

KLEI gZero3 ICs by Steve Reeve (Fine Art)

For those readers that frequent this site, you might be thinking, that I'm in the middle of some kind of KLEInnovations "love fest", especially since the past three reviews on this site has been about their products and this one makes it four. See www.KLEInnovations.com for specifics on their design philosophy and product line-up.

In my defence, KLEInnovations (KLEI) products are just that good — period! And they seem to like what I have to say about their products, so they keep sending me stuff to review.

BUT: As it states in the header of this site... I have NO affiliation to the products or companies mentioned on these pages. The products mentioned are those that I have used over time and found to perform very well.

My KLEInnovations (KLEI) journey so far...

I have tried the KLEI™Copper Harmony plug, KLEI™Silver Harmony plug, and KLEI™gZero2 SCs all from KLEInnovations (KLEI)...

- The KLEI™Copper Harmony plug was installed on my Stager Solid Silver interconnects and proved to be a much better performer than the previously installed Silver Bullet RCA's.
- The KLEI™Silver Harmony plug again proved to noticeably better across the board than the KLEI™Copper Harmony plug. The RCA plugs were installed on identical interconnect cables, therefore any performance improvements were solely down to the actual RCA connectors themselves.
- The KLEI™gZero2 SCs was a welcome break from the RCA battle, mainly because there was no soldering of RCA plugs involved. Despite an initial concern over the small gauge of the cables, they proved to be outstanding and significantly better performers than the Van den Hul D-352 that had been my only choice for many years.

I identified some aspects of the KLEI "cable science" in the KLEI™gZero2 SCs Review, but to recap the approach of KLEInnovations Design Team, the following applies to their entire range of cable products, including power cables (hopefully coming soon)...

- Their Goal: "The gZero™ architecture dynamically works to maintain a zero voltage Ground state"
- Their Approach: In accordance with KL's Signal/Ground Formula, the gZero™ architecture is comprised of hand wound conductors, and implemented in a manner to dynamically enhance electron flow in the Signal conductor, without the use of electronic components"
- The Result: "This has the effect of protecting the signal conductor from ground induced capacitive and inductive reactance, which facilitates smooth uninterrupted signal flow from one component to another, effectively isolating them and allowing them to perform their task without interference."

The KLEI™gZero3 ICs utilizes the KLEI™Silver Harmony plugs, so this particular review should be all about the actual cable used. However, the KLEI cable and plug architectures are linked (of course) and the two approaches are designed to actually augment each others performance abilities.

That doesn't prevent the KLEI™Harmony Plug range of RCA's from doing a significantly better job than conventional RCA's on standard cables, they just happen to perform better on their own cables.

So without further ado...

The KLEI™gZero3 ICs differentiates itself from other brands of cables currently on the market by the unique look of the KLEI™Silver Harmony plugs.



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It appears the cables are intended to be connected in a specific direction (probably due to their architecture), which is indicated by a small label with arrows indicating the direction i.e. the end the arrows point to is intended to be connected to the target component.

Keith Louis (aka KL) had advised that since this set of cables had gone through a factory "burn-in" and would only require about 24 hours to "settle-in", however, connecting one or both of the cables in the opposite direction would require that 150-200 hour burn-in process be repeated for the "cable set" before they sound at their optimum.

Just like a kid with a new toy, I seldom start the burn-in process and just walk away, I like to have that "sneak peek" of what is to come. The one thing that stood out immediately was how deep the bass line was (and it got better and more controlled over time), but the high end extension, resolution and dynamics were already as good as the KLEI™ Silver Harmony plug on my Stager Silver Solids after their burn-in had completed.

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With the cables well broken in I wanted to hear exactly what had happened to the bass extension following the burn-in period. For that I enlisted a couple of my favourite Pipe organ tracks.

The first track was Undring, from the album HarmOrgan, by Sigmund Groven and Iver Kleive. It's beginning passage featuring just the harmonica playing in the church where the organ was situated, allows you to appreciate the delicate upper and mid frequency details and harmonics these cables bring to the performance. When the pipe organ kicks in, it is then that a full range speaker can really bring the complete performance into the listening room.

Not only had the bass extended even lower than my initial sneak peek, there was a very controlled presentation that bordered on a "seismic event". The organ was now situated further back in the image and due to improved clarity, the harmonica was much more distinct and a little further forward, which contributed to a much more spacious performance.

The second pipe organ track, mention in other reviews here, is by Widor, Organ Symphony #5 in F Minor. Op42/1-6 Toccata: Allegro from the album Hear the Light on Phillips, performed by Daniel Chorzempa.

My comments made in the previous review pertaining to this track i.e. "reached into the depths, to bass levels I have never before heard, to the highest frequencies a pipe organ can reach, with a clarity that allowed the extremely complex layers of the many pipes in play to be clearly heard" held true, but there was even more control in the presentation of the bass line, with very low frequency details that had me believing the massive pipes of the organ were about to shake themselves loose.

The dynamics these cables brought to the performance on this track are superb. They also provide significantly better presentation of micro details that contribute to the venue acoustics, which project even further into the listening room. One of my favourite female artists is Norah Jones, mainly for her soft vocals that has a very whispery presentation, but also for the sometimes quirky arrangements that adds a distinct interest to her music.

It was during a more casual listening session that I became very aware of a second harmony that was now distinctly "Norah". Prior to this, it had simply been a vocalist singing in harmony. This was just another indication of the resolving abilities of the Essence® gZero3 Interconnect cable.

Gauging Neutrality

- When auditioning products, I use orchestral tracks to gauge their neutrality, since I am quite familiar with the sound from attending live concerts and also having first hand exposure to several of the instruments used.
- Orchestras always seem to have a very balanced sound that allows me to judge whether a product is adding colour and the one thing that has impressed me with all of the KLEI products to date, is that they are all very neutral and do not add colour to the performance.
- Attempting to judge neutrality while listening to Pop, Rock, and R & B is a little more difficult, primarily because of the coloration added by the sound processing that is applied in the studio.
- So, once I am able to assess the amount of coloration the component under review adds to the performance, I proceed to the other genres.

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On selecting tracks from other genres, I am often amazed with the changes that can occur in a track due to the complexity of sound engineering applied.

Tracks like Not Over You, from the album Sweeter, by Gavin Degraw, really highlights the articulate and dynamic nature of the KLEI™gZero3 ICs. Providing some extremely crisp punch and very nice deep bass control, which with lesser cables might otherwise sound less dynamic and bloated

Another track I've mentioned in other reviews is Precious, from the album Diva by Annie Lennox. The crispness in Annie's voice is superb and the depth and control of the bass line showcases the details at both ends of the audio spectrum that the Essence®gZero3 Interconnect cable can bring to a system.

Is that it? – you listened to just four tracks?

- And then some, as I listened to over 60 tracks across all genres over several days, both digital and analogue
- These four displayed the most extreme improvements in my system and highlight how these cables Kicked Butt

Summary

- Orchestral tracks presented the most spacious performances – too numerous to mention.
- Vocal tracks definitely carried more emotion – like Norah Jones, Christy Baron, Selena Jones, Diana Krall etc...
- Jazz tracks highlighted their upper register dexterity of the plethora of percussion elements like cymbals, triangles, drums, tambourines etc...
- Pop, Rock and R&B demonstrated their amazing control in presenting the many textures present in bass lines e.g. as on one favourite album SO, by Peter Gabriel.

So just how good are the KLEI™gZero3 ICs?

Well, my system has undergone several changes in the last couple of months and each change has improved the performance. They include upgrades to power cables, interconnect cables and speaker cables, but no changes were made to the components.

The power cable changes allow the components to perform at their peak abilities and the speaker cable changes allow the subtle details brought to the system by the interconnect cables to be quite discernible.

The KLEI™gZero3 ICs will change the sound of your system, but they are not adding colour, they are allowing the the music, as recorded, to come through.

- On some tracks the bass line may at first sound thinner, but listen for those details. On other tracks the bass line will sound rich and controlled, but never bloated.
- High frequency details may sound more edgy on pop and rock (the intent of the sound engineer perhaps), but on classical, those violin runs to the upper register are superbly smooth.
- And vocals can be as edgy as Annie Lennox or creamy smooth like Norah Jones

Will buying a pair of KLEI™gZero3 ICs take your system to its peak level of performance excellence never before experienced?

- Only if the rest of your cables are capable of performing to the same level! But you can be certain that the KLEI™gZero3 ICs are one of the very best performing "components" in your audio chain and move on to upgrading other items.

CONCLUSIONS

The KLEI™gZero3 ICs perform to the highest level I've experienced to date, providing an articulate, dynamic, spacious and believable performance. They are also warmer, fuller and go deeper into the bass register than the previous cables by a discernible amount.

After listening to the KLEI gZero3 ICs for several days I found I had become "accustomed" to the new sound. So I switched back to the Stager Silver Solids with the KLEI™Copper Harmony plugs.

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The differences were quite discernible in that the performance had a smaller image, less dynamics, fewer details etc... etc... But the overall "tone" of the performance remains unchanged.

Switching up to the Stager Silver Solids with the KLEI™ Silver Harmony plugs improved on these aspects of the performance almost to the level of the KLEI™ gZero3 ICs, but failed to capture, yes, I'm gonna say it, "The Essence".

Removing the KLEI™ gZero3 ICs from my system was definitely a case of... "Not realizing what you have – until it's gone".

So why did I purchase the KLEI™ gZero3 ICs? They are excellent performers that allows my system to convey a very dynamic and controlled performance with exceptional clarity and fullness. The KLEI™ gZero3 ICs allow my source components to perform to their peak abilities. However, should I decide to make a component upgrade, I'm confident that the abilities of the KLEI™ gZero3 ICs will exceed that of many of the components I may consider.

That's why I bought them! It's called... Future Proofing.



A highly recommended product

[Steve Reeve \(Fine Art\)](#)