

KLEI gZero3D SPDIF/IC (Coax/Digital) by Steve Reeve (Fine Art)

The KLEI gZero3D SPDIF/IC arrived in the same package as the [KLEI gZero2D \(Digital/SPDIF\) IC](#) (previously reviewed), so this review is more about the relative performance of these two excellent SPDIFs.

However, discerning the improvements that the KLEI gZero3D Digital/SPDIF IC should be able to provide, based on it's elevated stature in the KLEInnovations product line, was actually not that simple – why?

- even though the KLEI gZero2D IC may be the more affordable SPDIF of the two in the current KLEInnovations product line, it is far from *entry level*, a term normally used to denote the *most affordable* and in general, *the least capable* model in a product line.
- but, the KLEI gZero2D IC is an extremely adept SPDIF interconnect in its own right and capable of competing with many of the very best boutique and esoteric brands already out there.
- its entry level position has no real bearing on it's actual capabilities.
- but like all things from KLEInnovations, there's always room for improvement.



So, how did the KLEI gZero3D Interconnects perform?

On initial installation, the KLEI gZero2D IC lacked the fullness it was to reveal after some 25-30 hours of *settling-in* time, whereas I did not experience that aspect on installing the KLEI gZero3D IC.

From *settling-in* onwards, it was going to prove far more difficult to discern why the KLEI gZero3D IC should warrant my recommendation and why it should have a place in anybody's audio system, over the KLEI gZero2D IC.

The capabilities of both of these cables is extraordinary and initially appeared extremely close, ie. when installed on my modestly priced system. Perhaps improvements could be more easily observed if the KLEI gZero3D IC were installed on a system offering higher resolution?

Well, as it turns out, it just took some extensive and focused listening to *live performance* recordings to really appreciate exactly what the KLEI gZero3D IC has to offer...

- sure, there was a small improvement in the speed of the dynamics – they were a little crisper
- the image was a little deeper, but the spread in that deep image was a little more discernible
- there was a slightly improved isolation of performers with improved details between them
- there was a little more texture in the bass performance
- there were improvements in extremely fine detail, such as the delicate whispery tonal qualities of voice
- strings and soprano voice sounded a little less shrill and fuller (i.e. smoother)

But the most appreciable improvement for me was how the KLEI gZero3D IC seemed to tear down the walls of the 12' x 15' room where my system is located and transport me into a more appropriately sized venue. On many tracks I could not help but think this is exactly what the sound engineers were listening to as the recording was being made.

Albums of note include...

- Laments, Dances and Lullabies, Suite for Guitar, by Miroslav Tadic – the sound engineering on this album is superb and the conveyance of venue's acoustics placed me in a small church, the acoustics of which, matched perfectly to Miroslav's guitar and technique.
- Buenos Aires Madrigal: Argentine Tangos & 17th Century Italian Madrigals, by La Chimera – I've never been to Argentina, but I close my eyes and I'm transported into a smokey nightclub in downtown Buenos Aires, watching two slim dancers, both dressed in black, perform a perfect sultry Tango

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- Mozart's Violin Concerto no.4 in D major (the Allegro track), by Marianne Thorsen + TrondheimSolistene – this was just one of many tracks that far exceeded the walls of my audio room, but Marianne's passion for this piece shines more with the KLEI gZero3D IC

I also found that the KLEI gZero3D SPDIF/IC to have come the closest to conveying the much sought after analogue feel, that I have heard from digital music reproduced on a solid state system to date.

But is it worth it? Well, on reviewing my observations of each individual metric (dynamics, image, clarity, etc...), I found most of the improvements when compared to the KLEI gZero2D IC, are what I consider to be *marginal*. However, in this case, the *whole* was very much greater than the sum of the parts. Factor in the pricing of the KLEI gZero3D IC, ie. being only \$100 more than it's more affordable sibling, (an increase of only 40%) makes it a far more attractive proposition.

CAVEAT. Please ensure you burn these cables in for the recommended period on the KLEInnovations website

- The cable I tested was already burned in, but it still took a couple of hours to settle before performing its best.

They perform their absolute best when the other Interconnect and Speaker Cables are also from the KLEInnovations product line.

- It is not just that KLEInnovations products are capable of conveying the finest of details
- The KLEI gZero™ Architecture prevents the induction of noise into the signal conductor
- But more importantly the architecture keeps the Neutral side of the circuit of any attached component at zero volts, thus allowing the component to perform to a significantly high level
- Other than the obvious improvements in fidelity, another noticeable side effect of using KLEInnovations products is that solid state components actually run cooler than with other cables

CONCLUSION

Well, I tend to be very pragmatic in my component/cable selection and price plays largely into any recommendation I may make. In this case, KLEInnovations offers two exceptional SPDIFs...

- both perform extremely well.
- neither will disappoint
- both are modestly priced, i.e. compared some of the more expensive cables from other brands that attempt to offer similar abilities

From a pragmatists perspective...

- If you are serious about enhancing the abilities of the digital reproduction components of your audio system the KLEI gZero3D SPDIF/IC will not disappoint and bring you that much closer to analogue nirvana.
- If your digital components are used more for background music then the KLEI gZero2D IC may suit your needs better. But you might just find that will change your views on digitally sourced music once you hear them.

What has not really been addressed in this review is how the KLEI gZero3D SPDIF/IC compared to other SPDIF ICs from other brands. Unfortunately I only have one other SPDIF to compare it to, suffice to say, the other brand did not fare well at all.

The KLEI gZero3D SPDIF/IC expands on the very serious capabilities of the KLEI gZero2D Digital/SPDIF IC, by providing the most convincing analogue feel from a digital source that I have observed to date!

Congrat's to the guys at KLEInnovations, the KLEI gZero3D SPDIF/IC, like the KLEI gZero2D SPDIF/IC, is not just a winner, it's a REVELATION!



A highly recommended product

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