

KLEI gZero6/10/20 ICs by Steve Reeve (Fine Art)

I've been using the KLEI Innovations Interconnect cables since April 20014 and in that time I have become very accustomed to their exceptional performance characteristics and realize there are very few interconnects that can come close to providing this level of fidelity.

In the time since my review of the [KLEI gZero20 ICs](#) in January 2015, KL (Keith Louis Eichmann) of [KLEInnovations](#) has hinted at some forthcoming developments out of his R&D that he was very excited about and which he had decided to apply to his existing line of interconnects.

This struck me as being a bit of an odd approach, since most other companies would have simply announced new models, but thankfully, KL's approach is more beneficial to the customer because:

- by restricting their product line to a very concise model range assists in managing production costs
- it prevents the creation of a dizzying array of products (something most other companies seem to relish)
- which in turn assists the customer in selecting the Interconnect that is best suited to their needs and budget with an optimum outcome.



This approach, so early on in the product development lifecycle, seemed to me to indicate [KLEInnovations](#) was adopting a very customer centric approach.

The initial model range had a very consistent [acoustic signature](#) as you progress to each successive model. Also, each successive model provided a noticeable level of improvement, whereas other brands often suffer from diminishing returns as you approach the upper end of the model range.

So I was hoping that these new changes would not distort these particular facets of the KLEI product line.

[So What Was This Exciting New Development?](#)

During his R&D efforts, KL had refined his gZero Architecture/Technology, improving on its abilities with each successive model.

He then decided to try the some of those refinements on his entry level interconnects and found they provided significant improvements in their performance without significantly increasing their cost.

The refinements in the architecture does an even better job at shielding the signal conductor and holding the neutral/ground sides of attached components at a steady state of zero volts and as such is referred to internally as [gZEROs](#), for [ground zero state](#), but will continue to be termed simply as [gZero Architecture/Technology](#).

[So Which Models Have Been Improved And What Are The Benefits?](#)

The improvements have been applied to the [KLEI gZero2, 3, 6, 10 and 20 ICs](#).

I first had the opportunity to observe the effectiveness of the [gZEROs Architecture](#) just prior to this update, during the [KLEI gZero2 ICs review](#) and basically found...

- [The new gZEROs Architecture elevates the KLEI gZero2 ICs almost to the same level of performance as previous/old KLEI gZero6 ICs.](#)

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- But would the magnitude of the improvements observed between each successive model in the lineup diminish as you approach their top of the line products?

To assist me in answering that KL had sent me the current/new [KLEI gZero6, 10, and 20 ICs](#) for evaluation.

Observations for the new KLEI gZero6 ICs...

Since I reviewed them in January 2015, I've been using the previous/old [KLEI gZero20 ICs](#) and since I frequently leave my system running throughout the day, I would conservatively estimate they have now had close to 800 hours of playing time.

In that time I have become very accustomed to their [beguiling nature](#), to the point where installing any other interconnect in their place is immediately apparent, mainly because very few IC's can come close to providing that same level of haunting fidelity.

KL had advised that upon installation of the [KLEI gZero6 ICs](#) in my system, I should allow them to settle-in for 24 hours before performing any type of serious auditioning.

But as always I couldn't resist giving them just a very quick listen before leaving them to settle...

- what I was not prepared for was the very same [beguiling nature](#), which had only ever been produced by the [previous/old KLEI gZero20 ICs](#), which was now being conveyed quite convincingly by the [new KLEI gZero6 ICs](#)!

Here was yet another model in the product line, whose performance had improved to a level approaching a model that was two levels its superior, just as I had observed when I reviewed the [new KLEI gZero2 ICs](#).

Comparing the [new KLEI gZero6 ICs](#) to the [previous/old KLEI gZero6 ICs](#) revealed:

- The high end extension appeared unchanged
- however the improved clarity at the top end made it more pronounced and therefore sounded more complete
- the image was slightly wider and a little deeper with more details from venue acoustics filling in between performers
- performer placement within the image is far more precise
- the clarity has improved significantly, especially in the lower-mid to upper frequencies - probably due to a much lower noise floor
- the speed of dynamics are about the same, but again, the clarity has improved this aspect also
- there is improved bass extension in the low end with much more control and texture

That [beguiling nature](#), I believe is due to the exceptional clarity, which allows far more details to be heard, especially in the area of venue acoustics and reverberations, which in turn produces a more accurate and realistic reproduction.

Needless to say, the [new KLEI gZero6 ICs](#) with the revised [gZEROs Architecture/Technology](#) are much more adept at reproducing a more believable performance, especially for music recorded in a live environment.

Observations for the new KLEI gZero10 ICs...

So, if the [new KLEI gZero6 ICs](#) were performing almost to the same level as the [previous/old KLEI gZero20 ICs](#)

What improvements should I expect of the new KLEI gZero10 ICs?

Comparing the [new KLEI gZero10 ICs](#) to the [previous/old KLEI gZero10 ICs revealed](#):

- There was a significant improvement to the clarity of the high frequency details, making them more pronounced
- The image is wider and extends further back
- But also the venue acoustics and reverberations project much further forward, surrounding the listener and adding to the reality
- Performer placement within the image is more precise but now includes significant details of the performers actual movements

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- There is a significant improvement in clarity across the board, allowing you to play music at higher volumes without any degradation
- The speed and magnitude of dynamics have improved to a level I've never before experienced
- The bass extension in the extreme low end is not only lower, but superbly detailed and much better controlled.
- They now exhibited the same *beguiling nature* previously only heard from the *previous/old KLEI gZero20 ICs*.

By comparison to the *new KLEI gZero6 ICs*, the *new KLEI gZero10 ICs* provide a larger, more open sound, with crisper and more powerful dynamics across the entire frequency range. Their accuracy in the reproduction of the timber of various instruments is extremely life-like and regardless of whether the instrument is part of a full orchestral presentation or being played by a soloist in the foreground. Smaller ensembles, such as quartets/sextets are reproduced with a reality that many other interconnects can only aspire to!

Observations for the new KLEI gZero20 ICs...

The *new KLEI gZero20 ICs*, being the *top of the line*, were the last to be auditioned, which left me wondering...

- Would they provide a significant improvement over the *new KLEI gZero10 ICs*?
- Would their improvements be of the same magnitude as experienced with the lower end models
- More importantly, could they justify their rather hefty price tag?

As with any top of the line product, there is always the issue of diminishing returns, since for most audio components and cables, attaining that ultimate performance comes at a higher price and the return is often far less noticeable in the upper echelon of a product range than it is between the entry level products.

I had thought of following the same process as above, *ie. identifying improvements of the new vs. the old versions of KLEI gZero20 ICs*.

But when I heard the *new KLEI gZero20 ICs*, I realized this approach would be rather pointless, since it was quite clear the *new KLEI gZero20 ICs* really are in a league all by itself!

With ICs of this ability, it's no longer about how each of the various metrics have improved, *eg. the dynamics are faster, the image is bigger*, even though it was quite apparent.

It's about what the new KLEI gZero20 ICs achieve that is far more relevant!

I spent considerable time listening and thinking of how I could convey the very special improvements I was experiencing.

I listened for improvements in the various metrics and even though they were discernible, there was something much more appealing that was now being experienced in the music.

It was the amazing pinpoint accuracy of **performer placement** within the image, together with the **space surrounding** them and finally the **ambiance** of the entire performance.

I think the best way of describing the benefits of the *new KLEI gZero20 ICs*, is to turn to the world of cinema.

- If you think of the *new KLEI gZero10 ICs* as being analogous to watching a great action movie in an ultra-high resolution format
- then the *new KLEI gZero20 ICs* would be analogous to watching that same movie in IMAX-3D!

Everything simply appears **more focussed**, having **much more detail** with a **crisper presentation** and a **cavernous and spacious** image.

It's just downright eerie how the *voice* of each instrument or performer comes into immediate focus. Each commanding its position in a three dimensional space in such a way that it sounds more like each *voice* has its own individual speaker working on its behalf, even in full orchestral pieces.

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To get this level of coherence from a 2 channel system is extremely difficult and is often only available on a system that utilizes components that adhere to extreme design goals and uses high calibre parts in their circuitry. You know, *the real pricey stuff!*

When used on my digital source, the *new KLEI gZero20 ICs* brought the performance as close to an analogue sound that I have experienced to date and gives my solid state system a *very tube-like quality*.

So What's The Bottom Line?

The KLEInnovations cables are not the cheapest on the market, but I have found them to be the best that I have auditioned to date and at their price points, I find them to be exceptional value, especially when I look at the pricing of some of the high-end boutique and esoteric brands.

Which model you choose is up to you, but I think you will be very happy with any of the models that use the *KLEI gZero Architecture*.

- If your system uses high-end components, then I would recommend their top of the line products.
- If your system is more modestly priced and you find it a little difficult to entertain spending more on your cables than on your components, then try their entry to mid level interconnects.
- either way, they will not leave you disappointed

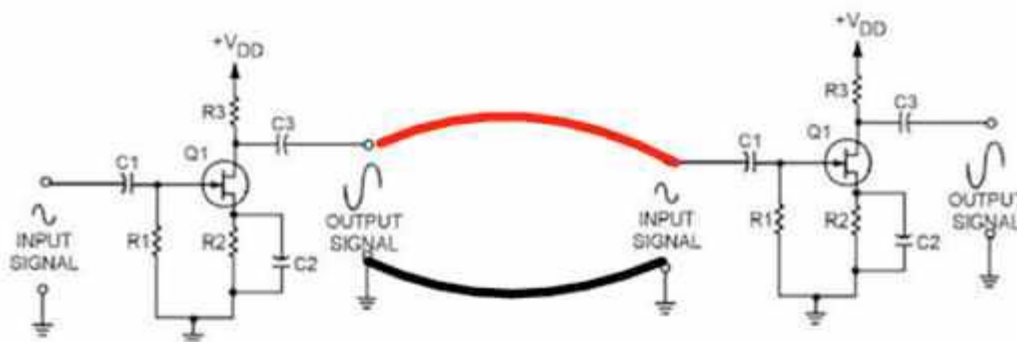
A Brief Recap...

During over 30 years of research, KL has developed an extremely detailed understanding of the various *influences*, both internal and external, that can affect the conveyance of a signal from one component to another *down a piece of wire*,

Also, there's the effect that the architecture of that **piece of wire** can actually have on the performance of the attached components.

KL's approach is a paradigm shift from conventional thinking in that...

- rather than view the components from a modular perspective ie. as two boxes connected by a single cable
- he views the connection from the perspective of the internal circuitry.



As can be seen from the diagram above, the two conductors making the connection actually perform two very different jobs...

- the signal conductor conveys the signal
- whereas the neutral simply connects the "ground" side of both circuits, keeping them both as close zero volts as possible

CONCLUSIONS...

This development in the architecture has elevated the performance of the KLEI interconnect product line to a level that I believe far exceeds all other interconnects from competitors and definitely those having a similar price point.

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Not only does the *KLEI gZero ICs* have the ability to sound excellent in high end systems, they also bring out the very best performance from more modestly priced components.

*eg. my DAC is one such component, costing around \$420.00.
But sounding as good as DAC's many time it's modest price point!*

The one outstanding feature of the new architecture is the **clarity** and **detailing** these cable now bring to the music. This is very apparent on orchestral pieces, which now sound so much closer to a live performance.

So, do you replace any existing KLEI gZero ICs you currently own?

- That is a personal choice, but because each model utilizing the new architecture performs to a higher level, even an **upgrade** to the same model will yield significant improvements.

How do you tell the difference between the new and old cables?

- the cables utilizing the new architecture have a Purple sleeve under the white label attached to each interconnect



I have always maintained that the KLEI product line offers exceptional value for money, but by implementing the *gZEROs Architecture* across most of their existing interconnect product line, **KLEInnovations** has just raised the bar on their competitors... by a significant margin!

All of these interconnects are exceptional performers and are highly recommended for all systems!



A highly recommended product Line!

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