

Cable Review

Kimber Silver Streak Interconnect

Golden cut, made of silver and copper... How is a twelve year old hybrid holding up in today's market?

Article was published on: 2009-06-10



When a product hits the market, it does presumably grab attention, enjoying all the publicity provided by the Press. Then, its impact gradually decays until it is surpassed by a successor, unless it becomes a classic, a reference choice, courtesy of its performance and innovation. However, there is also a limited promotion scenario, where a low profile is kept initially, then the product has to slowly earn its market share, solely by bringing out its virtues at any opportune moment.

This version also implies a higher risk, as it may eventually become obsolete while still in the shelves, waiting to be discovered. Accepting this challenge, Kimber unobtrusively launched the Silver Streak, to bridge the gap between the successful PBJ and KCAG and we are very interested in determining whether their choice pays off.

The Silver Streak is a hybrid, combining silver with copper. Conveniently thin and flexible, it makes you want to treat it with respect, but will not leave you with guilt after each plugging-unplugging process. The looks, silver black, low profile, serious, certainly not eye-candy - I am a little put off by plug's yellow gold tone but everything is a matter of taste after all.

The tech background is as sophisticated as you would expect from Kimber Cable's R&D and experience. The signal path is made of stranded, Teflon insulated, hyper-pure silver conductors, varying in size while following a specific ratio, in compliance with Kimber's patented Varistrand pattern. In brief, Varistrand technology aims against mechanical vibration, RF and skin-effect. The same pattern is utilized for the signal return path, only with hyper-pure copper conductors this time and multiplied by two. Hence three wires, two black, one silver, braided as per Kimber's preferred tri-braid topology carry the signal on to WBT's well engineered 0147 RCA plugs, for secure attachment to the ancillaries and "piece-of-mind" electric contact.



Let us not rephrase the cliches about how absent a cable should sound and move straight on to the Silver Streak's case. Well, in brief, this one is airy, detailed, transparent, almost perfectly unveiled! We only dare say that it may not provide the last bit of refinement in the high frequencies as well as the ultimate depth, weight and authority of the low bass region. To offset, it contributes with a bit of extra «flesh» to the highs, in a crispy, resonant way, precluding any fear of a lean or smeared presentation, whilst opting for a more life-like bass, in terms of warmth, timbre and control.

At the same time, the Silver Streak offers world-class clarity in the mid and low frequency region, resulting in a perfectly articulated and easy-to-follow "reading" even of the most complex passages. This asset, hand in hand with real-time transient response, precise imaging and immense soundstage, can infuse a dose of sentiment and drama to the listening experience, while always remaining intellectual. Vocals are conveyed with rich harmonics and nice singing overtones. Vibrato, natural tremolo, breaths, pauses are presented intact, almost touchable, revealing even the slightest tone fluctuation -as in a fugitive hesitation- on part of the performer.

Detail retrieval is exceptional, only rivalled by exotic cables in terms of implementation, bandwidth and cost. Enough said, but let's stress out the fact that all detail is kindly brought to the surface in the most natural, unstressed way and only to occupy a designated space in the musical event, meaning that it in every case remains what it is: detail, dramatizing, though never imposing or eager to steal focus off music itself.

Percussion simulates the real thing accurately enough to even become unsettling in a small room at a high volume level, not to mention it may reveal other bottlenecks in a system, in terms of transient response, harmonic richness and "freedom" of decay. Bass, acoustic or electric, is articulate, punchy and firmly controlled, always remaining melodic and flexible. Therefore, every movement is easily discernible within the large bass groups of the orchestra, finally paying all due respect to the composer's original score. Along with a nicely preserved "woodiness", every sound deriving from such a large group of people can be heard, like bows approaching the strings just before the beginning of a musical passage. In all, plenty of light is shed, in a conveying rather than an exposing manner.



The air surrounding instruments and vocalists is phenomenal, so is their placement on scene, with their physical dimensions preserved at all times, even though one could ultimately ask for a more "sculptured" aspect of their oh-so-delicate outlines, especially in smaller jazz or classical ensembles - see monocrystalline solid core conductors.

Were anyone to be unfamiliar with what interconnect swapping is all about in Hi-Fi, then the Silver Streak would be a striking example. Right from the start, it opened a large "window", as though everything was better recorded or as if one's hearing improved all of a sudden. Thus, it cannot be used as a hardware cover up, if this is what you are looking for. It's not going to add artificial brilliance, but neither will it eliminate any stridency that is already present. What might vanish completely, though, is smearing and congestion, courtesy of the Silver Streak's exemplary "bandwidth management" quality.

Is it utterly colorless? No, but its gentle character is spontaneously assimilated, reserving maximum space for a sweet, lucid, in-depth presentation with all the bite and courtesy you may ever demand.

Nikos Douris
nd@about hifi.com



Type: Stranded
Conductors: Varistrand hyper-pure silver(+), Varistrand hyper-pure copper (-)
Interleaving: Tri-braid
Available termination: WBT 0147, 0110, XLR (balanced)
Available lengths: 0,5m, 1,0m, 1,5m, 2,0m, 3,0m
We liked:

Golden cut between the PBJ and the KCAG, adding to the former's tremendous value, while coming close tremendous value, while coming close to the latter's performance

Airy, open, detailed, but also insightful
Very hard to beat at the price

We didn't like:

Hybrid construction may be unappealing to some
Looks

Lucid towards bright, can be unforgiving

List price: for 1m RCA:

WBT 0147: 432 € WBT 0110: 520 €

Pre/Power Amps:

Murano P500 plus monoblocks, Trends TA-10.1, Cary SLP98
Symphonic Audio

Source:

Marantz CD 6000 OSE KIS, GigaLab MoonDAC mark II,
Roksan Radius V

Speakers:

MB Quart Alexxa B1, Triangle Comete, Klipsch Heresy III

Cables:

VDH The First & The First Ultimate, Merlin Chopin, DNM Reson,
Mogami 2955, XLO Reference Type 5

Programme Excerpts:

Kenny Burrell, Coleman Hawkins «Bluesy Burrell» - JVC Japan

John Scofield «This Meets That» - Emarcy

Dave Brubeck «Time Out» - Columbia / Sony

«Women of Song» - Chesky Records

Nico «Chelsea Girls» - Polydor

Herbie Hancock «Gershwin's World» - Verve

Antonio Vivaldi - G. Carmignolla «Concerts Tardifs» - Sony

«Concerts Tardifs» - Sony

Antonio Vivaldi - Coin, Il Giardino Armonico «Il Proteo»

- Teldec

Antonio Vivaldi - Rolf Lislevand, Kapsberger Ensemble

«The Complete Works for Lute» - Astree

Sergei Prokofiev - Mstislav Rostropovich, Romeo and Juliet

ballet suites «The Glory of Rostropovich» - DG

Vadim Repin «Tutta Bravura» - Erato





SILVER STREAM

SILVER STREAM-SE

NET













WBT-0147

Ser. No. 0001657495