

EQUIPMENT REPORT



Kimber Kable 12TC Loudspeaker Cable

Even Better

Paul Seydor

12TC now brings to three the offerings in Kimber's TC (i.e., Teflon-coated) line of speaker cables, relegating 8TC to a middle spot between the newcomer and the entry level 4TC. Superbly neutral, transparent, and never, ever guilty of wrongdoing, 8TC has been the one constant in my system these last twenty years. Though I've enjoyed other cables, I always wind up returning to these stalwarts, which, despite their relatively modest cost, manage to go the distance against anything that comes my way. So the prospect of an even better TC cable filled me with excited anticipation, which was met with initial puzzlement: During the first few days, try as I might I heard virtually no differences between the 12 and the 8. Okay by me, I guess, 8TC being so good it leaves my ears desiring little more. But surely a heftier, pricier cable—\$31/foot versus 8TC's \$20—along the same lines should be better, yes? From Ray Kimber certainly, his products always embodying both high performance and high value. Several days' break-in was sufficient for some differences to become apparent: a slightly smoother, more extended top end from the new model; a better sense of ease and relaxation, not to mention more confident grip and control in the presentation; a more pleasing rendition of bloom and atmosphere, a greater sense of "opening out," as it were, especially from recordings rich in ambience (e.g., a glorious Vaughan Williams' *Wasps* Overture from Andre Previn in the days when he had some real fire in his belly [RCA, vinyl]). Tonally, the two cables could be clones, which is just fine—you can't get much more neutral than 8TC. Kimber claims greater bass authority for the 12; maybe, but I have to take it on faith that the sonic benefits

of more conductors and a fatter braid manifest themselves more noticeably in dynamic woofers than in the electrostatic panels I use (i.e., Quad 2805s). For soundstaging the newer cable expands and breathes a bit more in all dimensions, the same for dynamic range, while resolution in the form of low level detail is about the same. 12TC's improvements are incremental rather than dramatic, and typically required intensive listening to ferret out. Perhaps additional break-in will make these and other differences more obvious—after all, my 8TC has been in use for two decades. Until then my provisional conclusion (which I doubt time will seriously modify) is that a line of cables distinguished for truly excellent performance and outstanding value now has an even better top model. Will the 12 replace my longstanding 8? More than likely, but I remain pleased how well the ever reliable 8 continues to hold its own. **tas**

SPECS & PRICING

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Price: \$31/foot (not including termination and choice of connectors)

KIMBER KABLE
www.kimberkable.com