

STEREO STEREO

MAGAZIN FÜR HIFI • HIGH END • MUSIK



KIMBER SELECT KS1011
TERMINATED
WITH WBT-0108 PLUGS

KIMBER SELECT
KS1011 WITH
WBT-nextgen-
PLUGS

11/2004 NOVEMBER www.stereo.de

STEREO

MAGAZIN FÜR HIFI • HIGH END • MUSIK

Das Heft der Top-Themen:

- Großes Photo-Extra mit den 50 schönsten Schallplatten
- CD-Spiele beim CDSx
- Sieben tolle Racks
- Radiokluster getunt
- Krella von Lautsprecher

Jetzt in STEREO:

Dynaudio live in Bild & Ton

The Company Visit
Behind The Scenes/Behind The Music

DVD im HEFT

DYNAUDIO
AUTHENTIC FIDELITY

REPRINT
from STEREO 11/2004

Birds of a feather . . .

... flock together. So it's no surprise that Ray Kimber's superb interconnect cables in the Select range are fitted with WBT RCA plugs.

They now also come complete with the new **nextgen** connectors. And they never sounded so good.

by Matthias Böde

After my amazing experience with WBT's revolutionary **nextgen** RCA plugs, which were the subject of a big report and the title photo in the 4/2004 issue of STEREO, my thoughts immediately turned to Kimber Cable's Select interconnects. The asymmetric versions of these cables have traditionally been fitted with the well-known and - up to now - highly regarded WBT metal plugs. Kimber boss Ray Kimber, who has been producing cables since 1979, is so convinced of the quality of the top-flight plugs made in Essen (Germany) that he has been selling them in the US for years. Even if many hifi enthusiasts have not yet noticed and some

of them - as is always the case - refuse to believe it, WBT's **nextgen** plugs and the "Bullet Plugs" from Eichmann herald the dawn of a new era in the history of RCA plugs. These connectors, mainly made of plastic and possessing a ground lug that contacts the socket at a single point, thus preventing eddy currents at the transition to the socket, supply a considerably better sound quality from the same cables.

Sufficient reason to take another look at the three models in Kimber's Select range fitted with the standard WBTs as well as, for comparison purposes, with **nextgens** ordered from the German sales organisation. It's true that we took an in-depth look at the Select cables in May 2000, but we were looking forward to "hearing" them again, and the "smaller" KS 1010 and KS 1020 types have since been upgraded and are now called KS 1011 and KS 1021. The two copper strands in the ground contact have now been replaced by two solid core connections. The hot pin still has two copper (KS 1011) or silver solid cores.

Kimber's KS 1011 (around Euro 750, 2 x 1 metre, fitted with **nextgen** copper plugs) is one of the most ambitious "beginner's cables" for high-end systems. We were surprised by the natural breadth of the smallest Select audio cable and the even reproduction

across the entire frequency range as well as by the well-balanced energy distribution. Its basic character is sonorous and silky, and not a single tonal detail is suppressed. The acoustics have an extremely "open" feel and are superbly and coherently structured.

We began our extensive listening sessions with the Select KS 1011, and we could indeed have stopped right there, as the results left absolutely nothing to be desired - particularly in combination with WBT's **nextgen** copper plugs, which greatly enhanced the acoustic spectrum in terms of naturalness, pulse and conviction.

Compared to a second KS 1011 fitted with WBT's standard metal plugs, (around Euro 670), the **nextgen** combination made the music sound far less "canned". The spectrum had more depth and left the speakers with greater clarity. In terms of tonality, both voices and instruments were more reserved and almost severe via the metal plug/KS 1011 combination.

No matter how good the hifi system, the old WBT Cinch left its stamp on every tone, thereby limiting the overall sound quality. WBT is still selling the plug, but our advice to the Essen-based manufacturer would be to close this particular book as soon as possible. The era of big and heavy RCA plugs is over. Beating the KS 1011 was no easy task for the KS 1021. But it did. The pulse reproduction of the hybrid cable appeared to be firmer and more concentrated. Guitar strings seemed to be more highly tensed and emitted an athletic resonance. In the bass region, the sound travelling through the KS 1021 was more assertive, playful and agile. The KS 1021 also created greater space between the instru-

Kimber's Select range is among the **creme de la creme of the cable world.** And together with **WBT's nextgen plugs, they sound better than ever before.**

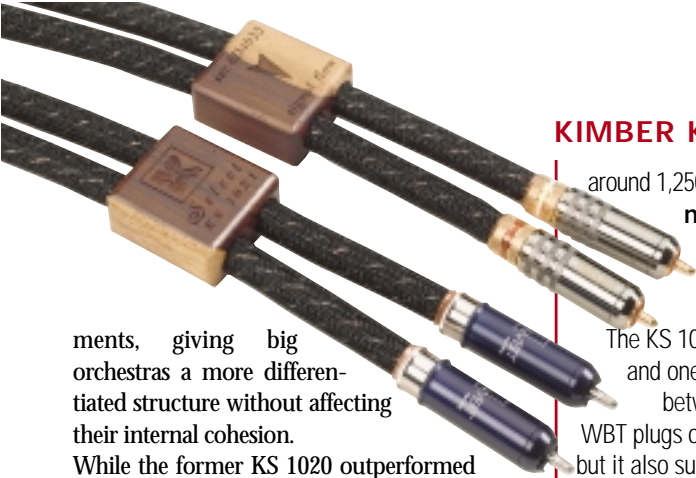
KEYWORD

Solid core

In place of a braided or stranded wire design, solid core cables possess one or more solid cores without individual strands.



WBT's **nextgen** plug is available in copper- (Cu, u.) and silver (Ag) versions. Pack-of-four prices for DIY cable customisers: around 100/170 €



KIMBER KABLE KS 1021

around 1,250 Euro(2x one metre with WBT nextgen AG; with WBT 0108: around 1,130 € Sales: B&D Phone +49 6237 800851 www.kimber.com

The KS 1021 may retail at a high price - and one which renders the difference between the prices of the various WBT plugs of only secondary importance - but it also supplies high quality and superb performance in every respect. If it is fitted with nextgens, the cable is without doubt one of the best recommendations in the market for hifi aficionados. The KS 1021 is also available in a symmetric version.

ments, giving big orchestras a more differentiated structure without affecting their internal cohesion.

While the former KS 1020 outperformed its predecessor, the KS 1010, by achieving slightly greater emphasis of the presence range, this applies to the KS 1021/1011 comparison only to a extremely limited degree. Although the sound reproduction through the KS 1021 was several nuances fresher and brighter than the darker timbre of the KS 1011, this is not the reason behind the superiority of the KS 1021, which also achieves more vivid demarcation between soloists and the background music.

All these statements refer to the version fitted with silver-plated nextgen plugs. We naturally also tested the KS 1021 with the old WBTs. The result was similar to that with the KS 1011, the only difference being that the latent tendency to produce a narrower, colder, sharper sound negatively impacted the listening experience with the KS 1021. A tonality that certainly still seemed acceptable using the sonorous KS 1011 was all the tougher on the ear. What was abundantly clear is that the nextgens are a blessing for the KS 1021, as they transform narrowness into spaciousness, understatement into airiness and severity into a full-bodied timbre. The same result was naturally also achieved

using the old and new KS 1030 cables with pure silver conductors, which are apparently impossible to improve upon (see interview). Kimber's top cable can dissect the fading rustling of a drum with such delicate precision that it hovers like fine dust in the sun between the speakers. It can grab hold of the sound and reproduce the most concentrated of orchestral tuttis without displacing the players on the broad stage by even a few centimetres, meaning that there is zero danger of the various instruments being merged into a single wall of sound.

And you don't need a complex tune to demonstrate just how much better this cable is than the KS 1021. All it takes is for James Taylor to strum the first few notes on his "JT" album - in a matter of seconds, the listener can hear how a state-of-the-art cable like the KS 1030 outperforms even a top cable like the KS 1021: thanks to properties like perfect

balance and the ability to draw a three-dimensional acoustic profile with the singer defined as an independent acoustic element relative to both the still, "black" background and his fellow musicians. This is a listening experience that takes acoustic harmony up to a whole new level, to a place where the borders between art and technology become blurred.

It goes without saying that we once again performed a plug comparison with the results as outlined above. The upshot? Anyone who allows the quality of a super cable like Kimber's KS 1030 to be impaired by plugs that are less than ideal is basically pouring money down the drain. Who could imagine a Porsche driver accepting an engine that is even just slightly off tune?

To enjoy the best of both worlds, owners of Kimber Select interconnects should - or rather must - make sure that they have nextgen plugs on the end. In Germany alone, there are several hundred satisfied Select customers who could be even happier at minimum expense. This advice naturally also applies to the older KS 1010/1020 types. Kimber distributor B&D offers a customising service for Euro140/210 (Cu/Ag) including plug.



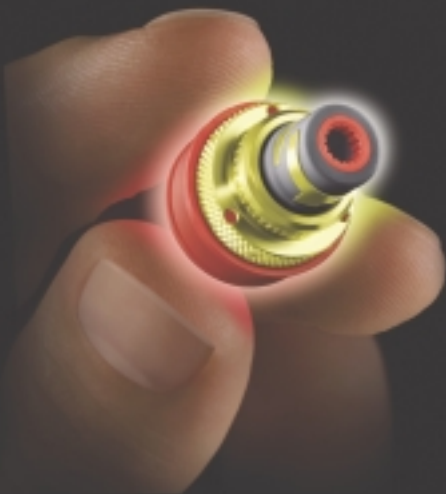
In contrast to the older model above, WBTs nextgen plug (below) no longer has an all-round ground contact.

nextgen.™

plug & socket*

... for an unbelievable listening experience

* Such as the nextgen plug makes your cable outperform to its extreme, the nextgen socket will place the full range of sound properties of your HIFI appliances on stage.



WBT

INTERVIEW

„Like a totally new cable“



Ray Kimber,
President
Kimber
Kable

STEREO: Mr. Kimber, you market WBT products in the USA. What kind of impact have the **nextgen** plugs made in the States?

Ray Kimber: A massive one. Progress in the hifi sector normally only comes one small step at a time, particularly if we're talking about so-called second-line components like RCA plugs. But WBT's **nextgen** has taken us forward ten steps in one go.

STEREO: In our comparative tests using your Select cables and standard WBT plugs/**nextgen** connectors, the new RCA plugs were the clear winners.

Kimber: We can fully confirm this impression. It's as though we had a new cable. I'd go so far as to say that the Select interconnects only really come into their own when they're fitted with **nextgen** plugs. As

a result, we will in future always equip the asymmetric Select models with **nextgen** connections. The entire design of the **nextgen** ideally matches the product philosophy behind our Kimber cables. We will only fit the old WBTs at the request of the customer.

STEREO: Kimber itself improved two of its Select interconnects - but not the KS 1030. Why is that?

Kimber: To be honest, we did try. But we ultimately failed. Whenever we tried to fine-tune a particular parameter, such as the resolution in the highest treble range, it had an adverse effect on some of the other properties. The cable is simply perfect as it is.

Ray Kimber, President of Kimber Kable

KIMBER KABLE SELECT KS1030

costs around €1,920 (2x one metre fitted with WBT **nextgen** AG; with WBT 0108 around € 1,800), Sales: B&D
Phone +49 6237 800851
www.kimber.com

Here's a cable



that many experts, not just Ray Kimber, consider to be "unimprovable". The ultimate solution for the asymmetric connection of components of the very highest quality. Our advice - once again - is to always prefer the version fitted with WBT's **nextgen**; otherwise some of the quality may be absorbed by the connector. Simply give it a try, and let your own ears persuade you.

It may still be acceptable with the KS 1011 but it doesn't really fly with the KS 1021: the understated and narrow acoustic feel of the old WBT

Select for Phono

Kimber Select interconnects are now also available for phono tonearms - naturally complete with **nextgen** plugs.



Like all Select interconnects, the cable is supplied in a hermetically sealable plastic case

The KS 1230 is based on the KS 1030 fitted with pure silver conductors. The one we obtained was equipped with WBT's **nextgen** silver plugs. All the standard connections are available on the tonearm side. We used the KS 1230 with a length of one metre (around Euro 1,300). Like the speaker-level versions, the phono interconnect scaled the most exacting acoustic heights. One of the units we tried it on was an Ortofon SPU Gold with a Dynavector DV-507 tonearm. The low voltage of the SPU is a challenge for any cable, as the smallest of errors has a major impact on the signal. The KS 1230 made an extremely convincing show with an incomparable transparency and resolution that still provided ample reach for acoustic solidity and the homogeneity of the midranges. The spatial depth and the clarity with which the sound departs the speakers were also nothing short of amazing. We've never heard a better phono cable.

nextgen™

WBT distributors worldwide:

Australia	Audio Dynamics Pty. Ltd. info@audiodynamics.com.au
Belgium	Greenwich Electronics SPRL info@grwe.be
Canada	Just May Audio Inc. sales@justmayaudio.com
China (PROC)	Laco HiFi Co. laco@laco-hifi.com
Croatia	Ileana d.o.o. audio art info@audio-art.net
Czech Republic	Servis Elektro - Jan Cerný office@serviselektro.cz
Denmark	L C Audio Technology ApS mail@lcaudio.dk
France	BC Acoustique S.A.R.L. bruno.roux@bc-acoustique.com
Greece	Exclusive-Audio Y. Poutous & Co. poutous@spark.net.gr
Hong Kong	Elephant Holdings Limited inquiry@elephant.com.hk
Japan	TEAC Esoteric Company hi-end@ho.teac.co.jp
Korea (ROK)	K-One AV Corporation sam.park@bestav.com
Malaysia	Wisma Audio Centre enquiry@wismaaudio.com.my
New Zealand	Denco Audio Ltd frank@dencoaudio.co.nz
Norway	Nonwegian Custom Media Solution as info@ncms.no
Portugal	AJASOM, comércio e indústria de som, lda. ajasom@ajasom.net
Russia	AudioSphere Company (Qvinta) info@qvinta.ru
Serbia and Montenegro	Dayens d.o.o. office@dayens.co.yu
Singapore	ATLAS HiFi Pte. Ltd. sales@atlas-hifi.com
South Africa	Lowveld Audio goodhifi@soft.co.za
Spain	Sarte Audio Elite S.L. sarte@sarte-audio.com
Taiwan (ROC)	Sound Ray Electronics Ltd. soundray@ms19.hinet.net
Thailand	Everest World Company Limited info@everestasia.com
The Netherlands	V.O.F. Nutters Audio nuttersaudio@hetnet.nl
U.S.A.	WBT-USA rich@wbtusa.com

WBT GmbH
45219 Essen · Germany
Tel.: +49 (0)2054 87552-0
e-mail: info@wbt.de
www.wbt.de

WBT