

SOUNDSTRING "GEN II" CABLES & POWER SUPPLY CORDS A SOUND INVESTMENT

The dicotomy of this hobby, in my opinion, consists of those music lovers whose financial position in life affords them the ability to purchase whatever the status quo deems "The Best" and the "rest of us" who are forced to seek out high performance and high value in a real world price range as opposed to taking out a second mortgage on the house in order to achieve a high level of sound quality. As pricing for quality high-end audio components goes into and beyond the stratosphere, finding "Giant Killers" is becoming an extremely arduous, if not impossible, task for "the rest of us" thriving to enjoy the music close to the level that big money buys.

This review is for Soundstring Gen II cables and power cords. As a reviewer, there is a very fine line between different and better. When comparing audio products, differences in the sound produced by one product could very well be just different but not necessarily better than the other product. Clearly, the qualitative aspects must be meticulously scrutinized in order to accurately determine which delivers the most realistic sonic representation of the recorded event. In my opinion, reviewing audio interconnects and power cords is one of the most challenging tasks for a reviewer.

A LITTLE HISTORY

I am no stranger to Soundstring Cables. I have the 1st Generation Soundstring Cables and Power Cords in my system since 2007. Aside from being affordable and flexible, I found these cables to be extremely musical, harmonically rich, and detailed with a tube like warmth that I initially found inviting and intoxicating. The 1st Gen Soundstring cables were clearly on the warm side of neutral. In addition to high performance and high value, I was also impressed with the fact that SoundString Cables didn't have the "higher levels of cable" marketing concept like almost all of their competitors. Soundstring gave you their best effort: That was it, that was all. After hearing that Soundstring had a new cable offering, curiosity got the best of me and I gave Len Miller, the President, CEO, and Sales Manager of Soundstring Cable Technologies, LLC a call to inquire about his new Gen II cables and to let him know how pleased I was with his 1st generation Soundstring offering. Len shared the following insights with me:

Soundstring Cable Technologies™ was founded in March, 2001 through the combined efforts of Superior Insulated Wire Corporation and the Lion Cords Division of Astrophonic Corporation of America, two veteran insulated wire, cable and power supply cord manufacturers, both founded in the mid 1940's. With more than 135 years of combined experience we have designed and constructed our products from

the inside out, using many innovative concepts and setting higher standards for performance, quality and reliability. All of our products deliver optimum performance at affordable prices.

Our original product line and our new GEN II Platinum Series™ are the result of many years spent in the research and development of new cable designs that form an “evolutionary pathway of least resistance” in signal and frequency transfer and voltage control. Our high performance power supply cords, interconnect, microphone and speaker cables greatly exceed the scope of today's digital systems, while simultaneously flattering state-of-the-art analog.

The original Tricormaxial™ power supply and speaker cables and Octaphase™ interconnect and microphone cables featured our special ***Progressive Geometric Multi-Conductor/Multi-Gauge***™ design featuring 99.99% Oxygen Free multi-stranded and multi-gauged bare electrolytic copper conductors that allowed the frequencies and signals to automatically seek the path of least resistance to flow virtually unimpeded over the surface of the individual conductors. This design produced fast, accurate, open and transparent sound reproduction for both interconnect and speaker cables. There was no discontinuity. Full frequency profiled alignment was the key. You heard a mirror image of the recording. For the power supply cords and cables, the voltage flow through each conductor of the multi-conductor design promoted faster, more accurate current flow resulting in enhanced performance and greater overall system component dynamics.

Starting in early 2010, we spent over 18 months developing and testing various combinations of copper strandings and constructions as well as several types of insulating materials as part of the R & D for what would eventually become our new GEN II Platinum Series™ of cables, featuring improved and enhanced overall performance developed by incorporating 99.9999% Oxygen Free high conductivity very finely stranded bare electrolytic copper conductors with the newest formulations of insulating plastics suitable for audio and power cables. By using 672 individual strands of #40 gauge OFBC for each of the power cord and speaker cable conductors and 168 strands of #44 gauge OFBC for each of the interconnect and microphone conductors, we significantly increased the circular mil area for the power cord conductors and the surface area for the speaker, interconnect and microphone cable conductors. For the signal carrying cables, this resulted in a greater, faster and more accurate signal and frequency movement across the larger surface area of the conductors. The result was a more open, transparent, fast and accurate sound quality usually associated with only a few of the very best performing cables at much higher costs. For the power supply cords, the increased circular mil area for each of the conductors generates faster, more accurate voltage flow to the internal components of power conditioners, power strips, amplifiers and pre-amplifiers providing maximum voltage flow with enhanced filtering. This allows the components to operate at maximum efficiency and peak performance. Skin effect is virtually neutralized resulting in faster heat dissipation, lower energy cost and greatly improved overall system performance.

A combination of advanced design technology and proven business experience over more than seven decades has been the key to our success and the ultimate catalyst for the ideas we formulated in the designs and constructions of our high performance cables. In our 35,000 square foot factory we extrude, cable, jacket, cut, terminate, assemble, test, package and ship our products nationally and internationally. We use laser micrometers to insure that every element in the production of our cables meets exacting standards plus or minus 3 mils (3/1000ths of an inch). We have complete control over all phases of the manufacturing process, quality control, testing, packaging, overhead and marketing costs. We purchase our oxygen free high conductivity copper in 5/16" thick 5,000 pound coils of continuous cast rod and have it drawn down to the fine wire sizes we use in the manufacture for each of our products. Our insulating plastics are purchased from two of the top compounders in the industry; all made to 100% RoHS lead free international standards with low durometers for maximum flexibility. This eliminates typical "middle man" costs and mark-ups associated with out-sourcing many of these functions by most of our competitors and enables us to manufacture and sell all of our high performance audio cables and power supply cords at very affordable prices! In the 68 years that our parent companies have been in business, we have produced over 100 billion feet of many dozens of types of insulated wires and cables for a multitude of industries, most recently including high end audio under the Soundstring name. Every audio and video system, regardless of cost, will benefit from the advanced technological and design concepts of our products.

Over the last 13 years, we have been very favorably reviewed by many well known, highly respected reviewers from on-line and printed audiophile publications. We were named to Philip Gold's "Best of 2003" list at 6Moons.com and received a 2004 "Most Wanted Component" award from The Stereo Times audiophile magazine. In 2007, Jim Merod, the owner of the Blueport Jazz Recording Studio in southern California and a respected senior reviewer at Positive-Feedback on-line, tested and reviewed our Omega Pro-Line shielded and balanced microphone cables. The results were so good that he voted them as one of his personal choices for the "Best Products of the Year for 2007!" Again, in 2012, Jim tested and evaluated our GEN II cables and found that their performance was even better than the original cables he voted as one of his 2007 Best Products of the Year! To read the in-depth product reviews by these and many other well known and highly respected reviewers, click on the drop down box for "Reviews & Awards" on our web site. We have also partnered and exhibited with many well known, highly respected speaker and component manufacturers at the International Consumer Electronics Shows in Las Vegas (CES), the Stereophile Home Entertainment Shows in New York City and San Francisco, The Rocky Mt. Audiofest Shows in Colorado, the AudioKarma "AK-FEST" Shows in Michigan, The Home Entertainment (T.H.E.) Show in Newport Beach, CA, CEDIA and at international shows in Canada, Munich, Hong Kong and Singapore through our international distributors and dealers in those areas.

Our product lines have focused on Power Supply Cords, Interconnect, Microphone and Speaker Cables. Now, we are developing and testing designs for a new line of cables for Video, Multi-Media, Home Theater and other digital

applications that are projected for introduction in 2014. These will include the latest Ethernet ready HDMI 1.4 and 3D cables, DVI cables, 75 Ohm Digital Coaxial Cables and possibly some USB type cables and adaptors for computers, digital cameras and other high end audio applications. In addition, all of our original and GEN II cables are available on bulk, continuous length spools and reels for in-wall and DIY installations.

We will continue to be a progressive, innovative, cost conscious industry force for the future. Anything less is unacceptable - compromise is not in our vocabulary! Len suggested I give the Gen II's an audition and write a review. He sent me replacements for all of my 1st generation SoundString cables after cooking them in their Audiodharma Anniversary Edition Cable Cooker for 120 hours.

THE SOUND OF THE GEN II CABLES

I replaced all of my 1st Gen interconnects, which were all single-ended, and speaker cables with the Gen II but left the 1st Gen power cords in my system. The speaker cables have the 24 Karat Gold Plated Spades and Plugs for greater signal conductivity. As I did with the first 1st Gen Soundstring cables, I used the single-end RCA interconnects as phono cables which are more than capable of doing double duty. The ability to use Soundstring's interconnects (for turntables with RCA connectors) in place of pricey specialty phono cables is another example of Soundstring's high performance, high value paradigm. The Gen II interconnects retain Soundstring's superb connectors, which have less metal (Soundstring's Patented Low Mass Concept), real wood casings and excellent RCA conductors. The difference between the 1st Gen Soundstring offering and these Gen II was not subtle. Listening to my system in this configuration delivered a more defined frequency range which delivered greater Dynamics, Air, Liquidity, PRAT, Focus and Clarity to the musical presentation. The soundstage extended in all directions with a near perfect, coherent blending, of greater layering, greater harmonic texturing, greater transparency, more lifelike timbres, more full-bodied and articulate bass, greater decay, more realistic depth perspective and much greater musicality. Dynamic contrasts were more accurately and evenly reproduced across the entire frequency range. The Gen II cables provided a more vivid outline of images within the soundstage which yielded a greater 3-D perspective and "the performers are in the room with you" experience. Compared to the 1st Gen cables, the Gen II are amazingly close to neutral and "State Of The Art", allowing you to hear the music extremely close to the way it was meant to be heard. As a result, you experience greater coherence and a more profound emotional connection that transports you deep into the inner essence of the recorded event. I attribute these quintessential results to the increased surface area and circular mil area of the speaker and interconnect cables. In contradistinction to my "Less is More" mantra, the Gen II cables clearly demonstrate "More (as in area) is Better". However, there is a caveat to these superb cables. The SoundString Gen II cables will either reveal any system shortcomings or simply astonish you.

WHAT DOES THE HIGH OUT-PUT POWER CORD ADD TO THE PRESENTATION?

The Gen II High-Output 30 Amp Power Cords are a true work of art with their beautifully, rugged 120V-15 Amp Grounded Furutech Male and IEC Female Hand Assembled Plugs. Replacing my 1st Gen power cords with the Gen II was nothing short of "Amazing". The noise floor becomes pitch black allowing you to hear more musical nuances and micro details with greater clarity. This adds another level of realism that gives your music such an integral completeness that it will have you revisiting your entire music collection. Personally, I find the so-called very best products incorporating exotic materials, cyro-treatments, etc... presents the musical experience in an uber realistic manner that mitigates the intensity of the emotional connection to the recorded event as opposed to the musical presentation with the Soundstring Gen II power cord which I find more natural, lush, and more emotionally inviting. In addition to its High-Output Power Cord, Soundstring also produces a Low Out-put Power Cord for digital applications. However, for those who demand the best, like myself, the High-Output Power Cord should be your power cord of choice.

CONCLUSION

As I stated earlier in this review, finding high performance and high value audio products doesn't present itself often for the "rest of us" in this hobby. However, these Soundstring Gen II Cables and Power Cords offer not just high performance, but in my opinion, performance that competes with the very best. The music with these cables connecting your system will deliver a Machiavellian realism that is purely captivating and emotionally involving. Once again, Soundstring Cable Technologies gives you their best effort at a sane price point as opposed to climbing the cable ladder as most of their competitors will have you do. Len Miller has compared his Gen II products with the best and openly admits that his products differ only by a few percent from the very best. How much more will it cost, component wise, to hear a difference of a few percent? Can you say "Diminishing Returns"? The bottom line is this: I highly recommend an audition of these Soundstring Gen II products for the "rest of us" and anyone else in this audio hobby who finds this level of performance and value an appealing proposition. In my opinion, these Soundstring Gen II Cables and Power Cords are the "BEST BANG FOR THE BUCK" in the entire cable and power cord space and represent not only a "GREAT" investment but a "Sound" investment that will allow you to experience the full potential of your existing high-end audio system.

SOUNDSTRING CABLE TECHNOLOGIES, LLC

Manufacturers of High End Power Cords, Interconnect and Audio Wires & Cables

149 WOODWARD AVE. * SOUTH NORWALK, CT 06854 * U.S.A.

Phone:(203) 853-9300 * Fax:(203) 853-9304 * E-mail: sales@soundstringcable.com

www.soundstringcable.com