



BOENICKE



Begging letter

Dear Mr. Boenicke, please leave the IC3 CG and the S3 with me for a while. Listening to the reference models of your new cable series gives me unbelievable pleasure, and you have made me put the title "component status" for cables to the test successfully. Thanks a lot for that! Amré Ibrahim

What comes across as a begging letter from an audiophile nerd has a serious background: I didn't write this report for those who have no interest in hearing any difference between an unassembled length of bell wire, a copper or silver conductor in the first place. Of those who can appreciate the difference, many are financially unable to afford cables with the price tag of a decent small car – I count myself among them. Among those who do have the financial wherewithal to do so, some will not understand why anyone would spend so much money on connecting cable. However, if you have an open ear and the sordid Mammon plays little to no role(x) in your life, you should consider yourself fortunate to be in a position to contemplate purchasing Boenicke Audio's IC3 CG low-frequency cable and/or the S3 speaker cable. The price of a 1-metre length of IC3 CG is 8876 Euro, while a 3-metre length of S3 costs 8966 Euro. I am aware of the Sword of Damocles of "audiophile disrepute", which hovers over the author's head in reviews of high-priced high-end cables and tuning accessories, and am willing to accept any damage to my image if I add that the above prices are by no means the end of the story, and claim that such investments may well pay off. That also applies – a small preliminary conclusion – to the two Boenicke cables I have at hand: They literally have it in them – not only in their construction, but also ... no, I'm not saying "tonal" now. It must be emphasized again and again: cables do not have their own sound! Connection and speaker cables carry a signal from one component to another. Condition, conductor material, length, impedance etc. have an influence on this signal transport and thus on the interaction between the connected devices, which inevitably leads to changes in the sound image. The "ideal" cable, which works equally well everywhere and also pleases – visually as well as in terms of its sound effects – does not exist.

But back to the S3 and IC3 CG: The abbreviation "CG" ("Competitor's Gear") refers to the top models of the Boenicke Audio cable series, very similar to the speakers: The four speaker series W5, W8, W11 and W13 are each offered in a standard, SE and SE+ version, which differ in the number of tuning elements as well as the components used, whereby "SE+" refers to the respec-



The top model IC3 CG from the Boenicke Audio cable series is assembled with KLEI Absolute Harmony Silver Bullet plugs. According to the manufacturer, the solid walnut wood box laser engraved with the product name contains sound-improving tuning elements, some of which are also installed in the Swiss audio manufacturer's loudspeakers. The inside of the boxes is covered with a shielding braid (minus 100 decibels, 1 megahertz to 30 gigahertz) made of copper and nickel fibres

tive reference model. Accordingly, there are also cheaper IC cables and a CG version of the S3. The entry-level RCA cable in the IC series is the IC1, whose price for a 1 metre length is €92, much more bearable than the CG version. The CG version of the S3 speaker cable is still in the final stages of development, but would have made little sense in my case: in my loudspeakers, the Boenicke W11 SE+, the tuning elements used in the "Competitor's Gear" – special series and parallel resonators as well as quantum filters from Bybee Technologies – are already installed. According to Sven Boenicke, doubling these sound-improving measures would not bring any further advantages. Owners of standard Boenicke speakers, however, can particularly benefit from the use of the CG variant as it allows a subsequent upgrade to the sound tuning of the SE models. Not bad, eh? As an avowed fan of the "Boenicke tuning philosophy", I naturally didn't want to miss the opportunity to hear the results of their top RCA cable IC3 CG and to find out whether the resonators and the Bybee Quantum Purifier between source devices and amplifier have a similar positive effect to what I know from my own comparisons between the Boenicke standard and SE loudspeaker models.

The construction of the Boenicke cables is based on an idea from Lithuanian cable manufacturer LessLoss Audio, which is probably only known to a few in this country. Sven Boenicke was so convinced of the potential of LessLossKabel, which had been developed over six (!) years, that he asked Louis Motek and Vilmantas Duda, the two heads of the audio manufacturer, to perfect their concept in collaboration with him. The result of the intensive three-month collaboration is now distributed worldwide exclusively under the Boenicke Audio brand. The basic structure of the cable consists of 288 lacquer-insulated high-frequency strands with a strand diameter of 0.125 millimetres and a total cross-sectional area of 3.5 square millimetres per channel for ground and signal cables. Six of the strands, each of which is spirally wound in a clockwise direction and consists of high-purity cryogenised copper, are combined to form a small bundle, of which there are 24 in total. If you have just recalculated, you will only have 144 strands. Correct! The reason for this is that the LessLoss Boenicke development comes with a mirrored counterpart: a spirally counterclockwise-wound second large strand bundle. That'll make up the 288. The strands of the two counter-



All so-called interconnects from Boenicke Audio contain a separately connected ground cable, which is "burned in" together with the signal cables and is also sheathed in mercerized cotton. The gold-plated copper rings are simply pushed over the RCA sockets

parts are looped into each other in pairs and finally braided in bundles around a cotton core. Last but not least, the whole construct is covered with a fabric coat of mercerized cotton.

The aim of this considerable effort is to produce a cable that does not require additional shielding and is nevertheless largely immune to the interference of electromagnetic fields. According to Boenicke, "high-frequency rubbish" is rendered harmless due to the "bucking coil braid geometry": "Normally, electromagnetic fields induce a polarized magnetic field around each conductor. Our spiral design is a kind of 'stretched' coil in which the magnetic field is formed inside the coil. However, since each coil has a counterpart wound in the opposite direction, an exactly oppositely-oriented magnetic field is induced at the same location. The two opposing magnetic fields cannot exist side-by-side at the same time and therefore cancel each other out. Thus, electromagnetic fields scattered from the outside cannot generate any unwanted currents in the signal path." Further measures for the internal damping and isolation of the conductors consist simply of completely separate signal routing, i.e. in separately routed cables for the positive and negative poles, which in

the case of the loudspeaker cable S3 lead either into cable lugs made of high-purity silver or Classic Harmony hollow silver banana plugs from KLEI and in the case of the IC3 CG into KLEI Absolute Harmony Silver Bullet plugs. To further prevent the above-mentioned interactions, the principle of spatial isolation of ground and signal is pushed to extremes at Boenicke: The IC3 has an external ground cable, which has a ring made of gold-plated copper at both ends, with which it – pushed over the RCA sockets – is routed from the output to the input of the connected component and fixed by connecting the RCA plugs.

Before the cables were sent to me, I wanted to know from the manufacturer what break-in time I would have to expect before I could devote myself to meaningful hearing impressions. The answer "Due to the large cable cross-section, about 500 hours" shocked me, but Sven Boenicke immediately dismissed my concerns: "All S3 and IC3 are burned in by LessLoss in Lithuania. A self-constructed burn-in machine, which operates with an output of approximately 1000 watts and of which there is only one on the planet, takes care of the burn-in process, which at the same time also determines the future running



A world first: Only the CG series ("Competitor's Gear") cables are tuned in the way Sven Boenicke is known for. In order to achieve authentic timbres, specially manufactured spiral-shaped electromechanical "series and parallel resonators" are used, which are intended to redistribute "diffuse" energy to defined resonance frequencies. In addition, "Gold Quantum Purifiers" from the American manufacturer Bybee Technologies – quantum filters based on a technique originally used in submarine sonar systems – improve the signal-to-noise ratio

Unique worldwide: The Lithuanian audio manufacturer LessLoss' so-called "bucking coil braiding geometry" makes shielding obsolete by means of a mirror construction, through which magnetic fields are polarized in opposite directions and cancel each other out. The braid should thus be largely immune to external radio frequencies. In addition, the maximum possible avoidance of plastics directly on the insulation and a minimization of eddy current braking phenomena through the use of connectors without metal housings and low-mass hollow banana plugs should contribute to the optimization of signal transmission



direction of the cable. One day of burning-in on this machine corresponds to approximately one year of listening to music every day for several hours."

Thus I was able to satisfy my curiosity and marry my Kondo Overture PM-2i and Boenicke W11 SE+ with the loudspeaker cable S3 as soon as the parcel courier rang. Anyone who is familiar with the richness of timbre and resolution of the Boenicke speakers will immediately see the S3 as a kind of "extended arm" of the speaker.

First, I fed the CD player the second movement from Claude Debussy's String Quartet in G minor on Ravel, Debussy, Fauré - String Quartets (Erato/Virgin Classics, 50999 519045 2 4, Europe 2008, CD), interpreted by the French string quartet Quatuor Ebène, in order to assess the sound image in terms of spatiality, timbre and potential over-presence in the high frequencies. In this respect, the S3 is by far the tidiest bridge between the integrated amplifier and the speaker diaphragms that I ever experienced in my listening room. With a strikingly homogeneous range and clear spatial distribution, completely free of any artifacts in the high frequency range, the interplay of the two violins, the viola and the cello, shows extremely powerful timbre, cleanly resolving even the finest details. The dynamic contrasts that arise from the bow strokes and pizzicati have never before been so clearly elaborated on my system. The addition of the IC3 CG between my Lector CD player and the Kondo seems to further reinforce my existing impression. The abstinence of any over-presence encouraged me to equip the output stage

of the Lector with blue Valvo 6201 triple mica triodes, which was rewarded with a loupe-like, yet never fatiguing insight into the attack and decay of the strings. With the RCA cable from Acoustic System Liveline, for example, the Valvos are too bright and the strings too sharp.

"In Heaven", the opening track of Julian Lage's album *Love Hurts* (Mack Avenue Music Group/in-akustik, MAC1148, USA 2019, CD) lets the exceptional guitarist's new trio formation literally step into my room through the Boenicke cables: regardless of whether I devote my attention to Lage's bluesy amp distortion or Jorge Roeder's bass solo, or "watch" Dave King, his drummer from The Bad Plus, working the skins and cymbals – the sound is bursting with energy, physicality, swinging and grooving like the devil. If the IC3 CG is placed between the Rike Audio Natalija Pre-2 phono stage and the Kondo – here it "behaves" with exemplary quietness thanks to the separate grounding conductor – the vocal ensemble Shards prove on their album *Find Sound* (Erased Tapes Records/Indigo, ERATP124LP, UK 2019, LP) what an immediate goose bump effect a homogeneous choir can create with the Boenicke cables: In "Thoughts" the twelve male and female voices seem to come out of a black void and vanish into it again. The reverberation

Partnering equipment

Record player: Technics SL-1210 M5G, TW Acustic Raven GT2
Tonearm: Robert Fuchs 12" **Pickup:** Grado Statement Statement 2, Lyra Kleos, SteinMusic Aventurin 6, AEC London C-91E
Headshells: Acoustical Systems Arche 5D, SteinMusic Ametrin 1, Oyaide HS-TF Carbon **Phonostage:** Rike Audio Natalija Pre 2
MC transformer: Phasemation T-300 **CD-Player:** Lector CDP-707 w/ PSU-7T power supply, Oppo BDP-103 **Integrated amplifier:** Kondo Overture PM-2i **Loudspeaker:** Boenicke Audio W11 SE+ **Cables:** Kondo Vc-II interconnect, Kondo Operia SPc-2.5 loudspeaker cable, Kondo ACc Persimmon, Biophotone interconnect and LS8-speaker cables, Acoustic System Liveline interconnect, fastaudio Black Science interconnect, Bastanis Meta and Epilog interconnects **Ancillary equipment:** Steinmusic Pi Perfect Interface Platter mat, Audiophil-Schumann-Generator, TAOC-Racks, SteinMusic Harmonizer and Blue Suns, Acoustic Revive RL-30 Vinyl Record Demagnetizer, Audiodesksysteme Glass Vinyl Cleaner PRO and Sound Improver, Audio Exklusiv d.C.d. Base and Silentplugs, FPH-Akustik-Damper, Herbie's Audio Lab Tenderfoot, Schallwand Audio Laboratory LittleFoot's/Big-Foot's, Duende-Criatura-Damping Rings, fastaudio-Absorber, Acoustic-System-Resonators, MFE power strip, AMR, Furutech and AHP micro fuses, Biophotone Magic Akasha Quantum Power Plugs, Acoustical Systems SMARTractor and HELOX record clamp, electronic valves by BTB Elektronik



Interconnect/Loudspeaker cable Boenicke Audio IC3 CG and S3



room of the recording attains a depth effect through the use of electronic sounds, which I feel more intensely than ever before with the combination of S3 and IC3 CG.

In short: I take the title "component status" for HiFi accessories absolutely seriously, it is no empty phrase for me – no more than I would consider interconnect and power cables merely incidental. Owners of Boenicke loudspeakers should definitely acquaint themselves with the Swiss manufacturer's new cable range, as should owners of other loudspeaker brands. If your system lacks enchantment, the Boenicke cables may give you the missing magic. And as for you, dear Mr. Boenicke, don't take my little begging letter too seriously... but nonetheless, leave the cables with me for a little while longer. O. K.?

On request, the S3 speaker cable can be assembled with Classic Harmony pure silver hollow banana plugs from Keith Louis Eichmann Innovations (KLEI) and/or cable lugs made of high-purity silver. For optimum signal flow, a special solder with 10 percent silver content from Swiss manufacturer Audio Consulting is used and, as always, Boenicke Audio uses solid wood – in this case walnut – for the hollow banana jacks

Speaker cable Boenicke Audio S3

Structure: Cotton rope core with braided copper conductor (cryogenic copper with 99.99 % degree of purity), LessLoss "Bucking Coil" Braiding geometry exclusively for Boenicke Audio consisting of 288 lacquer-insulated high-frequency strands, conductor cross-section per channel: 3.5 mm², fabric coating of mercerised cotton, Audio Consulting solder with 10 % silver content **Length:** 2 x 3 m
Versions: KLEI Classic pure silver hollow banana plug, extra charge for cable lugs made of high purity silver (99,99 % purity): 45 Euro per side **Warranty:** 5 years **Price:** 8966 Euro (extra charge for each additional 0,5 meter: 919 Euro)

NF Cable Boenicke Audio IC3 "Competitor's Gear"

Construction: see above and solid walnut tuning element box with copper and nickel fibre shielding including Boenicke Audio series and parallel resonators as well as Bybee Gold Quantum Purifier, separate and directional ground cable, KLEI "Absolute Harmony" Silver Bullet plugs **Length:** 2 x 1 m **Warranty:** 5 years **Price:** 8876 Euro (Surcharge for a further 0.5 meter: 535 Euro)

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