

In Memoriam



Helmut R. Krüger
1905-1996

Audio pioneer and AES honorary member **Helmut R. Krüger** died on Sunday, 1996 December 15 after a long and serious illness. Born in 1905 in Berlin, Germany, he would have celebrated his 91st birthday on December 22. Unfortunately, fate prevented us from celebrating this birthday with him.

After Helmut Krüger completed his studies and apprenticeship in Berlin, he worked in the electronic industry from 1926 to 1929. He then went to broadcasting where he spent the rest of his professional life. Until the end of World War II in 1945 he was with the RRG (Reichsrundfunkgesellschaft) the German radio corporation in Berlin. He eventually became manager of the department of sound and

recording. In 1945 Krüger was interned in Russia in a camp by the Volga River until the end of 1949.

Back in Berlin he started a new career as a sound engineer (Tonmeister) with RIAS, the Radio in the American Sector. In 1955 he moved to the SFB (Sender Freies Berlin), the radio in free West Berlin. He became a senior engineer and at the time of his retirement in 1970 was manager of the central department, Hörfunk-Betriebstechnik (sound broadcasting production).

Krüger was the first Tonmeister to make stereophonic recordings on magnetic tape. In 1941 Walter Weber invented the high-frequency premagnetization (bias), which considerably improved sound quality of magnetic tape recordings. With this system German radio made many high quality mono recordings. In 1943 two recorders were equipped with double-track recording- and playback-heads. Krüger was the first Tonmeister who used these machines to record concerts in stereophony. He used three omnidirectional microphones of which the middle one was panpotted to the left and the right channel. With this equipment he made approximately 250 stereo recordings in the Haus des Rundfunks at the Masurenallee in Berlin and in the Wagner Opera

House of Bayreuth, even under the difficult conditions of the war. The quality of these recordings is astonishing even today.

In 1963 the stereophonic FM broadcasting began in Germany, and Krüger was again a leading manager of that technology. As a Tonmeister, he had multiple contacts with the famous and great conductors of his time. He told us many anecdotes involving Wilhelm Furtwangler, Ferenc Fricsay, Herbert von Karajan, and Karl Böhm. In 1968 he was decorated with the Hans-Bredow-Medaille for his contribution to broadcasting development. In 1993 he was awarded the title of honorary member of the AES at its 94th convention in Berlin. During this convention the AES was granted permission to release three of the five of his remaining stereo tapes on CD. When Krüger visited the AES convention in 1995, Paris, he took great pleasure in seeing the high technological developments in audio today.

We deeply mourn this amiable and admirable man. Although we will miss him greatly, we will always remember this pioneer of stereophonic recordings.

Hermann A. O. Wilms
Brussels, Belgium
and Reinhard O. Sahr
Burgwedel, Germany