

In Memoriam

Julian Hirsch, AES life member, engineer and magazine writer, who was instrumental in transforming hi-fi from a hobby into a multibillion-dollar global industry, died on November 24, after a long illness, at the age of 81. Through more than 40 years of testing and reporting on the performance of audio equipment for consumer magazines, and especially for *Stereo Review*, Hirsch helped demystify high-fidelity sound reproduction.

He set a high standard of scientific and journalistic integrity in his reviews, and he was always ready to debunk the gimmicks and fads exploited by overzealous marketers. Under the auspices of the Institute of High Fidelity, which was later absorbed into the Electronic Industries Association (now the Electronic Industries Alliance), he helped draft standards for the testing of power amplifiers and FM tuners that made specifications for these components easier to compare and more useful to shoppers. Some audiophiles felt he gave too much weight to what was measurable, but during his long career many music lovers refused to buy new gear without his seal of approval. His writing inspired thousands of his loyal readers to become audio enthusiasts, many of whom moved on to become distinguished in the field as designers, engineers, manufacturers — even writers and editors.

Hirsch developed an interest in technology when he discovered amateur radio at the age of 14. He received a Bachelor in Electrical Engineering degree from the Cooper Union in New York in 1943 then served in the Army Signal Corps during World War II. After the war he worked at various jobs in the electronics industry, mainly developing sophisticated laboratory instruments for spectrum analysis.

He became hooked on the then brand-new hobby of hi-fi in 1949, building his own mono gear. As the commercial audio industry expanded in the early 1950s, Hirsch and his engineering friends began testing

products to see how they met their performance claims. In 1954, Hirsch and three others joined forces to publish their results in a newsletter, the *Audio League Report*, whose circulation eventually peaked at 5000. Publication ceased in 1957 when Hirsch joined with league member Gladden Houck to form the audio testing service Hirsch-Houck Laboratories.

In 1960, Ziff-Davis Publishing contracted for Hirsch's exclusive services, buying out his partner while keeping the name Hirsch-Houck Labs. Initially, Hirsch tested gear for *Popular Electronics*, and in October 1961 his first test report appeared in *Stereo Review* (then called *Hi-Fi/Stereo Review*). That year, he also began writing "Technical Talk," his long-running monthly column in *Stereo Review*. He wrote test reports, monthly columns, and feature articles for the magazine until 1998, when he retired and was given the title editor-at-large at *Sound & Vision*. He estimated that in the course of his career he contributed 4000 laboratory test reports to various publications, including 2400 for *Stereo Review*.

At the time of Hirsch's retirement, Hachette Filipacchi Media U.S., publisher of *Stereo Review*, and now *Sound & Vision*, established the Julian Hirsch Scholarship Fund at his alma mater, the School of Engineering of the Cooper Union. Those wishing to donate in his memory can make checks payable to The Cooper Union, with "Julian Hirsch Fund" in the memo, and send them to the Cooper Union, Development & Alumni Relations, Attn: Michael Governor, 30 Cooper Square, 8th floor, New York, NY 10003.

Hirsch is survived by his wife of 57 years, Ruth, of New Rochelle, NY, a son, daughter, and two granddaughters.

Edward J. Smith, musician and recording engineer, died on September 23 at his home in New York City. He was born in Worcester, MA, in 1921 and grew up in Ridgewood, NJ. His father, Jesse,



Edward J. Smith
1921-2003

who was an accomplished musician and arranger, encouraged Eddie's early interest in music.

At age fourteen, Eddie built his own transmitter and became a licensed ham radio operator. After graduating from Ridgewood High School in 1940, he studied arranging with his father, who was a musician and arranger for Leo Reisman's Orchestra. He later studied the Schillinger method with Tom Timothy.

After high school, Eddie moved to Paterson, NJ, where he worked at the Majestic Theater, playing piano in the theater band for vaudeville shows. Herb Miller (Glenn's brother) hired Eddie to arrange and play piano for the Herb Miller Band.

Eddie's understanding of radio and electronics circuits were put to good use. His recording career began when he went to Cincinnati in 1950 to work with long time friend Henry Glover at King Records as an arranger and A&R person, frequently doubling as a musician during sessions. He eventually was promoted to chief engineer for King Records. Eddie brought many important changes to the King Studio, and was responsible for the purchase of new microphones, equalizers, a brand new Scully Disc Lathe, as well as a new mixing console that

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he designed. He used his techniques to brand the sound of such artists as James Brown; Hank Ballard's "Finger Poppin' Time," Boyd Bennett's "Seventeen," and Bill Doggett's "Hold It."

Smith moved to New York City in 1961 when he was offered a position as sound engineer for Bell Sound Studios, a busy, successful studio that was "the sound" of that era.

While at Bell Sound, he was nominated for a Grammy Award. He was a favorite recording engineer for artists such as Louis Armstrong, The Essex ("Easier Said Than Done"), The McCoys ("Hang On Sloopy"), and Little Anthony and The Imperials ("Going Out of My Head"). At Bell he met Peta, whom he married in New York City in 1964.

His most memorable recording sessions were with the legendary Dinah Washington, Sarah Vaughn, Dizzie Gillespie, Count Basie, Sammy Davis, Jr., Don Costa, Burt Bacharach and Hal David. Considering the songs he engineered, such as "Don't Make Me Over," "Walk On By," "Do You Know the Way to San Jose?" with Dionne Warwick, and "What the World Needs Now Is Love" with Jackie DeShannon, Smith did his job perfectly. His calm amidst the storm and chaos of recording sessions earned him a place among the leading recording engineers.

In 1968, he left Bell Sound Studios to become a partner at New York's Mayfair Recording Studios where he stayed until his retirement in 1985. During his time at Mayfair he recorded many contemporary artists as well as many of the commercials that we still remember, such as Coca Cola's "I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing" and "It's the Real Thing."

In addition to his musical talents, Eddie was also a master photographer and avid cinematographer, collector and historian. He and his wife collected many vintage films, books, and a vast array of photographs of the talent he worked with.

He is survived by his wife of 40 years; a sister, three daughters, two granddaughters, and two nephews.