

## In Memoriam

the opportunity to supervise any recording sessions at RCA.

As the audiophile movement got underway in the early 70s, many high-fidelity manufacturers and record companies sought Bert's expertise. Notable are the recordings that he supervised which were issued by Crystal Clear. Most of these were done direct-to-disc but with digital backup via the Soundstream recording system. Bert's landmark Fiedler/Boston Pops recordings and Virgil Fox's organ recordings at the Crystal Cathedral are available on CD from Bainbridge and Laserlight. However, the London Philharmonic recordings on Crystal Clear conduct-

ed by Morton Gould and Walter Susskind dating from 1977 have yet to be reissued.

Most readers of *Audio* knew Bert as a perceptive commentator on current technological events in recording and video, and the releases later this year of CDs made from the original tapes of the Everest sessions may be their first hearing of Bert's recording work. I have heard most of these recordings via first-generation copies from their originals, and they will certainly be the match of any of the RCA or Mercury archival reissues, both musically and technically.

During the last 15 years Bert had curtailed his recording activities to

spend more time writing and consulting. Along with many younger recording engineers, I had long sought Bert's advice and had spent many an evening with Ruth and Bert in their home as guest, student, and colleague. Over the years, we spent literally hundreds of hours listening to new recordings, and I always marvelled at Bert's ability to pinpoint their virtues and defects and sum them up in a few well-chosen words. And that included my recordings, too.

We shall all miss him. He was both best friend and best teacher.

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**A**very Robert Fisher, audio industry pioneer, musician, and philanthropist, died on February 26, 1994 at the age of 87. He was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1906. Fisher started his professional life as a graphics designer in book publishing, a profession which he loved and at which he excelled. As a practicing musician and music lover, he started his own audio designs as a hobby and developed them into a business as friends started to ask him for copies of the advanced home audio equipment he was building for himself.

Fisher's first company, Philharmonic Radio, was founded in 1937 in partnership with Herman Hosmer Scott, another high-fidelity pioneer, who later founded Scott Radio. In 1945, he sold Philharmonic Radio and founded Fisher Radio. State of the art performance at premium prices was the charter for this new company. Fisher's talent for building an effective team, coupled with his keen sense for marketing, made this endeavor highly profitable. In 1969, when it became clear that the audio market was changing toward mass merchandising, he sold Fisher Radio to Emerson Electric of St. Louis. Today, Fisher Radio continues to flourish,

now owned and operated by Sanyo of Japan.

In 1956 Avery Fisher hired me away from Grundig in Germany as a design engineer for Fisher Radio. I was promoted to vice president of engineering in 1957, a position I held until my retirement in 1977. Soon after my arrival in this country, I was joined by four other German engineers, a group which Fisher liked to call his "Dutchmen." During the many years of working with him, I got to know him as a farsighted, generous and caring person. Demonstrating his generosity, Fisher distributed a sizable portion of the proceeds from the sale of Fisher Radio among his key employees.

After he sold Fisher Radio, he devoted himself to philanthropy, or, as he put it, "repaying old debts." His most public gift was the endowment fund to Lincoln Center, which in part was used to refurbish Lincoln Center's Philharmonic Hall, a venture he took pleasure in supervising personally. Today, the much improved venue is known as Avery Fisher Hall.

The other part of the endowment fund was set aside for the Avery Fisher Artist Programs, two award projects especially close to his heart. The larger and more prestigious one is the

Avery Fisher Prize, a tax-free \$25,000 gift awarded to young, established American instrumentalists. Among the recipients are pianists Andre Watts, Murray Perahia, Richard Goode, Emanuel Ax and Horatio Guiterrez, cellists Yo-Yo Ma and Lynn Harrell, violinist Elmar Oliveira and the clarinetist Richard Stoltzman. The Avery Fisher Career Grant is the other prize, a \$10,000 fund against which recipients can draw for career-related expenses.

A violinist himself, one of his most prized possessions was a genuine Stradivarius violin, which he delighted in loaning to promising artists for special performances. A Bösendorfer Grand Piano, the assembly of which he personally witnessed during a visit to Vienna, rounded out his private collection of musical instruments for his Park Avenue apartment. Avery Fisher thoroughly enjoyed leading musicians to his apartment for evenings of chamber music.

As a man of a great many accomplishments, far reaching interests and genuine generosity, Avery Fisher will be remembered and mourned by many.

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