

In Memoriam

William Savory, AES fellow and long-time audio engineer, died February 11, 2004, at his home in Falls Church, Virginia, at the age of 87. The cause of death was congestive heart failure.

Savory was involved with the team led by Columbia Records engineer William Bachman that succeeded in bringing the first $33\frac{1}{3}$ r/min long-play record albums to market in 1948. A master of the art of disc cutting, Savory made the first transfers from disk to tape to LP master. Among these were the on-site recordings of the historic Benny Goodman Carnegie Hall concert of 1938 and a Tchaikovsky violin concerto, which won him a dollar when he bet the violinist, Isaac Stern, that he could make an undetectable splice during a long trill. "I bet him a dollar he'd never find where the splice was made, and he didn't," Savory recalled. "So he paid me a dollar."

A musician who developed an interest in sound engineering, Savory began building his own recording devices in the mid-1930s, but soon learned the necessary electronics were not readily available. While making a piano demonstration record of his own in one of midtown Manhattan's small independent studios, Savory was able to fix some of the equipment that broke down during the session. He was offered a job on the spot and soon established service arrangements with several independent New York studios.

In 1938 he worked on a system for the National Vocarium to electronically reproduce Edison wax cylinders. In 1940, Columbia Broadcasting System hired him to help operate and maintain its new recording facility in Chicago. He left Columbia in 1942



William Savory with analog tape machine in the 1950s.

and joined the United States Navy for active duty during World War II, including a stint at the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory in Washington, D.C., where he worked in the centimeter wave research division. After a year in Washington, he returned to New York and Columbia Records, this time as a member of the team that developed the LP and as fill-in recordist and engineering troubleshooter for location dates. Involved in the early stages of setting up Columbia's legendary 30th Street Studio in a former church, Savory worked with William Bachman to help bring the acoustics of the enormous room "into focus" as he put it, part of which included designing special baffles, in particular a set of unique 8-foot parabolic reflector panels on wheels used by singer Johnnie Ray, among others.

He left Columbia in 1953 to join Angel Records/EMI as chief engineer

and represented EMI on the first engineering staff of the newly formed R.I.A.A. when the primary aim of that trade group was to establish a standard recording curve. After EMI purchased Capitol Records, he was transferred to the West Coast in 1957 where he became senior engineer in Ed Uecke's Engineering Development Department. There he built a stereo mixing room in the new Capitol Tower studios, completed just before the advent of stereo recording.

In 1960, Savory left Capitol and was soon called back to active duty during the Berlin Call-Up. When he returned to the U.S., he joined with former NRL colleagues to form General Electronic Labs and did consulting work on the Mattel "Talking Doll." He was then hired by TRW and sent to Washington, D.C., at which time he settled in Falls Church, Virginia. In 1976 ➤

In Memoriam

he retired from the Naval Reserve with the rank of commander.

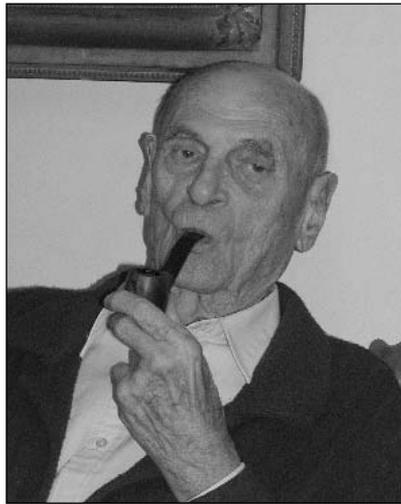
Throughout his life, Savory pursued what he called a “self-education regimen,” studying electrical engineering, physics, mathematics, and related disciplines at different times at Harvard, University of Chicago, Catholic University, and Columbia University. He was a charter member of the AES, the Sapphire Club, the IEEE, and the AIP.

Savory founded Lyricon Records, Inc. in 1980 and consulted on communications security systems at Tracor Applied Sciences, Inc., where he was senior scientist and director of the R&D Prototype Laboratory. At the 87th AES Convention in October 1989, he received a fellowship “for technical expertise in the field of recording art with particular emphasis on historically important recorded material (archival and restoration).”

He recorded via phone lines the historic May 29, 1938, jazz marathon at Randall’s Island Stadium, an all-day swing concert for the benefit of Local 802’s Hospital Fund. He also made many airchecks and phone line recordings of Benny Goodman, some of which he played for Goodman during a recording session in 1950. Goodman was so pleased with what he heard that he asked for more, and the result was Columbia’s 1952 release of the “air checks” album, *1937-38 Jazz Concert No. 2* later rereleased on CD as *On the Air (1937-1938)* (Columbia Legacy, 1993). After retiring in 1989 he devoted much of his time to the digital conversion of many aircheck recordings he made during the 1930s and ‘40s from hotel broadcasts, concerts, and sponsored radio programs.

Savory’s survivors include sons Eugene and William Stephen Desavouret, Phillip Savory, daughter Michele Savory, and two grandchildren. His wife Helen Ward Savory, a singer, died in 1998, and his son Mark died two weeks after him.

Susan Schmidt Horning



Josef Merhaut
1917-2004

Josef Merhaut, AES life member and fellow of the Acoustical Society of America, passed away at his summer-house in the south of the Czech Republic on July 30, 2004. He was 87 years old.

Born on November 5, 1917 in Prague, Czech Republic (Czechoslovakia at that time) he began his study at the Czech Technical University in 1936. Because all universities in the territory that is now the Czech Republic were closed by the Nazis during World War II, Merhaut was not able to complete his study until after the war. He graduated with a degree in electrical engineering in 1946. His postgraduate study earned him a doctorate in 1948 and in 1961 he earned a Dr. Sc. degree.

After his graduation in 1946 he joined TESLA works, where he began his professional career, working mainly on audio electronics and electroacoustic transducers. His first professional achievement was developing a sound reinforcement system for a very large open stadium in Prague, used especially for extremely large synchronized athletic performances. For this use he also designed an original rain-and-sand-resistant loudspeaker system, which could be imbedded into large open sports grounds. He then led the development of the four-channel the-

ater sound system for a performance called “Laterna Magica” in the Czech pavilion at the EXPO 1958 in Brussels.

In 1959 Merhaut founded the Research and Design Institute of Electroacoustics, where he was head until his appointment as professor at the faculty of electrical engineering at the Czech Technical University in Prague in 1964. There he became head of the department of audio and visual technology (1968) and later also served for a time as vice-dean. Merhaut also made a significant contribution to international standardization. He worked for a number of years in IEC, TC29, also in WG1 on loudspeakers. From 1978 to 1984 he was president of IEC. He was also an honorary member of the Czech Acoustical Society, where he was active for many years.

Since the beginning of his professional career, Merhaut had been interested in theoretical work, mainly in the theoretical basis of electroacoustics. He continued working in this field during the time he headed the institute, which he founded, and then as a university professor. He published many papers in the *Journal of the Audio Engineering Society* on electroacoustics, mainly on electroacoustic transducers. His book *Theory of Electroacoustics* (1981) published by McGraw Hill (ISBN 0-07-041478-5) is often used as a textbook.

Professor Merhaut was highly regarded not only because of his professional achievements but also for his lifelong readiness to listen and help others. Especially for those who knew him personally, he was fabled for his racy and wise sense of humor. He managed to keep himself hale, remarkably bright, and active up to his last day.

All of us, who knew Josef Merhaut, or even who had the opportunity to work under his leadership, will miss him deeply. He is survived by his wife Anela, two sons, one daughter, and seven grandchildren.

Tomas Salava