

Obituaries

Siegfried Linkwitz (1935–2018)



Siegfried Linkwitz, my friend and audio confidante for over 40 years, died on September 10, 2018, after a long illness.

He was born in Bad Oeynhausen in Germany in 1935 and received his degree in electrical engineering from the Technical University in Darmstadt. He came to the U.S. in the early 1960s, was hired by HP and spent the whole of his professional career, 37 years, in their Microwave Lab. He became an expert on RF measurement methods and managed the design of the HP 8566 Spectrum Analyzer. This was so expensive and HP sold so many of them that he was awarded a plaque that called him the “Billion Dollar Man.”

It was in this lab that he shared a common interest in audio with some of his fellow engineers. They made hi-fi components in their spare time, including loudspeakers. Siegfried is perhaps best known in the audio community for the Linkwitz-Riley crossover filter. This is ironic for, as he remarked, within HP it was known as the Riley-Linkwitz filter for the simple reason it was invented by his friend Russ Riley.

Siegfried told me that Russ never minded about the naming because for him

it was the invention not the credit that mattered. For Siegfried on the other hand it was important to publish and share it with others. He did, and while I was working for KEF Electronics in England we saw his paper in the *AES Journal* and decided to use this filter topology in our new speaker system, the KEF 105. We called it the Linkwitz-Riley filter and the name stuck.

Siegfried was the ultimate polymath. He did so many things and all so well. Wind-surfer, engineer, scientist, philosopher, music lover, hobbyist, and, especially, communicator. Whether it was in person, on paper, or in social media Siegfried was always thought provoking but presented his ideas with a flair that both charmed and informed expert and tyro alike.

In his lifetime Siegfried became one of the most celebrated loudspeaker experts. All this from someone who didn't join the loudspeaker industry until after he had retired. For the rest of us it takes a lifetime, even if we start young. Talk about a gifted amateur.

Siegfried has been an inspiration to professional and loudspeaker amateurs for as long as I can remember. And he made thousands of friends around the world through his website and DIY speaker kits. He has influenced me and countless others with his provoking ideas, practical advice, and DIY projects. His philosophical musings and observations about how we perceive sound, and of course why we should all use dipole loudspeakers to listen to stereo, persist to this day.

Siegfried was still learning, still teaching, and still sharing his thoughts on sound and his love of music to the end. I shall miss his stimulating conversations and musical presentations.

His life's work is our enduring legacy. His website, www.linkwitzlab.com will continue under the leadership of one his friends, Dr. Frank Brenner.

He is survived by Eike, his wife of 57 years, and his children Monika and Andreas.

Laurie Fincham