

In Memoriam

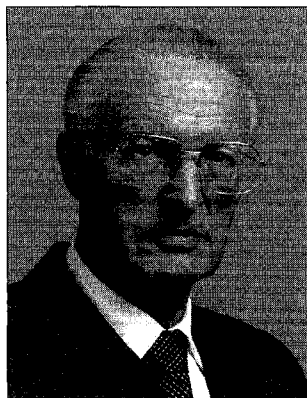
Audio pioneer **Willi Studer**, founder of the former Swiss Studer Revox Group in Regensdorf-Zurich, Switzerland, died on Friday, March 1 after a brief illness. The world renowned manufacturer of Revox and Studer audio products was 84 years old.

Studer founded his first company at the age of 19, building radio receivers under the brand name Tell. His father, a cabinet maker, built the housings. Willi was a perfectionist, and the radio sets were too good and too expensive for the company to survive. A year later Willi passed the radio engineering exam and soon made a name for himself as a successful radio constructor. In 1948 he realized his dream of becoming independent.

Studer began his entrepreneurial career in Zurich when he established a small electronics equipment factory. The experience gained from the adaptation of US tape recorders for the European market gave him the confidence that he would be able to design and build such equipment himself and that it would be even better and more reliable. For his tape recorders he chose the brand name REVOX. To keep up with production he expanded his operation to 25 employees by the end of 1950. Parallel to this, he began developing a "big" tape machine with a 3-motor tape deck, the Studer 27, for radio stations.

The ice was broken; a stormy phase began. The next Revox tape recorder, the A36, was also equipped with a 3-motor tape deck. To the delight of the tape hobbyists, the Revox B36 with three heads followed in 1956. Professional tape/source monitoring opened the nonprofessional market. With the A77 series in 1967 Studer Revox established a reputation for high quality hi-fi systems. The series of pioneering developments, such as a servo-controlled capstan unit with a rugged asynchronous motor, continued.

In 1960 Studer began the success-



Willi Studer
1912-1996

ful cooperation with EMT Wilhelm Franz GmbH, Wettingen/Switzerland, the purpose of which was to open the world market for professional Studer products. With the shipment of a Studer J37, the multichannel version of the C37, to the Abbey Road Studios in London for recording "The Beatles," a new milestone was achieved. The international breakthrough had become a reality.

The culminating point in the company's development was the year 1986. The Studer Revox Group had 2000 employees in its production centers and subsidiaries in 10 countries. The annual turnover reached SFr. 220 million.

In 1990 Studer sold his company to the Swiss Motor Columbus Group. Today the Studer Professional sector is owned by the American audio group Harman International Industries, Inc.

In 1978 Willi Studer was awarded an honorary doctorate in technical sciences by the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich. The highest honor awarded by the audio industry, the Gold Medal of the Audio Engineering Society, was bestowed on him at the 1982 convention in Montreux.

As an entrepreneur Studer knew how to assemble a highly competent team. His ability to instill quality thinking was a natural gift, his professional competence always convinc-

ing. Early in the morning he was the first one at work. His patriarchal management style also had a pleasant side. Many of his employees endearingly called him "Father Studer." His management style was very direct, although not always problem-free. Moreover, his excellent memory never let him down. He was a master at responding with brief and precise answers. Studer cared less for diplomacy than logic. Those who were able to present clearly defined proposals found an understanding ear. Despite this, life was not always easy for employees with a strong character. Studer, who drove a Jaguar, loved classical music as well as state-of-the-art production machines. He was also a gourmet, who enjoyed making his own jam. His secret recipe was that if storm clouds announced bristling tension, or if there was something special to celebrate, the patron invited the people involved to an excellent dinner. In this way the antagonists were able to meet in a relaxed atmosphere, and many strategies were decided over a fine dessert. Characteristic of Willi Studer was his social commitment. Never did he forsake a member of his "big family" in an emergency situation. His will to remain independent was profound, to remain self-sufficient his maxim for life.

Marcel Siegenthaler

As with many things in this industry, we are often so busy that we don't have time to pause and reflect on the passing of figures who have helped build the industry that we work in today. **Gordon Clark** was one of these figures. He was a real engineer: a guy who mixed, designed, and built things from consoles to widgets. He died on December 28, 1995, on his way home from work at Clack Studios. Gordon left Clack around 6 p.m. and collapsed on the platform while waiting for his bus at Port Authority. Po- ➤

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lice and paramedics arrived on the scene but Gordon was pronounced dead shortly after his hospital arrival. He was 62 years old. I found out the next day while doing field service.

I got to know Gordon well during the past year though we became acquainted about 15 years ago. I always enjoyed his dry humor and extensive knowledge. He was a very sharp guy. I had heard about various things he had done but Gordon was not one to talk about himself so I only got to know about his career when his sister Elizabeth contacted me after his death. Gordon and I talked on and off over the years because we had been crossing paths for some time. A year ago when I began to feel my departure from Clack was coming up I contacted Gordon and got him a job at Clack so I could hand over work to him. He had been working freelance out of his home in



Gordon Clark

Cliffside Park, doing small design projects. He was happy to get back in the mainstream.

He came to my shop about a week before he died. We spent the day going over documentation and plans for a custom console that is being built for Tom Clack. He was in good spirits

and optimistic. He looked good and was enjoying his re-entry into studio work. He was doing things he enjoyed and had been talking to people he had not seen for years. The night before he died we talked for more than an hour about various things. He mentioned encounters he had with people who remembered and appreciated work he had done twenty or thirty years before. He felt good.

I think he went out in style—on an upswing. He was a great guy. I wish I could talk to him and hang out with him more. His death is a loss. Gordon was someone I really respected. I wish I knew even half of what he knew. Recording engineers are called engineers today because of people like Gordon, who really was an engineer who helped make the industry we work in.

John Klett with
Tom Cahill