



Editor-in-Chief Martin Colloms

Senior Contributing Editor
Andrew Everard

Writers

Stan Curtis
Kevin Fiske
Chris Frankland
Steve Harris
Keith Howard
Chris Kelly
Andrew Mellor
Ed Selley

Publisher | Marianne Colloms

Design | Philippa Stewart

Published by
HIFICRITIC Ltd.

Registered in England No.6054617
Registered Office: Winnington House,
2 Woodberry Grove,
London, N12 0DR
info@hificritic.com
www.hificritic.com

Printed in the UK by
Premier Print, London

VAT Charges, EU Subscriptions

Conforming with EU VAT regulations we now have a trusted contractor dealing with prepaid and documented VAT charges. We have to adjust existing EU subscriptions and add top-ups. Paper and print prices have risen and sub rates will have to be revised.

HIFICRITIC

is a printed publication available by subscription only.

© HIFICRITIC Ltd 2022. All rights reserved.

Any unauthorised editing, copying, reselling or distribution of the whole or part of this publication is prohibited. The views expressed in any articles in this magazine should be taken as those of the author or the person quoted unless indicated to the contrary. While HIFICRITIC endeavours to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this publication, its accuracy cannot be guaranteed and HIFICRITIC.COM accepts no liability for any use of, reliance on or the accuracy of such information.

Apologies to all who suffered from both late- and non-delivery of Vol 15 No 4, October to December 2021. Enduring the tail end of Covid, now thankfully with restrictions lifting in Spring 2022, we endured a perfect storm of distribution difficulties. Europe's imposition of multiple country rates of VAT on printed paper has been a nightmare – applying it, charging for it, accounting for it and not least finding that some continental posties do not understand, leading them to block delivery and surcharge a second time, kindly adding administration charges which had already been paid. So we subcontracted the VAT mailout to experts and dispatched the shipment of EU magazines to them, but this shipment never got delivered. We reprinted that batch, delivered them successfully and finally they got through – but it was not over yet as we were now getting reports of UK non-deliveries. We canvassed the whole UK subscriber list and found that after four weeks the Post Office had delivered less than 5% of our stock, now lost. So we reprinted and shipped out the UK mailout a second time. Now we aim to weather substantial increases in paper and print costs, both from COVID repercussions and a certain difficulty in Eastern Europe.

Max Townshend (1943-2021)

Once encountered, never forgotten, that indefatigable Australian, Max Townshend – who passed away on December 31st, 2021, aged 78 – was a major force in our audio industry for many years. With a long career first in industrial electronics, and then in audio, he could engineer with a broad brush.

Fascinated, even obsessed by music and sound from an early age, he came from a musical family who encouraged his interests, and – aged just 10 – he was helping Guglielmo Marconi's former assistant, Australian Ernest Wishshaw, by reading colour codes on resistors. Ernest was now manufacturing valve audio amplifiers, which were Max's first experience of high-fidelity sound, and he was immediately hooked.

After university (BSc Electrical Engineering and Electronics, University of Western Australia) Max began his professional career in Australia, working on a diverse range of engineering projects that might notionally seem unconnected with audio, such as anti-submarine reconnaissance instrumentation for the Royal Australian Air Force and developing filter systems for monitoring oil drilling. His diverse activities also included power station control systems, electronic messaging displays and a contribution to radar aircraft landing technology.

1975 saw his first foray into audio when he adopted the Garrott Brothers' pioneering parabolic line contact stylus for his Elite MCP555 moving coil cartridge, and Max went on to develop many products including an efficient full range line source loudspeaker founded on EJ Jordan's transducer technology reaching back to Jordan-Watt from the 1960's. However, it was a thesis from a group at Cranfield leading to a patent on an optimised LP disc player, where optical sensing was used to correct tracking geometry, that led to fresh developments.

These including controlling the arm/cartridge resonance at the headshell, lateral and vertical axes, via coupling to a trough charged with a viscous fluid: this was the basis of the Townshend Rock turntable and led to a long association with lecturer, engineer and inventor Jack Dinsdale of the Cranfield Institute of Technology. Vibration isolation was a Max speciality, and he co-developed the Podium series of isolators with Jack, installing them on his recent triumph, the Allegri Reference line control unit. Allegri was his passion, which he laboured long and hard to perfect, and even he was surprised at how well it performed. Allegri embodied many aspects of his research, transformer metallurgy and alloy treatment, linear crystal 'fractal' windings, power supply noise control, transparent sounding switch technology and optimised signal paths. Furthermore, when nearing completion it was fitted with perfected Podium vibration isolating feet.

Max long held an ambition to design the whole audio chain from source to loudspeaker, and at times came close to achieving his goal – including a rebuilt, heavily modified digital audio player. He supported wide audio bandwidth with his accessory ribbon super tweeter, he pioneered Fractal cryogenically treated wire and researched deeply into audio cable impedance and matching.

Max Townsend's contributions to the art will live on as a testament to his many skills. Our condolences go to his family.

Martin Colloms
Editor-in-Chief