

## Tribute

Gerhard Haas (1/17/1952 - 1/28/2020)

audioXpress has received notice of the passing of our long-time author and contributor, Gerhard Haas, from South Germany, at the age of 68. We would like to express our sincere condolences to his wife Sabine, daughter Christine and son Maximilian, and his grand-children.

I met Gerhard Haas for the first time during an annual Elektor expert meeting somewhere in Germany, where he arrived together with his long-time friend Michael Kaim, the founder and owner of BTB Elektronik, Europe's largest tube supplier. It didn't take me long to understand that I had just been introduced to two of the world's most experienced and enthusiastic tube experts. At the time I had just started to work in audioXpress, and we quickly started exchanging ideas on how to expand the editorial coverage from high end to other tube audio applications, and explore the fascinating world of lesser known tubes.

Short after, Gerhard Haas submitted an article about the Wah-wah's effect pedal (which he originally signed as "Paul Hendrix"), quickly followed by another one about the KT 88 and KT 120 power tetrodes, and another about a Class-A headphone amplifier. And we established a plan to translate more than 10 different articles from German to English, most of which were previously published by Elektor in their Roehren Sonderheft editions, but they had never available in English before. Gerhard had written most of the articles for these Elektor "Tubes Special Edition" magazines, including bylined articles using alias.

Gerhards' talent and extraordinary work was the pure result of dedication and passion - he always described himself as an amateur, and always insisted that his projects should be available as low-cost DIY kits so others like him could also learn. But he certainly had a natural instinct for audio electronics and a contagious enthusiasm for high quality audio experiences, always considering the complete chain, always powered by tubes. "Whether guitar amplifier sound or Hi-Fi, a 2nd-harmonic-focused amplifier sounds better," he wrote.

I know that much of the richness and detail of Gerhard's works never fully translated from his original text in German to the published version in US English published by audioXpress. The German language represents a significant challenge for many publishers and always requires carefully translated work. Sometimes we would be dumbfounded to read paragraphs of text with a less than obvious inherent humor. Describing the Russian 6C33 tube, Gerhard wrote: "Such a high degree of resistance to vibration and shock is perfectly appropriate for the use in fighter jets, tanks or warships. Therefore, this tube could be used for beating people to death without damaging it. These characteristics are less important for hi-fi purposes."

But Gerhard Haas' work expands way beyond. His published work includes many more articles for Elektor and other magazines, and two books published by Elektor, the first being his popular "High-End mit Röhren" (High-End with Tubes), first published in 1995, updated in 2005, and updated again in 2017, and the more recent "Messtechnik fuer Niederfrequenzverstaerker" (Measuring Technics for AF Amplifiers), published in 2018.

Discussing his book "High-End mit Roehren" Gerhard always hoped that his circuits, which make up for half of the book, and that the theory part of the book would help others like him: "This is also the most valuable part of the book for me, because it teaches amateurs like me a great deal about the knowledge of electronic circuits."

In Germany, the Experience Electronics website (his former company) still promotes his Classic Series amplifiers. Some of his tube amp and preamp projects were published in the first years of audioXpress and before that in the pages of Glass Audio, where his amplifiers were also frequently advertised, stating: "manufactured in Germany by Gerhard Haas, designer and builder of Sennheiser's Orpheus tube headphone amp." And that's a story that still needs to be written, but Gerhard was always too modest to share the details.

J. Martins  
(editor-in-chief)

Gerhard Haas worked in that one and many of his electronic projects in collaboration with Norman Weber (Weber Electronic), which shared more details about Gerhard's life and work, and sent us an important message from his son, Max Haas, which we share here.

We know each other for longer than 30 years. We worked together on a lot of my own developments. And for some months already, we have been working together on Gerhard's latest amplifier series. I started to work for Gerhard about 30 years ago on the Sennheiser ORPHEUS "reference" project. This was a very interesting experience, and after the project was over I continued working for him as a freelancer, helping to build his Experience amplifiers (before the company was sold) and also developing and assembling modules for mixers, etc. A few years ago his idea came up to build a "final edition" of tube amplifiers, implementing the experience of the recent decades developing amps, transformers etc., all in an exquisite chassis. Together with his son Max we'll try to continue his lifework. The plan is to release several types of mono amplifiers (currently ppp with EL34, KT88 and KT120).

Norman Weber

My father was self-taught, but he took it to another level. He became interested in electronics and amplifiers very young and, as a 15/16 year old, he could already easily repair radios, TVs, amplifiers, etc. He acquired a deep knowledge of math, physics, chemistry, and electrical engineering over the years and decades. He was also always eager to expand his knowledge. He summarized his extraordinary skills about high end amplifiers in his clearly understandable book "High-End with Tubes".

He set up his own business since 1985. Tubes always received his special attention due to the "warm," pure and unadulterated sound that could be achieved.

The Orpheus HEV90 vacuum tube headphone amplifier, which he developed in 1990/91 was definitely one of his "official" masterpieces, and his significant participation in the project was instrumental, even if he never claimed credit for it. I am not surprised, however, since my father was a very humble person and reluctant to show off his achievements.

For me it is extraordinary that this development happened in his early years of work as a freelancer, and that at that time he was already able to create an amplifier, which in combination with the HE90 (Sennheiser electrostatic headphone), set new standards for decades - and probably also beyond.

In addition to amplifiers, he developed custom-made products on customer request. In addition to his numerous published technical articles and books he also often developed projects for recording studios. His knowledge and willingness to optimize technology to the limit of what is physically possible never ended. Developing was his real passion.

After he sold his company Experience Electronics in 2009, he retired for a few years, to start the development of a brand-new platform. He called the new amplifier series his masterpiece.

We as a family, together with Norman Weber, intend to offer this masterpiece under the name of LINOS to audiophile customers looking for authenticity and clarity. Norman is an essential resource, for he is fully familiar with my father's amplifiers and was involved in this project from the very beginning.

For me it is very important that my father was an honest, upright person. He was always fully transparent with regard to the quality of the amplifiers, and always specified reproducible, measurable parameters that reflect the quality and enable comparability. His standard was always to offer a fair product, so that users can enjoy one of the most beautiful things in the world, unaffected by technology - music!

Maximilian Haas