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audio record

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Wide World Photo

President Eisenhower receives from Deputy Secretary of Defense Donald Quarles the original tape recording of the President's message sent back to earth from the Atlas.

A QUICK LOOK BACKWARD

The passing of an old acquaintance is invariably the signal for reminiscing. And so it is with the *Audio Record*, which — with this issue—is breathing its last, as explained in the letter below. The lifetime of the *Audio Record* took in the second half of the forties and almost all of the fifties, an exciting era of continual change and astonishing progress. Scientifically, it started with the A-bomb and ended with the man-made moon: the first earth satellite. In the sound world, it went from 78 rpm records to commercially available stereo tape and discs.

A quick leafing through the *Audio Record* brings to light the highlights of the last 15 years of sound recording. The very first issue — July, 1945 — had a definite post-war flavor. One of the lead articles told how the Office of War Information's Voice of America broadcasts were using recordings to counteract the effects of years of totalitarian propaganda. Now, of course, the Voice has turned its efforts from Nazi Germany to Soviet Russia.

As a matter of fact, the lead articles in almost every issue that first year had an international flavor. In October, for example, an article told how BBC engineers had finally overcome the trans-ocean feed-back echoes that plagued a two-way quiz show between England and America. The big story in the March, 1946 issue told how the Army Signal Corps laboratories in Belmar, N. J. had "bounced" radar signals off the moon. A few days later, the experiment was repeated and recorded on an Audiodisc in Mutual Broadcasting Studios in New York. The recording was then used in a broadcast that was later selected as "the best special events broadcast of the year."

The atom bomb story was covered in August, 1946, with two articles on the important part recording discs played in the preparations for, and complete radio coverage of the dropping of the world's fourth atomic bomb off Bikini Atoll.

In December 1946, the headline announced "RCA Makes Billionth Record."

The original sound of the record — two Sousa marches by the Boston Symphony under the direction of Serge Koussevitzky — was cut on a standard Red Label Audiodisc.



LeBel

Our own C. J. LeBel first broke into the *Record* in March, 1947 with a bylined article on shapes of grooves in records. In the next issue, LeBel started his popular "Audiotape pointers" column, (known then as "Disc Data").

An important announcement was made in the January, 1948 *Record* by William Speed, president of Audio Devices. Announcing the availability of limited quantities of Audiotape for test purposes, Mr. Speed said. "A little over a year ago, Audio Devices, along with several other companies, was invited to Washington by the Dept. of Commerce to examine various pieces of captured German electronic equipment. We were much impressed with the Tonescriber and several rolls of German plastic base magnetic tape. Several weeks later, we returned to hear a demonstration by Col. Ranger of the Magnetophone. Samples of tape were made available to us by Mr. E. Webb of the Commerce Dept. Reports from Germany by ear witnesses were so impressive, Audio Devices decided to duplicate and, if possible, improve on the Magnetophone tape. Our research laboratory was instructed to put this study high on its priority list." Further information on the study later.

Teenagers got their thrills from the December, 1947 issue. There, under his photo, was a bylined story by Frank Sinatra. In it, Frankie discussed the importance of records in helping a pop singer up the long ladder of success.



Sinatra

Two important developments on the recording scene were announced in the *Audio Record* between November '48 and March '49. In the November issue, Vincent Liebler, Technical Director of Columbia Records, Inc., told the story behind the development of the Columbia LP record.

AFTER more than thirteen years of publication, we have decided to discontinue our magazine, the *Audio Record*.

For many years, the *Audio Record* served a very important function. Information on disc recording and, later, on tape recording, was difficult to obtain. Professionals and pioneer hobbyists were glad to get any news or technical data that our editors could provide.

But, as you know, interest in sound reproduction and recording has flourished in recent years. "High fidelity" has become a household phrase. And with this growing interest has developed a long list of excellent publications, covering every aspect of high fidelity.

As a result, the void that was once filled by our publication no longer exists, and we are convinced that it is time to put the *Audio Record* "out to pasture."

One special *Audio Record* service will be maintained, however. We will continue to issue our annual Tape Recorder Directory, which describes all, or virtually all, the tape recorders distributed in the United States and Canada. This particular service, we feel, is still of great importance to the magnetic recording industry as a whole, and of real value to the consumer.

We will not be able to distribute this annual directory on a subscription basis. However, it will be available on request and distributed at high fidelity shows and the like.

We hope that you enjoyed receiving and reading the *Audio Record*. We regret that we will no longer be able to provide you with it, but we are confident that you will understand our decision. We trust that we may continue to serve you in our primary capacity — with Audiodiscs and Audiotape.

THE EDITORS

Edward R. Murrow's now famous "I Can Hear It Now" albums were announced in the February 1949 issue. The first album covered the eventful era from 1933 to 1945, and was made available on the new LP records as well as 78's.



Murrow

The following month RCA's new 45 rpm record and player was described. D. D. Cole, Chief Engineer, RCA Victor Home Instrument Department, gave the how and why of the development.

In May of 1949 there was big news for tape recordists: "Audiotape Now Available!" The article started by saying, "Audiotape has the unique distinction of being both the newest and oldest magnetic recording tape in this country. For Audio Devices first started work on the development of Audiotape more than 2½ years ago, at the time when samples of German tape recording equipment were first brought to this country for study and improvement. A plastic-base Audiotape, which proved far superior to even the best German magnetic tape, was produced well over two years ago. This tape would have been placed on the market immediately—except for one thing. The product was good—but was it good enough to bear the "Audio" trademark? Audio Devices' engineers, acting as their own severest critics, felt that there was still some room for improvement, and that Audiotape should not be released until they were thoroughly convinced that it had achieved the highest possible degree of perfection in every respect."

Enter A Perennial Favorite

Three months later, there appeared the first issue of what has become a perennial favorite for tape recordists—the Tape Recorder Directory. This first Directory listed just 18 models. The latest Directory contains over 300 models.

The Audio Engineering Society's Audio Fair and First Annual Convention was covered in the December, 1949 issue. It was proclaimed a success by all concerned. During the proceedings C. J. LeBel received an award from the Society in recognition of his many contributions as one of its founders and its first president.

Audiofilm was announced to Record readers in October, 1950. This is a standard cellulose acetate, 35-mm, motion picture film—with Audio's red-oxide magnetic coating instead of the usual photographic emulsion.

A new trend in language instruction—the electronic language laboratory newly opened at Georgetown University—a

multilingual tape recorder system that set new standards for efficient language study—was featured in Jan. 1951.

Georgetown was, at that time, the largest language lab. The earliest one, described in the April, 1951 issue, is at the American University in Washington, D. C., and preceded the Georgetown installation by about one month.

One use of tape recording in medicine was described in the article, "Tape Recording in Cardiology," by J. Scott Butterworth, M.D., Associate Professor of Medicine at University Hospital in New York City. The article, which appeared in January of '52, told how the teaching of cardiology at New York Post-Graduate Medical School was helped immeasurably by the installation of a system composed of a special microphone for picking up the sounds from the patient's chest, a good amplifier and multiple electronic stethoscopes so that an unlimited number of students could listen at the same time.

The first binaural tape recordings to be aired on separate FM and AM channels, were described in the December 1952 issue. Two such simul-casts were transmitted by radio station WQXR, New York. The first featured binaural music Magnecord on Audiotape; the second featured a live orchestra under the direction of Jascha Zayde and the WQXR String Quartet. The event was considered an unqualified success by all concerned.

A Trip To The Dark Continent

"Audiotape to Shed New Light on Darkest Africa," was the headline on the first of a series of articles on Colin M. Turnbull, noted explorer, who was going to give Mylar base Audiotape a grueling test in Africa. Mr. Turnbull asked the Audio Devices engineers for advice on a recording tape that could withstand the rigors of Africa, from the high temperature and still higher humidity of the jungles, through the hot, arid plains, to the snows of East Africa. The engineers suggested the new Mylar base Audiotape. (Mylar is DuPont's polyester film.) Mr. Turnbull accepted the suggestion. He took 28,000 feet of Mylar base Audiotape with him. Plans for the expedition were outlined in the December, 1953 issue. Field reports appeared in November, '54 and January, '55.

The results of Mr. Turnbull's experiences are best described by him: "We took advantage of the mains electricity at Accra in the Gold Coast to edit all our material to date and were glad to find that all earlier splices were firm and intact. Each new reel of Mylar base tape that we ran through ran without any sign of sticking, but the non-Mylar tape, run through when the humidity was 92, temperature 95, and left standing under these conditions for

one hour (as had the Mylar test tapes) stuck sufficiently badly to make it necessary to give a fast wind through and back before a satisfactory recording could be made." Mylar had passed the test.



Mr. Colin M. Turnbull makes a tape recording in the Belgian Congo. (From November, 1954 issue.)

From taping in Africa to "Taping the Satellite to Earth" was the gamut during the next two years. The November 1956 cover story gave a general description of the International Geophysical Year and a detailed explanation of at least one role type EP (Extra Precision) Audiotape was to play in it. The engineers from the Ballistic Research Laboratories of the Army's Ordnance Corps had chosen EP Audiotape to be used in their DOVAP electronic system for tracking man-made satellites during the IGY.

In March, 1957, LeBel's column announced the C-slot reel—a practical solution to the tape-threading problem. This new reel is now standard for all 5" and 7" reels of Audiotape.

Solved: A Bothersome Problem

For years the tape industry has been plagued with the problem of print-through. This is the "magnetic echo" effect induced in adjacent layers of tape by any recorded signal. It proved most bothersome to professionals. In September, 1957, LeBel's column announced Master Low Print-Through Audiotape—a new tape that cuts print-through by 8 db, without changing any other performance characteristics. Master Audiotape has proved to be the solution to the print-through problem.

That same May issue contained an offering of great interest to serious tape recordists. "You Can Record the Satellites!" is the title of a booklet describing in detail the modifications needed to adapt your home FM receiver or communications receiver to bring in the signals from the Explorer and Vanguard satellites.

And so we've come the full cycle—from the first year of publication, with the radar-to-the-moon article, to the last issue, with a booklet on how to record the voices of the man-made moons. It's been fun.

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WESTERN ELECTRONIC NEWS

Are you a recording engineer?



"No, I'm a plumber

...but I know good recording tape"

AUDIOTAPE, the thinking recordist's tape, gives you the full, rich reproduction so satisfying to the happy audiophile — be he doctor, lawyer or Indian chief. Because behind every reel of Audiotape are two decades of research and development in sound recording.

When you buy a reel of Audiotape you're getting the tape that's the professionals' choice. Why? For example, the machines that coat the oxides onto the base material are unique in this field — designed and built by Audio engineers who couldn't find commercial machines that met their rigid specifications. Then there's the C-slot reel — the fastest-threading reel ever developed. For that matter, there's the oxide itself — blended and combined with a special binder that eliminates oxide rub-off.

There are many more reasons why the professionals insist on Audiotape. They know that there is only one quality of Audiotape. And this single top quality standard is maintained throughout each reel, and from reel to reel — for all eight types of Audiotape. That's what makes Audiotape the world's finest magnetic recording tape. For recording engineers, doctors, garbage men, investment brokers, sculptors . . . and plumbers!



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