

Audio Pro and Patents

During the close-to-forty years of my career, I have had the privilege to meet a number of persons who have deeply marked the world of professional audio by their ingenuity, their innovations and through their personality. I particularly think of and cite :

Mr Stefan Kudelski, Nagra
Mr Georges Quellet, Stellavox
Mr Andy Cooper, Cooper Sound
Mr Jean-Pierre Beauviala, Aaton
Mr Willy Studer, Studer
Mr Alain Roux, PSI
Mr Karl Schoeps, Schoeps
Mr Claude Cellier, Merging Technologies

What they all have in common is their passion for technology and for sound.

Whether they manufactured products that were complementary or in competition with ours, we have always maintained respectful and amiable relations, and during these four decades we might have been a source of inspiration for some others manufacturers who may perhaps even have plagiarised parts of our products.

When our company took over the Stelladat in 1993, we had already studied the possibility of improving the scope of global dynamics. Our research had shown that using 2 ADC converters was the only way to achieve this : it was as obvious as a car requiring four wheels !

At that time, component technology was not sufficiently advanced and such implementation in a portable machine was not possible. We had to renounce the concept, as being too complex, for reasons of space and size, and energy consumption.

Today however, technological evolution in treatment of signals and integrated circuits allow this to be done.

This method of double AD converters is not new and has been used by several companies for many years : Eastman Kodak utilised it as far back as 1991 for Telecine. A manufacturer of consoles even uses 3 AD converters to obtain a dynamic of almost 160 DB.

Although well-known for a long period, the double ADC method was patented in the United States by an American company who has simply appropriated this « invention. » The validity of the patent is thus questionable.

When we announced the arrival of the SONOSAX SX-R4+, this company immediately asked us to provide them with a machine as well as detailed circuit schemas and threatened us with lawsuits should we market in the USA a product that could, potentially, be liable under their patent.

This is something completely new for me, and I feel that something has been broken in our small world of professional audio. As far as I know, none of the manufacturers who have significantly contributed to the evolution of our domain has blocked the development of an idea/concept/product that would be beneficial for us all, through the use of patents. By breaking this tacit agreement, this company is closing a door on the world of sound and its wave of evolutions, and is rendering the world of audio impoverished.

We have proposed to meet with the President of this company ; he has refused. It is thus clear for me that we will never deal on any level with a person who is incapable of a face to face dialogue...

And no, we shall not enter into a judicial battle ; there are enough wars going on in this planet.. For this reason, we have made a special USA version.

Since 1977, we conceive, develop and manufacture products that have proven superior to others in matters of quality of sound, energy consumption, (light)weight and product life.

Jacques Sax
Managing director SONOSAX SAS SA
Le Mont-sur-Lausanne, November 9th 2015