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This issue of our Newsletter for October 2018 is an exclusive Q & A with owner and CEO of KLH, our own David P. Kelley conducted by World Wide Stereo. With over 30 years of industry experience, Dave assembled a team of industry veterans with combined experience of over 200 years. KLH is a revered brand with a rich history of excellence, and we are just getting started.



KLH



The KLH Speaker History & Relaunch: A Q&A with CEO, Dave Kelley

One of the most hallowed nameplates in the history of home audio, KLH Audio is back with new leadership, an impressive full line of new-design speakers, and a rededication to the company's original mission: to deliver an affordable audiophile-level experience to all.

World Wide Stereo is proud to be an inaugural partner with KLH, and we're honored to help them pursue their mission in making hi-fi music accessible to everyone. I had the chance to talk with KLH's new CEO, Dave Kelley and get the inside scoop on the brand relaunch, their latest products, and what lies ahead.

Meet KLH CEO, Dave Kelley.

Q: You and World Wide Stereo go way back, but for those who don't know you, can you tell us a little about your background and history in the industry?

A: My passion for audio products began when I was a young boy. At the age of 8 or 9, I became fascinated with portable radios, CB radios, loudspeakers and the like, taking them apart and putting them back together again. I was a real geek for the technology!

And you'll love this... when I was a teenager, I installed a complete home stereo system in my prized 1978 Ford LTD! This included a turntable, an 8-track tape player, and a cassette player all mounted on plywood. This was bolted to the passenger floorboard underneath the dash-mounted radio, with an amplifier mounted in the glove box. I was an audio trendsetter early-on <laughs>!

My professional career started in the 1980s. I had a job as a salesman at a well-known hi-fi store near my hometown. I found it extremely rewarding to help people choose which audio components were right for them and in doing so, to bring music to their lives in an even more enjoyable way.

In the 1990s, I joined a recognized loudspeaker brand based in my home state of Indiana. Over the course of more than two decades, I fully immersed myself into all aspects of the business, from helping design all types of stereo and home theater speakers to personal audio products. This included learning the manufacturing side of the business and working globally with marketing and sales teams in an executive role.

Now, more than 25 years later, I've started my own company by way of acquiring the iconic KLH brand!



Q: And... why audio?

A: From my early days at retail selling Hi-Fi, to my years in executive leadership, I have always loved this business, the people, some of whom are my closest friends, and the products, particularly loudspeakers and radios. In my heart, I have a deeply-held love for music and steadfastly believe it can change and improve lives regardless of one's circumstances. I think Plato captured it beautifully when he said "Music is a moral law. It gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and life to everything."

Q: So what's your setup at home?

A: My main setup consists of an Aragon Stage One processor and an 8008 amplifier, Marantz HDCD1 High Definition CD player, Sony Streaming 4K 1000 Blu-Ray player, Pro-ject 2Xperience turntable, and a complete KLH loudspeaker system consisting of our Kendall loudspeakers, Story center channel, Beacon surrounds, and two Windsor 10 subwoofers. It sounds fantastic! I also have two Pioneer Elite SCLX701 receivers, Control4, and Sonos driving my distributed audio system zones, outfitted with KLH speakers, naturally. (Stay tuned 'til the end for my go-to playlists!)

The history of KLH audio.

Q: From Cambridge, MA to Noblesville, IN, can you tell us a little about the KLH history and what led you to buy and relaunch the brand?

A: KLH was originally founded in 1957 by Henry Kloss and partners Malcolm S. Low and Josef Anton Hofmann. The company is special in that it developed many innovations in its time. They include: Model Eight high-selectivity radio; Model Nine full-range electrostatic loudspeaker (first full-range electrostatic speaker system); Model Forty tape recorder (first Dolby B reel-to-reel tape recorder); Model Eleven portable phonograph with stereo speakers. These were a big deal in their era and are still sought after by enthusiasts today. When the opportunity to acquire the brand was presented to me last year, I jumped at the chance, given it is one of the most storied and revered audio brands in the world.

We will be doing special production runs of many of the famous KLH models including Model Five, Model Six, Model Seventeen and of course the iconic Model Nine and Model Eight, and the other REALLY BIG NEWS here is that we have developed a complete, fresh line of bookshelf and floorstanding speakers that are certain to be of huge appeal to anyone shopping for new speakers for stereo or home theater listening. Twelve models in total in our new Series at present (and growing!) — all completely designed by us.

The excitement here is to take KLH back to its roots and founder Henry Kloss's original mission: to build world-class loudspeakers and radios at affordable prices. This is because our belief is that high-performance audio should not be the province of the wealthy, but should be enjoyed and accessible to people from all walks of life.

History

Q: Can you tell us more about Henry Kloss and his impact on the industry?

A: Henry Kloss was a prominent American audio engineer credited as helping advance high-fidelity loudspeaker, radio receiver and cassette deck technology. After college studies in physics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and High Fidelity at New York University, Henry went on to found and co-found several well-known audio brands over the course of several decades, this includes Kloss Industries, Acoustic Research, KLH, Advent, Cambridge SoundWorks and Tivoli.

Henry was fondly dubbed by Wes Phillips of Stereophile Magazine as "The Man Who Changed Audio and Video – Time and Time Again". He co-developed the first acoustic suspension speaker, and with KLH introduced the world's first full-range electrostatic speaker and launched the first-ever high-selectivity FM radio.

The new KLH speaker line.

Q: Can you tell us about the new line of KLH speakers?

A: Our goal at KLH is to improve and inspire the lives of music and movie lovers. (Response and reviews to date on new KLH offerings has surpassed our expectations.) The KLH lineup is comprised of a wide variety of bookshelf and floorstanding speakers to accommodate two-channel hi-fi and home theater setups. This includes powered subwoofers, center channel,

and surround speakers to complement the main speakers. These new KLH loudspeakers irrefutably fulfill the aforementioned brand promise.

On the outside, all feature real wood veneers with magnetic grilles (no visible fasteners makes for flawless appearance), nickel-plated five-way binding posts with Bi-amp and Bi-wire, 4-way chrome-plated spikes, and a solid MDF plinth. On the inside... we are using powder-coated cast aluminum baskets with woven Kevlar drivers (very strong), custom-designed tapered array crossovers, and vertically-brushed linear response aluminum faceplates with 25MM anodized aluminum tweeters.

Our design goal is to strike the best balance of dynamics and refinement within the sound realism. All the models in our inaugural Series are extremely versatile and boast high efficiency therefore perform beautifully even with nominal power. Naturally, the cleaner the power, the better the sound experience.



Q: Can you tell us more about how the speakers are made - the materials, the finishes, and the technology behind the line?

A: Drawings start by me on a napkin right here in our Noblesville, Indiana headquarters, and then our internal team of veteran loudspeaker designers work their magic. Everyone on our team shares a common passion for music and inspiring sound.

Henry Kloss believed that using premium quality materials and innovative design would

produce superior products and I see no reason to change this mantra. Our speakers convey premium in every aspect: utilized are luxurious real wood veneers and our floor standing designs are outfitted with Black Satin MDF bases with chrome plated steel spikes. Drivers are of the finest woven Kevlar® types, all housed in sturdy die-cast aluminum baskets with oversized magnets, complemented by braided tinsel leads and custom designed crossovers. Highs are delivered via high-performance 1-inch Anodized Aluminum tweeters mounted within a linear response faceplate, to deliver the utmost in imaging.

The speaker arrays are supported by rigid, custom-braced MDF cabinets that incorporate internal low-resonance driver chambers, hand-tunable baffle ports, and premium dampening materials, all coming together to produce natural detail and deep visceral bass.

The bass is so good that during a recent tradeshow presentation of our Kendall floorstanding speaker, several listeners asked us to power-down the external subwoofer so that they could listen solely to the Kendall's. We had to assure them that no external subwoofer was being used, that they were in fact just hearing a pair of the Kendalls!

The KLH offerings are designed at our headquarters in Indiana and manufactured at a top-notch facility in China. Our Model Nine is manufactured in the US.

Q: How is this new KLH speaker line different from previous KLH speakers?

A: The new Series share the original brand and design strategies, but the footprints, materials, and manufacturing technologies have been updated to state-of-the-art. For example, our two new bookshelf models (Ames and Albany) are acoustic suspension, sealed enclosure designs, which play off of Henry's designs.

We will also be doing special production runs of many famous KLH models. This will include Model Five (floor), Model Six (floor), Model Seventeen (floor) and of course the iconic Model Nine Electrostatic and Model Eight radio.

Q: KLH is positioning itself as an affordable, premium speaker brand. How is KLH able to offer such a high-quality product at such a competitive price point?

A: KLH is comprised of longtime loudspeaker experts in product development and manufacturing and we are doing business on a global level. We adhere to an efficient business model which supports deep vertical integration strategies. This allows us to offer high performance at price points previously not attainable. For example, we are delivering real wood veneer finishes at the same price points that many competitors are offering simulated or vinyl finishes. Our position is, why not have a loudspeaker system that looks as great as it sounds?

To give readers a feel for how outstanding of a value our line is, I'll use two common sizes as an example:

Our 3-way bass reflex Kendall floorstanding loudspeaker costs only \$1,298 a pair

Our 2-way acoustic suspension Albany bookshelf loudspeaker is only \$478 a pair

Both are top performers in their category!



Q: What kind of support can consumers expect from a warranty and service perspective?

A: We share Henry Kloss's original philosophy to utilize premium quality materials with innovative designs to produce superior products. Fittingly, all KLH passive products offer an industry leading 10-year warranty and 5-year for powered. Warranty support in the US is handled via our national operations center.

Q: What's the response from consumers and the industry so far?

A: Feedback from consumers and the industry have thus far exceeded our expectations. We are off to a very good start with sales right here at World Wide Stereo! Our dealer training events thus far have yielded a groundswell of support. Many of our dealers' most experienced industry veterans have given us a big thumbs-up! and are eager to share in the mission.

Q: What can we expect next from KLH?

A: KLH strives to be a responsible supplier of high-performance audio solutions, at affordable prices, that inspire and improve lives. You will continue to witness the evolution of KLH loudspeakers to include electrostatic loudspeakers that leverage our critically acclaimed Model Nine heritage but at more value price points. We've got some really cool tricks up our sleeves... here's a hint: "hybrids!" We will also be launching a new series of architectural (in-wall and in-ceiling) for both entertainment system and distributed audio applications. Stay tuned!

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