

TONY ANDREWS

FOUNDER OF FUNKTION-ONE



When the company started in 1992, where did you think it would be in 15 years time?

We didn't really have a plan, more a sense of direction. At that time we had envisaged collaborating with established players with a view to getting products to the street. After many discussions with various parties we came to the conclusion that we didn't want to relinquish the amount of control that was being asked of us. We had to do it our way so we took the plunge back into manufacturing with the benefit of knowledge from our previous experiences. By the time we arrived at the other side of the Millennium Dome we were well on our way to full-scale manufacture of a technologically new product range. The trials and tribulations of manufacturing is a high price to pay for doing it your own way. However, I'm very pleased with where we find ourselves today.

What have been the company's highs and lows over the last 15 years?

Overall, it's been very dynamic with many highs and I'm pleased to say not too many lows. One high that stands out is experiencing Jamiroquai at Wembley in 2002. It was so good a sound for Wembley that I was thrilled to bits. I was so full of myself that on the way home I overcooked the Quattro on a bend and mashed it. The worst bit was having the new German distributor in the back of the car at the time! I guess this counts for a high and a low. Another one was being back at Glastonbury after 15 years and then having to deal with the consequences of misinformation from a certain farmer. I guess you could term this "extreme dynamic range".

Is it difficult to reconcile the Funktion-One ethos with the demands of running a successful business?

Our focus is on audio excellence above all. If you really understand audio and what it is capable of then it is emotionally impossible to compromise the audio experience in the face of commercial pressure. Fortunately, there are enough people who share this view for us to sustain a successful commercial enterprise.

Which products from Funktion-One's past and present do you think are the most significant?

It's difficult to single out one particular product as they all have their significance. If I had to pick one it would be the Resolution 5 for the sheer amount of clean, even sound that comes out of such a small light box.

What other products do you admire and why?

Midas Venice for its small size, comprehensive features and above all its exceedingly good audio quality. Historically the Midas XL3 and XL4 mixing consoles for their robustness and superb audio quality. The XTA crossovers for the same reasons. It appears that I'm a fan of Andrew Grayland's electronic work.

Who or what has been the biggest influence on your career to date?

My wonderful wife Ann who convinced me to carry on and start Funktion One after the traumatic sale of Turbosound. Further back in time I would have to say Jimi Hendrix.

What achievement are you most proud of?

Axhead loading a 5" loudspeaker and achieving 14KHz. The Queen's Award for Export wasn't bad and come to think of it surviving the Millennium Dome experience was a credit to the whole company.

How did you feel when you won the Gottellier Award?

Honoured and appreciated.

What can we expect from Funktion-One in the near and distant future?

I find the World of Man so precarious at the moment that what happens in the more distant future is anybody's guess. In the meantime, more products, more innovation plenty more ideas and concepts in the pipeline and oh yes, I've still got the

Resolution 3 to finish.

What in your view are the best and worst things about the industry?

The best thing is its direct involvement with sound and music and the characters who come with it and the energy of the audience enjoying itself.

The worst thing is the amount of technical misinformation based on marketing hyperbole and the readiness of people to lap it up.

What is your best tradeshow experience? What is the worst?

I am pleased to say that I can't really think of any bad trade show experiences apart from Chinese plagiarism. The best thing for me is seeing the positive effects on the people who visit the Funktion One demo room.

What do you do with your spare time?

I didn't know I had any but I have managed to get down to The South Coast for some windsurfing four times this year.

What is your favourite city?

I guess I would have to say Paris for its grand design and architectural beauty although the energy of New York takes some beating.

What would you like to do if you didn't work in this industry?

Some more direct musical involvement such as playing in a band or dj-ing. That's not that different is it?

Which famous person would you say you are most like?

I've never thought about this before. Anyway, whether I am like him or not I don't know but I could identify with Nikola Tesla for his vision and extremist approach to life.

What is your philosophy on life?

How many pages have we got? Simply put - recognising the spiritual dimension of life.

What question should we have asked you and why?

There is an automatic assumption that the modern industry must be better. However, it is not that simple as some very important things have been lost. A good question could have been: "What changes in the industry have I observed in the last 35 years?" ■