

# Auditorium 23

A legend is  
back in the  
market:



1997,  
Lars  
Lundahl's  
MagAmp  
by A23



2010.  
The MagAmp  
relaunched  
by  
Acoustic  
Plan  
and A23

## *The Magnetic Amplifier by Lars Lundahl*

*Frankfurt, in the year 1995*

“...he is about to build a magnetic amplifier for music.“ It was during a meeting in our home with Ken Shindo and our Swedish friend and sales colleague of Shindo Laboratory in Scandinavia, Teruo Harada, when Teruo made this remark quite casually while speaking about Lars Lundahl. Ken worked closely with Lars for many years, ever since he'd been using the excellent Lundahl transformers in his own products.

A magnetic amplifier – who wouldn't get excited by such an exotic idea? We asked Teruo for his help in contacting Lars and we soon had one of three existing prototypes in hand. To us, this amplifier's tonal features harmonized so well with our speaker concepts and fit so perfectly into our product line that we contacted Lars personally to discuss how we could make this extraordinary amplifier a serial product and we also offered to be the distributor if/when a production model came to be.

For serial production many things have to be taken into account: an attractively designed cabinet was required, additional manpower was needed to manage the assembly in Sweden and last but not least the costly CE-Certification needed to be obtained.

After the decision was made to make the MagAmp project a reality, Auditorium 23 was given the task of designing the cabinet which we accomplished with the assistance of a friend who ran a design studio. One year later this design was awarded the 1997 Josef-Binder-Design-Award. We had been using the name MagAmp during the prototyping and design phase and when an official name for the product had to be selected, we decided to stay with the descriptive and simple MagAmp. In Sweden the first small series was launched. (Brochure).

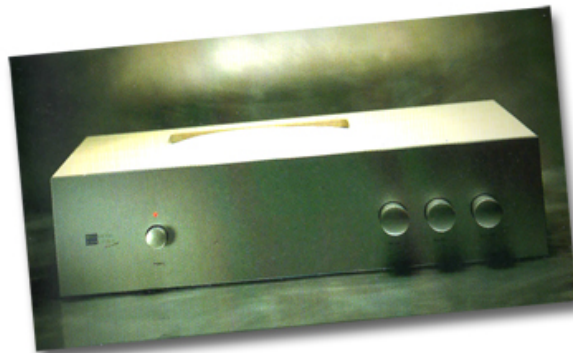
Meanwhile some German journalists had an opportunity to audition prototypes and were as enthusiastic as we were about its performance. Cai Brockmann at the German audio magazine Image-Hifi wrote the very first review of the MagAmp in issue 4/1996 “Lars Lundahl | MagAmp“.

In July 1996 we had a meeting at Auditorium 23 to discuss the future of the MagAmp among other things. In attendance were Lars and Per Lundahl, Harumi and Ken Shindo, Teruo Harada, Roland Kraft (Image-Hifi) and Dr. Jürgen Scriba (DER SPIEGEL), the latter two attended in order to interview Lars and Ken for reviews in their respective magazines.



This meeting was continued in a deeper manner in late '96 with a trip to Sweden and together with Roland Kraft, Dr. Jürgen Scriba and Markus Sauer (at that time the German correspondent for the US magazine Stereophile.) We visited Lars and Per Lundahl in their factory in Norrtälje. It was very impressive to see the production facility with the amazing possibilities of this company and to grasp a small look "behind the curtain." The accompanying article can be read in DER SPIEGEL. <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-9134435.html>

The MagAmp finally was unveiled to the public for the first time at the "High-End Show" 1997 in the Kempinsky Hotel/Neu Isenburg. In our demonstration it was alternated with the tube amplifiers of Ken Shindo and paired with our speakers the "Provence" by Auditorium 23 as well as the "Pata Acoustica" by ATD from Italy. The MagAmp generated a lot of excitement and was very favorably received.



In spite of these very positive reports, the market remained reserved. Perhaps it was the exotic nature of the design - neither transistor, nor tube - or it simply may not have been the right time. In any event, the necessary commercial success did not come within the allotted time frame the manufacturer required. The demand did not justify the costly burden of the custom components and the necessary manpower taken from the company's main business (producing audio transformers of excellent international reputation). So the decision was finally made, albeit reluctantly, to discontinue the MagAmp project.

#### *Fast Forward – Spring 2009*

During all of the years that have passed, I always felt that the MagAmp was not given the time it needed to reach its market. But time follows its own laws and takes as well as gives opportunities.

A growing relationship with a colleague in the south of Germany, Claus Jäckle of Acoustic Plan, inspired me to share with him the MagAmp story, my regrets about the loss of this fascinating product and finally to ask him

if he would be interested in getting involved in the re-launch of the MagAmp. Claus was very interested and curious to learn more so I sent him one of the amps I still kept in stock from the early days. As a result, he called me soon after receiving the MagAmp and informed me of his willingness to be a part of the project.

At a fortunate chance meeting with Per Lundahl at the Frankfurt Music Fair in March 2009, I told him about our desire to re-launch the MagAmp and asked his opinion. He was hesitant, though not generally opposed, and wanted a few days to think it over. He shared with us that there had been several unsuccessful attempts by different people over the years who had contacted Lars and Per Lundahl with the same idea. A few days later Per gave us his “Go ahead” for the project.

Then, everything went very quickly. Since Claus is a manufacturer of his own line of hi-fi gear, he was able to build a first prototype into one of his existing chassis. This first prototype gave him the opportunity to become more familiar with this unique circuit and to optimize parts choice and placement as well as plan for a production version. <http://www.acousticplan.de/>

At the Munich High-End Show in May 2009 the new MagAmp prototype generated tremendous excitement among visitors and journalists just as it had year’s prior when it was first introduced. The next opportunity to show the new MagAmp was the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas in January 2010, where it also caught the attention and piqued the interest of many visitors.



In Germany, Cai Brockmann of Image-Hifi was once again the first reviewer to be given the new MagAmp and we also shared with him this story of how it came to be.

The relaunch of the magnetic amplifier is my homage to Lars Lundahl. While Lars is not able to actively participate in this new project, we are honored to have his support. Through his various works in transformer design and this one-of-a-kind amplifier, Lars Lundahl undoubtedly deserves to stand in line with the most important personalities in Hi-fidelity of the last 50 years.

Keith Aschenbrenner  
Auditorium 23  
April 2010



In May 2010 the MagAmp received the  
***Image Hifi Award 2010***  
by the German audio magazine Image Hifi