

(((ABA)))

AUDIO BRANDING ACADEMY

Yearbook

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Extract



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Prelude

Music and advertising – a combination that causes some people to associate fantasies of omnipotence, and causes others to be afraid of unwanted manipulation. What is behind all this? Are there hidden persuaders and subliminal advertising? Or is it “only” about emotionalizing brands?

Well, audio branding deals with music and advertising. It describes the process of brand development and brand management by use of acoustic elements within the framework of brand communication. It is part of multi-sensory brand communication and holistic corporate design. Audio branding aims at building solidly a brand sound that represents the identity and values of a brand in a distinctive manner. The audio logo, brand music or the brand voice are characteristic elements of audio branding. So far, brands have spent a lot of time and money on visual branding while sound hasn't been treated as a brand element that needs to be explored. The emerging of new media and devices with built-in audio delivery, such as podcasts, streaming media or smartphones, expands the opportunities for audio branding but also increases the risks of causing noise pollution and cacophony. Effectiveness and efficiency of brand communication often suffers from un-systematic and unstructured application of acoustic stimuli. Audio branding can aid in optimizing brand communication and in designing a better sounding environment.

The Audio Branding Academy was founded by Cornelius Ringe, Kai Bronner and Rainer Hirt in Hamburg in February 2009. It is the first independent institution for acoustic brand communication. The Audio Branding Academy is a unique competence center for intersection points of brands, sound and environment and combines a forum, think tank, expert network and education. It hosts the annual Audio

Branding Congress and regularly organizes workshops on various audio branding related topics. One of the main aims of the Audio Branding Academy and its Congress is to establish audio branding as a self-evident discipline in practice and to promote an intentional and responsible use of acoustic stimuli within brand communication.

The first Audio Branding Congress 2009 took place on November 14th in the conference rooms of the “Dialogue in the Dark” located in the famous old warehouse district (Speicherstadt) of Hamburg, Germany. Dialogue in the Dark is an exhibition where visitors, which are accompanied by blind members of staff, can enter a world of total darkness. Scents, temperatures, winds and sounds create non-visual experiences, which are discovered by passing through various scenarios such as a park, a city centre or a bar.

For the first time, audio branding experts from all over the world met to discuss latest trends and exchange information about this new emerging discipline of audio branding. Attendees came from countries like Sweden, Denmark, The Netherlands, Spain, Italy, Finland, UK, USA and even Brazil. Internationally acclaimed experts from practice and science like the British musicologist Prof. Dr. Adrian North (Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh), the composer of the Intel audio logo, Walter Werzowa from Hollywood or expert for neuromarketing Dr. Hans-Georg Häusel presented new insights, innovative approaches, proven methods of audio branding and best practice cases.

We could have never expected such a great interest and have been overwhelmed of the positive feedback we received from the attendees. It seemed like everybody was just waiting for such an event to happen. The attendees were very glad to meet their peers and many personal and professional contacts were made. Especially the warm and friendly atmosphere contributed substantially to the overall success of the congress. The congress marked a turning point for the heretofore highly fragmented audio branding industry. Motivated by the positive feedback of the participants and encouraged by the success of the first Audio Branding Congress, this initiative will be continued.

This yearbook contains articles about the Audio Branding Congress 2009 and its given presentations. Moreover, participants of the panel discussion describe their experiences in the audio branding industry and highlight certain aspects that are of particular importance. Additionally, the Audio Branding Academy Yearbook includes an international directory of audio branding suppliers.

We hope this book is a help to those involved in audio branding. We would like this publication to further the desire for exchange of ideas and discussions and lead to more coalescence in the steadily growing community. But, above all, we want to express our deepest gratitude to those people, without their dedication the Audio Branding Congress 2009 and this book never would have existed: a big thank you to all speakers, authors and the many supporters.

Kai Bronner, Rainer Hirt and Cornelius Ringe
Hamburg, March 2010

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Summary Audio Branding Congress 2009

Cetin Demirci & Jens Köckritz

On November 14th, 2009 the first international congress on acoustic brand communication filled the rooms and halls of “Dialog im Dunkeln” in Hamburg, and the Audio Branding Academy successfully wrapped up its first event. Cornelius Ringe, Co-Founder and Managing Partner of the *Audio Branding Academy*, began his welcome speech by referring to the increasing mainstream recognition acoustic brand communication has gained over the past years. Ringe stated that the Audio Branding Academy was founded on the conviction that the more people do real professional audio branding with high quality results the more brands, audio brander and consumers will profit. That is why the goal of the Audio Branding Academy is to achieve an intentional and responsible use of acoustic stimuli within brand communication by enabling more professionals to improve their audio branding methods.

After expressing his enthusiasm and expectation of the congress, Ringe promised nothing short of new insights, innovative approaches and best practice cases presented by internationally acclaimed experts from practice and science like British psychologist Prof. Dr. Adrian North, who opened the lecture sessions by giving a presentation about the impact of music on consumer behavior.

The Impact Of Music on Consumer Behavior

It was very fortunate that the organizers were able to invite Prof. Dr. Adrian North, *Heriot-Watt University* in Edinburgh, as the keynote speaker. The famous author of books such as *The Social and Applied Psychology of Music* talked about basics of music psychology and his research methods.



Adrian North

North opened the congress with a presentation about *The Impact Of Music on Consumer Behavior*, segmented into *Arousal and Pleasure Effects*, *Knowledge Activation Effects* and *Effects on Time Perception*. He explained his considerations of *Arousal and Pleasure Effects* from two possible viewpoints. On one hand he could show a sales increase up to 33% while using music (Milliman 1982, 1986), on the other hand he identified a countermovement in *Pipe down!* which wants to save the right of quietness – especially in restaurants or shopping areas.

North declared that as a psychologist, he is more interested in the impact of loudness and speed as musical parameters influencing customers in their speed of eating and the amount of money they are spending. In this regard he found a positive correlation: the slower the music is in a restaurant the more time customers spend in there and the more drinks they get from the bar. Another possible usage of these musical parameters is to influence the movement of people e.g. in a store. It seems possible to navigate customers to particular parts of a store or to attract them up a stairway by playing corresponding music.

Knowledge activation starts when music retrieves inter-connected units in the brain. North clarified this by pointing to the impact of music played by an accordion, which activates ones knowledge about France, which, in turn, activates knowledge about the Eifel Tower, which, in turn, links to ones knowledge about big tourist spots in Europe like Big Ben in London and so on. North called this spreading activation, which not only applies to pictures but emotions as well. Therefore the activated knowledge can be linked to emotions gained through personal experiences, e.g. during a last vacation in France.

In another research project (North, 1998), students lingering in a student cafeteria were given questionnaires to describe the atmosphere of their cafeteria while different styles of music were played in the background. While playing pop music the ambience was perceived as being lively and youthful. Classical music evoked the image of up market sophistication. Easy listening music communicated a cheap, down market premises, and when they heard no music the result was a mixture of all responses. The students then were asked which items of the menu they would order, and which price they were willing to pay at maximum. The test subjects were willing to spend the highest amount of money when classical music was played, followed by pop music, then easy listening music and lastly no music.

In a study conducted at a restaurant in 2003, North could show that classical music led to overall higher spending per head. The guests ordered more luxury items e.g. dessert in a classical music environment. Another good argument for the power of stereotypes is the result of his study regarding product choice when selling French or German wine. He confirmed the hypothesis, that playing "typical" French music increases the sales of wine from this region as well as German music combined with German wine with an overall factor from 3:1 (North, 1997). The main assumption of successful practice of knowledge activation is that customers are uncertain which option to take. If they are in a shop to buy German wine, music won't have any effect on their intention.

North also reported from an unpublished study on the subject of music and its influence on taste of wine. In that study, 250 probands listened to different types of music (or no music) while drinking wine and subsequently rated it. The taste of red wine shifted towards the expression of the music with an average of 42,25% (e.g. powerful and heavy). Carmina Burana by Orff was rated 60% more powerful than no music. These results show a possible transformational effect of music to other senses.

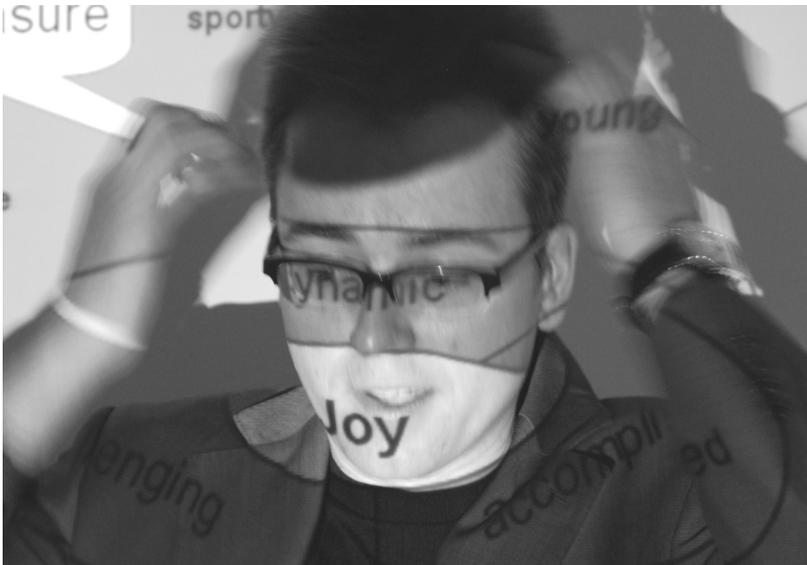
In the segment *Time Perception*, North discussed the phrase '*Time flies when you're having fun*' as formulated by Ramos (1993) and Stratton (1992). Studies show that pleasant information is processed and recalled more efficiently and that time perception increases with the amount of information encoded. Therefore, if playing music that is not liked, waiting time should be estimated shortest. North pointed out that those findings and their purposes might be arguable since other psychological mechanisms might play a higher role than music.

All in all, North sees the usage of music as an under-valued resource, which is very cost effective e.g. at a cost of £500 a year a small shop could increase its turnover by about 10%. His latest study deals with the impact of loud & fast and slow & quiet music on milk cows. According to the hypothesis they should have greater levels of immunoglobulin A, which indicates how well their immune system is functioning; lower levels of cortisol, which indicates how much stress they are experiencing and finally they should produce more milk.

The Sound of Success

Karsten Kilian, Brand Management Expert and Founder of www.markenlexikon.com, gave a lecture titled *The Sound of Success – How to Keep a Brand Orchestra in Tune with Its MARKnum Opus* and took the attendees on a fascinating ride through all stages of the brand formation process. By referring to the German musician Udo Lindenberg, Kilian demonstrated how a brand could be established successfully. He argued that although many companies consider brand elements and brand signals profoundly in their corporate design

manual, they still fail to define a strong brand identity and even if companies are aware of the importance of brand identity most of them use abstract terms e.g. *innovation*, *tradition* and *quality*, ambiguous terms such as *performance* or – in some cases – unrealistic terms like *simplicity*. Kilian suggested, among other things, selecting concrete, meaningful brand values by identifying two to four informative adjectives, which reflect the brand identity of the company or detect relevant and specific brand values by asking e.g. what it is that makes the brand unique or how the company can differentiate itself from its competitors. He underlined his arguments by pointing to the brand identity of the brands of BMW Group.

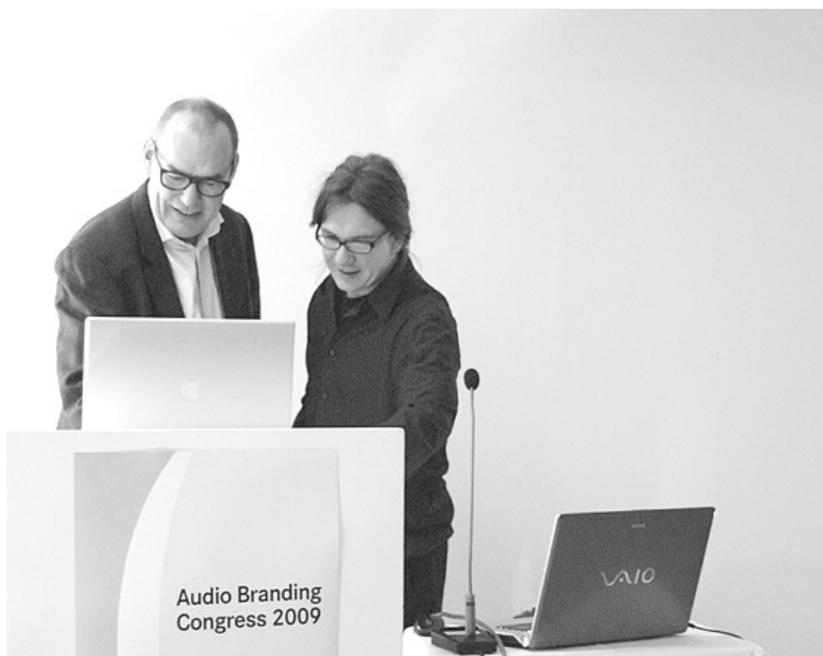


Karsten Kilian

He went on by discussing brand elements and how they can be combined intelligently to brand signals in order to capture the *spirit of the brand* and appeal to customers. Kilian closed by showing a Harley-Davidson commercial that underlined his arguments in a fascinating manner. It communicated the philosophy of the brand by showing people sharing a common interest and getting away from their

stressed life by discovering landscapes on a long Harley-Davidson ride, while saying their very own prayer. The ad clearly focused on consumer experience. While leaving the seminar room one could literally see how attendees were still processing the information they had just gained.

Sound Branding – Only the Name is New



Carl-Frank Westermann (left), Jens Köckritz (right)

Prof. Carl-Frank Westermann, Creative Director of Sound Branding at *MetaDesign AG*, presented a root oriented talk with the topic *Sound Branding – Only the Name is New*. He began his short history of sound with the *Wilhelm scream*, a sound effect often used when somebody is falling from great height. It was used in so many movies that it turned into a sound cliché by now. Who would have thought that, when it was used for the very first time in the western “Distant Drums” in 1951? Westermann identified a similar effect in the tradition

of the *James Bond* theme, which can be found in countless other musical pieces. The special mixture of chromatics and dissonances produce a set of emotions, which takes effect for decades.

In regards to the scope of brand communication Westermann referred to a composition of Gus Edwards and Vincent Bryan, who wrote the first licensed pop song in advertising history. In 1905 they composed *In My Merry Oldsmobile*, which became a hit on the radio and was used in an Oldsmobile car commercial in the late 1920's. Nowadays requirements for functional sounds are growing whereas the length, according to Westermann, should not be longer than two seconds. Maybe that's why successful brand sounds work at best, when they correspond to other senses. At the end Westermann highlighted that not every brand or product needs a sound if there is no matching point to it. In other words, in some cases the special sound of silence works best.

The lunch break and well-deserved coffee breaks gave everyone a good chance to mingle and exchange information among professionals and interested people from all different parts of the world e.g. USA, Brazil, Sweden and Italy. The subject of most of the discussions was the present and future of the industry. Although everybody used the opportunity to make personal and professional contacts, there was more to it than just going around shaking hands and dropping names. It took many by surprise that so many people from different parts of the world with different professions get together to discuss a common interest. With all the time they had, it still seemed to be left much to discuss.

Sounds: The Colours of Blind People?

The schedule got underway at 1pm with *Sounds: The Colours of Blind People?*, which was the first presentation in the so-called *Black Box* performed in absolute darkness. Carsten Dethlefs, Doctoral Student at the *University of Applied Sciences* in Kiel, gave an intriguing inside of his world of perception and talked about blind people in a consumers' society. He pointed out that since blind people differ in the perception

of their environment they could not be compared to one another. Some people were already blind when they were born; others lost their sight after collecting visual impressions for years and decades. Dethlefs further stated that blind people in a consumers' society cannot rely on outer appearances of products and that they cannot make statements on the appearance of brands or the look of the product. He gave an example by referring to the Milkacow and the incapacity to receive the intended brand message.

For him it is the connection of music, mood and picture, which makes products and services imaginable and he therefore suggests using the same melody all the time, if the goal is to achieve brand recognition. Since there is enough scientific prove that sound respectively music can produce trust in brands, this advice holds true even if the target group is not blind. The seminars in the Black Box also showed what the technical team was capable of. Although they could not see anything, they still mastered intermittent failures without anyone noticing. Astonishing, but somehow frightening as well!

Emotional Boosting

Announced as one of the best speakers in the German-language world, Dr. Hans Georg Häusel gave a very economic and sales oriented talk. The very humorous talk was, in short, about how to sell a 99cent soup for \$99. To reach this goal it is necessary to know more about your product and how it is interacting with your special customer-group.

Häusel is Chief Executive Officer of the Gruppe Nymphenburg Consult AG and consults with Limbic®, a multisience approach for neuromarketing. The multisensory brain is requesting emotions and the company that pushes the right buttons will earn the money. In his words, "*Emotional Boosting – Die Kunst der Kaufverführung*" (The art of sales seduction). In the beginning there was the question of which emotional regions are responded from a specific product. Häusel showed an elliptic diagram with the main sections stimulant, dominance and balance. Stimulant describes concepts like exploration and

adventure; dominance stands for competition and extrusion. Balance describes items like safety and stability (For further information see www.nymphenburg.de). According to the findings females are mostly dominant in the stimulant section and males in the dominant section, while in some cases they overlap.

Age groups can be mapped in the diagram as well. Furthermore the limbic consumers (f/m) can be analyzed in their hedonistic, adventure, performer, discipline, traditional, and savor habits. Hence managerial decisions regarding product and brand can be made on a scientific basis e.g. it is advisable to target people with high scores in adventure and performer with *Becks* beer; while *Radeberger* should aim at consumers with high scores in traditional. Häusel also presented some products that activate the reward system in the brain.



Hans-Georg Häusel

How Much Brand Can the Sound Bear?

An audio logo – as part of a holistic concept – has to be congruent with all other brand elements. On the part of brand communication the audio logo often needs to meet requirements such as flexibility and adaptability. In his lecture titled *Wie viel Marke verträgt der Sound?* (How Much Brand Can the Sound Bear?) Georg Rabbe, managing director of *Klangwerk Brand Acoustics GmbH*, described the audio logo of *Deutsche Telekom* and explained how it distinguishes itself from others.

Mc Hale & Barone composed the audio logo around 1999 in the key of C Major with 110 bpm on a polyphonic piano. It corresponds to the digits in the visual logo. The major third in the sequence corresponds to the big *T* in the visual logo. The awareness of the sequence is giving not only because of its simplicity and memorable character, but also because of its consistent use in corporate communication. The *Deutsche Telekom* from today is not the same as ten years ago. The new brand core does not focus on product or services instead it focuses on *Erleben, was verbindet* (engl. – roughly “experiencing what connects”). The acoustic part of its corporate communication is determined by this principle as well.

Because success of advertisers often depends on short-term goals, while brand consultants focus on sustainability, Rabbe prepared guidelines for Deutsche Telekom, defining how much variation to the audio logo is allowed in respective communication contexts. After complementing the idea of the Hello, Hola melody as an international language to underline the international character of the company, Rabbe stated that the melody of the audio logo of Deutsche Telekom is the most distinctive aspect and therefore different instruments (depending on their register) could play it without having a negative effect on its peculiarity, recognition, or acoustic applicability. On the other hand, the slightest change in the interval structure e.g. augmenting or diminishing one of the five notes could result in negative effects on all above-mentioned aspects.

After the presentation was over Claus Cramer, Brand Manager at *Deutsche Telekom*, participated in the question and answering session and answered questions aimed at changes in corporate communication and put some of the questions in the right context by referring to a common problem most big decentralized companies have to face, when they are a collection of silos (e.g. T-Com, T-Mobile, T-Systems).

One of the attendees wanted to know if the *Deutsche Telekom* believes that sponsoring a rock concert would result in an increase of customers. Cramer answered that it is not easy to execute changes with a company that employs 250.000 employees. The sponsoring of music has nothing to do with the acoustic communication aspect of the *Deutsche Telekom*.

The goal of sponsoring such events is to increase awareness of the brand and to underline its new positioning *Erleben, was verbindet*. The same holds true for advertising with Paul Potts or the sponsoring of “*T-Mobile Street Gigs*”. They enable the company to reach target groups they might have not been able to reach otherwise.

Functional Sounds – More Than a Ping

In his lecture *Functional Sounds – More Than a Ping*, Georg Spehr gave an overview about functional sounds in our daily life and the information they communicate e.g. church bells, siren of a police car and of course product sounds. Even the slamming of a car door can evoke information about the value and quality of the product.

While this information might be processed unconsciously it becomes immediately conscious when the sound of the car engine differs from normal. With an increasing mechanization of our daily life, there is a growing need for designed sounds of products and brands. The goal is the configuration of sounds with rich content of information. To reach this goal, sound designers can work with methods of imitation of well-known sounds and processes of conditioning. Offering free ring tones based on the acoustic logo or a commercial is one way in which this suggestion is practiced already.



Julian Treasure

Sound Affects!

In his book *Sound Business*, Julian Treasure presented the leading impacts of sound on humans and therefore on customers. Long before we see the daylight for the first time and take our first breath, we are already influenced by sound. Furthermore our development is characterized by what we hear and how we listen to it. Large parts of our verbal communication are not coded in the words we speak, but rather in the way we pronounce them.

On this basis Treasure created the working model *SoundFlow™*, which describes the way of listening from *Drivers* (e.g. Time, Pitch, Textures) over *Filters* (e.g. Environment, People Brand Values) to *Outcomes* (e.g. physical, behavioral). A Design Process has to pass through the opposite way. All in all he presented a brilliant talk.

From Hearing Development, to Psychoacoustics, to Helping Little Ears

The presentation *From Hearing Development, to Psychoacoustics, to Helping Little Ears* by Hans-Rainer Kurz, Director of Education and

Knowledge Management, *HörGut* GmbH, focused on the work of a project of the care organization of the German *Lions Club*. Kurz explained why children who cannot hear have immense problems in learning to speak. Thanks to the efforts of his organization children all over the world (Bangladesh, Mongolia etc.) could be provided with hearing aids such as cochlear implants and therapy to help them lead a better life. Funny moments occurred, when Kurz presented some utensils he diverted from their intended use, and a very stirring moment emerged, when Kurz showed a picture of a child that could hear for the first time in his life. The activities of *Hilfe für kleine Ohren* exceeds borders and became in the Netherlands *Hulp voor kleine oren*. The Audio Branding Academy donated 2 Euros of every sold ticket to the project.



Walter Werzowa

Tone Defines Content

In his presentation *Tone Defines Content*, Walter Werzowa, producer of the Intel Logo, enthused with interesting insights on his work for one of the well-known audio logos in the world. He gave some insights

on the design process and modifications that had to been done to keep the logo up to date. He used the phrase clients often use to describe their vision of an audio logo “...something like Intel” to discuss certain elements of music. He played some musical examples, which only differed in their melody, then in their instrumentation and finally in their rhythm. Every example fit to another environment, but at heart they were more or less alike.

Seeing by Ear

Heiko Kunert, Spokesman of the *Association of Blind and Visual Impaired People* Hamburg, held the second presentation in the *Black Box*, titled *Seeing by Ear*. The presentation focused on how blind people see the world. After welcoming the attendees in his world and kindly asking them to see by ear, Kunert explained how blind people are able to orient themselves in rooms or public places. Then he played several sound bites e.g. Florida’s swamplands in the early morning, a group of fishermen in Togo and asked the participants what they are hearing, what they are seeing in their minds and where the sound might have been recorded, before he revealed the proper answers.

During his insightful presentation Kunert also talked about a device that transforms screen content into Braille. After all, as a public relations consultant he is dealing with mails, blogs, social networks, RSS feeds etc. on a daily basis. He played an example from the *Guardian* homepage – an article published the day before. The result sounded pretty chipmunk voiced, but after a second and much slower try, the attendees gained trust in their ears again. Since Kunert worked with the device for the past ten years, he already understood everything of the first take – not because blind people have a better hearing sense, but rather because of his years of training.

This second presentation was also the last one in the *Black Box*. Some of the attendees had to leave after the lights were switched off (for understandable reasons). It is worth mentioning that – as in most of the presentations – participants always switched between German

and English language when asking questions or debating with each other. While most of them settled quickly for one language after exchanging some questions or arguments with their conversational partner, attendees in the Black Box did have some problems doing so.

Babylonian Branding: Audio, Acoustic, Sound or Sonic?

The panel discussion involved John Groves (Managing Director, *GROVES Sound Communications*), Wilbert Hirsch (Senior Partner, *audio consulting group*), Rainer Hirt (Managing Partner, *audity*, owner of *www.audio-branding.de*), Birgitte Rode (Managing Director, *Audio Management A/S*) and Ruth Simmons (Managing Director, *sound-lounge*) on the subject of *Babylonian Branding: Audio, Acoustic, Sound or Sonic?*

The discussion was moderated by Karsten Kilian and focused on the question if a standard terminology for “branding by ear” is needed and how it can be established since all existing terms e.g. *brand sound*, *sound branding*, *audio branding*, *corporate sound*, *sonic branding*, *acoustic branding* etc. and their rather broad meanings lead to confusion on the side of many clients rather than a clear process.



Panel discussion, Karsten Kilian (left), John Groves (right)

Groves suggested that a standard system for *acoustic branding* is needed, while Wilbert Hirsch pointed out that a development of an acoustic identity only by creating successive tones does not lead to an acoustic identity. Rainer Hirt said that “sound follows function”, stressing that acoustic branding is a matter of its function and not the composer’s personality. This led to the question that asks if there are too many creative people in the business, who tend to express their “personal style” rather than interpreting the brand identity? This might be the reason why many music studios also create acoustic brand elements once in a while. The panel discussion closed with a look into the future of “branding to the ear” and what acoustic brand communication will look like in the year 2020.

The last event of the day was an exclusive live act called San Glaser & Friends. Together with some of Hamburg’s top musicians San Glaser accompanied the get together evening with mellow jazz tunes as well as uplifting journeys into funk and soul. This fantastic lineup presented impressive soloing embedded in steady grooves, while keeping the flame burning throughout the evening. San Glaser did a great job in getting the audience involved. The style of the band was sophisticated and elegant: tasteful, melodic drums bonding with wonderful phrasings by bass, keyboards and of course voice.

Coda

The first international *Audio Branding Congress 2009* was a huge success and has certainly raised awareness throughout the industry. Even before the band played its first tune the complements praising the congress began to pour in. No doubt that it was a good chance to make new friends and meet old ones, but it certainly was more than just another good networking opportunity.

The speakers executed very insightful presentations and the attendees acknowledged that by providing interesting thoughts on each subject. There were interesting comments on a wide variety of topics all the way through the congress. In 2010 the *Audio Branding Academy* is going to offer several workshops about different aspects of au-

dio branding with top lecturers before the second *Audio Branding Congress* is going to be run in the second half of the year. The first international *Audio Branding Congress 2009* could have never taken place without the support of the ABA Team, consisting of young audio branding-, corporate design- and music-experts, who had their initial encounter with the ABA initiators when they needed support and insights of the industry for their theses. Cornelius Ringe, Rainer Hirt and Kai Bronner really deserve credit for organizing a very informative and enjoyable series of seminars and delivering an invaluable congress experience.

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