

In Memoriam

On April 9, 1997, eight weeks short of his twenty-seventh birthday, **Gabe Wiener's** life abruptly ended. Cut short was one of the most promising careers in audio engineering, one propelled by a keen intellect and an insistence on excellence in concept and execution. He particularly enjoyed promoting and participating in discussions about controversial audio issues. Gabe's clear insight and intelligence cut through hyperbole to identify real problem areas and seek out practical answers. Armed with a formidable knowledge of computing, he initiated and ran a pro audio group on the Internet, providing a T1 line for the forum at his own expense. His Website (<http://www.pgm.com>) was extensive, with a home page that revealed not only many of his own widespread professional interests but much of himself personally. His concerns were wide-ranging, from philosophy to firearms, from chess to ancient Greek. But it was music he loved above all, embracing it wholeheartedly as both performer and listener.

Gabe's professional life was defined by his constant search to identify and overcome the challenges of recording and reproducing sound realistically. The insights he gained through research and experimentation were always placed at the service of his first love, music. He started his own record company in 1993, PGM (Pro Gloria Musicae) whose ten CDs now stand as a lasting memorial to his passion for early music and the music of Bach in particular. Gabe produced, engineered, edited and mastered each PGM recording himself, and often contributed to the cover art and liner notes.

From earliest childhood Gabe showed an interest in and aptitude for things technical. Once he had reached the age of five, few repairmen appeared at the door of the Wiener household. Gabe seemed able to fix anything. At 8 years old he became the youngest person to pass the test for a ham radio license. He attended the Fieldston School, graduating with top honors. As an undergraduate at Columbia University, majoring in music,



Gabe Wiener
1970-1997

he joined and later became manager of the Barnard-Columbia Chorus. After graduating in 1992 he maintained a close association with the chorus, his vibrant tenor continuing to enrich their concerts. That same year he took the first step in realizing his cherished dream of creating a state-of-the-art facility specializing in digital editing, CD mastering and audio restoration. Based in New York, Quintessential Sound soon gained a reputation for the high quality of its work, and Gabe became active professionally as a member of the AES and SPARS. A year later the rest of his dream was realized with PGM's first release, a harpsichord recording featuring an instrument Gabe himself had commissioned for the project.

Gabe regularly attended AES conventions in the U.S. and Europe, posting extensive and candid assessments of their virtues—and shortcomings—on his Pro-Audio Forum. He was elected chairman of the New York Section of the AES in 1995, served as its vice-chairman the following season, and would have been chairman again in 1997 and '98.

If there could be a summation of Gabe's extraordinary accomplishments in his few years, it might be said that he was never deflected into seeing high-tech wizardry as an end in itself, but always sought the highest purpose for his efforts. Gabe exemplified that rarest of qualities: genuine character. He considered principled behavior and ethical conduct to be the necessary framework for a worthwhile life, with

loyalty to good friends and family obviously a concomitant. His legacy embodies and exemplifies these values.

In attempting to come to terms with an event such as this, one often hears the phrase "this is a tragic loss." In this instance, without equivocation, it surely is.

Gabe is survived by his parents, Michael and Zena Wiener, his sister Jenny, and the many, many friends and acquaintances who were warmed by his generous spirit and stimulated by his creative, questing mind. We will all hold safe in our hearts the ongoing and vital remembrance of Gabe Wiener.

Jerry Bruck
New York, NY

George A. Ballantine, AES fellow, died on March 28 in New Canaan, Connecticut, at the age of 82.



The cause of death was complications of a stroke.

Born in Port Ewen, NY, Ballantine served in

the U.S. Navy as a radio operator in the Pacific during World War II. After the war he worked for RCA Victor in New York for over 40 years. He was manager of RCA Recording Studios.

Ballantine retired from RCA and founded Ballantine Tours Inc in 1984, a group travel company specializing in choir tours. Active in the AES, he was a member of the board of directors of the Education Foundation. He was a key member of the AES convention plan acting as banquet chairman, effectively organizing the scheduling of many guest speakers. As part of the recording scene for many years, Ballantine's experience included the transition from 78s to LPs and from wax to lacquer and tape.

He was a good friend and traveler to audio conventions in the U.S. and Europe.

Ballantine is survived by his wife, a daughter, three sisters, a brother, and one grandson.