

TELEFUNKEN ELEKTROAKUSTIK | BY ALEX HARRELL

MAKING GOOD VIBRATIONS

When Toni Fishman refounded the German audio brand Telefunken, he had one goal in mind: to keep bringing in positive vibrations.

Re-established in 2002 as Telefunken Elektroakustik, the South Windsor, Connecticut-based company has been following in the footsteps of the original Telefunken company that began in Germany over 100 years ago.

“It’s just been an organic family business that has grown out of my passion,” Fishman said. “I pride myself on doing my best and maintaining all of [our relationships] and putting our money where our mouth is.”

BUILDING BRIDGES

So far, it’s been working. Telefunken Elektroakustik has been embraced by the likes of Snoop Dog, Jack Johnson and Phish; won several TEC Awards and nominations; and has just under 100 distributors worldwide.

“I wanted to build as many bridges between the old brand and what we do here today because we build microphones in the same manner which they were built in the 1940s and ’50s,” Fishman said.

And he’s not exaggerating, either. By reverse-engineering Telefunken’s original best-selling ELA M 251’s poplar pattern selector, Fishman recreated the entire mic just as it was originally made.

But he knew his brand needed to be more than just recreations.

“I always felt like, in founding the Telefunken name in America, that I would be burned at the stake if each product couldn’t stand for itself on its own merit,” he said. “So we’re careful about making



From left, Alan Venitosh, Toni Fishman, Ryan Loftus and Ian Cluggish.

With historically recreated mics perfected, Telefunken continues to grow all on its own

sure [each product] is going to be a success before it gets out there.”

So in 2005, Telefunken utilized standardized metalwork and structural chassis from overseas before designing and building the circuits in the USA to create the R-T-F Series — providing a lower-cost alternative to the company’s signature Diamond Series.

“The R-T-F Series has been great to us, and I believe that, in the future, what we’ll see happen is a facelift, if you will, to a lot of those products,” Fishman said. “We’re thought of as a company that’s famous for making microphones, but we have to do some more projects of our own design.”

On top of creating more custom products, Telefunken also wants to branch out into collaborations.

“I think there’s a lot of great gear out there that’s not neces-

sarily recognized by the smaller manufacturers,” Fishman said.

THE REBIRTH OF TELEFUNKEN

Despite having 32 employees and a 30,000-square-foot warehouse — as well as plans to continue expanding in terms of both size and product offering — Fishman hasn’t lost focus of the company’s vision.

“To find dedicated people who love what we do and are willing to come here every day and do it with such great skill — to me, that’s the greatest accomplishment,” he said, explaining that the most valuable lesson he’s learned throughout the years is not taking anything for granted.

“I never in a million years imagined that we would have the success we did,” Fishman said. “It’s kind of ironic that one of the

largest industrial German names is now owned here, in America, by a Jewish family.”

Fishman — whose mother is a Holocaust survivor — is proud of his German heritage and doesn’t neglect the dark aspects of Telefunken’s history.

During the 1930s, Telefunken was still distributing Neumann microphones, including the CMV3. This microphone “was so widely used by the Fuehrer and Nazi Party leaders that it acquired a nickname: The Hitlerflasche, or the Hitler Bottle,” NPR reported.

“I feel my mission is to try to make people happy with music,” Fishman said. “I think we’ve made a substantial investment in bringing back what the good things about Telefunken are, as we try to move forward into the future with many good vibrations.” **MI**