

# MARANTZ:

## THE MAN AND THE COMPANY



It's not often that a man and a brand are synonymous unless, of course, they're really eponymous. But the name Marantz is, if anything, more prominent in today's world of consumer electronics than it was when Saul B. Marantz founded the Marantz Company in 1953.

Although others certainly aided the early growth of the consumer electronics industry (or the "hi fi" business, as it was then known), perhaps no one was as recognized for his passionate pursuit of high quality sound reproduction as was Saul B. Marantz.

As is the case with many people, Saul's accomplishments were more the result of being in the right place at the right time and having the vision and skills necessary to inspire others. If any one thing stood out from the beginning, it was Saul's insistence that good industrial design was as important as superior performance. It was the cosmetic design, he felt, that would play an essential part in bringing electronics out of the garages and into the living rooms of music lovers everywhere.

His history, and that of the company he founded, forms an extraordinary picture of individual accomplishment and corporate evolution.

Although certainly not complete, the story we're presenting here is unique. We've interviewed many people in the consumer electronics industry who were close to Saul during his life. They gave generously of their time and knowledge and we thank them for their

input. In particular, we'd like to thank Ed Woodard, a long-time associate of Saul's. Through Ed, we even spent time with Saul's daughter, June Chamberlain and her husband Mark as she reminisced about her child's-eye view of her soon-to-be-famous father. Mark contributed many photos from the family archives, photos that we suspect have never appeared outside family gatherings. We're fortunate to have them.



This picture was most likely taken in Brooklyn when Saul was about 1 yr. old. (Photographer unknown.)

We hope you enjoy this fascinating look into the life of one of the industry's true pioneers.

### THE BEGINNING

Saul B. Marantz, perhaps the man most responsible for the birth of the high-end audio industry, was born the oldest of

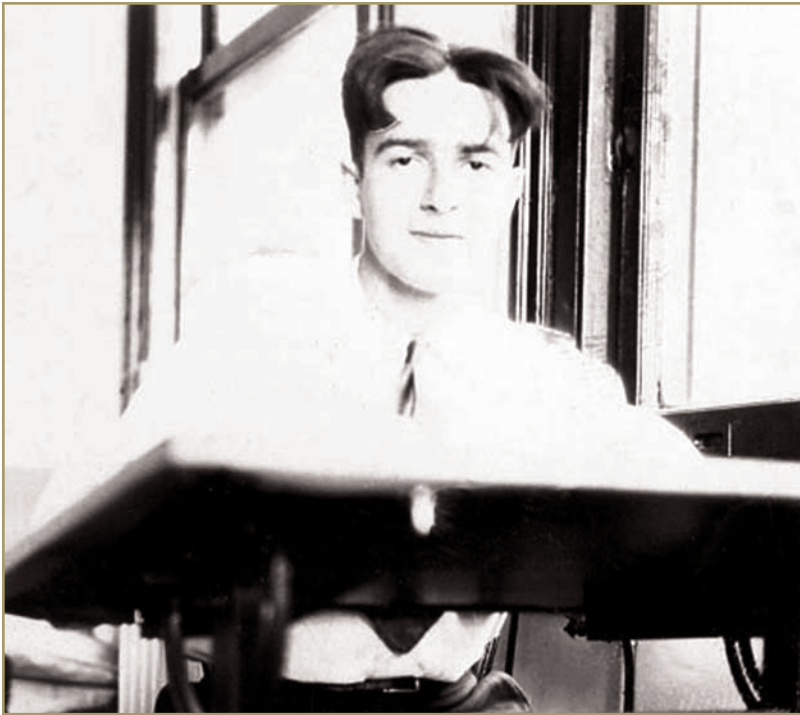
three children on July 7th, 1911, in New York City.

Much of Saul's early childhood was unremarkable and unrecorded. Although he showed an early aptitude for technology, experimented with crystal radios, crafted a microscope in his early teen years, and hoped to pursue training as an electrical engineer, his family's fortune (or, more accurately, the lack of same) dictated otherwise. Although he was accepted into an exclusive Rapid Advance program in the New York City public schools, he had to leave after the 8th grade to help support his family.

His first job was as a messenger for a now-known firm in the NYC financial district. This experience was not altogether positive as he was fired after taking an unauthorized holiday on the "friendly advice" of a jealous co-worker. Fortunately, the young Marantz had spent much of his down time at the same firm's art department and was immediately accepted as an apprentice.

Although Marantz's years of attendance and curriculum are largely unknown, he continued his art training with courses at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn. After his formal training, he became a commercial artist serving such clients as Hanes (for whom he may have designed the logo) and General Electric.

He met his future wife, Jean Dickey, in NYC at a St. Patrick's Day party in 1939. A friend who was dating another resident of the "women only" hotel



Saul at his drafting table. Photo taken in the early 1930s. (Photographer unknown.)



Jean and Saul Marantz. Photo taken immediately following the wedding. (Professional photographer unknown.)

where Jean lived had issued the invitation. Saul and Jean were engaged on Valentine's Day, 1940, and married in October of the same year in Basking Ridge, NJ.

Jean was to play a pivotal role in bringing the name Marantz to the public's attention. She had graduated from Vassar College with a liberal arts degree. After Vassar, she returned to her family's home to attend graduate school in architecture at the University of Minnesota. She left one semester short of her degree after the Department Chairman suggested that, as a woman, she would not be taken seriously in her chosen field. After working for a Persian art dealer, she moved once again to NYC in 1938, where she worked in the accounting office of Macy's. (Although this seems an unlikely preparation, her proficiency with math, particularly calculus, proved invaluable to Saul as he readied the "Audio Console," his first product, for sale many years later. Jean's ability at solving complex equations allowed her to calculate the proper values for many of its internal circuit components.)

Saul joined the Army Transportation Service in the spring of 1943 as a civilian employee. (During this time, Jean Marantz stayed with her family in Minnesota.) He was sent to San Francisco in August, then to New Orleans where he began service on a chartered oil tanker. From New Orleans, he went through the Panama Canal to the Pacific theater. During this initial journey, he was awarded a "Shellback Certificate," a document given to everyone crossing the Equator for the first time. The certificate states his nickname as "King Kong," a reference to his hirsute physique.

Although Marantz did not partake in any battles, he spent time in New Guinea, where an Australian pilot, much against regulations, flew him over the Owen Stanley Mountains for a reunion with his brother, Charles, who was stationed there as a member of the military.

Things were not entirely calm for the young Marantz, however. While taking the tanker through the Great Barrier Reef, he discovered that both the Captain and



This photo was taken on the day Saul returned from the Pacific theater. His daughter, June, is behind the stroller. (Photo most likely taken by Jean Marantz.)

First Mate were "under the influence." Marantz confined both to their quarters and assumed temporary command. No mutiny charges were filed, however, as the Captain later admitted that Marantz's actions were "correct."

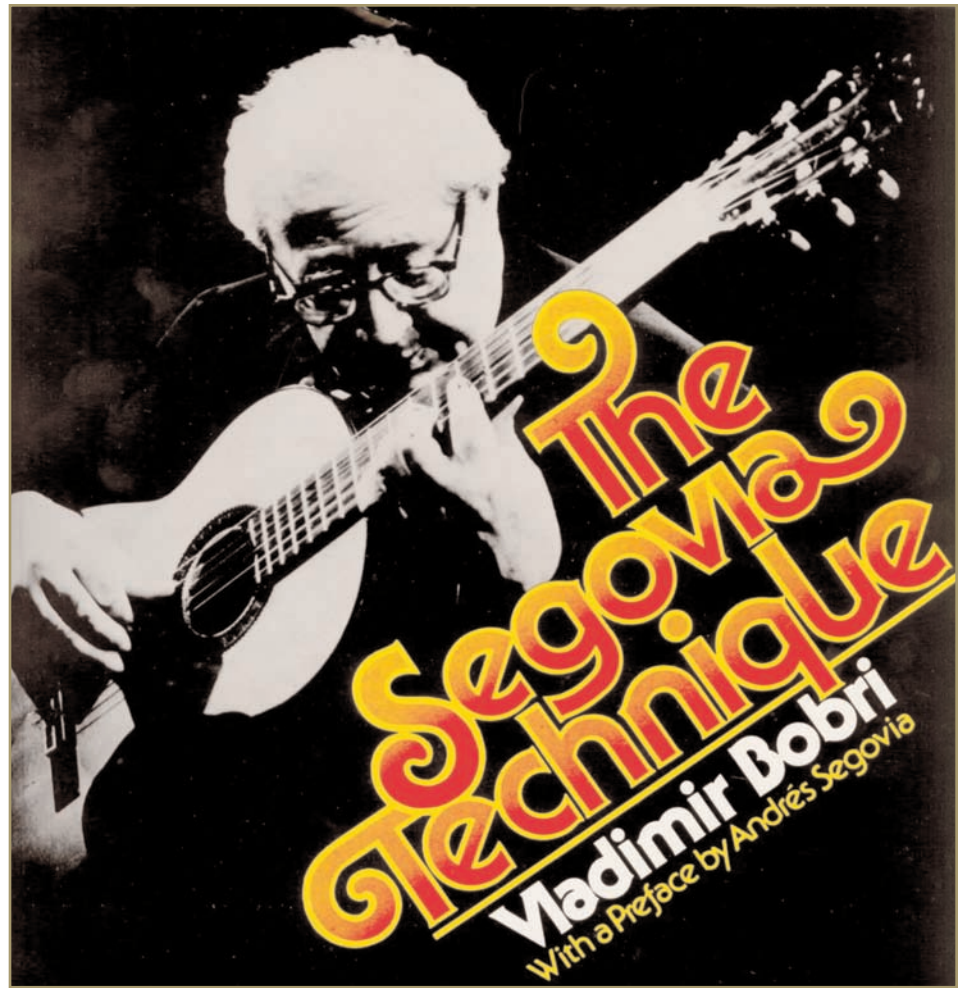




This four-disc set from MCA is now a collector's item.



One of Saul's photos, this one from page 45 of *The Segovia Technique*.



*The Segovia Technique*, by Vladimir Bobri. This edition published by The Bold Strummer, Ltd., Westport, CT

During his employment with the Army Transportation Service, Saul earned his GED (Graduate Equivalency Diploma) and, though he was technically a civilian, rose to nominal rank of Major.

After his return, Saul and Jean lived in Woodside, a suburb in the Borough of Queens, New York City, and later moved to Kew Gardens, another Queens neighborhood.

Saul Marantz's musical interests blossomed in the late '40s and early '50s when friends Karl and Ginny Noell invited Saul and Jean to a meeting of the New York Society of Classical Guitar. The couple soon joined the Guitar Society, as it was called by members, and Saul began guitar lessons shortly thereafter. During this period, the couple met and developed a strong friendship with guitar maes-

tro, Andres Segovia. (Their daughter, June, remembers sitting on Segovia's knee when Segovia visited her parents, probably at the Woodside home. She also remembers a large empty speaker enclosure in the house which she used as hiding place when she was 3 or 4 years old and suggests that this is evidence of her father's co-developing interest in music and electronics.)

Vladimir Bobritzki, also a member of the Guitar Society, later authored (under the shortened name "Bobri") a book entitled *The Segovia Technique*, originally published in 1972.

Saul took many photographs of Segovia's fingering style for this book and received the following acknowledgement for his work in the book's Preface: "SAUL MARANTZ who took most of the photographs and spent

hours in the darkroom experimenting with prints to achieve a maximum of brilliance and clarity."

Marantz's Segovia photos also appear in the booklet accompanying the 4 CD set called "Andres Segovia – A Centenary Celebration" released on the MCA label (MCAD4: 11124).

## THE "CLASSIC MARANTZ" PERIOD: 1951 TO 1964

The arrival of the monaural LP record in 1948 and general post-war prosperity contributed to the rising interest in high fidelity equipment. Among many other companies, McIntosh Laboratories, Fisher Radio, and H.H. Scott began to manufacture components.



The house that started it all. In the basement of his Kew Gardens home at 81st Avenue and Austin Street, Saul Marantz began to hand assemble the “Audio Consolette,” the first in a series of products that now spans over 50 years. (Photo from <http://www.oldkew-gardens.com/>)

Saul Marantz, however, was not satisfied with the commercially available components of his day and he began to build his own. One of the major problems facing music enthusiasts at the time was the large number of different equalization characteristics used by record companies. These disparate “EQ” curves made it difficult to fully enjoy records from different labels as most record companies adhered to their own in-house standards.

To solve the problem, Saul Marantz designed a preamplifier (the original “Audio Consolette”) that incorporated many equalization curves. It created a sensation among his friends and he was advised to start mass production. Jean encouraged him by suggesting “How about making 100 sets by way of trial?” Production, or, more accurately, hand assembly, began in 1952 in the basement of the Marantz home in Kew Gardens (Queens), New York.

## ENTER SIDNEY SMITH

Interestingly, it was during this period that the now-legendary Sidney Smith appeared at Saul’s home. A trained electrical engineer and ardent vocal student, he had seen an ad for the Model 1 and was looking for work after moving to New York from Chicago. After demonstrating his ability by modifying the Consolette’s circuitry to solve some noise problems in



The Marantz Model 1 Preamplifier: The first product of the newly formed Marantz Company (1954)



The Model 2 power amplifier, the first of Sidney Smith’s designs.

early units, he stayed to become chief engineer.

The first 100 units of the Audio Consolette sold quickly through Harvey Radio’s (now Harvey Electronics) main store, then on 6th Avenue in Manhattan. However, because of an ever-increasing reputation and a large backlog of orders (estimates vary from 400 to 800 units), Saul established the Marantz Company in 1953 and opened a factory in Woodside. The Model 1, the successor to the “Audio Consolette,” appeared in 1954.

The Model 1 was ground-breaking in several respects. Although it greatly resembled the “Audio Consolette,” it was the first preamplifier to include the brand-new RIAA (Recording Industry Association of America) standard equalization curve in addition to a large number of older and non-standard curves. The Model 1 also had a tape monitor switch and a “TV” input.

The Model 2 power amplifier followed in 1956. Largely completed by Sidney Smith, it was a very successful tube design using EL34s in “ultra-linear” (push-pull) configuration.

Although some sources cite the Model 2 as the beginning of Smith’s exclusive concentration on power amplifiers while Saul focused his attention on pre-amplifiers, the truth is that Sidney Smith was intimately involved in the development of many products, even the vaunted Model 10 and 10B tuners. Although Marantz was a talented designer, his formal education was in the graphic arts. Consequently, his understanding of electronics, while extensive for a non-professional, was largely self-taught. Smith, on the other hand, benefited from the disciplined knowledge resulting from his military training in electrical engineering.

Other products followed soon after the Model 2 as the company evolved: the Model 3 electronic crossover and the Model 5 power amplifier, a revised and more attractive version of the Model 2. However, it wasn’t until 1958 that the Marantz Company and the entire industry was inspired by the appearance of the stereo LP record.

As all previous Marantz components were designed for monaural systems, the company knew that new products were needed. Later in 1958, Marantz introduced the Model 6 stereo adaptor.



Designed to unite two Model 1s for stereo use, the Model 6 featured a 2-channel input selector and volume control. The Model 6 connected to two Model 1s through their tape monitor inputs and was cosmetically designed to flank a stacked pair of Model 1s.

In December of 1958, a true stereo pre-amplifier, the Model 7, was released. The circuitry was basically different from most preamplifiers of the day as the Model 7 used a unique three-stage phono preamp/equalizer that later became known as the “Marantz circuit.” The Model 7 dominated the high fidelity industry as no other product before had done. Over its life, more than 130,000 units were sold and it was honored as the premiere example of preamplifier design for many, many years. The front panel was pure Marantz and featured a sophisticated asymmetrical arrangement of knobs and switches directly traceable to Saul Marantz's intimate knowledge of industrial design.

With its popularity came legends, including that of the so-called “Model 7C” variant. In reality, all Model 7s were essentially identical, except for minor running production changes. The “7C” designation refers to a Model 7 in a cabinet, hence the “C” suffix. (Marantz did produce a few Model 7s with an extended 19” rack-mountable front panel with handles. These were sold primarily for professional use but the circuitry was identical to the more popular consumer version.)

In 1959, Marantz released the Model 8. With the soon-to-follow 8B, it was the only tube stereo amplifier the company ever produced. Although most regard the Model 8B (introduced in 1962) simply as a modified Model 8, there are significant differences between the two. For one thing, the 8B featured a Sidney Smith-designed transformer, and was more stable and phase-accurate, thanks in part to a negative feedback circuit originally developed for the Model 9 monaural power amplifier. (See the next



The Marantz Model 7 Stereo Pre-amplifier, one of the most honored components in the history of home entertainment.



The Marantz Model 9 monaural power amplifier – still a classic almost 50 years after its introduction.

paragraph.) The power output of both the Model 8 and the 8B was 30 watts per channel.

The Model 9 monaural power amplifier was released in 1960. Using EL34 tubes, this ultra-linear parallel push-pull design produced 70 watts of power, a significant accomplishment for its time.<sup>1</sup> The increased power resulted, in part, from the strong rivalry with McIntosh, whose power amplifiers were generally more muscular than otherwise comparable Marantz models. In addition to high power, the Model 9 reached new cosmetic horizons thanks to a bias meter centered on the front panel and a drop-down front panel door that concealed adjustments and connections. The meter, in addition to allowing a user to easily compensate for different tube characteris-

tics, extended the Marantz tradition of integrating functionality with high style and provided an aesthetic template still used by Marantz today.

The combination of a Model 7 and two Model 9s is, even now, recognized as a high point in the history of high fidelity.

## RICHARD SEQUERRA AND THE PERFECT TUNER

As the Marantz reputation grew, dealer demand for a Marantz tuner increased as well. After making faceplate and knob kits for Fisher and H. H. Scott tuners so they would match Marantz preamps, the company began an extensive R&D program to produce a tuner of its own even though FM stereo broadcasting was still in its infancy. Richard Sequerra, a highly trained and knowledgeable engineer with extensive experience in radio frequency design, joined Marantz in 1961.

His goal was simple: Produce a tuner as exceptional in its category as were the Models 7 and 9 in theirs. It took more than three years of costly research and the efforts of additional consulting engineers, including Mitchell Cotter, to reach fruition. Although Sequerra rightfully deserves substantial credit for the design, his was not the only chef's hat in the

1 Among other qualities, the Model 9 was exceptionally stable. In fact, the young Marantz Company was startled when it began receiving orders from NASA contractors for a slightly modified version called the 9120. To its amazement, the company found that multiple Model 9120s were specified as the amplifiers of choice to drive precision arrays of tracking antennas for the then-embryonic space program.



The Model 10B, often considered the pinnacle of FM reception.

kitchen. In the end, Sidney Smith contributed his considerable talents also. As retold by a close associate, Saul Marantz said “Yes, Richard designed it but Sid made it work.”

The result of this effort, the Model 10, didn't appear until 1964. One of the most innovative features of the Model 10 (and the Model 10B that soon followed) was the front-panel oscilloscope that replaced the conventional signal strength and center channel meters of the day. Not only did the 'scope show signal strength in a graphic way, it also allowed a far more accurate method of centering the tuner on a particular broadcast frequency. In addition, the 'scope provided precise information of the amount of stereo separation provided by the broadcaster as it displayed the differential L/R information directly instead of merely indicating the presence of a stereo “carrier” signal.

Although superb in many ways, the Model 10 posed a significant alignment problem that was eventually traced to the equipment used to solder the inductors in the tuner's IF (intermediate frequency) stage. These inductors became so heavily magnetized that final alignment became next to impossible. However, only about 100 Model 10s were produced before an improved version, the Model 10B, appeared later that same year. In addition to a minor change in the dial mechanism, the Model 10B used different inductors that were far more resistant to the magnetization problems than had plagued



The Marantz Model 18 Receiver, the first Marantz product with “Gyro-Touch” tuning, featured an oscilloscope to aid in tuning accuracy and signal analysis.

the Model 10. An interesting side note about the Model 10B is that final alignment took place in an oven. This simulated the actual operating temperature and resulted in far more accurate performance under real-world conditions.

## PERFECTION'S PROBLEM

The Model 10B did have one substantial downside. It was so expensive to manufacture and so under-priced that its very success put the company in severe financial difficulties. In fact, the Model 10B depleted the working capital to the extent that Saul was hard-pressed to make his weekly payroll.

Obviously, this situation was untenable and Saul began to think of alternative solutions, one of which was selling the company. Joseph Tushinsky, one of four brothers and the president of Superscope, Inc., expressed interest

after a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Institute of High Fidelity, a trade organization both men belonged to.

Tushinsky, an avid musician, had been looking for a way to insure Superscope's future. Originally founded to provide wide-screen camera and projector optics to Hollywood's film industry, that effort eventually fell victim to other film formats. In the meantime, Superscope's connections in Japan led to a distribution agreement with Sony under which

Superscope imported and distributed Sony tape recorders in the United States. Tushinsky, while appreciative of the quality of existing Marantz components, saw an immense opportunity in acquiring the Marantz name. In his mind, the brand could then be used for more affordable components manufactured in Japan by another company Superscope already had a relationship with – Standard Radio.

The sale was completed in late 1964 and presaged a significant change in the focus of Marantz as a company. For its \$3 million investment, Superscope moved from being simply a distributor (and thus vulnerable to Sony's expressed desire to forge its own destiny in the United States) to being a manufacturer with direct control of its business future.

Although the Marantz Company would eventually move from New York to a lavish headquarters building in Sun Valley,



California, an immediate change was a more modest relocation from the old 5,000 square foot factory in Woodside, NY to a new 35,000 square foot facility in the same neighborhood. The cash infusion also helped the Marantz Company grow from approximately 60 employees to well over 150.

## THE SUPERSCOPE PERIOD (1965 TO 1980)

Based on R&D projects prompted by the rapid rise of transistor technology, the company moved successfully from its previous tube-based product line. The Model 7T preamplifier and Model 15 power amplifier (actually two Model 14 monoblocks united by a common faceplate) appeared. But the most important product during this “transition period” was the Model 18 receiver, a collaborative effort featuring Saul Marantz’s cosmetic design, Sid Smith’s audio circuitry, and Dick Sequerra’s tuner expertise.

The Model 18 was the last product to benefit from Saul Marantz’s direct input. Towards the end of the transition period from ownership by Saul Marantz to ownership by Superscope, the new management’s desire to broaden the brand’s appeal exacerbated the already-existing friction within the company. Given the differences between the visionary/entrepreneurial spirit that gave birth to the Marantz Company in the first place and the new owners’ hard-nosed pragmatism and a strong desire for more affordable products, this friction, however unfortunate, was inevitable. After being offered the largely ceremonial position of “President Emeritus” in the fall of 1967, Saul Marantz resigned in December of that year and had no further direct relationship with the organization he founded. His last project was securing a new engineering team to continue product development for new Marantz-branded components as Sidney Smith, Dick Sequerra, and the rest of the “old guard” left with him. Even though Marantz the person had left, Marantz the company grew substantially in the years immediately following



The Marantz 2270 Receiver. The model numbers of the “2200” series receivers included power ratings. In this case, power output was 70 watts per channel.

Saul’s departure. In fact, some have called this period (1965 to 1980) Marantz’s “Second Golden Age” as the Marantz brand appeared on far more products than it had ever done before.

In 1966, Superscope began exploring manufacturing possibilities with several Japanese manufacturers with a view to producing these lower cost Marantz products. Eventually, Standard Radio Corporation was chosen as a partner and production began. Superscope eventually purchased a 50% interest in Standard Radio and, with the exception of the high-end separates manufactured in California, more and more Marantz branded components were manufactured in Japan.

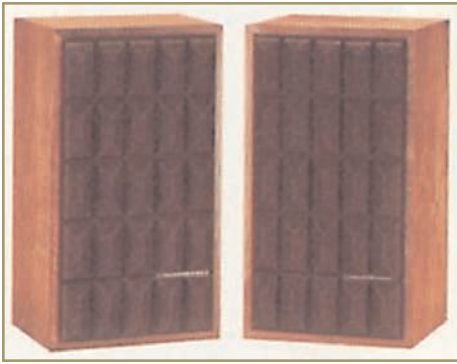
The most successful expansion of the Marantz brand was the receiver line. In fact, the “2200” receivers became one of the most successful product offerings in the history of consumer electronics. Ranging from a mere 10 watts of power per channel to well over 70, the new receivers brought the Marantz mystique to tens of thousands of consumers.

From its U.S. manufacturing facility in CA came many new separate components – the so-called “A” line. 1970 saw the introduction of the Model 32, a modestly powered stereo amplifier (60 watts/channel)

and the last Marantz product with a sequential model number. The more powerful – 125 watts/channel – Models 240 and 250 (the 250 with power meters) soon followed. In 1973 the company released the Model 500, a power amplifier with output capability of 250 watts/channel and forced air cooling. Marantz followed that with the slightly more powerful Model 510 two years later. Matching preamplifiers included the Models 33, 3300, and 3600, all produced under the guidance of Chief Engineer Dawson Hadley (the founder of Hadley Labs and recruited by Saul before the company moved to CA), James Bongiorno (later head of GAS and Sumo), and other engineers.

## THE LOUDSPEAKER CHALLENGE

Joseph Tushinsky’s interest in expanding the Marantz brand did not stop with electronics. Under Tushinsky’s urging, Superscope began to push loudspeaker development with the aim of becoming a major player in the this business. Although company records are somewhat clouded here, it appears that several Japanese-designed speakers had already reached the Japanese domestic market via a distribution arrangement with Mitsubishi Electric Corporation before U.S. design began.



The Marantz Imperial Seven Loudspeaker with Vari-Q and the diamond pattern foam grille designed by Patrick Hart.

In the U.S., the Marantz Imperial Six,<sup>2</sup> designed by Hadley and Bart Locanthi, had reached the market prior to 1971. It featured an extremely flat frequency response curve and was well-reviewed. The Imperial Seven, designed to compete with JBL's very popular L100, was the first Marantz speaker to feature a foam grille cut in a large diamond pattern.

Another innovation used by some of the American-designed Imperial speakers was a technique called "Vari-Q," implemented with a removable port plug for the bass-reflex enclosures. This allowed the listener to "tune" the speaker to modify bass response. With the plug out, the speakers produced substantial though uneven bass. With the plug in, the enclosure emulated an acoustic suspension design with lower and more even bass output.

Interestingly enough, this technique was the result of an extended listening session attended by Doug Sax and Lincoln Mayorga of Sheffield Lab fame (Sheffield was one of the first successful "direct-to-disc" LP producers). While listening to a pair of Marantz Imperial Sixes mounted well off the floor to simulate common placement in studio control rooms, both men noticed that the bass produced by the speaker was somewhat less extended and flabbier than they remembered hearing at the original recording session. Hadley then stuffed



The Marantz Model SLT-12 turntable: Despite the theoretical advantages of straight line tracking, the "Rube Goldberg-esq" mechanism was somewhat less than reliable.

rags into the Six's ports and everyone noticed a surprising – and very welcome – difference.

In 1976, Edmund (Ed) May, one of the most respected speaker designers at JBL, joined Marantz and was given the charge of developing a speaker line to complement the company's other high end offerings. Superscope built a new R&D facility for May to work in. The resulting "HD" speakers were highly praised and enhanced the brand's reputation substantially. Unfortunately, May died in 1980 and later design efforts met with considerably less success and all efforts to design and market loudspeakers ceased.

## THE SUPERSCOPE HERITAGE: SNATCHING DEFEAT FROM THE JAWS OF VICTORY

Based on the success of the receiver line in the United States and a greatly expanded separate components line in the Far East, Superscope, which owned a substantial interest in Standard Radio,

changed the name of the Japanese manufacturer to Marantz Japan, Inc. in 1975. Despite strong sales, however, all was not well with Superscope's stewardship of the Marantz name.

Although interpretations differ, some of the problems resulted from poor financial controls and a tendency towards profligate spending. Not all the problems were monetary, however. Among other things, Marantz embarked on a program to develop a straight line tracking turntable, one that would, in theory at any rate, eliminate most of problems caused by trying to track a record groove with a pivoted tone arm. Saul Marantz had argued vigorously against this product prior to his departure, citing mechanical problems in the initial design. However, the company introduced the SLT-12 in 1968 or 1969.

The original SLT-12 was available only with a Shure V-15 phono cartridge but a later version (the SLT-12U – for "universal") accepted virtually any cartridge. Regardless of the version, the mechanism proved to be as cranky as Saul Marantz had predicted and by 1970 the turntable was out of production. Generic problems with this unit soured many

<sup>2</sup> Marantz Imperial speakers designed in the U.S. had model numbers spelled out (i.e., Imperial Six). Marantz speakers designed in the Far East used Roman numerals (i.e., Imperial IV).





Marantz Model 7700 Tape Deck (1978), a three speed auto reverse unit. (Photo courtesy of <http://www.classic-audio.com>)

customers as there was virtually no way to ensure the turntable's continued operation. Other less-than-successful introductions included Marantz-branded open reel and cassette tape decks intended to ameliorate Superscope's loss of distribution rights for Sony's tape recorders.

On the positive side, receiver sales continued to be strong and products developed primarily for the Asian and European markets did well. Integrated amplifiers (combining preamp and power amp in a single chassis) were particularly successful. The comparatively little-known SM1000 power amplifier, in fact, won the prestigious "State of the Art" award from Stereo Sound magazine in 1979. Marantz also introduced power amplifiers with a switch to allow users to select Class A or Class AB operation, depending on power needs.

By 1980, Superscope's financial condition had become so tenuous that it decided to sell rights to the Marantz name for the Asian and European markets as well as the Japanese manufacturing facilities to Philips, the Netherlands-based mega-manufacturer. However, Superscope retained the name for the North American market, thus setting the



The CD-63 used a top loading mechanism for convenience and featured "oversampling," an advanced digital technique that resulted in less analog filtering and thus improved sound.

stage for a somewhat schizophrenic perception of Marantz around the world.

## 1980 – 2001: THE PHILIPS EXPERIENCE

Philips saw the acquisition of the Marantz brand in a very positive light. Despite considerable R&D and manufacturing capabilities in almost all areas of consumer electronics, Philips had little success in addressing the high end audio market. It viewed the Marantz name as the most practical way to broaden its appeal to quality-conscious consumers. Marantz benefited also as the affiliation with Philips put Marantz squarely in the loop of Philips' extensive knowledge of digital audio, which had begun to appear in professional circles about 1970.

As the co-developer (with Sony) of the CD, Philips had proprietary knowledge of what was soon to become the fastest growing product categories in the field – the CD player. In 1982, Philips released its first unit – the CD-63 – under the Marantz banner. Although Sony was technically first to market with its CDP-101, the Marantz CD-63 was the first publicly announced CD player.

As with most new technologies, prices of CD players dropped substantially in the following years. For example, the CD-34, released in 1985, sold for one-third the price of the original CD-63 but used many of the same internal components.

1985 also saw the introduction of the LV-1CD, a laser disc player, and the DPM-7, an all-digital amplifier that eventually saw the light of day in 1991 as the AX1000 "audio computer" along with the first Marantz CD-R (recordable CD) player/recorder.

On the analog front, Marantz's "Quarter A" amplifier technology became known for exceptionally smooth sound quality at any volume level. Quarter A, which premiered in the PM-6A integrated amp, used automatic switching to move the power amplifier section from Class A to Class AB operation when power output exceeded one fourth of its maximum rating.

HDAM,<sup>3</sup> an important technology for Marantz, first appeared in 1992 and was used in the PM-99SE ("Special Edition") and the CD-15. Current Feedback power amplifier technology, a sonic advance over less sophisticated voltage feedback designs, also appeared. 1994 saw the SC-5 peamplifier and SM-

3 This proprietary Marantz technology replaced conventional operational amplifier ICs (integrated circuits) with discrete low-noise components housed in a single module optimized with short signal paths. HDAM modules were specifically designed to amplify and buffer line-level signals and preserve music's subtle details and wide dynamic structure so that even minute high frequency details are reproduced accurately.

6 power amplifier as co-winners of Stereo Sound's top honors, the first such awards given to Marantz since the SM1000.

## MEANWHILE, BACK IN THE USA

Superscope continued to market Marantz components in North America but the similarity between its list of products and those offered in Asia and Europe continued to diverge. With the exception of some separates purchased from Marantz Japan, Inc. (MJI), Marantz in North America offered little that could be described as inspired – or inspiring.

Instead, Marantz drifted more and more towards “rack systems” of comparatively inexpensive components housed in glass-door furniture style equipment racks. The components themselves were manufactured for Superscope by a variety of OEMs (original equipment manufacturers) and the quality varied widely. Consequently, these systems depended far more on cosmetics than on performance for their appeal and were offered primarily through various department stores and credit card companies (notably American Express). Their impact on the brand was nothing short of devastating as Marantz became known in North America as a “has-been.” Car stereo components, another failed experiment, further diffused the brand's reputation.

By 1987, even these modest efforts proved too much for Superscope's declining stamina. It sold the North American rights to Dynascan Corporation, a Chicago-based company best known in consumer circles for its Cobra brand of CB radios and radar detectors. Marantz's North American headquarters was moved from Sun Valley, CA to Aurora, IL, a Chicago suburb, and the company started to regroup.

Unfortunately, Dynascan's lack of internal engineering and manufacturing resources put the Marantz brand



Marantz's SA-1 player brings new life to conventional CDs and plays the new high resolution SA-CD discs as well.

in the same position that had hobbled it under the Superscope banner. Product offerings and marketing direction suffered the same lack of focus as before. A new equipment line called the Century Series included receivers manufactured by Sansui, a once-respected Japanese manufacturer that, like Marantz in North America, had fallen on hard times and was struggling for survival itself. Dealer response was lukewarm at best.

In late 1990, two Dynascan senior executives, Jerry Kalov and Fred Hackendahl, flew to Philips' headquarters in Eindhoven, the Netherlands, and signed a contract that reunited Marantz's North America marketing efforts with those of the Philips/Marantz network in the rest of the world. Dynascan's interest in the Marantz brand ceased and its only further involvement with Marantz was to sell off its remaining inventory of Marantz branded components. Philips would wait until this was accomplished before starting to revive the brand. But there was reason to celebrate: For the first time in ten years, the Marantz brand was under a single management and the destructively schizophrenic existence was ended.

One area was left somewhat divided, however. MJI, or Marantz Japan, Inc., was still a largely autonomous unit in the Philips empire. As MJI was the design and production arm for

Marantz worldwide, there was still a minor disconnect between it and Philips marketing efforts for the Marantz brand. Although this situation was far better than what had preceded it, senior management at MJI, many of whom personally knew Saul Marantz, felt very strongly that total integration was needed. In short, they saw the advantage of uniting design, manufacturing, marketing, and sales under MJI's control. Until then, they felt, Marantz would not be fully reborn.

## HOME THEATER, SAUL'S DEATH, AND THE BIRTH OF THE SUPER AUDIO CD

The appearance of laser disc players in 1985 eventually began to transform the idea of home theater into reality. In Japan, initial enthusiasm for the concept declined rapidly after early excitement but grew substantially in the U.S. where high powered A/V receivers became more and more popular.

Marantz entered this exciting field with the energy and dedication that came from restored corporate unity. The company introduced the SM-80, its first THX-certified amplifier in 1992 followed that with the critically-acclaimed SR96 THX-certified receiver four years later. The '90s also saw the VP8770, Marantz's first LCD video front projector, and the PD4280, the



first of its highly-praised flat-screen plasma TV monitors.

Sadly, the industry lost Saul Marantz when he died in January, 1997.

In early September, 1999, Sony and Philips launched the SACD (or Super Audio CD) as a replacement for the conventional CD which by then was 17 years old. Marantz, still benefiting from its long relationship with Philips, introduced its first SACD player, the SA-1, two months later.

## A FULLY UNIFIED MARANTZ

2001 marked a momentous time for Marantz Japan, Inc. It acquired the trademark and distribution rights from Philips and so became solely responsible for everything related to Marantz from initial product development through marketing. All Marantz sales subsidiaries, originally established by Philips throughout the world, came under the control of MJJ also, thus paving the way for a truly unified brand expansion.

In 2002, responding to ever-increasing competitive pressures, MJJ became affiliated with D & M Holdings, Inc., an international investment and management group that now controls Denon, McIntosh Labs, Escent, Boston Acoustics, and several other brands in addition to Marantz.

## RECENT PRODUCT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Since its acquisition by D & M, Marantz has found even more strength. Recent product introductions include a new Reference Series which marries the aesthetic considerations so important to Saul Marantz with advanced technology that promises the finest in sound quality.

Examples include the MA-9S1 power amplifier, the SC-7S1 preamplifier, and the SA-11S1 CD/SACD disc player. The



The Marantz Reference Series MA-9S1 Monaural Power Amplifier draws cosmetic inspiration directly from the classic Model 9 power amplifier.



The Reference Series SA-11S1 CD/SA-CD player extends the original Marantz aesthetic to the finest audio playback format available today.

choice of model numbers, particularly the first two, was not done carelessly. Both power amp and preamp were conceived and designed to be as visually exciting and sonically rewarding as the Models 7 and 9 from Marantz's "classic" period more than four decades earlier.

## A LOOK TOWARDS THE FUTURE

Marantz is over 50 years old. Few companies in the home entertainment industry can boast of that longevity or of the tradition of high quality that drives the company today. Despite a complex history, Marantz today is closer to its roots in high performance

home entertainment than it has been since the 1960s.

Marantz is proud of that tradition but recognizes that the true test of its commitment will be judged by every consumer who places trust in the company by purchasing a Marantz component.

*As a member of the Marantz Owners' Circle, we hope you've enjoyed this unique company history. As we mentioned in the Introduction, most of our research in preparing it involved extensive interviews with people personally associated with Marantz the person and Marantz the company over many years. We thank them for their time and efforts. Again, our thanks also to Saul's family for their invaluable contributions.*