

PRESS INFORMATION

Media Contacts:

*Sue Morgan/Lucette Nicoll
Nicoll Public Relations, Inc.
781-762-9300
sue@nicollpr.com*

*Marc Koval
Meridian America
404-344-7111
marc.koval@meridian-america.com*

The Meridian Story

Approaching three decades of audio innovation and superb sound

Boothroyd Stuart, the company known today as Meridian Audio Ltd, was founded in 1977 by Bob Stuart and Allen Boothroyd to manufacture the high-quality audio products they had designed – including an active loudspeaker (the M1), preamplifier and amplifier.

Allen and Bob had worked together as consultants in the early 1970s. Their early projects included the famous Lecson Audio product range, which is now on permanent display in the New York Museum of Modern Art, and for which they won their first British Design Council Award in 1974.

The Meridian product range grew steadily into the 100 Series, for which the company received a second British Design Council Award in 1982.

Bob Stuart was involved in the very earliest stages of the development of Compact Disc through his technical connections with Philips in Holland, and in 1983 Meridian launched the first audiophile CD player. It was also the first CD player to be made in Britain. This product – the MCD – was acclaimed for its performance, winning awards as the best-sounding CD player in seven major countries including Japan and USA. It was joined by the world's first digital loudspeaker, the P10.

In 1986 the initial products of the new 200 Series were launched. This line remained in production until 1993 developing during that time to include the whole range of domestic Hi-Fi: from CD players, AM/FM tuners, pre-amplifiers and power amplifiers, to digital-to-analog converters and a series of multi-room components. In addition, a line of 'active' loudspeakers (speakers with on board amplifiers) was developed and brought to market.

In 1988, Bob and Allen were presented with their third Design Council Award by the Duke of Edinburgh. They are, to date, the only design team to win this award on three occasions.

During the 1980s the company continued to develop its skills in digital audio technology and in 1989 introduced the 206 20-bit CD player and the D600 digital loudspeaker. Meridian has continued to develop digital active loudspeakers. In 1990, the world's first loudspeaker using Digital Signal Processing (DSP), the DSP6000, was launched. Meridian remains the world leader in this field.

1992 saw the introduction of a landmark new line, the 600 Series, with its 601 DSP preamp – the first of its kind – and 602 CD transport, along with a tuner, A/D and D/A converters, and a mastering processor, the 618, that was rapidly taken up by studios as well as audiophiles. There was even a CD recorder.

The 500 Series was introduced in July 1993, when twelve totally new products were released at the same time. The 500 Series provided the foundation for the company's ongoing development work with a range of products for both analog and all-digital systems. The 500 Series expanded to include almost two dozen products, as well as several active, digital and DSP loudspeakers.

In 1994 the company entered the burgeoning Home Theater market, with another first: the Meridian Digital Theatre, based on a range of DSP loudspeakers and the 565 Surround Processor. The Digital Theatre and the 565 won a dozen major awards in as many months.

This success was followed by the release of Meridian's flagship line, the 800 Reference Series, in 1997. Today the 800 optical disc player and the 861 surround processor are recognized as world leaders in home theater technology, the latter now including Meridian's revolutionary automatic room correction system, that smoothes out room resonances for a dramatic improvement in sound. The Reference Series was more recently joined by the company's flagship DSP8000 series of DSP loudspeakers.

In 1998, Meridian Lossless Packing (MLP) was officially chosen as the compression scheme mandated for the new DVD-Audio format. Meridian is the only UK hardware manufacturer in the DVD Forum and has been deeply involved in the development of consumer audio-visual media for many years.

Most recently, in September 2003, Meridian Audio Ltd released a completely new line of products – the first in ten years: the G Series. The initial dozen products include optical disc players, analog controllers, a receiver, a surround processor and amplifiers, all packaged in stylish new enclosures – an entire range of analog and digital systems and ideal companions either for Meridian DSP loudspeakers or conventional passive configurations.

The Meridian Group consists of two companies, Meridian Audio Limited (the parent company) and Meridian America Inc., its North American sales and distribution wing, which is based in a 10,000 square-foot facility in Atlanta, Georgia. Products are manufactured in the UK, at a 25,000 square-foot factory in Huntingdon, near Cambridge. Meridian currently employs about 100 people in Huntingdon and about a dozen in the USA.

Export has always been a major focus – about 80% of Meridian's products are sold outside the United Kingdom – with the larger part going to the USA. Other export customers include all the European and many Pacific Rim countries.