

An audiophile's paradise at the “Bill Gates” museum



Taiwan also has a Bill Gates! Located in Baoshan Township in Hsinchu County, the Bill Gates Museum was founded by Wen Chao-long, a repairer and collector of audio equipment. Establishing the museum has fulfilled Wen's 40-year dream of opening a museum of audio equipment from around the world.

Wen decided to name his museum after Bill Gates because it is near Hsinchu Scientific Park, and he hopes to attract visitors from the high-tech industry, and share his collection with them.

Besides 100 antique gramophones and radios, the museum also houses over 30 amplifiers, more than 100 speaker units, and almost 30 record players. On top of that, there are also more than 30,000 records and over 500 musical instruments provided by his friend Wei Jin-yuan. When visiting the museum, audiophiles and music students can't help being amazed.

As soon as the 58-year-old Wen hears about a rare record or a special piece of equipment he will jump on a flight to Europe, America, China or Southeast Asia to do an exchange or buy a new item for his collection. He says that the gramophone is a wonderful invention because it produces a beautiful sound without an external power supply.

In 2004, Wen and his wife bought the building that later became the museum, an old 400-ping two-story redbrick house. Wen is also an enthusiastic promoter of activities related to music, art and culture.

The most precious item in the museum is an Edison gramophone made 105 years ago. Manufactured in 1905, it is extremely rare but still functions properly. Chang Chun-yen, ex-president of National Chiao Tung University, used to be very fond of this machine and wanted to have it, but Wen wouldn't let it go to anyone at any price.

Wen says vacuum tube-based amplifiers from different countries produce different sounds, with some suited to the human voice, and others suited to musical instruments. Handmade, custom-designed equipment has surpassed mass-produced equipment as the product of choice for connoisseurs because it produces clearer sounds and is made of better quality material.

When showing an RCA amplifier made in the US in 1935, Wen excitedly says that the machine produces a lovely sound and is beautifully designed. He's also very proud of a jukebox used in casinos and pubs in the 1950s. A large speaker for outdoor movie theaters is also among his favorites.

One of the museum's biggest instruments is a sousaphone. US composer John Philip Sousa modified this powerful instrument from a tuba in 1899, to be used by marching bands. A Victorian-style organ made in the US in 1935, of the kind often used in churches in the west, is also on the list of the museum's most cherished items.

(LIBERTYTIMES, TRANSLATED BY TAIJING WU)

「比爾蓋茲」博物館 愛樂人結音緣

台灣也有「比爾蓋茲」！在新竹縣寶山鄉，有個音響博物館就以此為名。曾是音響維修員的溫焯隆，修遍各類音響，心中湧上想要收藏各國音響的夢想，這個心願，在他奮鬥四十年後實現。

位在寶山鄉三峰路的比爾蓋茲音響博物館，除展示骨董留聲機、收音機一百多台、擴大機三、四十部、喇叭單體一百多顆、電唱機二、三十台等各類音響，還擁有各國唱片三萬多張，以及同好魏錦源提供展示的各國樂器五百多件，常讓國內外樂迷和音樂系師生大呼驚喜。

五十八歲的溫焯隆只要聽到哪邊有稀奇、有特色的音響、留聲機，他就飛往歐美、中國、東南亞等國家，交流、收藏各國唱片及音響。他說，留聲機實在很奇妙，不用電源，就能發出美妙的聲音，這項發明簡直令人難以置信。

二〇〇四年，溫焯隆與太太買下寶山一棟佔地約四百坪的兩層樓紅磚老屋，陳設他的收藏品，以音響作為博物館的主題，投入音樂藝術文化的推廣工作。

因為靠近新竹科學園區，他將藏館取名「比爾蓋茲」，希望吸引科技人上門，分享他對音響的收藏。

「比爾蓋茲」音響博物館的鎮館之寶，是一台有一百零五年歷史的愛迪生滾筒留聲機，這台一九〇五年生產的留聲機相當罕見，至今還能正常發音；前國立交通大學校長張俊彥參觀後，一度希望收購典藏，當然館主捨不得割愛。

溫焯隆說，各國所製作的真空管音響，不同型號有不同音色，有的偏向人聲、有的彷彿樂器。除量產音響，手工設計打造的「土炮」，因物料材質佳，音色清晰度高，為行家首選。

他興奮的介紹，一九三五年美國無線電公司（RCA）生產的擴大機，造型具古典美，音色一級棒。還有，一九五〇年代在美國賭場、PUB常見的點唱機，早年戶外電影院使用的超大型音響等，也都是他喜歡的收藏。

展示樂器中，有一八九九年美國進行曲大王蘇沙改良的蘇沙號，體積大，聲音渾厚寬闊；一九三五年美國製作的維多利亞式風琴，造型典雅，常用在西方教堂聖樂演奏。

(自由時報記者廖雪茹)



Clockwise from top: A range of speaker units, a woman playing a Victorian organ, a sousaphone, and Bill Gates Museum owner Wen Chao-long posing next to an outdoor movie theater speaker. PHOTOS: LIAO HSUE-RU, LIBERTY TIMES

最上圖起順時針方向依序為：各式音響組件；女子彈奏維多利亞式風琴；蘇沙號；「比爾蓋茲」音響博物館館長溫焯隆與戶外電影院使用的超大型音響合影。

照片：自由時報記者廖雪茹攝