

RALF ELSMANN

A warm welcome to my historical tour!

My path to your solution...

As a boy from Essen, I studied at the Muisches Gymnasium Essen Werden and was given a place at the Folkwang School for piano and clarinet, later flute. My path was meant to be a full course of study in piano, but the way it was taught drained much of my motivation, to put it mildly. I missed my private teacher from earlier days.

One spring day in 1980, after returning home from lessons in Werden, our piano tuner was there, restoring the instrument, bringing back the right tones, in frequency and character. When I asked what one had to learn to do such remarkable work, he, whose name I unfortunately no longer remember, answered: "piano maker."

BAM!

Back then, I could look things up in Brockhaus and discovered that nearby there was the renowned piano manufacturer Ibach in Schwelm. Written applications and rejections came to an end with a personal visit to the workshop, after intensive conversations, I secured an apprenticeship starting in August 1980. I WAS HOME!!

What I received there, from the high standards of the staff who became my colleagues, from my instructors, and not least from Mr. Rolf Ibach, still shapes my personal standards of work and quality to this day.

In 1984, I began working as a self employed piano maker, including assignments for Ibach. Other companies reached out and entrusted me with work. This eventually led me to a restoration business that, alongside technical repairs of pianos and grand pianos, also offered a wide range of surface finishing techniques. I later acquired that business and founded Piano Elsmann.

At one of the annual music fairs in Frankfurt, I offered my services to a renowned German manufacturer of electronic organs, who promptly took me on. That marked the beginning of my move to the beautiful Hunsrück, which I completed in 1994.

In 2000, I was invited to support the development of a newly established synthesizer assembly line for a respected local manufacturer of enclosures. Later, after its successful setup, I was entrusted with leading that department and expanding it with well trained staff and strong support from my superiors. Among other things, we fully produced one of Germany's best selling synthesizers there.

In 2008, I left that company as an employee and went my own way. I was able to attract several businesses that placed small series, complex instruments with my company, high quality, varied tasks. Through this work, I also connected with a company in the Taunus, for which we handled diverse projects in the production of interpreting systems, including complex cable harnesses.

At the beginning of 2018, Achim Lenzgen, founder of a renowned synthesizer service department, contacted me about a collaboration. From then on, my working day became a daily challenge, supporting instruments, amps, controllers, everything the industry brought to market, as a service partner. This included handling warranty work for, for example, Swedish manufacturers of keyboard instruments of all kinds, as well as synthesizers, amps, pedals, and other products from a well known German manufacturer, and carrying out repairs after stage accidents or other incidents. Our collaboration grew into friendship, which also brought us together musically. On August 10, 2022, at 8:30 a.m., I spoke with Achim for the last time. A few hours later, I received another call from Namedy, but no longer from him. On that day, Achim left behind all our shared plans and dreams... Since then, we have refocused on producing a wide range of products in all their facets, from your idea to a legend, if you wish.

Thank you for reading my story.

With warm regards,

Ralf Elsmann