

# The Tielman Brothers and the Semprini Mystery

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In the sixties a Dutch IndoRock band called the Tielman Brothers was performing in Germany and in the Hague-Scheveningen. They were famous for their musical show and their impressive live sound.

## The power of valves

Guitar and vocal amplification was a real problem in that era. The power of the available amplifiers was limited by the technical possibilities of the valves that were used. Transistor technique was still in its developing stage. The maximum power that could be obtained with valves was about 100 Watts. For example: the Vox AC-30: 30 Watt, Fender Showman and Twin Reverb: 85 Watt, Fender Bandmaster: 40 Watt, Vox AC-100: 100 Watt, Echolette M40: 40 Watt, Dynacord Eminent: 50 Watts, Binson PE: 100 Watt. Thereby the power of the speakers was seriously limited and speakers were frequently 'blown up'. There were no PA-systems in the mid sixties that could cover a large auditorium, a serious problem for the Beatles, who also suffered the noise of thousands of screaming girls and couldn't even hear themselves playing or singing.



*The Tielman Brothers in Israel (1963) with Fender & Echolette*

The Tielman Brothers saw rather early the need for a more powerful Public-Address (PA) system. Among their equipment of Fender guitars, most Jazzmasters, Six-String baritone guitars and Fender amplifiers they used one of the first known PA-systems, a **Semprini PA installation** for their vocals. For a long time the origin of Semprini was obscure although it was known, and only by its name, to be manufactured in Italy.

## Italian brands

Italy played a prominent role in the sixties manufacturing professional musical equipment. Names like: Davoli, Geloso, Binson, Meazzi, Galanti, Eko, Farfisa, Viscount were known all over the world. Hank Marvin of the Shadows used a Meazzi echo for his famous guitar sound.



*Meazzi tape echo unit*

## Echolette Germany

Sometimes a factory manufactured musical equipment with different names for different brands. This was also the case in Germany with the Echolette tape echo, an invention in 1958 by the German musician Hans Bauer.

A tape recorder manufacturer **Klemt** in Olching (west of München) manufactured his echo units named Klemt-Echolette S type **NG51**: 'Nachhall Gerät mit Bandlänge 51 cm' (Reverb Unit with 51 cm tape length). Late in the sixties his firm and the Echolette name were sold to the German brand **Dynacord**. In the early years the Tielman Brothers used mainly Echolette equipment for their vocal amplification.

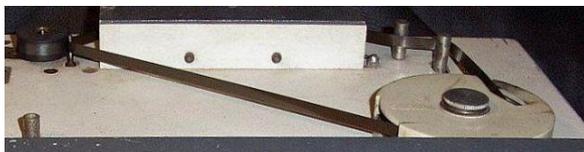


KLEMT *Echolette* -S- (1958)

## Semprini Italy

As stated before, Semprini was manufactured in Italy.

It was a small electronics factory plant called **L.I.A.R.E.** ( **L**aboratori **I**mpianti **A**pparecchiature **R**adio **E**lettriche ) situated in the Via Bissolati 22, Milano in Italy. Nowadays the location still exists and a computer-multimedia firm, **K2Media** (site is removed 2014) is now situated in the building. I don't know if it's the original building or a new one. Semprini was founded in 1956 by Cesare Semprini and his son Mario is running the **SEMPRINI-Trading Company** nowadays. SEMPRINI-Trading develops audio-visual and control-light system solutions for conference rooms, hotels, yachts and villa's with equipment from Bose, Crestron, Lutron and others ( site is removed 2014). You can access Mario Semprini on FaceBook.



*Semprini endless-tape cassette*

The concept of the Semprini PA system was rather revolutionary in the sixties. Separate lookalike units of echo, mixer and power amplifiers were combined in a slick rack. Gold and silver, satin metallic finish cases. Together with its valve technology and analog tape echo it sounded very clear and impressive.

The use of an endless tape in a cassette was unique too, since Dynacord, Echolette and Watkins all used a simple tape loop of about 50 cm. The cassette concept was later copied and applied in the Roland Space Echo's.

*Semprini had no connection with Binson.* However it seems obvious that Binson was aware of the Semprini concept and used the same layout for its later modular PE-rack.



*Semprini ST-280M amplifier & 707-6S Mixer/tape-Echo*

The Tielman Brothers' Semprini equipment as used in the late 60's begin 70's (pictures below):

- One combined 707/6 mixer + echo unit. (upper unit with open perforated lid)
- Two ST280 power amplifiers, probably 80 watt each. (middle units)
- One power stabilization unit. (lower unit)



*The Tielman Brothers with their Semprini PA-installation (late 60's)*

As I can remember the Tielman Brothers probably used Dynacord speakers with their Semprini PA, however Semprini also manufactured speaker enclosures and even microphones !



*A obscure picture of a Semprini speaker enclosure*

Power stabilisation was not really necessary for The Netherlands or Germany, but mains power was rather fluctuating in Spain and Italy in those years, however since the Tielman Brothers toured all over the world, even Israel, this was a rather useful unit to them.

## Semprini units

	<p><i>'Amplificatore Finali di Potenza Valvolare'</i>  <i>Power (end) valve-amplifier</i></p>
	<p><b>ST-280</b> valve amplifier</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Left part: mains power section with on/off switch and fuse</li> <li>• Middle part: power amp</li> <li>• Right part: pre-amp</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Power- &amp; pre-amplifier part of the ST-280</b></p> <p>Power part (left):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bassi- Bass</li> <li>• Alti - Treble</li> <li>• Volume - Volume</li> </ul> <p>Pre part (right): Mic 1 &amp; 2 and Line input</p>
	<p><b>ST-280</b> internal view:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• valve &amp; transformer coil technology</li> </ul>



**Stereofon Eco 707/6 S**

- Stereo Mixer & Echo unit with an endless tape cassette



**707/6 S**

- 5 channel mixer: echo, volume, treble & bass
- Echo part: repetition-volume, -tone, -length
- Main control part: volume, tone and echo volume



**Eco ETR 602/X**

- Echo unit



**ST-280 M amplifier**

- A more recent and integrated version of the ST-280 with a different frontplate but with the same controls.

## Binson Italy

The professional looks of the Semprini rack were copied by Binson in their PE rack. Binson also provided a power stabiliser, not shown in this rack configuration.



*The Binson PE rack (1970)  
all valve technology*



*Binson PE rack with Kustom speaker cabinets  
Eric Jahreis - The Groovy's (1975)*

### The Binson PE Rack

- 1 Binson P.E. 603-T Echorec (echo device)
- 1 Binson P.A. 602 (6 mic + 2 line/aux channels mixer)
- 2 Binson P.O. 601/100 (power amplifier unit, 100 Watts each)

Those Kustom speakers had a lifetime guarantee! We blew up a tweeter once and it was repaired for free.

The setup of the rack was rather cumbersome and with its sharp edges dangerous to musicians' fingers. One person held up the stands, another one had to slide the heavy units into their positions. Finally all connections had to be made at the backside. With the years this type of dedicated rackform was completely banned in favour of custom built flight cases or racks in the standardised 19-inch configuration.

## [SEMPRINI PICTURE GALLERY](#)

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