

Preface

The Linux Audio “movement” has a long history. It started with individuals working on pet projects at home, only occasionally showing the results of their work in postings on forums such as Usenet News. In 1998 a mailing list was formed to serve as a meeting point for these individuals — developers and users alike. This was later branded the “Linux Audio Developer’s Mailing List” (LAD).

It became obvious that there was a lot of potential in these people and their software, so it seemed like a good idea to demonstrate this to the public in some form. In July 2001 at the German “LinuxTag” (Europe’s largest expo on all things Linux), we had an open-source booth (with all expenses paid for by the LinuxTag organizers) for the first time where we demonstrated certain selected programs to visitors for 4 days. It was well received, so we did the same thing in the following years.

However, it became apparent that while this was informative and useful for the visitors, it left little time for the booth staff to talk to each other and share knowledge about their ideas and projects. This fact gave birth to the idea of a “programmer’s meeting”. We contacted the ZKM during the search for a meeting location in late 2002. The ZKM, in turn, expressed their interest in taking part, and we began planning together. The ZKM proposed the inclusion of public talks and presentations, thus transforming the meeting into a conference which could reach a much larger audience. On March 14–16, 2003, the first conference with roughly 10 presentations took place (free of charge for all), and everyone agreed that it was a good thing that should be repeated the following year.

The 2004 conference occurred once again at ZKM, in cooperation with SuSE Linux, from April 29 to May 2. Due to the success of the first conference, the second was planned as a significantly larger event. There were more than 30 talks, several workshops, demos, a panel discussion, and lots of spontaneous meetings and discussions. The ZKM engagement in the second conference also increased. While LAC2003 focused on the development of audio software, in 2004 the ZKM helped bring musicians into the mix. The 2004 conference featured several concerts of different types of electro-acoustic music, including world premieres and a piece by Orm Finnendahl commissioned by and developed at ZKM. The increase in scope was reflected in the name change from “Linux Audio Developer’s Conference” to “Linux Audio Conference”. Attendance to the talks remained free of charge, thanks to the ZKM’s efforts.

As it was the case in 2003 already, interested parties who were unable to attend the conference in person could listen to the talks through a live audio stream on the Internet. The talks covered a wide spectrum of topics, including audio architecture, hard disk recording, audio mastering, software synthesis, sampling, virtual instruments, spatialization, music notation, computer music, and documentation.

The idea to publish proceedings did not come up until during the conference. Therefore the proceedings of LAC2004 comprise only a portion of the talks, and we are especially grateful for the papers that we received. Links to ogg files and abstracts of all talks can be found at www.zkm.de/lac/2004.

The conference was sponsored by Lionstracs and Hartmann. During the conference two Linux based synthesizers were presented, Mediastation by Lionstracs and Neuron by Hartmann.

We owe many thanks to everybody who contributed to the conference and helped

in making it such a great success. We are looking forward to the LAC2005 which will take place on April 21–24, 2005.

Frank Neumann, Matthias Nagorni and Götz Dipper
Organization Team LAC2004
Karlsruhe, December 20, 2004