

Thomas “Rikki” Farr Biography

- Rikki’s great grandfather was born in County Cork in Ireland and traveled to Wales to dig coal in the coal mines of the Rhondda Valley.
- His father, Thomas George Farr, was the Boxing Heavyweight Champion of The Commonwealth and British Empire. He fought a memorable fight against Joe Louis in his first title defense after winning the World Championship from Jim Braddock. The fight took place in Yankee Stadium in 1937 for the World Heavyweight Title. Tommy lost on a controversial point decision after a tough 15 round fight, and Joe Louis was later quoted as saying that Tommy Farr was the toughest opponent he ever fought.
- His mother, Muriel Montgomery Germon, was selected to ride for Great Britain’s equestrian team at Olympia and was also a top model and actress including contracts with Top Rank, Chanel, and Christian Dior. She also was a championship race car driver, competing in the 24 hour at Brooklyn’s while driving a Delahaye.
- Thomas “Rikki” Farr was born in Hove on September 30, 1942 in the middle of a V2 bombing raid.
- Rikki grew up in Sussex and attended several schools including Brighton College, Seaford College Boarding School, and Brighton College of Art.
- While at Seaford, Rikki became the captain of the school’s rugby, tennis, and cricket teams and won the “Victor Ludorum” title (i.e., school’s best overall athlete) two years in a row. Sports continued to play a big part in Rikki’s life as he was later selected to play on the Junior International rugby team. He tore his ACL against Ardingly which temporarily ended his rugby activities.
- Rikki was also a Junior Theater actor and starred in several productions at Joan Littlewood’s (wife of Sir Lawrence Olivier) repertory theatre called Lewes Little Theater. He played in *Golden Boy*, *Dark Side of the Moon*, *Sport of My Mad Mother*, and *The Seagull*. He was recruited by Bill Foulk from the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art to play the lead part in the period piece about Henry VIII called *The Reformation*.
- While living abroad, Rikki met John Lennon outside the Kaiserkeller in Hamburg, Germany in 1960. John and his band The Beatles were the house band there. Rikki and John became good friends, and Rikki arranged for them to play at various venues throughout England during the infancy of the British music revolution.
- Rikki’s success with putting shows on with such bands as The Beatles and Yardbirds, Kinks, Spencer Davis, The Animals, Pink Floyd, Fleetwood Mac, Moody Blues and many others led to him pursuing a career in music. He opened what was then a revolutionary series of R&B clubs for not only the British bands but also the up and coming American artists like Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gay, Smokey Robinson,

The Miracles, Supremes, Wilson Picket and Sam & Dave. He owned or managed several premier British music clubs including Brave New World, Kimball's, Brighton Cellars, South Sea Pier and many more. He was invited by Harold and Barbara Pendleton to help turn the famous Marquee Club from a pure jazz club to a setting for bands such as the Rolling Stones, Beatles, Led Zeppelin, Jethro Tull, Pink Floyd, Rod Stewart, The Who and Gary Farr, Rikki's brother, and the T-Bones who held the longest running Friday residency at the club.

- In 1968, Rikki was asked by the Foulk brothers to help produce the first Isle of Wight Music Festival. This then led to the 1969 festival attended by 150,000 people. Rikki and Ronnie Foulk flew to New York to convince Bob Dylan to come out of retirements since his motorcycle accident to which he agreed and brought with him The Band and Richie Havens. At this show The Who presented for the first time *The Tommy Opera*, the Moody Blues presented *Knights in White Satin* and special guest, Joe Cocker, introduced *With a Little Help From My Friends*. The event was a tremendous success and Rikki and the Foulk brothers set to work on the now infamous 1970 Isle of Wight.
- The 1970 Isle of Wight, which was said at the time to be one of the largest human gatherings in the world, with estimates of over 650,000, surpassed the attendance at Woodstock. Included in the line-up of over fifty performers were The Who, Jimi Hendrix, Miles Davis, The Doors, Ten Years After, Emerson, Lake & Palmer, Joni Mitchell, The Moody Blues, Melanie, Donovan, Gilberto Gil, Free, Chicago, Richie Havens, John Sebastian, Leonard Cohen, Jethro Tull, Taste and Sly and the Family Stone. The unexpectedly high attendance levels led, in 1971, to Parliament passing the "Isle of Wight Act" preventing gatherings of more than 5,000 people on the island without a special license.
 - The 1970 Festival was filmed by a 35mm film crew under the direction of future Academy Award-winning director Murray Lerner who at that point had just directed the Academy Award-nominated documentary *Festival of the Newport Folk Festival*. Lerner distilled material from the Isle of Wight Festival into the film *A Message to Love: The Isle of Wight Rock Festival* released theatrically in 1996 and subsequently on DVD. Rikki Farr, who also emceed the festival, is prominently featured in this film including a famous rant scene where he passionately criticizes French Maoists who vowed to destroy the Festival unless it was free. Rikki's speech in this scene was later sampled and put into the opening of a song by the rock band Oasis.
- In 1974, Rikki founded a sound and lighting company called Electrosound UK (later renamed to Electrotec) and a tour production company called International Tour Services (ITS) from where he developed and produced over 4,700 live audio concerts with such artists as Pink Floyd, Led Zeppelin, Rod Stewart, Tom Petty, Miles Davis, Bob Marley, The Who, Bob Seger, Guns N Roses, Nirvana, Lalapalooza Festivals, and many, many more. Combined, Electrotec and ITS generated over \$70 million of revenues annually and was universally recognized as one of the top three sound

and lighting production companies in the world.

- In 1979, Rikki was responsible for the audio production when the Pope John Paul II came to Ireland. Over 1 million people gathered to hear him speak. This is the largest attendance in Europe to date still today.
- In 1980, Rikki and his team presented Bob Marley in Harare at the Independence from British Rhodesia to Zimbabwe. The first words uttered in Zimbabwe, following the raising of the new nation's flag, were "Ladies and gentlemen, Bob Marley and The Wailers."
- During this time, Rikki also founded Artists International Management (AIM) where he managed several bands including The Tubes. Here Rikki generated, with artists he worked with, 34 Platinum and Gold certified RIAA studio record awards.
- Rikki also wrote, created and produced *The Mighty Morphin Power Rangers Show* for Saban Entertainment. This production grossed over \$280M worldwide which still holds the record for highest grossing children's concert series of all time. The show toured in over 23 countries and also broke Neil Diamond's attendance record at Radio City Music Hall in New York.
- Rikki was responsible for the production & staging for U2's iconic downtown LA liquor store rooftop video shoot of "Where the Streets Have No Name" in 1987.
- Rikki sold Electrotec in 1988.
- In 1993, he founded the car audio company Diamond Audio. Diamond grew to become the leader in the premium car audio segment and carried a line of over 25 products.
- Rikki sold the car audio division of Diamond to Cerwin-Vega Mobile in 2002. He retained Diamond's lucrative multi-media division and renamed it Audio Solutions, Inc. (ASI). ASI sold audio products to a variety of OEM customers including NEC, Packard Bell, Gateway, Acer and eMachines. ASI merged with Aurasound in 2007 and became a publicly traded company under the ticker symbol ARUZ.
- Rikki left Aurasound in 2008 and returned in 2010, he was instrumental in growing the business tenfold from \$7M in revenues to \$76M in 2011. During this time, Rikki also developed the number one rated sound bar for Vizio in the U.S. However, disagreements over design quality caused Rikki to leave the company in 2012.
- Rikki is now actively building Audio Design Experts, the holding company for the rapidly emerging RIVA Audio which has in 2016/2017 has received some of the highest awards in the world of high performance wireless audio.

In summary, Rikki is a globally recognized audio expert and successful entrepreneur. He has over 50 years of experience designing and producing audio products and performances that many millions of people have experienced and enjoyed. Rikki has also founded five highly successful and profitable companies. He is regarded as a true “Golden Ears” throughout the music industry with a deep passion for delivering the real truth and joy of music. His philosophy and goal for RIVA Audio is to design and produce speakers and technology that can reproduce music and sound so pure you can hear the future.

Quick Links:

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[Rikki's Story - Part 2](#)

Rikki [Then](#) and [Now](#)