

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Sensaphonics celebrates 40 years of IEM innovation**

— Leading manufacturer of IEM and hearing health products continues to address the impact of sound exposure on musicians with a unique audiological perspective —

*The NAMM Show, Anaheim, CA, January 23, 2025***–** Sensaphonics, a leading designer and manufacturer of custom-fit in-ear monitors, earplugs and electronics designed to achieve safe, high-resolution audio in mission-critical applications, is celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2025. As the only custom in-ear monitor manufacturer founded and operated by a practicing audiologist, Sensaphonics stands uniquely positioned to deliver safe, high-fidelity audio solutions for professionals in high-SPL environments. From top-tier performing musicians and artists to industries including stock trading, auto racing, and space exploration, Sensaphonics continues to develop innovative tools designed to provide accurate and safe monitoring to everyone exposed to high SPL environments.

Founded in 1985 in Chicago, IL, by Dr. Michael Santucci, AuD, Sensaphonics began solely as a musicians’ hearing clinic, focusing on audiological evaluations, hearing conservation education, and recommending the use of foam earplugs (the only hearing protection available at the time). When it became apparent that musicians were averse to using the foam plugs, Dr. Santucci trialed wearing the plugs himself while playing his trumpet. The issues were immediately clear; the foam plugs had poor fidelity and were too occluding to be practical for music performance. This experience led Dr. Santucci to collaborate with Etymotic Research Inc. to develop the first custom high-fidelity hearing protection: the ER-15 filter embedded in medical-grade silicone. The result was a hit among users, and Sensaphonics began its evolution from a stand-alone hearing clinic to a pro-audio company driven by the mission of hearing health.

In the early 1990s, Dr. Santucci turned his focus to a different type of technology emerging in the music industry: the in-ear monitor (IEM). He recognized that existing IEMs used round diaphragm drivers, which required venting in the earpieces in order to pump in adequate sound. This caused the listener to crank up the volume of their in-ear mix in order to hear clearly over environmental ambient sounds, increasing their risk of hearing injury in the process. In response, Dr. Santucci developed the first IEM with balanced armature drivers in custom silicone earpieces (the ProPhonic IV). The result was increased isolation from environmental sounds and improved bass response, both of which allowed musicians to listen to their mix at a lower, safer level. The ProPhonic IV was first used on tour in 1992 by musicians and sound engineers for The Grateful Dead (see accompanying original tour pass), and word of its superior audio clarity and physical comfort quickly spread through the music industry, where bands including Aerosmith, Metallica, and The Rolling Stones were other early adopters of this new technology.

Continued advancements over the next several years helped popularize the use of IEMs and encourage the further refinement of safe-listening standards and practices. Today, the Sensaphonics portfolio includes a range of custom IEMs that have been developed and perfected to meet the various listening needs of music industry personnel, as well as workers in other high-SPL environments, all of which are made in a signature custom silicone material that is exclusive to the company. In addition to their highly-popular 2MAX, 2X-S and 3MAX custom-fit IEM models, Sensaphonics has continued to expand the capabilities and usefulness of safety-conscious personal monitoring. One such development is the 3DME Active Ambient IEM system, which utilizes embedded binaural MEMS ambient microphones, allowing the user to mix-in ambient sounds to a comfortable level, as well as providing control of EQ, balance and other processing via a Bluetooth®-connected app. Dr. Santucci’s latest innovation, the TEC Award nominated dB Check Pro, has made further waves in the hearing health landscape as the only device available that can inform listeners as to how loud they are listening to IEMs or headphones in real time while offering suggested time limits on how long it is safe to listen at those levels based on NIOSH and OSHA guidelines.

Dr. Santucci’s dedication to hearing health and providing a satisfying and safe listening experience for all ears drives his enlightening educational outreach to musicians, researchers, and other audiologists around the world. He has been a featured lecturer and has lent his expertise to many prominent industry groups including the World Health Organization (WHO), the Audio Engineering Society (AES), the National Hearing Conservation Association (NHCA), and MusiCares, as well as holding his own Gold Circle Audiology Master Classes online and at various events each year. Santucci and Sensaphonics have garnered recognition when awarded the inaugural NIOSH/NHCA Safe in Sound Award for innovation in hearing loss prevention; the American Academy of Audiology (AAA) Samuel F. Lybarger Industry Award for innovative contributions in engineering, technology, and advocacy for promoting hearing health among musicians, their crews, and music enthusiasts; an AES Fellowship Award for dedication to hearing loss prevention research and education, as well as his pioneering efforts in in-ear monitoring technology; an Innovator of the Year Award in the In-Ear Monitor category from Hearing Health & Technology Matters for the 3DME in-ear monitor system; and several TEC Award nominations among other industry accolades.

As Sensaphonics begins its 40th anniversary celebration, it is notable that they remain the only in-ear monitor company to specialize in hearing health for musicians and run in-house a musician-focused hearing clinic. “This is really what I do, what I’m all about,” states Dr. Santucci. “Since founding Sensaphonics, my life’s mission has been working to protect and conserve hearing for musicians and people in other industries with high levels of noise or sound exposure. Our work here over the past 40 years is just the beginning of what I see to be a revolution in the awareness and education about hearing health in our industry. While we strive to safely enhance all forms of sound and communications, we also know that musicians and related personnel have critical special needs that require more than just a warning to use proper hearing protection. These artists need to keep their ears healthy to protect their lifestyle through regular hearing evaluations with a music audiologist, proper use of quality earphones, and using common sense protective measures when in potentially damaging environments. Sensaphonics provides a clear path to the tools and education needed to provide the ultimate IEM experience for all users.”

Sensaphonics kicks off its 40th year celebration at The NAMM Show 2025 (booth 11906) with a variety of in-booth experiences, demonstrations, show-exclusive discounts, and contests aimed at creating better hearing health awareness while also showcasing their latest IEM’s and other award-winning products including the TEC Award nominated dB Check Pro sound level analyzer.

Visit [Sensaphonics.com](http://sensaphonics.com/) to check out the latest product offerings, hearing health information, and more.

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Photo file 1: Michael\_Santucci.JPG

Photo caption 1: Sensaphonics founder and president, Dr. Michael Santucci, Au.D, shown at the Sensaphonics offices in Chicago, IL.

Photo file 2: Grateful\_Dead.JPG

Photo caption 2: Grateful Dead backstage pass from the first show utilizing Sensaphonics in-ear monitors.

Photo file 3: Steven\_Tyler.JPG

Photo caption 3: Sensaphonics user Steven Tyler of the band Aerosmith.

Photo file 4: Dave\_Matthews.JPG

Photo caption 4: Sensaphonics user Dave Matthews of Dave Matthews Band.

Photo file 5: Adams\_Santucci.JPG

Photo caption 5: Rolling Stones monitor engineer, Mike Adams (left) with Sensaphonics founder and president, Dr. Michael Santucci Au.D.

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**ABOUT SENSAPHONICS**

Founded in 1985 by Michael Santucci, Au.D., Sensaphonics Hearing Conservation, Inc., designs and manufactures custom-fitted in-ear monitors, earplugs and electronics designed to achieve safe, high-resolution audio in mission-critical applications. Serving a primary customer base of musicians and sound engineers, Sensaphonics products are used exclusively on all manned NASA missions and on the International Space Station. Other significant markets served by Sensaphonics include house of worship, theater, broadcasting, motorsports, aeronautics, and audiophile listening. Sensaphonics is committed to the preservation of hearing through superior products, audiological services and audio consulting, enabling longer, more productive careers and richer quality of life. Located in Chicago, Sensaphonics can be contacted toll-free at 877-848-1714, internationally at 312-432-1714, or online at [www.sensaphonics.com](http://www.sensaphonics.com).