**Daniel Hagström Ditches DSP to Meet Tight Mastering, Gaming and Film Deadlines Using Amphion Monitors**

Amphion Two18 and BaseTwo25 speaker system enabled fast reactions during mastering for Mediatonic’s *Fall Guys*

Helsinki, Finland, August 2, 2023 — Award-winning mastering engineer Daniel Hagström opened his own room in February 2023 after working for more than nine years at Finland’s longest running studio complex with some of the biggest recording artists in the country, and beyond. He also took the opportunity to switch monitor brands, to a pair of Amphion Two18 and BaseTwo25 bass extension system powered by Amphion amplifiers, a leap of faith that was vindicated when his very first mastering project in his new room was approved without a single revision.

“It was time to spread my wings and try something new and fresh,” says Hagström, who had been planning the move for a while. His new room is in a building that houses other audio producers and creatives, including the studios of Universal Music Finland, in a creative and cultural district of Helsinki. “So, it's good for business,” he says. “But what I left behind was the room and the speakers, so everything changed at once. That’s a dangerous thing for a mastering engineer. But everything worked out very well.”

Hagström had heard Amphion monitors on their own at other facilities but wasn’t able to hear them in direct comparison to another set of speakers until he was at an industry party. As luck would have it, they were set up next to the same brand of speakers that he was using at the time. “I could instantly switch between speaker systems, so I played some of my masters and what my attention was attracted to was the speed of the Amphions, the low end and the resolution,” he says.

Monitor preferences are very subjective, he continues. “But for some reason, they felt more straightforward and natural to me. When switching to the other system, I could feel the low end slowing down a bit. That was initially why I got interested; I felt like I would be able to handle the low end so much better with the resolution of the Amphions. I decided there and then that if I were to ever have a newroom and change speakers this is the first set I would try.”

Hagström already had the rest of his equipment set up when the Amphion speakers were delivered but was about to leave for a weekend trip and had yet to hear anything in the room other than people talking. “I was so stressed. When you construct a studio you never truly know how it sounds until you put a speaker in it, even if you do all the simulations. And I was coming back on Monday to my first mastering job at 10 a.m.,” he recalls. With only minutes to spare before he had to leave, he put on a familiar song and briefly listened to the speakers and the room — and everything sounded just fine. “That was a huge relief,” he says. When he returned on Monday morning, he says, “I played one reference track then started mastering. And version number one was approved, with no revisions.”

Hagström is a true jack of all trades. “Pretty much anything you can think of when it comes to audio, I probably have been involved in one way or another, either a lot or a little,” he says. He built his first studio in a garage, tinkering with tape machines, old synths and software downloaded from the internet. He went on to become a composer, producer and engineer working in film, theater and video games. These days, he focuses on mastering, working with clients such as ***Gettomasa, Costi, JVG, Mikael Gabriel, BESS, Juha Tapio, nublu, Justinas Jarutis, Bauer Media and X-Factor Finland***. Among his awards is an Emma (Finland’s Grammy equivalent) for mastering the best-selling album of the year for Finnish rap artist Gettomasa’s 2022 release, *Vastustamaton*.

Working with Amphion speakers has changed Hagström’s approach to monitoring while mastering. “Before, when I was working with DSP-based speakers, I always used to measure and fine tune. Now I have taken the approach of listening in a new environment with new speakers and reacting to what they tell me. I don't think about the room or the response. I do what I think needs to be done, print the master and send it out. That is what changed, and it works amazingly well.”

Audio professionals are always evaluating other equipment, Hagström also observes. “I'm always interested in different tools and approaches. But I haven't felt the need to test any other speakers. With this setup and this room, I get so much closer to the emotion of the music I'm listening to, which is important in the mastering stage because I’m the link between the listener and the technical side. My guess is that this is because there is no DSP. This is straight from my converters to the amps to the Amphion speakers, and obviously the room is really good. But without any fine-tuning or EQ everything sounds fine. And it translates everywhere. That takes a lot of the stress out of my work.”

The Amphion speakers have also allowed Hagström to work faster. “I think it’s a combination of the design philosophy of the system, the fact that there's no DSP and the speed and resolution of the speakers, and this fine room. I can react fast to what I’m hearing and trust that reaction. And in my line of work speed is everything.”

Although he is first and foremost a mastering engineer, Hagström has also become well known for his work on the soundtrack for Mediatonic’s successful battle royale video game *Fall Guys*, which has attracted well over 50 million players. Initially he produced, mixed and mastered the music composed by his longtime friend, Jukio Kallio. But on the past two seasons, building on his background in producing electronic music, Hagström says, “I worked on the composition and the production on my own.” He mixes and masters the music in his new room, but mostly composes at home on his laptop with headphones.

**About Amphion**
Amphion Loudspeakers Ltd. was established in 1998. We design and build loudspeakers that are characterized by honest and accurate sound reproduction. Precise driver integration ensures world-class imaging and phase coherency. Controlled dispersion technology helps achieve more stable results in a variety of room acoustics. All products are handmade in Finland (and the Amphion amplifiers are assembled in Finland) to ensure enduring listening quality.

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