

Distributing Blues Power

Searching on GOOGLE for one of the IEC 61850 publications or presentations of Clemens Hoga, Siemens Engineer at Power Transmission and Distribution, leads to some surprising hits, showing Clemens playing in a Blues Band. And people think that engineers are boring! So we decided to talk to Clemens to better understand and get more information about these unknown activities.

Biography

Clemens Hoga is Innovation and Technology Manager at Siemens PTD, Energy Automation.

He acts as Vice Chairman of the UCA International Users Group, He is also a member of IEC TC57 Working Group 10 and TC 65 Working Group 11 and Convenor of the DKE 952.0.10, the German IEC61850 mirror committee.



Picture by G. Spandler

PAC World: Clemens, we know you from the IEC TC 57 Working Groups and as a Board member of the UCA International. What kind of Blues do you get from these jobs?

CL: Best vibrations only! I really enjoy the work and the environment of creativity in these committees and I like the international flair of this community.

PAC World: What kind of band do you play in?

CL: This is a Blues Band called "Van Bluus". The singer, Horst Spandler is an old friend from my school years. Actually, he was the singer in my first band when I started playing in bands at 16. This band split when he went to Boulder to study in the US. After 20 years of fairly no contact, he gave me a call for Van Bluus. Despite lots of work at Siemens, I took this chance to put an end to the frustration a musician feels without playing live. And this decision was absolutely right.

PAC World: What instrument do you play?

CL: I play the keyboards; I also play guitar in some songs.

PAC World: What kind of music is it?

CL: Most of the songs we cover are

from the Blues legends. We do not try to achieve the original sound. For example, B.B. King will always sound unique anyway; we look for our own interpretation. But we also write our own songs.

PAC World: Where do these skills come from?

CL: If I tell you that my father was a musician and my mother a ballet dancer at the opera house, you may imagine that little Clemens was not supposed to become a T&D engineer but a pianist. Therefore I started with piano lessons at the age of 5 and ended in a classical education at the conservatory including, studying things such as composition and harmony when I was 16.

PAC World: That does not sound too much like Rock 'n' Roll!

CL: That's right. When I was 14, I got in touch with the music of Pink Floyd, Led Zeppelin and other bands. This was when I decided to become a rock star. The hair got longer and through my classical education I was able to technically play all these songs. My godfather bought me an organ and a Fender Rhodes Piano and so I played in

several bands and composed a lot of songs. In 1977, at the age of 19, I had my first LP record with the band "Blister Chap". We produced it by ourselves in an edition of 500 records. Today, the record is a rarity. Later on, during my engineer studies, I worked as a studio musician and participated in more records. That was a solid financial base for a student.

PAC World: What went wrong with becoming a rock star?

CL: Almost everything! Lots of reasons! At the age of 19 you do not really know what life is (you just imagine you know), you think that if you make good music (or what you think good music is) the rest will come by itself. But in a young band there is always a lot of social dynamics under way – most of them split because of these reasons. By the way, during that time I learned a lot regarding how to operate and behave in "working groups".

PAC World: Were there any other reasons?

CL: There are a lot of things around music one must cover. Without a fair and skilled management you can not

get ahead. And at that time I thought I could do everything by myself, but the music business turned out to be tricky... Today, with a little more life experience, I can say that luckily I did not make it. Too many good musicians have disappeared and live in bad conditions.

PAC World: How did you join Siemens?

CL: Along with my conservatory education and the band activities I successfully finished my school education. This enabled me to study Communication Technology and become a qualified engineer. Naturally, I wanted to build synthesizers and lighting controllers for bands. Luckily, Siemens had a department for theatre and stage lighting, and with my background this was the entry to Siemens. Later I installed stage machinery in one of the biggest opera stages in Munich. This had to do with lots of security-related automation and Ethernet automation-protocols.

PAC World: What is the relation to your present communication work?

CL: I realized that a comprehensive communication technology will be a decisive factor in all future

automation application. I focused my activities to fieldbus technology and later on Ethernet protocols. And for the fields of T&D automation, IEC 61850 is my bible.

PAC World: Music and T&D Engineering are two totally different things. How do you excel in both?

CL: Quite the opposite! Creating innovative technology is not so far away from writing a song. In both cases you are looking for the new, the better, and you investigate and try if it works. This creativity is exactly what is needed in our business. For me every band meeting is like a creativity seminar. And I am not alone – some colleagues are playing an instrument and make music. For example Fred Steinhauser of Omicron plays the guitar, (lots of common visits at guitar centers in the US!) and Mark Adamiak of GE is an excellent piano player. And I think, there are many more.

PAC World: So, you keep on playing the Blues?

CL: Yes, I do. It is so much fun, especially if you play with old friends! Yes, for sure, this will always be a part of my life.

Blister Chap

