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Interview:
Pierre
Boulez





Audio Research Reference 3 Line-Stage and PH7 Phono-Stage

Reviewed by Roy Gregory in Issue 45

Audio Research might have suffered a few fallow years, but recent releases have shown signs of resurgence, a return to form underlined with a bang by the arrival of the Ref 3 and PH7. Classically styled and wonderfully versatile, these products deliver true high-end performance without the operational limitations or quirkiness that so often attend such sonic excellence. Easy to use with the facilities and options you actually want (all accessible via remote control and the clean, clear displays) these units are so sensible you start to suspect their audio credentials – but one listen will convince.



Carefully engineered, using appropriate technology (the PH7 employs a J-fet input



stage and limited gain to deliver a truly stellar performance) the ARC combination offers superb stability, separation and a relaxed confidence that allows you to hear right into the musical performance. Initial concerns over gain levels and a persistent haze from the line-stage were traced to a faulty valve. Back in rude health, the Ref 3 proved itself a superbly consistent and unflappable performer, with a phenomenal sense of power and dynamic range

built on that stable foundation. Quiet authority might seem a strange epithet to describe a pre-amp and phono-stage, but it sums up the unobtrusive excellence of this ARC pairing perfectly. ➤



Prices: Ref 3 \$8998
PH7 \$5200

UK Distributor:
Absolute Sounds
Tel. (44)(0)20 8971 3909
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Manufacturer:
Audio Research Corporation
Net. www.audioresearch.com