

In Mint Condition, circa 1969:

Warren G., Aural Evaluator

The first Audio Research/Electronic Industries amplifier is completely refurbished, brought to life and evaluated.

The Dual 100 C two-chassis fully vacuum tube-regulated all-tube stereo amplifier. (Serial number: 960160-3)

A friend of mine located this nearly mythical amp, one of only about 16 sets ever built (according to Leonard Gustafson, former customer service head and resident historian at ARC), down in Dallas, Texas in late winter from a broker representing the



original owner. It was bound for a Japanese collector until we intervened and offered to pick it up and pay cash. As an aside, another Japanese gentleman, a well-known audio electronics designer, has one of these residing in his vintage audio collection. This was to be Bill Johnson's first all-out statement piece in a long, distinguished audio design career.

Replete with 1/8" thick grey anodized aluminum chassis sporting heliarc welded corners, four oil-filled capacitors, a metal amphenol connector umbilical cord set between audio and power supply chassis, five potted transformers and 32 tubes total, this is a 110 lb. mil-spec beast. It pretty much defines what's meant when someone says they don't build 'em like that anymore.

Chris at ARC, master of restoring all things electronic, spent several months of his spare time tackling this project. This included all new, modern equivalent electrolytic capacitor replacements, requiring creative, extensive adapting hardware. The best new old stock tubes were located, tested, matched and fitted as needed. New original phenolic speaker binding posts and gold RCA jacks were installed, as well as a new power cord to replace the old dried out original one. Lastly, modern elastomeric feet replaced the crusty small rubber ones. Other than that, all other parts, wiring and circuitry are bone-stock original. Right down to a motherlode of orange-drop capacitors and cluster of carbon composition resistors surrounded by a nest of neat hand wiring. Finally completed, Chris threw it on the bench to run all the specs, which it easily met. A solid 80 watts per channel with very low noise and distortion. I popped in a fresh MDQ 8 amp slow-blow line fuse, pro-golded every metal contact and was ready to have a listen on the highly resolving Magneplanar MG 20.7s.

As the amp warmed up and began to break in the new parts over several days, a few things are immediately evident: A complete lack of grain and dryness – nor any sense of strain or electronic signature – flies in the face of all logic for any 48-year old amplifier. Spectacular dimensionality, focus and depth lend the midrange in particular a holographic vocal authenticity. The tonality is spot-on with a correct amount of body and timbral warmth balanced against modern-amp levels of transparency and inner detail. Yes, the amp lacks the last iota of bandwidth, bass control, speed, dynamic aplomb and staging width when thrown up against the best modern tube mono block amps such as the ARC REF 250SE or REF 750SE. And yet you could listen all day as it just pulls you in for hours on end with ravishing air and tonality, the subtlest texturing and addictive liquidity. And the longer it runs, the more open, effortless and beautiful the music sounds. Judged against all other vintage tube amps from the 1950's-60's era I've experienced over the years (as well as many more recent amp designs), the Dual 100 exhibits levels of neutrality, definition and realism far ahead of its time. Perhaps the rarest collectible crown jewel of early high-end audio amplification.

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