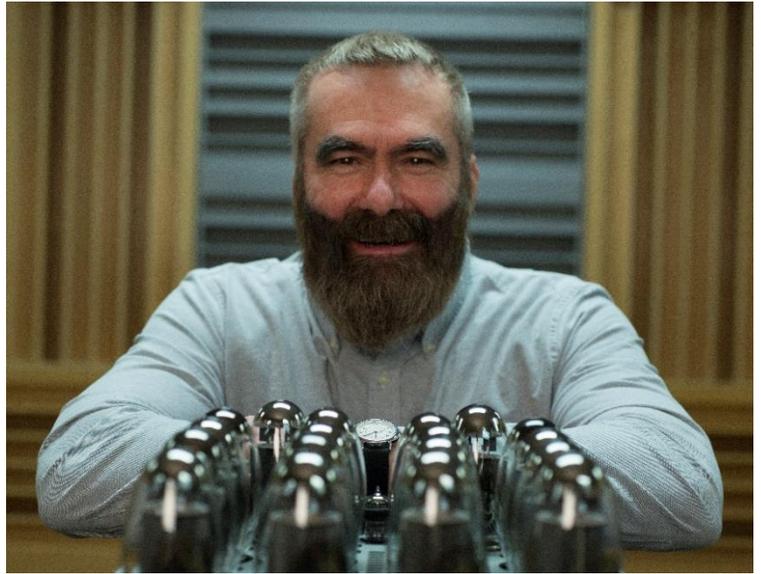


**Our House Sound – Part 1:  
The Audio Research high-definition design  
philosophy.  
Warren Gehl  
Sonic Development, Audio Research Engineering Dept.**



What sets Audio Research apart from its competitors has been there from its inception, woven into the sonic DNA of the very first designs nearly 50 years ago. The champion of pushing vacuum tube performance boundaries was (and remains through others after his passing) Bill Johnson, WZJ, founder and chief architect of our vision. The unique sonic attributes of each Audio Research component were instantly recognizable to me when I first laid ears on them in the early 1970's. They are just as unmistakable today.

Like many, I bought my first Audio Research preamp and amp second-hand, an SP-3 and Dual 75A in 1975. Twenty years later Bill hired me to be the main listener for the company, under the guidance of his gifted right-hand man and my predecessor, Jack Hjelm. Armed with a deep passion for the brand as well as live and recorded music, I am equally humbled and gratified to carry the torch of our signature sound that has been passed to me and our dedicated team to nurture and respectfully build upon with each new design. With over 22 years of invaluable learning experiences at ARC, I'll share a few thoughts on what I've absorbed along the way and what I believe makes Audio Research so special to so many music-lover audio enthusiasts around the world. And entirely unique in this industry.

Our formula is really a delicate balancing act: The importance of recognizing and harnessing all the deep emotional cues of live music. The cues that allow for the simultaneous intimacy and grandeur of music's sweep to hold court in your listening room. The cues that balance impossibly complex timbral beauty with deep inner textural detailing. A you-could-swim-into-it wrap-around ambience retrieval and spooky imaging dimensionality coupled with startling ever-shifting dynamic drama. The unfolding results are immediately palpable: The burnished woody volume and dancing velvety rasp of the cello, the tanginess of an oboe, the gleam in the clarinet, the shimmering tsunami of brass overtones washing over you from across the room when a big cymbal gets whacked...the thundering, menacing rumble of the left hand pouncing on a piano, the spiky, percussive sweet pings elicited by the right hand's mastery of the keys... all the mouth, throat and chest tones of a great singer coalescing once again into breathing, palpable human emotion through coherent, unbridled delivery. The harmonic halo of a massed string section rising like mist above the hall, wafting toward the audience as if on some magic carpet. These are what matter to the heart and memory of a performance. The untamed artistry and drama flaunted inside and between mere printed notes of a score. You see, at the end of the day when you come home and want to depressurize from the world and day's events, isn't all you really want to experience is a mini-vacation that reinvigorates your life and its true meaning through deeper human communication?

What deeply satisfies this appetite to unwind and refresh is exactly what an Audio Research component so uniquely captures. An amalgamation of what is thought to be mutually exclusive: the ability to both relax and engage you at once. To soothe yet energize and invigorate. The core idea in capturing this is to wed the intrinsic beauty of tubes – their wider, more complex tonal palette, their vast yet utterly focused and un-blurred dimensional sound space defining an event unfolding, moving toward and enveloping you, their purity and grainless octave-to-octave coherence – with the bandwidth, speed, control and background quietness strengths of great solid-state design. With each successive ARC product design, the goal of combining and enhancing the virtues of both technologies, while working to track down and eliminate their respective remaining historical weaknesses, is what moves us forward. It is what defines the progress of what we have always called the concept of high definition, long before it became fashionable for others to adopt this very term.

**audio research**  
HIGH DEFINITION®