



### Jonathan Valin

#### Magnepan Tympani 1-U/1-D

Back in the early seventies, when I was a graduate student at the University of Chicago, I fell in with a bad bunch of collegiate audiophiles, who worshipped at the altar of a hi-fi dealer named Basil Gouletas. Basil was as far removed from the high-end audio dealers of today as a person could get. He lived in and worked out of a decrepit brownstone apartment on the Near North Side and, like a cut-rate version of

Hugh Hefner, rarely dressed in anything other than silk pajamas and a tattered bathrobe.

Indeed, the first time I met Basil in his apartment, where my wife and I had traveled from U of C, he was not only pajama'd but unshaven. Nonetheless, he was quite friendly, showing us into his “display area,” an oblong, shabbily furnished room with a well-used grand piano, concealed by two room dividers, at one end, Basil’s frumpy armchair at the other, and a long musty couch along the side.

As we sat down on the couch, Basil reached over to a credenza beside his chair and someone behind the dividers began playing Chopin on the grand piano. I looked at Kathy and she at me, and almost simultaneously we asked, “Who’s playing your piano?” (We’d noticed no one at the piano bench when we came in.)

Basil laughed and said, “Arthur Rubinstein.”

Well, of course, it turned out that those screens weren’t room dividers at all. They were Magnepan I-U’s—a speaker that was then brand-new to the market and about which I knew nothing (TAS, which would soon rave about them, hadn’t started publishing yet)—being driven by first-generation Audio Research electronics (concealed in the credenza) about which I also knew nothing.

I’ve heard many many speakers, amplifiers, preamplifiers, and source components in many, many homes and showrooms since then. But in all my life I’ve never been more completely fooled by an audio “demo” than I was by the one in Basil Gouletas’ shabby apartment. Nor has a “demo” ever changed my life the way this one did.

Before Basil, like virtually every other budding audiophile back then, I relied on the specs printed in magazines to form opinions about what was more worthy and what less. After the Maggie/ARC experience, I realized that there was a standard far more important than numerical comparisons—the sound of the real thing, which HP would soon after celebrate in the pages of *The Absolute Sound*. Basil, who has long since passed away, may have been a character, but I owe my life as an audiophile and my career as an audio reviewer to that afternoon I spent in his apartment nearly five decades ago, when I learned that a recorded piano could sound enough like the real thing to make any other standard of comparison insignificant. Thank you, Basil, and rest in peace.



### Greg Weaver

#### Dahlquist DQ-10

Two experiences over the summer after I graduated high school (1973) permanently ignited my fascination with audio.

In June I visited a friend who had just purchased a B•I•C 980 turntable, a Shure V15 Type III cartridge (just released), Bob Carver’s Phase Linear 4000 preamplifier and 700B stereo amplifier, and Winslow Burhoe’s EPI 400 loudspeakers. Hearing the Styx 45rpm single of “Lady,” with its crushing bass line played at rock concert levels, and seeing dust shaken loose from ceiling fixtures, was more than merely eye-opening. It was the first time I heard a “stereo” even come close to approximating what I heard at a concert.

But it was a serendipitous visit to stereo store Opus One on Smithfield Street in Pittsburgh later that summer that would prove to be the lynchpin. A gentleman was playing what I first mistook to be a pair of modified Quads. While offering that familiar sense of coherence and midrange purity, here was real bass extension and impact, shimmering treble extension, and the most refined and detailed sense of soundstaging and imaging I had ever heard! Of course, it was Jon Dahlquist demonstrating his game-changing and wildly influential DQ-10s, the first dynamic speaker to use multiple drivers in an open-baffle, time-aligned array. The revelations of my time in front of those speakers on that momentous day have been impossible to shake. I’ve never looked back. **tbs**