

By Ward Meeker



JCA CIRCUITS
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JCA Circuits

JCA CIRCUITS WAS CONCEIVED to channel one man's desire to create custom amplification systems for guitar and audio.

"I've been heavily exposed to music, art, science, and electronics since early childhood," said JCA founder Jason Arthur. "I experience great pleasure creating new and exciting musical instruments."

Arthur has been designing and building custom guitar and audio amplification systems since 1995. A passionate music fan and guitarist, he appreciates what he calls "the universal subtleties" contained in a great piece of music, and says, "Making music is really a matter of selecting the best tools. And really, no matter what we do, without tools, mankind is no different than any other species. Our ability to design, make, and use tools sets us apart."

Did you get into building amps as a full-time venture or start it as a side job?

I always had ambitions in the audio field, and often felt underutilized—and bored—in my previous careers; I've worked as a laborer, equipment operator, plant operator, geologist, and engineer in the civil, environmental, and wastewater industries. I only recently decided to strike out on my own.

The creation of JCA Circuits is

the most rewarding and uplifting endeavor I have ever undertaken. Anyway, a great way to *not* be bored is to develop and market a new product line. That has been one of the most challenging things I've ever done with my time. One of my favorite quotes

ply for the output stage. There's also a high-power single-channel guitar amp in the works. It'll be the ultimate in terms of gain, clipping, and distortion shaping for the power chord hustler in all of us! Its concept is basically to perform as the ultimate

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is, "A man who makes no mistakes does not usually make anything," by Edward John Phelps.

When you were first getting up and rolling, how many amp models did you offer?

Well, I was—and still am—focused on the initial model—the GR 1.6 Golden Ratio, which is my personal showcase for the capabilities of the 6V6 power tube. But I do have other projects on the slate, like a wonderfully slick vacuum tube headphone amplifier for audio which uses a classic vacuum-tube rectified power supply for the input stage and a separate, super-stiff solidstate power sup-

expression of heavy authority being perfectly executed.

I'm always looking for new concepts, so JCA will always have something new to offer. It's really just a matter of when I become satisfied with a worthwhile prototype and move it into production.

What do you think it is that sets your product apart?

I view each of my amplifiers as unique and totally custom. Each is hand-wired by me, personally, and each can be voiced to a customer's preference. Since the GR 1.6 is such a responsive and versatile amplifier, I don't think it will ever need any serious circuitry tweaking. But it can be easily modified to line up with a particular player's style.

I also offer a variety of vacuum tubes, speakers, and covering options, and use the best components available without stepping into the "law of diminishing returns" (laughs)! We don't mess around with cheap wire, plastic jacks, chintzy pots, or a flimsy chassis; we engineer our designs to exceed what others do. Let's face it, \$2,000-plus is a lot of money to spend on anything. I believe that anybody willing to spend that hard-earned money on a very important tool, deserves the best product—one that will continue to perform for a lifetime. It's a simple matter of excellent value for the dollar.

So, are you a one-man amp-building operation?

Yes; my only help in the shop is Mr. Clancy J. Bigglesworth, who works in the customer support department. He's a large, gray, Maine Coon cat and is *quite* the tone junkie! He handles complaints...

What are your hopes for the future of the musical instrument industry?

I sincerely hope that the prevalent attitude in the industry continues to rally around the "working instruments." It's a lot of fun to observe and actually be a part of the recent trend of innovating new and original amplifier designs.

I'm personally much more inspired by a great new guitar or amp design than a designs that rehashes the past for all to ponder (laughs)!

What do you hope the future holds for JCA?

I'd like my products to be known as premium working instruments geared towards the real movers and shakers in the music world—the guys and gals out there in the trenches getting their hands dirty. I prefer to design and build an amp to be constantly played and appreciated by its owner. **VG**