

## Behind the Studio Glass with CEO Matt Boerum



The question of who is Audible Reality lies within its creative genius Matt Boerum. A musician first and an audio engineer second, Matt always seemed to find himself somewhere between his love for music and his creativity. Matt was involved in music from a young age, becoming obsessed with playing various instruments, singing, and performing for live audiences. Growing up as the son of a carpenter/mechanic who was an all-out master of the do-it-yourself philosophy, Matt was exposed to a world that deserved to be questioned—where settling for good enough wasn't an option.

As he got older, his passion for music and the stage was undeniable and through a decision that ultimately changed the course of his life for the better, Matt enrolled in audio technology at American University to study studio sound recording. This was something that didn't exist in the typical university setting but it was the perfect fit for Matt. Being somewhere between electronics, software, and music he quickly found his place. After graduating in 2005 Matt was brought on as a teacher/ recording studio manager at American University and over the next 9 years became a crucial component in the growth of its audio technology program. In 2011 after Matt and his colleagues had helped build up the program by 130 students, added a 2 million dollar recording studio facility, and a graduate degree program, American University was named the #1 audio technology school in the US.

Matt always had a knack for tinkering, which made American University such a great fit. At work and at home, Matt began taking apart stereos and mics, amassing a huge collection of historic phonographs and records while obsessing over how music and sound worked as a whole. Outside of the everyday technical work, he had dedicated fifteen years to traveling and making music professionally as a failed Rockstar and taking freelance audio engineering gigs for real Rockstars like CeeLo Green and Dirty Vegas. Matt's dedication

and passion for his craft eventually earned him an Emmy Award for his work behind the studio glass as an audio engineer. But as we all know life changes, families get bigger and old gigs grow tired—so it was time for a new challenge, some serious change, and a little self-discovery. So, in 2014 Matt made the decision to uproot his family and career from Washington, D.C. to live on a student salary and study under Grammy-winning legends, George Massenburg and Richard King at McGill University in Montreal. PS – If you haven't heard of McGill, you should do yourself a favor and check them out. From their outstanding music programs to their leadership in sound recording and music technology, this school has become an international reference for music.

While studying at McGill University, Matt started working on various 3D sound, virtual reality, and AI projects. He started asking himself, “Why can't we have more control of the sound we're listening to and why does it have to be so -dimensional?” Taking his background in sound engineering, and his passion from being an artist, Matt started tinkering with the way he could fill space with sound. His first experiment in 3D sound was an attempt to recreate the experience of sitting in a room listening to an old phonograph. He wanted to transport the listener back to the 1920s, imaging himself listening to an Edison phonograph in a living room of an old house around the fire, sipping brandy and smoking a cigar. “If people could get that kind of experience through 3D sound then I was onto something!” It wasn't until 2 months later when Matt was eagerly hacking away the code that would be his first prototype, listening to Adele's then breakout album 25, that he had his breakthrough “AHA moment.

“It was Adele's, *All I Ask* that started it all. It's a super roomy track, Adele's vocals shine and the clarity of her voice is just chilling, For me, that was the go-to test track for creating the next big production technology. I thought if I could make that feel better, I'd be in a good spot. At that point, I had rigged up the first prototype, expanded the music out, and shit... what an experience!” With the push of a button, Matt went from listening to a flat, ordinary song experience, to feeling like Adele was in the room playing him a private show. (This experience is now called *Sparkle* and is available for users to use on the AR platform) This was the moment he knew he had created something major, something that was going to change the way we listen to music forever!

Meanwhile, music streaming platforms were emerging and growing, but to what extent? He believed in a platform where users could be more interactive when listening to their music. He asked the question, “Who is deciding what quality of music we're reaching and how is it that we create music in million-dollar studios only to listen to a compressed audio file playing out of a shitty Bluetooth speaker” He wanted to bridge the gap between an ordinary sound experience and a transparent sound phenomenon—because it just made sense. In the last two years, the idea for Audible Reality has come full circle. In 2017 while at McGill University, Matt and his original co-founders were awarded the Dobson Cup for the most innovative tech startup. In the next year, the company had a fundraising campaign that

raised over \$750,000 in its first seed round. Angel investors, as well as venture capitalists such as Panache Ventures (David Dufresne formerly of Bandcamp/Bandzoogle) and Exponential Creativity Ventures (Adam Huttler & Brian Zisk of SF Musictech Summit), were major contributors.

Fast forward to this year and AR has a lot in store for its users to get excited about including collaborations with multiple artists and producers, new relationships with top music streaming services, (including a major international platform which will be revealed soon), and new work with mobile and automotive manufacturers that will make Audible Reality that much more accessible to its users. When I asked Matt what he wants users to gain from their experiences with Audible Reality, he said,

“We want to provide our users with the tools that will help them feel closer to the artists they listen to every day, to transport them to amazing new listening experiences even in the worst listening conditions. It’s all about the fan’s opinion on the music they love. What do we have to express this through sound..not a lot! The best we can get is a playlist but no offense I feel like I’ve been making playlists since the ’80s, back when I used to record straight off the radio haha. There’s got to be a better way to add ownership and unique flair to our music experience other than just suggesting a collection of songs to your friends. There’s much more we can do to share our love of music with one another and it begins with sharing how we experience it through our own two ears. Audible Reality understands how much music means to us as fans. But we also understand that when you’re an artist, music is part of your soul which is why we have made it our goal to get the power and glory back to these artists that provide us with the music we love. The streaming music model seems to be facing really difficult challenges in an attempt to pay artists what they deserve, but also provide listeners with a simple way to enjoy their music that isn’t outrageously expensive. Our team is made up of wholehearted music lovers and passionate artists that are truly just trying to give back to the community of music listeners, as well as the artists that touch our lives.”

The Audible Reality team and I have now been working together for a few months and I can promise you that from their never-ending slack threads filled with Mariah Carey memes to their energy-infused weekly team meetups this is just the beginning for Audible Reality and its users. This team is truly dedicated to fandom, and have set out to create a more controlled way of listening to music at the highest level of quality imaginable. Between their fully interactive listening platform, new developments with iOS, and planned partnerships for the future, there is no stopping this fast-growing startup.