



Audiophiles Dr. Tobias Gründl and Michael Wisniewski – or: Many roads lead to sound design

Ingolstadt, April 27, 2021 – Sound design can be learned as a trade, but it is a passion above all. Enthusiasm for creating intensive emotional experiences is what drives an audiophile. A sound system has to bring happiness – that's their aspiration.

Dr. Tobias Gründl and Michael Wisniewski talk about their dream job: what talents it requires, how they became a sound designers, and what drives them.

Dr. Tobias Gründl describes his “sound vitae” this way: “I really wanted to be a recording engineer and I was full of enthusiasm when I began studying. After a little while, though, it became clear that I didn't have the deep understanding of the technical foundations that I needed. I always want to understand the how and the why behind things. That's why I started studying physics at the same time. My passion for music – I was trained as a singer – was certainly another strong motivator on my way to becoming a sound designer.

Something that's particularly important in our work: it's not enough to know what technology can do and what settings will make the best use of it. You have to be curious about how you can have a certain emotional impact on listeners. You need creativity, critical thinking – and also always self-criticism.

For me, the psychological aspect is at the heart of the work: I want to convey ideas and create illusions in the car that put people under their spell and enchant them. The car becomes a stage and the sound carries me to the place where I want to be based on the music that's playing at the moment.

What I find most beautiful about my job is that I can realize my full potential and have a creative impact – because sound is so much more than just defining parameters and combining frequencies. The objective part has to be correct, of course, but it's the subjective part that tips the scales and has to fit. It's just great and satisfying to touch people with music and sound – whether as a sound engineer for Audi or as a musician on stage.”

Profile of Dr. Tobias Gründl

Dr. Tobias Gründl went from Porsche to Audi in 2019. Before that, he worked with the gauge specialists at Heidenhain in Traunreut, Germany. A physicist, he studied and got his doctorate at the Technical University of Munich with a focus on nanotechnology, quantum optics, and semiconductor physics. Dr. Gründl was trained as a sound technician and is passionately dedicated to music production, composition, and studio engineering. He plays various



instruments, including accordion, piano, saxophone, violin, and bass guitar, is an accomplished percussionist, and performs as a lyric tenor.

Michael Wisniewski describes his career in the world of sound this way: “I really would have been happy being a carpenter. When I was young, I often made wood cuttings for the speaker assembly in the car – that was a lot of fun for me. The subject of sound in vehicles has run through my life since then, given that, of course, as an engineer, I have a technician’s heart beating in my breast. In my late twenties, I decided that I didn’t want to just tinker with hi-fi equipment anymore. I wanted to develop sound systems instead. I’m the one for the architecture throughout the whole sound world – the one who connects all the components. Despite the meticulous work on sound, I’m rather unmusical and I don’t play an instrument. But I notice it when the sound is off, because I know how it’s supposed to sound. That takes a lot of experience. And communication is important, both within the team and with suppliers. Because only someone with specialized knowledge in various fields can ultimately reach the best possible outcome. There are no standardized solutions – in my profession, you have to constantly be looking at the bigger picture.

My aspiration is: a car has to provide the right sound in every situation and whoever is in it should feel good. The sound has to be smart: sometimes dominant, when I listen to rock music, sometimes restrained, when I’m focused on driving, but still want to listen to a podcast. Ultimately, what we’re doing is staging experiences in the interior. And they are always different. That captivates me and then I tinker until everything works perfectly. Whoever sits in an Audi should get a “Wow!” feeling, which involves sound and tone. That’s when I know we’ve done a good job.”

Profile of Michael Wisniewski

Michael Wisniewski has been working for Audi since 2011. Before that, the project director for sound system development was able to gain experience at, among others, Daimler: he was part of audio amplifier development in the infotainment department. Michael Wisniewski studied mechanical engineering at the Flensburg University of Applied Sciences. The engineer has had a passion for speakers and sound since his youth. When time permits, this family man likes to do woodwork and build furniture that his wife and their four children are comfortable in.

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Product and Technology Communications

Michael Crusius

Spokesperson Product and Technology

Phone: +49 151 54330810

Email: michael.crusius@audi.de

www.audi-mediacyenter.com

Product and Technology Communications

Christoph Lungwitz

Spokesperson Product and Technology

Phone: +49 151 54331109

Email: christoph.lungwitz@audi.de

www.audi-mediacyenter.com



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