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Subject: Re: Why is 2 Channel Better

Posted by [AudioFred](#) on Thu, 30 Jan 2014 23:22:42 GMT

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Multi channel, when done right, is a more realistic and more involving experience, which is another way of saying it sounds more like the band is in the room with you. Problem is, it's seldom done right. The two main reasons for multi channel to fail to live up to its potential are 1) the decisions made by the recording engineer and, 2) your own playback equipment.

The recording engineer decides on a number of things including the relative positions of the instruments in the soundstage. Many recording engineers favor an enveloping soundstage, where the instruments are placed all around you, like you were sitting on stage in the middle of the band or orchestra. Problem is that's not where most of us sit, so it sounds very exciting at first, but ultimately it begins to sound unnatural.

The second problem, the playback equipment, is usually compromised in placement and quality. The front speakers are often placed correctly, but in most real world rooms it's hard to find enough space behind your listening position to place the rear speakers. So you end up with rear speakers too close to your ears, and the effect is compromised. Quality is a problem when you don't have enough money to buy good equipment, especially speakers. The least expensive really good speakers are about \$1K each. Unfortunately,  $2 \times \$1K = \$2K$ , and  $5 \times \$1K = \$5K$  plus another \$1K for a subwoofer, unless you want a 7.2 system, where you're looking at \$9K. And good quality multichannel electronics are more expensive than comparable quality two channel electronics.

I have some friends in the Houston Audio Society who have to-die-for multichannel systems. I remember once I visited one's new house to see and hear his system, and as I entered the house he said "The media room is on the third floor. Do you want to take the elevator or walk up?" I knew I was in for a treat, and I wasn't disappointed. But if you don't have those kind of dollars, spend your limited budget on a good two channel system and you won't be disappointed.

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