Subject: Why is 2 Channel Better
Posted by Samuel on Thu, 30 Jan 2014 14:57:38 GMT
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I have a friend who is arguing that a two channel set up gives a better sound quality than a multi. That doesn't make sense to me. Can you tell me why that would be?

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, 2X$1K=$2K, and 5X1K=$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.

Subject: Re: Why is 2 Channel Better
Posted by gofar99 on Fri, 31 Jan 2014 03:21:31 GMT
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Hi, I agree on the issues. My partial solution to the problems of surround sound is to use electrostatic speakers that emit as much sound from the rear as from the front. When properly placed they present a very realistic presentation. Is it like a real concert, no, but really rather excellent.

Did the elevator add to the bass response like a huge tuned port?

I firmly believe that a really good 2 channel system will sound better and be more enjoyable to listen to that a mediocre 5.1 or 7.1. I have no issue with 2.1 systems with subs that actually perform as subs. Many things called subs now are really just woofers. I use a pair of subs to handle the below 40HZ stuff.

Subject: Re: Why is 2 Channel Better
Posted by Samuel on Fri, 31 Jan 2014 10:25:08 GMT
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Thank you so much! So it's not so much that a two channel system is better, but that the vast majority of people won't be able to do a multi channel system justice, and so it just isn't quite right.
