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Subject: Is a home theatre system really necessary?

Posted by [Pato](#) on Thu, 25 Oct 2018 22:19:13 GMT

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I remember watching the 'batman vs superman' movie using some speakers that were not an actual home theatre system and the sound quality was honestly really good. I feel like you don't need an expensive home theatre system to get that cinema-like experience; some good speakers can do.

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Subject: Re: Is a home theatre system really necessary?

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Fri, 26 Oct 2018 15:15:54 GMT

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You might expound upon what you mean by "actual home theater system."

My personal definition is any audio/video system that is setup to play movies. Many of them double as music playback systems for their owners.

So from this definition, a "home theater system" can be a television with a pair of stereo speakers. Better if it has a large screen and the sound system has a center channel, surrounds and multisubs.

But I'd prefer a high-quality stereo system over a retail "home theater in a box" system with a bunch of little satellites and a single subwoofer.

To me, the importance of quality sound components goes in this order:

1. High-quality stereo loudspeakers
  - Setup at screen height
  - Uniform directivity is preferred
  - If speakers have uniform directivity, cross forward axes ahead of listeners
2. High quality stereo amplification
  - Enough power to reach THX levels without clipping
3. Flanking subwoofers (2)
  - Set below, beside and behind the mains
  - Mains run "large", e.g. No high-pass or very low high-pass
  - Subs run to 100Hz second-order
4. High-quality side surrounds
  - Height just above listeners
5. Distributed subwoofers (2)
  - Setup far from mains, per Welti or Geddes
  - Position matters little as long as four subs are used
  - Crossover at 60Hz fourth-order
6. Center speaker that matches the main stereo speakers
  - Height same as left/right mains
7. Rear surrounds

- Height just above listeners

I rated the center channel last, but this is only the case if the main left/right speakers are capable of uniform directivity and they are toed-in properly to create an excellent phantom center. If this isn't the case, then I'd shift the importance of the center channel speaker up to the flanking sub position.

So to me, the necessity of equipment is more of a linear gradient, where the ability to create a realistic impression increases the further I am able to reach the goals shown above.

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Subject: Re: Is a home theatre system really necessary?

Posted by [Pato](#) on Mon, 29 Oct 2018 22:46:41 GMT

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You're right, my statement was incorrect. If I may rephrase, do you need an expensive home theatre system? For example, you've described quality sound as having the following components; high-quality stereo loudspeakers, stereo amplification, flanking subwoofers, distributed subwoofers, side surrounds, and so on. Is the difference massive between such a system and a more simple one, like the Creative Inspire T6300 speakers for instance?

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Subject: Re: Is a home theatre system really necessary?

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Mon, 29 Oct 2018 23:20:04 GMT

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Rather than critique specific components, I'll limit my comments to generalities.

I've found that going from "bad" to "decent" is relatively inexpensive, and then going from "decent" to "good" isn't much more. But at a certain point you come to a place of diminishing returns. This seems true for most things. That "Nth" degree often costs a lot.

Another thing I've found though, is there are a lot of products that cost way more than they're worth. And in that case, you can sometimes find "decent" or "good" at a cost that isn't any more than what it would cost to get something that is junk.

So the bottom line is to study the products and to look for real performance data. If you can't find measurements of sound equipment, assume the worst. Stick with products that have published performance data and compare that with other offerings.