



Involve Audio Surround Master

I have been a long believer in the potential superiority of multi-channel music playback and have taken a few paths down that road over the years with a nice Sony ES SACD player, a lesser quality but still nice sounding DVD-A/SACD player (SONY DVP-NS999ES), with various pre/processors, home theater receivers, stereo and multi-channel amps. Each of the travels ended in various degrees of success. For the most part, I have gotten to the point where I still believe it offers more potential than stereo, but the implementations have been flawed in one way or another, especially in the attempts to convert 2 channel programming to multi-channel.

When I had the opportunity to review the Involve Audio Surround Master, I jumped at the chance for a couple of reasons. First, while not the best writer, I do enjoy playing around with anything audio related and discussing audio on forums like Audiokarma.org. Second, I was interested if a new attempt at 2 channel to multi-channel conversion would be more successful than prior attempts.

I implemented this in two systems in the house with a couple of different approaches. First, in the family room system with an older HK AVR 80 mkII HT receiver and also in the living room with a couple of different 2 channel front ends and various amplifiers.

Equipment used:

Family Room System:

- Harman Kardon AVR 80 mkII Receiver
- Sony DVP-NS999ES SACD/CD
- NHT SuperTwos, NHT SuperZeros and NHT SuperCenter and a NHT Sub2 subwoofer.
- Nintendo Wii (Just for fun)

Main Listening Room System:

- Amplifiers: Parasound Halo A52 (borrowed from a friend), Adcom GFA-535 (x2), Fisher 500C (x2), Sima W-2002.
- Sources: Yamaha YP-701 turntable with a Grado Gold Cartridge, Roksan Kandy MkIII CD Player, Onkyo ND-S1 with iPhone 3GS playing through an Entech Number Cruncher 205.2 DAC.
- Speakers: DIY Speakers with Unity Horns and Lambda TD15M woofers, DIY Adire Audio HE10.1, and DIY Murphy Blaster MBOW1 2 ways running active with HiVi W12 12" woofers.

I received the Involve Audio Surround Master a couple of weeks back and my first reaction was surprise with how small it is. It come well packaged with clear instructions and a large assortment of various power connectors. There are no frills with the Surround Master, I hoped that this would be a situation where the focus was

placed on the sound rather than the packaging and we'll find out more about that later.


I decided that it would be easiest to get it connected to the family room system. I've read in other reviews that the Surround Master excels with 4.1 channel and decided that would be as good of a starting point as any. I arranged the speakers as advised in the manual and grabbed the stack of CDs and a couple of SACDs that I had set aside.

The Shins – Port Of Morrow: This is one of my favorite CDs in recent memory and I was looking forward to hearing what the Surround Master would do to add or subtract from the performance. My first reaction...wow. The Surround Master is **not** subtle. This is total immersion into the recording. One of the tracks that never ceases to make me tap my toe is 'Simple Song'. Guitars were coming from everywhere and unlike some surround formats I've heard, it wasn't losing any of the detail I normally would expect.

Mad Season – Above. The immersion I sensed in Port of Morrow made me grab Mad Season's Above, next. I skipped right to November Hotel. It's one of the great unknown rock instrumental tracks with Pearl Jam's Mike McCready going on what seems like an endless solo on his guitar with drummer Barrett Martin putting on a drumming exhibition. Since I was looking for that being in the music feeling, I wasn't disappointed.

To be continued in a day or two with more impressions of the Surround Master.

[wma04](#) 
Super Moderator



Join Date: Aug 2004
Location: MI
Posts: 21,816


I have been listening to it in two channel mode for a few days since returning from vacation. While I don't hear the rear surround effects that others have in 2 channel mode, it does make a significant impact in increasing the soundstage seemingly without losing detail or losing focus with imaging. In the NHT system, one thing the SuperTwos don't excel at is imaging/soundstage. While they aren't bad in the area, they sound pretty 2D compared to the MBOW1s. With the Surround Master, they provide far more of the disappearing act that the MBOW1s manage.

With the MBOW1s, the effect isn't quite as dramatic but it's still there. I've some notes written down with music I've played in 2 channel mode but not with me currently.

If you are a listener with speakers that are noticeably present in that you hear distinct sounds coming from speakers rather than coming from spaces outside of the speakers, I'd certainly encourage you to have a listen.

[ma04](#) 
Super Moderator


Join Date: Aug 2004
Location: MI
Posts: 21,816


Hi Frank,

When I said it's not subtle, I mean in it's abilities. Going from 2 channel stereo without the Surround Master to using 4 or 5 channel surround using the Surround Master is not a subtle difference. You are right on when you say that it seems to bring subtleties in the music to the forefront.

It's good timing that you posted. I decided to hook it up to my computer system in my office for fun. I have a Boston Acoustics 5.1 system which isn't anything particularly special but sounds decent and by computer speakers they are very good. My computer setup only has 2 channel output so it was the first time I really heard my computer setup in surround. It felt like I was in the middle of the action in the game, it was really superb. I had similar results playing the Wii. My daughter got a huge kick out of the effect.

I still have a bunch of music pieces I listened to that I need to write up.

I think I am leaning towards preferring discreet 5.1 channel formats like SACD and DVD-A at this point, but I prefer the Surround Master, to a pretty significant degree, over any of the stereo to surround converting formats I've encountered.

[ezmax](#) 

Turntable Whisperer



Join Date: Nov 2006

Location: Durham, NC

Posts: 1,494

I got mine in December, right when they released it. There was a lot of talk on Quadraphonic Quad about it because it's based on (and an improvement on) the old QS matrix format. They're currently working on a version that will do SQ as well, and offering a free code update (you have to ship it back to them) to anyone who has the current model. Pretty cool.

Depending on the recording, it does some AMAZING things with stereo inputs to create a 4.1 soundfield (I tried the 5.1 mode, but I like 4.1 better). Some mixes sound merely expanded, while some sound positively revelatory. I can tell you it's almost worth the price of the unit to hear Jimi Hendrix's *Electric Ladyland* through it. It's a swirling psychedelic roller coaster ride through the SM.

What the SM seems to be really good at is pulling individual instruments from a mix and sticking them in the back speakers. This gives the effect of really opening things up. On a song like "4th of July, Asbury Park (Sandy)" from Springsteen's *The Wild, the Innocent and the E Street Shuffle*, you realize there are layers upon layers of guitar lines that were mashed together in the stereo mix and now have room to breathe. The phasey rhythm guitars on Joni Mitchell's "Amelia" (*Heijira*) seem to wrap themselves around the room. Wilco's Yankee Hotel Foxtrot sounds great through it too (try "War on War"). And just about anything engineered by Alan Parsons has some cool stuff happening, especially *I, Robot*.

That's part of the fun of the SM -- you throw recordings at it and you never know what kind of surprising things that you've never heard in a mix will make themselves apparent.

If you like surround sound music at all, this is pretty much a must-have as it's the best

stereo-to-surround processor yet. It does remarkable things but never pumps or make anything sound too processed or non-musical. I'm pretty thrilled with it.



Super Moderator



Join Date: Aug 2004

Location: MI

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Chucky, just to go a little further with my comment about preferring discrete. My preference for discrete 5 channel formats in the past have been a preference based on a small number of recordings that got it right. At least 50% of the time, I found the surround material on such recordings to be a detriment to sounding natural and preferred the 2 channel sound.

I'm still listening to various recordings as time allows and I have to admit I'm enjoying it for a couple of reasons. First, it's like listening to music I've heard for years for the first time. Sometimes, I find it very good to listen to. With some recordings, I haven't liked the effect. Even in the times when I haven't preferred it, it's still doing some interesting things grabbing out details I hadn't noticed before. When turning it off, I was able to hear the details, but they hadn't stood out prior to listening to the SM's presentation.

Thanks for the additional links to information. This has been a very fun experience for me. I'm planning to have some friends over sometime soon and will try to get them to give their impressions, as well.



stay frisky my friends ..



Join Date: Mar 2007

Location: NoVA, 22030 - somewhere on the outskirts of DC

Posts: 4,283

Surround master, from Involve Audio

First things first.

Some folks feel the only proper way to listen to music is in 2 channel.

I'll counter that with saying that in life, sound comes to us from all around - bounced off walls and objects around us - we get a sense of our place in the world from those reflected sounds.

The recording industry understands this and over the years has provided releases with additional information encoded in the recording for that expanded presence, From the RCA Living Stereo 3 channel recordings on the mid-50s, through the Quadraphonic recordings of the 70s, and the multichannel techniques of newer technologies such as DVD-A and SACD, all wrap us in music

I've tried a number of those releases but it can get pricy buying additional copies of music you already own, and sometimes the newer remasters suffer or don't sound the same as the recordings you've had along.

The AK mods had read some of my posts on pushing my surround system further

forward over the last few years,
and offered me a chance to review the new Surround Master from Involve Audio.
They told me the Surround Master
takes regular 2 channel recordings and extracts positional information from those
recordings and takes them to 4, 4.1 or 5.1 channel mode.

First – Some notes on my gear –
my multichannel system can do 7.1 audio, but in 5.1 mode it consist of

Integra DTC-9.8 Preamp/Process
B&K ST-202 Plus Stereo Amp for the Front mains
B&K AV5000 Series II 5 channel amp - (Center, Sides and rear Surround).
Vandersteen 2CE front mains
Vandersteen VCC-1 Center speaker
DCM TimeFrame TF-600 Rear Surrounds
Harman Kardon Citation 22 amp, Bridged Mono for sub
JBL 4641 Subwoofer

I have a large collection of music in lossless form loaded on a Mac Pro computer
upstairs in my office - and I can stream it via wifi to an Airport Express unit on my
downstairs system, usually directly to the AUX input on a pair of stereo RCA cables.
For this test I am running that 2 channel feed into the Surround Master, and running its
multichannel output to the Integra DTC-9.8 preamp. I run the system flat, with no tone
controls, no EQ and no spatial effects on the Integra. Source and volume control is all
I use.

The Surround master comes with a 12 page manual in english (other languages
available on their website), 2 3 wire RCA interconnects, and a wallwart power supply
with 4 twist and lock adapters to match wall sockets in various countries.

I read in the manual and that the unit did 4 channel mode, so we ran it that way for a
few days, and while we enjoyed the way that sounded, the manual also says it does 5.1
mode.

Since I figure most folks have a surround system set up for 5.1 mode, I switched the
RCA cables around, on the rear of the unit to connect it to the Integra preamp's RCA
connectors for 5.1 mode. The manual shows 5.1 as front mains, center, rears, and Sub
- so that is how we used it for our testing. For that reason, I did not use my side
channel speakers for this test.

I enjoy all kinds of music and folks here have no doubt heard me say "Its all about the music" - well, the Surrround Master is nothing short of amazing. Listening to music with the Surround master in place really engages you with the music – its immersion – like swimming in the music.

It took me a while to write this review because once I heard some of my music through this gear, I wanted to go through my whole music collection and listen to everything again, hearing nuances and subtleties in the music I had not noticed before.

Its really like that, like putting a great new pair of speakers or a new amp in your system.

I didn't know what to play? Should I try newer recordings, old music, only classics that were well recorded?? I wound up jumping all over the place – and although I played a lot of albums in full, here are some of the tracks that really impressed me:

Dusty Springfield in Memphis - Son of a Preacher Man - wow - for a 1969 recording, it was amazing - she's front & center with you, horns and gospel choir behind you. For another older cut, I popped on The Guess Who's Greatest Hits & played American Woman - the quieter intro section was nice, but when the main theme that everybody knows from hit radio way back when kicked in - a great, room filling rhythm sound - the guest we had at the time was REALLY impressed - and so was I!

James Brown - 1971 Live at the Olympia, Paris: Love, Peace, Power -
A classic lineup of James Brown in concert - this one features an early Bootsy Collins on bass - track 14 - Super Bad - James is front and center, Bootsy's funky bass

Jump to Funkadelic Cd – Maggotbrain – the title track Maggotbrain is a psychofunk classic – guitar wailing in and out from different parts of the room

Grabbed some older jazz – Dexter Gordon – Ballads, & Miles Davis – In a Silent Way, not quite the revelation some of the newer recordings are. But still a nice listen.

Shifting the mood, I chose John Hammond's album of Tom Waits songs - "Wicked Grin" - track #1 is Heartattack and Vine - big thumpin' fun all around me!

Then to Tom Waits himself - Swordfishtrombone – title track has vibes behind you, with Tom front & center. Then, from The Mule Variations, the creepy “What’s He Building” has all kinds of ambient atmospheric sounds around you – I nearly jumped when the pipe fitting dropped behind me on the left!

Next - Hugh Laurie (House, M.D.) CD - "Let Them Talk" is a great steaming pot full of rhythm and blues I played track 1 - St James Infirmary, and then #12 - Whinin' Boy Blues – great stuff and more immersion within the band space.

For another take on that song, I grabbed Hot Tuna's 1st album and played #1 – Whinin’ Boy Blues - followed by #10 - Mann's Fate very quick guitar picking Very compelling – excellent sound from that early trio.

Jumping to something older, since we've been talking about James Bond movies on AK, for a hoot, I put on the Casino Royale Official Soundtrack - hey, kitsche can be fun too!

Track 1 - Casino Royale Theme by Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass - The band is in the rear of the room, Herb's blowing away in the front of the room. Nice!

The Highwaymen - Track 1 - Highwayman - its old but fun - Johnny Cash as a Starship captain always get a smile - very great sound filling the room.

The Rolling Stones - Sticky Fingers - Brown Sugar,(of course), Wild Horses, You Got to Move, and Moonlight mile - the band is in the back, Mick's front and center, other instruments placed around the room woah - this is great ... played a LOT of this album.

All of the Stones I played had similar mix – band behind you, Mick in front

More classics – Santana Abraxas – Black Magic Woman – Conga drums behind Carlos's guitar out front, brushes washing over the front right

Jethro Tull 40th Anniversary CD of Aqualung – Locomotive Breathe – opens behind you- when the volume swells the band swells forward to envelope you, with Ian front and center.

Pulled some Zappa – very nice immersion in the older recordings - from Hot Rats – Peaches en Regalia , from the Waka/Jawaka – Big Swifty , dabbled in The Grand Wazoo

All nice, but I went for broke with the posthumous WAZOO Live album – that's got some astonishing positioning of instruments around the room – wow!

I could go on and on and namedrop more albums I've heard hundreds of times that just opened up for me, connecting me so much deeper with the music and tempting me to spend more time immersed in music I had only listened to before.

I had a Yamaha Surround receiver with all kinds of room modes that added echo and ambience, my Integra has similar settings for concert hall and beer garden and small club – I've tried them and just didn't care for them, and turned those effects off pretty quickly.

The Surround Master is different and really brings you into the music in a new way.

All in all, I'd say highly recommended - with any luck, its staying in my system for keeps! That's how much we've enjoyed it!

Oh, one last note - the manufacturer says its not just for music - feed it 2 channel audio from your TV or movies or whatever and it will expand them into surround mode as well.

I couldn't try that with my system as all my video sources are either HDMI or optical feeds.



It took me a while to get my sample to review and I will be posting it in the next couple of days. In some respects, my experiences have echoed Heather's. I've been comparing it to various 2 to 5 channel surround formats (new and old) for a few days while I've been home with my daughter (who is sick) and it seems to be more immersive and less gimmicky sounding than some of the others I've compared it to. Pretty interesting stuff.

[hjames](#)

stay frisky my friends ..



Join Date: Mar 2007

Location: NoVA, 22030 - somewhere on the outskirts of DC

Posts: 4,283

The Surround Master is still very impressive.

Last night I listened to some old Little Feat - Sailin' Shoes and Dixie Chicken.

"Willin" was quite nice - brought a smile again, after all the times I've played it, enjoyable, as was "Dixie Chicken". That got me in the mood for some Byrds - first - Sweetheart of the Rodeo, then Byrds - Live at the Fillmore (Jan'69).

When I played "Medley - Turn Turn Turn, Mr Tamborine Man, 8 Miles High" - I was immersed in the music again, from those old recordings!

Wow, just flat-out Wow ...

[hjames](#)

stay frisky my friends ..



Join Date: Mar 2007

Location: NoVA, 22030 - somewhere on the outskirts of DC

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As I've said - the SurroundMaster is highly recommended for the absolutely lush way it takes 2 channel music sources and fills the room with surround sound from old or new media. My family loves the way it works.

The surround master only has a single source - multiple inputs might be a nice upgrade for future models, but the way I have my current surround rig set up, TV signals come in via FIOS/CATV and are connected to my TIVOHD (a DVR), then is fed over HDMI to the Integra DTC 9.8 That preamp feeds discrete 7.1 line level signals on RCA connectors to the various poweramps (B&K for mains and surrounds, HK Citation 22 for the sub).

Likewise, for DVDs and Bluray, my OPPO BDP-93 feeds HDMI direct to the Integra.

I have no source of discrete 2 channel TV or DVD sound to run into the SurroundMaster, so I have no way to test such sources.

That said, I can imagine that if you had a nice 2 channel system, ran the preamp out into the Surroundmaster and then fed its outputs into discrete power amps and surround speakers, it would be a very affordable and quick way to some gorgeous surround without the high expense of the typical HDMI type HT preamp/processor.

Involve Audio Surround Master SM-465 Review

Written May 21, 2013 at 7:04 pm by Marshal Rosenthal



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Full Article

I still remember when Dolby sent me their first “surround sound” processor back in the 1980’s. They said that their processor could “extract” ambient sound from within a recording to create a wider sound-field. And that it didn’t matter what the audio source was as this “added” sound was always recorded along with what was “heard” — which was a stereo recording. Of course today there’s discrete 5.1, 7.1 or even greater numbers of audio streams that can be processed through multi-channel receivers, but what about all those recordings that never made it past stereo? Rather than being forced to use psycho-acoustic sound techniques to “fool” your ear, plug in the Sound Master.

Here’s what it’s does: process an evenly distributed sound-field that envelops you (immersive); create distinct points of audio (think: a bullet traveling from in front of you past your left shoulder); recreate the original audio so that the listener doesn’t feel there’s some kind of techno-babble going on (i.e., you may hear explosions at your side, but John McLane’s “Yippe-kiya” is as distinct as if listening to Die Hard on an iPod).

Surround Master is about the length of a mini DVD player and about half as wide. Plug the AC plug in for ongoing power last — first set the switch on the front to 2-

channel mode. Then attach a pair of RCA stereo cables into the outputs from your audio source and the other end into the 2-channel input. The last step is to connect RCA plugs from the 2-channel output and into the Aux of an amplifier. If you decide to go with 4 speakers, then the switch goes to 4-channel mode and the Left Front/Right Front, Left Rear/Right Rear outputs are used, with their other ends plugged into the appropriate places on the amp. Use of the subwoofer is optional in either case.



Nothing special has to be done to the amp, with the exception that all surround sound simulated modes (like Dolby Pro Logic) have to be turned off so that the sound exiting to the speakers is not being modified (most amps call this “Direct Mode”).

Involve audio who makes Sound Master recommends using the 4-channel mode, so I’ve set it up that way. I’ve a pair of stereo speakers in front of me and a pair to the side and behind (what would normally be called “rear” speakers). My position is at the center so that each speaker’s bulls-eye is my body.

I’ve been given a demo disc to use in which specific scenes are produced that display surround effects. I played the disc first as stereo and verified that the scenes I would use as “test subjects” are just in stereo. Frequency response and other measurements were obviated in favor of my ear — if what I heard sounded right, then I was going to be happy. So I began the test:

* Transformers: Battle sounds come at the listener from multiple locations, not just the front, which was the case when played without the Sound Master. A rocket fired at the end of the sequence “traveled” from the front speakers to the back and was clearly perceived as such — again this did not occur when the scene was played as ordinary stereo.

*Dummyhead Stereo: Both a rear and side sound-field could be clearly heard, but more importantly it was a clean performance that didn't get "mushed" together (flutes being played demonstrated this fact).

*X-Men: The sequence had Professor Xavier using his mind powers on Wolverine to cause voices to "rotate" around the listener's head. There was a clear perception of this happening, as opposed to the audio remaining fixed at the front when it was played in stereo. Additionally, the dialogue was not muddled or had any hiss or interference to signify some form of audio modification was in process.

I also tried out the Sound Master with a number of symphonic CDs and videocassette commercial movies. The surround sound on the CDs varied in intensity, in some cases being extremely mild, but at no time did I encounter any degradation in the audio. As to the movies, surround sound effects that were clearly not present when played normally were now evident.



Switching over to the 2-channel mode creates a "virtual surround" effect that functions without such tricks as bouncing audio streams off walls. I've never been impressed by any of the modification technologies used to do this and the experience relies heavily on the perception of the person listening. I can say that the Sound Master performs as well as any other technology in this mode and many will find it an appealing way to enhance their sound-field. But used only in this manner is a waste of what it can do.



Overview

Release Date: Available Now

Price: \$395

Model #: SM-465

Article Type: [Review](#)

Brand: [Involve Audio](#)

Type: [Sound Processor](#)

Positives

Tech-free setup, Multi-country power supply

Negatives

Requires 4 speaker setup to be truly effective

Bottom Line

When used in a 4 speaker system, the Sound Master accurately reproduces the audio you expect to hear, but then adds in what was hidden to produce a surround sound-field. The actual process doesn't care what the stereo audio source is — the sound cues that have been recorded are brought out and given a distinct "location" in space relative to where they were during the recording. The results are superior to that of existing psycho-acoustic surround sound effects and more than justifies the \$395 price tag for those who wish to have multi-channel sound for as much audio content as possible.

Involve Audio SM-465 review by PeterS49



5.0

5.0 from 2 reviews

Rating summary

[Excellent](#)

2

Good

0

OK

0

Bad

0

Terrible

0

Product Details

The Most Accurate Sound Reproduction Available. Period.

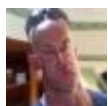
Surround Master combines true circular surround sound with real-time remastering to produce a completely accurate sound experience. Every sound recorded on a track is reproduced in exactly the same location where it was recorded, giving you the sense of actually being there.

- Real-time remastering – Surround Master listens to each track as it plays and encodes all of the sounds recorded with our patented technology before sending the signals to the speakers. Nothing is added or removed, we just do the industry's most perfect job of reproducing what's on the track.
- Clear separation – Accurate separation of left and right, and front and back sound means that every sound appears to come from a specific point in space, rather than being indistinct or "smeared" between speakers.
- Fully stereo compatible – Whether you have 2, 4 or 5 speakers, Surround Master creates a circular surround sound for every record, tape, CD, MP3 file, video, streamed file, or any other format you use.

[Official site](#)

[show more](#)

PeterS49's review



[PeterS49](#)

Member since:

May 18, 2012

Location:

ADELAIDE

Surround processor that does what it claims

5.0

- Excellent

[PeterS49](#) posted this on Nov 27, 2013

This review has been viewed **24** times

I bought this to use with audiophile quality equipment to bridge the gap between stereo and surround sources. I have no interest in home theatre. Surround simulator buttons on AVRs just smear the sound across the room and I've never heard one I liked. This pulls a realistic surround field out of a stereo source, particularly when used with 4 equidistant speakers. Results vary but 70s and 80s music sounds great and I'm constantly surprised by how music I know well sounds in surround. I'm using a NAD M51 DAC and there's no degradation of sound quality. Looks a bit cheaply made next to hifi gear but that's my only complaint.

RUSTYANDI

We have been waiting for years for a new CD4 Demodulator

And hoping that a new SQ decoder will come along

But I have been playing with a new Decoder
That is good as the QSD1

For any one that is keeping their QSD1 for a good price
Sell it now as this unit is half price

I have played all the QS demo Disc's on this unit
And switched back and forth with the QSD1
And there is no difference in the decoding
I am told that it is a 3 band unit like the QSD1
It is sharper than the QSD1000 also
It is meant as a Stereo to 5.1 synthesizer
I have only played it as a 4 channel unit so far
And found it keeps the center channel better than the QSD1
It decodes as well as the QSD1 and on some tracks better
When it is production ever one that wanted the best
QS decoder and the best synthesizer will be able to get one
I will be getting one myself when there are out

AGAIN

Charlie has brought a updated model for me to try
He has made the the rear channels stereo with a rear centre
It is now as good (or) better separation than the QSD1
The difference will be found by the Golden ears
But mine have turned to silver
The point is that this the best QS decoder I have played with since the QSD1 (I have had for 35 years)
Steely Dan, Play it again the rear channel has the solo break in both channels with a centre.
the Enoch Light tracks are full surround all channels almost discrete
Charlie said that one of the units is going to a club member
I will wait to hear what he thinks

AGAIN

I played the Chase the 1st track SQ through the reality Decoder
As you know it is QS
The start gives a left side with a slight acent to rear channel
the the same to right side
then you get a rear stereo effect then to the front Stereo
It gives a horse shoe effect from right rear to right front to left front to left rear
If you did not know how it decoder through Tate you would think it was great
I have played a few SQ through it as a rule
when you have a rear channel in SQ
it seams to come from both rear channel in QS
So a number of times it is like a stereo front and a stereo rear
not double stereo a separate front and rear and sometimes a right or left rear
Not to bad But not SQ

As for the releases
QS the best LPs were Project 3 . ABC.and a lot of rubbish . I have about 570 LPs
SQ had the most with big name singers. also the most Classical. I have about 810 LPs
CD4 were next I have about 585 LPs
EV4 maybe about 20 to 30 released they decode as QS

AGAIN

I forgot to say that it is a better decoder for stereo
than SQ I have played FM. Digital radio & LPs
and they range from great to OK
I have asked about a SQ decoder but I don't think there is any chance
Also I think that there was a \$350 price for members
If you are at all interested in surround sound you must have one

AGAIN

forgot to say that
Playing Q Sound CDs or LPs through the unit
Can give a full surround sound

And UHJ gives a fairly good effect
I have a LP in UHJ by T.A.G it is a electronic weird
but on 1 side the sound swirls around all the speakers
I have a UHJ decoder and have tested this effect
then on the Denon 100, UD4 setting and it is the same on the scope
and to your ear
on the new decoder it is not the same but it gives a
very interesting effect

AGAIN

I have played Involve decoder for a couple of months now
and have had the QSD-1 for 35 years
As a QS decoder it is a 3 band unit.
It has a better front centre hold on the vocal
And as good or better
A friend said that it has a bit better
open sound
The separation is perfect
If and when my QSD-1 breaks down I will miss it
but I will still have the best QS decoder

AGAIN

I have played a number of EV4 lps
Through the QSD1 and Reality Tec Decoders
And as I do not know the Maths
I can see through the Scope and with my ears
that they are doing a great job
It looks and sounds as they are QS LPs
the separation is as good
In the old days when people were selling these Lps
EV4 and QS were bracked as the same
All these lps are not EV4 but these are what I have tested

EV4

- 1 Ovation OD/1
- 2 Beach Boys Surf's Up
- 2A Beach Boys Surf's Up(New Heavy Vinyl)
- 3 Beach Boys Sunflower
- 4 Jones Tommy Tommy's Place
- 5 Bonnie Koloc After All This Time
- 6 Enoch Light Brass Menagerie
- 7 Enoch Light Brass Menagerie Vol.2
- 8 Enoch Light Permissive Polyphonics
- 9 Big Band Moog
- 10 QS-1 101 Strings Soul Of Spain Vol 3
- 11 QS-2 101 Strings Exciting Sounds
- 12 QS-3 Multiple Guitars
- 13 QS-4 101 Strings Todays Hits
- 14 Horn Paul & Concert Ensemble

- 15 Rich Mountain Tower
- 16 Hollins & Star Sidewalks Are Talking
- 17 Billy & Garry Mure Quad Spectalar
- 18 Sony Costanzo Sonny's Song
- 19 Beaver & Kraus Gandharva
- 20 Travers Mary Mary
- 21 Crewe Bob Generation
- 22 The Flame (Brother Lable)
- 23 Johannesen Grant Plays American Piano Music
- 24 Schory Dick Movin' On
- 25 Turner Jim Well Tempered Saw
- 26 Carl & Passions So Tough
- 27 Godzundheit
- 28 Erickson Tapes
- 29 Supercord Contempory
- 30 Dynaco 4 Demensional Demo Record
- 31 Pioneer 4 Channel Record PQX-1002
- 32 Otto 4 Channel Demo Nas-230
- 33 Otto 4 Channel Demo Nas-215
- 34 Otto 4 Channel Demo Nas-225
- 35 Fisher Test & Performance CD4-SQ
- 36 Quadrafile SQ-QS CD4-UD4 2 LPs
- 37 Mussorgsky Picutures At An Exhibition (DBX Encoded)
- 38 Invasion U.S.A (Dolby Encoded)???
- 39 Holst The Planets St. Louis Sym. (DBX Encoded)
- 40 Beaver & Krause All Good Men
- 41 Strauss Richard Salome Don Jaun Cincinnati Sym. (DBX-QS)
- 42 A Slavonic Festival St. Louis Sym. Slatkin.(DBX-QS)
- 43 Beaver & Krause In A Wild Sanctuary
- 44 Ferrari Larry Encore
- 45 Tweedy Don Chorus & Orch
- 46 Salzedo Sonata Fraicheur. Adams Galante (Sound Storage)
- 47 Bondon Claude Debussy Carter Chamber Orch.(Sound Storage)
- 48 Carl & Passions So Tough/Pet Sounds 2 LPs
- 49 Otto 4 Channel Demo Nas-340
- 50 Florida All-State 1972 (3LPs)
- 51 Steele Ron Chicago Guitar

AGAIN

me again
just for myself i played
some more Lps
flame dy
vanguard dy demo
and 6 EV4 lps
with the reality tec unit
it did a near perfect job of decoding
if it is not correct then it is close enough
there were rear channel solos very solid

the beach boys surfs up is not a very good
demo as it seems to blend front and rear channels
but not a bad
i only write what i see and am not selling anything

AGAIN

have played dolby surround CDs
with this unit and it gives a better surround than dolby
some of the James Last surround CDs are close to full logic
play any EV4 and DY LPs and let me know what you think

AND FROM RANSAKAWA

I had the pleasure to hear the unit in question at Rons place, the quad sound was very clear and seperation is excelent. I am very impressed. Thanks to Ron for allowing me to preview this equipment.

EARLY BOB ROMANO

I have had the complete **pleasure** to demo the Involve Surround Decoder. I decoded several QS LPs and CD's that still contain the encoding. They were all three Steely Dan titles, Jim Croce, Rufus - Rags To Rufus, Pharoah Sanders and a bunch more. I had previously done decodes of the Steely's, Rufus and Croce's using the scripts which got great results. The results from the ISD, to my ears, provided all of the separation in excellent fidelity without some of the artifacts that sometimes occur with the scripts (though the new SQ and QS Final scripts are awesome). All channels were crystal clear with no artifacts. I was really amazed.

I also played several regular stereo titles through the 4 channel outputs with varying results. Some titles like "Deceptive Bends" by 10CC and "Somewhere I've Never Traveled" by Ambrosia sounded like the real deal through the decoder. Much like using Dolby Pro Logic II, the results depends on the source.

What I wasn't able to really audition to the fullest was the 5.1 outputs. There was a pumping in the fronts that made the sounds a bit uneven. After emailing back and forth with Charlie, he seems to think that this is an easy fix. I sent him the results of the decoding so he could hear for himself what I was experiencing. The rears were not effected by the pumping because they are always the constant. If you look at the picture, you will see that there are 2 different surround outputs available (4.0 and 5.1). Both use the same rear outputs but the fronts change when using 5.1. For example, the lead vocals, bass and some drums would be in the center during 5.1 auditioning (most likely more mono sources in the mix). When listening to the 4.0 outputs, those sounds were spread across the fronts while the rears seemed to remain the same.

I am really enjoying running different sources through the box to hear what happens. If Charlie can get the 5.1 straightened out (which i would imagine would be a small tweak) this box is truly a winner. Next test will be SQ material.

By the way, I did up a new version of the Rufus album using the QS vinyl to DVDA and the opening of You Got The Love has the opening guitar riff dead in the rears with almost no leakage (other than the reverb of the guitar) in the front. Amazing!!! Do It Again sounds better through the box than it did using the script. Again the sound was clean with excellent (and correct) separation.

Watch for this box when it becomes available. I will be ordering one. I'm *that* impressed.

AGAIN

I was really excited when I began to play "You Got The Love" by Rufus for example. The opening guitar riff comes solidly from the rear right with reverb from the guitar along with a hi hat hit in the front.

I thought the overall sound of the unit was excellent. I detected no extra noise or coloration of the sound. Overall everything I played through it, especially QS, to my ears sounded as close to discrete as you could get. I will post some samples in the next couple of days as soon as I get a break from work. I couldn't say for sure about the difference in the ISD chip to the QSD-1 except to say that I was impressed by the overall sounds and separation.

AGAIN

I can say that no matter what I have played through the box, even in just 4 channel, really give nice depth and opens up the mix. The degree of depth will be varied by the actual mix of your source.

AGAIN

I finally had some time to sit with the decoder and play a bunch of stuff through the 2 channel surround decoder.

Using only my front 2 speakers I played all different types of music from various sources (CD, DVD, LP and Ipod-both lossless and lossy) and I was again amazed!! I know it seems like this is too good to be true but each track (didn't matter which one) made my stereo fronts wrap around me. I actually had to make sure I wasn't hearing my two rear speakers. I was not. It was the wrap effect of the box with no assistance from the rears. Best of all was no coloration in the sound.

I couldn't pick out specific instruments but there was a true sense of depth that disappeared when playing the same tracks without the decoder. I will say that I did sit on my sweet spot directly between the speakers mostly but even when I got up and moved a bit each track still had a sense of space about it.

I used mostly tracks that I was really familiar with. Some of the tracks I used were:
Love Alive - Heart (especially nice when the the second section kicks in)
Dig - Incubus
Kiss On My List - Hall & Oates (when the background "la la's" kick in I got

goosebumps)

Lopsy Lu - Stanley Clarke (actually a room like feel)

Deadmau5 - Raise Your Weapon (Madeon remix - awesome!!! this one blew me away - and it's an mp3)

Crank It Up - Peter Brown

Haven't You Heard - Patrice Rushen

Something - Beatles

Tomorrow Never Knows - Beatles (VERY nice)

Inside Out - Phil Collins (those 80's drums - huge)

Shoot Out The Lights - Richard & Linda Thompson

Bodhisattva - Steely Dan (not as good as the QS decode I did using the box but really nice)

I can only imagine that the final tweaks on this thing will make it the "go to" box for those who want excellent QS decoding, and awesome enhanced stereo playback. I still have not done a full 5.1 "decoding" because of a breathing issue that I was getting. However I can tell you that the center and sub were very nice and there was a definite difference between using the 4 channel and 5.1 channel decoders in the front channels. Using the 5.1 channel setting, the center information was mostly absent from the front L/R.

In any case - I have heard enough to know I am sold. Sign me up.

AGAIN

so check this out...

her is a screen shot of the first 30 seconds of the track played through the decoder. It is the track "Money" from DSOTM. The separation on this between the 4 channels is really great. If you look closely, you will see the opening drop of the cash register and change drop followed by the circling sound effects. It sounds excellent as well! This was the second sound file played through the encoder in 4.0 mode and recorded into Sound Forge. This was not just separation like Dolby Pro Logic II putting certain sounds into the rear but actual separation that sounds very close to discrete tape or - at least the very best of SQ or QS encoding. I find this to be absolutely amazing.

AGAIN

Ahhh... Sorry... I knew I forgot something...

When listening to the two samples back to back (using Foobar), to my ears, they are indistinguishable. There are no artifacts or even acoustic differences (phase variations etc.) that are audible in my opinion.

I know I am repeating myself here, and some will say this sounds too good to be true but, this box is amazing. I can't wait for the final.

Will the final be able to be updated like the firmware on my Blu-ray player or DVD player? I guess, regardless, as far as I am concerned, I think we have a real winner here folks.

AGAIN

I don't know about the math... what I do know is that this box (to my ears) sounds excellent. The separation when decoding QS is phenomenal (as good as the OD Final script) and playing stereo through the decoder is very realistic sounding and creates a very nice surround effect. As with any stereo to surround "decode", your source may effect the actual results. I can say that I put all kinds of sources through it (classical, rock, jazz, dance, ambient etc) and in all kind of formats (mp3 wav ogg etc) and all my results were very pleasing.

AGAIN

Got mine as well!! Thanks to all who created this wonderful piece. It is quite an amazing thing. The QS decoding is stunning and my first experiments using the 5.1 are excellent compared to the original prototype that I had. No pumping and really smooth sound. Also the addition of a single 9v power supply versus the dual 12v plugs is most welcome. In the box you get the surround master unit, 2 3-way connection cables, 1 2-way connection cable, instruction manual, and a power supply with 4 different tips for different countries. I can only imagine how many hours I am going to spend playing all my favorite cds and LP's through this thing. So far my Christmas has been most excellent!!!

Thanks again.

SIUOL

I came across Reality Technologies TSS (two speakers surround) and got a unit. I have been using it for a few months through electrostatic stereo speakers and I have not noticed any abnormal performance. Not being a tech buff, my opinion in simple terms, is that the different classical music instruments come out with their sound more distinguished while importantly the musical image is more present and just as coherent in the room. I am now leaving the entire comparison of using or not using the unit from recording to recording alone and I am enjoying the music with the TSS (two speaker surround) as it is unquestionably better.

For the small investment involved in getting your own, you should at least give the equipment a trial and you will have no regrets!

BANGSZEMAX

Got mine on xmas eve -- four days from Australia to NC!

Listening to my QS LPs now, and all I can say is "wow!" 🎧

I've been through three different sets of QS boards on my QRX-999. Recapped, readjusted, blend resistors removed, etc, etc. None of them sounded as good as this. I'm very impressed. I'll write a longer review later, but I'll say that this is a keeper.

Can't wait for the SQ mod if it sounds anywhere near as good as it does in QS.

Thanks for the work on this guys!

AGAIN

say if there are any more questions about lossy/lossless they should be asked elsewhere.

So I'm glad and excited that you asked about the actual topic of the thread!!!!

I've been listening to some "standard" recordings (not matrixed or Dolby'ed, just regular stereo) in 4-channel mode yesterday and today and the results are very enjoyable. A lot depends on the mix -- stereo presentation, EQ, phasing, etc. The better the separation in the mix, the better the effect.

Essentially what happens is the mix has room to breathe. Little parts in the background that are buried far in the back of the mix become audible (for musicians, this would be a great way to learn parts by ear). It's pretty neat because you hear things in the recording that you never really noticed before. I listened to Steely Dan's *Aja* and what I noticed was Fagen's little keyboard comps all over the place. On Wilco's *Yankee Hotel Foxtrot*, there's lots of open space, and great separation between the fronts and the rears, really dramatic on the intro to "War on War." Right now I'm listening to Bruce Springsteen's *The Wild, The Innocent, and the E Street Shuffle* and hearing how there are layers and layers of instruments (the guitars on "4th of July, Asbury Park" for example).

The Involve decoder manages to do the separation without essentially no "pumping" effect (sounds getting audibly softer or quieter as they're processed). This is the real magic of the unit. Other processors have pulled off some of the tricks, but when you hear the sounds getting processed, it ruins the illusion and it starts to sound like you're not listening to music.

I have a Sansui QRX-999, so I was already familiar with listening to stereo recordings through QS systems. The Involve decoder just sounds much better than the decoders on my QRX-999 ever did.

Obviously, this kind of device is not for everybody. Purists won't like hearing the mix get artificially messed with, and there are moments where hearing that much more audio information can actually get a little overwhelming.

But regardless, it is a very cool sounding thing. You definitely do NOT need to have QS (or SQ) recordings in order to enjoy the effect. The recordings you mentioned (Michael Jackson, Toto, Billy Joel) should sound pretty awesome through it because those were very well-mixed records.

Note again that I haven't tried the 2-channel TSS or the 5.1 modes yet, just the 4-channel.

AGAIN

Dixie4 --

As a test, I just put on MJ's "Off the Wall." Very nice separation -- if I just play the rear speakers, I get rhythm guitars and backing vocals very clearly with a reverb shadow of the lead vocal. Obviously, it can never get as good as a full discrete recording, but it does a pretty impressive job of pulling things apart.

AGAIN

veat -- listening to music is a subjective and highly personal experience, so what I perceive may not be what you would perceive.

When you hear a vocal or an instrument part pop up in a rear speaker unexpectedly, is that "gimmicky"? Or is it just really cool? The original recording was not designed with that intent, so the "gimmick" is (or is not) in the ear of the beholder.

When I hear something I'm not used to hearing in a recording (one that I know well) and I know that the little box plugged into my stereo is responsible for that effect, my brain tells me that something artificial must be going on. So I have to suspend disbelief a little bit in order to sit back and just enjoy the fact that I'm hearing more than what I was expecting. That's not a bad thing, but it takes a little getting used to.

Leaving aside stuff mixed for quad matrix playback, let's call this box what it is: a synthesized discreteness generator. So yeah, the end result is not "real." But it is really damned good at what it does. You'd be able to fool a lot of people into thinking they were hearing some sort of discrete recording. Again, the better the mix, the better the effect.

If you ask me if you should buy it, I can't answer that question for you. But I can tell you that I'm 100% satisfied with what it is and thrilled to own it. It sounds great and makes it fun to listen to recordings with fresh ears.

If I were me, I'd buy it (wait!! I already did!!!).

AGAIN

Okay, here's something wild. I have a Duke Ellington LP -- The World of Duke Ellington -- that's in fake stereo. It's good fake stereo, but fake nonetheless. In the rears I'm getting almost nothing. Some reverb, and that's about it, as if the thing knows that it's dealing with a fake signal.

AGAIN

Playing *Electric Ladyland* through the Surround Master now. It is crazy active! My son just walked in the room and his eyes got wide when he heard all of the stuff bouncing around the room.

This thing is waaaay cool!

AGAIN

So tonight I listened to the following stereo recordings in 4.1:

Bruce Springsteen -- "4th of July Asbury Park (Sandy)." Guitars everywhere. You have no idea how many guitars were recorded for this track until you hear it in the QS mode.

Jimi Hendrix -- "House Burning Down". Has to be heard to be believed. If you like an "active" quad mix, there can be no more active. *And it was created before quad even existed.* How did he know this device would exist to decode his insane mix ideas? Here's Jimi blowing your mind once more. Try it. I dare you.

Diesel -- "Sausalito Summer Night" -- Picked this one on a whim. It sounds awesome. Big goofy well-recorded pop song. Huge and wide with lots of cool rear elements through the Surround Master.

Poco - "Crazy Eyes" -- The banjo comes in fully (and in stereo) in the rears. Very cool.

Bottom line -- there are lots of great stereo recordings that sound mind-blowing through the Surround Master in 4.x because people mixed the stereo recordings with cool phasing ideas that become total ear candy through this box. But that center channel in 5.x will ALWAYS be a compromise when you're starting with stereo input. Do the math! Why even bother with five channels when you're starting with two?

Just leave this unit in 4.0/4.1 and don't look back.

STEVE SHOULTZ

I now have the unit properly hooked up in the 4.1 configuration. Everything sounds great. The pass-through function works. My personal preference is 4-channel, so the center channel issue is not a deal breaker for me. I'm a little dissapointed that the product was released with this obvious issue. I do plan to try an attenuator to see if this corrects the issue. I'm not sure how much attenuation is needed, just guessed 3dB. I know I can buy a 1dB, 3dB, 6 dB or 12dB. It would have been preferable that this was implemented in the original design. I'm very impressed with quad synthesizer capability. Very natural and MUCH better than DPLII IMHO.

RUSTYANDIE

OK

I will start as the one who has used it for the longest time
1st it is as good as the QSD 1 as a QS Decoder

And have been using it almost daily
until I had this unit I was using the QSD 1 for about 35 years.

I have a system that allows me to plug it easily and switch from 1 thing to another so I can compare decoders

I have only used it as a 4 channel decoder for Stereo and it works from pleasing to Spectacular depending on tracks

I am a surround fan so I am a Tragic and have not heard stereo on my system for years

For someone who want's the Best QS decoder at a price that is not out bid (E/Bay) and a new listening experience from you Stereo this is it

I write this as a person that enjoys music and if I can get any more fun from a piece of music then I am happy

But remember all effects are random

Happy New Year

Ron

AND AGAIN

I have used the Vector 4 test LP

And switched back and forward with the QSD1 all the tests were the same on the Scope or a tiny bit better the side test was the same rear channels were sharp center rear was there and the image moved from right rear to left rear

In all respects it the same as the QSD 1

one thing I would like to point out that if you want to hear good Quad or any Surround it is best if you have the same speakers the bigger the better here are a number of Quad and 5.1 tracks that have bass in the rear and drums

I have played Steely Dan QS lps and I have read that some people have thought that they were not Quad but if you hear them through the S/Master you will be surprised how good they are

I also have the QSD 1000 it has a sharper image than it, and a QSD 2 a friend of mine thought that the S/Master had a smother sound

I could not hear that but I am not as young as I used to be

As a QS decoder it is as good as the best

I hope to have a site up with the scope showing the effects comparing QSD1 and S/Master decoding

If charlie (chucky) will do it I am not able to

I,m tired now want to go to bed

Inqubuzz

Hi, well, yesterday I hooked up the Involve Surround Master to my receiver and... Im hooked up now...

WOW!

Ive got some amazing results. Ive been playing around with different songs in mp3 and I have to say...great stuff.

Everything has worked great, but there are some songs really amazing

Hoobastank - The Reason

Muse - Assassin

Devin Townsend - Coast

Muse - Knights of Cydonia

Oceansize - Commemorative 9/11 T-Shirt

Blackfield - Epidemic

Blackfield - This Killer (although SW said that he couldnt multichannel mix for Blackfield its done so anyway and its there with the surround master)

I have to mention PAntera - This Love, althou ther is nothing swirling around, its seems Phil Anselmo, the singer, is screaming in your face!!! and without spitting! its great!!

there are a lot other songs I listened to, and its really good, but I was paying more attention to the music, than taking notes of which songs i liked the most

thanks chucky and friends!

AGAIN

now... this is what i call quality music.

Now playing Dream Theater - Misunderstood from My Oppo, conected via toslink to my Cambridge Audio DAC Magic Plus (that arrived today, and thats why Im so thrilled), and the DAC to my Surround Master, so there is no more stereo for me anymore.. every stereo source I have is hooked up to the DAC and then to the SM (in 4.1 mode) (even if my wife wants to play "reggeaton" on her computer...its hooked up to the SM

I have to say the song is impressive in 4.1, sounds come from everywhere. Although you are not a fan of Dream Theater, you should try to listen to this song through the surround master...

EDIT: uuuhhh... and the song Disappear is also great through the SM, there's a beautiful part with some guitar strings that goes back and forth... very cool...

Byrdman7

Hi Chucky,

I installed a line level attenuator in the center channel and the 5.1 mode performs as well as the 4.0/4.1 mode which I have always raved about. I am sure you and David will address this issue by either a equal output from all 6 channels or a supplied in line attenuator to balance the center. Take care and thank you for providing a GREAT product.

Regards,
Reagan

AGAIN

I had to make several test discs by lowering the OPPO's output until I had no clipping in the center channel. It calculated to 3dB. I can hear 1dB level change too and in digital recording +1 dB can cause clipping so you can imagine what +3 dB was doing. The unit works like a charm now in 4.0, 4.1 and 5.1, I am VERY happy with its performance. Thanks again for a GREAT product.

Regards,
Reagan

LIZARDKING

listening to The Alan Parsons Project - Turn of A Friendly Card off the HDAD Stereo DVD-A 192k 24bit via my Oppo -> Surrround Master = A winner!!

Also listened to:

Thomas Dolby - The Flat Earth - I need to formally compare this to my SPEC version - it (at first listen) sounds very similar to me....

Tool - 10,000 days (Right in Two)

AGAIN

Gong - You - This is reference material for what it can do.... Thought I heard a guitar

going round to all 4 speakers one after the other at one point. 😊

The Alan Parsons Project - I Robot - HDAD DVD-A is awesome too!!!

AGAIN

FYI - Steely Dan - Aja on a casual listen wasn't as good as an old DTS CD upmix I've got....

Tiki - Past, Present, Future (NZ Music)... I wish I could record some of the tracks to show you guys samples. On one track the "electric buzz" sound goes around all four speakers.. sounds totally discrete!!!!

Blackfield II is another winner....

NOFFOUR

I bought a unit, it arrived on christmas eve.

Due to circumstances, I have not been able to do any comparisons.

I have hooked it up and did finally hook up my heathkit scope.

The QS test LP shows everything coming from the right places and very little bleed between channels.

The QS music I've played does sound good to my ears.

I have not tried any other modes on the surround master.

I will be doing a comparison with my QSD-1 and my Fosgate model 5 in popular mode (scope says very close to QS).

OLDASMONO

bought the Reality Technologies Surround Master but havn't had the time to test it adequately yet to provide a full review. The time is not just listening to it but to also do comparisons. Before getting the unit I listened to all my stereo sources through six speakers (L/R, SL/SR and Front High L/Front High R). I "Y" each stereo channel and patch that to my amp so each speaker receives full amp power (Left channel goes to three amp inputs and the Right channel gets three amp inputs). This gives me 200 watts per channel times 6 for stereo. Because the speakers are in four corners and at different heights the sound is very full and just the different highs and lows of each instruments make some instruments appear placed more front and some more rear and already separated left and right. I don't use DP11 or Nero as those seem to change the tone and almost sound filtered to me. I don't use 6CH Stereo either as I want the pure stereo signal from my Oppo 83se without the preamp adding processing. Hopefully this makes sense as it is basically stereo form 6 speakers as I said. So I bought the Involve unit. It does work good and gives you solid separation. I find it more isolating the center (left and right combined) to the center channel and moving the left to the rear left and right to rear right. It is very isolated which is what they promise. My problem is that solid isolation is not how good surround music is mixed. Steve Wilson fills the surround area with his mixes. Sure you hear things directional from speakers but if you listen he also has reverb and other effects from the same channel spread in other channels to give more depth. Even my 6 channel stereo has more depth because each channel is coming out of three speakers and depending on the stereo mix, spread

left as right some as well. I'm not saying the thing doesn't sound good, it does exactly what it advertises, a pseudo isolation of instruments to multichannel. Some stuff sounds unbelievably good through the unit. I was just hoping it would become my default for stereo listening and it is not. I hope my rambling made some sense. Truth is we all know nothing beats a good original surround mix and maybe I just had the wrong expectation. I'll listen more and give another update.

AGAIN

A day later. Good idea LizardKing on trying the 4 ch which I had done but it seemed to lose something. I also cheated and tried running the subwoofer line with 4 ch because the sub really adds to any mix but still wasn't right.

Chucky mentioned, "I may have read your contribution wrong but you may benefit by reducing the center channel by say 3dB..." First I have to say I'm impressed Chucky that you WERE able to read my rambling post correctly. Second, you have NO IDEA how RIGHT you were! I must apologize for not having read all these posts before spouting off on your product. I even made sure and re-balanced my entire setup first with my handy dandy Radio Shack meter before doing exactly what you said. I backed off the center by 3dB. It made all the difference in what I was describing before and now sounds beautiful! I'm usually pretty good on identifying these things but figured that was just the sound. I honestly hate to have to adjust balance based on the type of playback (basically being lazy I guess) but this made such a difference! It went from what I was describing before as almost 3.1 channel (Center, Surround Left, Surround Right & sub) to FULL 5.1. It spread the front out and allowed the front left and right to help compliment the rears.

Obviously in a single evening after work I haven't done enough testing BUT please let me retract my earlier post (hopefully not too late for any potential buyers). I spot checked some stereo SACD / CDs and even retried some 180 gram vinyl that seemed to sound awkward before, all sounded very smooth with no quality loss but now of course in obvious surround. I played the best of CD from Camel that was all solid and then a side of a new vinyl 180 gram of Supertramp's Crime of Century. It all sounded great. The Supertramp side ends with the song "Asylum" and what struck me the most was a recurring drum fill in that song starts with a drum front center and the next drum is rear center. The songs I played tonight would challenge my audiophile brother on whether they were original surround mixes or the Involve unit.

Please accept my apologies for the too abrupt post above as the unit DOES have the potential of being "the" Stereo playback mode for me.

DWIGHT

First of all, thanks goes out to Jon Urban for creating and maintaining this fantastic forum, which attracts creative and remarkable people. Jon, Thank You!

The case of the Sansui QSD-1 has been Resolved by The Master. I did not think that I would be writing this...I thought that, at best, the Surround Master would match my QSD-1's performance, but I was wrong, it is clearly superior. My QSD-1 was

refurbished with the blend resistors removed, but it cannot match the deep corner to corner and front to back separation of The Surround Master. I am still trying to deal with its sound quality...it is very, very good!....Sound Quality?..That will take another post.....I can't jump to conclusions, because I have to deal with the excitement factor, but I can deal with placement issues. I have a receiver equipped with DTS NEO X....it is a joke compared to The Surround Master..... Please don't laugh or smirk at me when I say that I have listened to my QS albums hundreds of times and have found them to be a bit on the smeary and disappointing side. For the first time, through The Master, they sound specific...I have finally heard a discrete sounding sound field.... I'm really looking forward to going back through my collection....after 30 yrs!

This unit has no volume or balance controls...at this price point you cannot expect them, and so to fully take advantage of its capabilities, you must be able to adjust signal levels independent of the unit. You must be able to adjust the rear channel volume levels. It is essential!

For this quick evaluation, I only listened in the four channel mode...I will tackle the 5.1 installation in a later post.

This device is a small plastic shell that does not visually inspire confidence; in fact looking at the small skimpy plastic slide controls scared me, if you know what I mean, but it's what's under the hood that counts and (VAROOM!!!)you will not be disappointed. It has turned everything that I listened to into sonic bliss-to-bumpers-shaboom-varoom... I will detail my equipment at the end....now to the listening.

At first, I was only interested in the unit's ability to compete with the Sansui VarioMatrix....I listened to cut 5 (This Jesus Must Die) of the remastered 1970 JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR. Voices move from front left to right and to the right back, then to front as well as center and in all quadrants at the same time.....Through the QSD-1 they were "virtually discrete"...through the Resolve they were discrete!....The voices were at the speaker or sidewall, not almost at the speaker, sidewall and just a smidgen elsewhere, but actually there!. The voices were cleaner, more completemy brain didn't have to work to finish the placement. Cut 9 (The Temple) is similar....voices everywhere.....and always clear and distinct.....

Next I played Paul McCartney's PRESS TO PLAY...cut 3 ..(Talk No More) Once again voices are placed very specifically around the listener to a degree that amazed me. The mind was relieved of work. I've listened to this album a hundred times... I know that placing a single voice in a single spot is not supposed to be difficult for high separation decoders...but DLP II and NeoX don't do it as well as the QSD-1 does it...and the QSD-1 does not do it as well as the Surround Master does it! The voices were complete and solid ...not virtual but real.

Next I listened to Cirque Du Soleil's IRIS...I saw and heard this at The Dolby Theater in Hollywood....It was a surround spectacular in person ...A mix of live and recorded music surrounding the audience. This recording duplicates the experience... it also produces a height effect and a 360 degree sound field...and The Master extracts every bit of detail.....The Master placed instruments at the speakers, in between...Everywhere!.....I was stunned!

I love the stereo cd version of DARK SIDE OF THE MOON synthesized by both the Tate II and the QSD-1.....particularly, as an example...at 1:52 of cut 2...."here for today, gone tomorrow"....the voice moves from over the right shoulder to right front ..across the front to the left and ends at the back left.... Through The Master it was spectacular and of course it was followed by the famous clock sequence which kills the QSD-1. In fact, I can say I prefer the derived quad version through The Master to all other presentations....but I must say the fidelity, not presentation, on the Blu-Ray is special.

The Surround Master reaches farther out into the corners, and that makes a dramatic difference.....it stretches the sound farther in all directions....and at the same time it is cleaner..... At first I thought it was strident, but then I listened to the Delos recording of Vivaldi's THE FOUR SEASONS conducted by Gerard Schwarz....I was thrown by the string tone that I had not heard before....It could be just a rush of excitement....but I will do some extended listening just for sound quality tomorrow. The depth captured by The Master on this recording is breathtaking!

Here are two other points. Point one is that Chucky and company have promised a SQ software upgrade for a nominal cost to this unit...if it works as well with SQ as it does with QS.....it is simply a stunner! My second point is something you will just have to try for yourself to believe....The surround position on the Tate II and the QS position on any Type A VarioMatrix unit will do a wonderful job of decoding a CD-4 record. I mean it will sound close to what you would hear through an original CD-4 demodulator.....For instance, if you listen to NO SECRETS by Carly Simon and move to (Your So Vain), you will hear the guitar riff move around the room almost exactly as you would hear it through the demodulator. This has been consistent with every CD-4 record that I own. The Surround Master has only improved upon the effect...It is not perfect, but close! Try it!

It might provide the solution to the great problem...one unit for all three of the prominent quad delivery systems...and a phenomenal synthesizer, which to my mind is its greatest use.

The Surround Master SM-465 is, at its price, a dream come true for anyone in love with multi-channel sound....It is clear that the folks at Reality Technologies have given us an extraordinary chance to experience sound at its best.
Dwight.

AGAIN

Nah! Made the whole thing up!..... Just kidding.....Listening now to the Quadradisc NILSON SCHMILSSON.....Jump Into The Fire.....Sensational through the Master!
Dwight



LaserVision Landmarks

Join Date

May 2005

Location

Plattsburg, MO (just outside Kansas City)

Posts

932

Points

10,374

Level

67

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

0

encoding discrete quad to Involve format

I've spent the day making Involve encoded CD's from discrete DVD-A masters - so far I've encoded CD's of "Company" and "Earthquake" and "Jaws" - Company came out amazing sounding and the Involve decoder decodes it so well that it sounds pretty much discrete. The SQ version of Company has some audible artifacts when decoded with the Fosgate Tate II due to incorrect SQ encoding - Company was recorded with poor isolation between performers, which can clearly be seen in the documentary, and it was mixed to discrete 4 channel and then encoded with the first CBS SQ Encoder, the 2410 which could only encode the speaker positions plus CF and CB correctly; all other phantom images were skewed into incorrect positions or non-localizable - the end result with the Tate decoding was it to cause vocals to pull away from their specific speaker towards the center of the room or towards the vocal that is louder and many vocal positions are completely smeared and you can't tell where they are supposed to be coming from (thank goodness the forward/backwards SQ encoders and the SQ Position Encoder were developed to clear up the anomalies in SQ encoding/decoding). Anyway, NONE of these types of artifacts are audible with the Involve encode/decode - you can locate the positions where each performer is and there is no pulling or movement of vocals as others appear - it really does sound discrete. The soundtracks to Jaws and Earthquake, taken from the Japanese CD-4 LP releases, are very discrete and the encode/decode keeps them sounding discrete - and I'm totally amazed how they all sound like completely normal stereo when played without decoding. Now I'll be able to listen to them anywhere without needing a DVD player. I wish I had a cassette deck because I'd like to see how the Involve encoding holds up on cassette - the 90 degree phase shifts can be mucked up pretty easily by

cassette phase shifts.

So, to say I'm impressed with the Involve encode/decode and stereo compatibility would be an understatement.

Lucanu



1K Club - QQ Shooting Star

Join Date

Apr 2005

Location

Cabras, Sardinia, Italy, Europe, World, Solar system

Posts

1,600

Points

23,491

Level

94

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

0

Blog Entries

4



Re: INVOLVE SQ - IS HERE

Ok, where's my beer??? I need a BEER!!!

well, almost!!

My unit arrived just an hour ago, already hooked up and playing both SQ and QS
What else can I say??? THANK YOU!! THANK YOU!! THANK YOU!! THANK
YOU!! THANK YOU!! THANK YOU!!

You did a great job on this unit, I was comparing to my QRX7001 QS decoding and
it's right there! BUM!! It just decodes perfect!

I also tried a SQ material and while I sat in the sweet spot I was watchin my quad
scope unit and it was DISCRETE as the best Tate II

Thank you guys, you made my day a better one for sure!!! BACK TO LISTENING
IN THE SWEET SPOT

Colin Dunn

Member

Join Date

Mar 2012

Posts

55

Points

1,603

Level

23

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

0

Re: INVOLVE SQ - IS HERE

I actually prefer the sound quality of the Involve SQSM to a Tate II. The Tate II sounds "harsh" and "electronic" by comparison. Whereas the Surround Master has a smoother, more lifelike reproduction.

There are some nice restored / upgraded Tate II units out there, at about 5X the cost of the Surround Master.

Q8



1K Club - QQ Shooting Star

Join Date

Aug 2012

Location

Ohio

Posts

1,312

Points

9,365

Level

65

Achievements:

Awards:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

[0](#)

Blog Entries

[1](#)

It is so nice to see so many happy SQSM customers.

Natural is a great way to describe it. It actually sounds like a discrete recording. Its easy to forget that this thing is decoding. You really can't say that about ny other matrix decoder. While they may sound good, they aren't as natural.

Its awe inspiring to hear this thing decode things where some of the mix is seperated into the corners, while at the same time other sounds move around closer to you. Accurate depth. No decoding distractions. Just good pure listening.

Now I can not feel as crazy for buying almost every matrix record I can lay my hands on.

Ill stop rambling, the SQSM just makes me so excited

LizardKing



1K Club - QQ Shooting Star

Join Date

Oct 2009

Location

Wellington, New Zealand

Posts

2,267

Points

17,692

Level

84

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

[5](#) (100%)

Re: INVOLVE SQ - IS HERE

OK - As part of getting my Dark Side of The Moon SQ back I decided to take my Surround Master around to my brother's place and have a SQ session.... He has better

gear than me anyway - so I wanted to hear it on his set-up.....

We listened to (in SQ):

Dark Side of the Moon - This put a smile to my face....if I didn't have the discrete version(s) of the quad mix I'd be content with this... It sounded great.... This will probably be my reference disc to "wow" friends about SQ decoding...

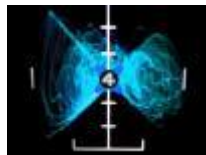
Chicago - Greatest Hits - better than I was expecting from the reviews... I really enjoyed this..

John Lennon - Imagine - Nice pressing - say no more...

I'm VERY VERY happy....

The hunt for SQ, QS and RM now gets serious for me...

Discrete 4



New Member

Join Date

Aug 2013

Location

Michigan

Posts

8

Points

263

Level

5

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

[0](#)

Re: INVOLVE SQ - IS HERE

OK, after playing with my new Surround Master SQ for about two weeks, I've found that I'm rather impressed with this unit. Compared to my SQ 2 plugged into my Marantz 4400, I find that the Surround Master tends to have much more separation in the rear channels with more clarity / volume. The QS or Involve mode seems to have Dolby pro logic II like capabilities. I have found that I can have actual true quad effects from youtube videos that have been encoded with Dolby Pro Logic II with each channel separately recorded. I have my laptop hooked into my Soundblaster 5.1 soundcard, and I have the soundcard's headphone output hooked into the Surround Master using the Involve setting, and setting my Marantz to "Discrete" with little or no Dolby noise reduction on the receiver. The results are amazing! Yes, you can get true quad from youtube videos that are encoded correctly. On Youtube, there's a Prologic II version on Pink Floyd's "Money" that does a nice quad job, and also a person Named Tab Patterson that has a channel with very good Enoch Light's reel to reel discrete recordings using this process. You should check them out, while hooking up your computer to the Surround Master. ** I also have to add this in.... I HIGHLY suggest using a decent separate phono pre-amp. I used the pre-amp built into my turntable, and have since removed it from the unit, and soldered the RCA cable wires direct from my cartridge pickup, and using a Cambridge Azur 551 moving magnet pre-amp as my turntable's new sound stage. HUGE difference!

[Colin Dunn](#)

Member

Join Date

Mar 2012

Posts

55

Points

1,603

Level

23

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

[0](#)

Re: INVOLVE SQ - IS HERE

I got to spend a few hours putting the Involve Surround Master SQ through its paces. Here are my thoughts and observations.

Stereo-to-surround upconversion: The best I've heard. Better than the results from a Tate 101A, or any of the common receiver modes (Dolby ProLogic IIx, dts Neo:6, etc.). The front stage was completely seamless. With the competition, sometimes vocals get isolated to the front center. On the Surround Master, it was a seamless front stage with an uncanny illusion of "soundstage depth," something I've never experienced before on my system when listening to stereo material. Listening to Dave Brubeck's "Time Out" (an older recording from 1959) was immersive with a middle-of-the-band effect. Sound quality on that CD bested many newer recordings I've heard.

QS decoding: I tried out the Project 3 test LP, the opening track from Paul Anka's "The Painter," and a QS Vox Box set of George Gershwin. On the Project 3 test record, all sounds were placed correctly in their channels during the test playback. Then in the music portion, instrument placement matched the diagrams in the album sleeve. Separation was clean, with no noticeable "bleed-through" to incorrect channels.

I chose the Paul Anka selection ["(You Bring Out) The Best In Me"] to do a comparison of script-based decoding vs. Involve decoding. The results were similar, but not quite identical. I did notice a little percussion bleed-through to the rear channels in the Involve version that was not present in the script-based decode. However, placement of background singers, instruments, etc. was very similar between the two. I don't know which rendition is more "accurate," but overall, I preferred the sound of the Involve rendition.

The Gershwin Vox Box is more of an "ambient surround" presentation. However, it was still a vast improvement over stereo as the Surround Master created a realistic 3-dimensional concert hall ambience out of the QS-encoded LP. Were it not for the vinyl noise, I would have thought I was listening to a multi-channel SACD.

SQ decoding: I tried out the Columbia introduction to SQ quadraphonic sound LP, then listened to a few cuts from Wendy Carlos's "Switched On Bach," Barbra Streisand's "Stoney End," and Billy Joel's "Piano Man." Again, all sound placement tests put sounds in the correct channels. There is a 360-degree pan effect (narration of "all around ... and around ... and around...") that came off flawlessly, with no perceivable gaps or jumps.

My copies of "Switched on Bach" and "Stoney End" are pretty noisy and beat-up (I got them used, and their previous owners didn't treat the records well). This didn't adversely affect the surround decoding, though the music was noisy or distorted as a result. Again, this was due to the records and not the Surround Master.

The decoding of the Billy Joel at least equaled what I have been able to do with the Adobe Audition scripts that have been posted on this site. However, the convenience of playing back the vinyl through the Surround Master can't be beat. This cuts conversion time by 2/3; on my computer, decoding an album with Audition takes about twice the running time ... and that is *after* playing back the album into the

computer!

So we definitely have a winner for decoding '70s quad material, as well as enhancing stereo to surround. If you have matrix quad albums, getting a Surround Master is a no-brainer. Stereo upconversion is also excellent, but with a caveat (see point #3 below).

RSilverman



Senior Member

Join Date

Aug 2012

Location

Los Angeles

Posts

230

Points

1,922

Level

26

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

0

Re: INVOLVE SQ - IS HERE

Got around to trying an Angel SQ classical record this morning (sealed copy of Karajan conducts Johan Strauss waltzes). Though perhaps I was expecting too much of SQ before, I was really impressed with the sound the SM gave me on the classical. It didn't hurt that the album is pristine, but the sound was clean and spacious, and the ambient effect noticeably better than one I got through my 2020. it was very much a real concert hall type experience. Can't wait to play more of my classical records.

dwright

Member
Join Date
Apr 2003
Location
Santa Clarita Calif.
Posts
131
Points
8,749
Level
62
Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like
Feedback Score
[0](#)

Re: INVOLVE SQ - IS HERE

I have finished my genuflections!....I will be removing my TATE II 101A from my audio shelf. The review is coming! There are surprising experiences, but if you are waiting , you will not be disappointed. I was able to compare the TATE and the INVOLVE SQ with the push of a few buttons...interesting!
Dwight

[dwight](#)

Member
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Points
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Level
62
Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like
Feedback Score
[0](#)

Re: INVOLVE SQ - IS HERE

I forgot what a “pain in the ass” it was to constantly re-cue records like ... maybe 150 times in 5 hours, especially when the turntable is 13 ft away...but...LOL ..Was it worth it for my fat ass to get up and compare The TATE ll 101A with INVOLVE SQ/SM? Yeah baby!..... If you have not lived with a TATE or a QSD-1, you will curl your toes a lot, clap your hands and say wow, and definitely cry; and if you have lived with one or both, you will smile a lot and say wow....and hell, maybe cry!

Those who buy this unit, will have state of the art decoding of both SQ and QS, and also a great synthesizer, all in one magic box ... a bit of a dream come true.

You really must have independent control of all audio channels, because INVOLVE does not provide them.

My TATE was one of the first made, however I have AB'd it with units produced later, and I heard little or no difference....just to be clear about that, also It has been recapped.

INVOLVE SQ performs all the SQ tricks perfectly.. ...have no fear or doubt about that...360 degree pans are exactly the same as the TATE..... every instrument is in its proper place, especially the ones that are exactly tucked in one of those famous rear corners where you know they should be, but through the INVOLVE, it usually sounds seamlessly discrete compared to the TATE, which on occasion, seems to vacuum suck an instrument into position.

This is not a great distinction, but it is audible!

INVOLVE SQ always sounds more open and transparent...especially when there is real room reverberation...Instruments bloom and sparkle, making the TATE sound slightly pinched.... and sometimes very pinched!

INVOLVE always reproduced voices with great clarity ...on several albums, after going back and forth, it sounded as if the vocalists, on some tracks, were recessed or slightly hazy through the TATE. The low end response seems much better through the INVOLVE decoder too!

Some of the albums I listened to :

Chase

SANTANA ABRAXAS

LOGGINS AND MESSINA

DON ELLIS TEARS OF JOY

MIKE OLDFIELD BOXED

BERNSTEIN'S MASS

THERE GOES RHYMAN' SIMON

RICK WAKEMAN: THE SIX WIVES OF HENRY VIII

I listened to many albums but decided to focus on those that I thought would most illuminate the differences.

I am going to start with BERNSTEIN'S MASS because it was designed as an early quadraphonic sound spectacular. In other words it is a 360 degree recording, with a large number of acoustic instruments, voices both alone and in chorus, and a taped quadraphonic recording used during performance to boot. It was during this recording that I heard one of the main differences between the TATE and the INVOLVE....on side two, during segment VIII EPISTLE "THE WORD OF THE LORD", there are three simple spoken segments...using INVOLVE you hear the voices surrounded by the ambience of the huge hall...when you switch to the TATE, the voices suddenly sound drier and are slightly recessed or muffled, and the ambience of the room is almost suppressed. Time after time I noticed that the TATE seemed to suck the ambience out of a recording; this was never true of the INVOLVE. The envelopment, fidelity and directionality of this recording through the INVOLVE was superior to the TATE.

DON ELLIS TEARS OF JOY is one of my favorite big band albums, but for years I have listened to it through a Sansui QSD-1, because it sounded more alive and real using the QSD-1....I missed the SQ decoding, but opted for the QSD-1 synth because of the fidelity issue....It is such a pleasure to be able hear it, with proper decoding and fidelity. This is a big band, string quartet, live recording!.....The strings are particularly seductive through the INVOLVE as opposed to the TATE, also when the brass reaches crescendos...where the TATE sounds compressed, the INVOLVE soars. There is also a vagueness to the rear decoding on this album, but only through the TATE...not so with the INVOLVE! I was puzzled by this. It was the only time that the INVOLVE and the TATE seemed to be, at times, in different worlds.

On the LOGGINS AND MESSINA album, during the second cut on side 1 "WHISKY", The guys sound just a bit cloudy through the TATE, but through INVOLVE, they sound separate, distinguishable and crystal clear.....During YOUR MAMA DON'T DANCE "Get out of the car longhair!" a phrase that suddenly jumps to the rear corner right, was one of those SQ quad tricks that I loved, and the INVOLVE is particularly effective here, ...it is a pleasure to hear the SQ version of this album without audible constriction.

MIKE OLDFIELD BOXED CD: I only listened to TUBULAR BELS, and again, it was in the area of clarity where INVOLVE excelled... also in the area of low bass energy where INVOLVE really won the day...prodigious is the word I'd use. This was the only CD I listened to.

I can tell you that INVOLVE SQ is as good as or better than the TATE in almost every way, which is an amazing accomplishment. They both decode SQ beautifully, with the INVOLVE presenting a smoother, more refined and transparent image!

When I first heard the TATE, many, many years ago, it was like magic...well the magic has spread, and now dwells in the depths of INVOLVE SQ. Listening was so much fun!

Dwight



1K Club - QQ Shooting Star

Join Date

Aug 2012

Location

Ohio

Posts

1,312

Points

9,365

Level

65

Achievements:

Awards:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

[0](#)

Blog Entries

[1](#)

Re: INVOLVE SQ - IS HERE

Okay, I finally got my initial listening in last night! My fat ass also got a good amount of exercise cuing up tons of records.

I will start this review with this: If you want to listen to QS and SQ records and want to synthesize stereo to quad, do not hesitate to buy this thing. It will meet your expectations and then some. Heck, if anything, the Involve folks are playing it safe and not talking it up enough (I know, they knew it would be more believable from us). This thing is beyond amazing. With SQ and QS records, I finally feel like I am getting what they told everyone they would be getting if they bought matrix stuff. If you have the Surround master, the 70's matrix propaganda is no longer a lie. I feel that if anyone is unhappy with it's QS/SQ performance, it is because they have a problem with their equipment, do not have everything optimally set up or are disappointed with the quad mix on the record (I think some people expect them all to sound like Dark Side Of The Moon).

Firstly, I sat up temporarily at my GF's house. This setup was not optimal. While I used 4 matching large 3 way speakers, positioning was not optimal. I had to work with the space I had. I got it fairly symmetrical but front and rear were closer than left and right (even with the poor speaker placement, the mixes shined). I used my big old sony quad receiver along with an external vintage realistic phono preamp (I know they preamp is perfectly working, i think the Sony is too but I did not want to trust the

receiver to this in the off chance anything in the old phono section is bad). The turntable was my GF's Technics SL-J1 linear. Pedestrian cart. Nothing too exciting here. Now that it has performed this well on this less than optimal setup, I know it will completely blow minds when setup in my system.

I will take one second to touch on the appearance. It doesn't look that good, but it's not ugly either. It looks like a cross between a 70's radar detector and one of those digital TV converter boxes that are used to "upgrade" old TVs.

So the first thing I slapped on was An Introduction to SQ Quadraphonic sound. I knew this would let me know right away if the SQ mode worked or not and hot damn it did! It actually sounded how you always thought it should sound! Image was perfectly stable, shocking separation, everything was going in the right direction. This was a great test. Now time to rock.

I have all three Aerosmith quads, and I was going to work my way through the hits on all three in chronological order. They had great separation and channel isolation, but by the time I got to Walk This way, my GF was getting bored. It wasn't ping-pongy enough for her "why would you pay 500 for this type of quad". While I was happy, I knew I had to skip forward to Back In The Saddle. Yay, swirly ping pong effect, her attention is regained. I knew what I had to do next.

Edgar Winter Frankenstein and Free Ride. Beautiful and amazing. Still has everyones attention.

Now for the big guns. Dark Side of The Moon by Pink Floyd. I only had time to play Money and Us and Them. Sounds pretty much like the discrete version to me! I then went on to test out the QS ability.

I put on one of the QS Ovation sound effects records, Sounds of Today and Tomorrow. It moved all the sounds around perfectly. Cars, Motorcycles, Digital effects, Airplanes, gunshots and all! Fun stuff!

I then went to Jim Croce's hits. Played Bad, Bad, Leroy Brown. Sounded really nice. Good separation. Boring mix. Loosing the GF again even though she likes that song.

I then played around with the synthesis from stereo records. Much better than anything I had ever heard. I will touch more on this later, but basically, when it's good it's good, when it stinks, it stinks. When it really works well with a song it is mind blowing. When it's a bad choice, it's almost unbearable compared to stereo.

I went back to a couple more SQ records then. I played the Song Indian reservation by The Raiders. Once again, completely solid and amazing.

The last thing I tried, was well after the ear fatigue set in (and alcohol and *whatnot* and record changing fatigue as well) was Hang On Sloopy from Rick Derringer's Spring Fever. Sounded pretty good but wasn't too exciting, plus I was beat. Kind of a low note to wind the night down on, but stuff happens.

Thank you so much to all the INVOLVE staff for making this happen!!! This is what we have all always wanted!

[dwight](#)

Member

Join Date

Apr 2003

Location

Santa Clarita Calif.

Posts

131

Points

8,749

Level

62

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

0

Involve Total Perspective interview

[A Audio pt.1.mp3A Audio pt.2.mp3A Audio pt.3 .mp3A Audio pt.4 .mp3](#)

Greetings All, A few months ago I was presented with one of those once in a lifetime gifts, an opportunity to visit Melbourne Australia...and of course, as most of you know, it is the home of Involve Audio, the birthplace of The Surround Master, the now state of the art SM/SQ decoder which was literally a labor of love and an answer to 10 years of wailing on this forum....one box that does both formats...no sex jokes please!

Last month I met with the very personable guys who make Reality Technologies tick, Chucky, David, Dawson, Trevor and many others at their offices,(you've seen their pictures if you bought the SQ Master) which is actually their factory too.....I was flabbergasted by the scope and breadth of their endeavor...from very efficient electrostatic panels and esoteric prototypes to their proprietary TOTAL PERPECTIVE system which removes the need for a center channel, and as you will hear in the recorded MP3 interview, I was not ready to accept that, but the proof was in the listening. Please forgive my exuberance and stuttering...I do shut up after the intro and let them do the talking!

I was not prepared for what I heard. Somehow, after encoding a 5.1 source and playing it back through the INVOLVE decoder in TOTAL PERSPECTIVE, there was

more information retrieved than from the 5.1, and the center channel sound was superior to the standard 5.1 presentation with the center channel speaker. The standard system was all B&W...not a slouch system! I was able to move around their theater setup and the dialogue was always center, but more importantly, it was always clearer and more natural. Hopefully this will be the subject of much discussion in the future.

I will let Chucky tell you in his own voice, but like me, I'm sure you will have to hear it to believe it, and I hope that happens soon.

I was also treated with such hospitality by a long standing member of this forum "Rustyandi"...Ron has an amazing system, phenomenal sound with a wall of components reminiscent of an audio salon...it is beyond belief...more cables than I have had in my worst nightmares and the largest single collection of quad records I have ever seen. He can play anything with the push of a button. ... and what a beautiful family...his wife and daughter made me feel as if I were home and fed me the best lasagna I have ever had in my life...I now have the recipe and will attempt to replicate it today.....I was also introduced to a friend of Ron's and his massive custom built room....with huge concrete enclosures....Horns and large direct radiators....sound as effortless as I have ever heard.

Here is the interview.....I hope hearing the voices that go along with the names and faces is enjoyable and informative. I really have to thank the guys in Australia....they are not just brilliant, but very warm and approachable. ...and thanks to Jon Urban for making all of this possible!

Dwight

[dwight](#)

Member

Join Date

Apr 2003

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131

Points

8,749

Level

62

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

[0](#)

Re: Reality Technologies Surround Master - 2013 Owners Thread

Surround Master 2

Chucky, First of all, I would like to get rid of the “fake surround” attribute which is frequently attached to units such as the S/M. Hafler, when he first demonstrated that there was real information buried in every stereo recording, although only with 3db of separation, was fighting the digital attempt to really and truly create fake surround through digital ambience surround.

I have spent many hours switching between my QSD-1 and my S/M ... the difference is not hard to quantify.....The S/M maintains the front sound stage no matter how much I raise the rear channel volume, which is necessary if I want a lot of info in the rear channels! If the info is there, it will appear, very discrete, If not I will find ambience! This is why I said in my initial review that volume control of all channels is essential.

This is an amazing attribute...I cannot duplicate it with any other processor that I own. The front image will usually collapse towards the rear, but not so with the S/M. The second point is one I have also mentioned here before, i.e. there is a side channel image created that is remarkable. It seems to create a very three dimensional phantom image along both sidewalls, even though this was not supposed to be possible, or at least a very difficult achievement.

I have tried Rustyandi's suggestion, to run the TSS output from the S/M into my QSD-1...the result was like listening under water...swimming signals...didn't work for me!...but perhaps I did something wrong!? I have tried it several times, but It ends up the same way every time...swimming signals!

I have run the stereo outputs from my OPPO 83 se to the S/M, and have played the rear outputs of the S/M instead of the discrete outputs and I can say that I prefer the S/M rear outputs 90% !....more fun and great directionality!..with a great front image.....We are all fiddlers.....fiddle and you will have fun.

Dwight

[skindzier](#)

Member

Join Date

Oct 2012

Posts

30

Points

1,047

Level

17

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

[0](#)

Re: Reality Technologies Surround Master - 2013 Owners Thread

Hooked up my Surround Master yesterday (in 5.1 mode). Only had a couple hours to play with it, so listened to a lot of individual songs to get a feel for it. I agree with the general statements of most other folks. Results ranged from Good to Spectacular. Definitely the best surround processor I've heard. At its best some of the mixes sounded like solid discrete mixes. Like others, even when there weren't necessarily discrete sounds, I definitely heard a lot more depth & detail in some material. Here's some specifics:

Something - The Beatles: Lots of detail I hadn't heard before. The flanged guitar part is a lot more prominent throughout.

Voices - Russ Ballard: The opening synth is very cool. All over the place!

If She Knew What She Wants - The Bangles: Very close to discrete vocals with the leads in the Center and the answered group vocals in the rears

Somebody's Baby - Jackson Browne: Exposed a lot more guitar detail

Ten Years Gone - Led Zeppelin: Heard a few more bits & pieces of the Page guitar army that I hadn't heard before

Africa - Toto: Sounded like a pretty good discrete mix (I haven't heard the SACD).

Revealed some acoustic guitar I hadn't previously noticed.

If You Leave Me Now - Chicago: Also sounded very close to discrete. Horns up front & acoustic guitars in rears

Calypso - John Denver: Orchestra was pulled to the rears

Fleetwood Mac - Rhiannon: Sounded as if it could have been on the Rumours SACD

Galileo - Indigo Girls: Heard some low background vocals I'd never noticed. Looking up the credits it appears they are Jackson Browne & David Crosby. I'd say they're

worthy of bringing up in the mix...

Anyway, I'll report back as I play more. Busy tonight, so it will be at least Wed before I can go again! At any rate, Chucky & Co, great product!

[skindzier](#)

Member

Join Date

Oct 2012

Posts

30

Points

1,047

Level

17

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like
Feedback Score
[0](#)

Re: Reality Technologies Surround Master - 2013 Owners Thread

Played a bit more last night...
Yes 90125 has lots of great moments.
Don't Stop Believin' by Journey has some discrete guitar parts and sounds great in general.
Get Together - The Youngbloods: Interesting in that the bass is nearly discrete in the left rear. This one really feels like you're in the room with the band.
I quickly spot-checked through several Chicago songs, since If I Leave You Now impressed me a lot - most sounded very good. Chicago & the SM seem to be a good fit.

In my two posts I've been listing songs where stuff has jumped out at me. Here's some where I thought there might be magic, however none arrived. The SM didn't do anything negative to these songs - they were still fine to listen to. It just didn't add much that I heard:

Thunder Road - Bruce Springsteen
Roll Me Away - Bob Seger
I Don't Believe In Love - Queensryche
U2 - Where The Streets Have No Name

I'll try to drop additional comments from time to time going forward...
[skindzier](#)

Member
Join Date
Oct 2012
Posts
30
Points
1,047
Level
17
Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like
Feedback Score
[0](#)

Re: Reality Technologies Surround Master - 2013 Owners Thread

Listened to some complete albums this weekend. Source for all was the original stereo CDs.

Fleetwood Mac- self-titled:

Awesome. Just a tremendous experience. Lots of discrete moments, lots of details and just filled the room beautifully. Had this been a discrete release and I'd been reviewing it in the polls, I'd have given it a 9.

The Cars - self-titled

Also very, very good. Not quite up to the level of FM above, but there were still discrete moments and detail. Maybe not quite as full as the FM and maybe not quite as defined, but still very enjoyable. Though it is probably my least favorite song on the album, I'm in Touch with Your World is a demo-worthy track with sounds coming from all 4 corners.

Green Day - 21st Century Breakdown

Brickwalling strikes. I knew that would be the case, but wanted to see how it affected the SM experience. Unfortunately, you can't polish a turd. In essence, the harshness of the recording was all around now. Obviously that isn't something the SM can help. The SM did its job. There was some separation and breathing room (not like the above 2 titles, though). The recording itself just made it hard on the ears. In poking around at reviews on HDTracks, it sounds like their hi-res versions of both 21st Century Breakdown and American Idiot are much better. I may take a flyer and give it a shot. We'll see...

[bmoura](#)

Friendly Moderator

Join Date

Mar 2003

Location

Redwood City, CA

Posts

3,801

Points

28,494

Level

99

Achievements:

Awards:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

[0](#)

Re: Reality Technologies Surround Master - 2013 Owners Thread

Set-up the Surround Master/SQ Edition this weekend. Here's some initial comments and findings:

- **SQ Mode** - Effective with two SQ Encoded CDs in my collection (Chase and Annie Original Cast Recording). The three band decoding approach does allow the unit to separate multiple sounds at once.
- **Involve Mode** - I found this most effective -and preferable to the SQ Mode on a variety of encoded material including QS, Spatializer, Roland, Dolby Surround, QSound and Stereo CDs. Probably not surprising since this is the decoder's native mode.
- **QSound CDs** - I was surprised to find that the best results from the Surround Master were from QSound encoded albums like Madonna's "Immaculate Collection" and Roger Waters "Amused to Death". The Surround Master grabs the wide stereo information from these CDs and really fills the Surround Sound field with convincing 4 Channel music. (I'll have to look for some more QSound CDs!)
- **QS Encoded Music** - QS Encoded Music was very well decoded. The example here is Synergy's "Electronic Realizations for Rock Orchestra" from HD Tracks in 24/192 WAV format. Excellent.
- **Stereo CDs** - They performed very well with the Surround Master when the album featured a wide stereo image and good dynamic range. The results were not as impressive when the CDs were compressed and/or had a narrow Stereo image. A highlight here was the Telarc Stereo CD "California Project: The Music of the Beach Boys and Jan & Dean". Very convincing Surround from a very well recorded and dynamic Stereo CD.
- **Dolby Surround** - The Surround Master's processing and steering actually separated some left surround and right surround placements and music from CDs that were not encoded that way. Nice. "The Home Video Album" on RCA was a highlight here.
- **Spatializer** - Telarc released a number of Surround Sound titles using the Spatializer processor. The wide stereo images made for some impressive Surround Music - and Sound Effects. Check the album "Best of Erich Kunzel & the Cincinnati Pops" for some examples - including cows and outer space effects in Surround Sound.
- **Roland Sound Space System** - Even the very obscure Roland Sound Space System used on Steve Reid's Bamboo Forest "Mysteries" CD on Telarc benefited immensely from the Surround Master's "Involve" decoding. It took a wide stereo image and made it into a very impressive Surround Sound performance.

So far, I'm very impressed. The Surround Master is a keeper - it really does convert CDs encoded in various matrix and enhancement formats into convincing Surround music. Even more impressive are the results with well recorded Stereo CDs.

One area where I disagree with the Surround Master folks is their claims that the unit

is equal to or better than Discrete Surround. I tested that out on a few albums that I have in Discrete Surround. The Surround Master offers some nice Surround effects from the Stereo tracks on these discs. But it lags behind the real Discrete Surround mixes. Not a big surprise, given that it is using a Matrix Decode/Enhancement system to create a Surround Field, but worth mentioning.

And now, back to the listening room for some more Surround Master fun.....

Quadro-Action

400 Club - QQ All Star

Join Date

Jul 2003

Location

Hamburg / Germany

Posts

409

Points

9,512

Level

65

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

0

Re: Reality Technologies Surround Master - 2013 Owners Thread

A very interesting test report from bmoura. I have tested the Surround Master with SQ and QS and Stereo LP's. I feel, that also the SQ mode would have better results as with the old SQ decoders and of course very well with QS. Also Stereo changing in Surround is impressive. But as bmoura said, it is dependent from the mix of the quadraphonic Matrix or the Stereo software. Of course, the SQ mix from Enoch light is very impressive and the half speed QS records from Sansui with QS will sound in quadraphonic mode also impressive in channel separation and hifi quality. A few of my know quadraphonic fans beeing also by an order.

On the other hand, also a well decoder will not make discrete surround productions unnecessary. Those will have a real feeling stable and "robust" sound construction - but also different by some sound engineers and productions. Some are not allowed to make a real "discrete" mix or have other puristic sound theories. That is the reason, why we make now self our discrete quadraphonic productions. But altogether the SURROUND MASTER is an advantage for each surround fan.

Dietrich

[bmoura](#)

Friendly Moderator

Join Date

Mar 2003

Location

Redwood City, CA

Posts

3,801

Points

28,494

Level

99

Achievements:

Awards:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

[0](#)

Re: Reality Technologies Surround Master - 2013 Owners Thread

Originally Posted by **LizardKing**

From the Acoustic Sounds website on the SACD re-issue of Roger Waters - Amused to Death:

"*Amused To Death* was originally mixed using QSound, a virtual surround sound, enhancing the spatial feel of the music along with the various sound effects sprinkled throughout the album. The Analogue Productions' reissue will faithfully preserve this three-dimensional experience."

The SACD played via the Surround Master will be the way to

go..

I'm sure that will be pretty amazing. Even playing the Amused to Death CD with QSound now is impressive !

I wonder if Chucky has thought of contacting James Guthrie and Chad Kassem and offering them a Surround Master or two to hear the results?

[fredblue](#)



5k Club - QQ Addict

Join Date

Mar 2009

Location

London, England

Posts

5,459

Points

25,300

Level

95

Achievements:

Awards:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

[2](#) (100%)

Re: Reality Technologies Surround Master - 2013 Owners Thread

Originally Posted by **bmoura**

I'm sure that will be pretty amazing. Even playing the Amused to Death CD with QSound now is impressive !

I wonder if Chucky has thought of contacting James Guthrie and Chad Kassem and offering them a Surround Master or two to hear the results?

brilliant idea! get a few Surround Master units into the hands of these guys and when they see (or rather hear!) the results the snowball will a-roll!

[Disclord](#)



LaserVision Landmarks

Join Date

May 2005

Location

Plattsburg, MO (just outside Kansas City)

Posts

932
Points
10,374
Level
67

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like
Feedback Score
[0](#)

Re: Reality Technologies Surround Master - 2013 Owners Thread

If anyone here is into Marc Almond and owns his album "Mother Fist... And Her Five Daughters" you are in for an incredible aural experience with the SM/SQ/QS unit. In the song "Saint Judy" (as in Garland) Marc Almonds voice is located totally in the left channel with sounds and instruments swirling between the stereo channels. With the Involve his voice never moves from the Left Front, even when strong sounds are pulling to the rear channels - towards the end of the song a chorus starts singing "Get Happy" in the right channel and both Marc's voice and the chorus are totally seperated with the rears still sporting the sound effects. Via the Fosgate Tate, the stronger instruments will sometimes "pull" Marc's voice to the rear channels momentarily or quickly smear the Get Happy chorus with Marc's voice in the back.

using the Fosgate as a 270 degree preprocessor for decoding in the SQ mode, Marc's voice is literally locked in the back left channel, as is the Get Happy chorus in the right, with the front channels sporting the various instruments and sound effects between LCR. Played via only the Tate in Surround mode, Marc's voice will pull to the front if a more predominant sound occurs.

the SM is amazing - I'm listening to CD's and LaserDisc's that I haven't played in a long time. The LaserDisc of Liza and Friends is encoded in Shure's Stereosurround process which encodes a full range mono rear channel (unlike Dolby MP's bandwidth limited rear channel) and the SM in QS mode makes it sound like a true quad recording. I just keep being more amazed by this little box. I'm gonna have to find room to hook up my Sony SQD-2020 though so I can use its wonderful VU meters.

oh, and BTW, the Runco LJR-I Super LaserDisc Player makes this CD sound better than any other CD player I've heard it on, including a belt driven unit.

[bmoura](#)

Friendly Moderator

Join Date

Mar 2003

Location

Redwood City, CA

Posts

3,801

Points

28,494

Level

99

Achievements:

Awards:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

0

Re: Reality Technologies Surround Master - 2013 Owners Thread

One more note - while there's a lot of focus on Stereo Synthesis and Matrix Decoding, don't forget to try the Surround Master on the many movies on Netflix that are encoded as 2 Channel Stereo or Dolby 2 Channel Surround vs. 5.1. I've had some good results there as well.

The Surround Master investment just keeps paying dividends !

[Shnicks](#)



Junior Member

Join Date

Feb 2012

Location

Woodland Hills, CA

Posts

16

Points

1,366

Level

20

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

[1](#) (100%)

Re: Reality Technologies Surround Master - 2013 Owners Thread

I've had my Surround Master in line for about a week now and am absolutely loving it. Congratulations and many thanks to the Involve team for this extraordinary innovation. Thanks so much to the QQ forum as well, If I were not a member here I never would have discovered the wonders of the SM.

Cheers!

[Bob Romano](#)



Surroundaholic Moderator

Join Date

Apr 2002

Location

Naperville IL

Posts

3,637

Points

51,872

Level

100

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

[0](#)

INVOLVE ENCODER SAMPLER

I was lucky enough to receive an Involve Encoder to test out and I now have a sampler available for download. There are 10 tracks:

01 AIX Channel Check

02 Steely Dan - Bodhisattva (Q8 4.1)

03 Deep Purple - Highway Star (SACD 4.1)

04 Spinners - I'll Be Around (QR 4.1)

- 05 Santana - Black Magic Woman (QR 4.1)
- 06 Beatles - Golden Slumbers Medley (DVDA 5.1)
- 07 Britney Spears - Toxic (5.1 DVDA)
- 08 Frank Zappa - Zeets (DVDA 5.1)
- 09 Billy Joel - Movin' Out (SACD 5.1)
- 10 Emerson, Lake & Palmer - Lucky Man (Steven Wilson version) (DVDA 5.1)

There are 2 separate sampler with the same tracks - one in Involve and one in QS - also encoded using the Involve Encoder. All sources were from discrete sources (even Golden Slumbers) and encoded to stereo. As with any matrix type of recording, it will never be 100% discrete however the results (IMO) are quite impressive. The really remarkable thing is that the mixdown of 4.1 or 5.1 sound like proper stereo with no artifacts. Burn and play in Involve 5.1 or QS 4.1.

I do not want to list the links here but if you PM me I will hit you back with the links. The zip files contain a wav and cue file that can easily be burned to a cd using ImgBurn.

[LizardKing](#)



1K Club - QQ Shooting Star

Join Date

Oct 2009

Location

Wellington, New Zealand

Posts

2,267

Points

17,692

Level

84

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

[5](#) (100%)

Re: INVOLVE ENCODER SAMPLER

All I can say is I'm impressed... I love the Eclectic Mix too....

Highway star and Black Magic Woman in particular were good....actually they're all good...

I need to do comparisons with the discrete versions...

[Disclord](#)



LaserVision Landmarks

Join Date

May 2005

Location

Plattsburg, MO (just outside Kansas City)

Posts

932

Points

10,374

Level

67

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

[0](#)

Re: INVOLVE ENCODER SAMPLER

Your tracks sound amazing through the SM - if I hadn't known better I would have thought I was listening to a discrete recording with lots of ambience and excellent localization. QS seemed to have a tad more separation than the involve but it was so minor that it didn't matter. And the Involve encoding played in stereo sounded totally normal, unlike QS. It sounded basically the same as SQ stereo playback.

[Disclord](#)



LaserVision Landmarks

Join Date

May 2005

Location

Plattsburg, MO (just outside Kansas City)

Posts

932

Points

10,374

Level

67

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

0

Re: Listening to now (In Surround!)

The Boyz 2 Men II conversion from DTS to Involve IQS came out wonderfully - and it has a lot of center back info so if you can send it through an EX decoder, it sounds amazing.

BTW I've started calling the Involve encoding process IQS or the IQS Matrix, IQS standing for Involve Quintaphonic Stereo - I personally don't think Involve conveys what the format is - it's great for a company name but not a process name. I hope Charlie doesn't get pissed at me for using the name - I've also thought UQS for Universal Quintaphonic Stereo - the quad name must be avoided at all costs or industry people will leave skid marks as they run from it.

Re: INVOLVE SQ - IS HERE

Though I had only my SQ and QS decoders on the Pioneer 949A to compare it to, I am thoroughly impressed by the SM SQ. I inserted a TCC TC-754 Phono Preamp with variable gain and aux. inputs before the SM SQ, allowing me to send both the pre-amp'ed phono and the Sony BDP-S380 Blu-ray/SACD/40 GB hard drive player through the SM SQ with a push of a button. The enhancement the Involve/QS mode creates makes this investment more than just buying the best/only new/warrantied SQ decoder available, it makes your entire analog and digital catalog fresh again.

I've only had two nights to sample the greatness, last night I went from phono SQ: Tomita-Planets; Earth, Wind, and Fire-Spirit; Blood, Sweat, and Tears-Greatest Hits, and Miles kindly 'ran that voodoo down' for me -- to digital Involve/QS: Beth Hart-Screamin' for My Supper, Prodigy-The Fat of the Land, and Joe Walsh 'confessed' to me.

Since I'm relatively new at the quad game, with admittedly having little to compare the SM SQ against, I'm not the guy to attest to the device's proper instrument and vocal placement, db's of separation, etc. Over the years I have heard some really nice set ups that were decades newer technology and a much greater investment than my

current system, now with the SM SQ I am completely satisfied with the audio/fidelity experience that my, comparatively modest, set-up has is offering.

The truest compliment I can give the SM SQ is that I can't wait for the weekend to have more time to explore certain analog and digital material that I haven't listened to in awhile. I'm making a mental list as to what SQ wax gets to spin in what order, and which of my favorite 320kpbs MP3 files I want to play first.

Bravo, Involve Audio, and thanks for taking on this endeavor and special thanks to Chuck and David for their continued participation in this forum and kindness to the 4.0 community.

(Beth Hart's Skin MP3 is playing from the hard drive by the Blu-ray player through the SQ/Involve setting on the SM SQ. Note the Left EQ [front channels] spectrum display vs. the Right EQ [rear channels])

Last edited by workmeistr; Yesterday at 12:45 PM.

Bren Workman

Gretna, NE

(C) [402-312-1992](tel:402-312-1992)

David and Charlie,

Warm greetings from cold Ohio.

Wanted to send this yesterday. The SM got here Thursday late. Yesterday fired it up.

THE SOUND I'M GETTING IS INDECENTLY GOOD !!! WAY OVER THE TOP! MY WIFE IS IMPRESSED.

We are trying to get out the door so more later.

For now, your product is AWESOME GOOD!

Will say the same on the blog later.

Sincerely,

Greg Badger

216.324.9600

"Life without God is like an unsharpened pencil - it has no point."

The Involvement Surround Master is the best movie decoder I have had in my home! Fantastic movie sound effects and better separation of the five channels than I have heard from the standard Dolby Prologic II and Neo: 6 DSP algorithms built into most home theatre receivers. Dolby sounds blurred in comparison, especially with vocals.

I just wish that the Surround Master encoding technology was adopted by the big players in the industry so that it becomes a part of our purchase with off the shelf HT receivers from Yamaha, Sony, Denon and the like ...

Cheers,

Steve. <http://stevem1960.blogspot.com.au/>

A night at the movies or Music maestro please?

It is always a pleasure to be at a demo that is at the very least controversial. A surround sound demo will always bring up the question. Is surround sound for movies or does it have a place in music reproduction as well? Charles presented this question last Wednesday evening with his Surround Master SM465 box of tricks and his, now well known electrostatics up front and as a bonus a second pair at the rear, kindly supplied by Wally.

At the outset it was clear that the question was very much in evidence, as the first couple of tracks had various cinema sound effects (guns, cars, etc.) as well as music. Charles asked if any members listened to stereo in preference to surround. The answer was, most still do. This, I believe, to be because recording engineers still put you in the middle of the band or orchestra rather than the rears being for ambiance.

The refreshing discovery here wasn't that the system sounded lovely, although it did, but that the surround effect could be tailored to produce the effect the listener believes is right. The SM465 sells for \$350.00 which is very affordable and appears to work very well, allowing you to be at the movies or in the concert hall. I, for one, was very impressed with the system as a whole but, in particular with the Whise HA1500 speakers. They were, far and away, the best electrostatics I have ever heard.

Charles is to be congratulated on a well executed idea and for his willingness to present it. And, of course, I cannot end without, once again, thanking Wally for supplying his speakers to complete the system.

Martin VP

Ken Tripp
Wise and Wonderful Webmaster
Melbourne Audio Club, Inc.

<http://www.melbourneaudioclub.org.au/>

SURROUND MASTER Reality Technologies Australia

The SURROUND MASTER is a profound improvement to multi channel listening. It is a four channel QS decoder...soon to be a limited production SQ decoder...and it is a real 5.1 multi channel extractor! It produces information from any two channel recording that is superior to every modern algorithm I have heard, and I have been down just about every path to supposed surround perfection, which includes Neo X and every version of Dolby PL II, Fosgate, and Logic 7 incarnation.

I will note that you must have independent volume control over all channels because there are no controls on the unit.

This is the closest I have ever come to a virtually discreet (I love that phrase) presentation from most two channel sources.. it decodes QS as it was meant to be decoded, and it also extracts, in its 5.1 mode, the best center channel I have ever heard extracted by such a device...vocals sound sensational! Many, if not most 5.1 recordings do not have an isolated center vocalist...frequently the vocalist is recorded in typical stereo phantom production, and it is inferior to the real thing. If you ever have the privilege of hearing the Nat King Cole album LOVE IS THE THING with a real center channel that rivals the main system, you will understand my point.

There are two other aspects that amaze me. It produces phantom side channels that my Sansui QSD-1 cannot produce. I use side channel speakers through a Lexicon CP3+ unit...I love it....I own a MC 1... it in the garage .. I had a MC 12 for a month which I returned..

The SURROUND MASTER produces side channels in an uncanny way. There are times when I feel my side channels are engaged and they are not! I have tried to reproduce this with my other processors and I can't. It also maintains a very stable front imageI have never owned a unit where I could turn up the rear volume in the rear channels and not totally obliterate the sound image....not true with the SURROUND MASTER. I have spent a fortune during my almost 66 years: this unit is one of a kind. It is a remarkable accomplishment!

Dwithers

Also from same reviewer:

The surround Master/SQ version is now available...It is a state of the art decoder and synthesizer for the the two legacy four channel matrix systems!....and every two channel source! . As someone who is simply a consumer...and I've spent a bundle on equipment...TATE II101A, Fosgate 3602, 3610, Lexicon CP3, MC 1, MC12, and Sansui QSD-1,...not counting the equipment I bought in between during the last 30 years... the Surround Master is the most extraordinary legacy device imaginable. AVS should demand a review of this product. And compare it to the best Lexicon has to offer!...I wrote a review of the original on this forum intimating that the SQ version was coming...it is here and spectacular... It makes every two channel source more valuable!

Dwihters

Surround Master Processor

A very effective pseudo-surround processor for any stereo source, lacking proper switching into an already-existing surround system.



Published on May 6, 2013



Surround Master processor

SRP: \$395

Involve Audio
Australia
www.involveaudio.com
+61-3-9580-5911

First of all, these Australians—some of whom were involved with Lake and other Aussie companies specializing in surround sound and acoustic effects—have come up with a really successful pseudo-surround processor for two-channel sources. It is much more effective and less gimmicky than either Dolby Pro Logic IIx or Circle Surround. In fact, it is similar to the Circle Surround processor which I used to have in my old car, in that it even creates some surround effect from mono sources as well as stereo sources.

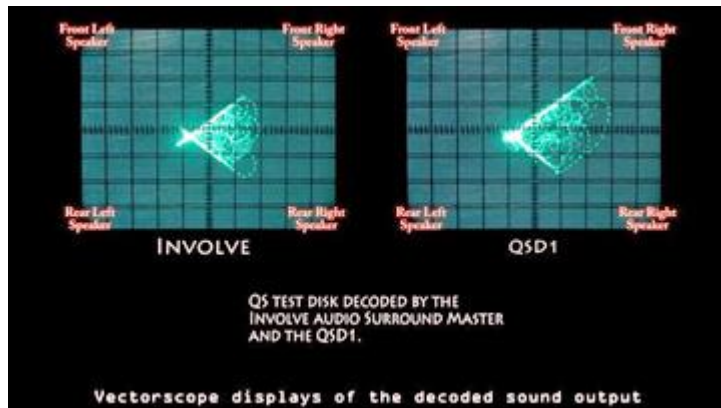
All stereo recordings have L-R or “difference” information which this type of pseudo-surround processor uses to pull out the out-of-phase information which can then be directed to the surround channels. This differentiates them from the “hall,” “jazz club” and similar processors in most multichannel preamps and receivers, which only add artificial reverb and EQ to the signal and are nearly always ineffective and unnatural-sounding. Today we have many different surround sound processes: the discrete three-to-six-channel systems of SACDs and DVD-Audio, the lossless multichannel systems of Blu-rays, the lossy systems of DVDs, and even some processes for Net downloads in surround. Then there are the analog two-channel surround codecs of Dolby Surround and Circle Surround which are pretty much obsolete by now.

There are audiophiles who play all their music-only sources as only stereo via their front left and right speakers, using their surround systems strictly for playback of movie soundtracks with that feature. As our readers are probably aware, AUDIOPHILE AUDITION supports Surround Sound for Music, and believes that since sound comes to us from all around us, listening to music in surround makes a lot of sense. The Surround Master makes it possible to achieve a very convincing surround effect from any stereo source with just four speakers and amps, and without any investment in discrete audio playback or specialized recordings.

The Surround Master is powered by a 9-volt wall wart and comes with a clear 12-page manual in English. The connection cables are included. It has only an on-off switch and another on the front which can be set for either 2-channel or 4-channel. (You must switch it on before you power on your amps; otherwise it creates a loud pop.) The 2-channel setup—which I did not test—creates a semi-surround effect from any stereo sources with just two speakers in front (probably similar to some of the soundbars). The 4-channel setup is specialized for playback via four similar speakers equidistant from the listener, and an optional subwoofer if you wish. However, since many users will have a 5.1 surround speaker setup already in place, it will also work with a center channel, and also with the two surround speakers placed more to the sides rather than directly behind the listener. Involve feels there is really no need for a center speaker nor additional rear speakers of a typical 7.1 setup (and I agree on the latter).



Surround Master Rear



The Surround Master comes with a demo DVD which has two repeats of sections from various action movies, and encourages the listener to play the first one without the Surround Master in the circuit (or set to 2-channel) and then use it in the 4-channel mode for the second repeat. It includes on-screen moving images from their “vectorscope” which shows the sounds you are hearing in visual form, using various processes in comparison to the Surround Master. I must say, the Surround Master processing often creates a surround field even superior to many DTS-HD MA 5.1 tracks. Some of the images are very interesting, such as the ProLogic II one showing no surround signal at all, which I don’t agree with—although Surround Master is much better, with less emphasis on the center channel.

The big problem here is that there is no way to switch the Surround Master in and out of one’s system for comparisons and to properly play actual 5.0 or 5.1-channel sources. One must disconnect the cables for channels 3, 4 & 5 plus the subwoofer from your preamp or receiver and reconnect them directly to the rear of the Surround Master. Its two-channel input signal must come from the two-channel outputs on your preamp or receiver; you cannot feed it multichannel signals. (The Involve tech person was concerned that I might not be getting the center channel signal into the Surround Master—even though I had selected “Multichannel Mix-Down to Stereo” in my Integra preamp. He advised me to move the two-channel feed to directly from my Oppo deck; an odd piece of advice since that meant no volume control whatever. Once my hearing returned I went back to the output from my Integra preamp.)

I do have level controls on the amplifier connected to my surround speakers, and there is a main level control on the Integra preamp for the two-channel feed. However, without the preamp there is no level control for the center channel, which goes directly to a tube monoblock amp. Therefore it is extremely difficult to set balanced levels on all the speakers when using the Surround Master. No matter how I set the levels of the left and right front speakers, the Surround Master seemed to provide more of a frontal signal on the left side and more of a rearward signal on the right side. Not only was I unable to use my side-height speaker feeds, but I could only

audition all my multichannel SACDs as two-channel sources. I had to change the option on my Oppo deck from multichannel to stereo only.

However, the surround field from most two-channel sources was phenomenal. Many 5.0-channel SACDs have extremely subtle surround channels, which often have to be raised in level to create more of a surround field. I never had that feeling from playing two-channel sources thru the Surround Master. Not only was there an excellent surround signal extracted from the original, but there was a more seamless surround field to the sides than achieved with most multichannel sources, even with my surround speakers to the rear. Occasionally there were instruments very specifically located at various points between the left front speaker and the left surround, and vice versa. There were not any artifacts or unusual equalization of the sound at any point. It appears that the higher the resolution of the stereo source (such as 2-channel SACD or 96K/24-bit) the more difference information the Surround Master processing has to work with and the more convincing the surround field it creates. (There are also some superb discrete 5.0-channel SACDs which capture the acoustics of the concert hall or performance venue with startling realism.)

In addition to providing a much better surround field (using the stereo layer) from those multichannel SACDs lacking a sufficient signal on the surrounds, the Surround Master created terrific sound fields from older 2-channel Dolby Surround CDs, UHJ Ambisonic CDs and LPs, and Circle Surround CDs. Sometimes I even had to turn down the level on the surround speakers for an improved balance. Then there are many stereo-only pop and jazz SACD reissues and even some mono SACDs, which would create a surround field, rather than be restricted to only the front left and right speakers, as when playing in normal SACD mode. (Most preamps unfortunately don't allow using Pro Logic on the discrete stereo SACD sources.) If you've already discovered the terrific surround placement you can achieve with the standard stereo releases of the Beatles and Beach Boys using Pro Logic IIx, you're in for a real treat with the stepped-up spatial positioning of the Surround Master.

If I were an independent audio buff without the magazine connection, I think I might even consider purchasing (probably used) one of those stereo-only high end SACD decks from Denon and others, set up four identical full range high-quality speakers and use the Surround Master to create the surround field from all two-channel recordings, both standard and hi-res.

Involve is to be commended for keeping the price reasonable for such a convincing surround experience. But meanwhile I will await a future model of the Surround Master that will allow for proper integration into an already-existing discrete surround system, as well as replacing and allowing comparison with Dolby Pro Logic II using stereo sources.

—John Sunier

A few days ago I have received my SM Decoder in QS/SQ version. The sound quality is very well and the channel separation too. A new step in Matrix quality. Other surround fans, who have listened too, have been also impressed. Now it should be the

time, that we could receive finally also the since years announced Dorren-Demodulator. That would lift also CD-4 to an actual suited sound quality.

Dietrich

Surround Master 2

Chucky, First of all, I would like to get rid of the "fake surround" attribute which is frequently attached to units such as the S/M. Hafler, when he first demonstrated that there was real information buried in every stereo recording, although only with 3db of separation, was fighting the digital attempt to really and truly create fake surround through digital ambience surround.

I have spent many hours switching between my QSD-1 and my S/M ... the difference is not hard to quantify.....The S/M maintains the front sound stage no matter how much I raise the rear channel volume, which is necessary if I want a lot of info in the rear channels! If the info is there, it will appear, very discrete, If not I will find ambience! This is why I said in my initial review that volume control of all channels is essential.

This is an amazing attribute...I cannot duplicate it with any other processor that I own. The front image will usually collapse towards the rear, but not so with the S/M. The second point is one I have also mentioned here before, i.e. there is a side channel image created that is remarkable. It seems to create a very three dimensional phantom image along both sidewalls, even though this was not supposed to be possible, or at least a very difficult achievement.

I have tried Rustyandi's suggestion, to run the TSS output from the S/M into my QSD-1...the result was like listening under water...swimming signals...didn't work for me!...but perhaps I did something wrong!? I have tried it several times, but It ends up the same way every time...swimming signals!

I have run the stereo outputs from my OPPO 83 se to the S/M, and have played the rear outputs of the S/M instead of the discrete outputs and I can say that I prefer the S/M rear outputs 90% !....more fun and great directionality!..with a great front image.....We are all fiddlers.....fiddle and you will have fun.

Dwight

Hooked up my Surround Master yesterday (in 5.1 mode). Only had a couple hours to play with it, so listened to a lot of individual songs to get a feel for it. I agree with the general statements of most other folks. Results ranged from Good to Spectacular. Definitely the best surround processor I've heard. At its best some of the mixes sounded like solid discrete mixes. Like others, even when there weren't necessarily discrete sounds, I definitely heard a lot more depth & detail in some material. Here's some specifics:

Something - The Beatles: Lots of detail I hadn't heard before. The flanged guitar part is a lot more prominent throughout.

Voices - Russ Ballard: The opening synth is very cool. All over the place!

If She Knew What She Wants - The Bangles: Very close to discrete vocals with the leads in the Center and the answered group vocals in the rears

Somebody's Baby - Jackson Browne: Exposed a lot more guitar detail

Ten Years Gone - Led Zeppelin: Heard a few more bits & pieces of the Page guitar army that I hadn't heard before

Africa - Toto: Sounded like a pretty good discrete mix (I haven't heard the SACD).

Revealed some acoustic guitar I hadn't previously noticed.

If You Leave Me Now - Chicago: Also sounded very close to discrete. Horns up front & acoustic guitars in rears

Calypso - John Denver: Orchestra was pulled to the rears

Fleetwood Mac - Rhiannon: Sounded as if it could have been on the Rumours SACD

Galileo - Indigo Girls: Heard some low background vocals I'd never noticed. Looking up the credits it appears they are Jackson Browne & David Crosby. I'd say they're worthy of bringing up in the mix... 😊

Anyway, I'll report back as I play more. Busy tonight, so it will be at least Wed before I can go again! At any rate, Chucky & Co, great product!

[skindzier](#)

Set-up the Surround Master/SQ Edition this weekend. Here's some initial comments and findings:

- **SQ Mode** - Effective with two SQ Encoded CDs in my collection (Chase and Annie Original Cast Recording). The three band decoding approach does allow the unit to separate multiple sounds at once.
- **Involve Mode** - I found this most effective -and preferable to the SQ Mode on a variety of encoded material including QS, Spatializer, Roland, Dolby Surround, QSound and Stereo CDs. Probably not surprising since this is the decoder's native mode.
- **QSound CDs** - I was surprised to find that the best results from the Surround Master were from QSound encoded albums like Madonna's "Immaculate Collection" and Roger Waters "Amused to Death". The Surround Master grabs the wide stereo information from these CDs and really fills the Surround Sound field with convincing 4 Channel music. (I'll have to look for some more QSound CDs!)
- **QS Encoded Music** - QS Encoded Music was very well decoded. The example here is Synergy's "Electronic Realizations for Rock Orchestra" from HD Tracks in 24/192 WAV format. Excellent.
- **Stereo CDs** - They performed very well with the Surround Master when the album featured a wide stereo image and good dynamic range. The results were not as impressive when the CDs were compressed and/or had a narrow Stereo image. A highlight here was the Telarc Stereo CD "California Project: The Music of the Beach Boys and Jan & Dean". Very convincing Surround from a very well recorded and dynamic Stereo CD.
- **Dolby Surround** - The Surround Master's processing and steering actually separated some left surround and right surround placements and music from CDs that were not encoded that way. Nice. "The Home Video Album" on RCA was a highlight here.
- **Spatializer** - Telarc released a number of Surround Sound titles using the Spatializer processor. The wide stereo images made for some impressive Surround Music - and Sound Effects. Check the album "Best of Erich Kunzel

& the Cincinnati Pops" for some examples - including cows and outer space effects in Surround Sound.

- **Roland Sound Space System** - Even the very obscure Roland Sound Space System used on Steve Reid's Bamboo Forest "Mysteries" CD on Telarc benefited immensely from the Surround Master's "Involve" decoding. It took a wide stereo image and made it into a very impressive Surround Sound performance.

So far, I'm very impressed. The Surround Master is a keeper - it really does convert CDs encoded in various matrix and enhancement formats into convincing Surround music. Even more impressive are the results with well recorded Stereo CDs.

One area where I disagree with the Surround Master folks is their claims that the unit is equal to or better than Discrete Surround. I tested that out on a few albums that I have in Discrete Surround. The Surround Master offers some nice Surround effects from the Stereo tracks on these discs. But it lags behind the real Discrete Surround mixes. Not a big surprise, given that it is using a Matrix Decode/Enhancement system to create a Surround Field, but worth mentioning.

And now, back to the listening room for some more Surround Master fun.....

[bmoura](#)

A very interesting test report from bmoura. I have tested the Surround Master with SQ and QS and Stereo LP's. I feel, that also the SQ mode would have better results as with the old SQ decoders and of course very well with QS. Also Stereo changing in Surround is impressive. But as bmoura said, it is dependent from the mix of the quadraphonic Matrix or the Stereo software. Of course, the SQ mix from Enoch light is very impressive and the half speed QS records from Sansui with QS will sound in quadraphonic mode also impressive in channel separation and hifi quality. A few of my know quadraphonic fans beeing also by an order.

On the other hand, also a well decoder will not make discrete surround productions unnecessary. Those will have a real feeling stable and "robust" sound construction - but also different by some sound engineers and productions. Some are not allowed to make a real "discrete" mix or have other puristic sound theories. That is the reason, why we make now self our discrete quadraphonic productions. But altogether the SURROUND MASTER is an advantage for each surround fan.

Dietrich

If anyone here is into Marc Almond and owns his album "Mother Fist... And Her Five Daughters" you are in for an incredible aural experience with the SM/SQ/QS unit. In the song "Saint Judy" (as in Garland) Marc Almonds voice is located totally in the left

channel with sounds and instruments swirling between the stereo channels. With the Involve his voice never moves from the Left Front, even when strong sounds are pulling to the rear channels - towards the end of the song a chorus starts singing "Get Happy" in the right channel and both Marc's voice and the chorus are totally separated with the rears still sporting the sound effects. Via the Fosgate Tate, the stronger instruments will sometimes "pull" Marc's voice to the rear channels momentarily or quickly smear the Get Happy chorus with Marc's voice in the back.

using the Fosgate as a 270 degree preprocessor for decoding in the SQ mode, Marc's voice is literally locked in the back left channel, as is the Get Happy chorus in the right, with the front channels sporting the various instruments and sound effects between LCR. Played via only the Tate in Surround mode, Marc's voice will pull to the front if a more predominant sound occurs.

the SM is amazing - I'm listening to CD's and LaserDisc's that I haven't played in a long time. The LaserDisc of Liza and Friends is encoded in Shure's Stereosurround process which encodes a full range mono rear channel (unlike Dolby MP's bandwidth limited rear channel) and the SM in QS mode makes it sound like a true quad recording. I just keep being more amazed by this little box. I'm gonna have to find room to hook up my Sony SQD-2020 though so I can use its wonderful VU meters.

oh, and BTW, the Runco LJR-I Super LaserDisc Player makes this CD sound better than any other CD player I've heard it on, including a belt driven unit.



Quadraphonic and other technical documents at: [Disclord](#)

I have to agree that Madonna's Immaculate Collection in QSound decodes wonderfully via the SM, even though QSound was never meant to be decoded. The last two tracks, Justify My Love and Rescue Me are, sadly, not in QSound though and I wish QSound had been used on The Beast Within version of Justify... It could be really creepy in full surround.

another good QSound album is Paula Abdul's first album, the title of which escapes me at the moment.

the Desper Spatializer HTMS-2510 home unit (a brand new one is on eBay for \$39 BIN), on its lowest setting creates some great quad effects via the SM, as does the original Hughes SRS units - only the Hughes brand SRS units have the variable servo to keep the effects under control - the later units from NuReality and such just apply a non-variable effect that creates too much out of phase info and is unpleasant to listen to.



One more note - while there's a lot of focus on Stereo Synthesis and Matrix Decoding, don't forget to try the Surround Master on the many movies on Netflix that are encoded as 2 Channel Stereo or Dolby 2 Channel Surround vs. 5.1. I've had some good results there as well.

The Surround Master investment just keeps paying dividends !

[bmoura](#)

A long-time favorite! Was just playing some Almond vinyl (the 12" of "The House Is Haunted") through the SM over the weekend and wasn't especially blown away.

But later I played the Eurythmics "Ball and Chain" off the B-side of "Sisters are Doing It for Themselves"...the bit at the end where the sound normally goes back and forth between the front channels instead ran counterclockwise around the room!

There's also a track (not the title one) off Romeo Void's "Never Say Never" EP where some little drum fills alternate between all four channels.

[atrocitiy](#)

I've had my Surround Master in line for about a week now and am absolutely loving it. Congratulations and many thanks to the Involve team for this extraordinary innovation. Thanks so much to the QQ forum as well, If I were not a member here I never would have discovered the wonders of the SM.

Cheers!

[Shnicks](#)

I've lived with the Surround Master now for about a month. It certainly creates some interesting separations.

However the processed stereo through my OB Lowthers loses some subtle

detail and becomes slightly strident on acoustic instruments and voice. The reason for

this becomes apparent

when I compare the FRs at the listening position. The EQd Lowthers are reasonably flat through the mids and

treble but become lumpier when processed. However this is fairly minor overall.

My rear speakers, also OB Lowthers, are EQd with the highs rolled off steeply above 8K. Messing about years

ago with Hafler setups then Dolby, HF sibilance and cymbals from the rear always annoyed me when most of that

sound was positioned front of house and was meant to stay there.

However electronic music is a different ball game through the Surround Master. For those who don't know I recommend

the EktoPlazm Free Music Portal for some stunning 4 channel effects.
[URL="www.ektoplazm.com/"] The HQ downloads

focus on dance music at rapid beats per minute but include many Downtempo, Deep Trance, Glitch and Ambient styles.

Some of my recent favourite DJs are Globular, Reflection, Maharishi and SeaMoon. There are many compilations of various

artists too such as "The Return Of The Quetzalcoatl". SeaMoon's "A Twisted Downbeat Adventure" rips!

Some of the Forest style music has fascinating introductions to the main dance beat like Ecometric's

"Deep Forest Music" EP.

CDs such as "Thora Vuk" by Robag Wruhme , "Space Is Only Noise" by Nicolas Javr and "The Eye" by Yello are

especially interesting in 4 channel.

Needless to say most of these dance tracks call for a solid bottom end to sound the best. Never-the-less the

surround effects are still there to enjoy even if the LFs are lean.

[artdeco](#)

AWESOMELY INDECENTLY GOOD!!!

Thursday, Feb. 13, mine arrived. Friday put it into my system.

My Mom was over and could immediately tell the improvement.

My wife is impressed.

The reality is phenomenal.

Will post again with my configuration.

[hgregorybadger](#)

My setup.

All inputs, Cable box, VCR, DVD, ROKU, high end desktop W7, connected to a Behringer XENYX X2442USB mixer.

Each channel routed to Subgroup 1 and 2 and subgroup 1 and 2 outputs to BBE 282iX Sonic Maximizer.

Output of BBE routed back in to stereo auxiliary returns.

Main output then goes to KRK10s subwoofer. Filter set at 100cps. Everything above goes back out to DI box to convert to unbalanced then to Surround Master stereo input.

SM 5.1 outputs go to Behringer DI800 to convert to balanced.

Then each channel goes to Mackie MR5 powered studio monitor. Sub output not needed.

Almost everything has a realism and presence that make you think the musician, singer, or person speaking is standing right in the room. It is an uncanny realism. AND adjoining rooms give the same sensation that there is a live presence.

Involve Audio deserves a Gold Medal.

[hgregorybadger](#)

I received my SQ Upgraded Surround Master a week or so ago, and have been unable to check it out...until today! 😊

What a nightmare! I went to fire up my SQT-1100 Test LP and when I lowered the tone arm on it, it slid across the record! The stylus had snapped off! YIKES!

Fortunately, I had another M24H on another turntable, so I made the swap. Then, it got worse!

I set the tracking and settings on the TT for the new cart, wired up to my PC via my MOTU and Vegas 12 recording software, and I had nothing coming out of the front left channel of the Surround Master. NOTHING. I checked all cables, checked the software, and there was zip. I switched the R and L fronts, and the audio followed the cable, so the unit was at fault. Switching to QS mode, I had audio in all 4 channels, back to SQ, dead Left Front again. Powered down, powered up, still the same.

I was about to contact Chucky for another trip for the unit across the "bigger pond", when I decided to open the unit. I am an electronics guy, so I figured I'd look for anything obvious. Opening the unit was easy, but inside there was nothing loose or obviously wrong. I could see where the new chip was soldered in the middle of the board, but it all looked good. Put it back together and tried it again, NOW IT WORKED!

Go figure. I will cross my fingers and hope that it stays functional.

So, after all that, I started to run test records through it. I had the SQ Gala disc, the Columbia Labs Test Disc, Quadraphile, and a Japanese SQ Demo LP, to start with! 😊

Ran the SQT1100 through and watched the recorded wave files as I listened to the channel test tones. By ear, they were clearly directional. The tones came from where they were supposed to. Watching the wave files as they were recorded did show some activity in the none active channels, some more than others. It's not totally discrete, as it probably cannot expect to be. The results from the Quadrafile SQ side were better with regard to wave data in the inactive channels. Again, the active channel was clearly defined, there was just some info in some of the other channels as well.

Enough of the tones, I moved on to music. The SQ Gala LP has some good demo tracks, most notably "Rock On" by David Essex, which is a classic quad demo tune, and of course "Money" from DSOTM. I have to say the listening experience was astonishing. "Rock On" is a technical marvel considering its age, and the SQSM playback was clear and precise. The timing of the vocals on this tune is very intricate, and the decode seemed to be perfect. Even observing the wav timings confirmed that it was an incredible playback.

Next track was "Money", one we're all familiar and a little sick of by now. The cash register sounds at the intro were clear and had pin-point location. Cannot complain about it one bit. Another track on this particular disc was "Close to You" by the Carpenters. I did not expect much from this one, and I was right. Even the sappy lyrics could not save this one. Clearly not a quad demo track, not sure why it's on this LP.

So, after some issues, and a very quick run through, I can say "AWESOME"!! I don't know if it's technically perfect or not, but it sure sounds good and does what it's supposed to do. I will test it more this weekend with other SQ LPs, and maybe my "Supersession" SQ CD that came out a few years ago.

When I do I may post some audio samples and jpg's. Again, I bought this unit, I paid for the return shipping, this was not a back room deal with Chucky or anyone. I'm speaking as a customer and a happy one at that. This thing does the job, and now it's even better!

More later.....

[JonUrban](#)



Board Operator ★★★★★

I got the Madonna CD and ran it through the Surround Master. It was awesome. The mix sounds better than a great deal of QS records! The decoding by the surround master seems to follow the Qsound ques. I listened through stereo headphones first and got an idea of the directonality they were going for. It seems to follow it quite well. A lot of rear LR action. Definately will be looking for more Q Sound discs. I wonder how active The Wall Live is or if its just "concert surround". Also according to the qsound site, Kiss Revenge is in Qsound too. Heck, if The Wall Live is good, it will be just about like having another PF quad. If someone has the discs and a surround master, try it out and let me know. I want to try some more things now, like Binaural and Dolby Headphone, Holophonic. I bet all the fake Surrounds + Surround Master = Real Surround

[Q8](#)



1K Club - QQ Shooting Star ★★★★★

Though I had only my SQ and QS decoders on the Pioneer 949A to compare it to, I am thoroughly impressed by the SM SQ. I inserted a TCC TC-754 Phono Preamp with variable gain and aux. inputs before the SM SQ, allowing me to send both the pre-amp'ed phono and the Sony BDP-S380 Blu-ray/SACD/40 GB hard drive player through the SM SQ with a push of a button. The enhancement the Involve/QS mode creates makes this investment more than just buying the best/only new/warrantied SQ decoder available, it makes your entire analog and digital catalog fresh again.

I've only had two nights to sample the greatness, last night I went from phono SQ: Tomita-Planets; Earth, Wind, and Fire-Spirit; Blood, Sweat, and Tears-Greatest Hits, and Miles kindly 'ran that voodoo down' for me -- to digital Involve/QS: Beth Hart-Screamin' for My Supper, Prodigy-The Fat of the Land, and Joe Walsh 'confessed' to me.

Since I'm relatively new at the quad game, with admittedly having little to compare

the SM SQ against, I'm not the guy to attest to the device's proper instrument and vocal placement, db's of separation, etc. Over the years I have heard some really nice set ups that were decades newer technology and a much greater investment than my current system, now with the SM SQ I am completely satisfied with the audio/fidelity experience that my, comparatively modest, set-up has is offering.

The truest compliment I can give the SM SQ is that I can't wait for the weekend to have more time to explore certain analog and digital material that I haven't listened to in awhile. I'm making a mental list as to what SQ wax gets to spin in what order, and which of my favorite 320kpbs MP3 files I want to play first.

Bravo, Involve Audio, and thanks for taking on this endeavor and special thanks to Chuck and David for their continued participation in this forum and kindness to the 4.0 community.

(Beth Hart's Skin MP3 is playing from the hard drive by the Blu-ray player through the SQ/Involve setting on the SM SQ. Note the Left EQ [front channels] spectrum display vs. the Right EQ [rear channels])

[workmeistr](#)



New Member ☆☆☆☆☆

What the folks at QQ have come to discover about Involve is that they're really good people doing some amazingly innovative stuff and they have some of the best customer service of any audio vendor ever.

There's not a huge market for a box that takes analog stereo and synthesizes it to quad or 5.1 (or Involve's own TSS 2 channel algorithm). The Involve folks got on QQ and started discussing the unit and the fact that its processing is based on the QS specs. The QQ crowd started wishing that the box decoded the SQ matrix, too. And then something insane happened -- those crazy folks at Involve *made it so*. They even offered free upgrades to their early adopters. So they catered to the niche of a niche and they delivered! For the old quaddies, it was a dream come true.

So some folks -- like me -- are really pulling for Involve to succeed beyond their wildest dreams. They're good guys and audio geniuses and they deserve it. Which is why we may react rather strongly to an offhand dismissal such as yours.

I think everyone should hear the SM and judge for themselves. On the right stereo recordings, they are pretty freaking cool. And on QS and SQ stuff, it's bringing the technology back from the dead.

[angsezmax](#) 

Turntable Whisperer



Yucca



New Member ☆☆☆☆☆

Join Date

Mar 2014

Posts

7

Points

39

Level

1



Achievements:



Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

0

Re: INVOLVE SQ - IS HERE

Hello,

Get the Surround Master yesterday, and very impressed with the first results 🎧.

Sound is much more natural than DPLII I used before. I'll have to recalibrate my system, but it's already very, very nice.

Hope the release date for the Encoder pro version is still planned for july (?).

However, it lacks some features, like a remote vol control, xlr connectors (for me), or

added delay for rear speakers, but it worths totally the price