



Involve Audio Hi-Fi forums Surround Master Review Compilation

March 2002 – July 2015

For more reviews please visit the Quadraphonic Quad Forum

[http://www.quadraphonicquad.com/forums/forumdisplay.php?23-Matrix-LP-CD-Formats-\(SQ-QS-EV-RM\)](http://www.quadraphonicquad.com/forums/forumdisplay.php?23-Matrix-LP-CD-Formats-(SQ-QS-EV-RM))

skindzier

Member

Join Date

Oct 2012

Posts

150

Points

2,923

Level

33

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...

inkubuzz



400 Club - QQ All Star

Join Date

Jun 2012

Location

Santiago, Chile

Posts

412

Points

6,448

Level

52

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

1 (100%)

Re: Reality Technologies Surround Master - 2013 Owners Thread

I dont know how I never put this record through the SM before but now that I did it blew my mind off to space!

Mr. Bungle - California

Well I thik this wont be the cup of tea for almost anyone in here, but I you really want to listen to a track that really will blow your ind with the SM it is the song "Goodbye Sober Day" (the track name kind of says it all)

This is really weird music, but withs lots of instruments and voices and the SM shines

Give it a try, you will probably never listen to any other recommendation after that, or

at least you will be scared to try, but for a once in a lifetime experience I won't do you any bad.

Quadro-Action

400 Club - QQ All Star

Join Date

Jul 2003

Location

Hamburg / Germany

Posts

449

Points

11,306

Level

70

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

0

Re: Reality Technologies Surround Master - 2013 Owners Thread

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 Doreen-Demodulator. That would lift also CD-4 to an actual suited sound quality.

Dietrich

Disclaimer



LaserVision Landmarks

Join Date

May 2005

Location

Plattsburg, MO (just outside Kansas City)

Posts

947

Points

10,719

Level

68

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

[0](#)

Re: Reality Technologies Surround Master - 2013 Owners Thread

Originally Posted by **bmoura**

Thanks for the comments. Certainly when there is no Discrete Surround version available, the Surround Master is very helpful with a very convincing substitute.

On QSound, I never paid that much attention to it before. But that has changed now! The Madonna and Roger Waters CDs with QSound are pretty amazing via the Surround Master.

And that brings me to a question - you mentioned a week ago that the Roger Waters "Amused to Death" QSound CD was one of the Involve "Reference CDs" used to develop and test the system.

Is there a place on your web site where you list the other reference CDs? I'd like to

see that list...

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.

bmoura



Friendly Moderator

Join Date

Mar 2003

Location

Redwood City, CA

Posts

6,181

Points

67,457

Level

100

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 !

atrocit

600 Club - QQ All Star

Join Date

Jun 2002

Location

Sacramento, California

Posts

677

Points

11,623

Level

70

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

0

Re: Reality Technologies Surround Master - 2013 Owners Thread

Originally Posted by **Disclord**

[Attachment 11560](#)

If anyone here is into Marc Almond and owns his album "Mother Fist... And Her Five Daughters"

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.

Shnicks



Member

Join Date

Feb 2012

Location

Woodland Hills, CA

Posts
38
Points
2,738
Level
31

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!

[hgregorybadger](#)

New Member
Join Date
Feb 2014
Posts
3
Points
116
Level
2
Achievements:

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

Re: Reality Technologies Surround Master - 2013 Owners Thread

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](#)

New Member

Join Date

Feb 2014

Posts

3

Points

116

Level

2

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

0

Re: Reality Technologies Surround Master - 2013 Owners Thread

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.

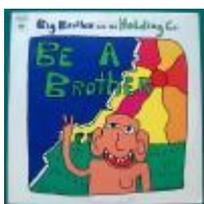
SM 5.1 outputs go to Behringer DI800 to convert to balanced.

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.

Involvement Audio deserves a Gold Medal.

Urban Spaceman



Member

Join Date

Jan 2009

Location

USA

Posts

42

Points

5,157

Level

46

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

0

Re: Reality Technologies Surround Master - 2013 Owners Thread

Just got my SM SQ unit in the mail today. Did some quick listening to various SQ and QS encoded LPs and WOW! I am super impressed here. I haven't tried any normal stereo LPs through this thing yet but I have a few in mind.....BRAVO

Involvement!!

----- Chris

bmoura



Friendly Moderator

Join Date

Mar 2003

Location

Redwood City, CA

Posts

6,181

Points

67,457

Level

100

Achievements:

Awards:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

0

Re: Reality Technologies Surround Master - 2013 Owners Thread

Originally Posted by **Urban Spaceman**

Just got my SM SQ unit in the mail today. Did some quick listening to various SQ and QS encoded LPs and WOW! I am super impressed here. I haven't tried any normal stereo LPs through this thing yet but I have a few in mind.....BRAVO Involvement!!

----- Chris

Don't forget the QSound encoded CDs - along with the many Dolby encoded CDs. Fine results there as well with the SM!

vinylguy4



400 Club - QQ All Star

Join Date

Apr 2004

Location

San Diego area

Posts

443

Points

13,135

Level

74

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

[2](#) (100%)

Re: Reality Technologies Surround Master - 2013 Owners Thread

Today is Thanksgiving Day here in the USA.

This year is the first full year with the Surround Master.

I do feel the need to say Thanks for the excellent SQ and QS Surround Master decoder here in 2014.

vinylguy4

[skindzier](#)

Member

Join Date

Oct 2012

Posts

150

Points

2,923

Level

33

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

[0](#)

Re: Reality Technologies Surround Master - 2013 Owners Thread

Hi folks, just thought I'd chime in something here... I've always used the SM in 5.1 mode. In my mind I'm thinking, I've got that center speaker & I'm going to use it, darn it.

HOWEVER, this past weekend I played with quad mode extensively for the first time & I gotta say that it was incredible. On the majority of songs, the soundstage was so well presented that you really couldn't tell that the center wasn't producing sound until you got within a foot of it. There were also a lot more subtleties with the soundstage, where I could better pick out that the singer was slightly left of center and the rhythm guitar was slightly right of center, etc. Pretty sure I won't go back to 5.1 mode. Anyway, just thought I'd throw that out there in case anyone else was hardheaded about it & hadn't tried it as well...

[skindzier](#)

Member

Join Date

Oct 2012

Posts

150

Points

2,923

Level

33

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

[0](#)

Re: Reality Technologies Surround Master - 2013 Info, questions and ordering Thread

Very cool offer - I'm loving mine! For any newbs who missed all of the activity when this device came out - it converts stereo analog to quad/5.1 analog better than any other synthesized surround I've seen - the results on some tracks are very discrete. Go back & read the posts and check it out. Highly recommended! (Mine is the original version. I'll let the quaddies chime in on the SQ version if they see fit!)

[rustyandi](#)



500 Club - QQ All Star

Join Date

Mar 2002

Location

Australia

Posts

537

Points

19,641

Level

88

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

[0](#)

Re: Reality Technologies Surround Master - 2013 Info, questions and ordering Thread

I have played a number of EV4 lps
with the Surround Master and the QSD1
and have shown the decoding on the Vector scope
Years ago on this site before the Surround master
I had said the best decoding for EV4 was through the QSD1
If it is not exact then it is so close that it does not mater

[bmoura](#)



Friendly Moderator

Join Date

Mar 2003

Location

Redwood City, CA

Posts

6,181

Points

67,457

Level

100

Achievements:

Awards:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

0

Re: Reality Technologies Surround Master - 2013 Info, questions and ordering Thread

Originally Posted by **Overture**

Hey there Par4ken,

Whether or not that's what OD was alluding to, it's not completely accurate - the Involve decode is based initially on the QS equations, but then we have a whole slew of really complicated dumb stuff (that makes sense, believe me) that works alongside and in conjunction with it.

As an owner of the Surround Master I find that the Involve/QS mode is the one I use most - for Stereo to Surround, QS decoding, Dolby Surround, etc. You definitely want to get that capability.

I won't be sending mine back.

[dwight](#)

Member

Join Date

Apr 2003

Location

Santa Clarita Calif.

Posts

136

Points

10,164

Level

67

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

Join Date

Apr 2003

Location

Santa Clarita Calif.

Posts

136

Points

10,164

Level

67

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 II 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 BELLS, 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

Q8



1K Club - QQ Shooting Star

Join Date

Aug 2012

Location

Ohio

Posts

1,616

Points

25,623

Level

96

Achievements:

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-pong 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 everyone's 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!

Colin Dunn

Member

Join Date

Mar 2012

Posts

73

Points

3,620

Level

37

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).

And now some questions and comments that I hope the Involve guys can answer:

1) There are connections for 4-channel or 5-channel output. If I want to do 4.0 upconversions of both SQ and QS, should I be using the 4-channel output jacks? Or use FL, FR, SL, SR from the 5.1 jacks? I read over the manuals and addenda twice but did not fully understand the difference between these two connections, and how the front channels differ. There had been some past discussion about the QS decoding only being in 5.1 and not 4.0. Is that still the case? Or can I decode QS in 4.0 (as it was done in the '70s)?

2) What sampling rate / bit depth are used internally to the Surround Master for digitizing and processing the audio? I usually rip LPs at 96/24, but if the Surround

Master works at 48/24, there's no point in doing a 96/24 LP rip. I ask this so I can use the highest bit rate for quality reasons, but not waste space by grabbing higher-resolution samples than the Surround Master can re-output as analog audio.

3) How to improve Surround Master and make it appealing to a broader market? The main thing that is missing is *digital* audio input and output. Relying upon analog input and output is somewhat obsolete in the current home theater world, which has largely migrated to HDMI for everything (except vinyl). I made the switch to HDMI for all my digital sources in 2009 and haven't looked back, as it combines multi-channel audio and video in ONE cable, and eliminates duplicate investment in multiple high-end D/A stages.

Since the Surround Master can act as a stereo-to-surround box, the ideal for digital stereo sources would be to have *digital* input and output. This avoids quality loss from extra A/D and D/A conversion steps. It will likely require HDMI (and the accompanying expensive licensing) to get a 4.0 or 5.1 lossless PCM surround signal into a pre/pro (the only surround I've seen carried over Toslink and coax is Dolby Digital and dts).

If I could connect up a Surround Master digitally, in between a CD player and pre/pro, I would use it to enhance all my stereo recordings. But I bought the lower-end Oppo players (without the high-performance analog stage), consciously planning to use them as "transports," and that the digital "sound" comes from the pre/pro.

Also, all home theater receivers apply bass management and room correction in the digital domain. My pre/pro forces me to "direct" mode (no bass management and room correction) when using multi-channel analog inputs.

The upshot is that the peculiarities of multichannel analog input mean I take a hit to sound quality for stereo sources. So where I find the Surround Master most useful is for decoding quad vinyl. Then I have a FLAC file or DVD-A that I can play back in all-digital form, getting the benefits of bass management and room correction.

I'd think perhaps the digital "guts" of the Involve stereo-to-surround processing should be sold/licensed to receiver manufacturers. I'd love to pull up "Involve" modes alongside all those Dolby / dts modes. That would also solve the HDMI / bass management / room correction issues. But I realize receiver manufacturers would probably pay \$10-\$25 per unit shipped for the firmware. It would take a 20X the sales volume to make the same money, and that's if these big multinational conglomerates even bite in the first place.

[RSilverman](#)



Senior Member

Join Date

Aug 2012

Location

Los Angeles

Posts

236

Points

3,476

Level

36

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.

[Lucanu](#)



Made in Italy ©1974

Join Date

Apr 2005

Location

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

Posts

1,622

Points

27,141

Level

97

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

73

Points

3,620

Level

37

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.

LizardKing



QQ King Lizard

Join Date

Oct 2009

Location

NZ

Posts

3,816

Points

35,476

Level

100

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

[9](#) (100%)

Re: INVOLVE SQ - IS HERE

YAY!!!! My chip upgrade is installed and working.... phew!

Thanks to all at Involve Audio - Nice to put a face to the names....

I had a minor worry that one of the channels wasn't working.. it turns out my switch box is on the blink.... after I figured that out it is all good...

Listening to Joan Baez - Blessed Are... very nice.

I would have put on Dark Side of the Moon, but my brother (who did the chip upgrade) forgot to bring it back...

LizardKing



QQ King Lizard

Join Date

Oct 2009

Location

NZ

Posts

3,816

Points

35,476

Level

100

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

9 (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...

medkill



Member

Join Date

Nov 2006

Location

Proctor, Arkansas

Posts

61

Points

7,783

Level

59

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

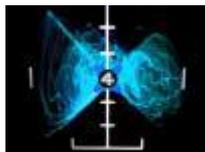
Feedback Score

0

Re: INVOLVE SQ - IS HERE

I had to put off installing/testing/listening to my Surround Master, as i had pressing duties as Motor Sergeant, working on servicing and repairing my motor vehicles. In the Republik of Mancavia, I'm not only the ruthless dictator, I'm also the oppressed peasant. Well, last night, I finally got to play with my system and I got the SM installed. Last night's listening didn't go so well, as my ears weren't cooperating. This morning was much better. I haven't done any 'critical' listening, but from what I heard from its work on Edgar Winter "They Only Come Out At Night", Chase 'self-titled' and Santana "Caravanserai", I ain't gonna worry about being critical. I can say that I agree with what the others have said and I am going to try it with QS records and some stereo records. I'm thinking of some Alan Parsons Project for that one. This was worth every cent and then some. As for my Tate 101A, it'll go to my bedroom setup.

Discrete 4



New Member

Join Date

Aug 2013

Location

Michigan

Posts

8

Points

547

Level

10

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!

- [JonUrban](#)



Board Operator

Join Date

Mar 2002

Location

Connecticut, USA

Posts

12,453

Points

974,288

Level

100

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

[1](#) (100%)

Blog Entries

[6](#)

Re: INVOLVE SQ - IS HERE

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.....

:-jon

Q8



1K Club - QQ Shooting Star

Join Date

Aug 2012

Location

Ohio

Posts

1,616

Points

25,623

Level

96

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

0

Blog Entries

1

Originally Posted by **bmoura**

Haven't tried Dolby Headphone encoded CDs. But the QSound CDs seem to work by providing the Surround Master with additional music cues to steer around the sound field. Very impressive - specially the albums by Roger Waters, Madonna and Sting. 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 cues. 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

workmeistr



Junior Member

Join Date

Apr 2012

Location

Gretna, NE

Posts

14

Points

3,839

Level

39

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

0

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])

Yucca

Junior Member

Join Date

Mar 2014

Location

France

Posts

23

Points

1,144

Level

18

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

- [alaric smith](#)



Member

Join Date

May 2013

Location

Kent, UK

Posts

89

Points

5,218

Level

46

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

[0](#)

Blog Entries

[13](#)

Re: INVOLVE SQ - IS HERE

I know that there has been a lot written on here recently about front/rear bleeds, etc., and that this issue is (seems) to have been sourced and has been/will be addressed. However, I would like to add my thoughts - I have never had the joy of owning a Tate or any of the full logic kit. My quad stuff has been driven through a Sony SQA-200 pre-amp and a Yamaha DSP1 on the (non-Dolby) surround mode (it can do Dolby 4 channel surround but has its own version, too - don't ask me what it does, I have no idea but I think that it is only an ambience effect). In addition, I don't have any testing equipment and have to rely on my ears. So, this review should be read with that in account.

I have had the Surround Master for just over a month now. Sadly, I have only been able to use it anger four or five times. It is very sad because when I play SQ albums

through it I sit back in amazement. It makes the poor Sony SQA-200 sound like my Yamaha DSP-1: false. I have tried to play as many of my SQ LPs through it. It took a little time get the balance right - I have a system built up over time, with all sorts of odd issues. The first issue I discovered was that the phono pre-amp on the front

channels had decided to drop the right side. . Luckily, there were options and they resolved the problem. On my system, I have to have a strong forward bias - this is a room shape & listening position issue. Once that was resolved I listened to a few more discs.

I started with my stock first play disk, "DSofM" - for some weird reason, I always play it through every new system, probably because it is my favourite album and I don't play it that often (to keep it fresh). It was incredible. There was a clarity of direction I have never had before. In a rush of blood, I followed it by playing two Santana albums ("Abraxas" and "III") and Janis Joplin's "Pearl". The Santana albums were equally impressive. Joplin was less so but I get the feeling that the pressing I have isn't great and the mix might have been more ambience then discrete in the first place - I bow to superior knowledge on that one. It was still a massive improvement though.

I guess my conclusion is: If you haven't had a full-logic decoder before - this kit is amazing and will change your listening experience. I am going to be a bit cheeky and say; even if you have had a full-logic set, this will be hard to beat.

I had been looking at a Sony SQD2020, which eventually sold for more than a Surround Master costs. I even thought that it might be worth saving up to have one for comparison. To be honest, I don't think that I will bother. I know that Tates and other top line full logic decoders might possibly give a more vinyl friendly results but for the price, I am going to stick with my SM. It is a fantastic little box, which has allowed me to appreciate my SQ collection in full.

A big "thank you" to Chucky and the boys.

I am waiting for the Octophonic/Hexadecaphonic version - no .1 please - though. Full sound all around.

I probably have something important to say. This isn't it and I can't remember what it was.

[KevinD9052](#)

Member

Join Date

Mar 2002

Location

Yonkers, NY

Posts

146
Points
10,463
Level
68
Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

0

Re: INVOLVE SQ - IS HERE

I think we are hearing differences in decoding styles here. I've listened to a few albums via the Sony SQD-2010, Audionics S&IC, (cartridge adjusted to full null), and the SQSM. Yes, there is more separation on the Chase Open Up Wide cut via the Tate. But the crosstalk on the SM does not in any way ruin the localization of the instruments. I may be putting myself out on a limb here because I have never owned nor heard this on a discrete tape but is it possible this small cross talk exists on the master discrete tape? Maybe the Tate is overcompensating. Yet I notice the SM also leaks the center vocals from some albums. "Sometimes In Winter" by Blood, Sweat & Tears comes to mind. Perfect center front localization of vocals via the Tate. But using the Surround Master the vocal leaks to right rear channel destroying the center front illusion. But then surprise, surprise, there are a few cuts on the first Paul Simon album (including the 2 hits) that provide perfect front vocal localization via the SM that leak to the left rear using the Tate. I can't explain why that happens. I think the mix may be reacting differently to the two decoding methods-DES vs. Variomatrix. All I know is that most of the SQ albums sound very close to the discrete tape using the Surround Master. The sound on the Tate is dryer, over processed & yes over separated, and that works-sometimes. It is sometimes what you want. But not all the time. The SM provides a very nice SQ sound stage most of the time. So I'm learning to adjust to those few records that does better on the Tate for the day when the SM is the only game in Town. Oh, and by the way, the Sony SQD-2010 did well for a logic decoder. Like the Surround Master is has great presence of sound but slips a bit in separation compared to the other two. What I am saying here is it is still a damned good SQ decoder. Can't wait to recap and fix my Lafayette SQ-W that crapped out on me last year. Now she is a beauty. Much better than the Sony in sound quality & SQ decoding. But until then I got the Audionics Tate & the SQSM. Both top of the line SQ/QS decoders. I just love listening to my records again! And PS: Janis Joplin's Pearl is a great SQ album. Except for the 2 single vocals "Me & Bobby McGee" & "Mercedes Benz" the rest of it is sonically active enough to make it very active quad mix. Big percussion in the rears, some in front along with vocals & horns & strings makes a very active sound stage. "Move Over" and "Half Moon" start in the rears and it opens up in the front with organs & vocals. Really well done. The mix is there with the SQSM. And it is THERE with the Tate too if you get my meaning. Does anyone feel the way I do?

workmeistr



Junior Member

Join Date

Apr 2012

Location

Gretna, NE

Posts

14

Points

3,839

Level

39

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

0

Re: INVOLVE SQ - IS HERE

Urban, beyond what it does for your SQ and QS listening pleasure, the Involve/QS setting enhances everything. I run my SACD/mp3 player through it with surprising results, and most stereo records are enhanced with solid natural results. This latter benefit is what ultimately convinced me to purchase. Everything I listen to goes through the SM in 4.0 glory.

workmeistr



Junior Member

Join Date

Apr 2012

Location

Gretna, NE

Posts

14

Points

3,839

Level

39

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

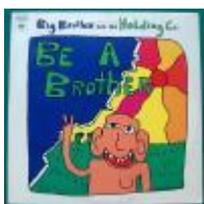
Feedback Score

0

Re: INVOLVE SQ - IS HERE

You're in for some pleasant surprises. My only QS and SQ decoders were on my Pioneer 949, so my expectations for matrix was low, but the SM blows it away. Some of my favorite QS records are my Rufus records. Also start watching for an SQ copy of Billy Paul's War of the Gods. I listen to Side 1 once every couple of weeks. I've only been doing quad for a year, and now have about 175 SQ, QS, and CD-4 records. I still use my 949 for CD-4 demodulation, but it has developed some RF background noise, so I am watching the auction sites for demodulators. Let us know about your SM experience once you give it a spin. Cheers.

Urban Spaceman



Member

Join Date

Jan 2009

Location

USA

Posts

42

Points

5,157

Level

46

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

[0](#)

Re: INVOLVE SQ - IS HERE

My Surround Master SQ edition unit arrived in the mail today. Wasted no time hooking it up and WOW! I have never heard either SQ or QS decoded so well. I knew what SQ was capable of, but for me QS was the shocker. And I have to mention I was spinning LPs in real time through the SM with no problems. I have a concert to go to tonight otherwise I'd be playing albums and marveling in this great product (which I plan to do henceforth). Gads - this thing is so awesome I feel like buying another just to keep as a backup in case the first one ever goes south on me. Involve Audio ROCKS!

[Bob Romano](#)



Surroundaholic Moderator

Join Date

Apr 2002

Location

Naperville IL

Posts

4,271

Points

67,858

Level

100

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

[0](#)

Re: INVOLVE SQ - IS HERE

I have to say that I have had the SM for months and months and have played almost all my QS and SQ LP's through it. I have also compared the SM decodes with Tate decodes and find that the results are, more often than not, as good or better than the decodes from a Tate. They tend to have less pumping. The actual separation sounds, to my ears, to be just as good. I also have the older scripts from OxfordDickie. They work really well and I often test the same material with the scripts against the SM and

then listen to those against the Tate. I have to say that I am pleased with the results of the SM. Also, the scripts tend to take hours to run where the SM is real time.

[rustyandi](#)



500 Club - QQ All Star

Join Date

Mar 2002

Location

Australia

Posts

537

Points

19,641

Level

88

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

0

Re: INVOLVE SQ - IS HERE

Before the rising Damp I had a play

I would like to start with the Tate chip

There were a couple of different chips for the decoding

I have a Audionics decoder

It was the first run I ordered it and paid \$75 and waited 3 years to get it for \$300

When I played SQ lps there was a very narrow front image

In about 6 months after I had it I received a note that there was an upgrade

I sent it back and when it returned there was a wider front image I asked them

If that was right and was told that's was the upgrade

So when you test the Surround Master against a TATE witch TATE

Charlie brought over the SQ BETA mod to test

We first tested it against the Chase track with the trumpet moves around all channels

I turned the front channels off and just heard the rear there was a big improvement

With cross talk between front and rear

But when you played a singer that is in the front centre there is still a bit more in the rear channels

Than the Tate
But when you played all channels it is hard to pick the difference
The Tate decoding has an effect of almost making a rear mono channel when there is a vocal in front
Then opening to either L/rear or R/ rear to give a dominant signal and if you listen only to the rear
That's what seems to give the pumping effect
The Surround master has a smother effect

As to the test I spoke to Charlie and said I have been very happy with the existing SQ decoder
And apart from the Chase test I did not hear a great difference
Dave said that he was glad that it did not degrade the decoding as he thinks that this a step backwards
As it is not to correct maths
I had the same friends over to listen Richard who has a Tate for 15 years when I switched back and forth
The decoders could pick the difference apart from he felt the Surround Master had a smoother sound
Also Warren who has better hearing than me also liked the highs that he could hear

He also said that my cartridge a Denon 303 M/C had a very good separation and other cartridges
May get a better results

I would like to hear what Tab has to say

To sum up it is still a great SQ decoder I wish that I could say that there was some great improvement
Whether it is better than the TATE or nearly as good it is better than any Logic decoders
still the only one that can be repaired

KevinD9052

Member
Join Date
Mar 2002
Location
Yonkers, NY
Posts
146
Points
10,463
Level
68
Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

[0](#)

Re: INVOLVE SQ - IS HERE

All I know is that the Surround Master is one of the best SQ decoders out there. It is without question the best QS decoder ever. I'm getting the SQ Vinyl to see how much better it can be. If that is possible. (Besides, I wanted a backup unit anyway)! I'm sure I speak for most of the QQ members when I say thank you for all your time & effort. It has not gone unappreciated.

[sjcorne](#)

New Member

Join Date

Jan 2010

Posts

5

Points

4,168

Level

41

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

[0](#)

Re: INVOLVE SQ - IS HERE

Just received my SQ Vinyl edition this week and have been having great fun testing it. I already shared some of this with the nice folks at Involve Audio over PM. I again thank them for developing this great device.

1. QS decoding quite amazing, compares well with my Sansui QSD-2..in fact I may give that device a rest.
2. Quad synthesis best I have heard, from both LPs and streaming sources (eg Spotify). In some cases sounds better than actual quad releases of some of the material..very discrete in some cases amazingly so .
3. SQ decoding – my main issue. Better than my ‘wave matching’ decoder (built into my old Lafayette LR 4000 receiver), as there is no pumping, but, I’m finding the channel separation in some directions less than what I expected (e.g. center front to

rear cancellation). I find the corners do better, even with multiple channels and concurrent material. I know its recommended we not do individual channel tests..but I could not resist. Comparing the new AF Billy Joel 'Streetlife Serenade' SACD vs the SQ..the SQ decoding gets the basic directions right (but so does my old wave match decoder) but I know Billy's vice should not be coming out of the back as loudly as it does and I sit closer to the rear speakers. I wouldn't complain so much but after reading the rave reviews and comparison to the Tate (which I don't own) was wondering. Maybe it's impossible to do better with a 40 year old matrix and old records.

Thanks

[inquadwetrust](#)



Senior Member

Join Date

Mar 2011

Location

San Francisco

Posts

292

Points

10,541

Level

68

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

0

Re: INVOLVE SQ - IS HERE

Like a kid on Christmas morning, I was up early and setting up my SQ Vinyl Beta Surround Master! It was a nice unboxing experience and the included documentation was very straightforward to follow, including additional information regarding the SQ Vinyl modification. I have not heard any of my SQ records in quad at all so after a quick run through of Columbia's 'An Introduction To The World Of SQ Quadraphonic Sound' LP to make sure all was well with my set up I was thrilled. This record starts with a very 70's spoken word introduction that then heads straight into an excerpt from 'Open Up Wide' by Chase, with it's famous panned trumpet opener that span

around the room as discretely as I could ever hope for from a 40+ year old format. My day will generally be playing everything I own in SQ followed by QS after that. But as a taster while I ate breakfast I had opened a sealed SQ copy of Enoch Light's 'Future Sound Shock' and the results were spectacular, positioning was incredible! It made me laugh out loud at how good this is; one of my tests today will be the QS LP version of 'Spaced Out' versus the Q4 transfer of it so I can check positioning but for now I am blown away by what I am hearing

[inquadwetrust](#)



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Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

0

Re: INVOLVE SQ - IS HERE

Continuing my evaluation this fine San Francisco Summer morning, I've been comparing the QS encoded Enoch Light album '4-Channel Dynamite' as this comes with detailed notes regarding the instrument and vocal placements for each song. I have to say I am hearing everything where it should be. For sure there is bleed, but it is minimal and never unmusical. If sitting in the sweet spot then the bleed really does become more like acoustic presence rather than a doubling of the instrument. 'Penny Lane' is the first track on side 2 and is a challenging mix in terms of positioning, the front back split between instruments as well as the FR/RL split for the Piccolo Trumpet does not seem to be an issue for the Involve QS decoder. Each Piccolo Trumpet is playing something slightly different and when they cascade sky ward together at the end of the arrangement you can really hear them discretely in each

channel and the effect is really rather lovely. The chorus does seem to bleed to the right side but again if you really sit correctly then you can actually pin point them to the FR with the bleed rolling off smoothly to the RR.

[dwight](#)

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Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

[0](#)

Re: INVOLVE SQ - IS HERE

I have had the good fortune to audition the SQ Vinyl edition of THE SURROUND MASTER! Turning records over every 25 minutes is a pain in the ass....LOL....but the pleasure of hearing quad as it was meant to be heard, and better than the state of the art for 40 yrs.is cathartic. I was not able to AB, with the flick of a switch, the old SM with the Vinyl SM version, but I can say that through the VINYL SM, simultaneous signals originating in all four speakers are simply rendered with fantastic separation! TOUCH by Morton Subotnick is a must listen If you have it. There is continuous movement and extensive use of the rear left and right "pockets", I think that's how the SQ guys referred to the extreme right and left rears. This was always impressive through the TATE II, but it was never this good spatially! It may be my imagination, but I heard a lot of height info while listening to the first cut, Singing Winds, while listening to Santana's ABRAXAS....and once again those rear signals really stayed in the pockets. While listening to the very last cut, El Nicoya, in the right rear, a single voice goes way beyond the rear pocket. I don't ever remember hearing that before.

THERE GOES RHYMIN SIMON and LOGGINS AND MESSINA are well recorded and I can't say I heard anything definitive that stood out...It was just a pleasure to hear them as they should be heard.

Rick Wakeman's SIX WIVES OF HENRY VIII was a surprise to me. I didn't like listening to the SQ version because the separation was annoyingly indistinct, but I

have to say I was pleased to detect the rears without struggling. I know this is a real difference, because I have, over the years, attempted many times to re-listen to this album, but would stop and listen to the cd through my Sansui ..and now through INVOLVE.

BITCHES BREW is a Miles Davis quad spectacular and it is really super spacey, but at the same time those rear channels are very clear and specific. I also plopped my Mike Oldfield Boxed CD on to see how it played through the Vinyl SM...It could be my imagination, but it never seemed this discrete and perfect. Wow!

Dwight

QUADradial



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Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

0

Re: INVOLVE SQ - IS HERE

Chucky (and all),

I finally had the chance to hook up the Involve with the new SQ chip. You guys NAILED IT! This is now my "go to" SQ decoder. Although it has slightly (and I mean slightly) more leakage than the Tate, it doesn't have the extreme artifacts of it. The levels seem spot on now. To me, it's a vast improvement over the original release.

FANTASTIC JOB...(and thanks for fixing my poor soldering).

[dwight](#)

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Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

[0](#)

Re: INVOLVE SQ - IS HERE

OK!!! So I just listened to the CD of BUDDY RICH LIVE AT KING STREET! It is, I believe, and I know someone will correct me if I'm wrong, the only recording encoded using the Tate SQ system. It was produced by Gary Rebar. When the SURROUND MASTER SQ was originally released, this recording was the only recording, that I listened to, that was clearly better defined through the TATE II than through the SURROUND MASTER SQ; however there is no doubt about it now, after listening to it through the new SM SQ, that it equals the TATE II decoding!This was a live recording and the surround mix was derived from the special mixer created for the recording.....It is a wonderful recording, but not an especially great surround recording....but the TATE II brought out the mix in a clearly more defined way than the old SM SQ....not now! Whatever the resident gurus did, they did it brilliantly.....and this isn't even vinyl...it's CD! Who'd a thunk!?

Dwight

[KevinD9052](#)

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Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

0

Re: INVOLVE SQ - IS HERE

I spent the last month comparing the SQ Vinyl Beta to the Original Surround Master and I have to say you guys have hit another home run. As claimed, the Vinyl version improves the 4 corner crosstalk between front & rear speakers. For me, where I sit in the rear end of the listening room the dynamics & separation between the left & right front speakers are easier to pick up - even when the back speakers are active. This improves the listening experience for several albums- Loggins & Messina, Chicago, Sly & the Family Stone & Poco come to mind. Sometimes what I thought were center front vocals were really L-R, C-L, or C-R exchanges. Nice to be able to pick up these subtleties! I'm curious to hear how close the Loggins & Messina album will be when I get my hands on the AF SACD next month! Classical ambience mixes sound the same as the original unit: excellent. So all in all the SQ decoding is improved & remains smooth. No artifacts at all. Other than that the unit is exactly the same as the Original with the same excellent QS decoding. Good job guys!

QUADradial



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Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

0

Re: INVOLVE SQ - IS HERE

Here is a down and dirty comparison between the two versions using the CHASE trumpet track. Sorry for the difference in levels because a different CD player was used and I had to use my cell phone for the new version...so there is a slight video drift. Keep your eyes on the rear channels when the trumpet is in the front. The leakage problem is gone. This decoder is pushing 20dB+ of separation. It's on par with the Tate II, but without the heavy pumping. The only complaint that I have is the rear levels run hot, so I had to roll off the back channels by about 6-9dB. This Surround Master is the best SQ decoder in my opinion.

<https://youtu.be/lPeYtF8iMLg>

QUADradial



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Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

[0](#)

Re: INVOLVE SQ - IS HERE

You know...all the SQ testing and I never gave the Involve mode a chance on QS material. HOLY MACKEREL! I played an Urbie Green QS LP and never heard separation like this! I may need to save up and buy another one of these...

[rustyandi](#)



500 Club - QQ All Star

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Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

[0](#)

Re: INVOLVE SQ - IS HERE

I would just like to say again
That the Surround Master is
as good as the QSD1 and now as good as the TATE

It is a 3 band QS decoder (same as QSD1)

and a 3 Band SQ decoder (the only 3 band SQ decoder Made)

some times these things are overlooked

If you wanted to get into Quad late you can do no better

There has never been a one piece unit that could decode both Matrix's to this standard

[schultz1010](#)

Member

Join Date

Jul 2015

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Points

620

Level

12

Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

0

Re: INVOLVE SQ - IS HERE

Test decode done today. Wow! The only sad thing is all the time, effort and money expended on the path getting to this point and having the SM!

First impression was - this (SM) is *quiet*. I knew the 40+ yr old Sony SQD-2020 was (even after being re-capped and having the solder joints redone) not a quiet/clean unit but the SM is dead quiet - over 30dB quieter.

For a test I grabbed Doc Severinsen's "Fever!" (CQD 40003) - a QS disc as it happens - and got it into the computer. For quick listening it's convenient to encode to AC3 - eventually the goal's to make DVD-Audio discs (thus all the noise I'm making over on

the DVD-A parts of QQ).

Oh my goodness - so much more musical and fun to listen to. Not the pulsing (aka pumping) from days gone by. And about a minute in the drums and the marimba coming so clear and clean from the right rear had me jumping out of the chair (well, almost).

Awesome!

The usual mode of listening is to digitize the audio and encode to various forms (interestingly 4channel 48K/24b is valid for DVD use) rather than going directly from the SM to the AVR (which in most cases doesn't have all the needed analog inputs).

The other thing that was needed was to adjust the input levels to the A/D converter -

the Sony had a low output level where the SM is more "normal". Most A/D convertedr lack analog preamp stages - but luckily I'd front ended the Apogee Digital Quartet (<http://www.soundonsound.com/sos/nov1...ee-quartet.htm>) with a unbalanced/balanced level converter that has trim/gain (+/- 12dB) capability <http://tascam.com/product/la-40mkiii/>

Next up - do the entire album

[inquadwetrust](#)



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Achievements:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

0

Re: INVOLVE SQ - IS HERE

Mine is always on! Everything that's not SQ or QS gets synthesized via the Surround Master. I can't buy matrix quad vinyl quick enough and the results are nothing short of remarkable, I am so very happy with mine!

[fredblue](#)



Quaddict

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Level

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Achievements:

Awards:

Post Thanks / Like

Feedback Score

[4](#) (100%)

Re: INVOLVE SQ - IS HERE

Originally Posted by **chucky3042**

Hi All SQ extremists

I suspect most of you that have recently purchased the SQ Vinyl package should have just got them or will in the next day or so.

Any reports????

Regards

Chucky

Not had much chance to play with it but the few times I have the results have been.. staggeringly good.

(Initial thoughts.. "Can this really be the same SQ system I've seen disparaged from time to time over the years..?")

Right off I played discs I've been desperate to hear the Quads of but conversions are either hard to find or non-existent.. with some nice results.. since then I've tried to prioritise those discs I already knew had tracks that do round the room pans, to try out the channel placement and steering as much as anything.. and so far = so very good..!

The following 360 pans perform superbly thru the Surround Master SQ Vinyl ;

O'Jays/Ship Ahoy "For The Love Of Money",

Chase/1st LP "Open Up Wide",

The Miracles/Love Crazy (in the intro to the track "Spy For Brotherhood"... there's a bit where the "spy guy" is at the airport, a plane flies overhead from front to back..

woosh.. thats cool.. and then the spy guy runs round the room while being chased, his hurried footsteps go from front right to rear right to rear left to front left - even cooler.)

...other discs I've tried out do some hilarious and wacky things.. from a thunder storm at the start of side 1, to animal noises a-go-go at the end of Earth Wind & Fire's "Head To The Sky" album.. to a group of sultry lasses giving Johnnie Taylor some smooth front to back panned backing vocals in his "Ear'gasm" album -- "Johnnie.. Johnnie.. Johnnie.. Johnnie.. Johnnie" washes over you, its quite something.. I guess the Q8 does the same thing? Or maybe its an Involve SQ bonus! Whatever it is, its a hoot!

It will take some time to do these old LPs and the Involve unit justice but I'm hoping to set aside some "me time" in the next month(s).. and will update with feedback on each QQ Poll and thread as and when I plough through them all in the fulness of time.

A heartfelt "Thank You" to you Chucky, to David (QQ Member: Overture) and all the guys at Involve for creating this mini marvel that takes 40 year old SQ encoded records and transforms them into Quadraphonic gems.