

SACD synopsis

When the Dire Straits launched their "Brothers in arms" the album specifically made to SACD/DSD specs is considered one of the 'first' commercial offerings in this technology. Although made for 5.0 multi-channel stereo (≠/≠ surround according to modern THX interpretations of enveloping), it seems very often awkward to hear a drum or guitar in the rear or on the side in non-live POP music.

Nevertheless it is very nice for Live performances and almost a must for classical music : dynamics, avoiding stereo recording issues (dual parallel vs. crossed mike positions, concert hall acoustics) never really made it happen, 3channel is much better, but 3/2 recording and playback brings the 3D to live-like acoustics as no other medium can.

E.g. : In demo'ing differences between CD (aad,ddd) & DVD & SACD of the same live recording, the purists (often musicians) who witnessed the concert live, can only pinpoint the 1/2 tone error of the x'th hobo player on the SACD version

Drawbacks :

- 1) as it's intended for 5 full range discrete channels, the physical implementation of 5 identical floor standing speakers is often quite a hassle with the spouses ;-)
- 2) in the rare case one needs to go away from the 'pure direct' signal, processing a DSD 1bit stream isn't worth it, as the signal will deteriorate when converted into PCM for calculation purposes
E.g. : major flaw of the PS3 output on Toslink
- 3) If only the standard would have permitted to split the channels on the digital level to be fed into superior DAC's [**], the Hi-End market would have had a blast and probably the commercial success thrived (?) ... maybe one day we will have a BD with 7+1 DSD tracks
- 4) when accustomed to the rich sound (frequency range & dynamics) of SACD it is very hard to fall back to the relatively 'poor' CD quality, let alone anything compressed (DVD, MP3, etc...)

REM : Luckily there's a new universal player that combines BD, DVD, SACD, CD; that I'll be available soon : Denon's DVD-A1UD

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- 1) receiver/amp DAC's are not what I call superior nor Hi-End, mostly the internal DAC's of the SACD player are better suited for this job
(e.g. Sony ES/QS series players provide the same result as a Parasound C1), unfortunately they do not always come in XLR versions, contrary to their stereo counterparts
- 2) the whole point of HDMI is not to have a technically superior quality (e.g. vs. DVI), but to counter copyright problems, thus mixing picture & sound in non-dedicated channels, quite the opposite Hi-End audiophiles have been doing for many years.
- 3) iLink and only the latter HDMI specs (1.2+) were capable of enough throughput for multichannel DSD transfer, but the number of implementations in devices is scarce (unfortunately)
- 4) for a modular multichannel system, all the channels have to be separated on the digital level : pure direct ('as is' on the disc) or processed in a cinema/surround mode (e.g. 5.1+1 bass management), in order to feed them into DAC's that are once again modular in a sense that the channels can be digitally split (instead of analog hi/lowpass filtering) before being converted into a number of analog multi-amping outputs & modes : eg. bi-/tri-amping options per channel, full range + sub feed on the front L&R channels (e.g. Focal Utopia III), 5.1+5, etc...