

## PMC/Bryston Get HIP

Bryston is pleased to announce that world famous Hippodrome theatre in London England has installed a PMC/Bryston BB5 XBD Active monitoring system.

The Golders Green Hippodrome has been home to the BBC Concert Orchestra since 1972 and is swathed in audio history. Originally built in 1913 as a theatre it now fulfills the role as the BBC premier radio and concert venue of which any avid listener to Radio 2 or 3 will be well aware.

The most extensive technical refit of the control room has resulted in a complete studio overhaul, which even included some extensive building structural work. No expense has been spared to achieve the highest quality result. This approach for



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## Encode vs. Decode

There's a serious problem here folks. With all the talk about surround systems in our homes moving to 6.1 and 7.1 Surround Systems someone forgot to tell the recording studios.

The 6.1 and 7.1 EX and ES systems consist of the standard 5.1 surround system but add 1 or 2 back channels as well. This version of 7.1 systems is in distinct contrast to the previous 7.1 systems you may have seen which had a standard 5.1 setup but included 2 'side' channels. There is also the issue of 6.1 as well which is the same as the standard 5.1 but adds a single back channel instead of 2 back channels. Boy this is getting confusing isn't it?

*My concern here is simple. Very very few of the studios out there that produce the sound tracks and recordings that are played back on these 6.1 and 7.1 systems have moved beyond the standard 5.1 surround format. The reason for this is that the 5.1 format is the recording standard and will probably remain so for a very long time to come.*

There will always be the exception of course and some of the big blockbuster type movies may be recorded in 6.1 surround but they certainly will be the exception. The other point is that all DVD movies also include a 5.1 version of the film as well even if they have mixed a 6.1 or 7.1 optional soundtrack. Also re-

member that rear coverage of sound is more a product of the need to provide a sound field behind the listener in large commercial theatre venues. At home in a reasonable sized normal room rear sound field coverage is easily handled by 2 properly positioned quality loudspeakers.

So, what we have here is an industry where the ENCODE side (studio) is producing a product which gets played back or DECODED on a different system than it was recorded and mastered on. In the days of Stereo that would be analogous to setting up your stereo system with no thought in mind of where each speaker should be placed to replicate the stereo sound-field the recording engineer intended you to hear. The old joke about going over to your friend's house to hear his new stereo and finding out he put the left stereo speaker in one room and the right in another is representative of this issue.

A Point: when the ENCODE side of the industry produces a movie or recording the number of channels are always quoted as to the number of discrete channels used. So 5.1 means 5 discrete channels with a discrete sub effects channel. With 6.1 it would be 6 discrete channels and 1 sub effects channel. So 5.1 or 6.1 or 7.1 would indicate the number of discrete channels at the encode side of the equation At the DECODE side of the industry the number of channels is a function of the number of playback channels and the Digital Signal Processing used. So 5.1, 6.1 or 7.1 is a

excellence has of course been reflected in the monitoring and the choice of PMC's active BB5 XBD flagship main monitoring system.

### BB5/XBD Active System

The BB5 XBD monitors finished in natural ash were the unanimous choice for the technical team mainly due to their huge success at BBC Maida Vale, which is the BBC's prestigious radio music recording complex.

The two metre tall free standing BB5's are not only impressive to look at, but are capable of reproducing the huge scale of an orchestra's performance with nimble pin point imagery.

The sub 17Hz three way system features dual 15" bass units which sit at the mouth of a massive 15 foot folded transmission line bass loading system. The PMC built soft dome mid range and high frequency drivers complete the monitor driver compliment. All drive units are strictly controlled by individual, ultra low distortion, PMC series Bryston amplification and electronic cross-overs which are housed externally.

The sum of the parts creates the highest quality, no compromise reference main monitoring system available in the market today.



function of the decoding capabilities available in your specific processor not necessarily the number of discrete channels recorded by the recording engineer. When you see all these companies referring to their products having 6 and 7 channel surround modes recognize that most of the time this refers to 'playback only'. So in a lot of cases when you listen to the movie or recording in 6.1 or 7.1 you are not hearing the recording in its original 5.1 format. The processor is synthesizing the extra channels from the 5.1 original recording.

So you can understand my concern here. If the whole point of the exercise is to replicate the intent of the recording engineer then we have a serious problem because the recording and playback side are not mirrors of each other. Even the positioning of the 6 or 7 channels is at odds. Some systems advocating side and rear channels and some advocating rear and back channels.

Unless we can agree on standards that provide a correlation between the recording and playback side of this equation the industry will remain in chaos.

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