

Mk 2. The 5.1/DVD Period

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1. General

In 2000, I,

- felt sick and tired over my music being massacred by Bose,
- felt disappointed with the bad musical properties of Pro Logic matrix surround,
- had stopped buying laserdisks, due to the high prices, nonexistent future, limited possibilities in comparison to DVD, and bad selection,
- was very interested in real, discrete, five-channel sound (originally "AC-3", later "Dolby Digital 5.1"),
- wanted to explore the possibilities of the new emerging media, DVD,
- and, finally, was economically healthy again :-).

A new generation was due. I sold the the Bose Acoustimass (I answered a BMW Newsgroup advert explicitly seeking Bose — so my consciousness is clean! I even gave the buyer the VS-100's free of charge.). Instead, I bought a set from Nubert, including active sub-woofer. The receiver was replaced by a Yamaha RX-V 596. The analog Pay-TV decoder was replaced by a digital receiver, a Nokia dBox II, running the (infamous) software from Betanova.

The tuner of the old video recorder had somehow developed severe picture disturbances (the customer service department at the store in Bremen where I originally bought it claimed it was in order, and recommended me to use a SCART-cable (i.e., problem is not the device, but that the customer is such a stupid sod, that connects a VCR and a TV with an HF-cable! For the record: written proofs of these statements exist, including a Panasonic service center report, in which the tuner is characterized as broken.) As replacement, the Philips VR-1100 (S-VHS ET) was selected. (It turned out to be somewhat loud, mechanically.)

As DVD-Player, the Pioneer DV 525 was selected, with a code free/Macrovision free modification (Macrovision removal was legal then, unfortunately not now) from Chiptech (out of business since 2006-12-31) was selected.

In this context, I attempted to modify the Laserdisk player (Sony MDP 650D) to be able to reproduce the AC-3 (nowadays "Dolby Digital") digital sound found on some laserdisks. During this work, I managed to break the laser disk player severely (a short-circuit on -12 Volts, that had no sensible fusing, and several secondary problems. Altogether a large number of components replaced.) Due to problems borrowing a sensible oscilloscope, and since the number of laserdisks with AC-3 sound I own amounts to exactly 6, and these titles are available as DVD anyhow, I abandoned that project.

The TV had to be repaired twice due to problems in the vertical deflection, and the vertical deflection circuit.

With the number of devices increasing, some sort of universal remote control was absolutely necessary. I have had somewhat mixed experiences with conventional remote

controls, so I bought the most advanced remote control around (in 2000) a Philips Pronto, the RU 890 model (now obsolete since a long time). See the section on home automation and remote control.

The Betanova software in the digital receiver was getting increasingly annoying. Fortunately, some smart people manage to "hack" the dBox II and port the Linux kernel to it, see my dBox page, and references therein. Since then, my involvement in this project has dramatically increased.

To reduce power consumption during standby, all devices but the dBox and the VCR (these may be recording) were connected to a master-slave power outlet box. Thus, in standby, (except for the VCR and dBox) only the Yamaha receiver (which is known to have low (< 1 Watt) standby power consumption) is connected to the power.

As a whole, I was very happy with this setup. In particular, the new loudspeakers brought life to my music collection. I was fascinated by the possibilities of the DVD's, and their comparatively moderate prices (compared to laser disks).

Due to the large number of devices (at times, also the tape deck and the CD-Player was connected) and the comparatively small number of inputs to the Yamaha, there was a need for quite a "creative" connection, see the wiring diagram.

2. Details Mk 2 (München 2000–2004)

- TV: Philips Matchline 28ML8805
- Loudspeakers:
 - Front Left/Right: NuBox 460 (2000-07-07)
 - Center: NuBox CS-3
 - Surround Left/Right: NuLine RS-3 (using Vogel's VLB 100 wall brackets)
 - Subwoofer: NuBox AW-850
- Laserdisk Player: Sony MDP 650D
- Yamaha RX-V 596 (Purchased 2000-07-15)
- Receiver Onkyo TX-SV9041
- Tape Deck: Marantz SD-53
- Pioneer DV 525 Code Free 2000-05-13
- S-VHS ET Recorder Philips VR-1100
- Nokia dBox II running the infamous Betanova software
- Timer: Pioneer DT-555 (only used as clock)
- Turntable Thorens TD150/II (purchased 1972), equipped with SME Model 3009 Series II Improved Arm and ADC XLM MKII stylus.
- "Telefunken" PALplus-decoder (manufactured by Nokia)
- Stax SR-X Mark 3 electrostatic earphones, with SRD-6 adapter. Purchased in 1982.
- Bass shakers: 2 Sinus live bass pump
- Remote Control: Philips Pronto RU 890
- TV-Live Light 13W

Wiring diagram (not showing loudspeaker or power cables).

2.1. Kitchen and Bedroom

Loudspeakers in the kitchen and the bedroom were powered from the old Onkyo receiver. A composite-video cable from the Yamaha to the bedroom allowed for certain video viewing in the bedroom, using a small Philips TV.

For the computer desk, a pair of JBL Control 1G speakers were used, connected as the secondary speaker pair of the Onkyo.

3. Photos (Munich 2004)



Continue to Mk 3. The big-screen period.