

Product Review

Classé CA-5200 Five-Channel Power Amplifier

Part II

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The Setup

I tested the CA-5200 in our main home theater lab, with a Denon DVD-5900 DVD Player, a Yamaha Universal DVD Player, a Theta Casablanca III SSP, Threshold ES-500 full range electrostatic speakers (ESLs) for the front left/right, and Final Acoustics ESLs for the center and rear left/right. The projector was a Panasonic PT-AE900U, and the screen was a Stewart Grayhawk. Cables were Nordost. The Casablanca is fully balanced and was connected to the CA-5200 using balanced XLR cables, with the front panel set to balanced for all channels.

In Use

As I mentioned previously, the CA-5200 needed a good half hour of warm-up before I could do any serious listening.

Although I have had more powerful amplifiers in the home theater lab, I have never had any that delivered more detail than the CA-5200. This was evident with the first movie I watched using it.



The latest *Star Wars* installment, *Revenge of the Sith*, has about 20 minutes of battle scenes at the beginning, and in among all the sounds of rockets and explosions, Anakin and Obi-Wan Kenobi are conversing over their radios while piloting their star cruisers. Using the CA-5200, I could easily

understand what they were saying. This means that there is not a lot of harmonic mush that would otherwise make voices unintelligible when in the middle of other loud noises.



Here is another example of sounds within sounds. Towards the end of the story, Anakin and Obi-Wan have a lightsaber battle on a planet that seems to be one big volcano eruption. When the sabers are swung or contact each other, they make a very distinctive sound, and in this case, they had to be distinguishable from the background roar, which they were. This may seem trivial, but it is not. It is very difficult to do.