



Marantz SR-5011

No segment of the broader home entertainment sector changes as frequently as the AV receiver category. As a result, it's also one of the most competitive sectors, with many brands releasing new models at least annually, if not even more frequently.

The Marantz SR-5011 may not be the marque's top model (that position will be taken by the upcoming SR-7011), but it bristles with features and capabilities that accurately reflect the state of the home theatre art.

The 7.2 receiver is not only compatible with the latest high-res surround sound formats, but also copes with object-based Dolby Atmos and DTS:X, which promise a more immersive, three-dimensional sonic delivery.

That aside, it's the extensive connectivity of the SR-5011 that impresses. In addition to Ethernet, it also offers 802.11 Wi-Fi in both the 2,4 and 5,0 GHz bands, and

will play material from devices via Apple's AirPlay, or the even more ubiquitous Bluetooth.

The SR-5011 is also UPnP compatible, allowing it to recognise and stream material stored on a networked-attached storage (NAS) device. A front-panel USB port allows material to be sourced from USB portable hard drives and flash drives, as well as iPods.

Marantz has ensured that the SR-5011 meets the growing demand for high-resolution audio by making the AVR compatible with lossless AIFF, WAV and FLAC files at resolutions of up to 192 kHz/24-bit. In addition, it will also play DSD64 and DSD128 files natively, but via the USB port or network sources only. Other supported audio formats include MP3, ALAC and WMA.

On the surround sound front, the SR-5011 not only offers compatibility with the latest Dolby TrueHD and DTS-HD Master Audio

multichannel formats, but as mentioned adds object-based Dolby Atmos and DTS:X.

The Marantz HDMI ports meet the latest HDMI 2.0 standard, which guarantees compatibility with 4K Ultra-HD video at 60 Hz, as well as 4:4:4 Pure Colour sub-sampling, and BT.2020 pass-through support, as well as 21:9 video and 3D.

HDCP 2.2 compatibility means the Marantz won't be caught out by next-generation 4K copy-protected material. In-built video processing allows the SR-5011 to upscale both SD and HD video to 4K Ultra-HD.

As you'll see from the vital stats panel, the Marantz has a rich offering of inputs and outputs, and still offers both component and composite video for use with legacy components. However, the eight HDMI inputs and two HDMI outputs should keep even power users happy.

If all of this sounds a little daunting, the next-generation Marantz AV control



app, available free for iOS and Android devices, makes access to most of the SR-5011's extensive features an intuitive and interactive affair.

Key to making the most of the AVR's performance potential is accurate speaker level and delay set-up, something which this Marantz is particularly good at. It uses Audyssey MultEQ XT software and a quick measuring sequence at multiple listening/viewing positions to calculate optimum settings.

It's as good as the latest Yamaha YPAO system, but not as accurate or impactful as the Anthem's ARC system – although, in all fairness, the latter is a far more complex and comprehensive solution that takes time and needs some IT and audio savvy.

The SR-5011 also offers on-the-fly equalisation and dynamic volume control, but I was happy to do without both systems, relying on Audyssey only for the initial set-up, after which I spent a little time checking and tweaking the suggested settings. To the MultEQ XT system's credit, the calculated settings were just about spot on.

The Marantz was used with a variety of speaker systems during its stay in our listening room, including the Sonus faber Principia combination reviewed elsewhere, as well as our regular Atlantic Technology sub/sat combination. An Optoma HD80 projected the visuals onto our 100-inch fixed screen.

I also used the Sonus faber 5s and our KEF R500 floorstanders to evaluate the SR-5011's stereo talents.

Delivering the source signal for movies was our Oppo BDP-95EU, while music files were drawn from a Synology NAS via the Marantz's Ethernet connection. I also used AirPlay to stream music from my iPhone 5S.

The initial focus was on movies, and I lined up a stack of Blu-rays for that very purpose. It's to the credit of the Marantz that I ended up spending much more time watching movies than I had anticipated – time flies when the SR-5011 is in charge!

I'm quite a fan of the gritty, irreverent James Bond that Daniel Craig has brought to the franchise, and *Quantum Of Solace*

(Blu-ray) has loads to offer as far as visual and sonic challenges are concerned.

The initial car chase scene, with Bond's Aston Martin being pursued by murderous thugs in a pair of black Alfa 159s while dealing with traffic, trucks, tunnels and the Italian *carabinieri*, is quite dizzying in its sonic and visual intensity.

The Marantz never lost its composure, confidently tracking the effects across and around the surround soundstage. The soundtrack adeptly follows the frenetic on-screen action, and the ability of the Marantz to deliver those effects with directional and dimensional accuracy – and real impact – greatly enhanced the movie experience.

I found myself wincing as the Aston scraped, scratched and skidded its way across the screen, bullets thwacking into the metalwork, and glass shattering in all directions. I was impressed by the sheer pace and impact of the Marantz, which added to the overall sense of realism and involvement.

The receiver not only remained true to the on-screen action, but also managed to capture and project dialogue with convincing clarity, regardless of the density of the soundtrack effects. Part of the credit here has to go to the Audyssey MultEQ XT set-up, which got the balance and levels just right. But the Marantz's penchant for precision and impetus also played a major role.

Swapping over to *Casino Royale* (Blu-ray) the SR-5011 continued to demonstrate its ability to keep up with the action in the high-energy sequence where Bond chases a suspected bomber through a construction site. The soundtrack is filled to the brim with often subtle sonic clues and effects to augment the action – footfalls, scuffles, exclamations – and the receiver captured and projected every moment.

Turning to musical fare, I took a listen to Jeff Beck's *Live At Ronnie Scott's* (Blu-ray) and enjoyed the way the Marantz really got to grips with the essence of the music. It managed to recreate the intimate ambience and atmosphere the club, with the audience sitting almost close enough to the artists to touch, and the camera

work capturing the interaction between band and audience.

The DTS-HD Master Audio mix is particularly impressive, doing full justice to Beck's virtuoso guitar work,

VITAL STATS

Channels.....	7.2
Power output	100 watts per channel
... (8 ohms, 20 Hz – 20 kHz, 0,08% THD)	
Surround sound formats..	Dolby TrueHD,
.....	Dolby Atmos, DTS-HD Master Audio,
.....	DTS:X
Frequency response	10 Hz – 100 kHz
.....	(+1, -3 dB)
Signal-to-noise ratio	100 dB
.....	(IHF A-weighted)
HDMI inputs/outputs.....	8/2
Video inputs/outputs....	2x component,
.....	2x composite / 1x component,
.....	1x composite
Audio inputs	4x stereo RCA,
.....	7.1 RCA set
Audio outputs.....	1x Zone 2 stereo RCA,
.....	7.2 RCA set
Digital inputs	2x coaxial RCA,
.....	2x Toslink optical
Connectivity	Ethernet, 802.11 Wi-Fi,
.....	AirPlay, Bluetooth. RS-232
Dimensions (WxHxD)	
.....	440 x 346 x 161 mm
Weight	10,0 kg

Verdict

Continues established tradition of believable, impactful surround sound and great stereo performance. Filled to the brim with features, too.

Price R19 990

Supplied by HFX Systems
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OUR RATING: 85/100





but never losing sight of the considerable contributions by Tal Wilkenfeld on bass, Jason Rebello and keyboards, and ace drummer Vinnie Colaiuta. Wilkenfeld's bass solo on *Cause We Ended As Lovers* was delivered with just the right mix of urge, potency and delicacy – simply wonderful.

Since we don't have any 4K capability in our review studio, all viewing was done at 1080p Full-HD, but even so, the visuals were crisply rendered. Colours were rich without becoming overly saturated, and even dimly lit scenes lacked nothing in depth and detail.

The SR-5011 is a more than viable stereo performer in systems that have to perform both movie and two-channel music duties. Running in pure stereo mode, Daft Punk's 'Get Life Back to Music' from the award-winning *Random Access Memories* (88,2/24 FLAC) was delivered with loads of punch and urge.

The Marantz easily got to grips with the thundering bottom end of the recording, and spread the electric guitars wide across the soundstage, with the vocals soaring

above the accompaniment. The staging was so dimensional that I had to make sure that the SR-5011 was indeed running in two-channel mode!

Nor was the receiver intimidated by the scale and densely packed layers of Rachmaninoff's *Symphony Dances* performed by the Minnesota Orchestra under Eiji Oue (Reference Recordings 176,4/24 WAV). It presented the music in all its glory, easily expressing the dynamic swings and the finely etched detail, and highlighting the individual elements, such as the beautiful bassoon solo in the first dance.

Again, the AVR's penchant for pace and precision stood it in good stead, allowing it to bring the full majesty and pathos of the music into the listening room.

Eva Taylor's swaggering, swinging rendition of 'Everybody Loves My Baby', on the *Opus DSD Showcase 3* (Opus DSD) not only proved that the Marantz can cope with DSD128 natively, but also that it could make the most of the finer resolution promised by the format.

The track sounded rich and vibrant, with Taylor's vocals taking centre stage,

but never dominating the finely rendered accompaniment, while also reflecting the space and ambience of the live venue.

Perhaps even more impressive was the way the Marantz was able to make lesser material sound good: Paradise Radio via the receiver's Internet Radio interface sounded spacious and detailed, with excellent tonal range and a real sense of dimension – not bad for MP3 source material!

And that's perhaps what makes the Marantz stand out from the AVR crowd. It's compelling and entertaining when rendering movies in full high-res digital surround, but it applies its talents for momentum, precision and incisive imaging in the two-channel environment with equal ease, and always seems to extract the best from the source material it's offered.

Add the versatility of its full-house feature set, the ease of set-up offered by the Audyssey MultEQ XT calibration system, and a great app that puts all those features at the user's finger tips, and the SR-5011 emerges as one of the top choices in its category.

Deon Schoeman

