



D1



P5

“This is audio at its finest

... Run, don't walk to your nearest Anthem Dealer.”



BY GARY ALTUNIAN

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To say, as Anthem does in its literature, that the Statement D1 and P5 can “recreate the passion a music lover experiences when attending a live musical performance, or the thrilling sound a movie buff experiences in the very best movie theaters” is an understatement. The Anthem Statement D1 preamp/processor/tuner and P5 multi-channel power amplifier are the best home-theater components I have heard in my system, and it was a joy to review them.

The new Anthem Statement D1 is an extremely sophisticated controller with state-of-the-art features, exceptional control capabilities, massive connectivity, and excellent sound quality. It could be used as the centerpiece of a high-end two-channel system or as the control center of a high-end home-theater system. With three-zone, multi-source capability, it could also be the hub of a flexible audio/video distribution system. Its features and

performance justify its lofty price tag, yet it is relatively simple to operate, even without a thorough reading of the owner's manual.

STATEMENT D1 CONTROLLER

The Statement D1 is a 7.1-channel controller with an extensive selection of surround-sound processing modes, including Anthem Logic-Music, which derives 6.1 channels from two-channel music sources, and AnthemLogic-Cinema, which derives 7.1 channels from two-channel movies. For multichannel sources there are Dolby Digital EX, DTS-ES, THX Ultra 2, and THX Surround EX modes. I could list all of the other modes, but take it from me the D1 includes every surround-sound you will ever need or want—even Mono Academy, which creates a sound quality closer to the original EQ on movies with monaural soundtracks made from the 1930s to 1960s. In addition, the Anthem is “future-proof” because its internal software is upgradeable

via the rear panel RS-232 port. Upgrades, when necessary, are available from your dealer or as downloads from the Anthem Web site via your computer's serial port. New versions of the operating manual are also available on the Anthem Web site. (You can identify the software version you're using by pressing the STATUS button on the front panel or the remote control.)

Dual Motorola DSP-56367 engines power the Anthem's processing. These 24-bit devices are among the most powerful DSP chips available today, complete with full bass-management capabilities and the extraordinary processing power of 150 million instructions per second. The D1 also includes an upsampling circuit that converts the sample rate of all incoming digital signals to 192 kHz, including Dolby Digital and DTS programs.

“... the best home-theater components I have heard in my system ... The D1 preamp exhibits such incredible clarity, detail, openness, and presence ... The P5 is the “poster child” for high-current amplifiers ... complements the performance of the D1 in every way ... my system sounded exceptional.”

Construction quality is excellent, with a 3/8"-thick aluminum front panel. The steel chassis is covered in finely machined aluminum with rounded corners. It has a solid feel and weighs in at 24.3 pounds. The front panel is busy but has a logical layout that is easy to understand. There are no AC outlets on the rear panel to prevent any interference from line voltage and Anthem specifically recommends against using a power-line conditioner because the D1's power supply has built-in voltage regulation and power-line filtering. The Statement D1 runs very warm, so it's important not to place it in a rack or on a shelf without adequate ventilation, even though there are optional rackmount adapters available.

The rear panel is a cable salesman's dream. This is a component that deserves the very best interconnect cables and if you make every connection be prepared for sticker shock. Although the rear panel is crowded, it is well organized and clearly labeled with inputs on a black background and outputs on a white background. There are enough audio and video connections for even the most complex A/V systems. All inputs can be re-named and configured according to your preferences.

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The best components include connections for balanced line XLR cables, and the Anthem is no exception. Balanced cables are especially important for long distance runs because they are less susceptible to noise and hum than single-ended RCA cables. The companion Anthem P5 multichannel amplifier has complementary balanced line and single-ended RCA inputs.

The Statement D1 has four component-video inputs and two component video outputs, each with a frequency bandwidth of 100 MHz for the luminance (Y) channel throughout the entire circuit, so it can handle a full 1080p HD signal. The chrominance channels are rated at a bandwidth of 90 MHz (Pr/Cr) and 80 MHz (Pb/Cb) respectively. There are seven S-video and composite inputs with a bandwidth of 70 MHz, and five S-video and composite-video outputs. All video switching circuitry is isolated and independent from other circuits to prevent signal interference. This is a hefty complement of connection options, but note that the D1 doesn't yet offer DVI switching. (A hardware upgrade is planned for later this year that will include a FireWire input for multichannel SACD and DVD-A as well as four HDMI inputs and one HDMI output.)

The Anthem Statement D1 is relatively easy to operate and navigate using the Master Control Knob (MCK), which controls volume and several other functions of the D1. When a function is selected, such as Surround Mode, the MCK is then used to scroll through the available options. Other functions, such as speaker levels, tone controls, tuner controls, and more are also controlled by the MCK. The blue fluorescent display on the front panel changes to show the current function and then reverts to a volume control after about three seconds. The same functions can be operated from the remote control, and the front-panel display is easily viewed from a distance.

SECOND OPINION

I've been using the D1 and P5 in my system for about two months, and can second Gary's enthusiasm for these products. The D1 is extremely sophisticated and flexible, and its sound quality is first-rate. I don't know if it's the intrinsic quality of the D1 or the upsampling of Dolby Digital and DTS signals, but I heard a remarkable clarity and resolution on film soundtracks—in fact, the best I've heard in my system. The D1 is also transparent enough to use for music; I've been running the six analog outputs from a Sony SCD-9000ES SACD player through the D1 with superb results on multi-channel music. Finally, the D1's set-up options and user interface are exceptional. Although this level of sophistication necessitates complexity, the set-up process was remarkably painless.

– Robert Harley

Although the D1 is easy to connect and use right out of the carton, I recommend reading and following the set-up instructions in the operating manual. When properly configured using the extensive set-up menus, it will deliver the maximum performance and flexibility. In addition to the standard adjustments that you would expect, such as speaker size, distance, and level, the Statement D1 also has on/off timers for all three zones with pre-set controls for volume levels and sources. There are independent speaker configurations for music and cinema sources, with adjustable crossovers for each channel that allow you to tailor crossover frequencies more precisely to best suit the low-frequency characteristics of your speakers. The advanced bass-management controls enable you to optimize sound for the digital inputs and for the 6-channel analog inputs. In addition, a Room Resonance Filter helps you identify and correct resonant peaks in your listening room. It takes some time to adjust, but it is easy to use and helps to eliminate exaggerated, boomy bass.

You can change the name of, assign digital and component-video inputs to, or select speaker configuration (music or cinema), adjust equalization and pre-select a listening mode (AnthemLogic, Dolby Digital, DTS, etc.) and THX preference, such as THX Cinema or MusicMode, for each source. Input levels for all sources can be adjusted with the help of a frontpanel VU meter, so there are no dramatic changes in volume as you switch among inputs. One of the D1's most useful features is Audio Group Delay, which delays the sound from all channels equally. This is essential if you're using a video projector or monitor with lots of processing that delays the video signal enough to put it out of sync with the audio.

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There are many more adjustments in the D1, too many to mention here. Suffice it to say that after I got done with the set-up menus the Statement D1 was perfectly customized for my system and listening preferences. The crossover frequencies and subwoofer adjustments produced a particularly noticeable refinement in sound quality. You may want a professional installer to configure the system for you or, if you're a do-it-yourselfer, you can save your settings (with password protection), reload factory default settings, or save your installer's settings in separate files.

The tremendous flexibility of this component makes it ideal for a custom-installation system. As previously mentioned the D1 is a three-zone preamplifier with audio and video outputs to all zones. Zone 2 audio outputs are either single-ended RCA or balanced line analog, and Zone 3 audio is single-ended RCA out. Both remote zones have composite and S-video outputs. The D1 has three 12-volt triggers, two with 50 mA and one with 200 mA current output, for activating various other components. The triggers can also be assigned to specific inputs such as SAT or DVD. There are three IR inputs powered by a built-in 12-volt power supply and two IR outputs for controlling source components.

“I listened to many CDs that I haven't heard in a long time, and it was as if I had never played them ... There was so much detail ... excellent audio performance.”

The Statement D1 is compatible with Crestron and AMX control systems via the RS-232 interface, and with an optional module can be used with Phastlink control products. There are provisions for a FireWire interface card in the future. (Some sources, such as DVD players, permit a digital connection to a preamp or receiver via FireWire. The D1 can be custom-programmed with a PC or Macintosh via the RS-232 interface. By downloading the utility software from the Anthem Web site you can select and save most system settings for backup protection or for copying system settings from one D1 to another. The D1's ability to expand the hardware and update the software is an important feature in today's world of changing standards. The universal/learning remote control is easy to use, though not as intuitive as the front-panel controls. It takes practice to easily navigate the menus and controls using the remote. The operating manual includes remote control codes for controlling other manufacturers' components that can be programmed into the D1.

STATEMENT P5 POWER AMPLIFIER

The Anthem Statement P5 is the five-channel companion power amplifier to the Statement D1, and it's a beast! The illustration inside the box shows two stick people unpacking the amp. Believe it. It is bulky and heavy at 130 pounds, and to unpack,

move, and set it up you're gonna need help. (My neighbor thinks I'm nuts — “No amplifier should be this heavy!” he said.) Make sure you place it where you want it before your neighbor leaves. Like the D1, the P5 also needs adequate ventilation, and if it is installed with optional rack-mounts, the rack needs to be as sturdy as the amplifier. This is a massive component whose size and weight portend its capabilities. It draws enough electrical current to require two AC cords, which should not be connected to the same circuit to prevent overload. I can only imagine my electricity bill next month.

“... performance as a home theater system was equally impressive ... Whether I was listening to multichannel music or movies the experience was outstanding ... exceptional soundfield characteristics in all surround modes ... pinpoint placement of effects ... naturally intelligible dialogue.”

With the P5, the term five-channel power amplifier is not really accurate. It is actually five monoblock power amplifiers in one chassis. There are no shared power supplies, as each channel has its own toroidal transformer resulting in no common audio path between channels, completely eliminating crosstalk. (No wonder it weighs so much!) The Statement P5 is the “poster child” for high-current amplifiers, with fourteen bipolar output transistors per channel, which vastly increase the available power for musical crescendos, particularly with current-hungry loudspeakers.

Like the D1 the P5 offers balanced (XLR) and single-ended (RCA) line level connections. Power can be turned on manually, or triggered when the D1 is turned on, or via an auto-power option, which turns the amp on when it senses an audio signal. In this last mode the amp turns off after a short period of receiving no signal.

The P5's specs are impeccable. It outputs 325 watts per channel, one or all channels driven, and I believe it. Harmonic distortion is spec'd at almost immeasurable 0.0007%, and intermodulation distortion is said to be 0.00019%. Damping factor, a good measure of speaker control, is 600, and the slew rate (a specification of amp speed) is 40 V/ps. The signal to noise ratio is 125 dB, and crosstalk between any two channels is an incredible -140 dB. Anthem claims a power bandwidth from 10 Hz to 150 kHz. But specs are only on paper—the most important spec, how it sounds, is measured by listening.

LISTENING EVALUATION

The goal of all high-end components is to eliminate the sense of reproduction and recreate the musical performance or movie experience in your listening room. The Anthem Statement D1 and P5 meet these goals.

I particularly appreciated the Statement D1 for its elaborate set-up and control capabilities, in addition to its sound quality. After completing setup using the operating manual, which is very well written, my system sounded exceptional. Initially I listened to the Anthem components with my reference speakers, whose sound qualities I know well. The Anthem pair brought out

the best in these vintage loudspeakers. As a finely tuned performance car needs a good driver, a well-designed speaker needs a good controller and amp, and the D1 and P5 met the challenge.

“The P5 complements the performance of the D1 in every respect ... exceptional control over the speakers ... tight, well-defined, and deep bass response ... very authoritative ... effortless dynamics ... I’m sure it never even broke a sweat.”

The D1 preamp exhibits such incredible clarity, detail, openness, and presence that I found it difficult to stop listening and start writing this review. Its soundstage is virtually three-dimensional, with precise imaging. Mids and highs sounded clean and articulate, never harsh or strident. Holly Cole’s vocals in “God Will” were not reproduced; they were recreated in my listening room, as if I had requested a private performance. Every nuance of Rod Stewart’s raspy voice was evident in *The Great American Songbook*. I listened to many CDs that I haven’t heard in a long time, and it was as if I had never played them. There was so much detail that an experienced audio engineer could probably identify the microphone used in the recordings.

Most of my listening was in two channel or in Anthem-Logic Music mode, which creates a pleasant surround ambience without exaggeration or over-emphasis in the rear channels. To preserve imaging and soundstaging this mode does not use the center channel.

The Anthems’ performance as a home-theater system was equally impressive. Whether I was listening to multichannel music or movies the experience was outstanding. The D1 and P5 reproduce exceptional soundfield characteristics in all surround modes with pinpoint placement of effects and natural intelligible dialogue.

I have only two criticisms of the D1 controller. First, there is no phono input. If you listen to LPs, you will need an outboard phono preamplifier. It seems to me that the potential buyer for this high-end component would be interested in listening to vinyl. Second, its tuner performance is only mediocre, depending on atmospheric conditions. I often listen to AM talk radio or FM music while writing, and although I live in a rural area, my midline A/V receiver did a better job of receiving signals than the Anthem. But, so what! The Statement D1 more than compensates for this weakness with excellent audio performance.

Although not a criticism, the next generation of the Statement D1 should include an automatic room equalization feature to provide the best sound for the acoustics in the listening room.

The P5 amplifier complements the performance of the D1 in every respect. It exerted exceptional control over the speakers, producing tight, well-defined, and deep bass response—no sub required. I would describe it as very authoritative, always in control of the speakers with effortless dynamics. I’m sure it never even broke a sweat. Great electronics bring out the best in a loudspeaker. I guess I can overlook its excessive mass and weight because of its sound. However, one would think that Anthem could squeeze two additional channels into the P5 (to

complement the D1’s seven channel capabilities). Never mind, I don’t have a forklift. To provide seven channels you will need to acquire an Anthem Statement A2 or P2 two-channel amplifier.

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After auditioning the D1 and P5 with my reference speakers, I connected the Paradigm Reference Studio 100 speakers, which are manufactured by the same parent company. Suffice it to say that they are excellent loudspeakers, worthy of consideration as replacements for my reference speakers. (See the Studio 100 review in the review section of the Paradigm website at www.paradigm.com).

SUMMARY

There are many excellent, less expensive audio components that will provide ninety percent of the sonic performance of the Anthem Statement D1 and P5. But that last ten percent is worth every hard-earned dollar you’ll spend. This is audio at its finest, and if you’re thinking about investing in audio components that will last a long time and provide exceptional performance, you’ve arrived. Run, don’t walk to your nearest Anthem dealer. I don’t often consider purchasing review components, but this time I might make an exception. Meanwhile, I have to call my neighbor to help me re-pack the P5.