The AM Stereo Thread and the players.

Discussion in 'Chat Area' started by Mister X, Feb 9, 2021.

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Mister X
Moderator
Staff Member

Messages:	19,427
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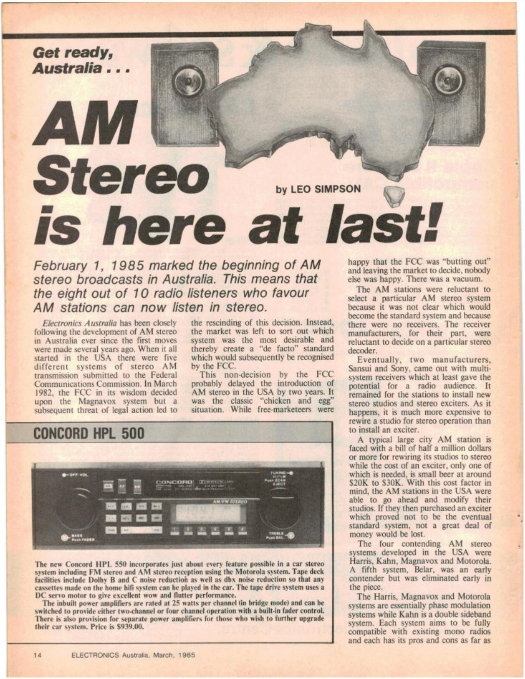
I've found some information over the years for AM stereo, a format I though would take over the world in the 80's. The only exposure I had to it was my buddies Pontiac Fiero had a cassette deck with AM Stereo and we had two or three stations broadcasting it at the time. I was hoping to find a Sony Reciever at some point over the last few years but I still haven't found one to try out the once promising format.

Here's some articles, information and photos, feel free to add anything. I put the thread here because it looked like Sony was partnering with broadcasters to get out portable models to expand the listening base.

Here's a great article on AM Stereo with equipment from Electronics Australia 1985



Get ready, Australia . . .

AM Stereo is here at last!

by LEO SIMPSON

February 1, 1985 marked the beginning of AM stereo broadcasts in Australia. This means that the eight out of 10 radio listeners who favour AM stations can now listen in stereo.

Electronics Australia has been closely following the development of AM stereo in Australia ever since the first moves were made several years ago. When it all started in the USA there were five different systems of stereo AM transmission submitted to the Federal Communications Commission. In March 1982, the FCC in its wisdom decided upon the Magnavox system but a subsequent threat of legal action led to the rescinding of this decision. Instead, the market was left to sort out which system was the most desirable and thereby create a "de facto" standard which would subsequently be recognised by the FCC.

This non-decision by the FCC probably delayed the introduction of AM stereo in the USA by two years. It was the classic "chicken and egg" situation. While free-marketeers were happy that the FCC was "butting out" and leaving the market to decide, nobody else was happy. There was a vacuum.

The AM stations were reluctant to select a particular AM stereo system because it was not clear which would become the standard system and because there were no receivers. The receiver manufacturers, for their part, were reluctant to decide on a particular stereo decoder.

Eventually, two manufacturers, Sansui and Sony, came out with multi-system receivers which at least gave the potential for a radio audience. It remained for the stations to install new stereo studios and stereo exciters. As it happens, it is much more expensive to rewire a studio for stereo operation than to install an exciter.

A typical large city AM station is faced with a bill of half a million dollars or more for rewiring its studios to stereo while the cost of an exciter, only one of which is needed, is small beer at around $20K to $30K. With this cost factor in mind, the AM stations in the USA were able to go ahead and modify their studios. If they then purchased an exciter which proved not to be the eventual standard system, not a great deal of money would be lost.

The four contending AM stereo systems developed in the USA were Harris, Kahn, Magnavox and Motorola. A fifth system, Belar, was an early contender but was eliminated early in the piece.

The Harris, Magnavox and Motorola systems are essentially phase modulation systems while Kahn is a double sideband system. Each system aims to be fully compatible with existing mono radios and each has its pros and cons as far as

CONCORD HPL 500

The new Concord HPL 550 incorporates just about every feature possible in a car stereo system including FM stereo and AM stereo reception using the Motorola system. Tape deck facilities include Dolby B and C noise reduction as well as dbx noise reduction so that any cassettes made on the home hifi system can be played in the car. The tape drive system uses a DC servo motor to give excellent wow and flutter performance.

The inbuilt power amplifiers are rated at 25 watts per channel (in bridge mode) and can be switched to provide either two-channel or four channel operation with a built-in fader control. There is also provision for separate power amplifiers for those who wish to further upgrade their car system. Price is $939.00.

SONY CATERS FOR PERSONAL AM STEREO

AM STEREO
SONY
FM·AM STEREO
WALKMAN

Sony has two portable receivers both of which are compatible with all four broadcasting systems. Both also give FM stereo reception. The Sony SRF-A200 is a miniature stereo receiver purely which can run from internal batteries or a mains plugpack adapter. For headphone listening, the cord functions as an FM antenna. Dimensions are 228 × 100 × 38.5mm and mass is 620g. Recommended retail price is $119.00. Alternatively, for purely personal stereo listening there is the Sony SRF-A10 Walkman which is supplied with headphones. Recommended retail price is $99.00.

separation between channels, harmonic distortion and other performance parameters are concerned.

The turning point

The breakthrough for Motorola came in April 1983. The Delco division of General Motors opted for the Motorola system for its original equipment radios fitted to GM cars. It was announced that 1984 Buick cars would be fitted with a Delco radio having the Motorola decoder. This was to be a potent selling point for Motorola.

By early 1984 Motorola was leading the race for numbers of exciters sold to AM stations but Harris and Kahn were very close behind. Magnavox, the system initially favoured by the FCC, was virtually out of the race.

Another breakthrough came in April 1984 with the announcement that Pioneer Electronics (USA) Inc would also adopt the Motorola system. As one of the leading manufacturers of car radios in that country, Pioneer was also living up to its name. Eventually Chrysler, Ford, Nissan and a whole raft of electronics manufacturers got on the bandwagon and Motorola was looking very strong.

The Australian situation

Australia faced virtually the same situation as the USA. We had the same four contending systems but we did not have same free marketplace. The Department of Communications licensed some 14 stations for trials with the four systems. The results were not conclusive as far as establishing a preferred system was concerned. Then the lobbying began. It seemed as though each station was keen to see its own exciter brand as the preferred system. Some electronics manufacturers lobbied for a single system while others lobbied for a multiple system.

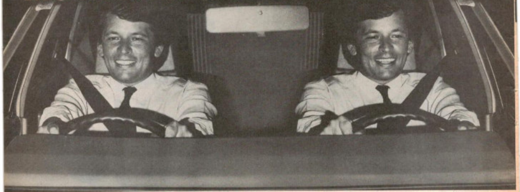
On the one hand it was argued that we should have a multiple system because we did not know which way the USA would eventually go. On the other hand, a single system would be desirable because it would be simpler to manufacture and cause less confusion to the listening public.

AWA CLARION 990E

990E
6 1170
AM
BASS
TREBLE

The 990E is the top of the AWA Clarion line with inbuilt Motorola AM stereo decoding as well as conventional FM stereo operation. The 990E incorporates an auto reversing cassette player with Dolby B noise reduction, metal tape switch and permalloy playback head. The fully synthesised tuner employs a red LED digital readout which also incorporates a quartz crystal clock. There are 12 station presets (6 AM, 6 FM), automatic station seeking, automatic local/DX switching, fine-tuning, mono-stereo switch, loudness switch, bass and treble controls, a fader for front/rear speaker balance and 25 watts per channel output. AWA state that the 990E has been specifically designed for Australia and was extensively field-tested in Sydney and Melbourne before production began. The unit is made in Japan. Recommended retail price is $620.00 but the expected selling price is around $550.00

NOW PIONEER PUTS TWICE AS MUCH STEREO FUN IN YOUR CAR.



Now with AM Stereo here, Pioneer puts twice as much stereo fun in your car with the launch of the KEA 433AM Electronic Tune AM/FM stations to the classics. From talk-back radio to sports broadcasts, everything will sound twice as good because it's in stereo.

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KEA 433AM lets you listen to the widest range of AM and FM stations in brilliant stereo sound.

From the top rock and roll

And like all Pioneer products the advanced features of the KEA 433AM are equally brilliant.

From AM/FM stereo, electronic station preset and seek, lock in fast forward and rewind, auto tape replay and metal tape facility to a built-in fader system for 4 speaker control.

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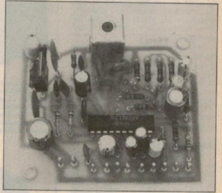
AM Stereo in Australia

EA'S OWN AM STEREO DECODER KIT



This decoder kit was described in the October 1984 issue and used the Motorola MC13020P in the recommended circuit. We showed how to add it to two Playmaster tuners and also gave details of a 9kHz whistle filter, two of which are required for a wideband stereo AM tuner. Kits for this decoder are available from all Jaycar stores at $19.95.

Electronics Australia weighed into the debate in October 1983 and June 1984. On both occasions we strongly recommended that a single system be chosen while not actually stating a preference for any.

By July 1984 it was becoming abundantly clear that the Motorola system was winning the battle. It led with numbers of exciters installed and also had the advantage that Motorola also produced an integrated circuit decoder. (National Semiconductor and Philips produced decoder ICs for the Magnavox system but that hardly mattered since Magnavox lost out in the sales war).

In August 1984 we took a punt on the Motorola system in deciding to publish a decoder in the October 1984 issue. We thought it was a winner and hoped that the Department of Communications would see it that way too. As events turned out, we were right, as the announcement by the Minister for Communications, Mr Duffy, in that month subsequently proved.

Since then there has been a flurry of activity at the AM stations to rewire studios, install exciters and tune antenna systems. Two models of exciters have been sold in Australia. One is made by Motorola and sold in Australia by Radio Manufacturing Engineers Pty Ltd (see page 23). Another is made by Delta under licence to Motorola (see page 18).

And just recently Harris Communications (Australia) Pty Ltd announced that they will be marketing an AM stereo exciter made under licence to Motorola.

While it has been a relatively(?)

AM STEREO

CONCORD
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SANSUI
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straightforward matter for AM stations to install new exciters and get on with the expensive process of upgrading studios, it has not been so easy for manufacturers of the receiving equipment.

Even those manufacturers who had models on sale in the USA have not had it easy since new equipment has had to be designed to suit the Australian market and the lead times for new manufacture are quite long. For this reason very few brands of AM stereo equipment were actually on sale at February 1. By the time you read this all the models shown in these pages should be on sale.

Australian standards

Well what is so different about AM stereo standards in Australia? Two points are substantially different. The first is the nominal spacing of AM stations. In the USA it is 10kHz but in Australia it is 9kHz, the same as in most of the rest of the world.

Back in the days when radios were continuously tuned this would not matter mch but for hifi AM tuners it is different. Most employ synthesised tuning giving the 10kHz spacing automatically for the USA market. For Australia, a separate model has to be designed, giving the correct 9kHz spacing and frequency coverage.

Hifi AM tuners also require a whistle filter to prevent 9kHz beats becoming audible during night-time listening. Two filters, one in each audio channel, are necessary for stereo operation. Again, a hifi tuner designed for the USA with

EUROVOX CAR STEREO

Eurovox have two car stereo players with the Motorola AM stereo system. Above is the MCC 2330R long range AM/FM stereo radio with auto reversing cassette player, metal tape capability, 12 programmable memories (6 AM, 6 FM), night illumination, fully synthesised operation with LED digital display, automatic station seeking, up/down fine tuning, automatic stereo/mono blending for noise reduction, bass and treble controls and loudness switch and two-week memory retention when the car battery is disconnected. Power output is 7 watts per channel. Price of the MCC 2300R is $549.00.

Top of the Eurovox line is the MCC 2301R. This has all the features of the above model but includes Dolby B noise reduction, automatic program search and joystick fader control for four speaker operation. There are four inbuilt power amplifiers rated at 7 watts each. The unit can be connected to the Eurovox MO-4200 (4 × 40 watts) amplifier or the MO-480 (4 × 20 watts) amplifier. Price of the MCC 2301 is $689.00. By way of interest, Eurovox is an Australian company. Their car stereo equipment is designed in Australia and manufactured in Japan.

WELCOME TO AM STEREO!

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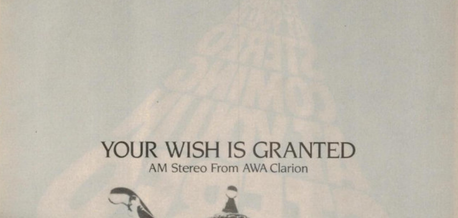

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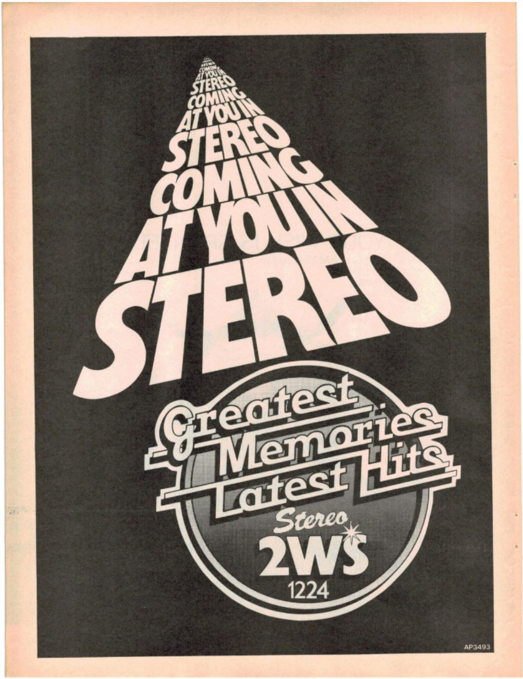
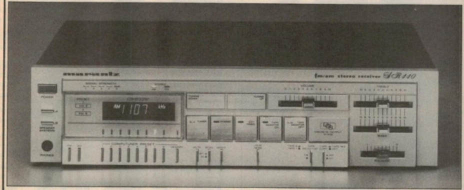


MARANTZ SR-440



The Marantz SR-440 is the first stereo AM/FM stereo receiver available in Australia to be fitted with the Motorola stereo decoder. It incorporates all the expected features of a fully synthesised tuner with a total of 16 station presets (8 AM, 8 FM). Rated power output is 38 watts per channel with both channels driven. Rated harmonic distortion is .02%. Recommended retail price is $499.00.

10kHz whistle filters would be useless in this country.

The second point is that American car radios are much bulkier than the DIN size units sold on the Australian market. It would be no simple matter redesigning an American car radio to suit our market.

Performance

What sort of performance can we expect from the new AM stereo equipment? Will it be every bit as good as we have come to expect with FM stereo broadcasts? There are quite a few answers to those questions.

Initially, the car radio listener is seen as the major market for the AM stations. They are looking to regain a substantial portion of audience lost to the FM stations. In this strategy they are hoping to benefit by two drawbacks of FM reception in cars: multipath reception and "picket-fencing".

Multipath reception

This name is given to the unpleasant effect of several signals arriving via different paths to the car radio antenna. Since the vertical whip antenna used by most car radios is essentially omnidirectional, it is completely open to receive signals from any direction; it is unable to discriminate between the direct signal from the transmitter and reflected signals from buildings, hills and so on.

Multipath reception problems are worse for those stations which use horizontal polarisation. The pickup of the vertical whip antenna is bound to be poor in these cases and multipath is rife. Most commercial FM stations use mixed polarisation which gives better results with car radios while still giving good results with horizontally polarised domestic antennas which have the virtue of some discrimination against automobile ignition noise. Many of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's FM stations use horizontal polarisation. This means that car radios get worse reception from those ABC stations than they do from the other FM stations.

Picket-fencing

If multipath reception was not enough of a problem there is also the problem of reception when driving through weak signal areas. As the car radio antenna passes through peaks and troughs of signals the recovered audio signal fluctuates accordingly. This leads to a

PIONEER KE-433AM

Pioneer was the first to have a stereo AM/FM car radio on the market in Australia incorporating the Motorola decoder. The KE-433AM incorporates many of the features of more expensive brands at a very reasonable price. At the time this issue went to press, this model was the cheapest car radio on the market with AM stereo included. The KE-433AM is a fully synthesised tuner with liquid crystel readout and fully illuminated controls. Features include a wide/narrow switch for best AM reception, local/DX switch, stereo/mono switch, fader control for 4-speaker operation, auto station seeking, programmable memory (6 AM, 6 FM) and metal tape switch. Recommended retail price is $349.00.

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rapid fluttering effect in the sound which is known as the "picket fence" effect.

There is a technical solution to multipath reception and picket fencing known as "diversity tuning". This system employs a receiver with two front-ends and a microprocessor to switch between the signals from each. The result is a great improvement on normal car radio reception. (See *Electronics Australia*, November 1984, page 14.)

Car radio reception of AM stereo broadcasts does not suffer from the above effects but it is still subject to the normal reception characteristics of AM.

Depending on the AGC characteristics of the receiver, fading of signals will still occur as the car passes through tunnels or under bridges and the reception area for AM stereo is slightly less than for AM mono reception. In weak signal areas car radios will switch automatically (or can be switched manually) from stereo to mono, as they already do for FM reception.

AM stereo reception will also be subject to the usual drawbacks of AM transmissions such as susceptibility to interference from mains-borne interference and lighting.

Even so, with careful design there is no reason why AM stereo tuners cannot be made to perform considerably better than the woeful standard we have come to expect from units made overseas.

Technical description

This article would not be complete without a brief technical description of how the Motorola C-QUAM system works. C-QUAM is an acronym for Compatible Quadrature Amplitude Modulation but while that is a fancy sounding technical term it is certainly

So where does the term "quadrature" come into the picture? Another way of regarding the Motorola system is as two RF carriers separated by a phase angle of 90° (here's where the quadrature term comes from). One carrier is amplitude modulated while the other is phase modulated. Each modulation process results in its own set of sidebands.

What the Motorola system does is suppress the phase-modulated carrier but transmit its sidebands along with the amplitude modulated carrier. Then the receiver reconstitutes the suppressed carrier with a phase-locked loop which again has a fixed phase relationship to the incoming amplitude modulated carrier.

(More details of the AM stereo decoding process were given in the October 1984 issue of *Electronics Australia.*)

Requirements of the receiver

Many existing AM tuners are simply not good enough to enable the Motorola C-QUAM system to work well. Because the system entails phase modulation and

When you go AM stereo, you'll want experience on your side.

MOTOROLA INC.

not self-explanatory.

Let's start with amplitude modulation which is the standard transmission mode. Here the radio frequency carrier is varied in amplitude by the audio signal. This is the system used for more than 60 years by broadcast stations. The signal can be picked up and detected by a very simple receiving circuit, such as the crystal set.

The Motorola system uses two systems of modulation. The amplitude modulation just mentioned carries the compatible mono signal (left plus right channel) while the difference signal (left minus right) is broadcast as phase modulation of the carrier.

Phase modulation is more easily understood as a mild form of frequency modulation. In other words, the carrier frequency is deviated above and below the nominal value by the audio modulating signal.

In the new world of AM Stereo, one company is an 'old hand'. R.M.E. have already equipped many Australian stations with Motorola C-QUAM AM Stereo systems.

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General Electronic Developments (Sales) Pty Ltd have available a broadcast standard monitor receiver, the type 112MS. This is a crystal-controlled 6-channel unit with the preset frequencies locally or remotely selectable. Sensitivity of the unit is quoted at 200μV and signal-to-noise ratio is better than 55dB at 1mV and 30% modulation. Switchable 9kHz notch filters and 6kHz low pass filters are included.

GED also have a stereo decoder board available using the Motorola C-QUAM decoder IC and incorporating low pass and notch filters. Prices on both these units can be obtained from GED, PO Box 376, Ryde, NSW 2112. Phone (02) 816 2211.

demodulation it is most important that the tuner be very stable. Not only does this mean the local oscillator must be very stable but the entire front-end bandpass characteristics must also be very stable.

Any drift in the local oscillator or the tuner's bandpass characteristics will result in the addition of "incidental phase modulation" to the signal and this will result in audible distortion. For the same reason, the tuner's bandpass characteristic above and below the carrier centre frequency must be symmetrical otherwise the upper sidebands will encounter a different response to the lower sidebands. Again the net result of this is incidental phase modulation or IPM. This also means that for best performance the tuner must always be tuned exactly to the centre of the channel.

Because of the two requirements of precise tuning and low drift, the majority of AM stereo tuners can be expected to be fully synthesised designs. These automatically give precise tuning and low drift but even synthesiser circuits can be a source of IPM.

Because a phase lock loop (an integral part of any synthesiser design) circuit involves an error detection process, the reconstituted carrier produced by the PLL can "hunt" above and below the desired frequency. This hunting again amounts to an extraneous phase modulation which will result in audible distortion. Careful filtering of the PLL error signal is essential.

For much the same reasons, the whole tuner must not be microphonic. Any mechanical variation of oscillator frequency or bandpass characteristics due to chassis distortion or vibration will again result in IPM.

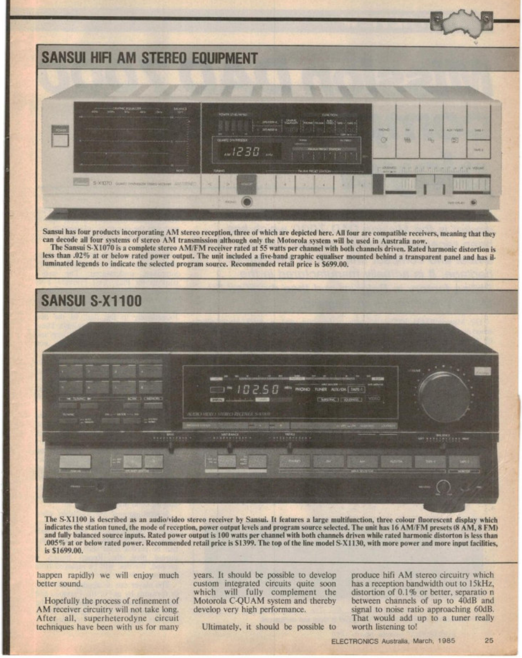
It is also desirable that the tuner have a wide (ie, more than several kilohertz) IF bandwidth to give the best recovered stereo separation. Wide bandwidth is also desirable to give better frequency response!

SANSUI CX-990

Sansui's CX-990 is a deluxe car stereo radio/cassette player. It has a computer logic tape transport, auto reverse, amorphous playback head, Dolby B and C noise reduction, automatic program search, intro scan (each tape item is sampled for 10 seconds) 24 station presets (6 × 3 FM plus 6 AM), automatic station seeking, preamp outputs, LED level meters and input/output terminals for a graphic equaliser. Recommended retail price is $689.00

Forecast

One point is clear. AM stereo will mean much better sound quality from that medium. When AM stereo tuners and receivers are refined to the same degree as FM tuners are (and this should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102.50
S-X1070

SANSUI HIFI AM STEREO EQUIPMENT

Sansui has four products incorporating AM stereo reception, three of which are depicted here. All four are compatible receivers, meaning that they can decode all four systems of stereo AM transmission although only the Motorola system will be used in Australia now.

The Sansui S-X1070 is a complete stereo AM/FM receiver rated at 55 watts per channel with both channels driven. Rated harmonic distortion is less than .02% at or below rated power output. The unit included a five-band graphic equaliser mounted behind a transparent panel and has illuminated legends to indicate the selected program source. Recommended retail price is $699.00.

SANSUI S-X1100

The S-X1100 is described as an audio/video stereo receiver by Sansui. It features a large multifunction, three colour fluorescent display which indicates the station tuned, the mode of reception, power output levels and program source selected. The unit has 16 AM/FM presets (8 AM, 8 FM) and fully balanced source inputs. Rated power output is 100 watts per channel with both channels driven while rated harmonic distorton is less than .005% at or below rated power. Recommended retail price is $1399. The top of the line model S-X1130, with more power and more input facilities, is $1699.00.

happen rapidly) we will enjoy much better sound.

Hopefully the process of refinement of AM receiver circuitry will not take long. After all, superheterodyne circuit techniques have been with us for many years. It should be possible to develop custom integrated circuits quite soon which will fully complement the Motorola C-QUAM system and thereby develop very high performance.

Ultimately, it should be possible to produce hifi AM stereo circuitry which has a reception bandwidth out to 15kHz, distortion of 0.1% or better, separation between channels of up to 40dB and signal to noise ratio approaching 60dB. That would add up to a tuner really worth listening to!

Mister X, Feb 9, 2021

#1

Mister X
Moderator
Staff Member

Messages:	19,427
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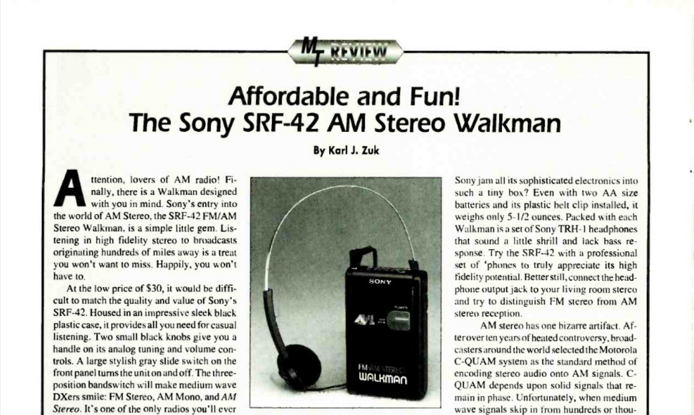
Location:	Minnesota

The Sony SRF-42 from Monitoring Times 1996


SONY
FM/AM STEREO
WALKMAN

MT REVIEW

Affordable and Fun!
The Sony SRF-42 AM Stereo Walkman

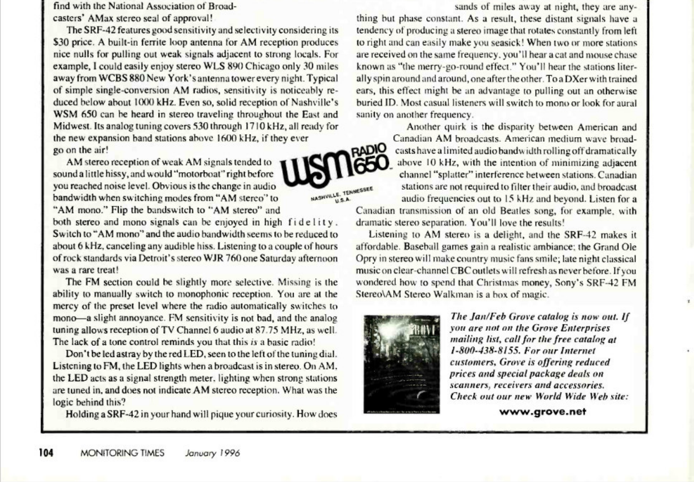
By Karl J. Zuk

Attention, lovers of AM radio! Finally, there is a Walkman designed with you in mind. Sony's entry into the world of AM Stereo, the SRF-42 FM/AM Stereo Walkman, is a simple little gem. Listening in high fidelity stereo to broadcasts originating hundreds of miles away is a treat you won't want to miss. Happily, you won't have to.

At the low price of $30, it would be difficult to match the quality and value of Sony's SRF-42. Housed in an impressive sleek black plastic case, it provides all you need for casual listening. Two small black knobs give you a handle on its analog tuning and volume controls. A large stylish gray slide switch on the front panel turns the unit on and off. The three-position bandswitch will make medium wave DXers smile: FM Stereo, AM Mono, and *AM Stereo*. It's one of the only radios you'll ever

Sony jam all its sophisticated electronics into such a tiny box? Even with two AA size batteries and its plastic belt clip installed, it weighs only 5-1/2 ounces. Packed with each Walkman is a set of Sony TRH-1 headphones that sound a little shrill and lack bass response. Try the SRF-42 with a professional set of 'phones to truly appreciate its high fidelity potential. Better still, connect the headphone output jack to your living room stereo and try to distinguish FM stereo from AM stereo reception.

AM stereo has one bizarre artifact. After over ten years of heated controversy, broadcasters around the world selected the Motorola C-QUAM system as the standard method of encoding stereo audio onto AM signals. C-QUAM depends upon solid signals that remain in phase. Unfortunately, when medium wave signals skip in from hundreds or thou-



find with the National Association of Broadcasters' AMax stereo seal of approval!

The SRF-42 features good sensitivity and selectivity considering its $30 price. A built-in ferrite loop antenna for AM reception produces nice nulls for pulling out weak signals adjacent to strong locals. For example, I could easily enjoy stereo WLS 890 Chicago only 30 miles away from WCBS 880 New York's antenna tower every night. Typical of simple single-conversion AM radios, sensitivity is noticeably reduced below about 1000 kHz. Even so, solid reception of Nashville's WSM 650 can be heard in stereo traveling throughout the East and Midwest. Its analog tuning covers 530 through 1710 kHz, all ready for the new expansion band stations above 1600 kHz, if they ever go on the air!

AM stereo reception of weak AM signals tended to sound a little hissy, and would "motorboat" right before you reached noise level. Obvious is the change in audio bandwidth when switching modes from "AM stereo" to "AM mono." Flip the bandswitch to "AM stereo" and both stereo and mono signals can be enjoyed in high fidelity. Switch to "AM mono" and the audio bandwidth seems to be reduced to about 6 kHz, canceling any audible hiss. Listening to a couple of hours of rock standards via Detroit's stereo WJR 760 one Saturday afternoon was a rare treat!

The FM section could be slightly more selective. Missing is the ability to manually switch to monophonic reception. You are at the mercy of the preset level where the radio automatically switches to mono—a slight annoyance. FM sensitivity is not bad, and the analog tuning allows reception of TV Channel 6 audio at 87.75 MHz, as well. The lack of a tone control reminds you that this *is* a basic radio!

Don't be led astray by the red LED, seen to the left of the tuning dial. Listening to FM, the LED lights when a broadcast is in stereo. On AM, the LED acts as a signal strength meter, lighting when strong stations are tuned in, and does not indicate AM stereo reception. What was the logic behind this?

Holding a SRF-42 in your hand will pique your curiosity. How does sands of miles away at night, they are anything but phase constant. As a result, these distant signals have a tendency of producing a stereo image that rotates constantly from left to right and can easily make you seasick! When two or more stations are received on the same frequency, you'll hear a cat and mouse chase known as "the merry-go-round effect." You'll hear the stations literally spin around and around, one after the other. To a DXer with trained ears, this effect might be an advantage to pulling out an otherwise buried ID. Most casual listeners will switch to mono or look for aural sanity on another frequency.

Another quirk is the disparity between American and Canadian AM broadcasts. American medium wave broadcasts have a limited audio bandwidth rolling off dramatically above 10 kHz, with the intention of minimizing adjacent channel "splatter" interference between stations. Canadian stations are not required to filter their audio, and broadcast audio frequencies out to 15 kHz and beyond. Listen for a Canadian transmission of an old Beatles song, for example, with dramatic stereo separation. You'll love the results!

Listening to AM stereo is a delight, and the SRF-42 makes it affordable. Baseball games gain a realistic ambiance; the Grand Ole Opry in stereo will make country music fans smile; late night classical music on clear-channel CBC outlets will refresh as never before. If you wondered how to spend that Christmas money, Sony's SRF-42 FM Stereo\AM Stereo Walkman is a box of magic.

The Jan/Feb Grove catalog is now out. If you are not on the Grove Enterprises mailing list, call for the free catalog at 1-800-438-8155. For our Internet customers, Grove is offering reduced prices and special package deals on scanners, receivers and accessories. Check out our new World Wide Web site:

www.grove.net

104 MONITORING TIMES *January 1996*

Mister X, Feb 9, 2021 #2

WDGY 92.1 FM/740 Am is a small rock and roll radio station just down the road from me, here's some posted airchecks in FM stereo and the little units they used. Most of this was done last year! I don't see it listed on Wikipedia's list of stations.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_AM_stereo_radio_stations
https://archive.org/search.php?query=creator:"WDGY"

Mister X, Feb 9, 2021 #3

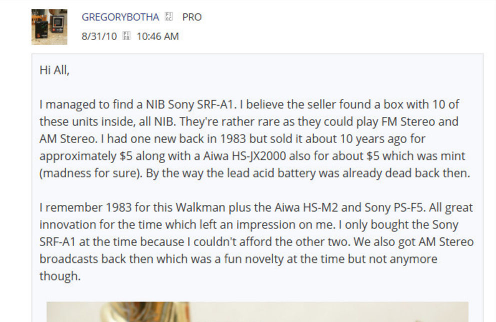
Mister X
Moderator
Staff Member

Messages:	19,427
Trophy Points:	113
Location:	Minnesota

Mister X
Moderator
Staff Member

Messages:	19,427
Trophy Points:	113
Location:	Minnesota

Posted by Gregorybotha on the old forum, way back in 2010, the Sony SRF-A1, check out the cool stand, I wonder if it came with the radio.



GREGORYBOTHA PRO
8/31/10 10:46 AM

Hi All,

I managed to find a NIB Sony SRF-A1. I believe the seller found a box with 10 of these units inside, all NIB. They're rather rare as they could play FM Stereo and AM Stereo. I had one new back in 1983 but sold it about 10 years ago for approximately $5 along with a Aiwa HS-JX2000 also for about $5 which was mint (madness for sure). By the way the lead acid battery was already dead back then.

I remember 1983 for this Walkman plus the Aiwa HS-M2 and Sony PS-F5. All great innovation for the time which left an impression on me. I only bought the Sony SRF-A1 at the time because I couldn't afford the other two. We also got AM Stereo broadcasts back then which was a fun novelty at the time but not anymore though.

POWER
AM ST MODE
ON
OFF
STEREO
FM
AM
MONO
SONY
FM·AM STEREO
SRF-A1
WALKMAN

Greg, As long as "It's a Sony"! My Favorite Sony Walkmans

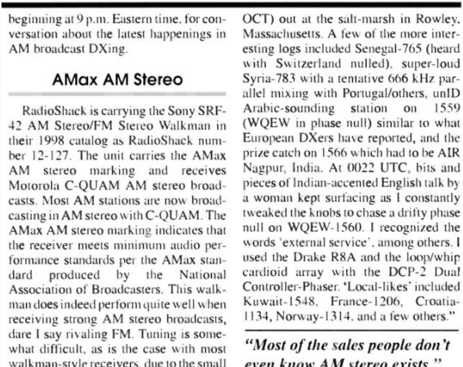
Mister X, Feb 9, 2021

#4

Mister X
Moderator
Staff Member

Messages:	19,427
Trophy Points:	113
Location:	Minnesota

From Popular Communications 1998, Radio Shack is carrying the SRF-42 in their catalog but you have to give the salespeople the part number since they don't know what AM stereo is.



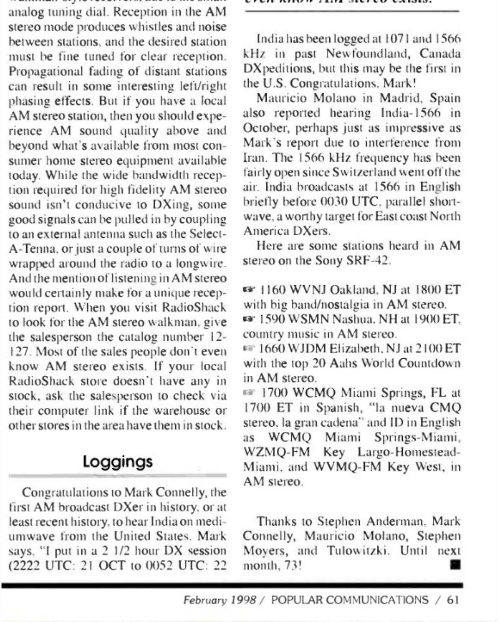
beginning at 9 p.m. Eastern time, for conversation about the latest happenings in AM broadcast DXing.

AMax AM Stereo

RadioShack is carrying the Sony SRF-42 AM Stereo/FM Stereo Walkman in their 1998 catalog as RadioShack number 12-127. The unit carries the AMax AM stereo marking and receives Motorola C-QUAM AM stereo broadcasts. Most AM stations are now broadcasting in AM stereo with C-QUAM. The AMax AM stereo marking indicates that the receiver meets minimum audio performance standards per the AMax standard produced by the National Association of Broadcasters. This walkman does indeed perform quite well when receiving strong AM stereo broadcasts, dare I say rivaling FM. Tuning is somewhat difficult, as is the case with most walkman-style receivers, due to the small

OCT) out at the salt-marsh in Rowley, Massachusetts. A few of the more interesting logs included Senegal-765 (heard with Switzerland nulled), super-loud Syria-783 with a tentative 666 kHz parallel mixing with Portugal/others, unID Arabic-sounding station on 1559 (WQEW in phase null) similar to what European DXers have reported, and the prize catch on 1566 which had to be AIR Nagpur, India. At 0022 UTC, bits and pieces of Indian-accented English talk by a woman kept surfacing as I constantly tweaked the knobs to chase a drifty phase null on WQEW-1560. I recognized the words 'external service', among others. I used the Drake R8A and the loop/whip cardioid array with the DCP-2 Dual Controller-Phaser. 'Local-likes' included Kuwait-1548, France-1206, Croatia-1134, Norway-1314, and a few others."

"Most of the sales people don't even know AM stereo exists."



analog tuning dial. Reception in the AM stereo mode produces whistles and noise between stations, and the desired station must be fine tuned for clear reception. Propagational fading of distant stations can result in some interesting left/right phasing effects. But if you have a local AM stereo station, then you should experience AM sound quality above and beyond what's available from most consumer home stereo equipment available today. While the wide bandwidth reception required for high fidelity AM stereo sound isn't conducive to DXing, some good signals can be pulled in by coupling to an external antenna such as the Select-A-Tenna, or just a couple of turns of wire wrapped around the radio to a longwire. And the mention of listening in AM stereo would certainly make for a unique reception report. When you visit RadioShack to look for the AM stereo walkman, give the salesperson the catalog number 12-127. Most of the sales people don't even know AM stereo exists. If your local RadioShack store doesn't have any in stock, ask the salesperson to check via their computer link if the warehouse or other stores in the area have them in stock.

Loggings

Congratulations to Mark Connelly, the first AM broadcast DXer in history, or at least recent history, to hear India on mediumwave from the United States. Mark says, "I put in a 2 1/2 hour DX session (2222 UTC: 21 OCT to 0052 UTC: 22

India has been logged at 1071 and 1566 kHz in past Newfoundland, Canada DXpeditions, but this may be the first in the U.S. Congratulations, Mark!

Mauricio Molano in Madrid, Spain also reported hearing India-1566 in October, perhaps just as impressive as Mark's report due to interference from Iran. The 1566 kHz frequency has been fairly open since Switzerland went off the air. India broadcasts at 1566 in English briefly before 0030 UTC, parallel shortwave, a worthy target for East coast North America DXers.

Here are some stations heard in AM stereo on the Sony SRF-42.

☞ 1160 WVNJ Oakland, NJ at 1800 ET with big band/nostalgia in AM stereo.
☞ 1590 WSMN Nashua, NH at 1900 ET, country music in AM stereo.
☞ 1660 WJDM Elizabeth, NJ at 2100 ET with the top 20 Aahs World Countdown in AM stereo.
☞ 1700 WCMQ Miami Springs, FL at 1700 ET in Spanish, "la nueva CMQ stereo, la gran cadena" and ID in English as WCMQ Miami Springs-Miami, WZMQ-FM Key Largo-Homestead-Miami, and WVMQ-FM Key West, in AM stereo.

Thanks to Stephen Anderman, Mark Connelly, Mauricio Molano, Stephen Moyers, and Tulowitzki. Until next month, 73! ■

Mister X, Feb 9, 2021 #5

Longman
Well-Known Member
S2G Supporter

Messages:	4,037
Trophy Points:	113
Location:	Bournemouth UK

Youtuber VWestlife runs this site with lots of information http://www.amstereo.org/
AM Stereo is to Europeans what DAB is to Americans i.e something that only happens on the other side of "the pond".
AM Mono was difficult enough to receive despite (or maybe because of) popular stations like Radio Luxembourg blasting out 1200KW.

Longman, Feb 9, 2021 #6

Mister X likes this.

Mister X
Moderator
Staff Member

Messages:	19,427
Trophy Points:	113
Location:	Minnesota

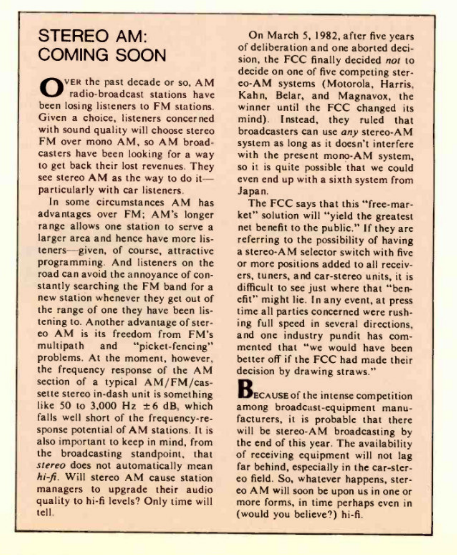
I listen to AM radio a lot, I've always been facinated by it and it's potential, I still think, even with the internet that there's a market for it. It looks like that website went live in 2013, I would have thought earlier since it looks like he used an early version of Microsoft Publisher to put it together. I wonder if Sony is still putting out AM stereo radios?

Mister X, Feb 10, 2021 #7

Mister X
Moderator
Staff Member

Messages: 19,427
Trophy Points: 113
Location: Minnesota

An early article from HiFi Stereo Review 1982, just don't look at the frequency response.....



STEREO AM: COMING SOON

OVER the past decade or so, AM radio-broadcast stations have been losing listeners to FM stations. Given a choice, listeners concerned with sound quality will choose stereo FM over mono AM, so AM broadcasters have been looking for a way to get back their lost revenues. They see stereo AM as the way to do it—particularly with car listeners.

In some circumstances AM has advantages over FM; AM's longer range allows one station to serve a larger area and hence have more listeners—given, of course, attractive programming. And listeners on the road can avoid the annoyance of constantly searching the FM band for a new station whenever they get out of the range of one they have been listening to. Another advantage of stereo AM is its freedom from FM's multipath and "picket-fencing" problems. At the moment, however, the frequency response of the AM section of a typical AM/FM/cassette stereo in-dash unit is something like 50 to 3,000 Hz ±6 dB, which falls well short of the frequency-response potential of AM stations. It is also important to keep in mind, from the broadcasting standpoint, that *stereo* does not automatically mean *hi-fi*. Will stereo AM cause station managers to upgrade their audio quality to hi-fi levels? Only time will tell.

On March 5, 1982, after five years of deliberation and one aborted decision, the FCC finally decided *not* to decide on one of five competing stereo-AM systems (Motorola, Harris, Kahn, Belar, and Magnavox, the winner until the FCC changed its mind). Instead, they ruled that broadcasters can use *any* stereo-AM system as long as it doesn't interfere with the present mono-AM system, so it is quite possible that we could even end up with a sixth system from Japan.

The FCC says that this "free-market" solution will "yield the greatest net benefit to the public." If they are referring to the possibility of having a stereo-AM selector switch with five or more positions added to all receivers, tuners, and car-stereo units, it is difficult to see just where that "benefit" might lie. In any event, at press time all parties concerned were rushing full speed in several directions, and one industry pundit has commented that "we would have been better off if the FCC had made their decision by drawing straws."

BECAUSE of the intense competition among broadcast-equipment manufacturers, it is probable that there will be stereo-AM broadcasting by the end of this year. The availability of receiving equipment will not lag far behind, especially in the car-stereo field. So, whatever happens, stereo AM will soon be upon us in one or more forms, in time perhaps even in (would you believe?) hi-fi.

Mister X, Feb 10, 2021 #8

Reli
Well-Known Member
S2G Supporter

Messages: 1,097
Trophy Points: 113
Location: USA

I assume your radio needs AM stereo decoder circuitry to achieve stereo, right?

Reli, Feb 10, 2021 #9

Mister X likes this.

Mister X
Moderator
Staff Member

Messages: 19,427
Trophy Points: 113
Location: Minnesota

Yes, and that's what makes this fascinating, they still broadcast in AM stereo in the USA but who has the recieving equipment? Are any of the sporting events broadcast in AM stereo and does it add a "realistic ambiance?"

Mister X, Feb 10, 2021 #10

Longman
Well-Known Member
S2G Supporter

Messages:	4,037
Trophy Points:	113
Location:	Bournemouth UK

> Mister X said: ↑
>
> *It looks like that website went live in 2013, I would have thought earlier since it looks like he used an early version of Microsoft Publisher to put it together. I wonder if Sony is still putting out AM stereo radios?*

VWestlife AKA Kevin is a big fan of obsolete hardware and computers

VWestlife
Watch on YouTube

Longman, Feb 10, 2021 #11

Mister X likes this.

Mister X
Moderator
Staff Member

Messages:	19,427
Trophy Points:	113
Location:	Minnesota

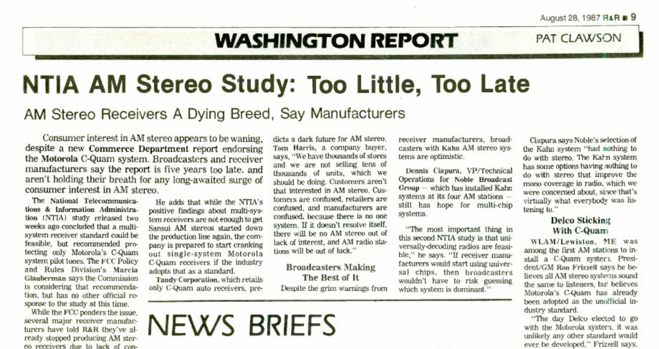
I've got a maxed out old ThinkPad as well, it has every port but I mainly use it for INPA Software to connect to vintage BMW Computers, it's beautiful when it's working and has helped with some big issues.

Mister X, Feb 10, 2021 #12

Mister X
Moderator
Staff Member

Messages:	19,427
Trophy Points:	113
Location:	Minnesota

The death of AM Stereo? 1987



WASHINGTON REPORT PAT CLAWSON

NTIA AM Stereo Study: Too Little, Too Late

AM Stereo Receivers A Dying Breed, Say Manufacturers

Consumer interest in AM stereo appears to be waning, despite a new **Commerce Department** report endorsing the **Motorola** C-Quam system. Broadcasters and receiver manufacturers say the report is five years too late, and aren't holding their breath for any long-awaited surge of consumer interest in AM stereo.

The **National Telecommunications & Information Administration** (NTIA) study released two weeks ago concluded that a multi-system receiver standard could be feasible, but recommended protecting only Motorola's C-Quam system pilot tones. The FCC Policy and Rules Division's **Marcia Glauberman** says the Commission is considering that recommendation, but has no other official response to the study at this time.

While the FCC ponders the issue, several major receiver manufacturers have told R&R they've already stopped producing AM stereo receivers due to lack of con-

He adds that while the NTIA's positive findings about multi-system receivers are not enough to get Sansui AM stereos started down the production line again, the company is prepared to start cranking out single-system Motorola C-Quam receivers if the industry adopts that as a standard.

Tandy Corporation, which retails only C-Quam auto receivers, predicts a dark future for AM stereo. **Tom Harris**, a company buyer, says, "We have thousands of stores and we are not selling tens of thousands of units, which we should be doing. Customers aren't that interested in AM stereo. Customers are confused, retailers are confused, and manufacturers are confused, because there is no one system. If it doesn't resolve itself, there will be no AM stereo out of lack of interest, and AM radio stations will be out of luck."

Broadcasters Making The Best of It

Despite the grim warnings from receiver manufacturers, broadcasters with Kahn AM stereo systems are optimistic.

Dennis Ciapura, VP/Technical Operations for **Noble Broadcast Group** – which has installed Kahn systems at its four AM stations – still has hope for multi-chip systems.

"The most important thing in this second NTIA study is that universally-decoding radios are feasible," he says. "If receiver manufacturers would start using universal chips, then broadcasters wouldn't have to risk guessing which system is dominant."

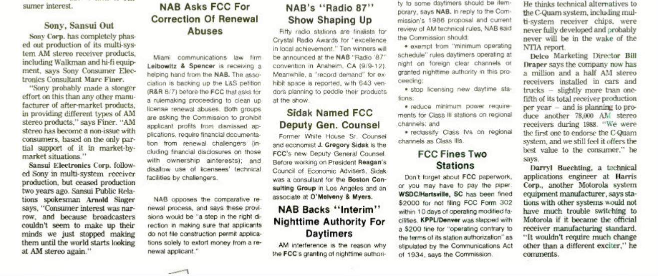
Ciapura says Noble's selection of the Kahn system "had nothing to do with stereo. The Kahn system has some options having nothing to do with stereo that improve the mono coverage in radio, which we were concerned about, since that's virtually what everybody was listening to."

Delco Sticking With C-Quam

WLAM/Lewiston, ME was among the first AM stations to install a C-Quam system. President/GM **Ron Frizzell** says he believes all AM stereo systems sound the same to listeners, but believes Motorola's C-Quam has already been adopted as the unofficial industry standard.

"The day Delco elected to go with the Motorola system, it was unlikely any other standard would ever be developed," Frizzell says.

NEWS BRIEFS



sumer interest.

Sony, Sansui Out

Sony Corp. has completely phased out production of its multi-system AM stereo receiver products, including Walkman and hi-fi equipment, says Sony Consumer Electronics Consultant **Marc Finer.**

"Sony probably made a stonger effort on this than any other manufacturer of after-market products, in providing different types of AM stereo products," says Finer. "AM stereo has become a non-issue with consumers, based on the only partial support of it in market-by-market situations."

Sansui Electronics Corp. followed Sony in multi-system receiver production, but ceased production two years ago. Sansui Public Relations spokesman **Arnold Singer** says, "Consumer interest was narrow, and because broadcasters couldn't seem to make up their minds we just stopped making them until the world starts looking at AM stereo again."

NAB Asks FCC For Correction Of Renewal Abuses

Miami communications law firm **Leibowitz & Spencer** is receiving a helping hand from the **NAB.** The association is backing up the L&S petition (**R&R** 8/7) before the **FCC** that asks for a rulemaking proceeding to clean up license renewal abuses. Both groups are asking the Commission to prohibit applicant profits from dismissed applications, require financial documentation from renewal challengers (including financial disclosures on those with ownership ainterests); and disallow use of licensees' technical facilities by challengers.

NAB opposes the comparative renewal process, and says these provisions would be "a step in the right direction in making sure that applicants do not file construction permit applications solely to extort money from a renewal applicant."

NAB's "Radio 87" Show Shaping Up

Fifty radio stations are finalists for Crystal Radio Awards for "excellence in local achievement." Ten winners will be announced at the **NAB** "Radio '87" convention in Anaheim, CA (9/9-12). Meanwhile, a "record demand" for exhibit space is reported, with 643 vendors planning to peddle their products at the show.

Sidak Named FCC Deputy Gen. Counsel

Former White House Sr. Counsel and economist **J. Gregory Sidak** is the **FCC**'s new Deputy General Counsel. Before working on President **Reagan**'s Council of Economic Advisers, Sidak was a consultant for the **Boston Consulting Group** in Los Angeles and an associate at **O'Melveny & Myers.**

NAB Backs "Interim" Nighttime Authority For Daytimers

AM interference is the reason why the **FCC**'s granting of nighttime authority to some daytimers should be temporary, says **NAB.** In reply to the Commission's 1986 proposal and current review of AM technical rules, NAB said the Commission should:

- exempt from "minimum operating schedule" rules daytimers operating at night on foreign clear channels or granted nighttime authority in this proceeding;
- stop licensing new daytime stations;
- reduce minimum power requirements for Class III stations on regional channels; and
- reclassify Class IVs on regional channels as Class IIIs.

FCC Fines Two Stations

Don't forget about **FCC** paperwork, or you may have to pay the piper. **WSDC/Hartsville, SC** has been fined $2000 for not filing FCC Form 302 within 10 days of operating modified facilities. **KPPL/Denver** was slapped with a $200 fine for "operating contrary to the terms of its station authorization" as stipulated by the Communications Act of 1934, says the Commission.

He thinks technical alternatives to the C-Quam system, including multi-system receiver chips, were never fully developed and probably never will be in the wake of the NTIA report.

Delco Marketing Director **Bill Draper** says the company now has a million and a half AM stereo receivers installed in cars and trucks – slightly more than one-fifth of its total receiver production per year – and is planning to produce another 78,000 AM stereo receivers during 1988. "We were the first one to endorse the C-Quam system, and we still feel it offers the best value to the consumer," he says.

Darryl Buechting, a technical applications engineer at **Harris Corp.,** another Motorola system equipment manufacturer, says stations with other systems would not have much trouble switching to Motorola if it became the official receiver manufacturing standard. "It wouldn't require much change other than a different exciter," he comments.

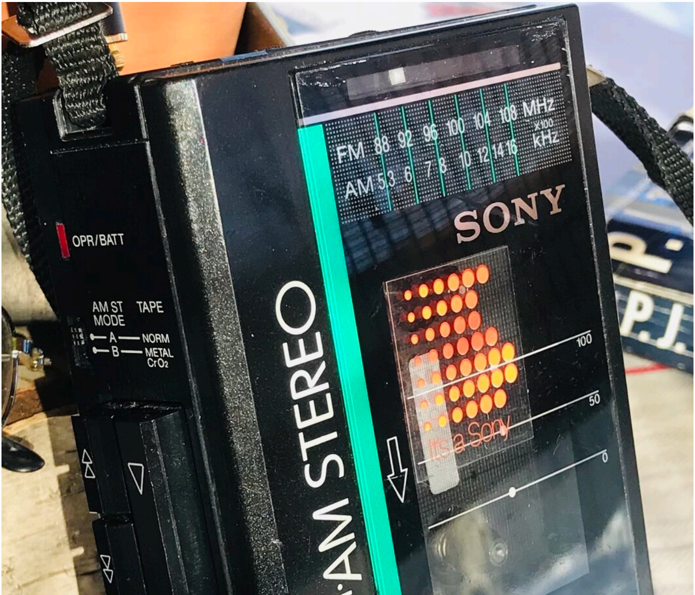
Mister X, Aug 30, 2021

#13

Mister X
Moderator
Staff Member

Messages: 19,427
Trophy Points: 113
Location: Minnesota

Found this on archive.org, my own local AM Stereo Station and the Walkman WM-F16 they listen to it on. You can listen to the sweet sounds I listen to alot!
https://archive.org/details/wdgy_cquam_stereo_sony_wm-f16



WALKMAN FM
FM / AM STEREO CASSETTE PLAYER
STEREO
WM-F16
SONY

Mister X, Jan 11, 2022 #14

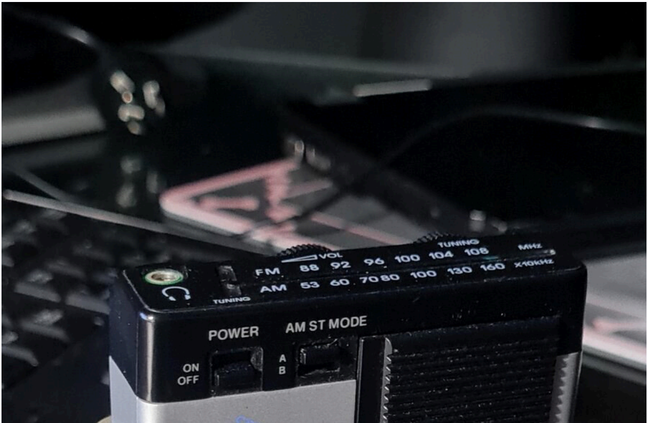
Emiel likes this.

Steve Caldwell
New Member

Messages: 5
Trophy Points: 3
Location: Sydney Australia

I still have my SRF-A10. Purchased it in the mid-eighties, when all the AM Stereo hype was around. I think I listened to about 3 hours in total of AM Stereo, and then went back to FM. The AM stereo had a lot of phase issues between channels, which was very apparent in headphones, and was not comfortable to listen too at all.

Here are some pictures I just took of it:

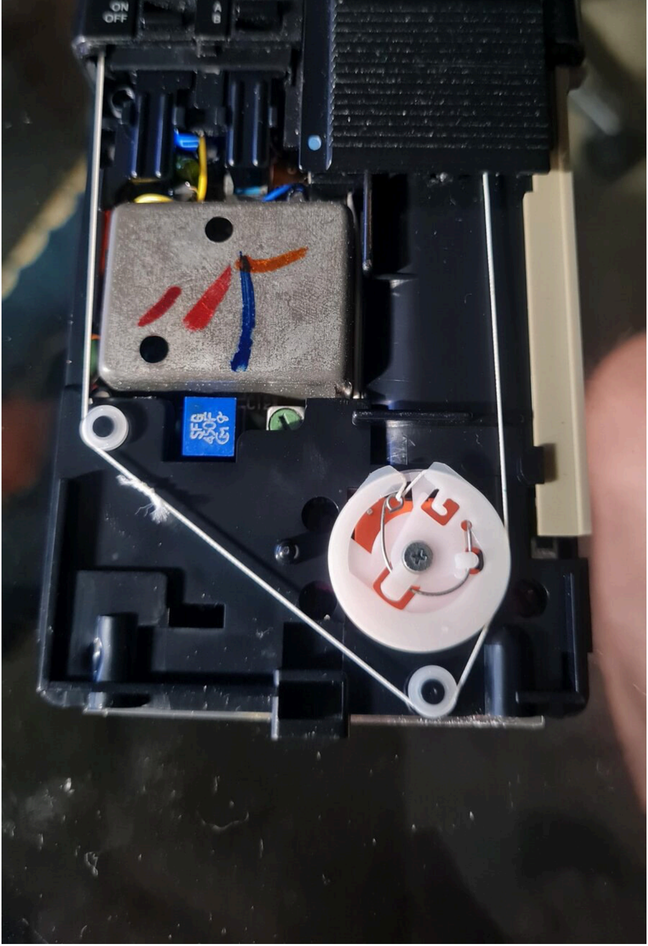


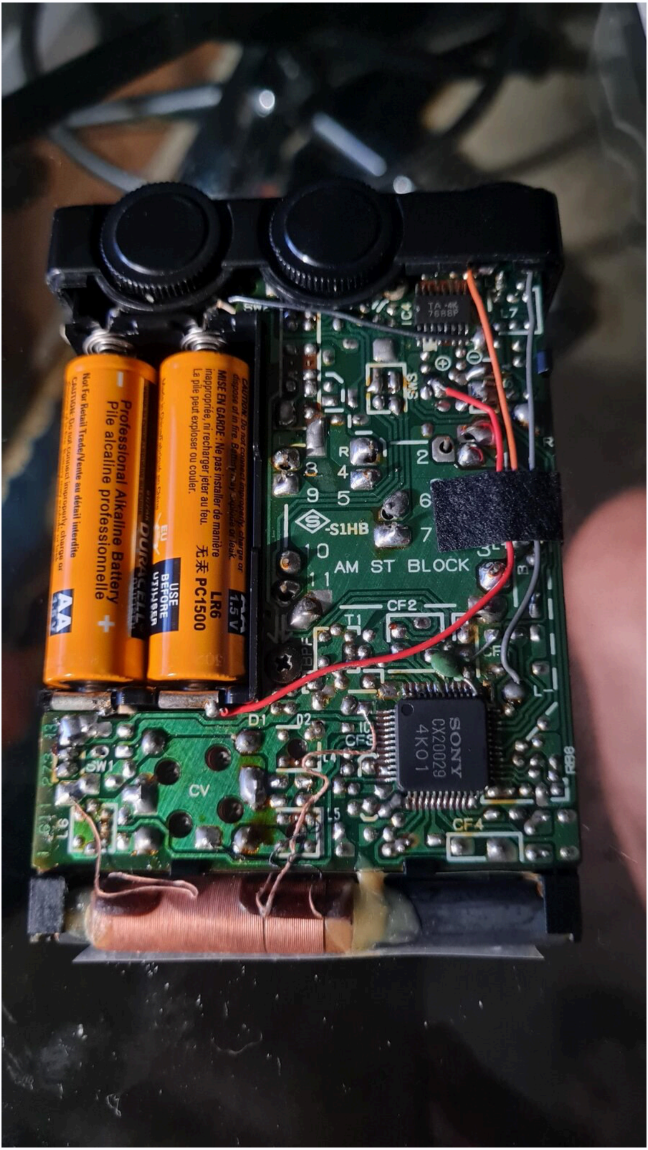
STEREO
FM
AM
MONO
SONY
It's a Sony
FM·AM STEREO
WALKMAN
SRF-A10

FM
AM
VOL
88 92
53 60 70
POWER
AM ST MODE
ON
OFF
A
B

SO
M STERE
WALKM

POWER
AM ST MODE




SW2
IC4
L7
R
2
3
4
9
5
6
7
S1HB
10
11
AM ST BLOCK
CF2
T1
D1
D2
SONY
CX20029
4K01
SW1
CV
L5
CF4
Professional Alkaline Battery
Pile alcaline professionnelle
DURACELL
LR6
PC1500
1.5V
USE BEFORE
UTILISER
AA
MISE EN GARDE : Ne pas installer de manière inappropriée, ni recharger jeter au feu.
La pile peut exploser ou couler.

Steve Caldwell, Jan 12, 2022

#15

Tony S. and Mister X like this.

Mister X
Moderator
Staff Member

Messages: 19,427
Trophy Points: 113
Location: Minnesota

I think my local station is still broadcasting in AM stereo but I'm not sure, I still haven't picked up a radio yet to confirm. That's interesting the phasing was off, you'd think the engineers would be all over that but it might be mostly a skeleton crew.

Mister X, Jan 12, 2022 #16

Tony S.
New Member

Messages: 14
Trophy Points: 3
Location: Miami, Fla.

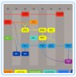
> Steve Caldwell said: ↑
>
> *I still have my SRF-A10. Purchased it in the mid-eighties*

Beautiful. And Rare.....This is the Australian version, as the one released in the US/Canada was the (much more common) A1, with a different color scheme.

I've been 'on the hunt' for this particular radio's cousin--the one with speakers--SRF-A200....For over a year--and nothing shows up on eBay...

Again, Australian only release, but related to the US/Canada SRF-A100----with a different color scheme.

Tony S., Jan 25, 2022 #17



Emiel
Well-Known Member
S2G Supporter

Messages: 1,115
Trophy Points: 113
Location: Western Europe

> Mister X said: ↑
>
> *Found this on archive.org, my own local AM Stereo Station and the Walkman WM-F16 they listen to it on. You can listen to the sweet sounds I listen to alot!*
> *https://archive.org/details/wdgy_cquam_stereo_sony_wm-f16*
>
> *View attachment 33594*

That is proper quality AM. Never heard stereo AM before btw.

Emiel, Jan 26, 2022 #18

Transcept, Mister X and Valentin like this.

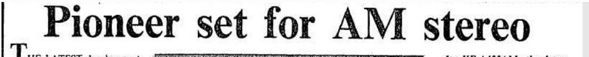
Mister X
Moderator
Staff Member

Messages: 19,427
Trophy Points: 113
Location: Minnesota

Me neither, how do you tune it in with regular equipment? Are these little players the only way? I should go down to the station and pick their brains...

Mister X, Jan 26, 2022 #19

Pioneer set of AM stereo - The Canberra Times 5 Feb 1985



Pioneer set for AM stereo

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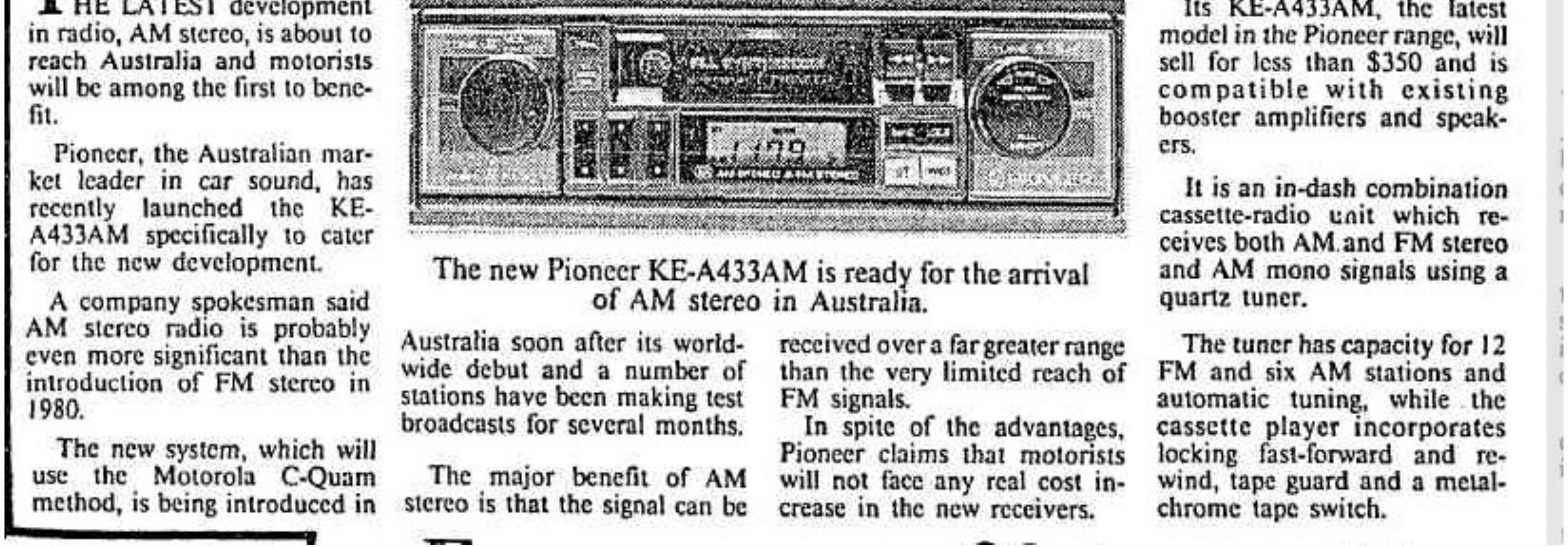

THE LATEST development in radio, AM stereo, is about to reach Australia and motorists will be among the first to benefit.

Pioneer, the Australian market leader in car sound, has recently launched the KE-A433AM specifically to cater for the new development.

A company spokesman said AM stereo radio is probably even more significant than the introduction of FM stereo in 1980.

The new system, which will use the Motorola C-Quam method, is being introduced in Australia soon after its worldwide debut and a number of stations have been making test broadcasts for several months.

The new Pioneer KE-A433AM is ready for the arrival of AM stereo in Australia.

The major benefit of AM stereo is that the signal can be received over a far greater range than the very limited reach of FM signals.

In spite of the advantages, Pioneer claims that motorists will not face any real cost increase in the new receivers.

Its KE-A433AM, the latest model in the Pioneer range, will sell for less than $350 and is compatible with existing booster amplifiers and speakers.

It is an in-dash combination cassette-radio unit which receives both AM and FM stereo and AM mono signals using a quartz tuner.

The tuner has capacity for 12 FM and six AM stations and automatic tuning, while the cassette player incorporates locking fast-forward and rewind, tape guard and a metal-chrome tape switch.

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