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Dolby Digital Surround Levels on the Laserdiscs of *Video Essentials*.

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The original VE came out in June of 1996, fairly early in the life of Dolby Digital (AC-3) on laserdisc. Using early proto-type consumer Dolby Digital decoders, we attempted to verify that levels in the Dolby Digital track were correct. What we found was a rather large disparity among the receivers. About 6 months after its release, with the help of Dolby Labs., we determined that we had used an option of Dolby Digital encoding that put each of the left and right surrounds 3 dB below the front channels.

The Dolby Digital encode option we had used was designed for movie theatres and did not fit the description of levels called out in the disc. In the theatre specification the combined sound of left and right surround would equal any one of the front channels. In the Home Theatre version of Dolby Digital each of the surrounds is supposed to be at the same level as any one of the front channels. This is the description we've used in the disc.

We confirmed the error while we were in production on the Japanese edition of VE. We selected the Home Theatre option for encoding it, then went back and fixed the English language master. The new English language master was sent to the pressing plant and the re-mastered edition started showing up in retail outlets sometime during the summer of 1997.

Version 1

If you own the first version of VE the surround levels in each channel from the Dolby Digital (AC-3) track are 3 dB below the front left, center, and right channels. Because the test signals are 3 dB low, you'll have to set the 5.1 system surrounds 3 dB low when using this disc. The Dolby Pro-Logic encoded material found on the PCM tracks are correct. There is no need for compensation when using that audio.

Version 2

Clearly marked as the Japanese version on both the package and the disc, the Dolby Digital and Dolby Pro-Logic tracks are correct in level. Use them as the disc describes.

Frame numbers for most of side one and the end of side two changed by one or two numbers from those found in the original English edition. Check the LD Index for additional information.

Version 3

The Dolby Digital and Dolby Pro-Logic tracks are correct in level. Use them as the disc describes.

Frame numbers for most of side one and the end of side two changed by one or two numbers from those found in the original English edition. Check the LD Index for additional information.

Identifying the two English language version of *Video Essentials*.

You'll need to play the disc to determine if your copy is the old or new version of VE. Search from Frame 28100 in Chapter 1 on Side 1. If you see an AC-3 in the Dolby Digital logo at the top of the screen it's the first edition. If the AC-3 is not there, it's the corrected version of the program. As we've noted there are also slight frame number differences between the two editions. They are detailed in the Index listings.

Joe Kane