

Similarly, live Premier League football (Sky Q 4K, Dolby Atmos) is portrayed with astounding realism.

So what of the differences? This time around there seems more nuance in the mid-range; it's a more impactful, organic sound. The NR1608 favours round edges over sharp angles, which makes it extremely easy to listen to. It's also quicker to anger.

The 2029 opening to *The Terminator* (Blu-ray, uncompressed 5.1 PCM), which features a sci-fi flyover and then rolling heavy armour, before Brad Fiedel's familiar theme punctuates the title sequence, is depicted with gutsy urgency. This receiver may not look brawny on paper (it claims a 7 x 50W into 8 ohm figure, 20Hz-20kHz but with two channels driven), but it has verve and spirit.

Just before Michael Biehn time travels, a cop car races from front left to rear, before electricity crackles back in the opposite direction; a chopper thwups across the rears, the synth score bubbling up to the front. When cops give chase, music pumps like blood in every channel.

There's energy aplenty. When Sarah Connor's big-haired chum has an unfortunate encounter with Arnie, the Terminator's gun retorts are shockingly violent. The subsequent bar shootout is astonishingly intense.

*Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Out of The Shadows* (Blu-ray, Dolby Atmos) isn't a movie that values sonic subtlety. The cast spend most of the time shouting at each other, and the soundtrack is horribly histrionic. But if you want immersion, dial up the chase scene in Chapter 7 and you get everything ramped to the max – ninja weaponry, honking soundtrack, police sirens, Foley effects, Turtles... and that's just in the main stereo pair. It says much for the precision of the NR1608 that it keeps all this chaos intelligible.

This ability to delineate is particularly effective with two-channel audio. Bjork's *Family* (MQA) is an Icelandic storm of percussion, swirling strings and vocal knots. But the NR1608 doesn't over-complicate proceedings, letting the track play out with intense clarity.

The Doors' *Riders on the Storm* (MQA) manages to filter weather effects from the band, yet never disentangles the magic in the mix. A 24-bit/192kHz remaster of *Hotel California* offers up nuance that makes the recording sound fresher than a dip in the Pacific. The receiver delights in the interweaving guitars of Joe Walsh and Don Felder. Hi-res audio is clearly welcome here.

It's great fun with games, too. *Star Wars Battlefront*, rendered in Dolby Atmos, offers furious sonic action, but again the NR1608 tracks details with ease. TIE fighters

### SPECIFICATIONS

**DOLBY ATMOS:** Yes **DTS:X:** Yes **THX:** No **MULTICHANNEL INPUT:** No **MULTICHANNEL PRE-OUT:** No **MULTICHANNEL OUTPUT (CLAIMED):** 7 x 50W (into 8 ohms) **MULTIROOM:** Yes. Second audio zone **AV INPUTS:** 3 x composite; 2 x digital audio (1 x optical and 1 x coaxial) **HDMI:** Yes. 8 x inputs; 1 x output **COMPONENT VIDEO:** Yes. 2 x inputs; 1 x output **VIDEO UPSCALING:** Yes. To 4K/30 **DIMENSIONS:** 440(w) x 376(d) x 105(h)mm **WEIGHT:** 8.3kg

**FEATURES:** Audyssey MultiEQ room calibration; ISF video calibration; HEOS multiroom compatible; hi-res file playback includes DSD (2.8/5.6MHz), FLAC, WAV and ALAC; Ethernet; Wi-Fi; Bluetooth; AirPlay; internet radio; USB input (front-mounted); FM/AM tuner; dual subwoofer outputs; Dolby Vision and HLG passthrough via firmware; HDMI 2.0/HDCP 2.2 on all HDMI's; Pure Direct Mode

### PARTNER WITH



**HEOS 7 HS2:** Go multiroom with the Marantz AV receiver and the biggest and best of the HEOS standalone speakers. Priced around £500, it sports five active drivers, two passive bass radiators and an eye-catching elliptical chassis.

swoop overhead, dialogue is locked centre stage, while heavy weapons thud into an Imperial Walker – there's a satisfying 'whump' as it crashes down into the snow. This box may be small, but it can handle big moments.

### Let me entertain you

The NR1608 is a confident, entertaining AV receiver. I've lived with most iterations of this particular Marantz family since launch, and have generally noted improvements on every update. This edition maintains the trend.

Although first and foremost a multichannel proposition – and well-specified in this regard – it's also precise enough to make the most of hi-res music sources, and its general usability has never been better. The addition of HEOS multiroom is an extra layer of icing. The NR1608 may make you wonder why your current AVR is so big and ugly ■

### HCC VERDICT



#### Marantz NR1608

→ £600 → [www.marantz.co.uk](http://www.marantz.co.uk)

**WE SAY:** HEOS multiroom, Bluetooth convenience and 3D audio tick all the right feature boxes, while precise multichannel delivery and musicality make this a cracking all-rounder.



**3.** Seven rear HDMI inputs (plus one on the front) means you should never run out