Stereo Imaging

While the separation of the stereo signals deals with the correct placement of things, the Stereo Imaging is what contributes to making the music seem "lifelike". If you can listen to a good piece of music, especially a vocal performance, and imagine or visualize an instrument or vocalist somewhere in that immediate area during that song, then that's Stereo Imaging. A simple description of Stereo Imaging is that it gives a three-dimensional effect to the music. It brings the music to life!

Ambiance

"Adding more speakers (without a specific ambience/fill purpose) only serves to make stereo imaging and ambience more difficult to achieve and more confusing to your ears."

Ambience is a little tough to understand. It's equally difficult to achieve. The more speakers you add in a car, the more potential difficulty you have to achieve the correct balance of ambience as it was during the original live or recorded studio performance. Ambience is best explained as the "little details" of music and sound that were present during the recording of the music. If the little cues such as echo, reverb, and delay are reconstructed exactly as they were during recording, the music should sound the same as it originally did. Adding more speakers only serves to make ambience more difficult to achieve and more confusing to your ears. There are also a number of DSP (Digital Sound Processor) devices available for car audio which artificially attempt to recreate these cues of ambience. The trouble is that they are still artificial and no substitute for simple acoustic principles. Ambience is best when it's natural. Recordings of live and concert hall performances often have more natural ambience then heavily mixed pop studio recordings.

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