



## Real People Reviews

by Daniel M. East

### Squeezebox

*Take music from your Mac to your home audio system, wirelessly or hard-wired*

By Daniel M. East

Review date: April 21, 2004

#### PULL QUOTE:

“joy reminiscent of my first auto-reverse cassette player”

I don't have an iPod...yet. I have a ton of music on my Mac and a home surround stereo system. Getting these two together can be done in a number of ways, but this one does it well. Squeezebox from Slim Devices is THE product for your Mac music library with home audio systems.

While the setup can be more involved than our now beloved “plug and play” devices, the sound quality, ease of use and joy reminiscent of my first auto-reverse cassette player make this one fine product. Even when using WIFI with 128 bit encryption with the AirPort interference robustness, performance is excellent (in fact, those settings are recommended).

While MP3s are their default format of choice, you can employ a free LAME iTunes plug-in that compresses AAC, AIF and other files nicely with no affect on the original files if WIFI is your choice. Squeezebox supports wireless, Ethernet and optical cabling depending on model. For best audio results, hard-wired or optical cable are your best bet.

This is a very good looking product with the ability to customize readout brightness, text size and features from the remote included with the product. The audio quality is good enough that my Dolby ProLogic® system did process the surround imaging embedded in the mastering of the tracks. There is even a built-in alarm clock function. The system is so well thought out that you can even view your Slim Server activity in your web browser.

This is still MP3 (with other formats supported), so if you have Wilson \$20,000.00 speakers (I wish I did), you may not be the right person for such things, period. No reflection on the Squeezebox there. The only real problems I have are interference from my other IR remotes and that the server was going offline when my Mac would go into “sleep” mode, but I understand that these issues are addressed in their latest update (and a free one at that). You can even plug earphones directly into the standard mini-stereo output jack. It is recommended that you use AirPort Extreme (or other 54Mbps wifi system) for best results, but my good ol' snow AirPort worked just fine.

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### FINAL THOUGHTS:

This is a great way to not only listen to your iTunes music library on your home system, but also fun to set up an old Mac as a music server. I like the fact that I can take the box to any stereo system with RCA inputs (inside or out) and play my music. Sharp looking, good sounding and a great way to get more out of your Mac as the lines between multimedia and computing continue to blend nicely.

Product: Squeezebox

Version: Server v. 5.1x

Manufacturer/Vendor/Developer: Slim Devices

MSRP: 199.00 hard-wired only/279.00 wireless option

MIN. SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS: Any Mac running OSX (runs on nearly any platform as well)

URL: <http://www.slimdevices.com/>

Tel: (650) 210-9400

RATING 4.5 out of 5 EXCELLENT

*Daniel East is the founder and president of The Mid-Atlantic Macintosh User Groups Team (MaMUGs) - a division of The Apple Groups Team; a member of The Apple Consultants Network (ACN); a member of The Apple Developer Connection (ACN); a panelist on "PC Talk Radio;" a live speaker/presenter and a freelance columnist for several Mac publications.*

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