

## Freshly Squeezed Reviews

# My Ears Rejoice!

*By Frank Petrie*

Product:



Author: Speck <[www.astoundstereo.com/](http://www.astoundstereo.com/)>

Requirements: Leopard (10.5.1) or higher; 1 GHz Intel or PPC (G5) processor; 1 GB RAM; Stereo audio output; Internet access

Price: \$24.95

Test Rig: MacBook 1.83Mhz

Sound processing is usually met with about the same success rate as 3D visuals. Sometimes worse. Cold and sterile. The only company that has been fairly successful at it is Bose. But no more. Welcome AstoundSound.

“The AstoundStereo™ Expander is a software application that runs on your Macintosh. The AstoundStereo Expander is always running in the background processing audio from all applications. It takes any stereo audio as input and produces a significantly wider stereo image, while preserving center information (e.g. vocals or center staged instruments), in real time. The result is a wider, fuller and richer listening experience which can be heard while playing music, a DVD, a video game or any application that produces audio.”

More rhetoric or did they really nail it?

### **THE JUICE**

AstoundSound is an extremely simple System Preference. Installation takes the better part of 10 seconds. It has three settings to choose from. And the preference is easily accessible from your Menu Bar.

That's it.

### **THE PULP**

The success, in my opinion, of AstoundSound is that it sounds like it was tuned with musician's ears instead of engineer's ears. I'd also swear that that AstoundSound enhanced the clarity and definition of the instruments.

I tested AstoundSound with The Beatles, The Beach Boys, The Bears (Adrian Belew), Donald Fagen and Eugene Ormandy conducting Fanfare for The Common Man. Incredible. You can hear the plectrum on McCartney's bass strings. You can sense the timbre of the hall during Fanfare. And maybe it's me but I swear there was a bit of bass boost tossed in for good measure.

### **THE RIND**

Nada. Nada. Nada.

### **SUMMARY**

The only thing that could make this any better is an iPod/iPhone version. And the authors told me there should be one in several months.

Experiencing your music with AstoundSound is like when you listened to your newly remastered music on CD for the first time. It's that good.

RATING : 10 out of 10

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