

Wavelength Audio

Computer Systems for Audio on a \$1250 budget

First what is required for a good computer system to compete with the best transports? Well, one of the first things is that computers with USB 2.0 host controllers will sound better than 1.1 host controllers on older models. The newer 2.0 controllers have imbedded support for audio and that makes the CPU's job much easier. The computer does not need a ton of memory as most of the applications required have a small footprint. It is however nice to have a quiet computer with quiet or they can be annoying. This is also true for large (1 Terabyte drives) external hard drives. Which is another component needed for the system. Actually 2 drives are better than one. That way you can back up or mirror your drive so that you don't lose any of your Library of music. For most of our systems 250GB external hard drives will hold about 500 cd's. So you can figure out what your needs are by multiplying your intended number of cd's times 0.5GB. Most drives come in 160GB, 250GB, 400GB, 500GB and 1TB. For MAC OS based systems Firewire is the best connection method and for PC's USB 2.0. Since CD's do not carry information like song titles and stuff the computers do have to be attached to the internet. I suggest Apple Airport or in PC land WIFI 802.11G wireless. This way your computer is not hooked directly to other computers with a physical link. The computer does not require an email address, but if you want to download songs then it will. If you want to use say a Palm Pilot or other handheld computer for remote then Bluetooth is required.

Ok what will a \$1250 budget get me?

Macintosh, really two systems stand out in my mind, both of these come with built in Apple Airport and Bluetooth. Some Mini bundle prices include keyboard and mouse free.

Apple iBook G4 12" laptop \$999, LaCie 250GB firewire hard drive \$169 = **\$1159**

Apple Mini 1.42 \$599, Keyboard and mouse \$99, Princeton 1510D LCD monitor \$209, LaCie Mini Companion Drive 250GB \$199 = **\$1106** You could also substitute the MicroNet 250GB Mini Mate for the LaCie at the same price.

I prefer the Apple products over the PC's because you only need to set about 5 options and you are done with everything and all software is free and included. Whereas PC's you have to master 2 programs at a minimum and load a device driver to get the same results you have never used a Mac they are very easy compared to a PC.

In the PC area I would first look at the nice people at LogicSupply.com. They have many fanless PC's and low noise PC's from Hush and their house brands.

LogicSupply GS-L01 800MHZ 512/40GB, 4 USB 2.0 & Firewire with XPHome \$664, Keyboard and mouse \$50, WIFI USB adapter \$25, Bluetooth USB adapter \$15, Sharp LLT15 LCD Monitor \$173, MicroNet PHD250 250GB USB2.0/Firewire drive \$160 = **\$1087** A version with Celeron processor is also available at about the same price.

HP, Dell, Toshiba Celeron 15" Notebook/Laptop systems with 512M ~ \$850, WIFI USB adapter \$25, Bluetooth USB adapter \$15, MicroNet PHD250 250GB USB2.0/Firewire drive \$160 = **\$1050** The fans on these can get a little loud.

Prices derived from MacMall.com, LogicSupply.com and NewEgg.com