

## Now *Hear* This !

**Product:** *Hear*

**Developer:** Joesoft, [www.joesoft.com](http://www.joesoft.com)

**Requirments:** Mac OS X 10.4+

**Cost:** \$49.95

**Rating:** 🍏🍏🍏🍏 (5 of 5 Apples)

iTunes is such a widely used piece of software on the Mac (and PC) that any number of enhancers are available as add-ons to control, alter and enhance the program. There are even packages that allow sound enhancing beyond what iTunes has built-in. *Hear* from Joesoft takes sound enhancing to a completely new level for iTunes and your entire Mac.

Installing *Hear* is as simple as launching the application the first time. After the first install a background helper application is placed on your system. You can turn this application off anytime from within the *Hear* software. What this wonderful little application does is intercept any audio source your Mac is processing and sends it to *Hear* for enhancement. The results and possibilities are nearly endless.

Within the *Hear* application you can specify any application that *Hear* should enhance the audio from. Some common examples would be iTunes, DVD Player, QuickTime, Real Player and ANY other you add to the list. For every application you can specify the enhancements on an application by application basis. For example if you like Classical music from iTunes you could choose specific equalizer, bass, 3D and other parameters most suited for music of that type. However, those presets don't work so good for your favorite movie or game. In those cases simply select a new set of presets best for those, *Hear* can handle any application or combination of presets.

*Hear* comes with nearly 70 presets for nearly every type of music, movie or other audio situation. Just in the movies category you can select from "comedy", "science fiction", "musical" or other presets made to give the best general performance for those types of situations. They even built-in different presets for various computer games like shooters, role playing or casual. Naturally the most presets are for music with nearly three dozen.

If you don't care for Joesoft's presets in *Hear* you can alter them to your ears delight. There are basic parameters such as Super-Bass, Dewoofers, Ambience, Fidelity, Chaining and Equalizer. A few of these might need some explanation. Dewoofers allows you to clean out the bass of mid-range frequency and is useful for older recordings. Ambience adds a reverb effect like a concert hall, while Fidelity increases harmonics in the higher frequencies often making low quality MP3 files sound better. Chaining simply alters the order the effects are applied (which does make a difference) and the good old fashioned equalizer is included for altering audio from 32Hz to 16kHz. The equalizer can be for 10-48 segments of the range allowing for greater control.

*Hear* doesn't stop with the basics though. Many additional settings can be enabled and altered. The 3D effect is a real breakthrough in that you normally have left/right and other "positions" but by making audio "envelopes" you can open up the apparent position for larger dynamic spacing. The effect is dramatic. The Ambience effect is also powerful in that it controls the reverb effect you would hear in an open room environment and boosts it. The FX effect allows you to move the center bass sound while pushing the left right channels. The Space effect takes the sound and places it behind the listener for a "bounced" sound. You can even control a Brainwave synthesizer effect that oscillates the sound for relaxation, I played with effect using some non-relaxing music and got some very weird sounds, then I tried it with some New Age sounds and the effect was quite powerful - in a good way.

*Hear* has even more areas of audio enhancement but you might ask why alter your music? Don't you want to keep it pure? My simple answer is try it. Your music is altered in every case. Concert halls are designed for effect, music is produced with enhancements before it is ever placed on your CD and music from a computer is inherently altered by going through the process of making an MP3 or other audio file and even just playing through the computer. *Hear* simply allows you final step to make your audio sound the way you want it to. Listening is deeply personal and what one person finds great another will dislike (or not even hear), with that in mind you can have your sound the way you want with *Hear*.

The program is quite simply the most comprehensive audio processor I've seen on the Mac or PC for that matter. The interface is clean and easily navigated even with the multitude of options *Hear* gives you over your audio. Joesoft has definitely raised the bar with *Hear*, try it, hear it, I think you'll love *Hear*.



### About the Reviewer:

Rob has been a lifelong resident of the Trenton and Princeton areas. It was at Rider University in 1989 he found his computer platform of choice in the form of a Mac Plus running MacWrite and ChemDraw. Since joining PMUG in 2002 he has held several positions including leading the Intermediate SIG, President and is currently editor of *The Dialog*, PMUG's monthly newsletter.