

# Serving out Wireless Sound

— Chris Martens

**Y**amaha's MCX-2000 is a second-generation music server, and the firm's depth of experience shows in many ways. A big part of this server's appeal centers on the fact that it can serve as the hub of a multi-room audio system, supporting up to 15 remote "client modules," five of which can be wireless. What is more, Yamaha's MCX-A10 Wire-

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The MCX-2000 is a snap to configure, thanks to its onscreen Easy Setup wizard. Following the wizard's clear, step-by-step instructions, I prepared the server for use and configured a WiFi-connected remote playback zone in under an hour. One minor complaint is that Yamaha's user interface graphics look a little crude and unpolished. The Yamaha interface is structurally sound, but its appearance needs work.

The Yamaha offers more versatile playback options than most servers, providing Internet radio connections plus built-in

while the other captures MP3 data only (at 160, 256, or 320 kbps encoding rates). The MCX-2000 does not support other compression options. The server's 160GB drive can store about 200 hours of music in the PCM + MP3 mode, or up to 2,000 hours of music in MP3-only mode. Recording controls are simple and self-explanatory. Yamaha uses the Gracenote CDDB system to look up album data, though a disappointment is that the server captures text data but not album cover art.

Sonically, the MCX-2000 reflects Yamaha's traditional "house sound," which offers smooth highs, a good measure of mid-range openness, punchy bass, and natural warmth. Overall sound quality falls somewhat below that of today's best CD-only players in the \$1000 range, but is very good relative to many music servers I've heard.

While the Yamaha sounds laid back at first, its easygoing clarity and natural warmth prove compelling in the long run.

The MCX-2000 offers intuitive recording and playback controls, better than average sound quality, and the shortest, simplest path to multizone audio I've yet seen. Going forward, we'd like to see Yamaha improve this server with larger hard drives, broader compression options, and a better-looking interface. Then, this sophisticated server's virtues would shine even more brightly. **TPV**



## The Last Word



- Easy to set up, use
- Smooth, natural sound
- Multizone audio made easy



- No component video or coaxial digital audio outputs
- Better looking interface graphics, please
- Needs a bigger hard drive and more compression options

## Specifications

- Dimensions: 17.1" x 3.7" x 16.1"
- Weight: 14.9 lbs.
- Price: \$2200 (MCX-A10, \$600; MCX-C15, \$430)

## Manufacturer Information

**Yamaha Corp.**  
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www.yamaha.com

