FMJ

advance product information
ARCAM MS250 MusicFile Server

questions and answers

Overview

Q. What is the Arcam MS250?

A. It is a world-class music replay and storage device. At its simplest the MS250 is an audiophile quality stereo CD player, with a built-in 400GB hard drive to store some 640 uncompressed CDs or up to 4,800 CDs (about 80,000 tunes) in compressed audio formats. When used to its full potential it is an extremely powerful home music server that supports multiple audio zones, via analogue, and which lets you make compilations of your own music on to CD-R. Furthermore it provides internet access for listening to internet radio.

music replay and storage

Q. How good is the sound quality?

A. Unlike other music servers the sound quality of the MS250 when playing CDs is as good as an audiophile CD player. This applies to all four of its analogue outputs. This is because Arcam's engineers used their expertise to design a custom sound card specifically for the MS250 using four Crystal CS4398 120dB dynamic range 24-bit stereo DACs, plus properly implemented power supplies and output filters, just like an Arcam CD player.

When stored in uncompressed WAV format, music playback from the hard drive is of audiophile quality, just as you would expect from an Arcam CD player. Playback of compressed files (MP3, etc.) produces an extremely enjoyable musical experience, especially when using data rates of 320kBs or higher. Wolfson Analogue to Digital converters ensure even the analogue inputs enjoy superb audio quality, making them ideal for archiving non-digital material such as vinyl, tape or FM radio.

Q. What happens when I first play a CD in the MS250?

A. It loads and plays just like it would in a conventional CD player. However you can route the sound to any of the supported zones that you choose.

Q. Does the MS250 recognise my CDs automatically?

A. If your MS250 is connected to the internet it can automatically access an internet database. This recognises the vast majority of commercial CDs and also contains track lists, timings and genre information. You can easily enter tracklists for unknown albums via the remote control, used in the same manner as text entry on a mobile phone.

Q. What kind of playlists can I make?

A. You can sort your entire music collection by artist, genre, album or generate any number of custom playlists. The music can be sourced from the MS250 and also from anywhere else on your home network.

Q. Can I play tracks in a random order?

A. You can select a playlist, album, artist, genre etc., or the whole contents of the MS250, and then play this material in random order. The same track will not be played twice in the same session.

Q. Can I burn anything on my MS250 to CD-R?
A. The MS250's CD drive incorporates a CD burner. You can burn any music stored on an MS250 to CD-R or CD-RW for your personal use on other systems, such as your car.

Q. I've got loads of music on my PC - do I have to reload all of this?
A. Not at all. Provided you can link your PC to the MS250 via an Ethernet or wireless network, all the music on your PC becomes available to the MS250.
* Ethernet / wireless bridge required, not supplied

Q. Can I record my old vinyl LPs?
A. Yes, because the MS250 has two analogue inputs for external sources. Vinyl records will of course need to be played through an external phono preamplifier stage, which is usually already fitted to most stereo integrated amplifiers and receivers.

Q. Can I use my iPod with my MS250?
A. You can replay anything stored on your iPod or other portable storage device through one of the MS250's analogue inputs.

multiroom and networking with the MS250

Q. Can I listen to my music in more than one room?
A. Yes of course. In the analogue domain the MS250 supports four zones, at line level, which can simultaneously send different music to each room (zone). This can be from a CD played in real time in the MS250, from the music library stored on the HDD, or streamed from broadband internet or routed from up to two external audio sources such as a radio tuner and set top box.

In addition the system works in the pure digital domain. The MS250 is designed to integrate seamlessly into your home network via its Ethernet connection and access your music stored on other devices on the network such as your PC. It is also possible to use multiple MS250s on a home network.

Q. How can you control different zones?
A. Each analogue zone can be controlled from the main zone or locally. The latter typically uses an Arcam infra-red remote control handset and needs an infra-red link from each zone (such as a Xantech dinky link) back to the MS250. An RS232 port on the MS250 allows it to be integrated with third party multi-room controllers such as Crestron or AMX.

Q. Do I need to connect my MS250 to external amplifiers?
A. The audio outputs of the MS250 are at line level, so you will need an external stereo amplifier and speakers for each zone (room) that you are using. For best results use high quality hi-fi or A/V amplifiers. Zone one also has 44.1kHz SPDIF coaxial and optical digital outputs.

on-line services

Q. What can I access on the internet?
A. When the MS250 is connected to the internet, a number of key services are available including up-to-date CD track information when storing and playing discs, plus internet radio services using the WMA or AMX formats. Hundreds of internet radio stations are available from around the world serving a wide variety of audiences. The quality of these services will of course depend on the data rates broadcast by the radio stations and the speed of your internet connection

Q. What speed internet connection do I need?
A. To get the most out of on-line music Service Providers you'll need a broadband modem. We recommend a minimum speed of 500kbits/sec, which will allow 2 or 3 streams to be received simultaneously by different users.

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using the MS250

Q. What displays does the MS250 have?
A. The MS250 has a large, clear display (a 6 line graphics VFD) on its front panel, which allows the user to browse and select playlists without the need for an external monitor. However an external video output (supporting composite, s-video and VGA) is provided, which allows a TV or monitor to be used to present more information and.

Q. What about backing up my hard drive?
A. The music on your MS250's hard drive can be backed to an external hard drive.

Q. Once it's installed, will any upgrades be possible to my MS250?
A. The system software can be maintained and upgraded via a CD-ROM supplied by your dealer. Note that the hard drive is not designed to be user upgradeable.

The MS250 is designed and manufactured by Arcam in the UK

ARCAM

Bringing movies and music to life

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