CAMP News

May 2009

May Meeting Program

It's iTunes night! CAMP Membership Director Mike Knight will show us the ins and outs of personal computing's premier computer music player at our May 13 meeting. The festivities start at the usual time and place: 7:00 p.m. in Room 117, Gardiner Area High School. If you haven't yet paid your 2009 dues, please give Mike your $20 check as soon as possible.

Noteworthy iTunes Plug-ins

Jeff Frankel, Newsletter Editor

It seems like eons ago that Apple bought the SoundJam MP3 player application and molded it into iTunes. Even before the debut of the iTunes store, iTunes had already spawned a cottage industry of plug-ins and add-ons. Following the introduction of Dashboard in OS 10.4, Tiger, a slew of iTunes widgets followed. I've partaken lightly of all these customization options, as the program has met my needs with a minimum of third-party enhancements. Yet there are two plug-ins that I've found to be indispensable: iWow and Kaleidostrobe.

SRS iWow Premium for iTunes from SRS Labs is a sound enhancer for iTunes audio output that must be heard to be believed. The effect is difficult to describe in words, but you'll definitely hear the difference. SRS' web site uses such phrases as "clearer definition," "dynamic center control," "wider stereo image" and "bigger, deeper bass" to describe the benefit, and it's all true. You can choose from a wide variety of presets or roll your own, but it all adds up to tremendously increased presence in your music. The before-and-after comparison is astonishing. iWow turns my run-of-the-mill 2+1 computer speakers into the mouse that roared. Unfortunately, SRS has tremendously ratcheted up the price of iWow for iTunes since I bought it. The application is now available only in a "premium" edition for $40.

There are iTunes visualizers, and then there is **Kaleidostrobe**, *the* iTunes visualizer. Most visualizers bear only a tenuous relationship to the musical characteristics of the track that is playing. Not so Kaleidostrobe, which keys into the pulse and tempo of a song to generate an ever-changing explosion of geometric kaleidoscopic patterns. The web site accurately notes that the plug-in works best with music that has a prominent beat and lots of bass — thus obviating the need to indulge in other stimulants. From Shehryar Lasi. Price: Free.