

Producer/Engineer's Note:

What Is FLAC, And Why Do I Want It?

We're committed to finding the highest quality way to get music from Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers to you. We want you to hear it at home the same way we hear it in the studio.

We think the best audio option for your computer or media server is FLAC. FLAC is a high quality file that is the best sounding format for downloads. Unlike mp3, which discards elements of the audio to make the file size smaller, FLAC is a "lossless" format, which sounds the same as the source files it was created from. We made the FLAC files from the same high-resolution uncompressed 24-bit 96K master stereo files we used for the vinyl and Blu-Ray versions of *Damn The Torpedoes: Deluxe Edition*. When we compared those files to the FLAC's, the waveforms tested out to be virtually identical.

FLAC captures the full dynamic range of the music from the quietest to the loudest sounds. Because of this (and because we are adding no digital compression) it will not sound as "loud" as a standard CD or mp3. To compensate for this, turn up the volume!

Here are some things to know about FLAC:

- The FLAC files are for those who want to get the best sound possible out of a computer connected to some good speakers or a hi-fi system. FLAC will not play back on iPods or portable mp3 players. (For iPods and other portable players we made Apple Lossless files and high quality 320K mp3's)
- FLAC is a new, evolving format, so you will need to be a bit of a pioneer and put in some effort configuring your system to get the most out of it. (The [FLAC faq](#) page is a good resource to learn more.)
- FLAC will not play back in iTunes. Apple's iTunes software does not support it.
- FLAC will play back on a computer using one of many free applications that are [downloadable](#). (There is a very good one I've found called [Songbird](#) for Windows, Linux and Intel processor Macs.)
- Once you load all the FLAC's into the software player, you will also need to configure your computer's outputs for the right format. If this is not set properly, then you will not get the most out of these files, as most computers outputs are set to the lower resolution of 16-bit 44.1K stereo.

- Here's how to set a Mac for proper playback. 1) Launch **Audio MIDI Setup** (inside the Applications/Utilities folder). 2) Set the **Output Format** to 96000.0 Hz, and 2ch-24bit. From what I've heard about PC's it might be more complicated, but certainly not impossible, to set the output to 24-bit 96K stereo.
- For the ultimate in sound, consider getting a high quality digital to analog converter (DAC) and connecting it directly from your computer to your stereo system. Computer Audiophile is a very good resource for information on hi-end computer audio, and on DAC's (like the Lavry DA11, which I own). There are also several hardware players that support FLAC, including a hybrid product called Squeezebox which will turn a computer into a music server using a wireless network.

So there you go. If you follow the above steps you will be able to impress your friends and be a pioneer in computer-based high-resolution audio. With the right system, you'll be as close to being there as we can get you.

Ryan Ulyate