

How to Practice **On-Line Music On Your Computer**

(last revision 2010-10-27)

Introduction

This area of the web-site is intended for singers who want to use their computer to help them practice music at home. Whatever method you use, if you study your part at home, and don't make the director stop rehearsal to pound out your part on the piano, your fellow choristers will think you're really cool! Use our scarce rehearsal time to work on blending and breathing and making it beautiful.

What You Need

1. You need either a PC/Windows computer or an Apple Macintosh. Your computer must have some speakers which will play the music.
2. You need web browser software. You can use Microsoft Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, Apple Safari, Google Chrome, or probably any other browser.
3. The first time you use the practice files, you'll need to download and install the latest Scorch software into your browser. "Scorch" is a free software from Sibelius. It's a plug-in for your web browser which allows you to display and play Sibelius music score files on the web-site. You only have to do this once (for each browser you use), and below are instructions for installing it.

The Music Practice Files

1. Now you should see a list of the practice files, something like that shown below:

Adieu Sweet Amarillis	Grey p039	Gm	All	Sop	Alto	Tenor	Bass	Dir Notes
April Is In My Mistress' Face	Grey p008	Fm (was Gm)	All	Sop	Alto	Tenor	Bass	Dir Notes

**Click on your part
(for example, ALTO)**

2. After you select the song you want, you should see the music:

Scorch

Welcome This Night

Joan McMillen
(jg 2009-11-29)

SOPRANO
ALTO
TENOR
BASS
Piano

Wel-come thisnight, o wel-come thisnight.

queen of the dark - ness, moth-er of light. O lay downthe old.

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If you can't see the score, [get the Sibelius Scorch plug-in here.](#)

**If you don't
see this music,
(or at least the
title page)**

**then
click here
to install
Scorch**

**if you have an
old version of
Scorch, you'll
get a message
to Click to
install the
newest version.**

3.

Music Playback Control Bar

At the top of the music score display is the Scorch music playback control bar. Use it to control the playing:



1. Turn pages. You can also use the up & down arrow keys on your keyboard
2. Change playback devices. Usually you can ignore this. If you have sound-playback problems on your computer, this is for fooling around with that.
3. Playback controls: Start, Pause, Stop, Reverse-Skip, Forward-Skip. The slider is very useful -- it controls the tempo. Slide it to the left to slow down the playback when you're just learning the song.
4. Transpose keys. Usually you can ignore this, and it might not show on your computer. The files are already in the correct key.
- 5,6,7. Not used on these songs, and usually don't show. We intend you to play the songs from the web-site.
8. Get information and updates for Scorch from Sibelius. Usually you can ignore this.

After you've finished playing one song, use your web browser's BACK button to return to the list of files.

Viewing the Scores on Your Computer

Scorch displays the music scores one page at a time as you play them. On most computer screens, the print is fairly tiny and hard to read. Some web browsers have a VIEW > ZOOM tab at the top, which you can use to make the display larger, but for large sizes the bottom of the score page might fall off the bottom of your screen. All in all, you might be better off reading along from your printed sheet music.

How the Songs Sound on Your Computer

Your Part. If you click on the button for your part (for example, ALTO), you'll hear your part louder and on the LEFT stereo channel (left speaker or earphone), with the other parts softer and on the RIGHT channel. If you click on "ALL" you'll hear all parts balanced equally together.

Tonic. For a-cappella (voice only; no piano), each song begins with a "pitch-pipe" sound of the Tonic (first note of the scale, or the "do" of "do-re-mi..."). For example, if the song is in the key of F#-major, you'll hear the note "F#"; or, if the song is in A-minor, you'll hear the note "A". Practice finding your starting note from this "pitch-pipe" tonic, and singing (or thinking) it BEFORE the main song starts. That's exactly what you'll have to do during a street-corner performance when your chorus director blows the pitch-pipe. For example, maybe your ALTO part begins on note 5 of the scale ("do-re-mi-fa-SOL"). Practice singing your first note loudly and confidently -- no tentative "wussy" beginnings! DON'T wait until the other parts start singing to figure out your starting note -- they'll be waiting for YOU.

Tempo. After the tonic, each song begins with "clicks" for the starting tempo. This is kind of like how your real director will start you. Think Lawrence Welk's "ah-one, ah-two, ah-three...".

Lyrics. Sorry. This playback is great for learning your note pitches and rhythms, but what you hear is computer-simulated instrumental sounds without vocal lyrics (words). The lyrics display in tiny print on the screen, but you'll have to learn them on your own from your sheet music.

Beauty. Many really good musicians think practice song files sound ugly and tinny. They're correct. These files are intended to be a learning tool, not a work of art. It came off a computer, for goodness sakes! If you want beautiful music, get together with the humans in your chorus and make some!

Copyrights. Perhaps some of these practice songs are covered by copyright. You should have acquired legally purchased sheet music for them. Given that, our understanding is that you can legally use the practice files for your own personal use. Please respect all copyrights, and do not distribute this music.

Errors and Omissions

I tried to make these practice song files as correct as I could. I transposed keys, changed individual notes, and modified repeats, etc. to match your director's most recent instructions, as nearly as I could understand them. I'd like to blame any errors on the computer, the director, or my dog, but truthfully, errors are probably my own. Please tell me about any errors or omissions you find, or any great ideas you have for improvements. Maybe together we can make things better. Happy singing!

-- Jack Ghiselli (jghiselli@sbcglobal.net)

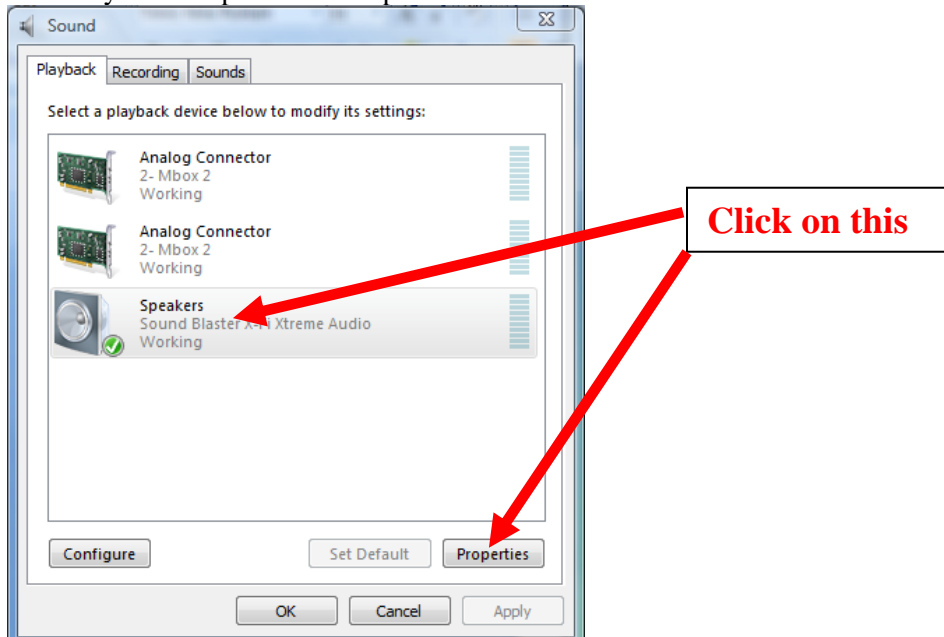
Appendix A: Adjusting Speaker Left/Right Balance on Your Computer

Please ignore this section if it's too complicated for you. For most songs, there are special files with your part (e.g., Alto) emphasized. Your part is louder, and is on the LEFT stereo channel (left speaker or headphone earpiece). The other parts are on the RIGHT stereo channel. If you want, you can adjust your computer's playback BALANCE (sometimes called PAN) to make your part louder or softer. Set BALANCE full LEFT to hear only your part, with other parts silenced. If you're really brave, set BALANCE full RIGHT to silence your part and hear "the chorus minus me", and sing your part with no help.

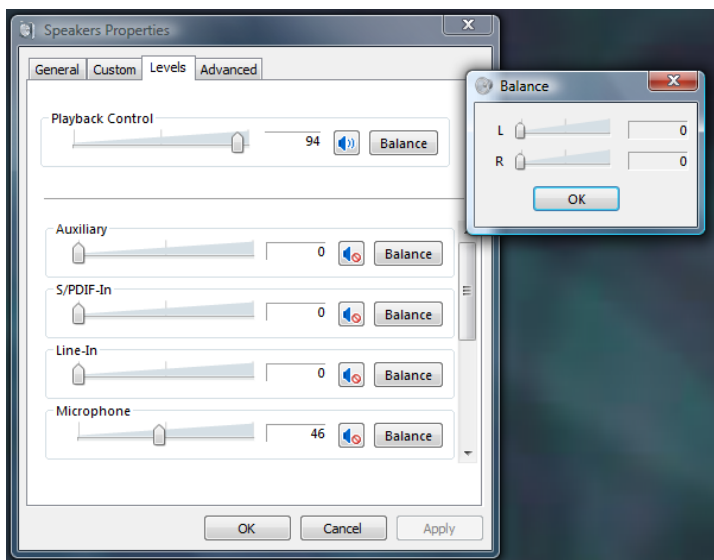
Adjusting your computer's playback balance depends on your particular operating system. The following procedures might be different on your computer.

For some Windows Vista systems:

1. Click on START > Settings > Control Panel > Sound
2. Click on Playback > Speakers > Properties

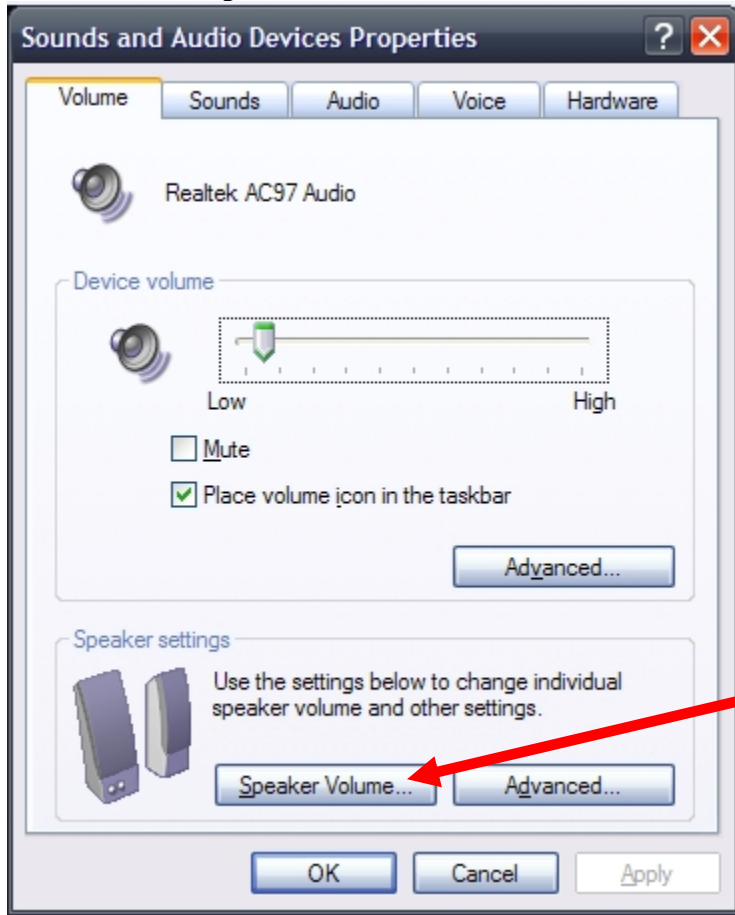


3. Click on Levels > Balance, and adjust the Balance sliders

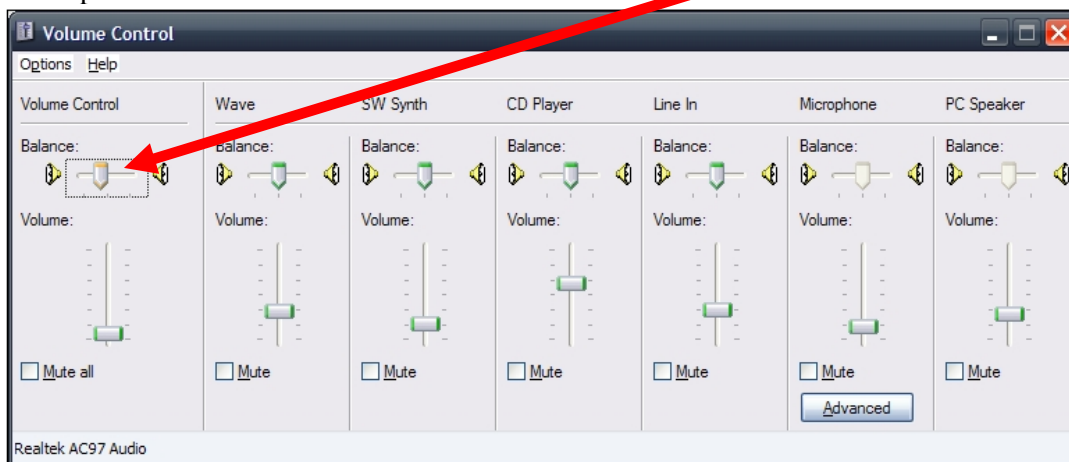


For some Windows/XP Systems:

1. Click on Start > Settings > Control Panel > Sound



2. Click on Speaker Volume



3. Adjust the left/right Balance to suit yourself

If you can't figure out how to adjust BALANCE on your computer, snuggle your ear up to the left or right speaker, or pull one headphone earpiece out from your ear. Or just suck it up and cope.