

A method of converting MIDI files to WAV files

The question, "How can I convert a Mozart" score into a WAV file is often asked on the Forum. A number of replies have been given; some of which rely on using Windows built-in recorder, and some use proprietary software that needs to be purchased.

The method I am about to describe makes use of the iTunes software (from Apple inc.) which at the time of writing is freely available from <http://www.apple.com/itunes/overview/> .

Some advantages of using iTunes to perform the conversion are

- Once the WAV files have been produced, the same software can be used to 'burn' the files to a CD if so required,
- A batch of files can be converted by a single command,
- The conversion is performed at better than 'real time' (the actual rate will probably depend on the specification of the PC in use)
- iTunes is also able to convert to other formats such as MP3.

On the down side, you have no control over the voices used. I'm not clear if they are provided with iTunes or if it uses Windows default ones, or ones associated with any sound card found. I imagine one of the former. It does understand General MIDI so selecting a trumpet in Mozart will use a trumpet voice, but maybe not as good as you would find with a high-end sound card, or dedicated synth.

1st step – Use Mozart to create a MIDI (.mid) file.

In order that iTunes can be used to produce a WAV file, you need to produce a MIDI file from Mozart. This can be achieved with the

File > Export > Save MIDI as...

menu selection. (It's worth noting that any settings made under the 'Voices', 'Dynamics', Volume' and 'Stereo' tabs of 'View > MIDI options' will be respected during this conversion process.)

2nd step – Import the MIDI file into iTunes.

Once you have the MIDI file(s), run iTunes, and import them.

File > Import

will open a normal Windows file selection dialogue. Navigate to where you saved the MIDI (.mid) files and import them. Unfortunately, only one file can be selected at a time, but repeated Imports do go back to the same folder used last time.

The 'imported' files will show up in iTunes if the 'Music' heading under 'LIBRARY' in the left hand window area is selected.

3rd step – Prepare for conversion.

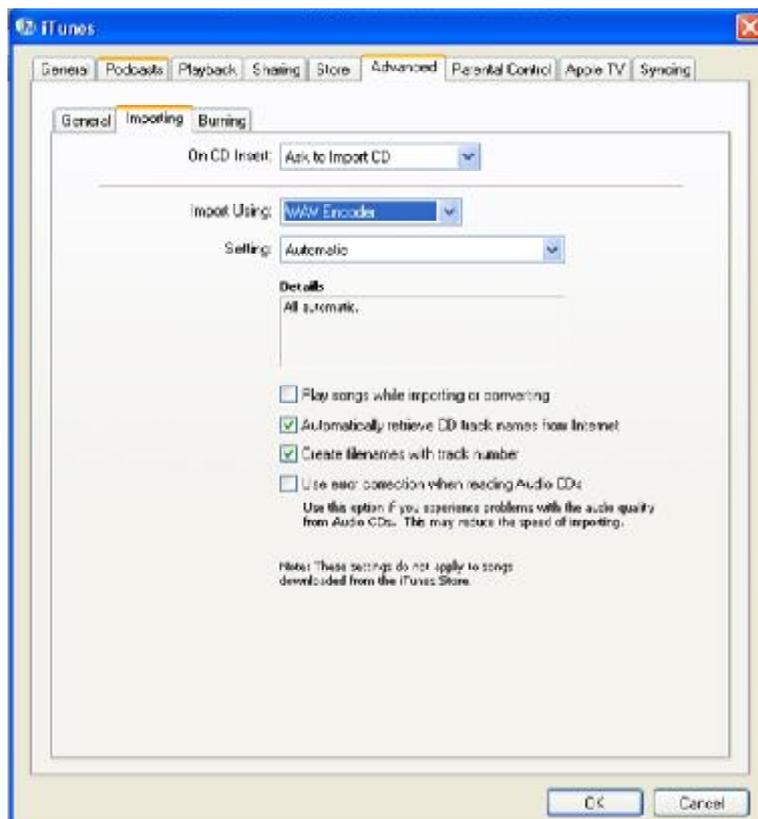
Before the imported MIDI files can be converted, iTunes needs to know what conversion is required. This is done by the following sequence.

Edit > Preferences

Click the Advanced tab

Click the Importing tab

Then in the Import Using drop-down select WAV Encoder – Click OK



4th step – Perform the conversion.

If the above step was successful, then a Right Click on one or more selected MIDI (.mid) files should have the entry 'Convert Selection to WAV' in the menu that appears. Click on this and the conversion will start.

During the conversion, iTunes shows progress in a small window at the top of its main window.

Some general points.

Once converted, there will be two files with the same name. One is the original MIDI file, the other is the newly generated WAV file. The MIDI files can be removed from iTunes now if required.

iTunes doesn't default to show file types (and I haven't found a way to make it do so). It can therefore be a bit tricky to differentiate the original MIDI file from the new WAV file. Fortunately, selecting a file and Right Clicking brings up a menu, of which the first entry is `Get Info`. Selecting this will show you various pieces of information about the file, including what **kind** of file it is. It will also show the location of the file, which is necessary if you wish to access it from somewhere other than within iTunes.

iTunes allows files to be grouped into Folders and Playlists. If you wish to burn a number of files to CD it is best to group them into a playlist.

`File > New Playlist`

Then name the playlist as you wish.

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Once you have created a Playlist, a file can be added to it by selecting it, Right Clicking, and selecting 'Add to Playlist' from the menu that appears. This will in turn show the playlists available - Select the one required.

Once in a Playlist, the order of files can be changed by dragging them up and down the list.

A playlist can be burnt to CD by selecting it, Right Clicking and selecting the option 'Burn Playlist to Disc' from the menu that appears.

A MIDI file can be played in iTunes without performing the conversion if you want to check what it will sound like before proceeding.

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