



SoundJam MP Plus

Digital Audio System

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Manual by Tom Negrino
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CHAPTER 1: WELCOME TO SOUNDJAM MP PLUS

Welcome to SoundJam! You now own a powerful music and entertainment program, one that turns your Macintosh into the smartest component you ever added to your stereo system. SoundJam makes MP3 files sing, dance, and do somersaults at your command.

WHAT'S MP3?

MP3 is a special sound-file format that has become explosively popular on the Internet. You can get hundreds of thousands of MP3 files from the Net; this format has enabled great new bands—that you otherwise never would have heard of—to get discovered by online fans. Even established musicians—and their record labels—have jumped onto the MP3 bandwagon; you can often download MP3 previews of your favorite artists' new songs from the Internet.

The beauty of MP3 files is that they play back songs with amazing quality—to you, they sound almost like CDs—but because of the special compression, each MP3 file is only a fraction the size of actual CD music files.

Why do you care about how big a sound file is? First, of course, smaller files are faster, less expensive, and more manageable to send by e-mail or to post on a Web page. Second, smaller music files mean you can fit a lot of them on your hard drive or, say, a Zip disk, turning your Mac into the ultimate sound machine.

Finally, MP3 files are so small, over an hour's worth of them can fit into the memory of a tiny portable MP3 player like Diamond Multimedia's Rio 500 or Creative Labs' Nomad II. Load up your favorite music from the Mac onto this pocket-sized personal stereo system, and you've got skip-proof music in your headphones for even the longest morning jogs.

The jukebox has come a long way.

WHAT'S SOUNDJAM?

SoundJam MP is the ultimate MP3 music center. Of course, it can play all kinds of MP3 files, no matter where they came from, in any order, with a 10-band graphic equalizer to make the sound quality exactly what you crave. But describing SoundJam as just an MP3 player is like describing Leonardo da Vinci as just a dead Italian. SoundJam can also:

- Show stunning animated displays that shimmer and dance on the screen in time to the music.
- Change its look at your command—a high-tech control center, a 1950s rock and roll restaurant, a prehistoric tablet—thanks to an amazing choice of visual “skins.”

- Play traditional music CDs with far more control and better visuals than Apple's built-in CD player software.
- Convert almost any kind of sound file, including those on your favorite CDs, into MP3 files that you store and manage on your Mac, portable MP3 player, or even your own newly burned CDs. (And of course, instead of 70 minutes, a single CD can hold an incredible ten hours of audio as MP3 files! Standard CD players can't play MP3 files, but your Mac can.)
- Download new MP3 files directly from the Internet, thanks to the built-in Web menu.
- Play "streaming" music from the Internet—live broadcasts as well as commercial recordings that come in the form of real-time transmissions, not downloadable files.
- Automatically fill in the names of your CDs, songs, and artists, thanks to live links with CDDb, the Internet's massive CD-ROM information database.
- Serve as a database of your own music. Sort by song name, artist name, album, and much more.
- Connect to your stereo with the included patch cord for the ultimate in great sound.

HOW TO INSTALL SOUNDJAM

Installing SoundJam is extremely easy: the SoundJam MP Installer takes care of the process.

1. Insert the SoundJam MP CD-ROM.

The SoundJam CD window will open automatically.

2. Double-click the SoundJam MP Installer program. The Installer window appears, as in Figure 1-1.
3. If you want to install SoundJam on a hard disk other than your startup disk, click the Switch Disk button in the Installer window. Otherwise, click the Install button. The Installer puts the pieces of the SoundJam package into the correct places on your hard disk. When the Installer's done, you'll be prompted to Restart your Mac.

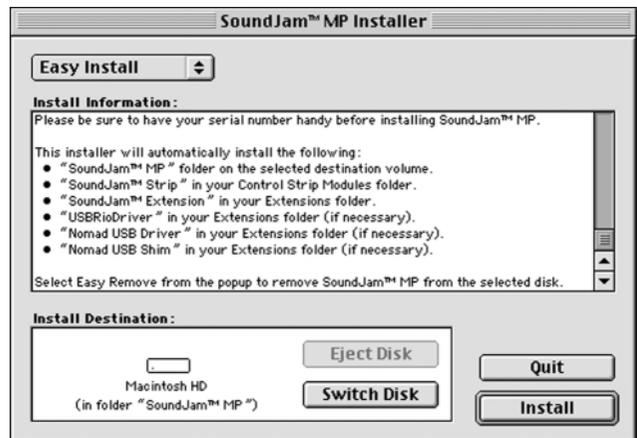


Figure 1-1: The Installer window.

4. When your Mac finishes restarting, there will be a folder named SoundJam™ MP on the top level of the hard disk you chose. Inside the folder, you'll find your new software, as shown in Figure 1-2.
5. Double-click on the SoundJam™ MP icon to start the program.

The first time you run SoundJam, a license agreement window appears. Read the license (if you like legalese), then click the Agree button. Next the

Personalize dialog box appears, prompting you to type in your name, company (optional), and serial number. (You can press the Tab key to jump from one of these blanks to the next.)

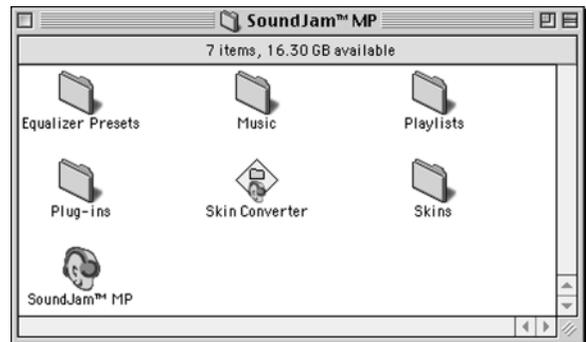


Figure 1-2: SoundJam and its attendant folders.

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- ✻ Your SoundJam serial number is printed on the front of the CD-ROM envelope and in the front of the manual. Don't lose this number! If you ever need technical support, you'll need this number again.

If you're stranded on a desert island without your serial number, leave the serial number field blank, click the OK, button in the Personalize dialog box, and SoundJam will remind you to enter the serial number or go into demonstration mode. Click OK, and then click the "7-Day Demo" button that appears in the Personalize dialog box. You'll be allowed to use the software for a week—in demonstration mode, which limits the number of new MP3 files you can create—which should give you time to dig up your serial number.

6. Type in your serial number, and then click OK.

If your Mac uses virtual memory—which it almost certainly does, since this memory-saving and speed-enhancing technology was turned on at the factory—a message now appears. It lets you know that virtual memory may cause skipping in the play-back of your MP3 files when you do something that requires the Mac's full attention, such as launching another program.

For most people, a possible skip in their music won't be enough of a reason to disable virtual memory. After reading the message, click OK. The first screen of the SoundJam Setup Assistant opens, as shown in Figure 1-3.



Figure 1-3: The SoundJam Setup Assistant steps you through configuring the program.

7. Read the introductory text and then click the Next button. The Product Registration window appears.

In this window, click the radio button next to one of the three registration choices. You can choose to register SoundJam now, register later, or tell the Setup Assistant that you have previously registered SoundJam. Remember that you must register the product in order to receive technical support from Casady & Greene. Registration also entitles you to some free enhancements to SoundJam that are available only to registered users. When you're done, click the Next button. The information window appears.

8. Fill out your name, address, e-mail address, and other information.

You can use the Tab key to move from one information box to the next. Only the name and e-mail address is required. Click the Next button when you're done, and the additional information window appears.

9. Use the supplied radio buttons to specify which information you want to send and receive from Casady & Greene, and feel free to comment about SoundJam in the text box provided. Click the Next button.

10. In the Internet Playback window, shown in Figure 1-4, tell the Setup Assistant if you want to use SoundJam as the helper application for playing MP3 files or streams from the Internet. Then click the Finish button.

That's all there is to it. The SoundJam folder on your hard drive contains everything you need to start playing and making music.



Figure 1-4: It's a good idea to set SoundJam as the player of choice for Internet MP3 files.

System requirements: With any luck, you made sure that you had the necessary system software and Macintosh model before you bought SoundJam.

For the record, however, you need a Macintosh with at least a PowerPC 603 processor at 100 MHz or faster—and Mac OS 7.6.1 or later. Your System Folder requires the extension called Sound Manager 3.2 (or a later version); unless you threw this software away, it's already in your Extensions folder.

THE SOUNDJAM TEST DRIVE

Once you've installed SoundJam onto your hard drive, using it is as easy as using a CD player—easier, in fact. Here's how:

1. Run SoundJam (if it's not already open). From SoundJam's File menu, choose Open Playlist, then from the pop-out menu, choose Tutorial Playlist, as in Figure 1-5.

A playlist is a list of songs that you've arranged in a particular order. The SoundJam CD comes with more than 100 music files ready to play—and they've been organized into the playlist called Tutorial Playlist. That's the file you're

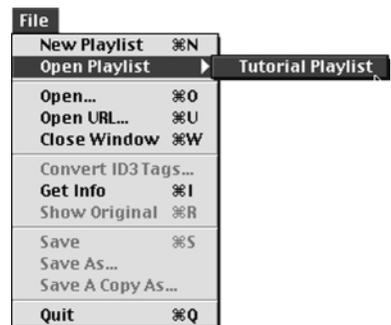


Figure 1-5: Opening the Tutorial Playlist.

opening for this experiment. (The actual MP3 files themselves are in a folder on the SoundJam CD-ROM called “Music from songs.com.”)

The SoundJam window is now open. Part of SoundJam’s charm is that you can easily change its look; but the first time you run the program, it looks like Figure 1-6.

2. Click the Play button (shaped like a triangle), or press the Space bar.

SoundJam begins to play the first music file in the playlist.

Now you can go to town, using the controls on the SoundJam “front panel” to play, stop, jump to previous track or next track, and so on. Adjust the volume, bass, and treble by dragging the sliders at the bottom of the window. (You can find details on these controls in the next chapter.) You can even switch to another Macintosh program, continuing your work for the day to the soothing strains of 10,000 Smashing Maniacs (or whoever your favorite happens to be).



Figure 1-6: SoundJam’s first appearance.

But SoundJam isn’t just a treat for your ears—it’s nice to look at, too:

3. From the Window menu, choose Eclipse.

A new window opens, featuring animations of a blazing sun—that dance in time to the music as it plays.

4. Click the PL button on the “front panel.”

The Playlist window comes to the front.

5. Double-click the name of a different track to hear it.

When you’re finished playing around with SoundJam, choose Quit from the File menu.

For even more fun using SoundJam as a music player, turn to the next chapter. You’ll find out how to use the Graphic Equalizer, create playlists, hook up your Mac to your stereo for better sound quality, and more.

CHAPTER 2: SOUNDJAM: THE E-JUKEBOX

SoundJam can create music files, organize them, download them, annotate them, and much more. What you'll do most of the time with SoundJam, however, is play music files.

And where, you may ask, do these files come from? The world is filled with them. SoundJam can play not only standard audio CDs and MP3 files, but also QuickTime audio, AIFF, WAV, and other sound formats. See the next chapter for instructions on getting music files from the Internet, the SoundJam CD, or even your own CD collection. Use this chapter, meanwhile, as your guide to playing the files you collect.

HOW TO OPEN A MUSIC FILE

Once you've managed to acquire a music file, you can open it in SoundJam in any of these ways:

- If the sound file is one you've previously opened or created with SoundJam, just double-click it.
- Drag the music file icon onto the SoundJam icon (see Figure 2-1).
- Launch SoundJam. From the File menu, choose Open. Navigate to the folder where you keep your music files, and double-click to open one.
- Launch SoundJam. Drag music file icons from your desktop directly on top of any SoundJam window, also as shown in Figure 2-1. You can even drag an entire folder of sound files into a SoundJam window

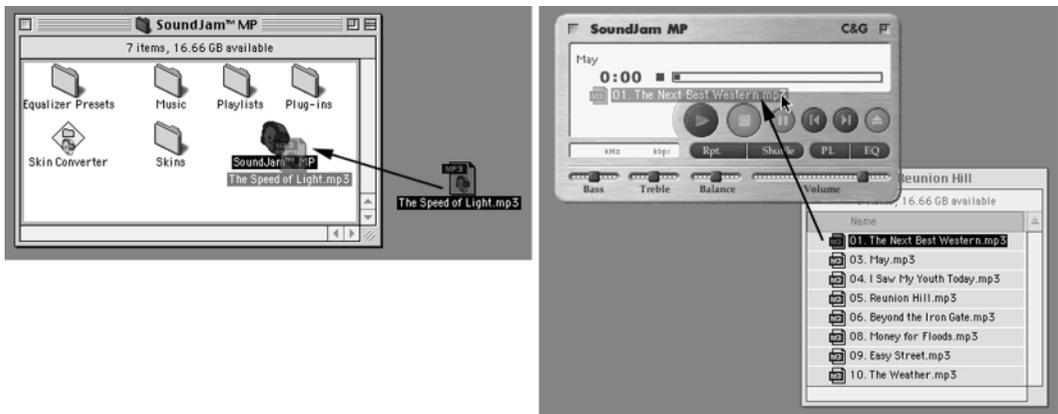


Figure 2-1: Open a sound file by dragging its icon onto the SoundJam icon (left), or by dragging its icon into any SoundJam window (right).

-
- ✎ *SoundJam can also serve as the front panel for your regular music CDs, replacing the much more limited Apple AudioCD Player program in your Apple menu. Just insert a music CD while SoundJam is running; the SoundJam Playlist window appears automatically, listing the tracks on the disc.*
-

THE PLAYER WINDOW

The Player window is the “front panel” of your virtual music player. It contains a volume slider, play and stop buttons, a counter, and so on. The exact controls visible on this important window vary, depending on the skin or graphic design module you’re using at the moment (see *Switching Skins*, later in this chapter); in general, however, you’ll find the following elements, as shown in Figure 2-2:

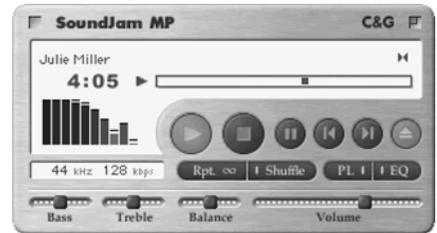


Figure 2-2: The Player window.

- A. **Close box**—Click this button to close all the windows and quit SoundJam.
- B. **Song information**—Clicking in this area cycles between the current song’s title, the album name, and the name of the artist. If the song is being “streamed”—sent to you over the Internet—SoundJam shows you part of the URL of the song.

If you don’t see the actual song names displayed here, and instead you see just “Track 02,” for example, it’s probably because you’re playing an audio CD that SoundJam doesn’t recognize. Fortunately, the program links to CDDDB, the world’s largest CD track-name database, which means that you can have this information filled in automatically with a single connection to the Internet. See the next chapter for details.

- C. **Position bar**—As your sound file plays, the handle on the position bar inches to the right. Whenever you want to hear a particularly great musical moment again, grab the position handle with your mouse, drag it to the left, and release, thus making SoundJam repeat the juicy moment as it plays back. On the other hand, if you know that a particular verse of the song, one that you can’t stand, is coming up, you can grab the position handle and drag it to the right, past the offending moment.

You can also click anywhere in the position bar to jump to the corresponding spot in the track (instead of dragging the handle on the position bar).

- D. **Equalizer button**—Click this button, often marked by the letters E or EQ, to open the Graphic Equalizer window, described in the next section.

- E. **Playlist button**—Click this button, usually marked by the letters P or PL, to open the Playlist window. In this window, you see the list of songs SoundJam is ready to play—either because it’s the table of contents of the current CD, or because it’s the list of MP3 or other audio files you’ve assembled yourself. See “The Playlist Window,” later in this chapter.

Tip: You can highlight a particular track in the playlist by typing the first few letters of its name.

- F. **Min/Max box**—If the SoundJam Player window is taking up too much room on your screen, click this button. The Player window “collapses,” hiding many of the less important controls, so that it takes up less room on your screen.

- G. **Counter**—As on a real CD player, this counter shows the current elapsed-time location of the track you’re playing. Depending on the “skin” module you’re using (see “Switching Skins,” later in this chapter), the display may show minutes:seconds, hours:minutes:seconds, and so on.

Tip: When you click the counter display, it changes to display the remaining time left to play the current track. Clicking again displays the total time of the track.

- H. **Bass and Treble sliders**—These sliders correspond to the Bass and Treble knobs on a standard stereo component. If your music sounds too tinny, boost the bass (by dragging its slider to the right); if there’s a hiss, you might want to decrease the treble (by dragging its slider to the left). You can also set a new bass or treble level by clicking anywhere in the sliders’ “tracks.”

Note: Whenever you adjust the bass and treble sliders, you automatically deactivate SoundJam’s Graphic Equalizer, described below; after all, both sets of sliders affect the same qualities of the music. (To reactivate the graphic equalizer, click the Active or On button on the equalizer window itself.)

- I. **Repeat button**—As you repeatedly click this button, its appearance changes. When you see the button label change to “Repeat 1” or “Rep. 1,” SoundJam will play the current song over and over again (until you quit the program, play a different song, or turn off the Repeat button).

Click the Repeat button a second time, and the button now just says “Repeat ∞,” “Repeat All,” or “Rep.” Now the entire playlist plays over and over again, endlessly looping. (If you’re in Shuffle mode, the Repeat button makes SoundJam begin a new, complete play of the playlist, in a new random order.)

Click the Repeat button a third time to make the “light” go out, indicating that SoundJam won’t repeat anything at all.

✿ *Alert: The look, wording, and behavior of the Repeat button depends on the “skin” you’re using at the moment. Some may not, for example, include a Repeat 1 function. See “Switching Skins,” later in this chapter.*

J. **Shuffle button**—Click this button to make it “light up,” indicating that SoundJam will play the songs on the current CD or playlist in a random order. Click it again to make the “light” go out, which means that SoundJam will play the songs from beginning to end in their original order.

If you click Shuffle while a song is playing, SoundJam continues playing the same song—but treats it as Song #1 of a newly shuffled playlist. You’ll hear the entire playlist again, beginning with the song in progress.

K. **Graphic spectrum display**—This graphic display indicates the frequency spectrum (the high-low, or frequency, range) of the song you’re listening to. The broader the spectrum, the better the recording. The graph dances in time to the music. Click on the graphic display to change the look of the display from three variations of a frequency spectrum analyzer graph to an oscilloscope-like presentation. A final click turns the graphic display off.

L. **Readout**—SoundJam’s display may also show you the current song’s sample rate in kHz (kilohertz), bit rate in kbps (kilobits per second), and whether it is playing in mono or stereo. These technical parameters are described in Chapter 4; in essence, though, they provide an indication of the recording quality. (A music CD is generally recorded at 44.1 kHz and 1411 kbps.)

M. **Balance control**—If you’re listening to your music in stereo, use this slider to adjust the relative balance between the left and right speakers or headphones. (SoundJam can also swap the two channels, left-for-right; see “Preferences” in Chapter 5.)

N. **Play and Stop buttons**—Click the Play button (usually marked with a triangle), or press the Space bar, to begin playback; click the Stop button (usually marked with a square), or press Command-period, to stop the music and rewind to the beginning of the track.

O. **Volume slider**—Drag this slider, or press Command-up arrow/Command-down arrow, to make the music louder or softer.

P. **Eject button**—This button, which is operational only when there’s a CD in your Mac, ejects the disc and removes it from the Finder’s desktop. If you prefer, you can instead press Command-E.

- Q. **Pause button**—Click this button, or press the Space bar, to stop the music in its tracks; when you click Play again, the music picks up from where it left off. (The Pause button doesn't work when you're playing streaming audio from the Internet, as described in the next chapter.)
- R. **Fast Forward button**—Click this button, or press the right-arrow key on your keyboard, to skip to the next song in your playlist. Holding this button down shifts SoundJam into fast forward for the current track, and the longer you hold down the button, the faster SoundJam will skip ahead.

 *Tip: You can press the right-arrow key on your keyboard as an alternative to clicking the onscreen Fast Forward button. Holding down Command-Option and the right-arrow key puts SoundJam into a fast forward mode within the currently playing track.*

- S. **Rewind button**—If you click this button within the first three seconds of a track's playback, SoundJam plays the previous track in the current playlist. Pressing it repeatedly is a great way to hunt for a certain song: just click the button—listen for a moment—click the button again, and so on.

If you click the button after the first three seconds, on the other hand, SoundJam starts playing the current track from the beginning. Holding this button down puts SoundJam into rewind for the current track, and the longer you hold down the button, the faster SoundJam will backtrack.

 *Tip: You can press the left-arrow key on your keyboard as an alternative to clicking the onscreen Rewind button. Holding down Command-Option and the left arrow key puts SoundJam into fast rewind.*

- T. **Options button (not pictured)**—Only some “skins” offer this button, whose label often says OP; it opens the SoundJam Preferences window, described in Chapter 5.
- U. **Stereo/Mono Indicator**—This icon tells you if the currently playing track is stereo or mono.
- V. **MP3, CD, Net Indicators (not pictured)**—These indicators are only available with some custom “skins.” They tell you that the playback source is a local MP3 file, a CD inserted in your machine, or streaming to you over the Internet.
- W. **Animations (not pictured)**—This new feature (as of SoundJam 1.7 and later) allows some custom “skins” the capability of animating during playback. If you have one of these animating “skins,” you'll see SoundJam get down and dance while the music plays!

GRAPHIC EQUALIZER

The Graphic Equalizer is a tantalizing SoundJam feature. Using its 10 sliders, corresponding to 10 different frequency ranges in the music you're listening to, you can tailor the bass, treble, midrange, and other qualities of the music to suit your speaker system and your tastes. Think of the Graphic Equalizer as the same hi-fi controls you'd pay \$2,000 extra for on the real CD player—yours free with SoundJam.

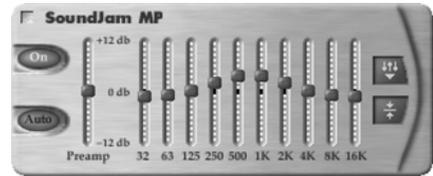


Figure 2-3: Use the Graphic Equalizer to shape the sonic qualities of your music.

To open the Graphic Equalizer window, choose its name from the Window menu—or click the EQ button, if there is one, on the Player window. Either way, a window like the one shown in Figure 2-3 appears. Here's how you use it:

- A. **Close box**—Click this square to hide the Equalizer window. You can always make it reappear by choosing its name from the Window menu.
- B. **On/Off**—The Graphic Equalizer sliders work only when this button is engaged, lit up, or turned on. (When you're using the “skin” that first appears when you launch SoundJam, the button says On, when it is On.)

Click to turn off the equalizer (without disturbing the slider positions)—a handy feature when you're trying to “A/B” the music, alternately listening to it with and without the effects of equalization. You may have to wait a second or two before you can hear the difference.

The Equalizer is automatically turned off whenever you adjust the Bass and Treble sliders described earlier in this chapter. The Equalizer's effects are also ignored if you turn off “Use CD Digital Audio Playback” in SoundJam's Preferences screen, as described in Chapter 6.

Note: Turning off the Equalizer is a good idea if you're trying to run speed-intensive programs on your Mac; SoundJam may slow down computations in other applications while the Graphic Equalizer is in use.

- C. **Equalizer bands**—Drag these sliders to shape the sound of SoundJam's music playback. If you're playing through tinny PowerBook speakers, for example, you might want to boost the bass (drag the leftmost sliders upward) and tone down the treble (drag the rightmost sliders downward). If you're listening to the music through especially boomy headphones, you might want to decrease the bass slightly.

It may take a second or two before you hear any difference after adjusting a slider. Also, keep in mind that SoundJam's sliders are more sensitive than those on your stereo equipment; small adjustments have more impact.

- D. **EQ Presets pop-up menu**—SoundJam comes equipped with a number of memorized, pre-adjusted slider settings. From this icon/pop-up menu, choose (for example) Classical, Vocal, or Rock to adjust all the sliders at once to make the corresponding kind of music sound especially good.

Similarly, if you've tweaked the sliders to absolute perfection for your particular Mac, tastes, and music collection, you can save the sliders' positions for future use. From this pop-up menu, choose Save Settings. When the standard Save File dialog box appears, if you're not already looking at the contents of SoundJam's Equalizer Presets folder, navigate to it (click Desktop, open your hard drive, open the SoundJam folder, and open the Equalizer presets folder). Type a name for your presets ("External iMac Speakers," for example) and then click Save (or press Return). From now on, your saved preset will also appear in this pop-up menu.

✎ *Tip: To delete a presets file, open your hard drive, open the SoundJam folder, and then open the Equalizer Presets folder. There you'll find icons representing each item in the Presets pop-up menu; throw away the one you don't want. Next time you run SoundJam, that preset no longer appears in the pop-up menu.*

- E. **Reset**—Click this button to make all the sliders snap back to their original "zeroed" positions.
- F. **Preamp**—This slider changes the overall volume of the currently playing track. (Behind the scenes, it adjusts the level of all the Equalizer sliders at once, although you'll notice only a sonic, not visual, difference.)

The Preamp slider can be useful when listening to a track that was recorded especially quietly, for example. Be careful, however: If you drag this slider too high, you'll pump too much sound through your Mac's sound circuitry; the result is the unpleasant, rattling distortion sound that comes from over-cranking an amplifier (or your Mac's speaker). Of course, a quicker way to avoid clipping is to click Auto, described next.

- G. **Auto**—This button is your weapon against clipping, described in the previous paragraph. When Auto is turned on, lit up, or shown in white lettering, SoundJam automatically lowers the volume, if necessary, enough to avoid this clipping effect. (Your slider positions don't change.)

THE PLAYLIST/CDWINDOW

The Playlist window is a list of the tracks you've chosen to play—and a cheat sheet that displays their order. The CD window, which appears when you insert a music CD, is almost identical.

To open the Playlist window, choose its name from the Window menu. To open the CD window, simply insert a CD. Either way, a window like the one shown in Figure 2-4 appears. You can create and save playlists of your own, of course; see Chapter 3. In the meantime, SoundJam uses a built-in one called the Master Playlist. At the top of the Master Playlist (or any Playlist), SoundJam tells you how many items you have in the Playlist, the total playing time of those items, and how much disk space they take up.



Figure 2-4: You can drag files up or down in the Playlist to change their playback order.

You can create and save playlists of your own, of course; see Chapter 3. In the meantime, SoundJam uses a built-in one called the Master Playlist. At the top of the Master Playlist (or any Playlist), SoundJam tells you how many items you have in the Playlist, the total playing time of those items, and how much disk space they take up.

SoundJam can display up to ten different columns of information about the files in your playlist. You can control whether the lists are sorted from A to Z or from Z to A, adjust the widths of the columns, and add or remove columns as your whim suits you.

WHERE SOUNDJAM GETS ITS INFO

When you first insert a music CD, the Playlist columns probably don't show much useful information. SoundJam can fill in the blanks for you—artist and album name, song names, and so on—when you use the Web Database feature, which is described in the next chapter.

When you load up a playlist with sound files, such as MP3 files, however, it's a different story. Album, Artist, Genre, and other such information is often embedded directly in your MP3 files.

Tip: If some of your MP3 files didn't come with embedded identifying information, you can record such information manually. Highlight a music file in the Playlist; from the File menu, choose Get Info. In the resulting Track Information window, you'll be offered the chance to type in this kind of data for the highlighted file. You can even add or change information for a group of files in one fell swoop. See Chapter 3 for more on this.

SOUNDJAM'S PLAYLIST COLUMN CRITERIA

The Playlist column with the most possibilities is the leftmost one. This is the column that shows your files' names. Using the "Listed by" pop-up menu above the list, you can sort these files in any of the following ways:

- **by Album**—Your files are grouped in clusters according to the CD they came from (if SoundJam knows this information).
- **by Artist**—Your files are grouped in clusters according to the band or singer's name.
- **by Bit Rate**—This is a way to group your files according to recording quality. CD files are higher quality than MP3 files, so this is an easy way to sort your playlist and see which files still need to be converted to MP3. If you converted some MP3 files at a lower bit rate (to trade audio fidelity for file size), you can spot your lower fidelity files.
- **by Date**—This option lets you see your tracks in chronological order. (The date that appears here depends on the kind of files you're viewing; MP3 files, for example, are listed here by their most recent modification dates. A music CD may show today's date.)
- **by Genre**—If your music files contain self-identifying Genre information (such as Classical, Pop, or R&B), you'll see it displayed here.
- **by Kind**—SoundJam plays MP3, CD, streaming MP3, MP2, and Macintosh "snd" files. This column sorts by file type.
- **by Name**—SoundJam sorts the list alphabetically by the tracks' names.
- **by Conversion Order**—This command, available only in the Converter window, will display the order in which files will be converted.
- **by Play Order**—This view shows your files in the order they'll be played.

Tip: The Play Order view is especially useful: it's the only listing that lets you drag the songs up or down for manual control over their playback order, as shown in Figure 2-4.

- **by Shuffle Order**—When you've asked SoundJam to play the tracks in your playlist in a random order, this view lets you know what the mixed-up order will be.
- **by Size**—When you choose this command, SoundJam lists the files in the playlist according to their file size on your hard drive (or the CD you've inserted).

- **by Time**—This listing groups your files according to the playing times of the tracks.
- **Copy to Play Order**—This menu choice takes the currently selected playlist display order and makes it the playing order for your songs.
- **Reset Play Order**—This command, available only in a CD window, will change the play order back to the original play order for a CD.

Tip: SoundJam sorts your sound files with (for example) the longest, most recent, or alphabetically earliest files at the top of the list. But you can reverse the sorting order, regardless of the criterion you've chosen for listing—just click the tiny pyramid-shaped button in the upper-right corner of the file list, shown in Figure 2-5. (Click that tiny button again to restore the initial sorting order.)



Figure 2-5: Click to (a) change the info criterion, (b) adjust the column widths, (c) add or delete columns, or (d) reverse the sorting order.

In the Album, Artist, Genre, and Kind views of your information, SoundJam shows the files hierarchically, similarly to list views in the Finder. This is especially useful in the Artist view, which shows a folder for each artist, and inside that folder, additional folders for their albums, shown in Figure 2-6. Click on the disclosure triangles to expand the list view as needed.

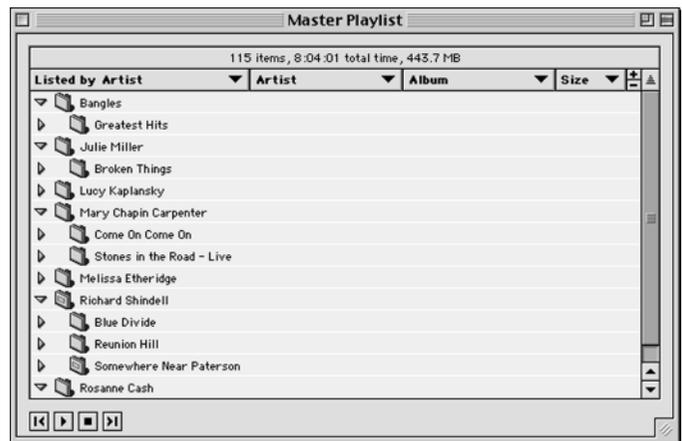


Figure 2-6: Viewing a playlist by Artist shows all their albums, too.

 *Tip: Option-clicking on a folder in a playlist opens or closes all of the folders (and if they exist, subfolders) in that view.*

MANAGING THE OTHER COLUMNS

When you first install it, SoundJam shows you four different information columns, as shown in Figure 2-5. But you can add more columns, if your curiosity demands it, simply by clicking the tiny plus sign at the upper-right corner of the window. (Click the tiny minus sign, conversely, to decrease the number of visible columns, starting from the right side.)

 *Tip: You can resize the playlist or CD window to accommodate longer track, artist, or album names by dragging the resize box at the lower-right corner.*

But even if you don't have a gigantic monitor, you can still enjoy multiple columns—just make them narrower to fit your screen. To adjust the widths of your columns, horizontally drag the divider line between the pop-up menus atop each column, as shown in Figure 2-5.

As with the first column, the additional columns you add can also show almost any information you like about your files. The commands here are much the same as those listed in the first column, but there are some additions:

- **Location**—This gives you the actual file name of the song, as shown in the Finder. This may be different from the Name of the song in the first column of the playlist.
- **Sample Rate**—Like Bit Rate, this is another setting that affects the fidelity of the sound file. See Chapter 4 for a detailed explanation.
- **Track**—If you converted the MP3 file from a CD, this tells the CD track number.
- **Year**—The year the song was recorded, if SoundJam knows it.

CONNECTING YOUR MAC TO YOUR STEREO

You can listen to your music files using four kinds of equipment: your computer's built-in speakers; special computer speakers you've attached to your Mac's sound-output jack (on the back panel); headphones (again connected to the back panel sound-output jack); or your stereo. If your Mac is close enough to your stereo system, you can use the patch cord included in the SoundJam package to hook your computer up to your receiver—for maximum sound quality. (The cable is not, of course,

included with copies of SoundJam you download from the Internet; today's modem technology is too slow for the transmission of physical objects.)

To do so, plug the thinner end of the cord (a miniplug) into the Sound Output jack on the back of your Mac, whose icon looks like a speaker emitting sound waves. Plug the fatter ends of the cord (RCA jacks) into the right and left auxiliary inputs of your stereo receiver; the red cable goes into the right channel.

Turn the volume knob of your stereo almost all the way down. The front panel of your receiver probably includes an input-selection knob that lists CD, Tape, Aux, and so on; turn it so that it matches the jacks you used on the back of it (probably Aux).

Start the music playing in SoundJam; turn up your stereo's volume knob until the music is playing at the level you like.

SING ALONG WITH SOUNDJAM: KARAOKE MODE

For many of us, singing along with our music is a real joy. Depending on the quality of our singing voices, it may or may not be as pleasant for our family and co-workers! But regardless of your vocal talents, SoundJam makes it easy to serenade those around you with its special karaoke mode. When karaoke mode is switched on, SoundJam does an amazing thing: it digitally processes the music in an attempt to remove the main vocalist. And, most of the time, it does a pretty good job. With karaoke mode on, the singer's voice in most popular music fades into the background, clearing the way for your star turn. Because there's no free lunch (even in the digital realm), the price you pay for this vocal excision is an overall lowering of sound volume and, sometimes, a reduction in musical fidelity. The main thing that affects how much the music will be changed by the digital karaoke processing is the way the original track was recorded; there's no hard and fast rule. Just try it, and sing out!

To activate karaoke mode, choose Karaoke from SoundJam's Controls menu, or press Command-K on your keyboard. Choose the command again to toggle Karaoke mode off.

Note: Karaoke is a Japanese abbreviated compound word, invented (like karaoke itself) in the 1980's: "kara" comes from "karappo" meaning empty, and "oke" is the abbreviation of "okesutura," or orchestra. Usually, a recorded popular song consists of vocals and accompaniment. Music tapes in which only the accompaniment is recorded were named "karaoke."

USING SOUNDJAM AS AN ALARM CLOCK OR A SLEEP TIMER

If you keep your Mac close by your bed (or hook your Mac up to your sound system), you can use SoundJam to lull you to sleep or to wake you up in the morning at a time you choose. You can pick the playlist you want to use, so if you're an especially heavy sleeper, that playlist filled with Sousa marches should be just the ticket.

To set up SoundJam's timed playback features, choose Alarm Clock/Sleep Timer from the Window menu, or press Command-5. The Alarm Clock/Sleep Timer window opens, as shown in Figure 2-7.

To set the time SoundJam wakes you up, click the Wake checkbox, pick a day of the week, every day, weekdays, or weekends from the pop-up menu, then type in the time you want to be awakened. Be sure to add AM or PM. Then click the "Select Alarm Action File" button to choose a playlist, audio file, or AppleScript to trigger when the alarm goes off. If you don't choose anything here, SoundJam will play the current track.



Figure 2-7: SoundJam can be an alarm clock or a sleep timer.

Tip: SoundJam does not have to be open for the alarm to work. If you have the SoundJam extension in your System Folder and it is active (using Extensions Manager or Conflict Catcher), the SoundJam application will launch when the alarm activates.

If you want to use SoundJam as a sleep timer (in which case it will play music for a specified time while you fall asleep, then turn itself off), first set the timer delay in minutes, then pick what you want to occur when the timer expires. Your choices are to stop playing, quit SoundJam, put your Macintosh to sleep, or Shut Down your Mac. Begin the sleep timer's countdown by clicking the Start Timer button.

EYE CANDY: SOUNDJAM'S VISUAL PLUG-INS

SoundJam isn't just a music player; it's also a treat for the eye, thanks to its Plug-ins and Skins, described in this section and the next.

Plug-ins are small, add-on software modules that add a visual (and sometimes aural) component to the music playback.

OPENING A VISUAL DISPLAY

Try this:

1. Start some music playing.
2. From the bottom half of the Window menu, choose the name of the visual plug-in you want to use.

A window opens, showing live, animated, visual displays that pulse in time to the music. The plug-ins included with SoundJam are purely visual displays, but future plug-ins may even affect the sound, too—adding reverb, for example.

 *Tip: Depending on the plug-in, you may be able to click inside the window to experiment with options in the pop-up menu that appears.*

ADDING PLUG-INS

Now that SoundJam has become an enormous smash-hit best-seller, independent artists and programmers have developed their own, additional plug-ins. They are posted at www.SoundJam.com. Once you've downloaded them, you can install them into SoundJam's Window menu like this:

1. Drag the plug-in file into the Plug-ins folder, which is inside the SoundJam folder on your hard drive. Depending on the type of plug-in you're adding, you'll want to drag it into the Audio Plug-ins, Device Plug-ins, or Visual Plug-ins folders inside the main Plug-ins folder.
2. Launch SoundJam. The new plug-in appears as a new command in the Window menu.

 *Tip: Press Command-F to expand a visual plug-in so that the window fills your entire screen—a great effect at parties.*

This feature works only, however, if you install the system extension called DrawSprocketLib, which is in the SoundJam folder, in a folder called, “DrawSprocket 1.1.4.” Install DrawSprocketsLib by dragging it onto your System Folder icon; you do not need to restart your Macintosh after installing this file.

SWITCHING SKINS

A skin is a graphic-design scheme—a “look.” The ability to give your music player a space-age look, a 1950s look, or any other look is a hallmark of the best MP3 players, and SoundJam is no exception.

CHOOSING A SKIN

From the Skin menu, choose a skin. You may not know what to expect as you choose each command, but you’ll find out soon enough what visual surprise lurks behind each name. A few of the different looks are shown in Figure 2-8.



Figure 2-8: Different looks for different moods.

Tip: Variety is the spice of life. By choosing Random from the Skins menu, SoundJam will use a different skin every time you run the program.

You’ll notice, by the way, that not every design scheme includes all of the different playback controls described at the beginning of this chapter. For simplicity, a skin designer may have omitted certain controls; some of the skins lack a coordinated design for the Graphic Equalizer, for example.

Because skins are created by different artists all over the Internet, you may have to spend some time experimenting before discovering which control in a particular skin is the volume control, which is the balance adjustment, and so on.

DOWNLOADING AND CONVERTING NEW SKINS

SoundJam comes with numerous skins, resembling everything from a prehistoric cave painting to a psychedelic swirl. You can find dozens of additional skins on the Internet; use the Get Skins command in SoundJam's Web menu to jump to the skins download page on www.SoundJam.com.

You're not limited to skins designed specifically for SoundJam; most of the Internet's skin collection is intended for use by Windows-based MP3 playing programs, such as the popular WinAmp. There's also another Mac MP3 player called Audion which has a nice collection of skins. Fortunately, SoundJam includes a conversion program that automatically turns downloaded WinAmp skins and Audion faces into SoundJam-compatible ones. To do so, follow these steps:

1. Open the SoundJam folder.

Inside is a program called Skin Converter.

2. Drag the folder containing the WinAmp skin pieces onto Skin Converter. Or drag the Audion Face file onto Skin Converter.

Instantly, your downloaded skin file is readied for use with SoundJam and placed in the Skins folder, which is also in the SoundJam folder.

3. In SoundJam, open the Skin menu.

Without even having to quit and relaunch SoundJam, you see your newly converted skin file in the Skins menu. Pick a skin, and SoundJam's appearance changes.

CHAPTER 3: BUILDING AND ORGANIZING YOUR MUSIC COLLECTION

Chapter 2 covered SoundJam's skills as an electronic jukebox. The program is equally adept, however, at helping you acquire and organize your music.

WHERE TO GET MUSIC

The world has gone MP3-crazy: MP3 files are the most popular music-file format on the Internet. But no matter where your music files come from, SoundJam is ready to help you organize, search, and play them.

FROM THE SOUNDJAM CD

Your SoundJam CD-ROM comes with 100+ MP3s, ready-to-play music files. (You'll find them in the "Music from songs.com" folder.)

To play one using SoundJam, double-click its icon; it opens in SoundJam and begins playing automatically.

If you prefer, double-click instead the Tutorial Playlist icon inside the Playlists folder, which is inside the SoundJam folder on your hard disk. The Tutorial Playlist contains all 100+ songs, so that your Mac can serve as a jukebox with only a double-click. See Chapter 2 for details on playing back these files.

FROM THE INTERNET BY DOWNLOADING

Hundreds of Web sites offer MP3 files ready to download and play. Try, for example, www.mp3.com, one of the most complete MP3 collections. (Many files found here are free; others require you to pay a fee.)

Tip: Use SoundJam's Web menu as a shortcut for jumping to some of the best MP3 sites.

FROM THE INTERNET BY STREAMING

Some MP3 files aren't available for download, but only for streaming. In this scenario, the music data is sent by the Web site directly into SoundJam for real-time playback; you never download a file, and you can listen to the music only when you're actually connected to the Net. A record company might post a streaming MP3 file, for example, so that you can listen to a track of a new CD—without being able to easily capture or distribute it.

For example, Figure 3-1 shows the Play buttons on one of the largest MP3 Web sites, www.mp3.com. Play means “send as streaming audio”; when you click this button, the MP3.com site (and some others) give you the option of two quality settings, depending on the speed of your Internet connection. The slower speed is appropriate if you have a modem connection, and the higher speed (which also offers higher quality) setting is best if you have a fast connection, such as DSL, ISDN, or a cable modem. Whichever speed choice you make, SoundJam launches and begins playing the music as it’s fed to your Mac from the Internet. (SoundJam can also play streaming QuickTime music files, another popular streaming audio format, if you have QuickTime 4.0 or later installed on your Mac.)



Figure 3-1: On some Web sites, streaming music is labeled, for example, Play.

Tip: SoundJam automatically plays streaming audio only if, the first time you launched it, you authorized SoundJam as your preferred streaming-audio application. If you declined at that time, you can designate SoundJam once again to be the program you want to play your streaming audio by following these steps:

From the Edit menu, choose Preferences. Click the General icon; click the button called Use SoundJam for Internet Playback, as shown in Figure 3-2. Click OK. From now on, whenever your Macintosh begins to receive a stream of music information from a Web site, SoundJam automatically opens and plays it.

FROM YOUR OWN MUSIC CD DISCS

SoundJam is a superior player for music CDs—far better than the AppleCD Audio Player. Just insert a music CD into your Mac and hit the Play button. If you choose the name of the CD (or the words “Audio CD”) from the Window menu, moreover, a list of the tracks on

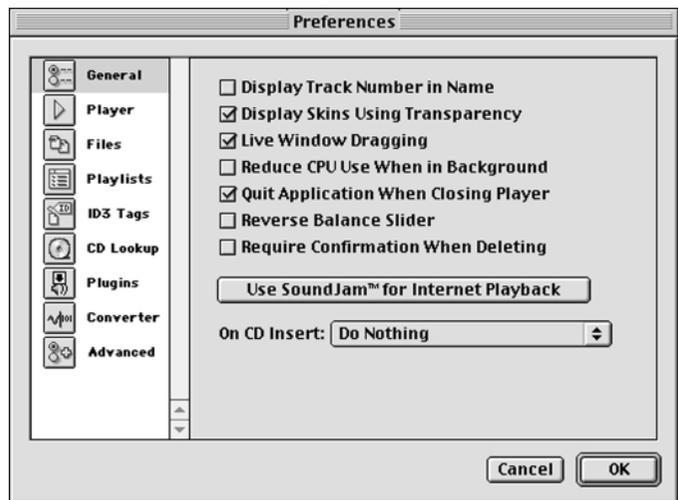


Figure 3-2: Tell your Web browser to use SoundJam to play streaming MP3 files by clicking the Use SoundJam for Internet Playback button.

the CD appears (see Figure 3-3); you can manipulate this list exactly as you would any SoundJam playlist, as described in Chapter 2.

If you want SoundJam to automatically begin playback whenever you insert a music CD, open the General panel of SoundJam's Preferences. From the pop-up menu next to "On CD Insert," choose "Begin Playing."

FROM YOUR OWN MUSIC CD FILES

One of SoundJam's most useful features is its ability to turn your favorite CD tracks into compact MP3 files that you store on your hard drive. Because MP3 files take up only a fraction of the disk space required by an actual CD track, you can conveniently build a collection of MP3 files—converted from your favorite discs—that you keep stored on, and play back from, your hard drive. For instructions on performing this kind of CD-to-MP3 conversion, see Chapter 4.

FROM PRACTICALLY ANY OTHER SOUND FILE

SoundJam plays a wide variety of sound file formats. Besides CD audio and MP3 files, you can play QuickTime sound files, and older sound formats such as AIFF, WAVE, "snd," MOD, and MP2 files. You can also convert any file SoundJam can play into an MP3, MP2, or AIFF file.

FROM ANY AUDIO SOURCE YOUR MACINTOSH CAN USE

With SoundJam's Record From Sound Input feature, you can create a digital file from any audio input that your Mac has, whether it be an external microphone, an expansion card with audio input capabilities, or the audio-in features of some AV-enabled Power Macintoshes, such as the Power Macintosh 8600. SoundJam uses the audio input source that you set in the Sound control panel (in some versions of the Mac OS, you determine audio settings in the Monitors and Sound control panel).

One of the most exciting uses for the Record From Sound Input feature is the ability (with the right audio input hardware) to record and convert old vinyl records or cassette tapes into a digital format. You'll need audio hardware that can accept line-level audio from a turntable or tape deck; a preamplifier or a mixer connected to any Mac's audio input jack will do, or some Macs come factory equipped with stereo RCA jacks.

In order to record sound from one of these audio inputs, make sure that the input source is selected in the Mac OS Sound control panel, then choose Record From Sound Input from SoundJam's File menu. You'll be asked to name the file that you're about to record; enter a name and click the Save button. SoundJam then opens a Sound In window, as shown in Figure 3-3.



Figure 3-3: When you record from sound input, you can adjust the input levels for best results.

Tip: If you have problems getting your Macintosh to change the sound input source, make sure to quit all open applications and try again.

Using the Input Gain slider, set the sound levels so that the highest peaks of the sound don't make the Levels display turn red and you can't hear any audible distortion. When the input levels are correct, click the Start Recording button. While the recording is taking place, the Status area of the window lets you know the elapsed recording time. Click the Done Recording button when you're finished. SoundJam then opens a Track Information window that lets you enter in any of the standard MP3 information, such as title, artist, or comments. The recorded track is then added to your Master Play-list (or whatever playlist is set in the Advanced preference panel) for easy manipulation.

ORGANIZING YOUR MUSIC COLLECTION

Once you've amassed your music collection, you can use SoundJam as the ultimate multi-disc changer. The program can organize your music any way you see fit, so that you can leave out the songs you don't like, play your favorites at the beginning, and so on.

THE IDEA BEHIND PLAYLISTS

In the previous chapter, you can read about playlists, SoundJam's music-organization windows. In each playlist file, you can arrange music files any way you like. You might create multiple playlists for

different occasions: one that contains nothing but party tunes, another filled with soothing New Age music to play while you write, and so on. Because playlists are so versatile and easy to create, you can build playlists for as general or specific a reason as you desire. With SoundJam's Playlist Composer (detailed below), you can even have SoundJam build playlists for you.

WORKING WITH PLAYLISTS

To create a new playlist, choose New Playlist from the File menu. A new, empty playlist window appears; load it up with music, fiddle with its columns, and sort the tunes, as described in the previous chapter. From the File menu, choose Save to give your new playlist a name and file it away on your Macintosh.

 *Tip: You can organize your playlist files just as you'd organize any Macintosh files: by putting them into folders on your desktop, for example.*

Better yet, store them in the Playlists folder, which is inside the SoundJam folder. Put an alias of the Playlists folder into the Apple Menu Items folder, which is inside your System Folder. When you do so, all of your playlists become extremely easy to open—simply choose their names from the Playlists command that now appears in your Apple menu. If you're in SoundJam, you have equally quick access to playlists; just choose the playlist you want from the hierarchical menu under the Open Playlist command in the File menu. To add a playlist to this hierarchical menu, just drop it into the Playlists folder inside the main SoundJam folder.

Once you have a playlist window open, you can add files to it by dragging them from the Finder or another playlist into the new playlist window. Choose Save from the File menu to give the new playlist a name and to store it in a folder on your Mac.

COMPOSING NEW PLAYLISTS

When you have a large music collection, you need a bit more help in managing all of those songs. SoundJam's Playlist Composer creates new playlists for you automatically, based on criteria that you give it. With Playlist Composer, it's no problem at all to build playlists that contain just enough music to fill up your portable MP3 player, or that only have rock songs that were released in 1998.

To build playlists:

1. Choose Compose Playlist from the File menu. The welcoming Playlist Composer screen appears, as shown in Figure 3-4. Read the introduction, then click Next.
2. In the next screen (Figure 3-5), you'll pick the Source for the files you want to add to the new playlist, and the Destination for the tracks the Playlist Composer will select. The Source space starts out with your Master Playlist, and you may add folders, or other playlists, by clicking the Add button and navigating to the desired source.

Pick the Destination playlist from the pop-up menu; it will either be a new playlist, or

you'll add to an existing playlist, which must already have been opened in SoundJam. When you're done selecting the Source and Destination, click Next.



Figure 3-4: The first Playlist Composer screen just tells you what the Composer does.



Figure 3-5: Choose the Source and the Destination for the new playlist.

3. This next screen, shown in Figure 3-6, lets you add files from the Source in random order. You can also place limits on the size of the playlist under Track Limits. The first choice, Add all matching tracks, adds every track that meets the criteria that you'll see in the next step. The Limit destination choice is the most useful for use with portable MP3 players; it lets you make playlists that you can be sure will fit into the limited memory of your MP3 player. Enter in a number next to Limit destination, then pick minutes, hours, or megabytes from the pop-up menu. Similarly, the Add At Most choice allows you to limit the amount of material that you may add to an existing playlist. Click Next.



Figure 3-6: You can limit the new playlist's size in this screen.

4. The heart of the Playlist Composer is its Criteria screen, shown in Figure 3-7. From this window, you can create selection criteria that narrow down the files that SoundJam considers for inclusion in the new playlist. Click the Create button to build a new criterion. Let's say that you want to choose just country music with the word Love in the title. The result would look like Figure 3-8.



Figure 3-7: Store playlist criteria in this window.

Just give the criterion a name at the top of the window, pick from the pop-up menus to select which criteria you want, and fill in the corresponding blank(s) with any needed information. Click Add Criterion to narrow the search, and Remove Criterion to broaden the search. Click Save to save the criteria for future use. To activate criteria for use, click the checkbox next to the criterion name, as in Figure 3-7.

When you click the Compose button, SoundJam processes all of your choices and either opens a new playlist window reflecting those choices, or adds the choices to an existing playlist.

EXPORTING PLAYLISTS

On occasion, you might want to turn a playlist into a text file. For example, let's say that you've created a killer sound-mix for a party you're putting on with some friends, and you want to share the playlist with them before the party. You can't print a playlist from SoundJam, but you can export one to a text file that can be opened up in any word processor, database, or spreadsheet. To do that, just open the playlist that you want to export, then choose Export from the File menu. SoundJam will ask you to name the exported file, then save it to your hard disk.

The exported file is a plain text file in tab-delimited format, where bits of information are separated by tab characters, and with a return character at the end of each track entry. Tab-delimited files can easily be read into any word processor, databases such as FileMaker Pro or the database module in AppleWorks, or by spreadsheets like Microsoft Excel or the AppleWorks spreadsheet module.

FILLING IN MISSING CD TRACK NAMES

When you insert an audio CD or when you load some MP3 files into SoundJam, you'll notice that some columns of the CD or playlist window are empty. All of those potentially useful information columns—Artist, Album, Track Name, and so on—are missing.

Of course, you can input such information manually by highlighting each song name, choosing Get Info from the File menu, and typing in the data. (This is the method you must use when organizing MP3 files, as opposed to music CDs. See "Adding Track Data Manually" below.)

When your music CD window comes up with missing track names in this way, however, SoundJam offers an amazing, automatic means of filling in the missing data: it can consult CDDB, the Internet CD Database. This massive, ever-evolving Web site (www.cddb.com), which houses an enormous collection of CD names and their associated track names and other data, has been created over the years through the collaboration of thousands of Internet fans. By posting their own new CD data to this database, these volunteers save their fellow Internauts — like you—hours of manual data-input labor.

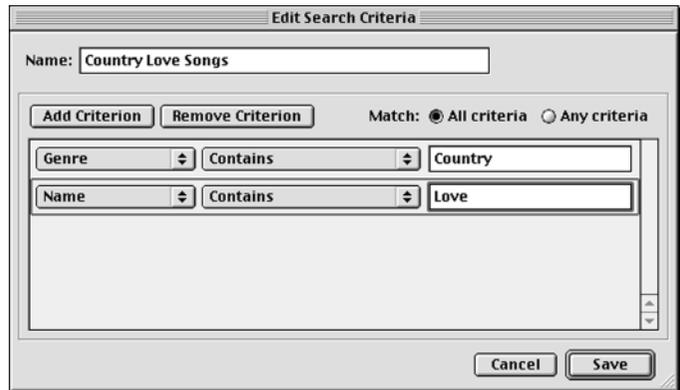


Figure 3-8: narrow your search for tracks to add to your playlist with the Edit Search Criteria window.

Here's how it works:

1. Insert a music CD.

If SoundJam has never seen this disc before, a CD window opens automatically—but most of the information columns lack useful names, as shown in Figure 3-9.

2. Click Get Names Online.

SoundJam connects to the Internet, connects to CDDDB, looks up your CD, and automatically downloads the track and artist information, filling in the missing blanks in the window on your screen. All of this takes a moment or two.

The next time you insert the same CD, SoundJam will remember the downloaded information and display it automatically.

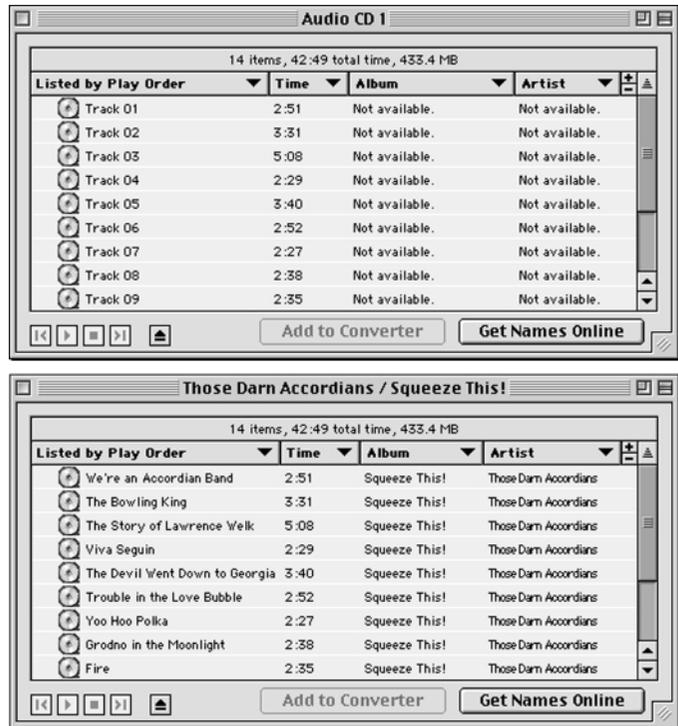


Figure 3-9: A music CD window before (top) and after (bottom) using the Get Online Names button.

Tip: Behind the scenes, SoundJam stores the information about your CD collection in two files called *CD Remote Programs* and *CD Remote Programs Plus*. They're in the *Preferences* folder, which is in your *System Folder*.

When you want to transfer your CD info to another Mac, or e-mail it to a friend, now you know the secret: simply copy these *CD Remote Programs* and *CD Remote Programs Plus* files and put them into the identical folder location on the other machine.

ADDING CD INFORMATION MANUALLY

If you get MP3 files from the Internet, insert a music CD that isn't in the CDDDB database, or make your own music file using SoundJam's Sound Input feature, you'll end up with CDs or MP3 files without track data.

SoundJam allows you to add the information manually, either for a whole CD, one track at a time, or to apply the same information to multiple tracks in one step.

To add the basic information about a music CD, make sure that the CD's window is frontmost in SoundJam, then choose CD Info from the Edit menu. In the resulting dialog (shown in Figure 3-10), enter the artist's name, the album name, then pick a genre from the pop-up menu.

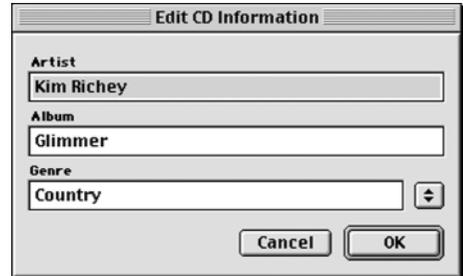


Figure 3-10: The main CD information window.

ADDING TRACK DATA MANUALLY WITH THE GET INFO WINDOW

SoundJam's Get Info window gives you a wealth of information about a track, lets you add track information, and even lets you tweak the track's playback. At the top of the window, you can enter the track name.

Try this:

1. Select a track in a playlist, then choose Get Info from the File menu, or press Command-I.

The Track Information window opens, as shown in Figure 3-11. In the Info tab, the window tells you the technical data about the track.

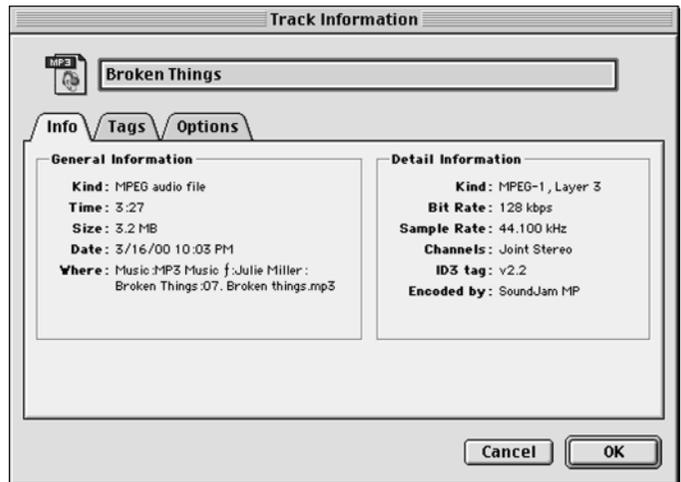


Figure 3-11: The Info tab of the Get Info window.

2. Click the Tags tab.

Here's where you can enter information about the track, including the artist, album, year, track number, comments, and genre, as shown in Figure 3-12. Some of this information is automatically added when you do a lookup from CDDDB. When you add genre information, you can either use the pop-up menu, or start typing into the genre field; SoundJam will try to guess the genre and finish entering it as you type.

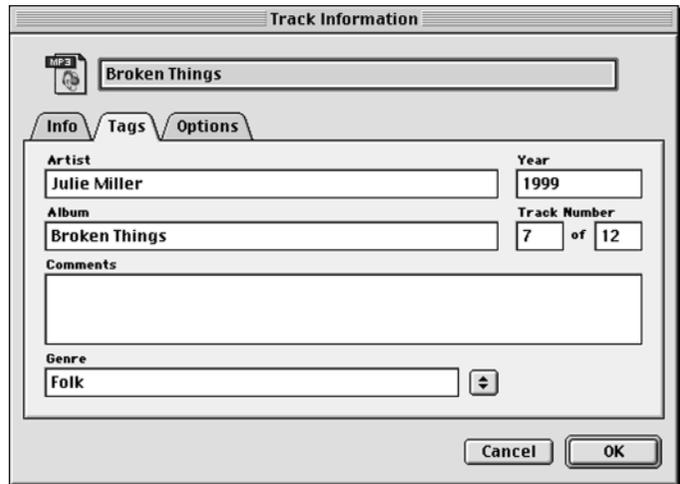


Figure 3-12: The Tags tab.

3. Click the Options tab.

Here, you can tweak the way the track behaves on playback. Use the Volume Adjustment slider to even out the volume of a track that was recorded too loudly or too quietly. The Equalizer Preset pop-up menu lets you specify which of your existing Graphic Equalizer settings you want to be used when the track plays. And the Start/Stop Time area lets you clip off time from either the beginning or ending of the track.

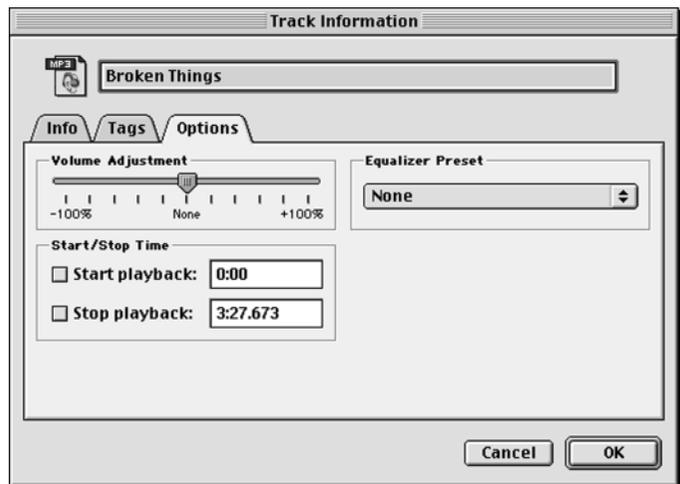


Figure 3-13: The Options tab.

CHANGING DATA FROM MULTIPLE TRACKS

If you select multiple tracks in a playlist, you can modify all of their tag information in one operation. Here's how:

1. Select more than one track in a playlist.

To select multiple contiguous tracks, click on the first track, hold down the Shift key and click on the last track. All of the tracks in between will also be selected. To select discontinuous tracks, hold down the Command key while clicking on tracks.

2. Choose Get Info from the File menu.

SoundJam will ask if you really want to edit information from multiple tracks. When you click Yes, the Multiple Track Information window appears, as shown in Figure 3-14. Enter the information according to the instructions in "Adding Track Data Manually with the Get Info Window," above.

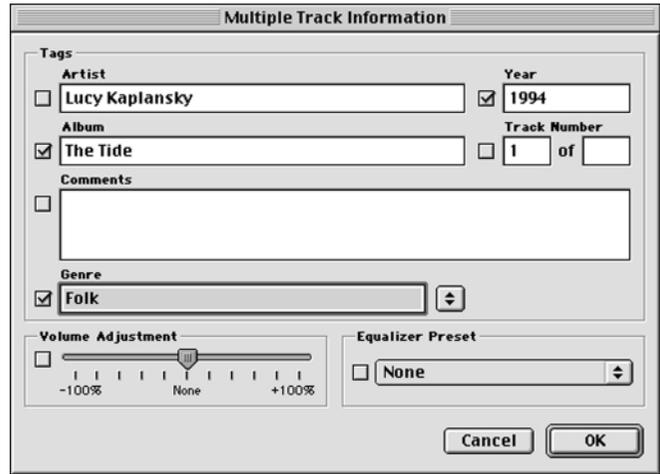


Figure 3-14: Change the tag info for lots of files in one quick operation.

SENDING CD INFORMATION TO CDDB

SoundJam lets you contribute to the CDDB database by sending CD information that you've entered manually. Most of the time, you won't need to do this, because someone else has beaten you to it. But if SoundJam informs you that there's no available information for the CD you've inserted after you click the Get Names Online button, then you can send the CD and track information to the online database.

To contribute to CDDB, bring the CD window to the front, then choose Send CD Info to CDDB from the Edit menu. SoundJam connects to the Internet, then sends the information. There's no acknowledgement from the database.

✱ *Alert: It's very important that you don't send CDDB track data for CDs that you've burned yourself on CD-R or CD-RW media. All that would do is clutter up the database with information that won't be useful for anyone else but you, since nobody else has your custom discs.*

CHAPTER 4: MAKING YOUR OWN MP3 FILES

As good as it is at organizing MP3 files you collect from the Internet, SoundJam really shines when it comes to creating new MP3 files. With a single click, you can turn any track of any music CD—or indeed, almost any kind of music file—into an MP3 file suitable for e-mailing, storing on your hard drive, or copying onto a portable MP3 player such as the Rio 500, I-Jam, or Nomad II.

STEP 1: CHOOSING THE MUSIC TO CONVERT

SoundJam can convert all kinds of sound files into MP3 or MP2 format:

- Tracks from your music CDs
- AIFF sound files
- The sound tracks of QuickTime movies
- WAV files (the most common sound-file format on Windows)
- “snd” files (Macintosh sound files, sometimes known as System 7 sound files)
- MOD files (MODule files, which contain samples of digital instruments and instructions for sequencing and playing those samples.)
- Other sound-file formats for which plug-ins may become available

You can select the files you want to convert in any of several ways:

- Insert a music CD. From the Window menu, choose Audio CD (or the name of the CD). Click the name of the track you want to convert to MP3, and then click Add to Converter.

 *Tip: You can select multiple CD tracks for conversion to MP3 by pressing the Command key as you click their names. Or, to select a number of consecutive tracks, click the first one—and then Shift-click the last one you want to include. After highlighting several names in this way, click Add to Converter.*

- From the Window menu, choose Converter. Insert a music CD into your Macintosh. When its icon shows up on your desktop, double-click it. You'll see icons representing the tracks on the CD, as shown in Figure 4-1. Drag the tracks you want into the Converter window, also as shown in Figure 4-1.

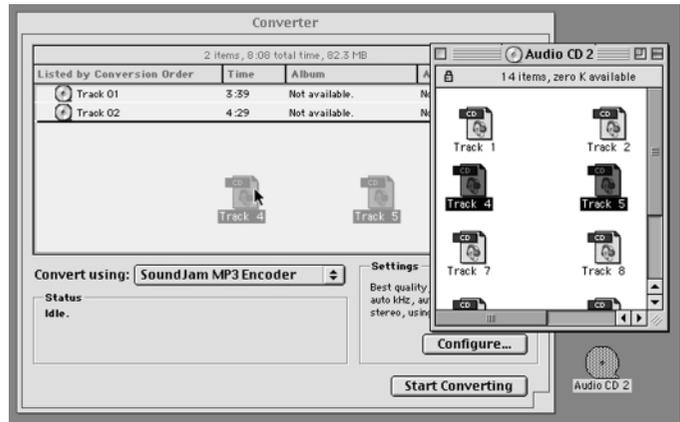


Figure 4-1: Drag tracks directly from the CD into the SoundJam Converter window.

- From the Window menu, choose Converter. Return to your desktop, where you can now drag AIFF, WAV, "snd," MOD, or QuickTime file icons directly into the Converter window.
- From the Window menu, choose Converter. Drag any file icon from any playlist window into the Converter window.

STEP 2: SETTING UP THE CONVERSION

After indicating which files you want to convert (by loading them into the Converter window), you can tell SoundJam exactly how you want these files processed.

Tip: Unless you're a true audio aficionado, you'll probably find some of the following settings extremely technical. For most purposes, you won't need to change any of the options discussed here. SoundJam offers them, however, to provide you with extra control when answering the question: "What is more important to me: the quality of the sound—or the size of the resulting sound files?"

THE "CONVERT USING:" POP-UP MENU

As shown at lower left in Figure 4-1, the first decision you must make is whether you want SoundJam to create MP3, MP2, or AIFF files. Your choices from this pop-up menu are SoundJam MP3 Encoder, SoundJam MP2 Encoder, and SoundJam AIFF Encoder. (Future versions of SoundJam may let you cre-

ate other sound-file formats.) MP3, MP2 and AIFF (Audio Interchange File Format) are standard sound files that can be played on either Macintosh or Windows. Here are some of the differences:

MP3 Files	MP2 Files	AIFF Files
Cannot be played by a standard CD player (but you can burn these files onto a CD, which can then be played by SoundJam).		Can be played by a standard CD player—which is useful if you own a CD-ROM burner and want to create your own custom CDs.
High compression of original audio file, while maintaining good fidelity.	Less (but still significant) compression and better musical fidelity.	Remains at full size—SoundJam doesn't perform compression.
Can be created with great control using SoundJam's configuration window.		SoundJam offers no configuration settings.
Can be played on portable music players like the Rio 500.	Can't be played on portable music players.	Can't be played on portable music players.
Can be played on both Macintosh and Windows with the appropriate software.		Can be played both on Macintosh and Windows with the appropriate software.
Incompatible with most pre-1998 sound software.		Compatible with almost any sound software, including many shareware programs.

In general, then, you'll want to create MP3 files if you plan to play the music back from your hard drive or from a portable MP3 player; you'll want to create AIFF files if you plan to burn your own music CDs. MP2 files can't be played back on portable devices, so they can only be played back from your hard drive. Some people believe that MP2 files are musically superior to MP3 files, so if you need maximum fidelity, consider MP2.

THE CONFIGURE BUTTON FOR MP3 ENCODING

If you decide to create MP3 or MP2 files, you'll find that SoundJam offers a host of additional controls which you can access by clicking Configure. (If you're creating AIFF files, the Configure button is dimmed because there's nothing else to set up in SoundJam.)

Here's what you'll find in the dialog box that appears when you choose the Configure button for the SoundJam MP3 Encoder, as shown in Figure 4-2:



Figure 4-2: Configuring MP3 encoding.

BIT RATE POP-UP MENUS

These two pop-up menus—one each for Mono and Stereo—are among the most useful in the dialog box. The higher the kbps (kilobits per second), the better the resulting MP3 file will sound—and the more space it will take up on your hard drive, disk, or portable MP3 player.

So what setting should you choose? The answer depends on your purpose:

- The most commonly used bit rate for stereo MP3 files is 128 kbps. At this rate, you'll just barely be able to tell that the sound isn't as good as on the original CD—but the resulting sound file takes up less than 10 percent as much disk space as the original CD track. This is a good option for creating MP3 files you plan to load onto a machine with limited memory, such as the Rio 500, I-Jam, or Nomad II MP3 players. And given the quality of the headphones used with most mobile devices, chances are that the 128 kbps bit rate will be the perfect trade-off between file size and audio fidelity. This is SoundJam's default bit rate setting.
- The next higher option—160 kbps for stereo—may be the best one for music you plan to listen to over a stereo system or through high-quality computer speakers. Although the resulting file is slightly larger than a 128 kbps MP3 file, you'll probably find the trade-off worth it: at this bit rate, the sound quality is almost indistinguishable from that of a CD.
- Use lower numbers for sound files containing, for example, voice recordings (instead of music). Using lower bit rates means that far more sound can be stored on a disk, your hard drive, or a portable MP3 player.

VARIABLE BIT RATE ENCODING (VBR)

Variable Bit Rate encoding lets SoundJam change the bit rate dynamically depending on the characteristics of the material being encoded. The idea here is that on audios which don't have much dynamic range (dynamic range is the difference between the softest and loudest parts of the program), as with voice recordings, SoundJam won't use the same high bit rate that it uses for material with a large dynamic range, such as orchestral music. Instead, SoundJam will sample the program and adjust the bit rate as needed. With VBR enabled, SoundJam uses the Bit Rate pop-up menu as the guaranteed minimum bit rate. By default, VBR is turned off, because the audible differences it offers are subtle. Feel free to experiment with it and see if it makes a difference to your recordings.

✱ *Tip: Because of a bug in the Rio 500's firmware (versions 1.04 and earlier), tracks recorded with VBR show incorrect playing times in SoundJam's Rio 500 window (see Chapter 5).*

PERFORMANCE

Just as there's a trade-off in file size versus audio fidelity, the Performance section lets you decide what is more important to you: faster encoding speed, or higher quality of the final MP3 file. If you have a lot of CDs you're planning on encoding, and a limited amount of time or a slower Macintosh, then the Faster choice might make sense. Most of the time you'll probably want to stay with Best Quality, the default choice.

SAMPLE RATE

As with the Bit Rate pop-up menu, this control lets you make a trade-off between the size of the resulting MP3 file and the sound quality of the playback. In general, the best choice here is Auto; the Bit Rate pop-up menu is a far more effective tool for making quality/file size adjustments.

For your reference, however, CD quality is 44.100 kHz (kilohertz); anything higher wastes memory and disk space. Cheap AM radio quality is about 22 kHz; you might conceivably use this setting for voice recordings.

CHANNELS

If you plan to listen to music on your desktop Mac's solitary built-in speaker, creating stereo files (those with right and left channels of sound) is simply wasting disk space. In such a case, choose Mono here. (A mono file takes up less than half the space of a stereo file.)

On the other hand, if you'll be listening to these MP3 files using your stereo system, a portable MP3 player, a stereo PowerBook or iMac, or a pair of external speakers you've attached to your

Mac, use the Stereo or Auto buttons instead. Actually, Auto is almost always the best choice—it converts tracks that are already monaural into mono MP3 files, and stereo files into stereo MP3 files.

STEREO MODE

In Normal mode, your MP3 file contains two independent tracks: one each for the right and left stereo channels. In most cases, however, the two channels contain a lot of related information. The special, space-saving Joint Stereo mode takes advantage of this fact, making an attempt to store, for example, only the information that is different between the two channels. The result isn't identical to a true stereo file, but you probably won't be able to tell the difference by listening, and the quality improvement—because SoundJam can use more data to describe the primary musical material—can be substantial.

USE DEFAULT SETTINGS

Click this button to reset all the controls in this dialog box to their original, factory-set settings.

THE ADVANCED BUTTON

Click this button to gain access to the Advanced encoding settings, shown in Figure 4-3.

SMART FREQUENCY REDUCTION

In creating an MP3 file, SoundJam generally discards sound in the sonic spectrum above 16 kHz, in the interest of saving disk or memory space. (Most people can't tell whether or not sounds above that frequency are even present.) If you turn on this checkbox and your chosen bit rate is below 128, SoundJam will eliminate the very highest frequencies in the source material, in an effort to preserve the most sound data for the middle of the sonic range. This setting has no effect when encoding at 128 kbps and higher. We recommend that you leave this checkbox enabled.

FILTER FREQUENCIES BELOW 10 HZ

The lowest audio frequencies can't be heard by most people (or reproduced by most speakers and headphones), so SoundJam gives you the option of filtering them out and using the saved space to more faithfully reproduce frequencies which are easier to hear.

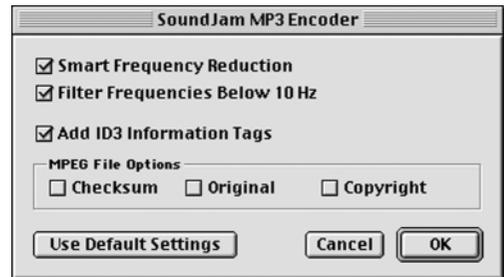


Figure 4-3: The MP3 encoder's Advanced settings dialog box.

ADD ID3 INFORMATION TAGS

Many MP3 files on the Internet come equipped with ID3 tags, which are small bursts of useful information that are stored along with music data in the files themselves. This information provides the name of the song, artist, album, and so on—exactly the kind of information that SoundJam can show in its playlist window. (If you ever encounter an MP3 file that's missing its song, artist, and album names, you'll know why—the MP3 file was lacking an ID3 tag.) The ID3 tag contains the CDDB information (see Chapter 3 for more on CDDB).

When this checkbox is turned on, SoundJam adds this information to the MP3 file you're creating (if, in fact, your source material—such as the CD track you're converting—offers such information). There's little reason to turn this option off; only the oldest and least sophisticated MP3 players are incapable of playing MP3 files that contain ID3 tag information.

MPEG FILE OPTIONS

These are three settings that can be added to every encoded file. The checksum verifies the integrity of the file. The original setting indicates, if set, that the file is located on its original media. The copyright setting tells other encoders that copying the file is disallowed. By default, all of these settings are off.

THE CONFIGURE BUTTON FOR MP2 ENCODING

When you set the Convert Using pop-up menu to SoundJam MP2 Encoder, the options in the Configure dialog are different (though similar to MP3 encoding), as shown in Figure 4-4:

All of the options in this dialog box work in much the same fashion as they do for MP3 encoding; see the discussion above for information

about each option. The main difference is that MP2 encoding offers a different set of bit rates, including bit rates that are of higher quality than MP3 offers. The options in the MP2 Advanced setting dialog are identical to those in the MP3 Advanced settings; see above for more information.

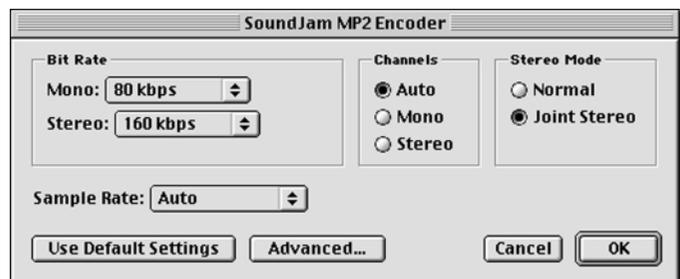


Figure 4-4: MP2 encoding options.

STEP 3: CONVERTING THE FILES

After you've set up the conversion the way you want it—and have closed the SoundJam MP3 Encoder dialog box by clicking OK—you're ready to begin the conversion process. One last time, you can take a moment to survey the list of tracks you've prepared for converting. You can manipulate the Converter window just as you'd manipulate the playlist window, described in Chapter 2. For example, you can control how the files are sorted and which information columns appear.

Tip: If you change your mind about one of the files, you can remove it from the list by highlighting its name and then pressing the Delete key.

When the list looks good, click Start Converting.

Creating a standard-length MP3 file takes a minute or two; a progress bar shows you how much longer the job will take, as shown in Figure 4-5. (Playing music, visual plug-in displays, Internet downloads, and running other Mac programs can make the process take longer.) The window in Figure 4-5 provides a running readout of the time remaining for the conversion of the current track—click this display to change it to Time Elapsed—and the speed of the conversion. (This last statistic is displayed in the form “3.5x,” which shows how many times faster the conversion is going than real playback time.)



Figure 4-5: During the conversion, click Time Remaining to change the display to Time Elapsed.

If your CD-ROM drive is fairly modern, SoundJam achieves high speed using asynchronous encoding—that is, it simultaneously reads your CD disc and saves the MP3 file in progress on your hard drive.

 *Tip: Some older CD drives and some off-brand CD driver software don't offer asynchronous operation. In these cases, SoundJam must first transfer the sound data from the CD onto your hard drive (or whatever drive you've specified using SoundJam's Preferences command, as described in the next chapter). Only then does the actual conversion process begin.*

When the conversion is over, SoundJam opens its playlist, where the converted files now appear, ready for playing.

Behind the scenes, SoundJam places its newly created MP3, MP2, or AIFF files into the Music folder, which is inside the SoundJam folder. That's useful to remember when you want to locate one of your homemade music files in order to back it up, e-mail it to someone, or delete it. If you want SoundJam to put files it creates somewhere else, use the Select Conversion Destination button in the Converter panel of the Preferences window.

USING THE VELOCITY ENGINE

The PowerPC G4 processor used in newer Power Macintoshes contains a special processing unit that Apple calls the Velocity Engine. This unit is great at some specialized tasks, such as very fast processing of audio and video files. The catch is that applications have to be rewritten to take advantage of the Velocity Engine's turbocharging. SoundJam was one of the first programs to include Velocity Engine support, and it significantly trims the time it takes to encode MP3 and MP2 files—by as much as 50% faster. Best of all, you don't have to do anything to use the Velocity Engine. If your computer has a G4 processor, SoundJam takes note and automatically switches into Velocity mode. Just sit back and enjoy the ride!

CHAPTER 5: SOUNDJAM AND PORTABLE MUSIC PLAYERS

One of the best things about using MP3 files is their portability; you can easily move them from one computer to another, because MP3s pack so much music into such a small space. But it's hard to strap a computer to you when you go for a jog, so the ultimate solution for portable music is portable MP3 players. These tiny units (about the size of a pack of playing cards) have solid-state memory that holds hours (current models hold as much as three hours) of near CD-quality music. Speech files, such as audio books, typically take up much less space than music, so you can fit up to 30 hours of spoken words into a portable player, which is enough for even the longest audio books.

MP3 portable players have no moving parts, so you never get skips in your music when you hit a bump in the road. Because the music is coming out of RAM in the player, you truly have random access to your music. And depending on the player's display, you can see the song title, artist, elapsed time of the track, and more. Some portable players even have built-in FM radios, so when you've listened to all of the MP3s you've brought along, the music doesn't have to stop.

SoundJam supports three portable MP3 players: the Diamond Multimedia Rio 500, the Creative Labs Nomad II, and I-JAM Multimedia's I-Jam Player. With all of these players, SoundJam makes it easy to transfer MP3 files from your computer to the players over a speedy USB connection. It only takes a few minutes to load your portable soundtrack and you're ready to roll.

 *System Requirements: In order to transfer music to these portable players, you'll need a Macintosh that has a USB (Universal Serial Bus) port, such as an iMac, an iBook, or a recent PowerBook, G3 or G4-based desktop Macintosh. If you have an older Macintosh, you'll need to get a USB PCI card adapter, which plugs into one of your Mac's expansion slots.*

WORKING WITH THE RIO 500

To get started with the Rio 500, make sure that your Rio 500 is turned on, and that the wide end of the USB cable that came with the Rio 500 is plugged into your Mac. When you plug the other end of the USB cable into your Rio 500, two things happen: the main Rio screen appears, as shown in Figure 5-1, and an entry for the Rio window is added to SoundJam's Window menu.

THE RIO 500 WINDOW

A. **RioPort logo**—Clicking this logo launches your Web browser and brings you to www.rioport.com, Diamond Multimedia's Web site with a huge compendium of downloadable MP3 tracks. You can find music of virtually any genre here, as well as tons of spoken word files, including comedy, audio books, and even old-time radio shows.



Figure 5-1: Everything you need to work with the Rio 500 is accessible from this window.

- B. **Folder Pop-up Menu**—The Rio 500 allows you to create folders within the device's memory, which you can use for music from different artists, different albums, or whatever else you want. You can create and name one or more folders for music, or have different folders for spoken word files. It's up to you. The folder pop-up menu changes the playlist below to reflect the contents of the selected folder. The Rio 500 has 64 Mb of memory built-in, and it accepts 16 Mb or 32 Mb SmartMedia memory cards in its memory slot, for a maximum memory of 96 Mb. The folder pop-up menu always tells you if the folder resides on the internal memory, or on the memory card.
- C. **Content Gauge**—The content gauge is a graphical view of how full the memory in your Rio 500 is. Above the gauge is text giving you the amount of memory used, out of the storage location's total memory.
- D. **Playlist**—Like all of the playlists in SoundJam, this one gives you the option of multiple columns, and you can change a column heading by clicking on it and making a choice from the resulting pop-up menu. In the Rio 500 window's playlist, the first column lets you list by date, name, play order, size, or time. Subsequent columns allow you to list by date, size, or time. At the top of the playlist you'll find a display of how many items are in the playlist, the total time of those items, and how much space those files take up.

Tip: Because of a bug in the Rio 500's firmware (versions 1.04 and earlier), tracks recorded with Variable Bit Recording show incorrect playing times in SoundJam's Rio playlist window (see Chapter 4 for more about VBR).

- E. **Add Track Button**—Clicking this button brings up the standard Macintosh get file dialog box, where you can select files that you want to add to the playlist. It's much easier, however, to simply drag files from another SoundJam playlist or the Macintosh Finder into the Rio 500 playlist. As soon as you drag the files, SoundJam transfers the files to the Rio 500.

Tip: If you attempt to drag more files to the Rio 500 than its memory will hold, SoundJam will copy all the files that will fit, and will simply refuse to copy any more.

- F. **Create Folder Button**—Clicking this button brings up a dialog box that allows you to create and name a folder in the Rio 500's unused memory, as shown in Figure 5-2. The Media pop-up menu allows you to create the folder in the internal memory or (if installed) a memory card. Just type in the new folder name, and click the OK button.

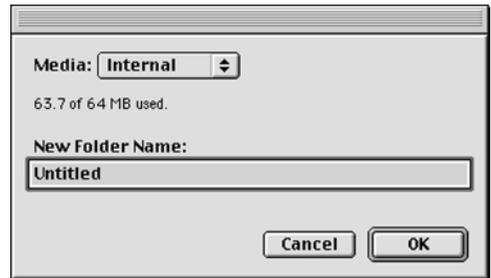


Figure 5-2: Creating a new folder in the Rio 500.

- G. **Delete Folder Button**—This button lets you delete the currently selected folder and everything in it. Because this operation erases data inside the Rio 500, SoundJam asks you to confirm the deletion, as in Figure 5-3.



Figure 5-3: SoundJam won't let you delete information without making sure that you're sure.

- H. **Rename Folder Button**—This feature lets you rename the currently displayed folder. Enter the new folder name, and click the OK button, as shown in Figure 5-4.

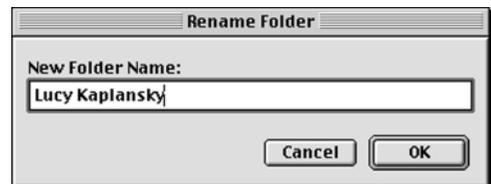


Figure 5-4: It's easy to update folder names.

- I. **Erase Player Button**—This option brings up a dialog box identical to the one in Figure 5-2, but the function of this one is very different. Clicking

OK here will erase the entire contents of either the internal memory or a memory card, depending on which you select from the Media pop-up menu.

- J. **Player Settings Button**—Click this button to name your Rio 500, as shown in Figure 5-5.



Figure 5-5: The Settings button lets you name your Rio 500.

WORKING WITH THE NOMAD II

Creative Labs' Nomad II is both an MP3 player and a portable FM radio. Unlike the Rio 500, the Nomad II has no built-in memory; instead, it relies on a 64 MB SmartMedia card to store your tunes. To begin with the Nomad II, plug the rectangular end of the USB cable into your Mac and the square end into the Nomad. Two things occur: the main Nomad screen appears, as shown in Figure 5-6, and an entry for the Nomad window is added to SoundJam's Window menu.

Tip: Some models of the Nomad II allow you to use the device as a voice recorder. The voice files that the Nomad II created have the .nvf file extension, and SoundJam can manipulate and play these files in the same way it works with any other file.

THE NOMAD II WINDOW

- A. **NomadWorld logo**—Clicking this logo launches your Web browser and brings you to www.nomadworld.com, Creative Labs' Web site. It includes music downloads, information about the Nomad hardware and accessories, and more.

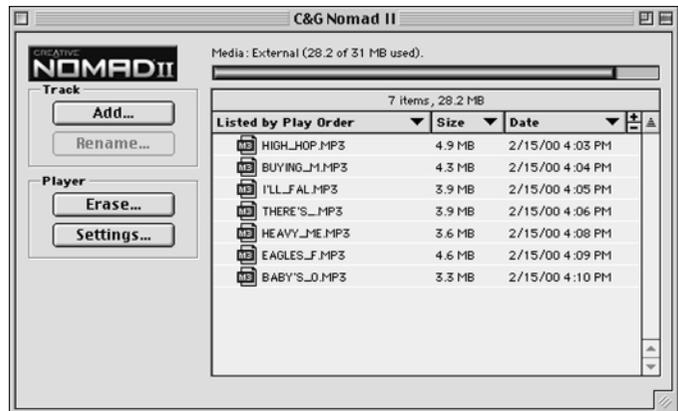


Figure 5-6: The Nomad II window.

- B. **Content Gauge**—The content gauge is a graphical view of how full the memory in your Nomad II is. Above the gauge is text giving you the amount of memory used, out of the memory card's total memory.
- C. **Playlist**—This playlist gives you the option of multiple columns, and you can change a column heading by clicking on it and making a choice from the resulting pop-up menu. In the Nomad II window's playlist, the first column lets you list by date, name, play order, or size. Subsequent columns allow you to list by date or size. At the top of the playlist, you'll find a display of how many items are in the playlist and how much space those files take up.

Tip: MP3 files in the Nomad II's playlist seem to be named differently than when they appear elsewhere in the program. That's because the Nomad takes the file's name and converts it into a DOS-compatible filename, with eight characters followed by the .mp3 file extension. It looks clunky to Mac users, but fortunately when the Nomad II actually plays the files, it displays the song's actual title (as listed in the song's ID3 tag info).

- D. **Add Track Button**—Clicking this button brings up the standard Macintosh get file dialog box, where you can select files that you want to add to the playlist. It's much easier, however, to simply drag files from another SoundJam playlist or the Macintosh Finder into the Nomad II playlist. As soon as you drag the files, SoundJam transfers the files to the Nomad II, and keeps you updated on the transfer's progress, as shown in Figure 5-7.

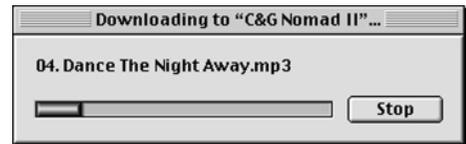


Figure 5-7: Tracking the progress of a file transfer to the Nomad II.

Tip: If you attempt to drag more files to the Nomad II than its memory will hold, SoundJam will copy all the files that will fit, and will simply refuse to copy any more.

- E. **Rename Track Button**—Clicking this button with a track selected in the Playlist brings up a dialog box that allows you to rename the track. See Figure 5-8.

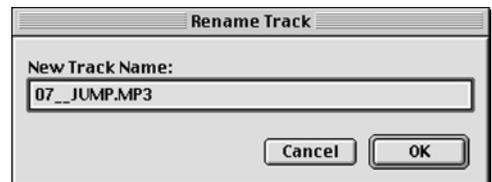


Figure 5-8: The Nomad II allows you to rename tracks on the device.

- F. **Erase Player Button**—This option will erase the entire contents of the Nomad II's memory card. Because this operation erases data, SoundJam asks you to confirm the deletion.

G. **Player Settings Button**—Click this button to name your Nomad II. You can also use this button to create up to 32 presets for the Nomad’s FM tuner. See your Nomad II User Manual for details.

WORKING WITH THE I-JAM PLAYER

Like the Nomad II, the I-JAM Multimedia’s I-Jam Player is both an MP3 player and a portable FM radio. It uses a different type of flash memory card than the Nomad and Rio; where those players use the SmartMedia card format, the I-Jam uses the physically smaller MultiMediaCard format that holds either 16 Mb or 32 Mb of memory.

TRANSFERRING FILES TO AND FROM THE I-JAM PLAYER

The I-Jam Player comes with a USB card reader that accepts the player’s MultiMediaCard. Install the card player according to the directions that come with it, and install the card reader’s driver software.

Insert the MultiMediaCard into the card reader. An icon for the MultiMediaCard will appear on your Mac’s desktop, much like any removable media, such as a floppy disk, or Zip disk. You can treat the MultiMediaCard as you would any disk you use with the Mac. To copy MP3 files to the MultiMediaCard, drag them from the folder where they reside on your hard disk, or drag files from any SoundJam playlist, to the MultiMediaCard’s icon on your desktop.

To erase files from the I-Jam Player’s MultiMediaCard, double-click on the card’s icon on your desktop, select the files that you want to delete, drag them to the Trash, and choose Empty Trash from the Finder’s Special menu.

CHAPTER 6: SOUNDJAM, MENU BY MENU

The preceding chapters introduce you to SoundJam, feature by feature. This chapter is for your reference: it covers each of SoundJam's menus—and the windows that these menus summon.

APPLE MENU

The Apple menu contains two general SoundJam choices, described below:

ABOUT SOUNDJAM™ MP PLUS

This command shows you credits for the people involved in SoundJam's creation, as well as some registration information.

REGISTER ONLINE

Choosing this starts the SoundJam Setup Assistant, which steps you through the online registration process and some basic SoundJam settings. Take a minute and register to get access to technical support, and to be informed of updates when they happen.

FILE MENU

The File menu lets you open and close files and playlist windows.

NEW PLAYLIST

As described in Chapter 3, you can create as many different playlists as you want, each containing music organized for a specific purpose. This command opens up a new, untitled playlist window. See Chapter 3 for instructions on managing your playlists.

OPEN PLAYLIST

This menu item leads to a hierarchical menu that contains all of the playlists that are inside the Playlists folder, inside of the main SoundJam folder. It's an easy way to switch between your playlists.

COMPOSE PLAYLIST

Pick this command to open the Playlist Composer. See Chapter 3 for detailed instructions on using the Playlist Composer.

OPEN

This command opens the standard Open File list window, so that you can navigate to, and open, anything SoundJam can open: an MP3 file, QuickTime file, AIFF file, playlist, CD track, and so on.

OPEN URL

Choose this command to summon the dialog box shown in Figure 6-1. Type an Internet Web address into this box and click OK to play an MP3 stream (an MP3 file that's sent to you live over the Internet).

SoundJam connects to the Internet and the stream begins to play. If the Web address ends in .mov, you're probably tapping into a Web page that offers a streaming QuickTime audio file, which SoundJam will begin playing automatically.

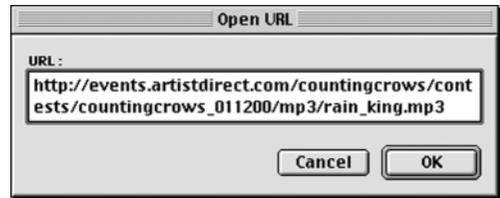


Figure 6-1: The Open URL window lets you play an MP3 stream from the Internet.

CLOSE WINDOW

This command closes whatever window is in front. If you close the Player (control panel) window, SoundJam quits.

GET INFO

After highlighting a sound file in a playlist window, use this command to open the Track Information dialog box in which you can edit the file's name, artist, album, and other textual information. This information is also known as the ID3 tags for MP3 and MP2 files. Selecting multiple files before choosing Get Info allows you to make changes to all of those files in one operation.

SHOW ORIGINAL

After highlighting a sound file in a playlist window, use this command to bring the Finder to the foreground and show you this file.

CONVERT ID3 TAGS

Converts or removes (or adds, if absent) versions of a track's ID3 tags, which contain information about the file's name, artist, album, and other textual information. As the MP3 standard has evolved, different versions of the ID3 tags have evolved along with it. Use this command to make all the ID3 tags in your music collection up-to-date. It also will allow you to convert text between ISO Latin-1 and ASCII. This is useful for foreign language system compatibility with other MP3 players and encoders that store ID3 tags in ASCII.

PLAY FROM SOUND INPUT

Plays audio from the input source selected in the Mac OS Sound control panel.

RECORD FROM SOUND INPUT

Creates a new MP3 file from the input source selected in the Mac OS Sound control panel. Especially useful for converting vinyl records or cassette tapes into digital format.

SAVE, SAVE AS, SAVE A COPY AS

If you've made changes to the currently open playlist, the Save command preserves them, exactly like the Save command in a word processor or any other program. As in other programs, use Save As when you want to create a copy of the current playlist—with a different name—that then remains on the screen.

The Save a Copy As command is almost the same as Save As—except that when you're finished naming the copy of your playlist, the original playlist remains open on the screen.

 *Tip: you can easily tell whether a playlist has been changed since it was opened. Just look at the small icon next to the playlist window's title. If the icon is dimmed, the playlist has been modified.*

EXPORT

Exports the frontmost playlist's contents as a tab-delimited text file.

QUIT

This command quits SoundJam.

EDIT MENU

The Edit menu's most relevant SoundJam feature is its Preferences command.

UNDO, CUT, COPY, PASTE, CLEAR, SELECT ALL

These commands work as they do in any Macintosh program—in SoundJam, they're primarily useful for editing the names of your tracks. Clear lets you delete the elected file from the active playlist. Command-Clear will bypass SoundJam's "Are you sure?" dialog box.

JOIN CD TRACKS

Sometimes consecutive tracks on a CD will have been designed for playback without interruption. By joining these tracks together into a single sound file when you convert them, you can eliminate any pause between them during playback. It also will keep them together for shuffle play.

To join CD tracks together, first add them to the Converter window. Then select them in the Converter window and choose the Join CD Tracks command. This will merge the two or more consecutive tracks into a single track for conversion.

CD INFO

A CD has information that you might want to edit separately from the individual tracks (for example, the album title or artist). With a CD window in the foreground, choose this command to edit this information.

SEND INFO TO CDDB

This command sends information about a CD to CDDB, the Internet music database. It allows you to be a contributor to this volunteer-built database. Make sure to only send information on commercial CDs that you've already found aren't in the CDDB; don't send information about custom CDs that you've burned for your own use.

GET INFO FROM CDDB

This command allows you to retrieve track, artist, and album information from CDDB and apply it to tracks that you converted without having already done a CDDB lookup. This is great if you converted CD's at a time when you didn't have an Internet connection available. Only works on files that you converted with SoundJam 2.0 or later.

PREFERENCES

Choose this command to display the Preferences dialog box, shown in Figure 6-2. By clicking the icons at the left side of the window, you can summon different panels, each containing settings that govern different aspects of SoundJam's behavior.

GENERAL

This panel offers several checkboxes that govern SoundJam's overall behavior:

- **Display Track Number in Name**—On a CD, SoundJam can either show you a list of track names (“Overture,” “The Beginning,” and so on)—or, when this option is turned on, a list of track names preceded by the track numbers. The result is “1. Overture,” “2. The Beginning,” and so on.

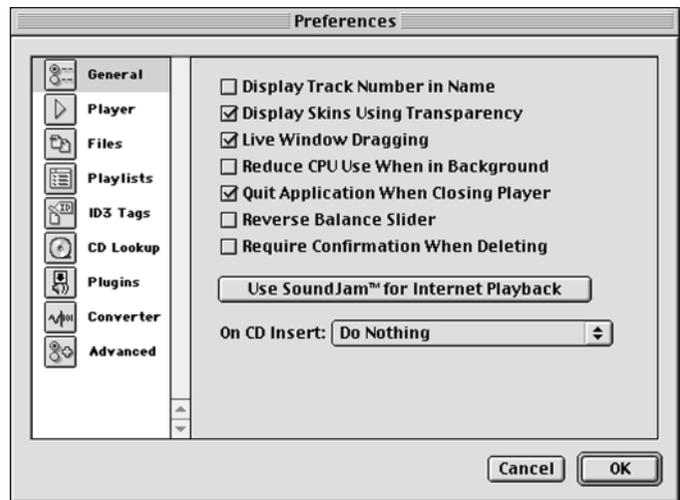


Figure 6-2: The Preferences dialog box is divided into multiple panels.

- **Display Skins Using Transparency**—This allows skinned windows to have transparent layers. For example, skinned windows can now cast transparent drop-shadows on the items below them.
- **Live Window Dragging**—Updates the window in real-time while you drag the window. No longer will you see just the outline of the window as you move it around.
- **Reduce CPU Use When in Background**—Processing music data is hard work, even for a fast Macintosh; if you like to listen to SoundJam music while working in other programs, you may notice that your Mac feels slower than usual. If you'd prefer SoundJam to use up less of your Mac's horsepower when playing music in the background, turn on this option.
- **Quit Application When Closing Player**—When this option is selected, the application will quit when you close the Main Player window. (Deselecting this option is useful when you want to close all open windows and just use the player without any visual stimulation.)
- **Reverse Balance Slider**—Turn on this option if you want SoundJam to swap the balance control for the left and right playback channels. You might use it if, for example, you've inadvertently put on your headphones backwards, or if you own a Macintosh model whose right and left channels are reversed.
- **Require Confirmation When Deleting**—When this is checked, SoundJam will put up a confirmation dialog box when you delete items from playlists.
- **Use SoundJam for Internet Playback**—Click this button. After that, when you listen to streaming audio from the Internet, as described in Chapter 4, there's nothing to configure—SoundJam automatically detects and intercepts that audio stream and begins to play it.

 *Tip: When you turn on this option, SoundJam automatically updates your Internet Config files—the preferences you set using the Internet control panel in Mac OS 8 and later, or using the free Internet Config extension in earlier systems—to record your preference.*

- **On CD Insert**—This option lets you control what SoundJam will do when a new CD is inserted. The options are: Do Nothing, Begin Playing, Convert All Tracks, and Convert All Tracks & Eject. This lets you setup SoundJam to perform quick batch conversions of your CD collection.

PLAYER

- **Scroll Title Display**—SoundJam will automatically scroll titles that are too long to display in the player window. It will also cycle between the currently selected track's album, artist, and track names.
- **Resume Playback At Startup**—Resumes playback at the point in the track when SoundJam MP last quit.
- **Play Tracks While Converting**—SoundJam has a very powerful feature that allows you to play a track while it is being converted! This means that you can hear the results of the conversion while still performing the conversion at full speed. When you start converting, if the CD driver is capable of extracting while converting (most Apple CD drivers can), the track will be added to the playlist right away and playback will begin. Otherwise, playback will begin after the first track has been converted.

This feature does require that your computer be capable of converting faster than real-time while still performing the playback. A G3 processor or better is recommended.

- **Play One Track at a Time**—After playing each track, SoundJam will stop on the next track. This allows SoundJam to be used like a “cart” machine used in radio stations, with the space bar starting the next track.
- **Use CD Digital Audio Playback**—Your Mac can play music from an audio CD in either of two ways: directly from the CD player, or via the Mac's own circuitry.

When the CD player plays music directly—which it does when you turn this checkbox off—the music is sent straight to the Mac's Sound Out jack, bypassing the Mac's innards.

When this checkbox is turned on, however, the music is sent into the Macintosh and processed—the great advantage is that SoundJam's graphic equalizer, visual feedback screens, and other audio features can then interact with the music.

There are only three cases when you'll benefit by turning off this option: (1) You have an older CD-ROM drive that doesn't communicate with SoundJam otherwise; (2) You're running computation-intensive programs on your Mac, and SoundJam's music-processing features are slowing things down; or (3) You're a purist who resists any kind of sonic processing of the music that's passed from your Mac's CD drive to your stereo.

- **Preload Files into Memory**—This feature lets SoundJam use a portion of RAM to preload into memory the next files to be played (this feature uses temporary memory, so there's no need to increase SoundJam's memory partition in the Finder). This is for PowerBook users

so that SoundJam will NOT spin up (or keep spun up) the hard disk. It's very important for preserving battery life. SoundJam will attempt to keep the buffers full whenever it has to go to the disk to load a track. Whenever it encounters a track it has to read, SoundJam will do the prereading. You can specify how much RAM SoundJam will set aside as the buffer space.

- **Shuffle—Keep Album's Tracks Together**—With this option selected, SoundJam will shuffle entire albums withing the playlist.
- **Shuffle—Shuffle Album's Tracks**—With this option selected, SoundJam will shuffle the tracks within an album, but still keep the album's tracks together.

FILES

This panel's checkboxes pertain to SoundJam's handling of sound files on your hard drive.

- **Change File Creator to SoundJam**—Every time SoundJam opens an MP3, AIFF WAV, or other SoundJam-recognizable file, the program marks the file as one of its own—behind the scenes, the program changes the file's invisible Macintosh creator code to match SoundJam's. The advantage of this system is that, henceforth, you'll be able to double-click that MP3 file on your desktop to launch SoundJam (instead of having to drag its icon into the SoundJam window, for example). If you'd prefer that SoundJam refrain from stamping MP3 files with its own parenthood, turn off this option. (SoundJam never adopts QuickTime files in this way, however, even though it's technically capable of playing audio QuickTime files.)
- **Update Incorrect File Types**—In the Windows world, an MP3 or AIFF file identifies itself with the appropriate letters (.mp3 or .aif) at the end of its name. On the Mac, as noted above, the corresponding identification is provided by an invisible, four-letter creator code.

Many sound files downloaded from the Internet arrive with no four-letter Mac codes, because such files were originally designed to be played only by Windows computers. When this option is turned on, whenever SoundJam observes a familiar suffix (such as .mp3) on the downloaded file's name, it adds the necessary Mac Creator code automatically.

 *Tip: If you download a sound file from the Internet that SoundJam doesn't seem to recognize, it may be because the file has neither a Windows-style ".mp3" suffix nor a Mac-style Creator code. Try adding the necessary suffix to the name yourself; SoundJam may now be able to open the file.*

- **Delete Temporary URL Files**—Sometimes, when you play a streaming audio file (see Chapter 3) from the Web, the Web site in question deposits a small file on your desktop (often with a suffix like .M3U or .PLS). This file is for the Web page's use, not yours—when the play-

back is over, you have no choice but to throw away this piece of Internet lint. When this checkbox is turned on, SoundJam does the throwing away for you.

- **Add Extension to Filename**—When you create new MP3 or AIFF files, this option makes SoundJam add the correct Windows-style suffix (.mp3 or .aif) to the end of the resulting files' names. This option is useful only if you plan to use your newly created files on a Windows PC.
- **Add Track Number to Filename**—This option makes SoundJam add the track number (from the original CD) to the name of MP3 and AIFF files it creates.
- **Create Files in Artist Folder**—When you use SoundJam to generate new MP3 or AIFF files, it places them into a folder bearing the name of the artist of the original CD (inside the Music folder, inside the SoundJam folder). If you turn this option off, SoundJam puts newly created MP3 files directly into its Music folder (in your System file folder).
- **Create Files in Album Folder**—When you use SoundJam to generate new MP3 or AIFF files, it places them into a folder bearing the name of the original CD (inside the Music folder, inside the SoundJam folder). If you turn this option off, SoundJam puts newly created MP3 files directly into its Music folder (in your System file folder). If the Create Files in Artist Folder option is on, this folder will be created within the artist's folder.

PLAYLISTS

- **Ask Before Saving Playlist Changes**—Each time you close a playlist window to which you've made changes, SoundJam prompts you to confirm that you want to save the changes. If you'd rather not be asked, turn off this option; now SoundJam automatically saves whatever changes you make.
- **Maximum Folder Levels**—Allows you to select how many folders the hierarchical playlist will display. Your choices are none, one, two, three or all. You can turn off the hierarchical display by selecting none.

ID3 TAGS

- **Add Missing ID3 tags**—For any MP3 file that does not have an ID3 tag, SoundJam can add one to the file. The version that is used will be the one that is selected in the "Create ID3 tags as" option.
- **Update Existing ID3 Tags**—When you type track names, album names, and other information into your music files (using the File menu's Get Info command), SoundJam ordinarily doesn't make this information part of the MP3 files you create—instead, SoundJam stores this data as part of the file's playlist window. In other words, it's possible to wind up with two

independent sets of information about the album, artist, genre, and so on: the information that identifies the track in the playlist, and the ID3 tags that come built into the music files (see Chapter 4 for more on ID3 tags).

The Update Existing ID3 Tags option, when turned on, makes SoundJam change the existing track's ID3 data (artist, album, genre, and other information) to reflect what you've typed in. (If Add Missing ID3 Tags is turned on, SoundJam adds such information as ID3 data even if the source material doesn't have ID3 information to begin with.)

- **Create ID3 tags as**—This allows you to select which ID3 tag you would like to use. 1.0 and 1.1 are the most widely used. 2.2 is rapidly becoming the standard but not all MP3 players understand tags of this version. 2.3 is the latest version, and it allows you to add the most information to a track.
- **Create ID3 tags with Padding**—Some MP3 players cannot correctly read files that were created with padded ID3 tags. By disabling this option, SoundJam will create its ID3 tags without the extra space. This means that if you make information in the tag larger (for example, changing the track name to a longer one) SoundJam may have to take a moment to grow your MP3 file slightly.

CD LOOKUP

The options on this panel pertain to SoundJam's ability to retrieve information—song names, album, artist, and so on—from the Internet's massive, collaborative music-CD information database, the CDDDB Web page.

- **CDDDB Server**—From this pop-up menu, choose the Internet CD server you'd like SoundJam to use when retrieving information from the Internet about your CDs. Click the Update Server List button to connect to the Internet and get an updated list of servers to use.
- **Your E-mail Address**—Type your e-mail address here, if it doesn't already appear. The CDDDB Internet database requires this information in exchange for the free CD information you're looking up.
- **Connect to CDDDB Automatically**—If this checkbox isn't checked, SoundJam fills in the missing album and track information for your music CDs only when you click Get Names Online in the CD window, as described in Chapter 3. This option, however, makes SoundJam connect to the Internet CD database automatically whenever you insert a CD your Mac hasn't seen before.

This option works best, of course, if you're lucky enough to have a full-time Internet connection (such as an office ethernet connection, a cable modem, a DSL connection, or the like).

If you generally connect to the Internet using a standard phone-line modem, turn on this option only if you don't mind SoundJam automatically dialing up your Internet account whenever you insert a new CD.

PLUG-INS

The Plug-ins panel offers a simple list of any visual plug-ins that are available to SoundJam. When you click a checkbox to turn it off, the corresponding plug-in no longer appears in the SoundJam Window menu.

At the bottom of the window there are two buttons, About and Configure, which may not be active for all plug-ins. When you select a plug-in which supports configuration, these buttons are available and allow you to configure the plug-in. Because each plug-in does something different, the results of clicking the Configure button will vary. Of the plug-ins that come with SoundJam, Melt-O-Rama is the only one that is configurable. Try highlighting the Melt-O-Rama plug-in in the list, clicking the Configure button, then experimenting with the resulting settings dialog box.

There's little downside to leaving all of your original SoundJam plug-ins turned on and available. Plug-ins written by independent programmers that you download from the SoundJam Web site, however, may be a different story. Some may require a lot of memory to run—memory that you can reclaim by turning off these plug-in checkboxes. Others may not be visual plug-ins at all, but instead audio plug-ins that (for example) add reverb or some other effect to the music play-back. Turning off their checkboxes in this panel may be the only way you have to turn off such musical effects.

CONVERTER

The controls on this panel let you change the settings for SoundJam's Converter window which turns CD tracks and other sound files into MP3, MP2, or AIFF files. See Chapter 4 for details on this process.

- **Convert using**—Use this pop-up menu to choose the file format you use most often: MP3, MP2 or AIFF. You'll find a discussion of these three file formats in Chapter 4.
- **Configure**—Click this button to summon the SoundJam MP3 or MP2 Encoder dialog box, as described in Chapter 4. The identical dialog box appears here so that you can specify your most frequently used settings, thus establishing new factory defaults, saving you the trouble of setting them up every time you perform a conversion.

- **Select Conversion Destination**—When SoundJam has finished creating a new MP3, MP2, or AIFF file, where should it put the file? Click this button to designate a new folder as these files' birthplace. (If you don't specify a location, SoundJam puts them into a Music folder inside the SoundJam folder.)

ADVANCED

The Advanced panel is for SoundJam's specialized or technical settings.

- **Add Encoded/Opened Files To**—These options let you control which playlist should receive newly encoded or opened files. You can choose None to let SoundJam keep track of the files internally while you are playing them (on a temporary and hidden playlist). Other options include the Master Playlist or a new playlist. By default, SoundJam wants to put all new tracks into the Master Playlist for convenient access.
- **Disk for Scratch Files**—When you extract the sound from a CD or QuickTime movie, or when you convert sound files into MP3, MP2, or AIFF formats, SoundJam occasionally creates temporary files on your hard drive, which it then deletes when it's finished with the work. This pop-up menu lets you specify which volume (hard drive, Zip, or other disk) you want SoundJam to use for storing these temporary files. You'll find this option most useful when SoundJam gives you a "not enough disk space available" message.
- **Buffer Sizes**—These options let you change the internal buffer sizes used for streams and files. Increasing the buffer size used for streams may help poor network connections keep up with playback.

CONTROLS MENU

This menu contains commands for Play, Stop, Next Track, and other typical CD player-type controls. Of course, most of these commands are also represented by buttons in the Player window, and are described in Chapter 1. The advantage of this menu, however, is that it indicates the keyboard shortcuts for each of these commands, which lets you manipulate SoundJam without having to use the mouse. You'll also find the menu command for the Karaoke feature, as described in Chapter 2.

 *Tip: The Controls menu also contains a Mute command, which can be useful when, for example, the telephone rings while you're playing music. You can also tap the Space bar, which toggles between Play and Pause.*

SKIN MENU

This menu displays one listing of each skin file in the Skins folder of your SoundJam folder. (A skin is a graphic design scheme for the Player window. See Chapter 2 for a complete discussion of skins and how to install and use them.) If you have custom skins in your Skins folder, you'll also find a Random Skin command here, which makes SoundJam show a different skin each time you launch the program, and a command called Built-in, which shows the original, factory-installed skin.

WEB MENU

If your Mac can connect to the Internet, you'll find the commands in this menu useful indeed. They launch your Web browser and open up the corresponding Web sites automatically—which is a great way to get more skins, more visual plug-ins, and more music files for use in SoundJam.

You can also use the Update SoundJam™ MP command to make sure that you're using the latest and greatest version of the program, and the Get Skins command to jump directly to the skins page at www.soundjam.com.

WINDOW MENU

Use this menu to open SoundJam's various windows. They include:

PLAYER

This window is the control panel for your virtual CD player, as described in Chapter 2. It contains buttons for starting and stopping the music playback, along with volume and balance knobs, the Shuffle and Repeat controls, and a counter.

EQUALIZER

Choose this command to open SoundJam's ten-band Graphic Equalizer window, which lets you shape the music—bass, treble, and everything between—to suit your taste and your equipment. See Chapter 2 for instructions.

CONVERTER

This command opens the Converter window, which lets you turn CD tracks and other common music files into MP3 or AIFF files. Chapter 4 contains step-by-step instructions.

MASTER PLAYLIST

In addition to any playlists you create yourself, as described in Chapter 3, SoundJam always maintains one permanent playlist called the Master Playlist. This command opens the Master Playlist window. (Unlike normal playlists, the Master is always open. Clicking its close box just hides the Master Playlist instead of actually closing it.)

ALARM CLOCK/SLEEP TIMER

This command opens the Alarm Clock and Sleep Timer window. See Chapter 2 for details on using this window.

[PORTABLE MP3 PLAYER WINDOWS]

Any audio player device that you have attached to your Macintosh through the USB port will be listed here. Some devices that you may see here are the Rio 500 and the Nomad II.

[CD AND PLAYLIST NAMES]

The Window menu also lists any playlist windows and CD windows that are currently open. By choosing their names, you bring the corresponding windows to the front.

[VISUAL PLUG-INS]

Any visual plug-ins you have open and active will appear here. Select the name of a plug-in to bring its window to the front.

USE FULL SCREEN

This will display your frontmost visual plug-in using the whole screen. To exit full-screen mode, simply press the Esc (escape), or Command-F keys.

SCRIPTS MENU

If you have downloaded or created AppleScripts to extend or automate SoundJam, put them in the Scripts folder inside of the SoundJam folder. The scripts will appear in the Scripts menu, ready for use.

HELP MENU

Choose SoundJam™ MP Help from this menu to view a text-only, abbreviated version of this manual. This menu also contains the usual Macintosh help commands, such as Show Balloons.

GETTING IN TOUCH WITH CASADY & GREENE

HAVE YOUR TECHNICAL INFORMATION READY

If you need to get in touch with our tech-support staff, please be ready to give us the following information:

1. Your SoundJam MP version and serial number.
2. A description of your system configuration, including...
 - Macintosh System Manufacturer and Model
 - System RAM
 - System Software Version
 - Startup files in use on your system
3. A detailed description of your problem including where and when it happens.

We'll probably be able to give you the most help if you're sitting in front of your computer and can take some time to work with us in solving your problem.

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Technical support is available any time via the Internet.

On-line Support:

Message Board www.casadyg.com/support/msgboard/
 FAQ www.casadyg.com/support/faq/
 World Wide Web www.casadyg.com
 FTP Site [ftp.casadyg.com](ftp://ftp.casadyg.com)

Internet E-Mail:

Sales and Upgrades sales@casadyg.com
 Suggestions c&g@casadyg.com
 Web Site Comments and Suggestions webmaster@casadyg.com

We are also available by phone Monday–Friday from 8:30am–4:30pm PST.

Casady & Greene Live Technical Support 831-484-9228
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Or you can write us at:

Casady & Greene, Inc., 22734 Portola Drive, Salinas, CA 93908.

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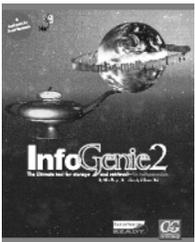


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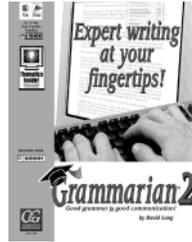


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