General Information - MIDI

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to MIDI Lieder, and thank you for your purchase! It is our goal to provide quality sequences that will aid in your teaching and your students' learning. There are many advantages to using a MIDI sequence in your rehearsals. With MIDI Lieder playing the accompaniment and/or vocal parts, you are free to focus your attention where it should be - on the student. MIDI also gives you the ability to transpose any piece without changing the tempo. This is great when you have an early morning rehearsal and that high G just isn't there yet. Or, maybe your vocalist is having trouble finding all the notes in that long melisma at the given tempo. With MIDI, you can change the tempo without affecting the pitch. You can also start playback at any point within the sequence. Just type in the measure number and press play!

SOME BASICS

Some people find "tracks" and "channels" confusing, so it will be best to talk about that now so the terminology used later may make sense. Most synthesizers sold today are 16 part "**multi-timbral**." This means that they can produce 16 sounds (voices, patches, etc.) at a time, each on its own MIDI "**channel**" (1-16). Think of it as 16 separate little synths inside the one box, and each little virtual synth can produce one sound (piano, flute, etc.), and can also play multiple notes at a time (**polyphonic**). The sound that each track makes is determined by the **Program Number** you assign to it. MIDI “sequencers” come with anywhere from eight to an unlimited number of "**tracks**" available. Each voice part is recorded on its own track, as is the piano, etc. Each track must be assigned to a "**MIDI Channel**." The midi sequence files from MIDI Lieder have each track assigned to its corresponding channel number (Track 1 is assigned to Channel 1, Track 2 to Channel 2, etc.), but you can assign any track to any channel, and even multiple tracks to a single channel. For instance, you could assign all of the vocal "tracks" to "channel" 1 if you needed to. Each of those tracks would need to be assigned to the same **program number**, however, and would produce the same sound.

GETTING STARTED - MAC/PC USERS

To make the MIDI Lieder sequences universally available, they've been saved as "**Standard MIDI Files**." This is the common file-exchange format of virtually all sequencing programs. To open a song, first start your sequencing program. Then, using its Open or Import command, load the song you want. Once the file is open, look at the way it's been set up. The Piano track will always be Track 1, Channel 1. This will be followed by the voice parts, usually one track per part. Each track is set to its corresponding channel number (track 2 assigned to channel 2, track 3 to channel 3, etc.). Please refer to the enclosed **Track List** document to verify which voice part each track contains.

The Program number (also referred to as voice, or patch) determines the "sound" that will play, such as piano, flute, sax, etc. **In the past few years I have left the voice setting blank for all parts. This will allow you to make your own settings for the playback sounds. Be aware that your synthesizer or computer will play whatever default setting it has for those channels until you make the changes either at your keyboard, or the computer software. Make sure you save the file with the changes into whatever software you are using so that it will come up correctly the next time you use it.**

If you are making practice recordings for your students or rehearsing live, I recommend using Piccolo, Oboe, Clarinet, or English Horn voicings. You may need to experiment with various voicings for each voice part by changing the program numbers (look in your instrument's manual for a list). Look for a sound that is easily distinguishable from the accompaniment. Students can then tune in to that timbre and be able to pick it out of the mix. I also like to use a sound that sustains so the student can hear exactly where the cutoff should be. I try very hard to make the cutoffs accurate. With each "track" assigned to a different "channel" you will also be able to adjust the volume of each part independently. Everyone's equipment and setup is a little different, so be sure to read your manuals and know the possibilities.

Don’t be afraid to consult your manuals, online help resource, or call the software company if you have specific questions. They will explain how to change settings and manipulate the music if you're unsure. Every manufacturer and product is different. Sometimes the learning curve is steep, but eventually it will make sense. Once you have made any changes according to your system and preferences, be sure to “Save As” to a new location and folder so that the changes will be retained. You can then create an alias of the folder and place it on the desktop for fast startup.

Now, assuming you have your synthesizer connected to your computer correctly (or perhaps you are just using the sound card on the computer), press the play button. Presto! Using your sequencer's Play, Stop, Rewind, Fast Forward, and Pause buttons, you can control the way the music plays back, just like you were using a tape player, only better! You can jump around in the song, speed it up or slow it down, turn off the piano part, and so on. Consult your sequencer manual to find out how you can manipulate the music.

SYNTHESIZER SEQUENCERS (To use these files without a computer)

Your synthesizer sequencer must be able to read Standard MIDI Files (SMF's) in order to use these files. There are many synths currently on the market with this capability, such as keyboards by Yamaha, Roland, Kurzweil, Korg, and others. While some keyboards use floppy disks to import the sequences, some have CD drives, and newer models either use a SmartMedia card (like in a digital camera), flash drives, or can download sequences from a computer via a USB cable. At any rate, check your manual to see if your synthesizer reads SMF's. Everyone is receiving the files via download from the website, so you may need to transfer the file from your computer to whatever media your synth accepts. If you do need to transfer the files from the computer to another format and are unsure how to do it, contact your tech person in the district. Otherwise, you can contact me and I will try to help.

Be sure to print out the enclosed Track List which tells you the file number of each song, and which voice part is on each track/ channel.

This year I have left the voice setting blank for all parts. This will allow you to make your own settings for the playback sounds. Be aware that your synthesizer will play whatever default setting it has for those channels until you make the changes at your keyboard. Make sure you save the file with the changes onto whatever media and format you are using so that it will come up correctly the next time you use it.

The synthesizer files have been saved as "file format 0," which means that the accompaniment and vocal lines are all on the same track. However, just like the computer based sequencers, each voice part, piano, etc. retains its MIDI channel assignment. Many newer synths expand the Channels into separate tracks automatically. The tracks are organized in the same fashion as the Mac/PC files, as explained above. You should still

be able to assign each part to a different sound so you can hear them clearly and be able to control the volume of each. Many newer synths also are able to read the “PC” versions saved as “file format 1”. Please learn the possibilities of your synthesizer sequencer by reading the manual.

Generally, you will need to follow your synthesizer manual instructions for loading these files. Each manufacturer does it differently. The songs are saved in a numbered fashion for synth sequencers. **Please reference either the Track List document, or Song Notes document for the file number for each song**. Many synth sequencers only have a 2 digit display. You may only see the first 2 digits of the file name. Once you have loaded a song and made any necessary changes (program numbers, etc.), be sure to **save** it on a disk or other medium that is formatted for your particular synth.

MEASURE NUMBERS

The measures in sequencer programs can only be numbered in strict consecutive order. In order to start the sequencer at a certain measure within a song, you must first number the measures in your score, just like at Large Group Festival, beginning with the first full measure. However, you must also include the measures in repeats. **For example, if you have a song that repeats measure 10 through 19, they will be measures 20 through 29 on the second time through. From that point on, the publishers measure numbers will be different from that of the sequence. It’s a price we have to pay.**

FERMATAS & RITARDS

Fermatas have been programmed into the sequence by using tempo changes, but the basic pulse will continue. It's been done this way so you don't have to guess how long to hold the note and when to re-enter. For example, if the song tempo is 90, a fermata may be set at 45 (the note would feel like two beats instead of one), or at 30 (the note would feel like three beats). Fermatas will be addressed as needed in the "Song Notes" section. Ritards have also been programmed in with tempo changes as well. As these are subjective things, feel free to edit them to your liking. One of the great things about MIDI files is the ability to change the tempo, key, velocities (that's how hard the key was struck), etc. You can do as much as your sequencer (and your time) will allow. Feel free to edit any of the "data" to suit your own musical taste and interpretation.