SONY

SOLOIST™

Digital PC Comparative Recorder for SYMPHONY®
Language
Learning
System

DIGITAL RECORDER SOFTWARE FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING

Sony Soloist - German.wav

SONY PROGRAM 1

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BOOKMARKS CLEAR

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SONY SOLOIST: IT SPEAKS A UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE.

SOLOIST™
Digital PC Comparative Recorder for SYMPHONY®
Language
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ENHANCE THE POWER OF LEARNING

Sony Soloist™ Digital PC Comparative Recorder and Media Player is a software application designed for use in language learning. It operates like a dual track cassette recorder but instead of using cassette tapes, Soloist uses the PC sound card to record and playback digital audio files to and from the PC. Students can access lessons from many sources including CD-ROM, hard disk, media server or the Internet. It provides full comparative recording capability - allowing students to listen to a sound file (such as a practice lesson) and record their own voice at the same time. Both can then be played back simultaneously for comparison, and the student's voice may be re-recorded to reinforce speaking practice.

Soloist supports multiple video and audio file formats, including PCM format digital audio WAV files, MPEG Layer-3 ("MP3") encoded digital audio files, "Zip" compressed WAV files, mid and rmi MIDI files, ASCII Text files, Rich Text Format files, Hyper Text Markup Language files, as well as mpeg, avi and mov format digital video files.

Soloist is easily integrated into the classroom as a component of the Sony Symphony® Learning System. In this directed environment, the teacher can communicate and interact with the students, control the students' activities, or permit students to work independently. Using the Conductor™ Companion Software and optional modules, the teacher also has advanced control over the Soloist recorders. In addition, Soloist can be used as a stand-alone application allowing students in a LAN environment, such as in a library or computer lab to work individually.

Soloist Features

- Comparative Recording plays the program track while recording the student voice on the other track. If creating a new recording, both tracks will be recorded simultaneously.
- Digital Audio provides true random access and selectable sound quality. Recording time is limited only by the selected format and available hard drive space. Recordings can be copied to network or CR-R/CD-RW drives for permanent storage.
- Random Access allows instant access to any part of the file.
- Real time counter displays current position in minutes, seconds, and tenths of a second.
- Multi-Language ToolTips provide a brief text description of button functions when the cursor is held over the button for a few seconds. Current choices are English, Spanish, French, Italian and German.
- Bookmarks (up to ten) can be named and saved. ToolTips indicate the time position and the name of the bookmark.
- File Association allows automatic opening of HTML, text, and bookmark files.
- Repeat Phrase will automatically return to the beginning of the current phrase or sentence and start playing again.
- Infinite A-B Repeat plays a segment that will be repeated until stopped.
- User Friendly Controls for Play, Record, Stop, Fast Forward, Rewind
- Volume Level Meter displays playback and recording levels (dependent upon PC Sound card capabilities).
- On Screen Display for Program Group, Student Response Feedback, Teacher Control, Model, Lid Lock and Microphone Cut available when connected to the Symphony Learning System.
- Call Button to notify the teacher that assistance is needed.
- On Line Help with topic scan and keyword search

Teacher Control

When used in an instructional classroom, Soloist can be controlled from the Symphony System console or with the Conductor Companion Software, much in the same way as Sony's ER-8020 Comparative Cassette Recorder. The teacher can control all "transport" functions such as Play, Stop, Fast Forward, Rewind, and Record, as well as turn on/off the student microphone, and prevent the student from changing program material. Additionally, Soloist provides information to the teacher console including student names, current open files, and "transport" mode status.

The teacher can also initiate "Auto Test" mode in which the student recorders are synchronized with a master tape deck - whenever the master deck is playing, the student recorders are paused, and when the master deck is paused, the student recorders start recording. The student's recording contains only their vocalizations, providing for efficient assessment.

The "Auto Transfer" mode allows the teacher to copy audio from an analog cassette to the student digital recorders. Auto Transfer can be done at either real-time speed or two-times speed. This means you can digitize a 10-minute lesson in 5 minutes! A bookmark is automatically set within Soloist so the students can quickly access the beginning of the copied material. The teacher can also collect the student recordings from the individual PCs to a network drive, zip drive, CD-R, or other media. The "Student Recording Auto Compile" allows the teacher to collect the student recordings in sequence from their Soloist recorders to a master cassette tape at the console at up to two-times speed.

ADVANCED TEACHER REMOTE CONTROL

Integrated Features

In addition to the real-time audio communications functions including All Call, Group Call, Pairing, Conferencing, Monitoring, Intercom and Modeling, the teacher can control the following Soloist features when using the Conductor software:

- Launch any file on the students' PCs
- Bookmarks can be remotely set and cleared.
- Repeating phrase control
- List of opened student sound files
- PC screen control including blanking screens and viewing/modeling snapshots (optional)
- Disabling and enabling the Windows environment; Opening and closing files for the students
- Random access of any position in the student file
- Web pages can be displayed on a secure, built-in browser (optional).
- Collection of student recording to a specified folder

Cassette Tape Integration

Realizing that there is a proliferation of program material that exists on cassettes, and the ease of portability, low media cost, and commonly available playback devices for analog cassettes, Soloist can be integrated with a Sony ER-8020 comparative cassette recorder at any or all student positions.

Soloist provides full remote control of the ER-8020 recorder; the recorder can be mounted on the student's desktop, or in a rack that is out of the way. Students can also perform two-times speed copy to and from the sound files and cassette tapes. When copying from a sound file to tape, the ER-8020 counter is automatically set to zero, and the transport is automatically stopped when the end of the sound file is reached.

Stand Alone Operation

Soloist can be used without being connected to the Sony Symphony learning system; a simple headset with microphone is all that is needed for students to use Soloist on any PC that is connected to the LAN (in the Library, dormitory, or shared PC lab). Normally, if students want to practice comparative recording, they would have to go to the "language lab". Standard cassette recorders are not capable of comparative recording. With Soloist installed on a PC outside the lab, students can access files from a shared PC network, record their oral responses, and copy the files back to the network or e-mail them to the teacher for assessment. Soloist eliminates the need to transport audio assignments via tape.

System Configuration

Various configuration settings are available based on the system and faculty requirements. These settings can be password protected to ensure that they are not inadvertently changed. Selectable settings include:

- Creation of a "time based" log file to track almost every action performed by the user
- Display of an additional button in the Soloist window to allow access to a frequently used application or file
- User Login at start-up. The student's entry is used as part of default filename when recordings are saved. The login name can automatically default to the Network login name, and can be sent to the teacher's Conductor Companion Software for display in the corresponding student positions.
- Automatically "Attend" to the teacher console when started
- Automatically advance to the end of an open sound file before teacher initiated recordings
- Automatically set a bookmark before teacher initiated recordings
- Execute any of the advanced teacher remote control commands
- Automatically backup program files when opened
- Automatically disable the Windows environment while running
- Select the sound file format for new recordings (selections for both normal speed and two-times speed recordings)
- Define the parameters for the "Repeat Phrase" control

PC Requirements

The minimum PC requirements for Soloist Digital PC Comparative Recorders are:

- Microsoft® Windows® 95, 98, NT4 or 2000 operating system
- 150Mhz Pentium® class microprocessor (300MHz required for MPEG files)
- 5MB available hard disk space
- SVGA graphics capability
- Mouse or other screen-pointing device
- Sound card with full duplex capability
- Headset with microphone (when using Soloist in stand-alone configuration)

When using Soloist with the Sony ER-80B Digital Recorder Interface Box and the Sony Symphony Learning System the following is also required:

- PC network with Shared Folder access
- RS-232C Serial Communications Port (second port needed for optional control of the Sony ER-8020 comparative cassette recorder)

**Sony's Soloist Digital PC Comparative
Recorder Software and the Symphony
Learning System provide flexible technology
tools for effective language learning.**

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