



Manual for using Virtual Singer (VS) files produced in mp3 format by *Choralia*

General information

This manual provides information and instructions about using the Virtual Singer (VS) files produced in mp3 format by *Choralia*.

The VS technology has been developed by Myriad (<http://www.myriad-online.com>), and adopted by *Choralia* as a mean to distribute training aids for choir singers.

VS training aids can be used in three different ways:

- converted already into mp3 files, that one can play online using the “*Choralia mp3 player*” (see details next), or through any other mp3 player, or record on CDs, etc. . These files can be played or downloaded from the “mp3 catalogue” page of the *Choralia* website, and it’s the easiest way to use *Choralia*’s training aids;
- running VS within a web browser, where a specific software, the Myriad Music plug-in, needs to be installed first. This is slightly more complex to use, especially if one wants to record files on CDs or mp3 players, however it provides the best audio quality when one wants to significantly slow down or speed up “tempo”;
- running VS through a specific application to be installed on the PC (or MAC), named Myriad Melody Player. This adds further complexity, however the user can change most settings, such as the volume of each voice, the left-right position in the stereo space, and even transpose music up or down.

Users can find the best solution for their learning needs and depending on their computer skills.

This manual specifically addresses the first case, i.e., using files in mp3 format.

Listening to mp3 files – the “Choralia mp3 player”

Since the very beginning *Choralia* provided mp3 files that can be played using the mp3 player that is embedded in all recent web browsers. *Choralia* now offers a specific mp3 player, the *Choralia mp3 player*, that still makes use of the mp3 player provided by the browser, but also provides additional functions specifically conceived for music learning purposes.

The *Choralia mp3 player* requires a browser that is compatible with the HTML5 specifications. All recent browsers are compatible with these specifications, although some behaviour may slightly change depending on the specific browser used. If your browser is not compliant to the HTML5 specifications, or if you don't want to use the *Choralia mp3 player* for any reasons, a "legacy" alternative is provided, which is described in the following sections.

In all cases, in order to use *Choralia's* mp3 files you have to understand some specific details such as file naming conventions, especially if you want to download files rather than listening to them through the *Choralia mp3 player*. These details are also described in the following sections.

Please note: the advertisements shown by the *Choralia mp3 player* are present because the player is based on a third-party technology used by *Choralia* under license conditions that require the presence of advertisements. They do not replace the donations required to make use of *Choralia's* training aids. If you don't want to have advertisements displayed, please use the "legacy" access described in the next sections.

File names

All file names are in lower-case letters.

When you select a work from the "mp3 catalogue" page of the *Choralia* website, your internet browser is directed to an internet address having the following format:

http://www.choralia.net/<product code>mp3

where *<product code>* is the code assigned by *Choralia* and that is different for different works. For example, the product code for the Christmas Oratorio by Saint-Saëns is *ss01*, thus the corresponding internet address is:

http://www.choralia.net/ss01mp3

This address shows the main web page for the work chosen. You can access all mp3 files for the work in subject from this page. File names have the following format:

<product code><song number><voice practice level>.mp3

The *<product code>* is as described above. The *<song number>* is a number (-1, -2, etc.) relevant to the song sequence. As the same song is processed at three different practice levels for each voice (only voice with metronome, all voices with one voice emphasized, all voices at the same level), each song results in three different audio files for each voice.

The *<voice practice level>* is *ss* for soprano solo (only voice and metronome – first practice level) and *se* for soprano emphasized (second practice level). If voices are split (e.g., soprano I and soprano II), the corresponding number is added to the letters (e.g., *ss1* and *ss2*). For the other voices it's similar: *as* and *ae* for alto, *ts* and *te* for tenor, *bs* and *be* for bass. The *<voice practice level>* is omitted when all voices are at the same level (third practice level).

For example, the first two choral movements of the Christmas Oratorio by Saint-Saëns are represented by the following files (please note: the first movement is for SATB, while the second movement is SSAA, i.e., soprano I and soprano II, alto I and alto II):

<i>ss01-1ss.mp3</i>	(first movement, soprano voice plus metronome)
<i>ss01-1se.mp3</i>	(first movement, all voices with soprano voice emphasized)
<i>ss01-1as.mp3</i>	(first movement, alto voice plus metronome)
<i>ss01-1ae.mp3</i>	(first movement, all voices with alto voice emphasized)
<i>ss01-1ts.mp3</i>	(first movement, tenor voice plus metronome)
<i>ss01-1te.mp3</i>	(first movement, all voices with tenor voice emphasized)
<i>ss01-1bs.mp3</i>	(first movement, bass voice plus metronome)
<i>ss01-1be.mp3</i>	(first movement, all voices with bass voice emphasized)
<i>ss01-1.mp3</i>	(first movement, all voices at the same level)
<i>ss01-2ss1.mp3</i>	(second movement, soprano I voice plus metronome)
<i>ss01-2se1.mp3</i>	(second movement, all voices with soprano I voice emphasized)
<i>ss01-2ss2.mp3</i>	(second movement, soprano II voice plus metronome)
<i>ss01-2se2.mp3</i>	(second movement, all voices with soprano II voice emphasized)
<i>ss01-2as1.mp3</i>	(second movement, alto I voice plus metronome)
<i>ss01-2ae1.mp3</i>	(second movement, all voices with alto I voice emphasized)
<i>ss01-2as2.mp3</i>	(second movement, alto II voice plus metronome)
<i>ss01-2ae2.mp3</i>	(second movement, all voices with alto II voice emphasized)
<i>ss01-2.mp3</i>	(second movement, all voices at the same level)

Listening to files or downloading them

Select any work from the “mp3 catalogue” page of the *Choralia* website by clicking on the “listen to” icon (a small loudspeaker) relevant to such a work. The main web page for that work will open, and it will look similar to the following screenshot:

English Italiano

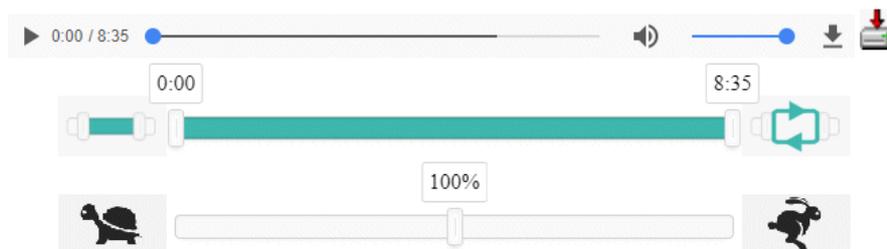


C. SAINT-SAËNS – CHRISTMAS ORATORIO OP. 12

Soprano	Voice with metronome, organ	Emphasised voice and other voices	All voices
Gloria in altissimis			
Domine ego credidi – soprano I			
Domine ego credidi – soprano II			
Quare fremuerunt gentes			
Consurge Filia Sion			
Consurge Filia Sion (choral excerpts only)			
Tollite hostias			

Alto	Voice with metronome, organ	Emphasised voice and other voices	All voices
Gloria in altissimis			
Domine ego credidi – alto I			
Domine ego credidi – alto II			
Quare fremuerunt gentes			

If you click on the small loudspeaker icon relevant to a certain piece and a certain voice, the *Choralia mp3 player* will be activated for that piece and for that voice. It will look similar to the following screenshot:



The above screenshot is obtained from Chrome. Other browsers may show something slightly different.

The top control is the playbar provided by the browser. It allows to play, pause, change volume, mute, and move the time slider through the piece. Chrome also offers a pushbutton (on the right side of the playbar in the screenshot above) to download the mp3 file to your computer. Other browsers may not show this pushbutton, while they will anyway show the other download pushbutton that is present on the right side of the playbar. This is a special download pushbutton, and details about it will be provided in the following.

The control in the middle is the *section* slider. It allows to identify a specific section of the piece to be played. The two handles mark the beginning and the end of the section to be played. Initially, the two handles are set at the beginning and at the end of the piece, so

the section identified corresponds to the whole piece. Then you can drag each handle to the desired position on the slider and mark the beginning and the end of the desired section. Time labels help to identify the desired position.

The pushbutton on the left of the section slider enables or disables the *section player*, so you can toggle between playing the whole piece or just the section identified.

The pushbutton on the right of the section slider enables or disables the *loop player*. If the loop player is enabled, the section (or the whole piece, depending whether the section player is enabled or not) is played and, when the end is reached, it is played again from the beginning. If the loop player is disabled, playing stops at the end of the section (or of the whole piece), so you have to manually click the button on the playbar to restart the player.

The bottom control is the *tempo* slider. It allows to slow down or speed up music. The slider controls “tempo” from 50% (very slow) to 150% (very fast) of the nominal speed (100%). The “tortoise” pushbutton on the left side of the slider reduces “tempo” in 5% steps, while the “hare” pushbutton on the right side of the slider increases “tempo” in 5% steps.

Large speed variations with respect to the nominal speed may result in noisy or distorted audio performance. This depends on the specific browser you use. Currently, the best performance is offered by Chrome and Safari, followed by Mozilla Firefox. The performance of Microsoft Internet Explorer and Edge is a little bit worse.

If you want to download the mp3 file to your computer, most browsers allow to do so by right-clicking on the playbar and then selecting “save audio as...” (or something like that, depending on the browser). On smartphones and tablets the equivalent of right-clicking is obtained with a long pressure on the touchscreen. For browsers that do not offer this function, you may use the download pushbutton on the right side of the playbar or the legacy functions described next. Please note: the mp3 file will be downloaded “as is”, for the whole piece (not for the specific section you selected) and at the nominal speed. To play a specific section or to change “tempo” after you download the file you have to install a suitable mp3 player on your computer (see details in the last section of this manual).

As an alternative to the right click on the playbar, a specific download pushbutton is provided on the right side of the playbar. This pushbutton is not completely equivalent to the right click on the playbar because it performs the downloading of the file as a binary file rather than as a mp3 file. Downloading the mp3 file as a binary file may solve some problems with specific browsers and settings that do not handle mp3 files normally.

Safari currently does not offer the function to download the mp3 file with the right click on the playbar, so you have to use special download pushbutton described above, or the legacy functions described next. Furthermore, HTML5 functions on Safari require that QuickTime is also installed. If QuickTime is not installed the *Choralia mp3 player* cannot work under Safari, and unfortunately Safari provides no suggestions to install it. So, please install QuickTime if you want to use the *Choralia mp3 player* under Safari.

Legacy functions and special browser and mouse settings

If your browser does not support the HTML5 specifications, or if you don't want to use the *Choralia mp3 player* for any reasons, you can access the *Choralia* website through the URL <http://legacy.choralia.net> (please note "legacy" in lieu of "www"). This access disables the *Choralia mp3 player*, so mp3 files will be played using the mp3 player embedded in your browser. In this case, what happens when you click on the loudspeaker icon mostly depends on the internet browser that you are using (e.g., Microsoft Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, Chrome, etc.) and on its settings, so the behaviour may be slightly different depending on your specific settings.

In most cases, the left button of the mouse is programmed to download the selected file to your computer, and to send it immediately to the default mp3 player application configured for the browser. If so, left-clicking an icon will immediately play the file using the default mp3 player installed on your system.

The right button of the mouse is instead usually programmed to show other possible actions that the system can perform on the selected file. So, right-clicking a loudspeaker icon will open a small menu with a list of possible actions. If you want to download the file to your computer, you have to select the correct option in the list by left-clicking on it. The name of the correct option is slightly different depending on the internet browser you use. Typical names are "Save as...", or "Save object as...", or "Save target as...", or something like that. Depending on your browser's settings, the file will be saved into a default folder, or you will be prompted to define the specific folder where you want it to be saved.

Today's internet browsers offer full flexibility to define actions associated to the various mouse buttons. The above settings for the left and for the right buttons are by far the most common. However, slightly different settings may be occasionally encountered. For example, if no mp3 player is configured for the browser, it is possible that the left button is used to save the file to your computer rather than to play it. If you have a non-standard configuration, you may need to experiment a little bit to find the right commands for it. Settings for left-handed people may also completely swap the functions associated to the left and to the right buttons.

Some MAC versions may not be equipped with the right mouse button at all. In these cases, the right button can be usually simulated by holding the "Control" (CTRL) key while clicking the only mouse button. Holding the "Option" key while clicking the mouse button may be another possibility on some models.

As an alternative to the use of the right button of the mouse you may access the *Choralia* website through the URL <http://mp3.choralia.net> (please note "mp3" in lieu of "www"). With the most common browser settings this will offer the possibility to download mp3 files also when clicking the loudspeaker icon with the left button of the mouse. This may be especially required when using software for visually impaired users, as specific, non-standard functions may be associated to the right button of the mouse.

Slowing down and loop playing mp3 files downloaded to your computer

As previously described, the *Choralia mp3 player* allows to select a section to be played, to change “tempo”, as well as to play the section over and over again in a loop. If you want to obtain the same functions on mp3 files you downloaded to your computer, you have to use a mp3 player providing the same functions, such as, for example:

- VLC Media Player (<http://www.videolan.org/vlc/>). It is a free, open source, multi-platform multimedia player. It supports both slowing down and loop playing functions. However, for large slowing down factors (20% or more) the sound quality degradation is quite significant;
- QuickTime Player (<http://www.apple.com/quicktime/>). It is available for Mac OS X and Windows. The free version supports the slowing down function with pretty good quality also for relatively large slowing down factors. However, the loop playing function is only available in the Pro version (payment of a license fee required);
- Amazing Slow Downer (<http://www.ronimusic.com/slowdown.htm>). It is an audio file player available for Windows, Mac OS X, and some mobile devices (Apple, Android). It supports both slowing down and loop playing functions. Sound quality remains pretty good also for relatively large slowing down factors. It's a commercial product, so the payment of a license fee is required.