

MultiMix FireWire

**Frequently Asked Questions
& Troubleshooting Guide**

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ALESIS

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

MACINTOSH ISSUES

[What system requirements does the MultiMix have?](#)

[How do I set the MultiMix as my recording and playback device?](#)

[How do I uninstall the MultiMix \(usually in order to install a more current driver\)?](#)

[Clicking the “Control Panel” button in Cubase LE’s Devices | Audio Devices | VST Multitrack... menu does nothing](#)

[What type of Mac drivers are available?](#)

WINDOWS PC ISSUES

[Which versions of Windows are supported?](#)

[What types of drivers are available?](#)

[When I insert the CD into my CD or DVD drive, nothing happens](#)

[When I try to open the control panel from within my audio application, an error message appears](#)

[Sample rate error messages appear in my recording program](#)

[I cannot change the Windows XP volume using the Windows volume control slider](#)

[How can I make the MultiMix my default audio device?](#)

[I think that I only installed some of the drivers, not all of them](#)

[When I was installing the MultiMix, I received an error message saying “A problem occurred during device installation. Your hardware may not work properly.”](#)

[I want to uninstall the MultiMix from my computer](#)

[What’s the difference between the MultiMix “Drivers” and the MultiMix “Control Panel”? Why do I need both?](#)

[I’m having trouble with Sonar \(or my other WDM-based audio application\)](#)

GENERAL ISSUES

Can I use the MultiMix as a regular old analog mixer, without a computer?

I'm not sure if the MultiMix is being "seen" by my computer. How can I tell?

What's the best way to connect my headphones and speakers and to monitor my recordings?

Can I connect two MultiMix mixers together for twice the channels?

I hear an echo, like a slapback delay

My track has reverb effects, but they are not being recorded

I've heard that some audio equipment operates better if it is left on all the time. Should I always keep my MultiMix on?

Why is the left input of my stereo line-in channel is being sent to both the left and right channels in my audio application?

I would like to route audio from the computer to the MultiMix, apply the MultiMix's EQ and digital effects, and then record this audio back to the computer. Is that possible?

Why are there two Firewire ports?

Does the MultiMix computer connection operate at FW400 or FW800 speed?

I'm getting hum or a digital glitch noise through my mixer when it's connected to my computer. Help!

I hear high-pitched screeches, static, wrong-speed playback, or other bad things

What is latency, and what are the best latency settings to use?

My system is unstable. Can you provide any tips?

MACINTOSH ISSUES

What system requirements does the MultiMix have?

The MultiMix requires OS X 10.3 (Panther) or above.

How do I set the MultiMix as my recording and playback device?

Choose the Audio MIDI Setup control panel. Within it, choose the MultiMix for both recording and playback.

How do I uninstall the MultiMix (usually in order to install a more current driver)?

To uninstall the MultiMix driver, use one of the many “uninstall” tools available for Mac.

Alesis has had good success with the program “Desinstaller.” The program is freely available at <http://www.versiontracker.com/dyn/moreinfo/macosx/13955>.

Clicking the “Control Panel” button in Cubase LE’s Devices | Audio Devices | VST Multitrack... menu does nothing

This is normal. All settings for the MultiMix should be made through the *Audio MIDI Setup* control panel, located under your system preferences.

What type of Mac drivers are available?

On Macintosh, the MultiMix uses CoreAudio drivers only.

WINDOWS PC ISSUES

Which versions of Windows are supported?

Windows XP (Home and Professional) are the only supported operating systems at this time.

What types of drivers are available?

As of September 2005, WDM, WDM/KS (for programs like Sonar), and ASIO 2 drivers are available. These are 32-bit drivers only (not 64 bit).

GSIF and GSIF2 are not supported at this time.

When I insert the CD into my CD or DVD drive, nothing happens

In order for you to see the various program and driver installation options, the CD needs to “autoplay” (which means that it will launch a program when it is inserted into your computer.)

If this “autoplay” does not occur, click the Windows *Start* button and go to *My Computer*. (If *My Computer* does not appear under the Start menu, look for it on your desktop.)

From there, you will see the Alesis disk listed under one of the Devices with Removable Storage. Right click the disk and choose “Autoplay.” The disc will begin its autoplay routine.

When I try to open the control panel from within my audio application, an error message appears

Most likely, the control panel has not been installed. Your MultiMix will work in many cases without it (so long as the drivers have been installed). However, there are cases where it is required.

To solve this problem, insert the software disk that came with your MultiMix into your computer. Follow the steps on screen to install the control panel.

Sample rate error messages appear in my recording program

Close your audio application. Then, open the MultiMix control panel. (In Windows, click *Start* and *All Programs*. Then, find the *Alesis MultiMix* listing and open the control panel from there.)

Set your preferred sample rate (usually 44.1k for music without video and 48k for music plus video). Then, close the control panel.

Re-open your audio application. Be sure to choose the same sample rate here as you chose earlier in the MultiMix control panel. Different programs allow you to set sample rates in different ways. Consult your program's documentation for this.

It's important that you select a sample rate that the MultiMix can handle. Do not select a sample rate other than 44.1k or 48k.

I cannot change the Windows XP volume using the Windows volume control slider

This is normal. Change the volume by using the controls on the MultiMix.

How can I make the MultiMix my default audio device?

In Windows, choose *Start, Control Panel*, and then *Sounds and Audio Devices*.

Click the *Audio* tab. Change the *Sound Playback* drop-down box to "MultiMix Audio Out." Change the *Sound Recording* drop-down box to "MultiMix Main In."

Do the same for the *Voice* tab.

I think that I only installed some of the drivers, not all of them

It's easy to click a wrong button during installation, causing a partial installation of the drivers. Here's how to remedy this problem:

1. With the MultiMix turned on and connected to your computer, go to the Device Manager. To do so, press and hold the *Windows* button (the one with the little Windows icon on it). While holding Windows, press the *Pause/Break* key. Now, click the *Hardware* tab and then the *Device Manager* button.

(If your keyboard does not have a *Windows* key, located *My Computer* either on your desktop or through the Start menu. Right-click *My Computer*, choose *Properties*, and then click the *Hardware* tab. Now, click the *Device Manager* button.)

2. Click the little plus sign ("+") next to *Sound, video and game controllers*. The MultiMix should be listed there. (If it's not, leave your mixer on and reboot your computer. It's necessary that your mixer be listed here before you can proceed.) It will probably have a yellow explanation point in its listing, indicating that there is a problem with it.

3. Next, right-click on the MultiMix listing and choose *Uninstall...*. Accept the warning that you are about to uninstall the device from your system by pressing *OK*.

Now, the drivers have been uninstalled.

4. Have your MultiMix CD handy. Better yet, go to www.Alesis.com to get the latest drivers and place them on your computer.

5. Reboot your machine. When you plug the MultiMix in again, Windows will go through the MultiMix driver installation routine.

6. Have you installed the control panel? If not, click the Windows *Start* button and go to *My Computer*. (If *My Computer* does not appear under the Start menu, look for it on your desktop.)

From there, you will see the Alesis disk listed under one of the *Devices with Removable Storage*.

Right click the disk and choose “Autoplay.” The disc will begin its autoplay routine. From there, choose to install the Alesis MultiMix control panel.

When I was installing the MultiMix, I received an error message saying “A problem occurred during device installation. Your hardware may not work properly.”

For some reason, not all of the drivers installed properly. To remedy this error, follow the procedures to uninstall and re-install the drivers in the topic *I think that I only installed some of the drivers, not all of them*, above.

I want to uninstall the MultiMix from my computer

This is a two-stage process.

First, follow steps 1 through 3 of the topic *I think that I only installed some of the drivers, not all of them*, above.

Second, uninstall the control panel. Choose *Start* and then *Control Panel*. Choose *Add or Remove Programs*. Click on “MultiMix” and then press the *Remove* button. Click *Yes* when asked if you’re sure that you want to remove MultiMix.

What’s the difference between the MultiMix “Drivers” and the MultiMix “Control Panel”? Why do I need both?

Drivers are what Windows uses to connect to a device. Without them, Windows would not be able to communicate with a device at all.

The *Control Panel* allows you to actually change how the mixer operates. For instance, it’s the control panel that allows you to change buffer sizes and sample rates.

Therefore, we could say: drivers are for *communication*; the control panel is for *functionality*.

I’m having trouble with Sonar (or my other WDM-based audio application)

Check www.Alesis.com for revised drivers.

GENERAL ISSUES

Can I use the MultiMix as a regular old analog mixer, without a computer?

Yes, absolutely! The Firewire functionality is extra, not mandatory.

I'm not sure if the MultiMix is being "seen" by my computer. How can I tell?

In Windows, choose *Start, Control Panel*, and then *Sounds and Audio Devices*. Click the *Audio* tab. Check to see that the MultiMix is available under the *Sound Playback* and *Sound Recording* drop-down boxes.

In Mac, open the *Audio MIDI Setup* control panel and see if the MultiMix can be selected.

For both Mac and Windows, if the MultiMix is not available, try turning off and on again the MultiMix. If that does not work, with the MultiMix on, pull the Firewire cable out of either the computer or the mixer, wait a few seconds, and then re-insert it.

You will want to close and reopen the control panel to see if these actions have solved the problem.

If neither of these approaches works, reboot your computer with the MultiMix turned on. Don't simply "restart." Rather, shut the computer completely off. This will reset the computer's Firewire device that detects the MultiMix.

Once in a while, the Firewire device in your computer may not reset entirely even if the power has been turned off. In these cases, turn off your computer and actually remove the power cord from the computer. Wait about ten seconds, plug the power cord back in, and then start your computer. This approach virtually guarantees that the MultiMix will be seen by your computer.

What's the best way to connect my headphones and speakers and to monitor my recordings?

1. Connect your headphones and speakers

Attach your headphones to the HEADPHONES output and your powered speakers (or speaker amplifier) to the CONTROL ROOM OUT jacks.

2. Route the 2-TRACK input

Press down the button to send the 2 TRACK signal—the signal from the computer—to the HEADPHONE/CONTROL ROOM knob. DO NOT press down the other 2 TRACK button, the one that sends the 2-track signal to the MAIN mix.

3. Route the MAIN mix

Press down the button that routes the MAIN mix to the HEADPHONE/CONTROL ROOM knob.

4. Adjust the listening volume

Then, use the HEADPHONE/CONTROL ROOM knob to control the volume.

Note that this is Alesis' standard routing, but there are plenty of other possibilities. For instance, you could choose to monitor through the MAIN outputs, and then press the 2 TK TO MIX button on to hear the computer signal or off not to hear it. There are a number of different routings that can work well.

Can I connect two MultiMix mixers together for twice the channels?

This is not possible at this time.

I hear an echo, like a slapback delay

Most likely, the computer recording program is playing back the audio it is receiving. Therefore, you're hearing it once through the mixer and again, with a bit of latency delay, as it comes back from the computer.

To avoid this issue, turn off the "input monitoring" function of your computer recording program. Often, this function can be switched on or off per track, with an icon located close to the track's record-arm, solo, and mute buttons.

My track has reverb effects, but they are not being recorded

You'll understand this issue when you consider the MultiMix's internal routings.

The MultiMix's preamp gain, EQ, and channel fader settings all operate on each individual channel. For example, if you change these settings on channel 1, channel 2 will not be affected at all.

Reverb and other AUX effects work differently. When you apply an effect from a channel, you're really sending a bit of that channel's signal out to the reverb or other processor. This way, you can have only one reverb processor, but you can still send a bit of each channel's signal to it. (If the MultiMix had an individual reverb processor for each channel, it would be outrageously expensive.)

The problem, then, is that this one reverb processor can't take the input from all of the channels, process them independently, and then send them back—in correct proportion and without the input from the other channels—to each channel. Since all of those channels' inputs are combined as they are sent to the reverb, the situation is kind of like Humpty-Dumpty in reverse: once all the channels have been combined, they can't be broken apart.

So, the reverb gets returned not to the individual channels (which would be impossible) but rather to the MAIN mix. (The amount of the effect that gets returned to the MAIN mix is determined by the AUX RETURN knobs.) Therefore, if you want to record these effects, record the MAIN mix, rather than the individual channels.

By the way, there's nothing unusual about all this: practically all mixers work the same way.

I've heard that some audio equipment operates better if it is left on all the time. Should I always keep my MultiMix on?

We advise against leaving the MultiMix on all the time. Some tube-based gear does sound noticeably different after a couple of hours of warm up, but solid-state devices such as the MultiMix generally achieve optimum performance very quickly after power-up.

Why is the left input of my stereo line-in channel is being sent to both the left and right channels in my audio application?

This is an artifact of the way that the MultiMix routes the line-level input signals:

If only the *left* jack of a stereo line pair is used, that signal is routed equally to the left and right sides of the stereo channel.

If only the *right* jack of a stereo line pair is used, that signal is routed to the right side of the stereo channel, and the left side is left silent.

If *both* jacks of a stereo line pair are used, the left jack is sent to the left side, and the right jack is sent to the right side.

Therefore, if you are only using one input in a stereo pair, record just that one channel and not the one adjacent to it.

I would like to route audio from the computer to the MultiMix, apply the MultiMix's EQ and digital effects, and then record this audio back to the computer. Is that possible?

This is possible, but it requires some additional cabling.

1. Turn the HEADPHONE/CONTROL ROOM volume knob all the way down.

2. Press the 2 TRACK TO CONTROL ROOM button *down*, and leave the 2 TRACK TO MIX button *up*.
3. Take a pair of cables, and connect the CONTROL ROOM OUT jacks into a line-level stereo channel's input jacks.
4. Connect your speakers to the MAIN MIX OUT jacks.
5. Slowly increase the volume on the HEADPHONE/CONTROL ROOM knob until a good signal level is reached on the line-level stereo channel chosen in step 3.
6. EQ the stereo channel to taste, and dial in the right amount and type of digital effect.
7. In the computer, record the MAIN mix.

Note that you can only route two channels from the computer back into the MultiMix this way. No more than two channels from the computer are ever available to the MultiMix.

Why are there two Firewire ports?

Firewire allows you to chain various devices together. You can use either port to connect to your computer. External hard drives or other Firewire devices can be connected to the other port.

Does the MultiMix computer connection operate at FW400 or FW800 speed?

The MultiMix uses the IEEE1394a (400Mbit/s) protocol. This is the "original" Firewire protocol, not the newer IEEE1394b (800Mbit/s) standard.

I'm getting hum or a digital glitch noise through my mixer when it's connected to my computer. Help!

Try using a ground lift adapter on your computer's AC plug (one of those gray adapters with three holes on one side [for your AC plug] and only two blades on the other side [to stick into the wall]). This should solve your problem.

I hear high-pitched screeches, static, wrong-speed playback, or other bad things

Adjust your latency settings in the MultiMix control panel. You will find this panel in Windows under *Start, All Programs, Alesis MultiMix*. In Mac, the control panel is under *Preferences* or through *Audio MIDI Setup*.

For more information on latency, see the next topic.

What is latency, and what are the best latency settings to use?

Latency means *delay*. All digital signal processing requires a bit of latency. For instance, the signal that you send to the mixer via a microphone or synthesizer must get translated into a digital signal. That requires a little bit of time.

In terms of recording, latency is measured as the time it takes for digital data to travel between the computer and the MultiMix.

Setting the latency low

Latency can be set very low, which lessens the delay between the two devices but makes the computer work harder to process the data at the very microsecond that it is received. Latency settings that are too low yield crackling audio and computer instability.

Setting the latency high

If you increase the latency, the delay you perceive will be increased, but the devices don't need to work so hard. That leads to more stable operation. Also, it usually allows you to pile on more effects to your computer audio tracks.

However, if you set the latency *too* high, you can also experience strange audio behavior.

(You don't need to worry about the latency setting affecting the timing of your audio recording. Your recording software adjusts for latency settings automatically.)

So, what's best?

Every system is different, and you will need to experiment with yours in order to find the best range of latency values. For your first few days of use, experiment with different buffer settings.

If you are only recording signals from the MultiMix, feel free to set the latency relatively high. This is because you will be able to monitor your audio through the MultiMix's analog routing, which is latency-free.

If you work with software synthesizers, you will hear the latency between the time you press a key on your keyboard and the time you hear a sound. To minimize this latency, you will need to choose lower latencies.

My system is unstable. Can you provide any tips?

If your system is not rock solid, try the following techniques. They are listed more or less in order from most to least important, so start at the top of the list and keep working down until your problems are solved:

1. Turn off all your Windows system sounds. (These sounds play back at a different sample rate than the audio you are recording, which can cause glitches.)

Choose *Start, Control Panel, Sounds and Audio Devices*, and finally the *Sounds* tab. Choose the sound scheme “No sounds.”

Press “OK” to accept this new setting.

2. Turn off any wireless devices, such as wireless networking.
3. Disconnect as many peripherals (such as USB and Firewire devices) as possible.
4. Do not connect to the Internet.
5. Minimize the number of programs you have open at the same time.
6. Disable unnecessary background services.

Under Windows, go to the *Start* menu and choose *Run...* Then, type “msconfig.exe”. The *System Configuration Utility* will open.

Choose the *Startup* tab and look for any non-critical processes that you can identify that are scheduled to load when you start your computer. Examples are the Adobe Acrobat assistant, QuickTime, RealPlayer, and chat programs. Untick each of these items so that they will not load at startup.

NOTE! Do not untick programs with which you are not familiar, especially Microsoft programs. Many of these are necessary for your computer to run.

After you save your changes and restart your computer, Windows will remind you that you have made these changes. You can safely ignore or disable these reminders once your system has proven to be stable.

7. Disable any network cards.

In Windows, you can do this under the Device Manager. Right-click

My Computer, choose *Properties* and then the *Hardware* tab. Click the *Device Manager* tab. Look under *Network Adapters*, and right-click and disable the devices.

8. If your system has any other sound cards, disable them (also via the Device Manager).
9. Defragment your hard drive, and be sure you have at least 20% of it still available.

In Windows, choose *Disk Defragmenter* under *Accessories | System Tools*.

10. If you are using an ASIO application like Cubase under Windows, disable the WDM (system sounds) audio in the MultiMix control panel.
11. Try another software company's sequencing product. Trial versions of just about all the major sequencing programs are available, so a trial shouldn't cost you any money.

It may be that, for whatever reason, the first sequencer you chose to use is simply unstable on your particular computer/MultiMix combination.

Advanced techniques under Microsoft Windows.

Note: *These techniques are for Windows experts only. Try them if you or a friend have Windows expertise and nothing else seems to work.*

12. Set your Windows processor to "background services".

Under the *Start* menu, right-click *My Computer* and choose *Properties*. From there, click the *Advanced* tab and then the button called *Settings...* under the *Performance* area.

Under the new window that has popped up, choose the *Advanced* tab. Click the radio button under *Processor scheduling* labeled *Background services*.

Click *OK* in this box and the one before it to accept this setting, and reboot your computer.

13. Adjust your internal PCI cards' interrupt settings.

Begin by reading the excellent writeup of this issue from the music magazine *Sound On Sound*:

<http://www.soundonsound.com/sos/Oct04/articles/pcnotes.htm>.

The Double Dawg utility for Windows can be downloaded from

<http://mark-knutson.com/t3/>

14. Review your computer's IRQ settings, and make adjustments as necessary.

Open your Device Manager's hardware tab. From there, go to the *View* menu and select *Resources by type*. Look for the IRQ number of your Firewire device. If the number is shared with other devices, see if you can (a) move your card to another slot, (b) disable any of the other, non-critical devices that share that IRQ number, or both.

15. Try another software company's sequencing product. Trial versions of just about all the programs are available, so a trial shouldn't cost you any money.

16. Try using another Firewire card, preferably one with another Firewire chipset.

While Alesis has tested a wide variety of cards from various different manufacturers, there are significant differences in how Firewire interfacing is implemented by different vendors. See if another card solves your problems.