Kanon Digital Orchestration

Opera Files Gilbert and Sullivan Files

General advice on using audio files for concert / stage performance

Audio files downloaded from Kanon Digital Orchestration are all mp3 files at 320Kbps - this is equivalent to CD quality. If you have downloaded files from Kanon Digital Orchestration you may access the equivalent wav files free of charge. Wav files are lossless, uncompressed broadcast quality music files. Kanon's wav files are 44.1kHz 24 bit. These files are very big, and, depending on your internet speed, may take a long time to download. If you purchase an entire opera, for example, then it would be advisable to download the files overnight. If you wish to access the wav files then please contact support@kanon.co.uk indicating the wav files you require and giving the purchase / invoice number from Payhip for your mp3 downloads. We will then send the wav files by "we transfer" to your email address.

Technical advice for using Kanon Digital Orchestration audio files in theatre / concert performance.

For personal use simply download the mp3 audio files to your favourite mp3 player / ipod / phone etc. plug in your headphones and you can then practice your singing on the bus or train and you won't even hear the tutting from everyone around you! Or, plug into your stereo system and give an epic performance in your front room.

Use in live concert / theatre performance.

While burning the files to CD, to play through a theatre's audio system, is possible, this method is not recommended. Burned CDs can be very temperamental - play perfectly on one system but behave poorly on another. If you must use CDs then it is strongly recommended that you make a back-up copy of the CD and burn this CD on a different CD recorder. A back-up CD player is also recommended and thoroughly test the CDs on the system to be used.

Laptop /PC

A Laptop or PC connected to the theatre's sound system or the system supplied or hired by your organisation is probably the most stable and secure method. Make sure the Laptop / PC is stable and not cluttered with redundant applications and cleaned of all spyware etc. Disable any Wi-Fi connections while in use. It is advisable to have available a back-up Laptop / PC loaded with the same files.

Remember to have it switched on. Also, make sure you have spare and tested connector cables. (Cables have a habit of walking when left lying about!)

Decide which audio player application you are going to use e.g. VLC, QuickTime, Windows Media Player (WMA) etc. and stick with that application. See note on Soundbyte cart systems below.

Sound System

Most theatres / concert halls / churches will have a good sound system installed and it should be relatively simple to hook-up your Laptop / PC or CD player to that system. Some will have a computer system installed that only requires you to load your files onto their system. Obviously, it is essential that your sound engineer becomes thoroughly familiar with the workings of the system.

If your venue does not have an adequate sound system then there are numerous sound hire companies who will supply everything from a modest PA to a full rig. Forget the idea of using Ghetto blasters or similar - these may be suitable for rehearsals but are generally not suitable for even small concert venues. The sound is not dissipated evenly - sit close to one and the sound is too loud and at the back of the hall, probably very weak.

Connecting to a Sound System

When connecting a laptop to a PA system it is important to use a DI (direct injection) box. The headphone output sockets on laptops are un-balanced and prone to mains hum. Using a short cable to a DI and then connecting that to the mixing desk converts the signal to a balanced, mic level signal which is ideal. Also, if you don't use a DI box you can potentially damage the laptop. If you connect a laptop headphone socket to a mixing desk via a 3.5mm stereo jack, or 2 x XLR cable and introduce phantom power from the desk this may "fry" the motherboard on the laptop.

Most installed PA systems would have DI boxes available. If no DI box is available a 3.5mm stereo jack - 2 x 1/4 **mono** jack cable is safe but note that not all sound desks have 1/4 jack inputs, some are just XLR.

DI boxes that use the computer's USB bus to output audio and convert that to balanced mic level are also available but quite expensive compared to other DIs.

If in doubt, ask for advice from an audio engineer.

Foldback Monitors

Depending on the size and acoustics of your performance venue it may be necessary to use foldback monitors for the performers. These are rear facing

loudspeakers known as monitor speakers or stage monitors. These speakers are for the benefit of the performers and their volume is controlled independently of the main PA. It goes without saying that the performers must hear clearly all the music. Quieter passages when well balanced for the auditorium may be almost inaudible on stage.

Soundbyte Cart Systems.

If you are using A Soundbyte or similar cart system contact Kanon Digital Orchestration and we will send you separate mp3 (or wav files). These systems are commonly used in broadcasting, stadia and other venues and enable you do trigger a file a the push of a button.

If you are using a continuous mp3 file make sure you know what your pause and stop buttons do. Some stop buttons allow you start where you stopped the file - others go back to the beginning.

Please note that the above advice is general and advisory only. Kanon Digital Orchestration accepts no responsibility for the way in which you use an audio system. If in any doubt contact a qualified audio engineer for further advice.

If you have any comments or questions on Kanon Digital Orchestration audio files then please contact us at support@kanon.co.uk

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March 2016