

HOW I RECORD MY RECORDS TO MY LAPTOP

~ by Dennis Farrar ~

Introduction: The diagrams below shows how I record my square dance music from record to mp3 using a external mic input and a USB sound card from Turtle Beach sound card. I know there are other ways to this process. I'm just sharing some of my thoughts and what process is in hopes to help make it easier for others to enjoy using the technology of laptops to call their dances.

~ Dennis



CONNECTORS NEEDED:

(FIG. 1) I use a 1/8" to 1/8" cord to go from my HP Laptops "MIC" jack to my Amplifier (as shown). I use a RCA adaptor to go over the 1/8" plug that is plugged into the "MUSIC OUT" female on the amp. All these connectors are available at your local audio stores. See Figure 1 on the left.

(FIG. 2) Please not that if you don't have a "mic" input in your laptop you will have to purchase a USB sound card that has one. A lot of callers are using the "Turtle Beach Amigo II" which can be purchased from audio store that have them in stock or you can go online at turtlebeach.com and purchase one. See Figure 2 on the left.

LAPTOP: (See Figure 1 or Figure 2 to see which applies to your needs)

Any Laptop will do as long as you have a "MIC" or "INPUT" Jack. I use the "MIC" or my [Turtle Beach Sound Card](http://TurtleBeachSoundCard.com) on my new computer. **Most newer computers manufactured after 2013 have eliminated these inputs.** The Turtle Beach site says, "The Amigo II USB sound card adds a stereo output and mic input to a Mac or PC and converts a standard headset into a USB headset. Because it uses a USB digital connection, the Amigo II isolates the audio signal from the noisy electronics inside a PC or laptop to provide higher-quality sound.

With a single USB connection, the Amigo II lets you conveniently add another sound port to your PC or laptop for easy access wherever you go. The stereo output can be used for connecting powered speakers, headphones or an external recording device. The microphone input can be used for connecting an external microphone or the boom mic on a headset. Amigo is a great accessory for laptop owners who want to enjoy high-quality audio on the road or at home."

HEADPHONES: Any headphones will do. I bought mine at RadioShack. Some computers will distort or even mute if you don't have a HEADPHONE pulled in the "Y" connector. Also headphones are great to monitor your recording cleanup process after recording. More important, be sure when record your music listen to the complete recording. I usually will record more than one record since I have the amp out away. That's your personal preference. When you start recording your records don't walk away for that cup of coffee or to attend more important things. You may find out that that record had a "skip" in it when recording. **THAT WOULDN'T BE GOOD**".

AMPLIFIER:

I use and recommend a Hilton Micro 100. However you can you an older model, such as the Hilton 300. You will have to plug in the 1/4" phone plug in the back of the amplifier. I think it's labeled "Tape Output"? Not sure where the rest of the outputs are located as I didn't have any other Hilton



models.

If you are using a Micro 100 you will have to use the small volume control above the jack to set the level of music. If you a Hilton 300 model you may have to use the Phonograph volume control.

SOFTWARE USED: (Cleaning up your recordings)

I use and recommend the "GOLDWAVE" software. "GOLDWAVE" is available thru an Internet download to try for a limited time and can be purchase for a nominal fee. This being said, I know some of the callers and cuers are using [Audacity](http://Audacity.com). Whichever works for you is okay. I recommend using the cleanup software that others are using in your area because you are more likely to get better tech support from these individuals.

MAKING YOUR RECORDING AN MP3 FILE:

After I'm satisfied with my recording and have cleaned up the "pops" and "initial noise" I save it as an MP3 file using Goldwave software. When saving my mp3 files I am consistent when naming them. (Title - Record Label #.mp3)

(See examples below)

Butterfly Hoedown - GMP-5008.mp3

Beautiful Brown Eyes - RHY-0301.mp3

If you are consistent when you save your recordings you will find it much easier to find your music you are looking for.

IMPORTANT: I use "MP3GAIN" (thanks to Ron Mineau for this pick) to make sure that my recordings are the same level. You can select the files or folders you want. Just as important as getting a clean recording is to make sure that all your mp3's are normalized. MP3GAIN analyzes and adjusts MP3 files so that they have the same volume. MP3GAIN does not just do a peak normalization, as many similar programs do. Instead, it does some statistical analysis to determine how loud the files actually sounds to the human ear. Also, the changes MP3GAIN makes are completely lossless. There is no quality lost in the change because the program adjusts the mp3 file directly, without decoding and re-encoding. It defaults at 89db, and that's what I use. This can be change (your choice). Now I have all my mp3's the same level and don't have to reach for the volume control to adjust the volume levels.

Thank you Ron!

PLAYBACK SOFTWARE:

I use and recommend "SQVIEW". In my travels, I'm finding out that most callers are using this software, and keep it updated to the latest version. The author, Thomas Bernhed is doing a first-class job in offering us an up-to-date program that is FREE. That's right. **I said FREE!**

This program will handle most anything you would like to, including the most common. Changing your tempo, speed, and pitch. But, again I feel it is important to use what callers are using in your area. If you ask them, they may offer you the tech support if you need.

Final Comments:

I hope this documentation has enlightened you on what I use, not only to record my music, but, how and what software I use to call the final cut. As far as what I use to perform my dances. I use the Hilton MA-220 Amp. If I call dances with others who are using records, I use my Hilton Micro-100 Amp/Turntable. I also have added to my dance programs a [Williams Hearing Assistance System](http://WilliamsHearingAssistanceSystem.com) and five receivers that are available for use that I purchased from [Hilton Audio Products](http://HiltonAudioProducts.com). Hope this helps you and I'm always open to your comments and suggestions.

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