



The Passionato
MediaMonkey Player
– A Guide



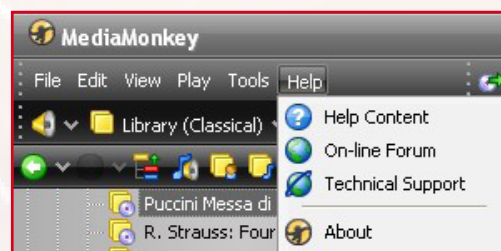
Introduction

MediaMonkey is one of the most versatile media players currently available. It can play and encode into a variety of formats, including FLAC and MP3, and offers the user much more flexibility in defining how to use & manage their digital collection than many of the better-known players, like Windows Media Player.

In this Guide we'll help you to explore some of the key features of the MediaMonkey player, in particular how it can be best used to make the most of a Classical music collection. A quick-start guide to using MediaMonkey can also be found in our help section at.

[Click Here...](#)

For a detailed guide to all the features the player has to offer please refer to the Help Content section in MediaMonkey itself:-



Please note that some of the features outlined in this guide are only available in the "Gold" version of MediaMonkey, which is available for \$39.95/£26.54/ €29.13 (prices correct as of December 2009).

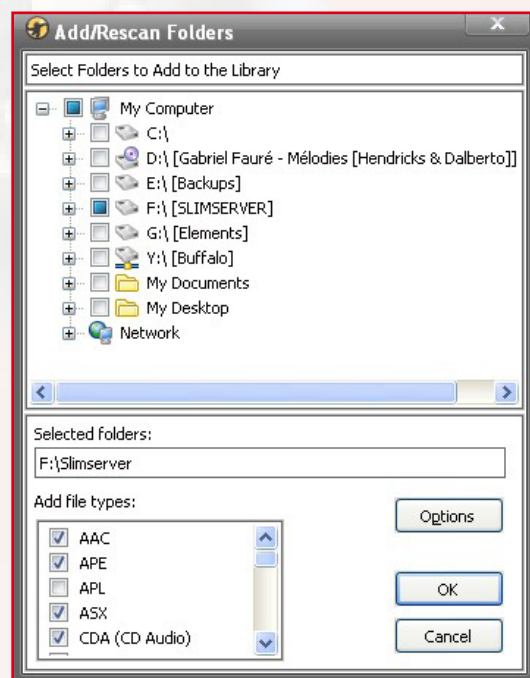
Importing Music Files & Playlists into MediaMonkey

One important thing to remember when using a new media player like MediaMonkey is that when it scans your music library for files to add to its database it does not alter or move the actual files: it simply creates an index of them, so it is completely safe.

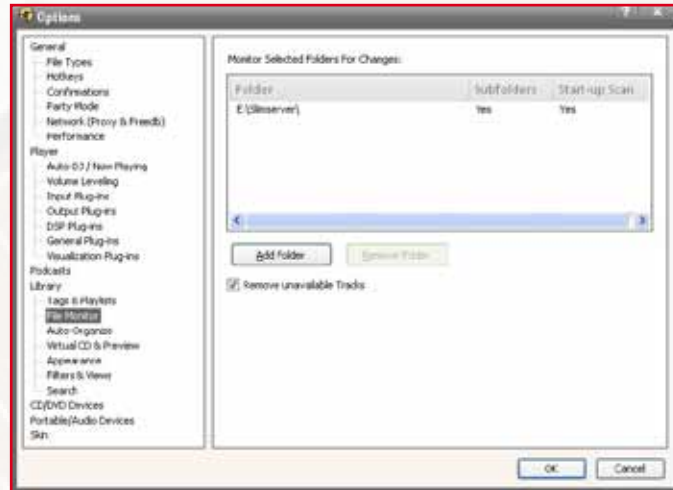
When you first run the program you will be asked to select which folders you would like scanned for music. You can also specify this manually using the Add/Rescan folders option on the file menu:-

So, for example, any purchases made from the Passionato store would by default be placed in your My Music/Passionato folder.

On this import dialog you can also specify what file types you want added to your MediaMonkey library (FLAC, MP3 etc etc)



One very useful feature of MediaMonkey is that, unlike many other players, you can tell MediaMonkey to monitor specific folders on your computer, so that each time the program is launched it automatically checks those folders for any new recordings. You can set this up by going into Tools/Options/Library>File Monitor, where you will see a box like this:-



Playlists can also be imported. The most common format for playlists uses the M3U file type, which can be specified in the add files dialog box shown above, at the same time you specify MP3, FLAC etc.

It is also possible to import playlists from iTunes. However, because iTunes (and Windows Media Player) use a different format for its playlists, these lists need to be exported into a format that MediaMonkey can recognise. Details of how to achieve this can be found here:-

[Click Here...](#)

Playing Your Music

Once you have scanned your music files you have several ways in which you can search and browse your collection. The default layout will show you the list of album folders on the left-hand side and the tracks for the selected album in the main window on the right. Double-clicking any track will start playback, which can be controlled from the area at the bottom of the page, which also displays further information about the track being played.



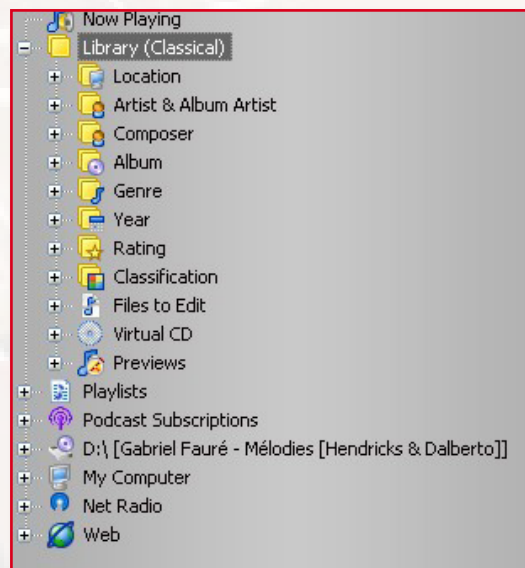
Folder Display

The folder list on the left-hand side of the screen will also display your music broken down into various groups, such as album, artist, composer, and genre. It is worth noting that when you update or edit artist information in MediaMonkey any artist names that are separated by a semi-colon are indexed separately – so in the artist tab on the left-hand side with an album artist field like this:-

Curzon; LSO; Szell

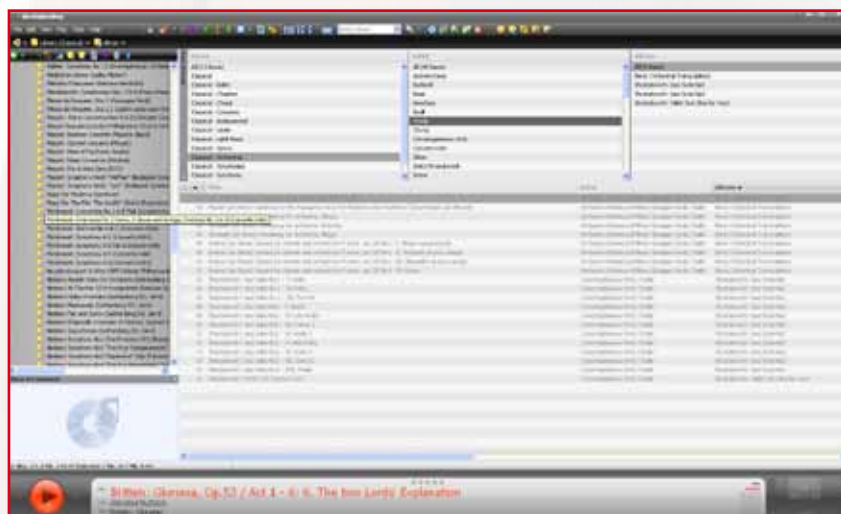
Would show separate entries in the artist tab for Curzon, LSO and Szell

(This useful function can be further refined incidentally via the Tools/Options/Library>Appearance menu – by updating the “Split multiple-field values with” field)



Browse

There are also several methods for browsing your collection. You can view by album cover, album cover and listing, or just a simple tracklist. There is also a trackbrowser function that works in a similar way to the iTunes browser by showing Genre, Artist & Album selection boxes:-



Playlists and Auto-Playlists (Gold Version)

As with any good media player, you can create, import and export playlists in MediaMonkey. One very useful feature is the ability to create “autoplaylists” (please note that Auto-playlists are only available in the Gold version). Right-click on the Playlists header & select “New Auto-playlist”. Here you can set the criteria for creating a playlist that will be automatically updated whenever any new tracks are added to your library that match.

So, for example, you could create an auto-playlist for all the recordings you have of Baroque Operas (assuming you have these tagged by genre), & these will get added to the playlists automatically.

Grouping your collection: The MediaMonkey filters (Gold version)

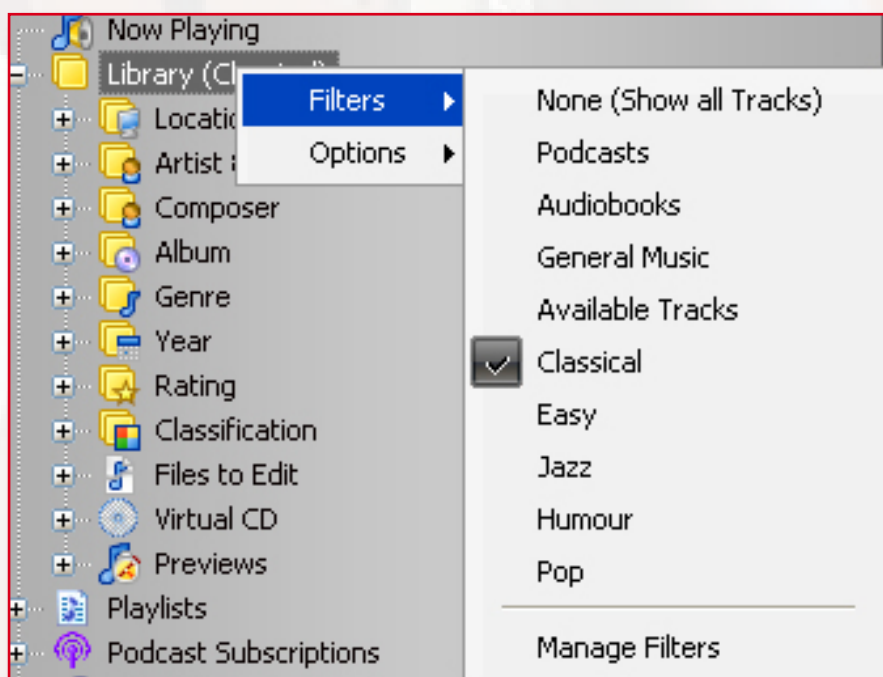
If you have a large collection of music, particularly if it covers different genres, then the Gold version of MediaMonkey offers an extremely useful filtering feature that enables you to configure the player views for different types of music.

So, for example, you might choose to have a filter for Classical, Jazz and Pop – meaning that when you view the folders by Genre, Composer etc it will only show the product in that group – so browsing by Composer in a Classical filter you’ll only see Bach and Beethoven, not Brubeck or Gary Barlow!

To access the filters just right-click on the Library folder and click Filters, then manage filters. Then you can configure filters and add new ones according to any criteria you want – based on any data field in the player. For a purely Classical collection this might mean having separate filters for Periods or Genres. It is your choice.

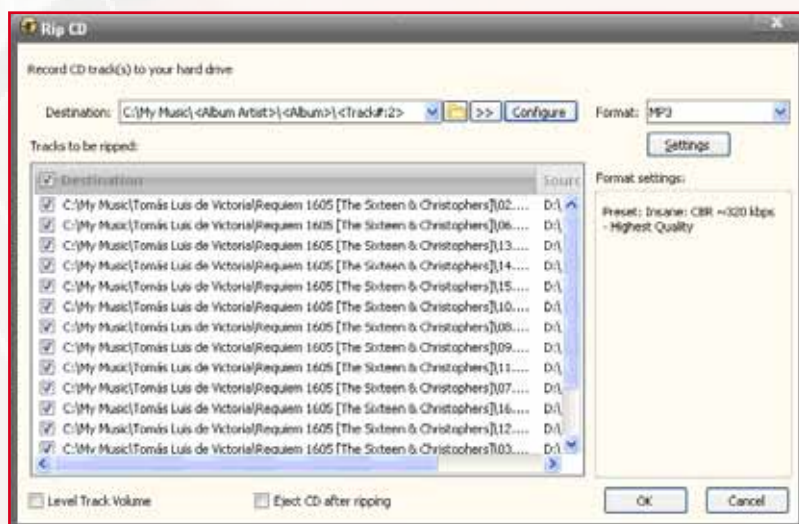
You can also define exactly what columns are displayed in each view.

Selecting a filtered group is as simple as right-clicking on the Library folder and selecting your grouping:-

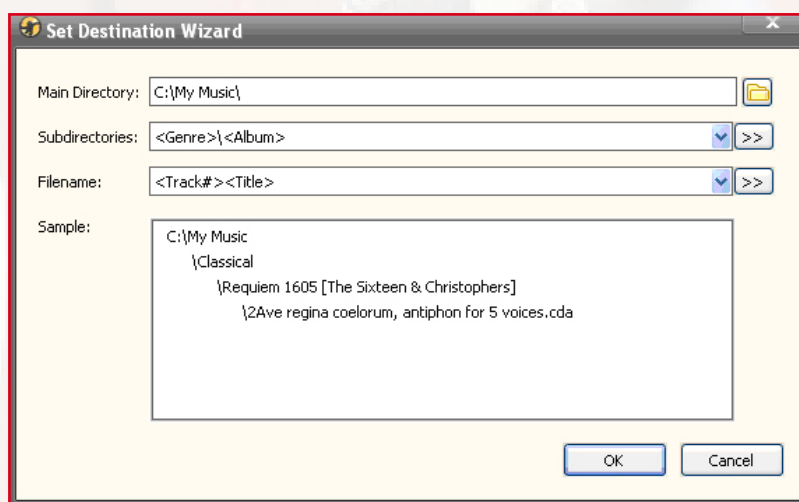


Ripping CDs

Obviously, as well as playing music you'll want to rip some of your own CDs. MediaMonkey has a versatile ripping engine that will encode into FLAC, MP3 (in the Gold version) and many other formats. It will also allow you to control the bitrates you create (just click "Settings") and also how the encoded files are arranged on your PC. So, for example you can ensure that all your Beethoven CDs are placed into a folder named Beethoven, or in an artist folder, or simply the album name folder – or a combination of these.



In this example when you click on "Configure" you'll see these options:-

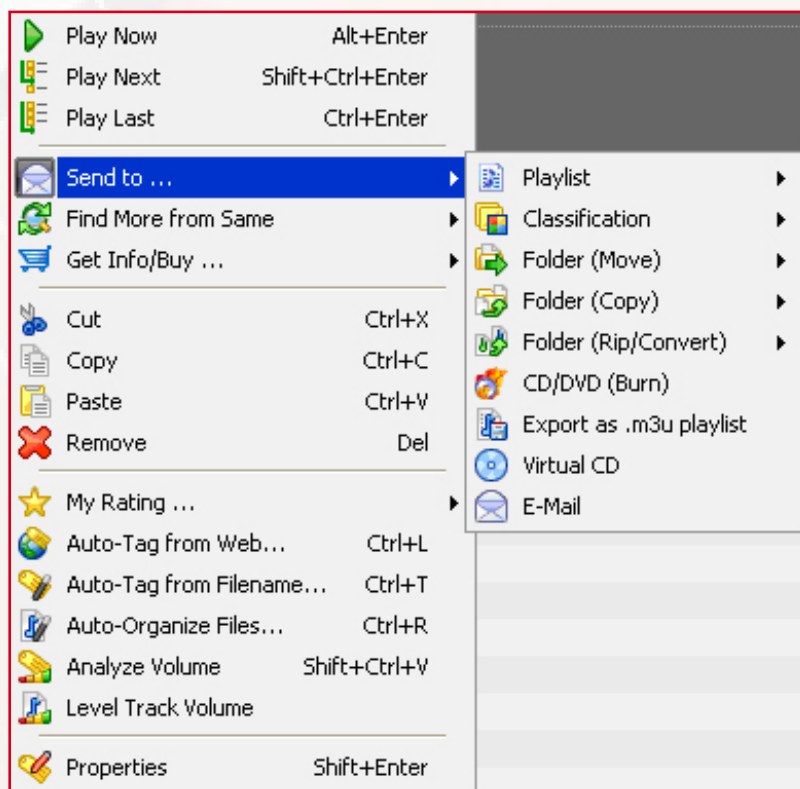


...where the files that are to be ripped will be placed in a folder for the Genre (in this case Classical) and the album name folder – with the track filename being based on the track number and track name. The arrows to the right of the boxes reveal a menu of tags you can select to customize how your encoded files are named and filed.

Exporting & Burning Files

MediaMonkey also enables you to burn files to CD, either converted into a format that will play on any CD player, or as a “data” CD that preserves the file format you have in your MediaMonkey Player.

You can also copy files from MediaMonkey to an external hard drive, using the Send to menu obtained by right-clicking on any file selection:-



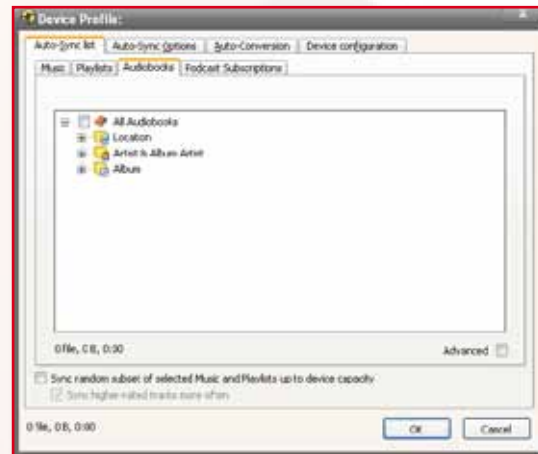
Using this menu you can copy files, move them, and also copy & convert them at the same time. So if you had some FLAC files and wanted to copy them onto a portable drive – to use on a car MP3 player for example – you can get MediaMonkey to convert them to MP3 as it loads the external drive (leaving your original FLAC files intact)

Music on the Move: The iPod and more

If you have an iPod you don't need iTunes to update it, MediaMonkey can do that for iPods (and iPhones), as well as numerous other types of player. It is also configurable in ways that iTunes is not.

When you click the iPod icon on the toolbar you have options to automatically update your iPod when you connect it, or do it manually. You can also specify in some detail exactly what gets synced with your portable device.

Select your device from the list & click "Configure" & you'll see a dialog box like this:-

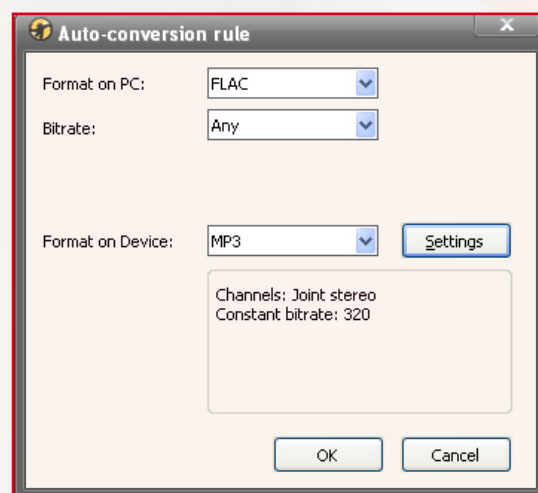


Auto-Conversion (Gold version)

If your music files are kept in FLAC you will not be able to upload these onto an iPod, but MediaMonkey has a very useful conversion facility that will convert any files automatically when it uploads to a portable device. You simply set the criteria & the player does the rest. So you can add music held as FLAC files to an iPod: MediaMonkey converts them to, say, 320k MP3 as it loads your iPod (without changing your original FLAC files by the way!).

To set this up click the Auto-Conversion tab in the Device Profile:-

Click Add Auto-Conversion Rule:-

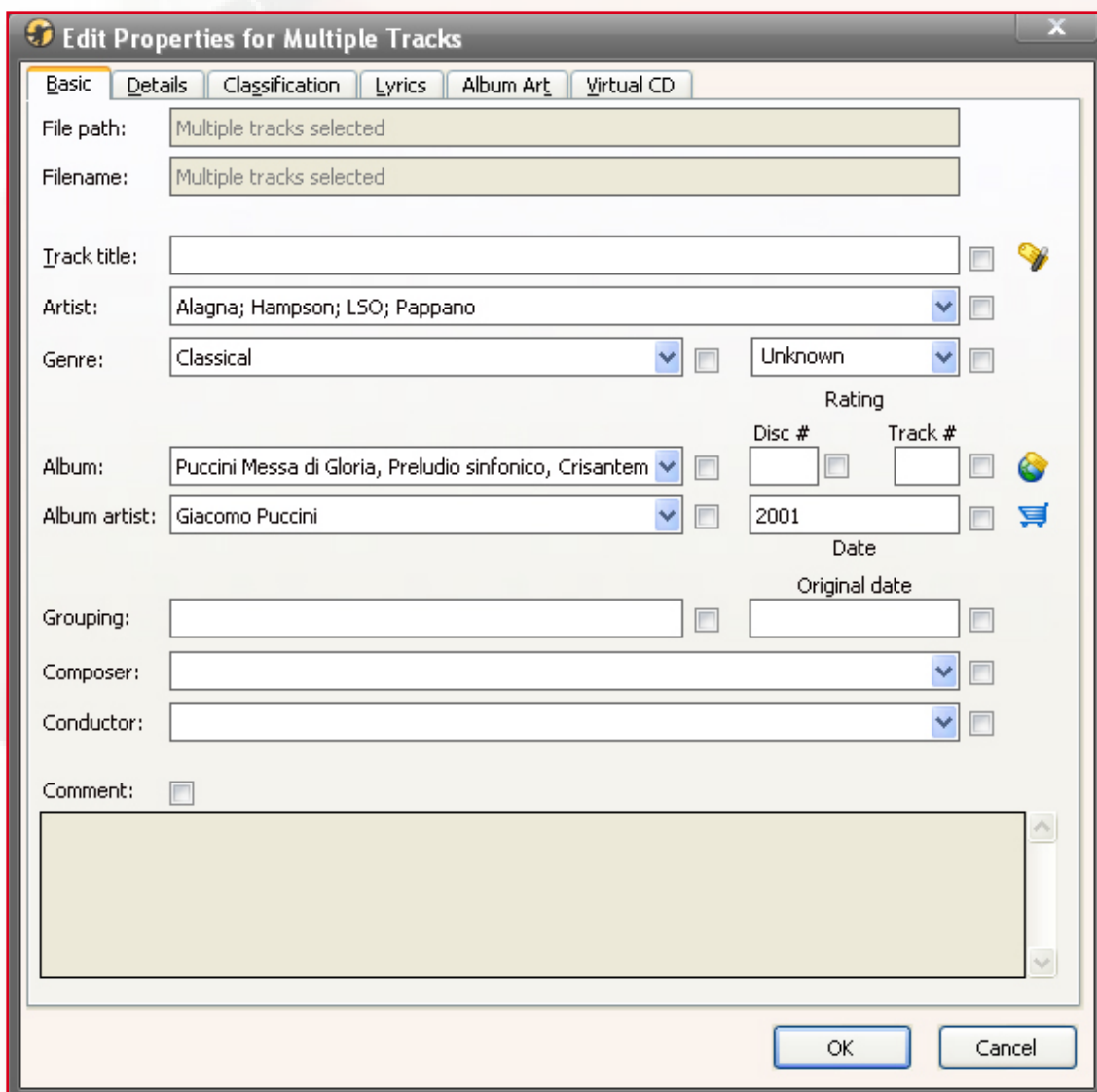


And set the format required using the settings tab (in this example it is set to convert FLAC files to 320k MP3)

Managing Your Collection – Editing Metadata

MediaMonkey offers extensive facilities for updating metadata, and even looking up missing data online. In the player view to access the tag editor simply right-click on a track – or a selected group of tracks. This will show the information for the track, or the common information for any selected group.

The basic data display looks like this:-



The screenshot shows the 'Edit Properties for Multiple Tracks' dialog box. It has a title bar with a close button. Below the title bar are tabs: 'Basic', 'Details', 'Classification', 'Lyrics', 'Album Art', and 'Virtual CD'. The 'Basic' tab is selected. The fields are as follows:

- File path: Multiple tracks selected
- Filename: Multiple tracks selected
- Track title: [Empty]
- Artist: Alagna; Hampson; LSO; Pappano
- Genre: Classical Unknown
- Rating: [Empty]
- Album: Puccini Messa di Gloria, Preludio sinfonico, Crisantem Disc #: [Empty] Track #: [Empty]
- Album artist: Giacomo Puccini Date: 2001
- Grouping: [Empty] Original date: [Empty]
- Composer: [Empty]
- Conductor: [Empty]
- Comment: [Empty text area]

At the bottom right are 'OK' and 'Cancel' buttons.

There are multiple tabs of data you can add/edit. Where a check-box appears next to a field this is to select updating that field in a selected group of tracks. In this section you can also define a number of fields with your own titles (see the Classification tab – define the Custom fields via the Tools/Options menu), as well as add cover images if you do not already have them.

As mentioned earlier, if you separate terms by a semi-colon, each artist will appear as separate item in the artist view.

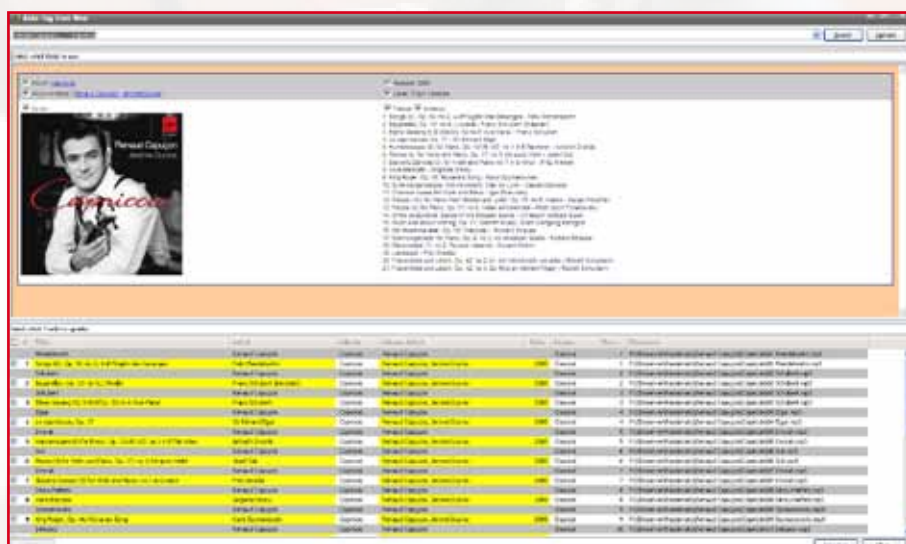
Missing Metadata?

If you are missing metadata and do not want to type it all in manually there is an option to look-up data from amazon, which may fill gaps for key data. To do this select the album tracks you want to look up – it needs to be one album only and for it to look up anything automatically there will need to be some data for the album already in your player. Right-click the highlighted tracks and select “Auto-Tag from Web”.

In this example we have a Renaud Capuçon album with incomplete track data:-



Selecting “Auto-Tag from Web” will produce something this:-



The yellow section shows the data from amazon & one can also get the sleeve image downloaded as well. If there is no match from the data in the MediaMonkey player it is also possible to do a manual search again in the search box at the top of this page (using the options one can also specify in more detail about how the amazon search is done, and even which amazon site is searched)

Further Options

Well actually, there are a multitude of these. In this guide we have looked at some of the key features that might be of most use to a Classical user. Full details of how these and other functions work can be found in the very comprehensive Help section in the program itself.

A few of the features we have explored are only available in the “Gold” version of the player – but it is well-worth the modest extra cost for the wealth of extra functions it offers – as well as the unlimited MP3 encoding facility.

A full comparison list showing the different versions of MediaMonkey can be found here:-

<http://www.mediamonkey.com/download/>

There are many more terrific features to be explored in MediaMonkey – here is a glimpse of just a few:-

- Podcasts – automatically download your favourite podcasts: never miss an edition of Radio 3’s Building a Library again!
- Auto-organise (Gold version) – get MediaMonkey to automatically arrange your files into folders according to your personal preferences
- Virtual CD (Gold version)– a useful facility to help you catalogue your CD collection even if you don’t want to rip them all completely.
- Level Volume – analyse your files and ensure that you don’t get arbitrary changes in volume between different albums (this is a common problem when different engineers/labels set a slightly different volume level for the album)
- Scripts – automated scripts that can do things like set track numbers for any found group of tracks automatically, or swap the data in fields (useful with freedb originated data, for example, where the Artist and Title data is sometimes the wrong way around). For advanced users there is a thriving online community where you can learn more about using and writing scripts)

MediaMonkey and Passionato – The Future

Over the coming months Passionato will be working with the MediaMonkey team to bring you some great new features specifically designed to make the player even more user-friendly for Classical users.

In the meantime if you have any general comments or feedback about your experiences of using the Passionato/MediaMonkey Classical Player – in particular any features you would like to see included do please contact us at:-

mediamonkey@passionato.com

For general support enquiries or if you have any technical questions about using the player please contact MediaMonkey support:-

MediaMonkey Support

http://www.mediamonkey.com/support/index.php?_m=knowledgebase&_a=viewarticle&kbarticleid=70