

Getting going with Cakewalk's latest Version

Although when first opened, the latest version of Cakewalk looks even more complicated than before, it is still free and does have the advantage that it has the ability to communicate with a MIDI Control Board using Bluetooth. This means that tunes can be tested on an organ quickly and easily, without the need for adapters or wires, swapping of connections, or transferring files using SD Cards (or Palms!). The simplest way to edit music for musical non experts is to use a piano roll display that looks like the actual paper rolls used in many organs. However, to get to a display that is familiar to the old version, or Anvil Studio, initially appears quite daunting, so this article hopefully may assist new users to get there. Remember that an explanation of a simple action can take many words of text, so do not be put off by the apparent wordiness of the following.

Loading a MIDI file

After opening Cakewalk for the first time, the *Cakewalk Start Screen* appears. Click *New Project* and then *Empty Project.cwt*. A new display opens beneath the existing top group of controls. At the top right of this new display, click the ►► symbols to remove the right pane - which should not be needed. On the very top row – *File/Edit/Views/etc* – click on *File/Import/MIDI...* Find your MIDI file on your system, then click *Open*. Details of the tracks in your file appear in the left-hand window, and graphics of your file's contents in the right-hand window.

Getting the familiar piano roll view

On the very top row – *File/Edit/Views/etc* – click on *Views* and select *Piano Roll View* (or key Alt/3). A keyboard appears in the bottom part of the display, but probably no notes show in the display.

To get a larger view of the piano roll, position the cursor at the top of the bottom part of the display until it turns into the up/down arrows symbol, then hold a left click as you move the cursor up to bring the top of the bottom part of the screen to just below the tracks in the top half. Similarly, position the cursor at the top of the *Velocity* section at the bottom of the bottom part of the display until it turns into another up/down arrows symbol, then hold a left click as you move the cursor down to remove all of the *Velocity* section.

Click on *Track 1* up in the top left corner of the screen, then *View* at the top of the bottom part of the display. Untick *Show/Hide Articulation Pane*, then click on *Fit MIDI content* – notes of your tune should then appear in the piano roll. You can expand/condense the display in both the horizontal and vertical directions using the + and – versions of the two sets of magnifying glass symbol which show at the bottom right-hand corner of piano roll.

Playing your file

At the left-hand side of the top panel is a group of nine boxes. Click the one labelled *Preferences*, and then *Audio/Devices*. Tick the appropriate *Input Drivers* and *Output Drivers* for your system. Select *MIDI/Devices* and, under *Outputs*, tick *Microsoft GS Wavetable Synth* to hear a file play on your PC, or – if you are using a WIDI Master Bluetooth device on your organ – tick *WIDI Master OUT* to send your file directly to your organ. Click *OK* to close the window,

The usual controls for playing files (*Play/Pause/Stop/FF* etc) are positioned at the top centre of the top panel. To start playing from somewhere other than the start of the file, position the slider in the top part of the display where desired, and the file will play from that point. To return to playing from the start, move the slider to the extreme left.

Editing the music

An unwanted existing note can be deleted simply by right clicking on it – get it back by keying *Ctrl/Z*. New notes are inserted by clicking and dragging at the appropriate note line for the length required. Again, actions can be undone with *Ctrl/Z* – many times if necessary.

Deleting every entry for one note

Position the cursor on the appropriate key on the left-hand keyboard display and left click – all the entries for that note change colour. To remove them all, key *Delete*, and they all disappear. To bring them back, key *Ctrl/Z*.

Transposing the complete track

Click on the number to the left of the highlighted *Track* that is displayed in the piano roll – the number also becomes highlighted. On the very top row – *File/Edit/Views/etc* – click on *Process* and *Transpose*. In the window that opens, set the *Amount* box to the number of half-tones up or down (-) that you wish to move the track by, then click *OK* – the entries in the piano roll move appropriately. To bring them back to where they were, key *Ctrl/Z*, or repeat the transpose action with the reverse entry in the *Amount* box.

Saving your work

To save a Cakewalk **project** for later use, on the very top row – *File/Edit/Views/etc* – click on *File/Save* to save as a .cwp file.

To save a **MIDI** file of the type usually used with organs, on the very top row – *File/Edit/Views/etc* – click on *File/Export/Standard MIDI File*. In the window that opens, after choosing the storage location and file name, in *Save as type*, select *MIDI Format 0* to save as a .mid file.

Quick/Easy way to get Piano Roll display

When starting Cakewalk, choose Recent Projects from the Cakewalk Start Screen, and pick a project that was displayed in the piano roll mode. Alternatively, on the very top row – *File/Edit/Views/etc* – click on *File/Open* and in the window that appears, choose a .cwp project file for a tune that was saved when displayed in the piano roll mode.

In the *View/Options/Tracks/etc* menu at the top of the second part of the display, under *Tracks*, click on *Wipe Tracks(s)* – the existing file info' disappears. On the very top row – *File/Edit/Views/etc* – click on *File/Import/MIDI*. Find your MIDI file on your system, then click *Open*. Your file is then displayed in the Tracks and Piano Roll windows.

Before going any further, to avoid accidentally overwriting your existing project file, in the *Tracks* area, double click on any track info' – such as title, composer – that needs to be amended and type in the new details, then, on the very top row – *File/Edit/Views/etc* – click on *File/Save As* and save with a revised destination/name for the new project file as a .cwp file. Don't forget to save the file as a project file **again**, and as a MIDI file, when any modifications to the file are completed.

Switching between audio and organ outputs

If you are using a Bluetooth device such as MIDI Master, there is a quicker way to change from playing audio on your PC and sending the file directly to your organ Control Board. On the top panel, click the box labelled *Preferences*, and then *Audio/Devices*. Select *MIDI/Devices* and, under *Outputs*, tick **both** *Microsoft GS Wavetable Synth* and *WIDI MASTER OUT*. Click *OK* to close the window. On the extreme left of your screen there are two vertical sections. Near the bottom in the left-hand column, is a box labelled *In/Out* which contains two labels, the top being for input (i) and the lower for output (o). Selecting one or other of the options that appear when the lower (o) label is clicked routes audio to your PC audio output or sends the MIDI file to your organ, and can be changed whilst a file is playing.