Manual for using the Virtual Singer (VS) technology
by *Choralia*

General information

This manual provides information and instructions about using the Virtual Singer (VS) process conceived by *Choralia*.

The VS technology has been developed by Myriad (http://www.myriad-online.com), and adopted by *Choralia* as a mean to distribute training aids for choir singers.

VS training aids can be used in three different ways:

- converted already into mp3 files, that one can play online using the "*Choralia mp3 player*", or through any other mp3 player, or record on CDs, etc. . These files can be played or downloaded from the "mp3 catalogue" page of the *Choralia* website, and it's the easiest way to use *Choralia*'s training aids;

- running VS within a web browser, where a specific software, the Myriad Music plug-in, needs to be installed first. This is slightly more complex to use, especially if one wants to record files on CDs or mp3 players, however it provides the best audio quality when one wants to significantly slow down or speed up "tempo";

- running VS through a specific application to be installed on the PC (or MAC), named Myriad Melody Player. This adds further complexity, however the user can change most settings, such as the volume of each voice, the left-right position in the stereo space, and even transpose music up or down.

Users can find the best solution for their learning needs and depending on their computer skills.

Using VS within a web browser

The VS technology requires that you install the Myriad Music plug-in and a browser compatible with it. The Myriad Music plug-in and a version of the SeaMonkey browser that is compatible with the plug-in can be downloaded from http://www.choralia.net/vscatalogue.htm .Please install the Seamonkey browser first, then the Myriad Music plug-in, and ensure that the plug-in is visible by the browser. You can use the SeaMonkey browser only for *Choralia*, and continue using your preferred browser for all other websites. Please use the version of SeaMonkey provided in the above

mentioned page, and never update it to a newer version: the newer version may not be compatible with the Myriad Music plug-in. If a newer version was installed, please re-install the version provided in the above mentioned page. If any warnings related to the installation of an outdated version are displayed, ignore them and complete the installation anyway.

In the case SeaMonkey is not detected by the installer of the Myriad Music plug-in, you may try to install Mozilla Firefox (https://www.mozilla.org/it/firefox/products/), and then the Myriad Music plug-in. Most likely, the installer of the Myriad Music plug-in will detect Mozilla Firefox and install the plug-in for Mozilla Firefox. As SeaMonkey and Mozilla Firefox share the same engine (Gecko), installing the plug-in for Firefox should normally make the plug-in available to SeaMonkey, too.

VS can be used within a browser in two different modes:

- *On-line mode*. In this mode the VS files containing the music are downloaded individually from the *Choralia* website when they are required to be played. For example, if one wants to listen to a certain alto part, only the file containing such a alto part is downloaded, then locally stored inside a temporary folder on the PC, and played. Then, if the user wants to listen to another part, another file is downloaded at that time. So, switching from one file to another requires that an internet connection is active. The on-line mode is therefore convenient in the case a permanent internet connection is available.

- *Off-line mode*. In this mode all the files relevant to a certain work are downloaded at once, compressed inside a single file with .zip extension. After the downloading of the zip file is completed, the internet connection is not necessary any more, as all the files required are locally stored on the PC. The off-line mode is convenient in the case a non-permanent (e.g., dial-up) internet connection is available.

The instructions for on-line and off-line mode are provided separately in the following paragraphs. If you are only interested to the off-line mode, please read the instructions concerning the on-line mode first, as most procedures are identical and they are not repeated. The information about file names provided in the next paragraph may be useful for both modes, as they allow to better identify the various files used and played.

File names

All the file names are in lower-case letters.

VS files can be played by opening a web page (.htm extension) within a standard web browser. Just one "main" web page must be opened for each music work, as it will automatically recall all the other pages that may be required. A naming convention applies to the main pages produced by *Choralia*. The name of the main page is:

<center>*<product code>.htm*</center>

where *<product code>* is the code assigned by *Choralia* and that is different for different works. For example, the product code for the Christmas Oratorio by Saint-Saëns is ss01, thus the corresponding main page file name is ss*01.htm*.

When the main page is run, it recalls several other files. Most of them are either further web pages that open inside the main page, and they have .htm extension, or they are music files in the Myriad format, and they have .myr extension. Regardless the specific extension, the following naming convention applies:

<product code><song number><voice practice level>

The *<product code>* is as described above. The *<song number>* is a number (*-1*, *-2*, etc.) relevant to the song sequence. As the same song is processed at three different practice levels for each voice (only voice with metronome, all voices with one voice emphasized, all voices at the same level), each song results in three different audio files for each voice.

The *<voice practice level>* is *ss* for soprano solo (only voice and metronome – first practice level) and *se* for soprano emphasized (second practice level). If voices are split (e.g., soprano I and soprano II), the corresponding number is added to the letters (e.g., *ss1* and *ss2*). For the other voices it's similar: *as* and *ae* for alto, *ts* and *te* for tenor, *bs* and *be* for bass. The *<voice practice level>* is omitted when all the voices are at the same level (third practice level).
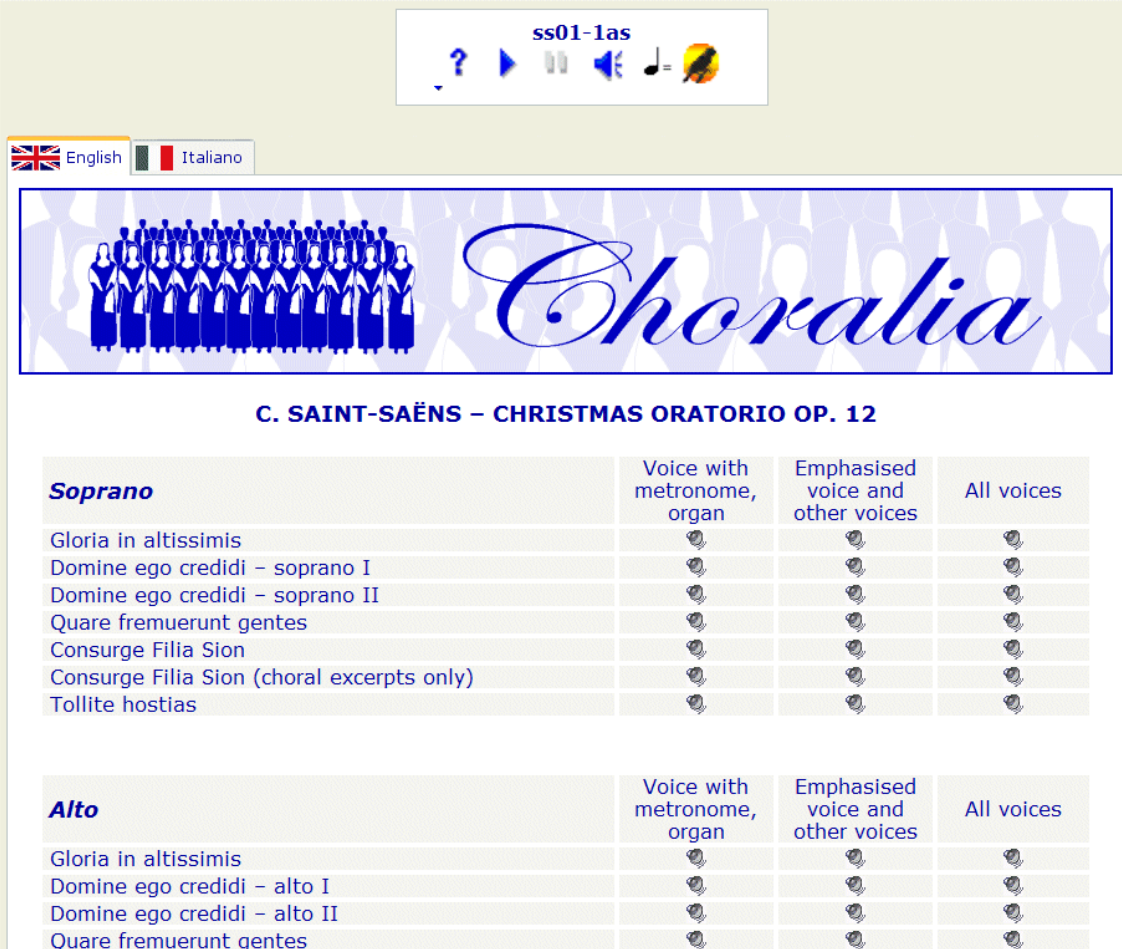
For example, the first two choral movements of the Christmas Oratorio by Saint-Saëns are represented by the following files (please note: the first movement is for SATB, while the second movement is SSAA, i.e., soprano I and soprano II, alto I and alto II):

ss01-1ss	(first movement, soprano voice plus metronome)
ss01-1se	(first movement, all voices with soprano voice emphasized)
ss01-1as	(first movement, alto voice plus metronome)
ss01-1ae	(first movement, all voices with alto voice emphasized)
ss01-1ts	(first movement, tenor voice plus metronome)
ss01-1te	(first movement, all voices with tenor voice emphasized)
ss01-1bs	(first movement, bass voice plus metronome)
ss01-1be	(first movement, all voices with bass voice emphasized)
ss01-1	(first movement, all voices at the same level)
ss01-2ss1	(second movement, soprano I voice plus metronome)
ss01-2se1	(second movement, all voices with soprano I voice emphasized)
ss01-2ss2	(second movement, soprano II voice plus metronome)
ss01-2se2	(second movement, all voices with soprano II voice emphasized)
ss01-2as1	(second movement, alto I voice plus metronome)
ss01-2ae1	(second movement, all voices with alto I voice emphasized)
ss01-2as2	(second movement, alto II voice plus metronome)
ss01-2ae2	(second movement, all voices with alto II voice emphasized)
ss01-2	(second movement, all voices at the same level)

Playing music files – on-line mode

Please remember to download and install the SeaMonkey browser and the Myriad Music plug-in first. No music file can be played without the plug-in and a compatible browser are installed. The plug-in must be installed after the browser is installed.

After having installed the browser and the plug-in, select any work from the "VS catalogue" page of the *Choralia* website by clicking on the "listen to" icon (a small loudspeaker) relevant to such a work. The main web page for that work will open, and it will look similar to the following screenshot:
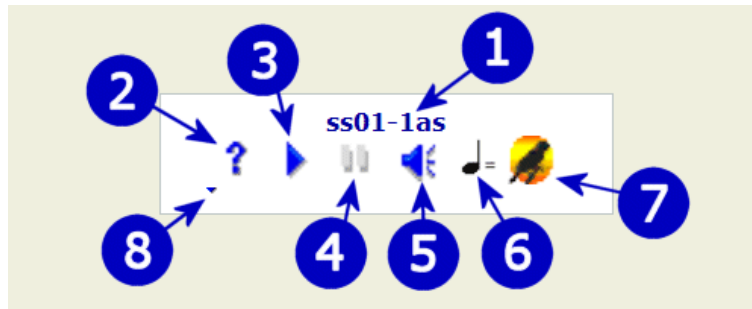

You may note the VS control panel shown on the top of the page. It allows to play, stop, pause, etc., each VS music file relevant to the selected work. It provides the following controls:

1) *File name*. This is a reminder showing the name of the music file being played (or ready for being played). Please refer to the previous paragraph of this manual for the file naming conventions used.

2) *Plug-in version check*. By pressing this button, a check is performed to ascertain whether the latest version of the Myriad Music plug-in is installed. If not, the opportunity to up-date it is offered. This check requires that an internet connection is active. You don't need to carry out this check frequently. Newer versions of the Myriad Music plug-in may not show this control any more.

3) *Play/stop button*. By clicking on this button, the music starts playing. If you click again, the music stops playing. Clicking again, the music re-starts from the beginning.

4) *Pause button*. This button stops the music while it is being played. Then, pressing this button again, or pressing the play/stop button, the music re-starts from the point it was stopped.

5) *Volume button*. When clicking on this button, a volume cursor is shown. Using the mouse, you may reduce the sound volume by dragging the cursor left, or increase the sound volume by dragging it right.

6) *Tempo button*. When clicking on this button, a "tempo" cursor is shown. Using the mouse, you may reduce tempo (i.e., slow music down) by dragging the cursor left, or increase tempo (i.e., speed music up) by dragging it right.

7) *Virtual Singer activate/deactivate*. This button is normally shown in colours, indicating that the Virtual Singer function is active, so the lyrics will be actually "sung" by a synthesized voice. If you click on the icon, it will become grey, indicating that the Virtual Singer function is not active. Lyrics will not be sung any more, and a "doo doo" sound plus choirs "aahs", similar to the sounds used by the CMS technology, will be heard instead. Clicking again on this button will re-activate Virtual Singer.

8) *Progress cursor*. This cursor shows the relative point of the music file currently played: the beginning of the song is the leftmost point, the end of the song is the rightmost point. Using the mouse, you may easily move back and forth through the song by dragging the cursor to the appropriate point. This provides the equivalent functions of the "fast forward" and "fast rewind" buttons of classical tape recorders.

Further to the Virtual Singer control panel, the rest of the page contains a list of all the items (songs/movements and voices/practice levels) available for the selected work. You may switch from English to Italian language or vice versa by clicking on the top tabs. Then, to select an item, you just need to click on the small loudspeaker icon corresponding to the desired item. Its file name will be shown on the Virtual Singer control panel, and you will be able to play it from its beginning. When another item is selected then, the previous item will be stopped and replaced by the new one, which can be played from its beginning.

Playing music files – off-line mode

The first operation to perform if you want to operate in off-line mode is to download the zip file containing all the necessary files for the work of your interest. Go to the "VS catalogue" page of the *Choralia* website and click on the "download" icon (a small hard disk) relevant to such a work. Save the zip file on the hard disk of your PC, in a location convenient to you.

Depending on the settings and applications installed already on your PC, the zip file might be displayed either as a "compressed folder" containing several files, or simply as a zip file. In any case you have to de-compress the file or folder so as to create the uncompressed folder containing all the required files. If the file is displayed as a compressed folder you can de-compress it by double-clicking the compressed folder and then selecting the "Extract all" function available. If the file is displayed as a zip file, you probably installed a specific software to manage the compressed files, so you'll de-compress the zip file using the specific commands of the software you installed.
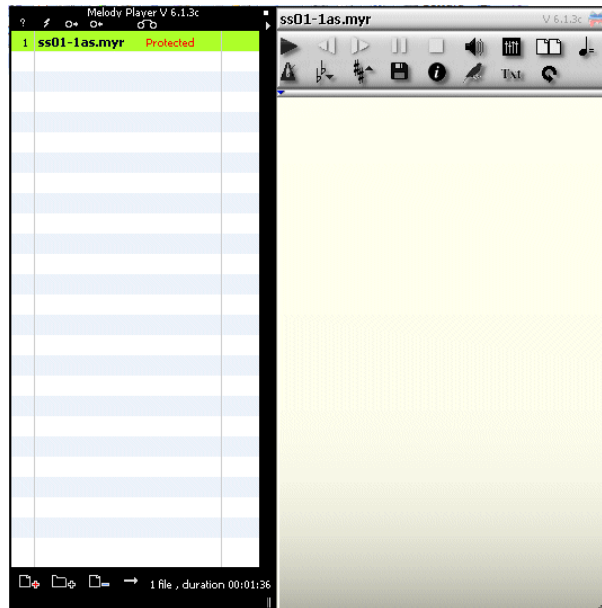
After having de-compressed the file or folder, you will find a folder identified with the product code (ss01, in our example), containing several files. Open the folder and activate (double-click) the file containing the main web page for that work. Please refer to the paragraph "File names" in this manual to recognize the file containing the main web page (its name should correspond to the product code – e.g. ss01 – with the extension .htm or no extension shown).

After having opened the main web page of the selected work, all the rest is identical to the use in on-line mode.
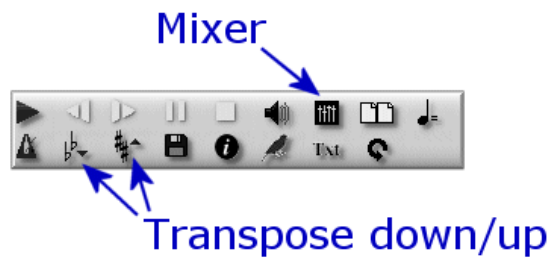
Using VS with Myriad Melody Player

Myriad Melody Player is a free application available for PC and MAC, that can be downloaded from http://www.myriad-online.com/en/products/melodyplayer.htm. It is available both for Microsoft Windows and for Mac OS operating systems. To install it, please follow the instructions provided by Myriad.

To use VS and Myriad Melody Player, you should download the zip file containing all the .myr files and de-compress it as described in the previous paragraph. Then identify the .myr file that is of interest for you, and open it with Myriad Melody Player using the normal "load file" function. The Melody Player window will look like this:

Most controls are similar to those already described about the use of VS within a web browser. The most interesting new controls for *Choralia's* users are the "Transpose" and the "Mixer" controls highlighted hereafter:

The "Mixer" control is especially powerful as it allows to apply changes to individual voices/tracks, such as change volume, mute, move left or right in the stereo space, etc. .