How do I put my MIDI tracks onto CD?
It would be great if you could simply burn the MIDI files to a CD and then play it in your CD player. Unfortunately, this won't work - MIDI files don't actually contain any sound information. Instead, a MIDI file only provide instructions to a MIDI device on what notes to play, for how long, and with what instruments.

What is the difference between Audio and MIDI?
Audio is an exact representation of music and is recorded using a microphone. It can be recorded to CD and a recording will sound the same on every system. Audio, however, can be difficult to edit - you can you really only change the tempo and pitch of all the instruments. You cannot isolate specific instruments, or voices.

Unlike audio, MIDI is a description of music. It tells a MIDI device (such as a keyboard, the soundcard in your computer, a soft synth, etc.) what notes to play when. In a sense, it is similar to sheet music in that each performer reading sheet music will sound different - a professional will sound much better than an amateur. A MIDI file will sound better on a professional soundcard. A MIDI file is also easy to edit and can be created using a keyboard, computer, or any MIDI enabled instrument.

To get your MIDI file playable on a CD, however, you will need to convert the description of the music in the MIDI file to an exact audio recording.

How do I convert my MIDI tracks to audio?

Once you have your MIDI tracks edited and ready for CD production, you need to record these tracks as audio. In general, there are 3 common methods of converting your MIDI files to Audio files.

1) Convert to audio using a soft synth that can convert MIDI to Audio.
2) Convert to audio using your computer's internal soundcard.
3) Convert to audio using a sound module or a soft synth.

1) Use a soft synth that can automatically convert MIDI to Audio.

This is the simplest method of converting MIDI to audio. Using a software synth like the VSC-MP1 will automatically convert your MIDI files to audio files. The sound quality of the VSC-MP1 is fairly good, however, using a sound module like the SD-20 or a soft synth like SampleTank (in option 2), will give you even better, more realistic sounds and results.

2) Convert to audio using your computer's internal soundcard.

a. You can convert a MIDI file to audio using the sounds of your computer's internal soundcard along with a MIDI/audio recording program like Sonar or Cubase.

To do this, you can import the MIDI files into the MIDI/audio recording program, and then while sending the MIDI output to your computer's internal soundcard (Microsoft GS Wavetable SW Synth is a common internal soundcard), arm an audio track(s) (arm means to put a track in record mode) and select the audio input as your computer's internal soundcard.

You can then press record, and the MIDI will create audio. You can than save your project to burn to a CD.

MIDI programs: PowerTracks Pro Audio, Cubasis VST, Cakewalk Home Studio, Sonar, Cubase SL, Cubase SX, Logic Audio

b. If you are using a notation program such as Sibelius or Finale and want to convert your compositions to audio so you can burn to CD, a recording program like Wavelab or Sound Forge will work well.

All you have to do is press play in your notation program and record in the recording program, and your MIDI will become audio. You can then burn your recordings to a CD.

Note that most internal soundcards on computers don't have very realistic sounds, so using a sound module or a soft synth will give you much better, more realistic sound quality.

Recording Programs: Sound Forge Studio, Sound Forge, Wavelab Essentials, Wavelab, Peak, Peak LE

3) Convert to audio using a sound module or a soft synth.

This method usually produces the best sounding results. Using a MIDI/audio recording program like Sonar or Cubase, you can send the MIDI output from your MIDI tracks to a sound module/soft synth, arm an audio track with the input as your sound module/soft synth, press record and you have created audio from MIDI.

Sound Modules: SD-20, SD-80, SD-90

Soft Synths: SampleTank, Halion, Kontakt, HQ-OR Orchestral Synth, The Grand, Lounge Lizard, Hyper Canvas, HQ-OR Orchestral Synth

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