

MusicMatch Jukebox for Windows

If you're using your iPod with Windows, you'll probably have the most fun using Apple's own iTunes program to rip, record, and organize your digital music files. This free program has more features than Napster's software, no deliberately crippled features (like CD ripping in MusicMatch), and exclusive access to Apple's iTunes Music Store.

Even so, there are some very good reasons why you might not want to use iTunes. For starters, it requires Windows 2000 or XP, which leaves several hundred million PCs out in the cold. Or maybe you're perfectly content to keep your music collection in MusicMatch Jukebox Plus. (This might be the case if you were using MusicMatch before you got your iPod or if you started using MusicMatch when it was the only program that could talk to your iPod.)

This chapter explores MusicMatch Jukebox, which still works beautifully as a loading dock for the iPod. (Specifically, this chapter describes version 7.5, the last officially Apple-approved version for use with the iPod, and the edition that MusicMatch.com recommends for iPods. More recent versions of MusicMatch Jukebox work with the iPod, too, as long as you install the iPod plug-in software described on page 116.)

Note: Like Apple's iTunes Music Store, MusicMatch has its own online song store for legal music downloads. However, since MusicMatch.com's downloads are copy-protected using Windows Media Audio format, you can't play them on the iPod.

Introduction to MusicMatch Jukebox

MusicMatch Jukebox has been ripping (converting) CD songs to MP3 files since 1998. The program has evolved considerably, adding features like a music subscription service, faster encoding speeds, and more than 28 million customers.

The basic, free version of MusicMatch Jukebox lets you rip MP3 songs from CDs (convert them to computer files) and download them to portable players. The enhanced version—MusicMatch Jukebox Plus—adds tons of extra features, but costs an extra \$20. If your iPod's CD came with a copy of MusicMatch, though, you can upgrade to the more muscular MusicMatch for free, just by entering the serial number from the sticker on the iPod CD's cellophane sleeve.

UP TO SPEED

Mixing and Matching MusicMatch

This chapter is based on the menus and features of MusicMatch Jukebox Plus 7.5 for the iPod. If you have version 7.1, version 8 or later, or iTunes, you may need the following instructions to get the iPod to work.

If you have MusicMatch Jukebox 7.1: Download version 7.5 from www.musicmatch.com/download/free/index.cgi?OEM=APPLE.

If you've installed MusicMatch Jukebox 8 or later: If you try to install an even newer version—8.0 for example—you'll discover that MusicMatch no longer recognizes the iPod. The workaround: In MusicMatch Jukebox, choose Options→Add New Features. Make sure you're connected to the Internet, because this command takes you to the New Features page of the MusicMatch Web site. Once there, click the "Portable MP3 Players" link to reveal all the available plug-in software for portable players, iPod included. Click the link for your iPod model to start the download.

If you've installed iTunes: If you were curious enough to download and install iTunes for Windows, you may be alarmed to discover that iTunes has wrested control away from your copy of MusicMatch. Suddenly, MusicMatch doesn't even "see" the iPod.

If that's your situation, here's how to get your iPod popping up in MusicMatch again:

1. Unplug the iPod from the PC.
2. Choose My Computer→Control Panel→Add or Remove Programs.
3. Select and uninstall at least five things: iTunes, iPod for Windows, the MusicMatch iPod Plugin software, the iPod System Software Update (or any other iPod software listed), and MusicMatch Jukebox itself.
4. Close the Add or Remove Programs box and restart the PC.
5. Choose Start→Program Files→MusicMatch→MusicMatch Jukebox. Drag files in this folder (but not the folder itself) to the Recycle Bin. Do the same with the files in the Program Files→iPod folder. Empty the Recycle Bin.
6. Reinstall MusicMatch Jukebox from the CD that came with your iPod. Alternatively, download the iPod version of MusicMatch Jukebox from www.musicmatch.com.
7. Restart the PC.
8. Connect your iPod to the computer and start MusicMatch Jukebox, which should work fine now.

Note: You'll have best results with iPod and MusicMatch Jukebox if you have at least a 330-megahertz Pentium computer with 96 MB of RAM or more, running Windows Me or later. You'll also need a hard drive large enough to hold all the music you want to listen to and 50 MB of space for the MusicMatch software itself, plus a FireWire or USB 2.0 port on the PC.

The iPod-compatible version of MusicMatch Jukebox Plus gives Windows iPodders features like automatic synchronization, Volume Leveling to help even out sound levels between songs, digital sound effects, a Super Tagging function that quickly locates song information, and the ability to record CDs right from within MusicMatch. More on all of this on the following pages.

Figure 5-1:

Top: When you need all the screen space you can get, the player neatly collapses down into a petite control bar. To shrink the player down like this, press Alt+Page Down. To return it to full size, press Alt+Page Up. (The View menu also contains these commands.)

Bottom: The library window shows you the artists in your collection and the songs you've acquired. You can modify and rearrange the columns and look of this window, as well as each track's tags—a great way to repair the typographical and other minor errors that commonly occur with CD lookup services. (For most people under the age of 100, for example, Peggy Lee's music is not considered New Age.)



A Quick Tour

As shown in Figure 5-1, the MusicMatch Jukebox main window has plenty of buttons and a small menu bar in the upper-left corner. The circular control panel just below the menu bar contains the familiar volume slider, and play, pause, forward, reverse, and record buttons; the song currently playing is identified in the adjacent

panel. A small window capable of displaying animated “laser-light shows,” album art, and video snippets sits between this area and the Playlists section.

Note: If you’ve used an MP3 player with RCA Lyra or Creative Nomad Jukebox, then MusicMatch Jukebox may look and feel familiar to you. Lucky you—you’ve got a lot less software learning to do.



Figure 5-2: Right-clicking a column heading gives you plenty of choices for substituting a different kind of column—all the better to sort your music by. MusicMatch can display seven columns in the main window at any one time.

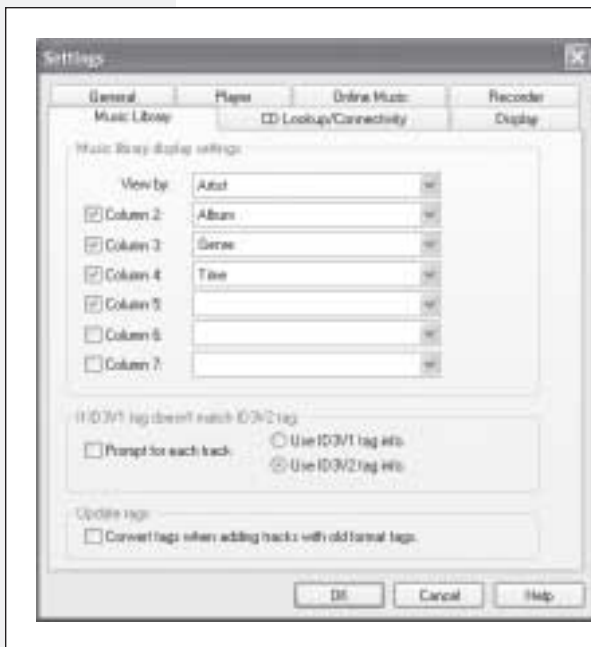


Figure 5-3: The Settings box lets you set up your My Library columns with just the info you care about, in the order you want to see it. (The bottom two checkboxes let you choose which version of the track-tagging standard you want for your files. The older ID3V1 tag format can’t hold as much information as ID3V2, which can display pictures and lyrics in the song’s tag file. See the box on page 121 for more about ID3 tags.)

Below this top section are four oblong buttons that each reveal something different in an expanding window below. The buttons, and each of their contents, are:

- **My Library.** Click here to examine the contents of the MusicMatch Jukebox music library. Songs are grouped by performer name, with album information, genre, and track length easily visible.
- **Radio.** This button reveals a list of streaming Internet radio stations in a range of genres.
- **Music Guide.** With a click of this button and an Internet connection, MusicMatch provides links to music downloads, recommendations, charts, and more.
- **Now Playing.** This button brings information about the musician you're currently listening to right into the MusicMatch window for instant gratification.

Window Fun

When you first look at your music library, you'll notice that the View by Artist column groups your music by performer. If you click the + button next to the CD icon, a subcategory unfurls beneath the artist name, showing you all of the songs you have by that particular person or group (Figure 5-1, bottom).

Tip: You don't have to view your music library grouped by artist. You may prefer to organize that first column (the *Folder View*) by album, track title, or any of several other categories. Just right-click anywhere in the Folder View column and choose from the shortcut menu.

You don't have to sort your music alphabetically by artist, however. You can have all kinds of fun with this columnar display. For example:

- Change the order of the columns by dragging. For example, if you want to have Time right before Genre (instead of after), drag the word Time horizontally until it's to the left of Genre.
- To change the identity of just one column—to swap in the Artist column where the Time currently appears, for example—right-click its title. From the pop-up list of column categories (Bit rate, Recording Year, and so on), choose the name of the column you want to replace it with, as shown in Figure 5-2.
- To adjust the width of a column, drag the vertical divider line on its right side.
- To add more information columns (or fewer), choose Options→Music Library→Music Library Settings to produce the dialog box shown in Figure 5-3, where you can turn columns on and off en masse.
- Click a column title (like Artist or Album) to sort the song list alphabetically by that criterion. Click a second time to reverse the sorting order.

For example, if you're having the girls over for tea and want to have some nice mellow music wafting about in the background, you can sort your music library by genre and select all the music in the Classical section.

Ripping CDs into MusicMatch

If you don't have any music files to move onto that brand-new iPod, it's easy to whip some up with MusicMatch. Just grab those albums and start up the program. Then proceed as follows.

Phase 1: Choose an Audio File Format

When you slide a CD into your drive, Windows XP, if that's what you're running, asks you how it might assist you with the disc you've just inserted. In the dialog box that appears, choose MusicMatch Jukebox Plus to play the CD. (Earlier versions of Windows are not quite as forthcoming as Windows XP. If you've used MusicMatch Jukebox to play CDs before, the program should open right up. But if Windows presents you with a list of programs to consider for the task, choose MusicMatch Jukebox Plus.)

MusicMatch Jukebox Plus starts out set to produce MP3 files recorded at 128 kilobits per second (see Chapter 3), but you can adjust this rate (to produce smaller music files, for example). To do so, press Shift+Ctrl+S or choose Options→Settings, and then click the Recorder tab. Use the Recording Quality controls, as shown in Figure 5-4.

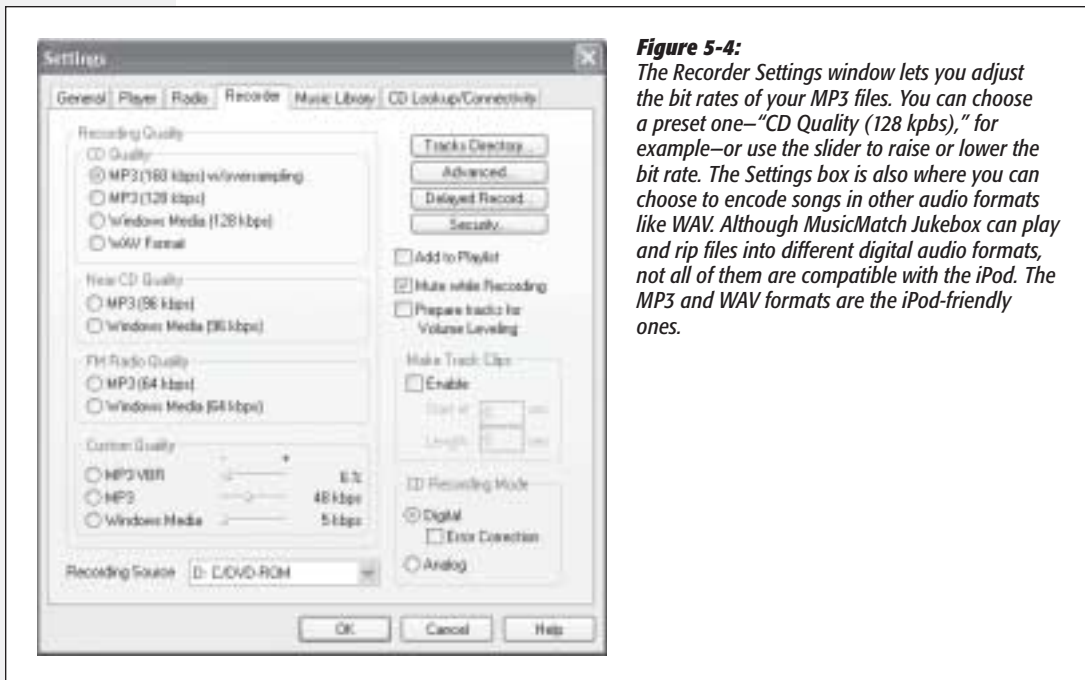


Figure 5-4: The Recorder Settings window lets you adjust the bit rates of your MP3 files. You can choose a preset one—"CD Quality (128 kbps)," for example—or use the slider to raise or lower the bit rate. The Settings box is also where you can choose to encode songs in other audio formats like WAV. Although MusicMatch Jukebox can play and rip files into different digital audio formats, not all of them are compatible with the iPod. The MP3 and WAV formats are the iPod-friendly ones.

Phase 2: Download Song Names and Track Information

It turns out that most audio CDs don't include any digital information about themselves. When you first insert a music CD into a PC, you may be disappointed to discover that to the computer, every song on it is called "Track 1," "Track 2," and so on—and the name of the album is "Audio CD." If you don't do anything to solve the problem, after you've ripped, say, seven CDs into MusicMatch Jukebox, you'll find that you have seven songs called Track 1, seven songs called Track 2, and so on—not the easiest way to organize your music.

If you have a high-speed Internet connection (like a cable modem or DSL), the program quickly dashes out and brings back the information by itself (unless you've changed the Deferred CD Lookup setting described next). Behind the scenes, the program is consulting the Internet's massive, comprehensive CD Database (CDDDB), which is maintained by a company called Gracenote (www.gracenote.com). After MusicMatch sends information from the disc to the CDDDB Web site, the database identifies the album and sends back the song titles and other data for MusicMatch to display.

If you have a dial-up modem, you may prefer the Deferred CD Lookup option, which appears on the CD Lookup/Connectivity tab of the Options→Settings box. With Deferred CD Lookup, MusicMatch Jukebox waits to download the information for your songs until the next time you're online.

If your CD has no entry in the CDDDB database—if, for example, it's the demo disc for your brother's punk-klezmer quintet—you can also manually enter the track information by clicking in each line and typing the song, artist, and album names. Or you can edit the track's *tag files*, as described in the box on below.

UP TO SPEED

ID3 Tags: The Basics

When you use an option like the CDDDB database, MusicMatch (or iTunes, for that matter) matches a code on the CD with the corresponding track information in the online database. That information, which includes artist, song, and album name, is then stored in a part of the MP3 file known as the *ID3 tag*.

Most MP3 and audio-management programs rely on these tags, which have been around since the mid-1990s, to sort and organize song files. Editing ID3 with an MP3 program like MusicMatch is a handy way to fix an occasional typo or

incorrect information from an online database (see Figure 5-7).

Although the original tag standard allowed for a limited amount of information to be entered, a newer version of the ID3 tag standard, ID3v2, has room for things like the song's lyrics, elaborate commentary, and pictures. Both MusicMatch and iTunes include an option (in the tag-editing box) to convert a track's ID3 tag to the newer version of the standard. There's detailed technical information on ID3 tags and how to use them at www.id3.org.

Note: If MusicMatch tries to download song information and seems to be running into a wall, it might be doing just that—smacking up against your network’s firewall. In that case, check the program’s settings to make sure you have any *proxy addresses* or other necessary information filled in. Check with your network’s system administrator if you’re not sure what the settings should be.

If MusicMatch Jukebox Plus keeps causing your *personal* firewall software to complain, consult the program’s help files to learn how to let MusicMatch Jukebox pass through without alerting you.

Phase 3: Convert the Song to a Digital Audio File

Once your song information is in place, click the red Record button identified in Figure 5-1. When the Recorder window pops up, showing the list of songs on the CD, pick the tracks that you want to convert to MP3 files (Figure 5-5).

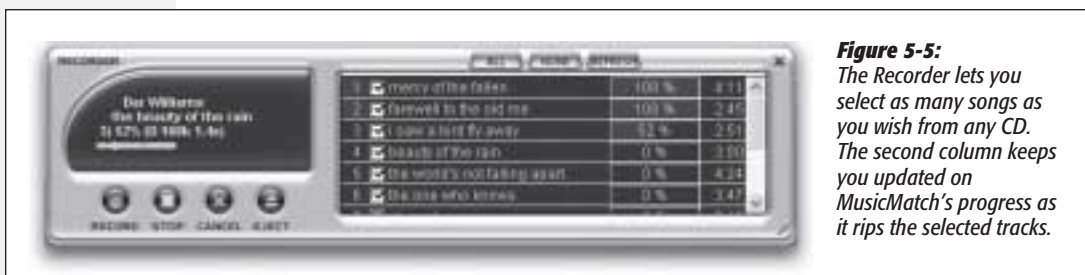


Figure 5-5:
The Recorder lets you select as many songs as you wish from any CD. The second column keeps you updated on MusicMatch’s progress as it rips the selected tracks.

When the Recorder first opens, all songs are checkmarked. Turn off the checkbox next to any songs you’d prefer *not* to rip. If you only want one or two songs off the album, clicking None above the song list in the Recorder window unchecks all the songs at once, saving you a few seconds of clicking. This is a great technique when you want only one or two songs in the list; turn *all* checkboxes off, then turn those *two* back on again. (Click All to turn them all back on at once.) The Refresh button

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION

Analog or Digital Recording?

I very much enjoyed Figure 5-4. I was puzzled, though, by the choice between analog and digital recording. I thought MP3 files are digital, and so are the iPod and my PC. What’s the deal?

The Analog recording mode is slower because it records songs in real time, but it can produce MP3 files with better sound quality, especially if your computer’s CD drive isn’t equipped to handle digital extraction or doesn’t do it very well. If you have an older CD-ROM drive and your MP3 files don’t sound very good after digital recording, try switch-

ing to Analog mode by choosing Options→Settings, clicking the Recorder tab, and turning on the Analog box.

Most modern CD drives handle digital recording quite well and can really speed up the recording process, even up to twelve times the normal play speed of the song. A digital recording usually sounds better than an analog recording, but a high-speed processor and good sound card can make analog recordings very close in audio quality to their digital cousins.

forces the Recorder to rescan the CD drive for the disc inside (the program sometimes doesn't notice that you've swapped in a different disc).

Once you've selected your songs for ripping, click the Record button at the lower left (visible in Figure 5-5). MusicMatch gets to work converting the tunes to MP3 files on your hard drive, keeping you informed of its progress by posting percentages of conversions completed next to each song title.

Tip: To focus the computer's processing power on the track-ripping task at hand, MusicMatch doesn't *play* the songs as they're being converted into MP3 files. If you do want to hear the music as it's being converted, though, choose Options→Settings, click the Recorder tab, and turn off "Mute while recording."

The time it takes to convert a CD to MP3 format depends on the speed of the computer and its CD drive, the bit rate you've chosen, and whether or not you've turned on MusicMatch Jukebox Plus's automatic error-correction feature (in the Settings box shown in Figure 5-4). On average, a file converted at 128 kbps takes about 20 seconds per minute of audio.

The Recorder window (Figure 5-5) displays the recording speed as you rip along, so if you see a number like 5.0x in the window, you know you're recording that song at five times its normal play speed. The program may adjust its speed as it encounters and corrects errors.

Note: Open, memory-hogging programs like photo-editing software or games can slow down the ripping process; so can frequently saving files in other programs.

When the program is done converting your songs, it politely hands back your disc by ejecting it from the computer's drive.

Phase 4: Add Cover Artwork

As shown in Figure 5-6, an accompanying image of an album cover or other evocative art adds a professional element to your MusicMatch experience. Thousands of prescanned album covers can be found around the Web on music ecommerce sites (like Amazon), which you can download to your desktop with just a right-click of the mouse.

Figure 5-6:

A dash of art in the track's tag can perk up the window quite a bit. If you don't want the album cover, you can have any picture you want in the player's art window.



Here are a few other artwork tips:

- If you have a scanner and a love of art, you can also scan images from the CD insert—or anything else—and attach the image to the track. Save the artwork as a BMP or JPG file in the MusicMatch Jukebox Plus folder on your hard drive.

Then right-click a track in the MusicMatch list and, from the shortcut menu, choose Edit Track Tag(s). In the Edit Track Tag(s) box that appears (Figure 5-7), click the Find Art File, navigate to the correct image, click it, and click OK. The artwork appears in the media window whenever the song plays.

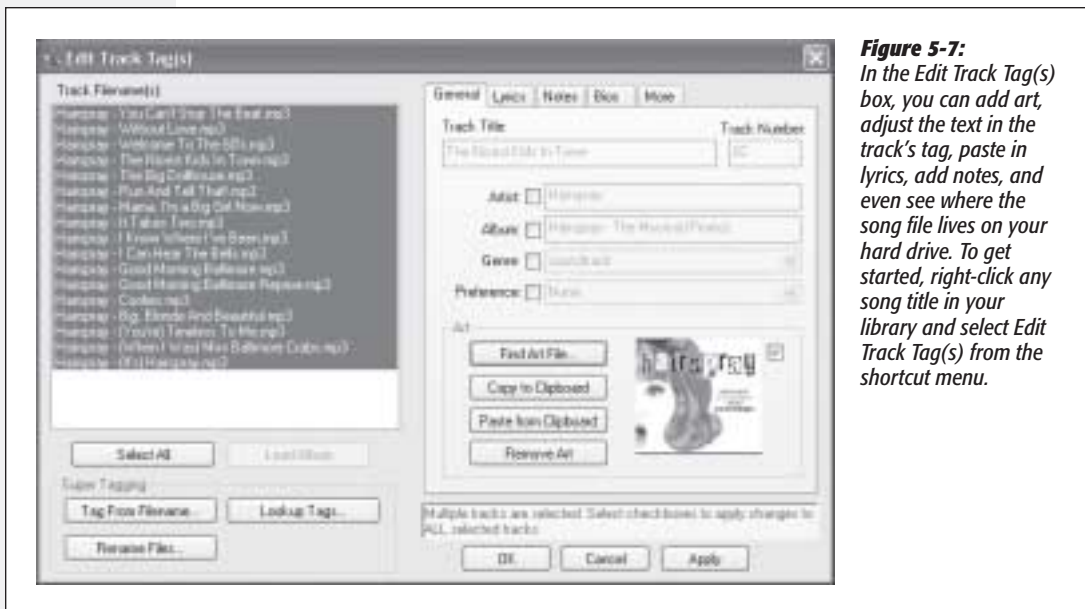


Figure 5-7: In the Edit Track Tag(s) box, you can add art, adjust the text in the track's tag, paste in lyrics, add notes, and even see where the song file lives on your hard drive. To get started, right-click any song title in your library and select Edit Track Tag(s) from the shortcut menu.

GEM IN THE ROUGH

Autoimporting

MusicMatch Jukebox can watch for the arrival of newly downloaded music files and automatically import them. All you have to do is tell the program which folders to keep an eye on—the ones you put new music in.

To set this up, choose File→Watch-Folders. Turn on Enable Watch-



Folders and click Add. Browse to the folder or folders where you save your newly downloaded music and click OK, as shown here. (You can add as many as you like.)

From now on, whenever it's running, MusicMatch Jukebox automatically adds the new tracks to the library—and gives you one less chore.

- To copy the same piece of art to all the tracks on an album, select a song from it and then open the Edit Track Tag(s) dialog box (see Figure 5-7). When the song is listed in the Track Filename(s) window, click Load Album below it to round up all the tracks ripped from that same album. Click Select All.

On the other side of the Edit Track Tag(s) box, turn on the checkbox where it says Art. Click Find Art File, navigate to the picture you want to use, and click Open. The art gets pasted into the tag for each track on the album. Click OK.

- Pressed for time but still want your tracks to be artful? MusicMatch Jukebox can hunt down the album's art for you automatically. In the Settings box (Ctrl+Shift+S), click the Display tab and turn on "Look up album art if not already present."

Tip: You can also even make MusicMatch change your PC's desktop wallpaper to match the album art for whatever album is playing. Just turn on "Use album art as wallpaper."

Importing Other Music Files into MusicMatch

Not all sound files come directly from the CDs. If you've had a PC for longer than about two days, odds are you already have some audio files stored on the hard drive: MP3s downloaded from the Internet or ripped in another program like WinAmp, WAV files featuring snippets of dialogue from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, sample songs that came with other multimedia software, and so on.

If you're so inclined, you can add these audio files to your growing MusicMatch Jukebox Plus library in any of three ways.

- For a hands-on approach, just drag the icons of your music files right off the desktop (or out of your folder windows) into the MusicMatch Jukebox window.
- For an automated approach, choose File→Add New Music Track(s) to Library. (Alternatively, click Add above your list of songs in the library window, visible in Figure 5-1.)

A dialog box asks you to find the files you want. If you're in a hurry, feeling lazy, or busy watching the hockey game on the TV, you can have the program do a sweep of your main drive and add any MusicMatch-friendly file formats to the library. Just select your entire hard drive as the directory for MusicMatch Jukebox to search (or choose Options→Music Library→Search and Add Tracks From All Drives. You may wind up with a lot of sonic debris washing up in your library, but you can't beat the convenience.

If you want to be more selective, you can navigate to folders where you have stored your music files. Click Add when you've found what you're looking for and are ready to add the new songs to the library (Figure 5-8).

Tip: To import a bunch of files at once, Ctrl+click the name of each one, thereby selecting several simultaneously, before clicking Add.

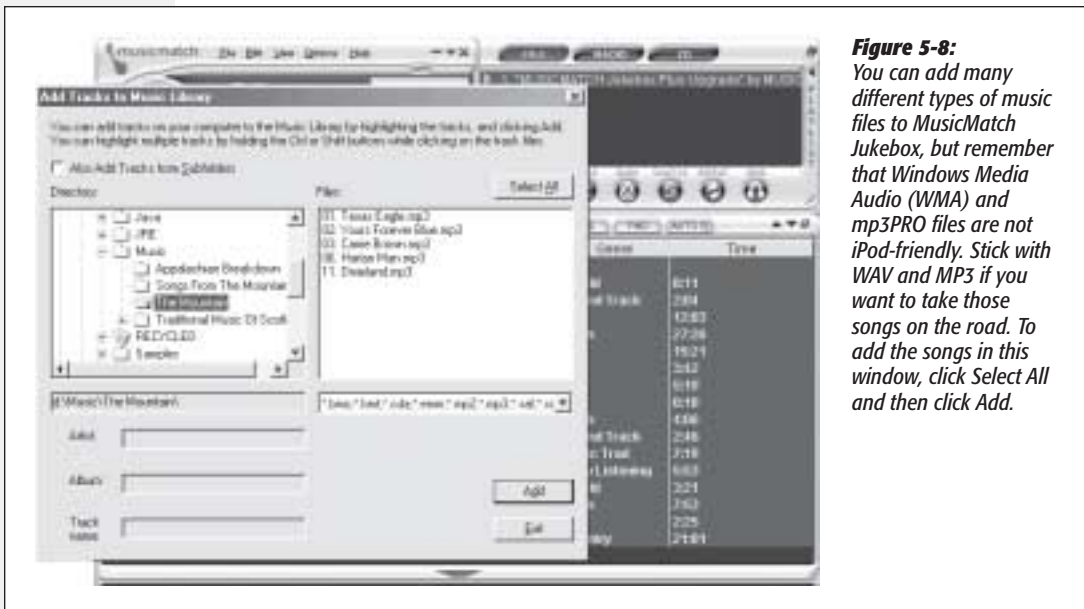


Figure 5-8: You can add many different types of music files to MusicMatch Jukebox, but remember that Windows Media Audio (WMA) and mp3PRO files are not iPod-friendly. Stick with WAV and MP3 if you want to take those songs on the road. To add the songs in this window, click Select All and then click Add.

Deleting Songs

Music tastes evolve and change, and hard drives get full. If you find yourself in either situation, or just feel like doing a little cleanup, you can remove tracks from your collection with a couple of clicks.

Click the song you wish to delete (or Ctrl+click to select several), and then click the Remove button at the top of the My Library window. MusicMatch asks if you're sure you want to delete the track, and gives you the option of erasing the song from your computer altogether (Figure 5-9).



Figure 5-9: MusicMatch alerts you when you click the Remove button to delete tracks from your library. Turn on the checkbox if you want to erase it from your hard drive, as opposed to just removing its listing in MusicMatch. (Right-clicking the song or album title and selecting Remove Track(s) is another way to dump songs.)

Tip: If you click a track to play it, and all you get is a lousy error message babbling about “path/track could not be found,” you may have moved a music file out of its original folder on your hard drive. Fortunately, you can fix it right away. Right-click the faulty track and, from the shortcut menu, choose Repair Broken Links. MusicMatch Jukebox Plus goes on a hunt for busted file paths and gives you the option to fix or remove broken links.

Playing Music

MusicMatch Jukebox Plus is not just mere CD-ripping software, but a full-featured digital audio management program with plenty of ways to customize its look and feel to determine how it presents your music.

Once you’ve ripped a few tunes, you’ll see a list begin to grow in your MusicMatch library window. To turn your PC into a music machine, click the small + icon next to the artist’s or album’s name in the first column to see all the corresponding songs. (Of course, if you’ve fooled around with the display settings for this first column, you may already be staring at a big long list of songs.)

There are many ways to play a song or album:

- Click the song title, and then click the triangular Play button in the MusicMatch Jukebox player controls.
- Ctrl+click multiple songs in the library window, and then click the Play button.
- Click a performer’s name in the Library window, and then click the Play button to play all of that artist’s songs. (The same trick works if you’re viewing the main list by album or another category.)

The songs you select end up in the Playlist window, and a red triangle appears next to the song title that’s now playing. Use other player controls to pause, stop, rewind, or fast-forward the songs in an album or playlist. You can jump to another part of the same song by dragging the small Tylenol-shaped button on the progress bar. Of course, the volume slider works, too.

Visualizations

As music plays, you can control and manipulate the music and the visuals of your PC in all kinds of interesting ways. As a result, some people don’t move from their PCs for months at a time.

Visualizations, for example, are animated graphics that appear in the Media Window, wiggling and pulsating in time to the music (Figure 5-10). You can create your own visual world of music by choosing View→Visualizations→Select Visualization.

In the dialog box that opens, clicking Get New takes you to an area on the MusicMatch Web site where you can download new animations. Running the graphics can slow down your PC, though, so if you’re running tight on available memory, skip the Visualizing.

Skins

If you're tired of the way your MusicMatch Jukebox Plus window looks, you can give the whole thing a fresh new look by changing its *skin*.



Figure 5-10: Visualizations can keep dancing long after the music stops. Click the tiny oval button above the frame to make the display slightly larger.

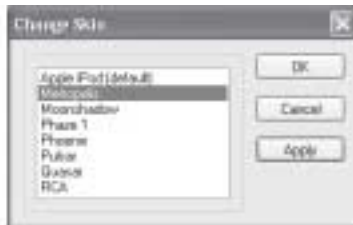


Figure 5-11: Top: Choose View→Change Skin to produce this dialog box, which makes it easy to give MusicMatch Jukebox Plus a whole new look. (Click a skin name and then click OK—or click Apply to test it out without having to close the dialog box first.) If you get tired of the ones that came with the program, just go to View→Download Skins and snag some more.



Bottom: There are skins available in all kinds of styles, from Earnest Techno to Whimsical Moderne; here, the skins called Xtreme, Starskin, and Phaze are on parade.



“Skin” here has nothing to do with dermatology; it’s computerese for “the visual look and design of the program, like its color scheme, window design, font choices, and button shapes.” MusicMatch comes with a few alternate skins, which you can try on for size as the mood strikes you (see Figure 5-11).

Note: In the version of MusicMatch Jukebox Plus that came with the 2002 iPods, the Change Skin and Download Skins commands were in the Options menu, not the View menu.

The Graphic Equalizer

On expensive luxury stereo components, a *graphic equalizer* is a control console that lets you adjust the strength of each musical frequency independently.

MusicMatch provides an Equalizer, too, stocked with presets for various styles of music. To adjust the sound quality of your tracks with prefab—or customized—settings, choose Options→Player→Equalizer. Turn on the Enable EQ box in the lower-left corner, then choose one of the preconfigured settings from the pop-up menu at the bottom of the box. From there, you can adjust the sliders to customize the sound for your personal listening pleasure, as described in Figure 5-12.

Figure 5-12:

The Graphic Equalizer lets you apply your own sonic boom to songs. The Limiter controls the overall amplification, while the bass frequencies start on the left at 60 Hz and proceed to the high end of the scale at 18 KHz. This Tinny AM Radio setting shows a distinct lack of bass.



Presets of your own

If you’ve taken advantage of the serial-number sticker on your iPod CD and upgraded your software from mere MusicMatch Jukebox to MusicMatch Jukebox *Plus*, you can create and save your own customized Equalizer presets.

Click the word Custom in the box at the bottom of the dialog box, and then type a name for the preset you’re about to create (“Tinny AM Radio Simulator,” for example).

Now go to work with the sliders shown in Figure 5-12. You can fiddle with the Limiter (a slider that can keep a lid on the levels at which the frequencies are amplified)

and ten sliders that adjust sound frequencies in the bass, treble, and midrange tones of the music.

Once you're done sliding around, click Save to add your new custom preset to the list, where you'll be able to summon it later with a couple of quick clicks.

Note: Equalizer presets from MusicMatch don't transfer to the iPod with your music. Of course, you can always use the EQ settings on the iPod itself when playing your tunes.

Preventing Ear-Blast Syndrome

Volume Leveling adjusts the volume of both loud songs and soft songs to create a middle ground, so you're not straining to hear one track and then deafened by the next one.

To use the feature, select the tracks you wish to work with, in either My Library or Playlist window.

Right-click any one of them and then, from the shortcut menu, choose Prepare Tracks for Volume Leveling. MusicMatch Jukebox asks for confirmation; if you give the go-ahead, it automatically adjusts the recorded volume levels. It adds a green musical note next to the name of each track that's received volume surgery.

These tracks will maintain their adjusted volume settings when transferred to the iPod—if you turn on the right switch. Proceed as follows:

1. Connect the iPod to the PC.

Wait for MusicMatch to start up. Eventually, a window called Portable Device Manager appears, displaying the iPod's icon.

2. Right-click the iPod icon. From the shortcut menu, choose Options.

The Options dialog box appears.

POWER USERS' CLINIC

Look, in the Window! It's Super Tagging!

MusicMatch Jukebox not only tags music files, it can Super Tag them. Super Tagging actually means Auto Tagging; it speeds up tagging tasks by analyzing the song's file name on your hard drive. These features are especially useful when the file's name actually reflects the song and performer names. For example, you might have downloaded a song file called, "I Wanna Be Sedated – The Ramones.mp3."

In the lower-left corner of the Edit Track Tag(s) box (Figure 5-7), you'll find these options:

Lookup Tags zips into the MusicMatch online database to search for the full tag information based on just the artist or track name on the file's name.

Tag From Filename analyzes the downloaded file's name and, if possible, creates tags with the Artist and Track names in their proper fields. In the example above, you'd get "I Wanna Be Sedated" in the title box, and "The Ramones" in the Artist box.

Rename Files does the opposite. In songs whose tags are correctly entered, this command changes the song file.

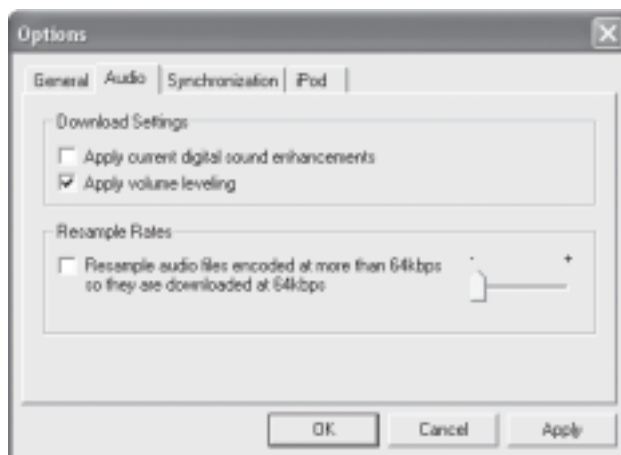
3. Click the Audio tab and turn on “Apply volume leveling” (Figure 5-13).

That’s it. The next time you sync with the iPod, your PC will transfer all of the newly modified songs to the player.

Note: You may spot an option on the iPod itself called SoundCheck, which also purports to adjust mismatched volume levels between songs. But that’s for use with iTunes only. MusicMatch for Windows doesn’t work the same way; it adjusts song volumes on the PC and then transfers the whole shebang over to the player.

Figure 5-13:

Grab a magazine next time you sync—applying volume leveling to your tracks makes them take longer to download to the iPod from MusicMatch Jukebox.



MusicMatch Administration

At its heart, MusicMatch is nothing more than a glorified database. Its job is to search, sort, and display information, quickly and efficiently. Here, for example, are some powerful managerial tasks it stands ready to handle.

Searching for Songs

The Find feature can search out all the songs that have a specific word in their title, album name, or artist attribution. To make it work, click Find at the top of your library window.

In the Find in Music Library box, type the word or name you’re looking for, and then click Find First.

For example, in Figure 5-14, typing *love* jumps down the library list to tracks by different performers that all have the word “love” somewhere in the song’s information—maybe the title of the song, maybe the band name. Click Add to add the song to the playlist window, and then click Find Next to move on.

Tip: There's another way to find a certain song, too: just start typing the first few letters of the artist or album. MusicMatch highlights the first matching song in the list.



Figure 5-14: The Find function in MusicMatch Jukebox makes it easy to find love, or rather, songs with the word “love” in their titles within your music library. This sort of thing could be useful for creating themed playlists, like a mix for that Valentine’s Day special someone made from songs that all have the word “love” in the title.

Editing Track Tag Information

As described on page 121, the CD Lookup feature saves a lot of time and tendons filling out *tag* information (track names, album names, and so on). But MusicMatch provides space to attach much more information to each song. Only the song title, artist, album, and genre show up on the iPod, but music librarians with an attention to detail can have a ball with the track tags on the PC side.

To change or add more information to your song files, click a track name in the My Library window and then click Tag. The Edit Track Tag(s) box pops up. You can add

GEM IN THE ROUGH

Waking Up with “Wake Up, Little Susie”

You already know that the iPod can wake you up to music if you happen to nod off while wearing the earbuds. But what if you fall asleep at the PC?

MusicMatch is there for you. In fact, you can use the little-known Alarm function to play up to five different alarms throughout the day, programmed with different songs and

sound clips—like “Food, Glorious Food” to alert you to lunch hour.

To get to the Alarm Settings box, right-click the MusicMatch Jukebox Plus icon in the Windows system tray. In the Settings box that opens, select the days, times, and songs you wish to use for your musical alarms.

lyrics, album art, and personal comments (Figure 5-7). The General tab has all basic information, including a huge selection of genres—but you can also type in genres of your own (Rockabilly Waltzes, anyone?).

Tip: To save time entering the same tag information for all the songs from the same album, open the Edit Track Tag(s) dialog box as described above. Then click Load Album (shown way back on page 124). You’ve just added to the list all the songs from the same CD, or—if you had already entered the album title by hand for each track—all songs with a matching album name.

If you click the More tab, you’ll find that you can apply your own designations for the Mood or Situation fields from a pop-up list as well—or add your own like “Cheery” or “Keg Party at the Delta Upsilon House.”

When you’ve finished filling out your tags, click Apply and then OK.

Internet Radio

Clicking the Radio button on the MusicMatch Jukebox Plus window whisks you off to the company’s server, where you can sign up for an account with the MusicMatch MX Platinum subscription service. The service costs \$5 a month and offers Internet radio streams from over 8,000 performers, like the one shown in Figure 5-15. A free trial is available on the site, as is a tutorial on how to use it.

Figure 5-15:
MusicMatch MX can bring streams of music flowing from the Internet into your computer. While you listen to the radio over the Internet, you can browse the MusicMatch site for tracks by other artists with a similar sound.



MusicMatch MX has helpful features like Artist on Demand to search for certain musicians, and Artist Match, which purports to find acts that *sound* like your favorites. You can listen to low-bandwidth streams of popular music and programming from online radio stations free of charge—by clicking them in the list at the left side of the window.

Playlists

A *playlist* is a list of songs that you've decided should go together. It can be made up of pretty much any group of songs arranged in any order. For example, if you're having a party, you can make a playlist from the current Top 40 and dance music in your music library.

Unlike the tedious, afternoon-consuming way of making a mix album in the Olden Days of vinyl, cassettes, and a stopwatch, MP3 playlists are a cinch to set up. Once you've got 'em, you can save your playlists, download them to your iPod, or even burn them to CDs for posterity.

Making a New Playlist

The Playlist window at the upper-right corner of the MusicMatch screen (Figure 5-16) is your workspace for making and mixing playlists. (If some technically challenged miscreant accidentally closed it when you weren't around, choose View→Playlist.) The Playlist window tucks itself behind the main MusicMatch Control panel, but leaves a vertical sign reading PLAYLIST on the edge that you can click to slide it out.

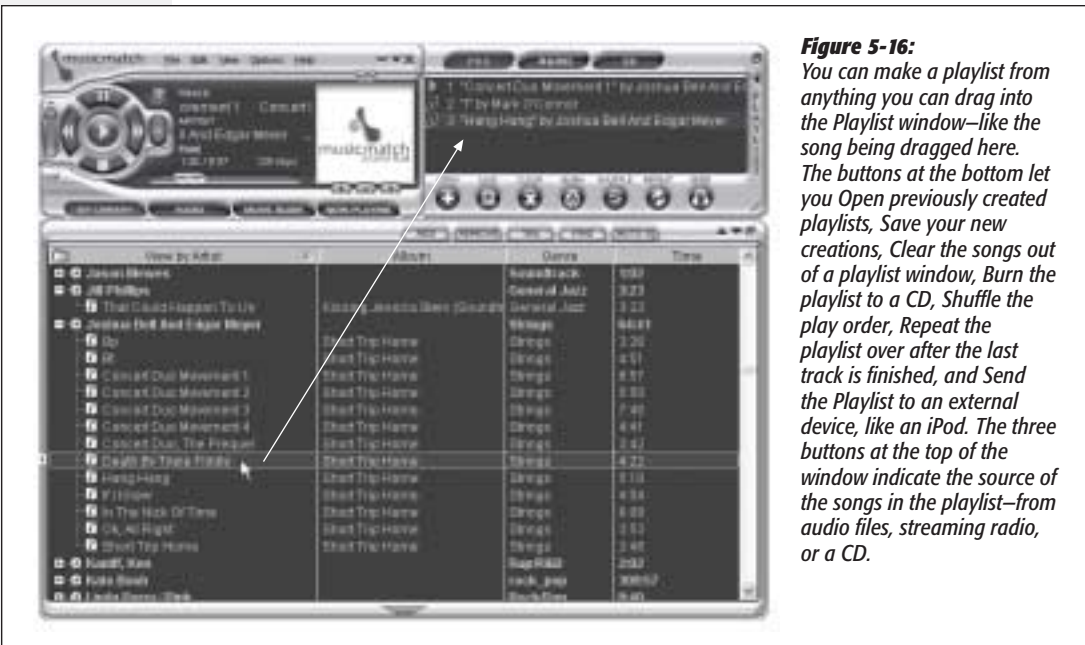


Figure 5-16: You can make a playlist from anything you can drag into the Playlist window—like the song being dragged here. The buttons at the bottom let you Open previously created playlists, Save your new creations, Clear the songs out of a playlist window, Burn the playlist to a CD, Shuffle the play order, Repeat the playlist over after the last track is finished, and Send the Playlist to an external device, like an iPod. The three buttons at the top of the window indicate the source of the songs in the playlist—from audio files, streaming radio, or a CD.

Once you have your Playlist window open, you're all ready to make a playlist. If there are song titles still in the window from the last time you used the program, click the Clear button just below the window to wipe the slate clean.

To add songs to this window, start in the My Library window. Double-click each tune you'd like to add to your new playlist. You can also drag individual tracks— or groups of them—onto the playlist window, as shown in Figure 5-16.

To make a playlist from the entire contents of albums or collected artists' works, use any of these tactics:

- Drag album titles or performer names from the first column (Folder View) up to the Playlist window.
- Right-click a track and then, from the shortcut menu, choose the Add Track(s) to Playlist option.
- Drag sound files directly from your desktop or folder windows into the Playlist window. (Note, however, that these songs don't get automatically added to the library unless you change your preferences. To do so, choose Options→Settings; click the General tab; then, where it says "When double-clicking local music files," turn on "Add to Music Library.")

Don't worry about clogging up your hard drive. When you add a song title to a playlist, you don't *copy* the song; you're just giving MusicMatch instructions about which tracks to play and where to find the files. In essence, you're creating file shortcuts of the originals. You can have the same song on several different playlists without having to worry that you've now got sixteen copies of "Convoy" by C.W. McCall.

Once you have that new playlist just the way you want it, click the round Save button at the bottom of the Playlist window. A dialog box asks you what you'd like to call this new playlist.

Note: After you've created new playlists, don't move your original music files and folders around on the hard drive. The Playlists feature uses the file paths and locations of the music files when you originally saved the playlist, so moving the original files will result in having to redo your playlists.

Once you've saved and stored some playlists, you can call one up again by clicking Open at the bottom of the Playlist window. When the Open Music box pops up, click the icon for Playlists, click the playlist you want, and click the Play button within the Open Music box to start the music.

Modifying a Playlist

To reopen a playlist so you can add to it, shorten it, or rearrange the songs in it, proceed like this:

1. Open the Playlist window.

If it's not onscreen, go to View→Playlist, or click the triangle on the edge of the MusicMatch control panel window to slide open the Playlist window.

2. Click the Open button.

The Open Music dialog box appears.

3. Click the Playlists icon on the left side of the box, and then click the name of the playlist you want to edit.

It looks like a folder with an .m3u file extension.

4. Click Play to load the tracks into the Playlist window, where you can work on them.

Now you can drag the song titles up or down within the playlist window to reorder them, drag new songs into the window, delete songs by selecting them and then pressing the Delete key, and so on, until you're happy.

5. Click Save.

You can give the modified playlist a new name if you like. To retain the old name, click Yes when MusicMatch Jukebox asks if you want to replace the older version.

Deleting a Playlist

You can delete a playlist, but you'd never guess how.

Start by opening the Playlist dialog box. Then, believe it or not, you're supposed to click the playlist name and click *Save*. In the Save Playlist box, click the name of the one you want to delete and then click Delete (Figure 5-17). The playlist disappears from your collection.

Click the red X in the top-right corner to close the dialog box (your other options are Save, Cancel, and Delete, none of which are good for making the escape).

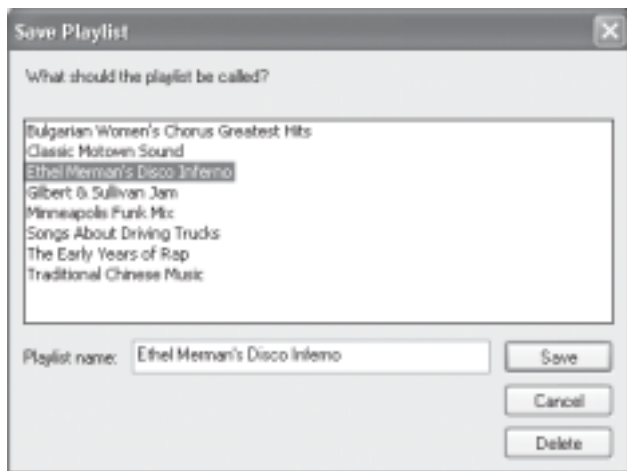


Figure 5-17:

The Save box also holds the key to deleting playlists, which isn't exactly the most intuitive thing in the world, but it works.

AutoDJ Playlists

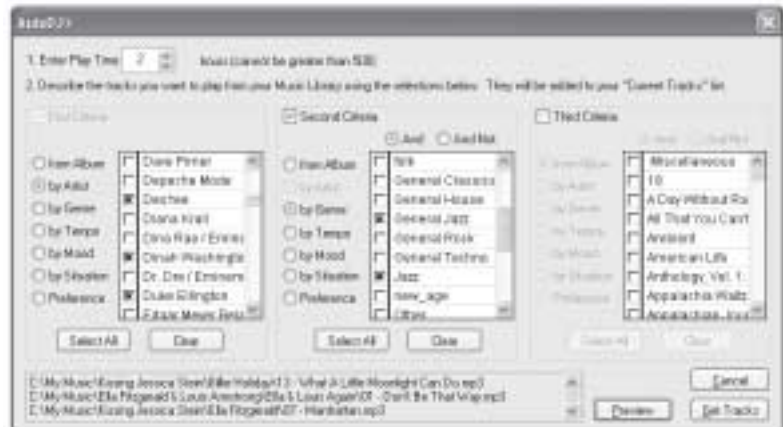
Computers have automated many a time-consuming mission, and making playlists is no exception. With its AutoDJ feature, MusicMatch Jukebox Plus can compose its own playlists that appeal to your personal tastes. You just have to tell it what your personal tastes *are* for the playlist at hand.

For example, you might tell one AutoDJ Playlist to assemble a two-hour set of songs from your immense jazz collection—but *only* tracks by Louis Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald, Art Tatum, and Duke Ellington. Doing it the AutoDJ way lets you spend less time picking through your library to find songs that match your mood, meaning you can get on with the music that much faster.

To get started, click the AutoDJ button at the top of the My Library window (or choose Options→Playlist→AutoDJ). As you can see in Figure 5-18, the AutoDJ dialog box asks for your input on the amount of time you want the playlist to last and what kind of music you want on it.

Figure 5-18:

The AutoDJ automatically generates a playlist with the guidelines you provide. Just pick the amount of time you want the playlist to last and then add criteria like albums, artists, or genres. This AutoDJ production, for example, will snag two hours of tunes by selected artists in the Jazz genre. You can give the AutoDJ up to three sets of criteria.



You can get a sneak peek at the computer-generated playlist by clicking Preview. A list of tracks appears in the Preview window. If you like what you see, click the Get Tracks button to sweep all the tunes into the Playlist window.

If you like the AutoDJ playlist enough to transfer it to your iPod the next time you synchronize it, click Save.

Tip: The more information you've added to your track tags during your music-organizing activities, the more detailed and precise you can get when formulating an AutoDJ playlist. What you've done is give yourself more elements to use in the AutoDJ criteria boxes.

Burning CDs

The iPod version of MusicMatch Jukebox Plus comes with a separate CD burning program called Burner Plus. With it, you can record regular audio CDs, MP3 CDs, and data discs. You can even do things like print out CD labels and jewel-case inserts and split up large chunks of data over multiple discs.

Tip: Before investing a lot of time with Burner Plus, check www.musicmatch.com for a list of CD and DVD drives that work with the program.

Once you have a CD in your drive, the procedure for making an audio CD of your tunes goes like this:

1. Click the **Burn** button under the Playlist window (or choose **File**→**Create CD**).

The Burner Plus window appears (Figure 5-19). If there's a playlist in the Playlist window, its songs appear in the burner's window.

If not, your job is to load the songs you want into the Burner window.



Figure 5-19:
The MusicMatch Jukebox Burner Plus program can record everything from audio discs to data backups, and can even help you design a label for the finished disc.

2. Drag songs, albums, or artist names from the My Library window into the Playlist window.

You can also add audio files from your hard drive by clicking the Add button at the top of the window.

Tip: At the bottom of the Burner Plus window, you can see how much space you have left on the disc as you add more files to it. If you've chosen too much music for an audio CD, you have two alternatives. First, you can select some songs and then click the Remove icon at the top of the window. Alternatively, you can divide the batch and spread it out over multiple CDs by clicking the Split button at the top of the window.

3. Choose **Options**→**Settings** in the **Burner** window. In the dialog box that appears, select the size of CD media you're using.

The drop-down menu offers you choices like 74 minute, 650 MB; 80 minute, 700 MB; and even DVD discs and those peewee 50 MB “business card” CDs.

You can also make other configuration adjustments on the various tabs of this dialog box: selecting the kind of disc you want (standard audio, MP3, or data), adding a two-second gap between songs, and applying volume leveling.

4. Click **OK** to close the **Options** dialog box. Then click the orange **Burn** button to start the CD recording process.

As a final touch, you can click **Print** to call up the **Print CD Insert** box, which lets you add art and titles and print out a list of track names to go with your freshly burned CD.

ALTERNATE REALITIES

Using a Mac iPod with a Windows PC

In the beginning, there were no Windows iPods. When it was introduced in 2001, the iPod was a Macintosh-only product. This made many Windows fans feel completely unloved and ignored. Here was this fabulous device they couldn't use with their computers! In short, Windows people found out what it's like to be Mac people.

Not wanting to let this cool gadget slip away because of a minor operating system incompatibility, creative Windows programmers rose to the challenge and came up with software that would let Windows machines connect to Macintosh-formatted iPods.

If you want to give your old Mac iPod a second life as a WiniPod, you can download the Windows iPod software from Apple's Web site and reformat the player's hard drive into a PC-friendly machine. (Just point your browser to www.apple.com/ipod/download and pull down a copy of the software designed for your version of the iPod. Once you download and start the installer program with the iPod connected, you need the **Restore** option to reformat the drive. Full details on using this software are on page 296.)

XPlay makes the iPod look like any other drive in Windows Explorer, so that you can drag music files and con-

tact information right onto the player. It walks you gently through the process of setting up the iPod and includes its own tools for making playlists and tweaking audio files. **XPlay**, which you can download from www.mediafour.com/products/xplay, costs about \$30. A demo version is also available.

EphPod is a free program created by Joe Masters, who was a college student when he wrote it. To use it with a Macintosh iPod, you'll also need to buy **MacOpener**, a program that lets Windows see Macintosh-formatted disks. It's available for \$40 for EphPod users; there's a link to it on the EphPod Web site at www.ephpod.com. (The program can work without **MacOpener** if you have a Windows iPod and are just looking for a free, great, user-friendly program to manage your iPod contents.)

The EphPod screen sort of looks like an Excel spreadsheet crossed with an inventory list from a record store, but it's easy to use, especially for transferring songs on and off the iPod. EphPod also includes the ability to download news headlines and create memos, contacts, and calendar information for the iPod. (There's more about the EphPod freeware in Chapters 2, 7, and 9.)

Note: MusicMatch Jukebox Plus is chock full of features that have nothing to do with the iPod. To find out more about the more intricate, Pod-free parts of the program, just select one of the many topics under the program's Help menu.

GEM IN THE ROUGH

Resampling for More Room

If your iPod is getting crammed full, one way to solve the problem is to re-rip all your music from the original CDs, this time using a lower bit-rate setting. You'll get smaller files (of course, at lower quality).

That's a lot of effort, though. You may as well mow your lawn with fingernail scissors.

Fortunately, there's a much faster, automatic way. You can make MusicMatch Jukebox do the job for you—without even requiring your original CD collection. With the iPod plugged in, click the Options button in the Portables Plus window,

You'll see an option for *resampling* your songs at a lower bit rate when transferring tunes. Turn on the box for resampling, then drag the slider to a lower bit rate than what's currently used in your library (probably 128 kbps).

The next time MusicMatch transfers the music to your iPod, it will automatically convert each song to a lower, more compact form. This feature adds quite a bit of time to your sync session, of course. But the beauty of it is that your original music collection retains all of its original quality—on the PC. Only what's on the iPod is affected.