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What is TapeMaker?

TapeMaker is a sophisticated combination of a music database and a cassette insert printer. Whether you want to keep track of your music collection or print beautiful cassette inserts or both, TapeMaker is for you. You'll find features here that simply aren't available anywhere else.

TapeMaker's database features let you <u>view all the albums, artists or songs in your collection</u>. When you select an album, artist, or song from the left half of the window, the album's details instantly appear on the right giving you quick access to information. The database is even <u>customizable</u>, so you can add data fields with any information you want in them. With TapeMaker, you're not limited to what the program thinks is important information.

If you like <u>making tapes</u> from your music collection for use in your car or at parties, TapeMaker lets you make the most of your cassette. You can drag and drop music from the database to the cassette insert, tell TapeMaker to <u>find the best arrangement</u> of music to fill up your cassette, choose fonts and background patterns for the cassette insert, and print it out.

TapeMaker also comes with a built-in <u>CD player</u>.

TapeMaker comes with a sample database, SAMPLE.MUS, so that you can load it and quickly explore how TapeMaker works. Keep an eye on the status bar at the bottom of the window. It displays hints on how to use the program. And remember, you can hit F1 at any time to get help.

Creating a new music database

Select **File | New** from the <u>main window</u>'s menu or click the button on the main window's toolbar. If you already have a database open, and you have made changes to the database, TapeMaker will ask if you are sure you want to lose your changes.

See also:

<u>Adding and Editing Albums</u>

Adding and editing albums

To add a new album to your database, select **Album | New Album** from the main window's menu or click the [New] button on the main window's toolbar or type Ctrl+N.

To edit an album, <u>select it</u>, then select **Album | Edit Album** from the main window's menu or click the [Edit] button on the main window's toolbar or type Ctrl+E.

In either case, the album details will become editable.

> **NOTE:** You can not edit an album that has songs on the cassette insert. If you try, TapeMaker will warn you and ask if you would like to remove the songs from the cassette insert. You can choose to remove them and proceed with the editing, or cancel the editing.

Once you've clicked **New** or **Edit,** you can fill in all the album detail fields. Every album must have a title, unless it is a 45 RPM record (you remember those, right?) or a 3" CD. Every album must also have at least one song. Each song must have an artist, either in the Artist field next to the album title or in the Artist field next to the song title. If you forget anything, TapeMaker will remind you.

Most albums have only one artist. For these, enter the artist's name in the Artist field next to the album title. But many albums have a collection of songs from different artists. For these, enter the artist name for each song next to the song title in the song grid.

To insert a song in the middle of an album, select a song, then click the [Insert] button or the **Album | Insert Song** menu item or type Ctrl+Ins. The song you selected, and all following songs, will be moved down and a blank line will be added where you can enter the song information. To delete a song, select it and click the **Album | Delete Song** menu item or type Ctrl+Del.

When you finished editing, click the [Save] button or the **Album | Save Changes** menu item or type Ctrl+S. If you don't want to save your changes, click the button or the **Album | Cancel Editing** menu item or type Ctrl+L.

<u>Reading Song Times from a CD</u>

<u>Deleting Albums</u>

Viewing the Database

On the left of the main window is a list of all the albums in your database in alphabetical order. Above that is three tabs labeled **Albums, Artists**, and **Songs**. You can click on those tabs to view the artists or songs in your database, also in alphabetical order:

In the Song list, both the title and the playing time for each song is displayed. If you have not entered a song time, TapeMaker will display "**??:??**" instead.

When you highlight an album in the album list, its details appear on the right. When you highlight a song in the song list, its album's details appear on the right:
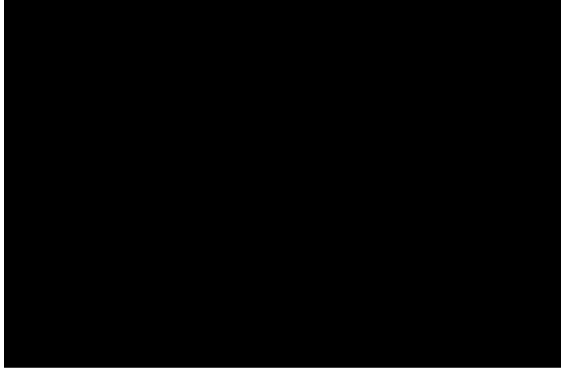

But what happens if you highlight an artist in the artist list and there's more than one album by that artist? In that case, a list box appears in the lower left with all the albums by that artist:

Albums	**Artists**	Songs
Bon Jovi
Def Leppard
Dire Straits
Genesis
John, Elton
Petty, Tom
Talking Heads
Little Creatures
Stop Making Sense
True Stories

TapeMaker's purpose in life is to make tapes. There may be times when you have a little space left on a tape and you want to find a song that is just the right size to fill it. You can display all the songs in your database in order of their playing times by selecting the **Songs** tab, positioning the mouse over the songs, clicking the right mouse button, and selecting **Sort by Time** from the pop-up menu. To switch back, select **Sort Alphabetically** from the pop-up menu.

Customizing the Database

You display the cassette insert window by selecting **Tools | Database Configuration** from the main window's menu.

Every album has some standard fields defined: album title, artist name, and media. But you might want to add some of your own. Perhaps you want to keep track of when the album was made, or the type of music it is. The Database Fields window lets you create these fields. You can get this window by choosing **Tools | Database Configuration** from the main menu.

There are four quadrants in this window. Each quadrant holds the information for a user defined field. The top two quadrants are used to define text fields, which can hold anything you care to type. The bottom two are for multiple choice fields.

A field needs to be enabled for it to appear on the album details of the main window. You may not want all four user defined fields, so you can turn any of them off by unchecking its Enabled box. If you want to use the field, check Enabled.   In the above example, one multiple choice field and one text field are being used.

Next, every field that is used must have a field name. This can be any text you choose. Note that in the above figure, the field names have an ampersand (&) in them. When the field is displayed in the album details, the character following the ampersand will be underlined and you can quickly go to that field by holding down the Alt key and typing that character.

The multiple choice fields need a list of choices that will appear in a drop-down list in the album details of the main window. The first item in the list of choices is special. Whenever you enter new album information, the multiple choice field for that album will automatically be set to the first item.   Obviously, you are able to change it as you enter the data. But you will find it most convenient if the most common item is listed first. In this example, the user buys mostly Rock and Roll music, so he listed it first.

Also, when you define a multiple choice field for the first time, all the albums already entered in your database will be set to the first item.

A Warning About Changing Database Fields

Reading Song Times from a CD

When you are <u>entering album information into your database</u>, you can read song times from a CD if you have a CD-ROM drive. (Unfortunately, album titles, song titles, and artist names are not stored on audio CDs.) If TapeMaker detects that you have a CD-ROM drive *and a CD is in the drive*, the Read CD button and the **Album | Read Times From CD** menu item will be enabled. Select either of these or type Ctrl+R to fill in the song times in the album details.

If you have a CD-ROM drive and TapeMaker is not enabling the button and menu item, you might not have the multimedia audio CD driver installed. Install it via Windows' Control Panel.

<u>Adding and Editing Albums</u>

The Cassette Insert Window

You display the cassette insert window by selecting **Tools | Cassette Insert** from the main window's menu or clicking [icon] on the main window's toolbar.

Click on parts of the window to see what they do:

[icon]

[Adding music to a cassette](#)
[Removing music from the cassette](#)
[Optimizing and randomizing the music](#)
[Manually rearranging the music](#)
[The edge flaps](#)
[Changing fonts](#)
[Adding a background picture](#)
[Printing out the cassette insert](#)
[Printing out the song list.](#)

The Insert Menu:
    [Optimize](#)
    [Randomize](#)
    [Clear](#)
    [Print Setup...](#)
    [Print Insert...](#)
    [Print Song List...](#)
    [Close](#)

The Layout Menu:
    [1. Flaps on Top, Songs Side-by-Side](#)
    [2. Flaps on Bottom, Songs Side-by-Side](#)
    [3. Flaps on Top, Sides Stacked Vertically](#)
    [4. Flaps on Bottom, Sides Stacked Vertically](#)
    [Select Background Picture...](#)
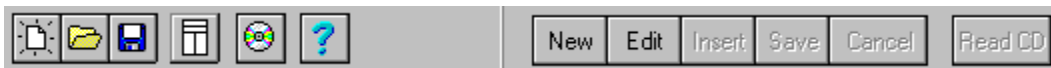
How do I play a CD?

The Main Window

The main TapeMaker window allows you to view your database of albums, add and edit albums, search the database, and to display all the other windows in TapeMaker (the cassette insert, the database configuration, the CD player, and the registration window).

When you start TapeMaker, it remembers the last size and position of its windows. It also remembers the last database you had loaded and automatically re-loads it.

The buttons on the toolbar allow you to quickly access common features. When you place the mouse cursor over a button, a yellow hint will appear next to the cursor and a longer description of the button will appear in the status bar at the bottom of the window.

Click on parts of the toolbar to see what they do:

The File Menu:

New
Open
Merge
Save
Save As...
Export...
Exit

The Album Menu:

New Album
Edit Album
Delete Album
Read Times from CD
Insert Song
Delete Song
Save Changes
Cancel Editing

The Tools Menu:

Cassette Insert
CD Player
Find...
Find Again

Database Configuration
Register TapeMaker...

Attempts to arrange the songs on the cassette such that the cassette is completely filled with music, with no unused tape on either side. It is most likely to succeed if you have selected several more minutes of music than will fit on the cassette.

Skip forward 10 seconds.

The CD Player

You display the CD player window by selecting **Tools | CD Player** from the main window's menu or clicking on the main window's toolbar.

Click on parts of the window to see what they do:

The CD Player controls are straightforward if you've ever used a real CD player. The **POWER** button closes the window (but, if you're playing a CD, it will continue to play). The buttons to the side of the digital display are enabled when you're playing a CD and jump forward or backward by 10 seconds on the CD.

The Registration Window

I hope you will decide to register TapeMaker. A lot of work over many years went into TapeMaker, and I've been very attentive to my customers in fixing bugs they find (and giving them free updates), adding features, and helping them with any difficulties they ran in to.

You can display the registration window by selecting **Tools | Register TapeMaker** from the main window's menu.

Just fill in your name and address, select the floppy disk size you want, tell me where you found TapeMaker (it helps me to know how far it's spread) and give me any suggestions you have. Then click the Print button and follow the mailing instructions on the print out.

If you're overseas, don't worry about the postage. I realize it's inconvenient for you to get U.S. currency or checks, so the least I can do is pay the extra postage myself.

When you register, you will get the latest copy of TapeMaker for Windows, a printed manual, and a registration ID that you can use to disable the nag screen that appears when you exit TapeMaker.

The Nag Screen

TapeMaker is shareware. If you use it for most than 30 days, you should register it. The "nag screen" appears when you exit TapeMaker as a friendly reminder. When you register, you will get the latest version of TapeMaker, a printed manual, and an ID number that you can enter into the nag screen and stop it from ever appearing again.

Registering TapeMaker

Optimizing the songs on your cassette

Lets you choose a background image to print on the cassette insert. The image will not appear in the cassette insert window, but will appear on your print-out. Also see <u>the Background Picture window</u>.

Deleting albums

To delete an album from your database, <u>select it on the left side on the main window</u> and select the **Album | Delete Album** menu item.

Searching Through the Database

You can search for text in your database by selecting **Tools | Find...** from the <u>main window</u>'s menu or typing Ctrl+F. A standard search dialog will appear. The search will be done through albums, artists, or songs depending on which is being displayed on the left. You can repeat a search by selecting **Tools | Find Again** or typing F3.

<u>Viewing the Database</u>

A Warning About Changing Database Fields

You can define a field and change its definition at some later time, but you need to understand what will happen if you do.

- u   If you disable a field, you will lose all of the information you have entered in that field for each album.

- u   If you change the name of a field, you will not change any of the information stored in that field.

- u   If you change the items in a Multiple Choice field, you may get strange results. When you enter album information, TapeMaker stores the multiple choice field value as a number, 1 through 10, indicating which item you chose. If you then change the text of the item, the number TapeMaker has saved will not change, but the text you have associated with the number will. For example, if "Rock" were changed to "Muzak" in figure 8, all your rock and roll albums would change to Muzak.   This is not only undesirable, it is nightmarish.   It is safest to add any new items to the end of the multiple choice list, where it will not affect any data that has already been entered.

Adding music to a cassette

To add songs to the cassette insert, drag them from the main window and drop them on the cassette insert. You can drag albums (in which case all songs on the album are added), artists (in which case all songs by the artist are added) or individual songs. You can drag any of these from the left side of the main window or you can drag songs or the album title from the album details side.

Most screens are too small to show the main window and the cassette insert window side by side, so it's difficult to drag from one window to another. So instead, you can drag music to the cassette insert button () on the main window's toolbar.

TapeMaker uses the playing time of songs to determine how many will fit on a tape. So you can not drag a song to the cassette insert if it has no time entered.

Saves your picture selections and closes the dialog.

Optimizing and randomizing the music

If you would like to mix up the songs you have selected, click ▨ or select the **Insert | Randomize** menu item. This is useful if, for example, you have selected all the songs from a few albums. If you kept the songs in the order you selected them, you would end up with 45 minutes of one artist, 30 minutes of the next artist, and 40 minutes of the third artist.   You may prefer to shuffle the songs so that you have more variety.

If you would like to optimize the order of the songs, click ▨ or select the **Insert | Optimize** menu item. TapeMaker will attempt to re-order the songs so that there is no blank tape left. There is usually more than one "best" order for the songs. If you do not like the order that TapeMaker came up with, you can randomize the songs, then re-optimize them.

It is not always possible to find a perfect order for the songs, i.e., an order where there is no blank tape left on either side.   However, you can improve the odds by selecting more music than can fit on the tape. For example, if you select 110 minutes of music for a 90 minute tape, TapeMaker will probably find some arrangement of songs that will fill exactly 45 minutes on each side.   Of course, 20 minutes of the music you selected will be left off the tape.

Manually Rearranging the Music

You can manually rearrange the songs on your cassette insert. Typically, you may want to rely on TapeMaker's randomize and optimize features. But sometimes they will arrange songs such that two songs that you don't want next to each other, are next to each other.

You can drag and drop songs between the three list boxes (the Side A and Side B list boxes and the Excess Songs list box). You can also drag songs from one place in a list box to another. However, keep in mind that TapeMaker is always making sure that the music fits on the tape. If you move a song from Side B to Side A, TapeMaker will probably have to move the last song from Side A over to Side B.
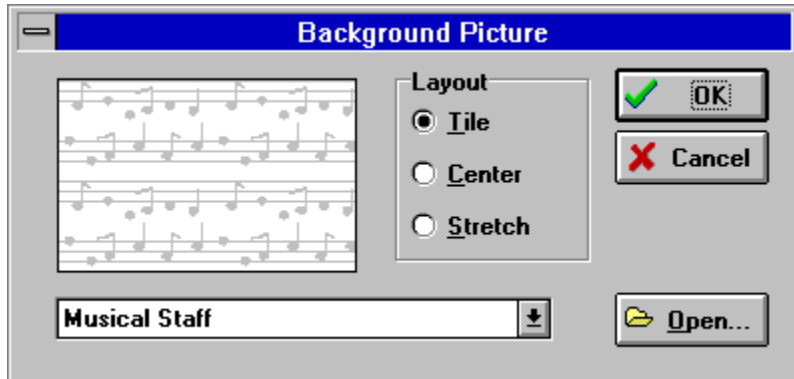
Position the mouse over the section whose font you want to change (either Side A, Side B, or one of the edge flaps) and click the right button. A menu will pop-up with a **Font...** item. Select the item to get to the standard Windows font dialog.

The Background Picture Window

You can decorate the background of your cassette insert with a background picture. You should be careful in choosing your pictures; a dark picture will obscure the text on your print-out.

You display the Background Picture dialog by selecting **Layout | Select Background Picture...** from the cassette insert window's menu, clicking ▧ on the toolbar or typing Ctrl+B.

Click on parts of the window to see what they do:

A drop-down list box at the bottom of the dialog lets you select a built-in background picture of a musical staff, or no background at all. The **Open...** button displays a standard file dialog box that lets you choose your own picture (Windows bitmaps only) to use as a background.

You can choose to have the picture tiled, centered, or stretched to fill the cassette insert background by selecting the respective radio button. A cassette insert's flap is 4" wide and 2.6" high. If you stretch a picture whose ratio of width to height is not 4:2.6, the picture will be distorted. If you center the picture, the picture will be magnified by integer amounts (e.g. it will be doubled or tripled in size, but not magnified by 2.5) to fill as much of the flap as possible, but without distorting it.

The background will not appear in the cassette insert window, but it will appear on your print-out. TapeMaker will remember your background selections the next time it is run.

Printing the Cassette Insert

Select Insert | Print Insert... from the Cassette Insert window's menu or click on the toolbar.

See Also
    Printing the song list

Shuffles the songs on the cassette.

Print the cassette Insert. See also <u>Printing the song list</u>.

Changes the layout of the cassette insert. You can have Side A and Side B side-by-side or stacked one on top of the other. You can have the edge flaps at the top or the bottom.

Specifies the length of the cassette tape. TapeMaker needs to know this so that it can figure out how much music will fit on the tape. Note that most cassettes hold more than they claim. For example, a 90 minute cassette usually has 92 minutes or more of tape. You can enter any number of minutes and seconds here.

Specifies the amount of times TapeMaker should allow between songs. You can choose a number between -9 and 9 by clicking the up or down buttons.

The negative numbers are most useful. When TapeMaker reads song times from a CD, it reads the amount of space reserved on the CD for the song. However, the song may be preceded and followed by a few seconds of silence. Since you will not typically record that silence on your tape, you may want to tell TapeMaker to subtract a few seconds from each song's time. You do this by entering a negative value in the counter.

On the other hand, if you are just copying a CD onto tape, some CDs have a few extra seconds between tracks (they show up as negative times on your CD player). In this case, you might want to specify 2 or 3 seconds between songs.

You may type any text you want, such as a title for the cassette, into the edge flaps. You can change the font and whether the text is left justified, right justified, or centered, by positioning the mouse over the flap and clicking the right mouse button. A pop-up menu will appear with the font and justification items.

Side A and Side B are displayed with all the songs that fit on them. You can change the font by positioning the mouse over the flap and clicking the right mouse button. A pop-up menu will appear with the font item.

You can rearrange songs by dragging and dropping them. You can remove a song from the cassette insert by selecting it and bringing up the pop-up window as above.

The Excess Songs area display all the songs that couldn't fit on the cassette. You can move songs between the Excess Songs and Side A or Side B by dragging and dropping them. You can remove a song from the cassette insert by selecting it, positioning the mouse over it and clicking the right mouse button. A pop-up menu will appear with the option to remove the highlighted song..

Displays the amount of music on sides A and B.

Printing the Song List

You might want a list of the songs on the cassette insert, along with their albums and playing times, to guide you in making the tape. You can print this list by selecting the **Insert | Print Song List...** menu item.

Removes all the songs from the cassette insert.

Displays the standard Windows Printer Setup dialog.

Closes the window.

To remove a song from the cassette insert, highlight it, then click the right mouse button over it. A pop-up menu will appear offering you the **Remove Highlighted Song** item. Select it and the song will be removed.

Displays the standard Windows File Open dialog so that you can choose a bitmap (*.BMP) file to use as a background picture.

Lets you choose to have no background picture (by choosing **[None]**) or the built-in background picture, a gray picture of musical notes.

Shows the picture you have selected as it will appear on the cassette insert, tiled, stretched, or centered.

Tile: Repeats the picture as many times as necessary to fill the cassette insert's background.

Center: Magnifies the picture by an integral amount (e.g. 2x or 3x, but not 2.5x) as much as it can while still having it fit in the cassette insert, then centers it.

Stretch: Stretches the picture in both the horizontal and vertical directions (which may end up distorting it) so that it fills the cassette insert.

Closes the dialog without saving any changes you made.

Skip backward 10 seconds.

Close the CD Player window. If a CD is playing, it continues to play.

Play the CD.

Pause the CD.

Stop playing the CD.

Skip forward to the next track on the CD.

Skip back to the previous track on the CD.

Open the CD drawer.

Shows a variety of information about the CD:

When the CD is not playing, it displays the number of tracks and total playing time.

When the CD is playing or paused, it shows the current track and time.

When the CD drawer is open, it displays Open or Not Ready.

Distributing TapeMaker

TapeMaker for Windows is distributed as shareware.   This means you may make as many copies of the program and the on-line instructions as you like.   You may give them to friends, put them on computer bulletin board systems, or distribute them in any other electronic medium. You may not charge for copies of these files, other than for the connect and download time in the case of a computer bulletin board, or a nominal copying fee not to exceed $6 in the case that you are distributing them on a floppy disk. You may include TapeMaker on shareware CD-ROM collections regardless of the collection's cost.

The ZIP file you received should be a copy of the ZIP file I created. When you un-zip it, you should see verification information from me (i.e. my name should appear after the files are un-zipped).   If you don't, the files might have been tampered with or infected with a virus.

If you upload TapeMaker to a BBS (and I hope you will!) please upload the original ZIP file.   Do not upload a ZIP file that you created, since my authentication information will not be in it.

Opening a Database

Select **File | Open** from the <u>main window</u>'s menu or click the button on the main window's toolbar. If you already have a database open, and you have made changes to the database, TapeMaker will ask if you are sure you want to lose your changes. TapeMaker uses files that end with a .MUS extension.

Merging Databases

Loads a TapeMaker database and combines it with the one currently in memory.

Saves the changes you have made to your database.

Saves your database under a new file name.

Display the help contents.

Exits TapeMaker.

Exporting to dBase

You can save your data to a file in dBase III format. From there, it can be read into just about any database program or spreadsheet program. This allows you to work with your data in ways that TapeMaker might not support.

Simply choose **File | Export...** from the main window's menu and chose a file name for the dBase format file.

The dBase file will consist of one table with each record having information for one song. The record will include the song title, its artist, playing time, track number, and all the information for the album it's on (a unique album number, the album title, media, and all your user defined fields).

Technical Support

You can get free technical support for TapeMaker by sending e-mail to 71621.3073@compuserve.com or sending printed mail to:

Robert E. Alexander
6 Robinson Drive
Bedford, MA 01730
United States of America

Adventurous customers may use directory assistance to find my phone number. I am not including it here because it is not my preferred means of support. However, if you need to call, you will find me cheerful and helpful. Please keep in mind that I am in the eastern time zone of the U.S., I sleep at night, and I am neither cheerful nor helpful when woken up. If you are not a registered customer and you need to have me call you back (e.g. you leave a message on my answering machine) expect a collect call.

Getting the Latest Version

You can get the latest version of TapeMaker from the World Wide Web at
http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/Robert_E_Alexander