Midi Typer
(Version 1.0)

Midi Typer

1. What is it?

The short answer

Midi Typer is a drag-and-drop utility. It convinces your system that all those MIDI files you downloaded (or bought) *really* are MIDI files. This is often a problem with MIDI files created for other computer systems, even though the data format for MIDI files is identical among all computer systems.

Midi Typer is smart enough to automatically distinguish between real MIDI files and other kinds of documents (such as this documentation), so you can just drop the icon of a folder or disk on Midi Typer, and it will do the rest. You can also use Midi Typer to change the application that will open your Midi Files.

Midi Typer requires System 7.0 or greater.

The long answer

Macintosh users who download MIDI files (or buy them from commercial collections) are often faced with the problem that their MIDI software refuses to recognize the downloaded file—they won't even show up in the standard Open File dialog. The problem is that the Finder thinks your MIDI files are *really* text-only documents. (This description is somewhat simplified; the "How does it really

work?" section goes into more detail.)

You can, of course, solve this problem by using any of a number of utilities (ResEdit and DeskTop come to mind immediately), but you have to manually change information for each file individually. With Midi Typer, you just drag a bunch of icons onto Midi Typer, and it does the rest. You can also specify an application to open your Midi Files with, so that you can double-click on the Midi File and have it opened in your favorite sequencer, notation program, or Max.

There are other utilities for automatically changing file types. Midi Typer is unique in that it actually looks at the data in your file to check if it is, indeed, a MIDI File. There's no point in trying to open a "Read Me" document with your sequencer.

2. How much does it cost?

Nothing. You *must*, however, read Section 6 ("Legal Stuff") before you may use Midi Typer.

3. How does it work?

The first time you use Midi Typer, you should open the application directly (either select Midi Typer and choose Open from the File menu or double-click on Midi Typer's icon). You can choose which MIDI program you want to open your MIDI files with from the Open With menu (Figure 1). If your MIDI program is not listed in the menu, choose Select Other Application, and you can specify any application you want to in a standard Open File dialog (Figure 2).

Once you've specified which MIDI Application to use, go back to the Finder, select your Midi Files, drag them over to Midi Typer, and when Midi Typer's icon is highlighted, just drop 'em. When you're finished with Midi Typer, you can quit the application.

Once you've specified your sequencer, you can just drag-and-drop files, folders, and even entire disks onto Midi Typer. It will make all the necessary changes and quit automatically. If you ever want to change the application used to open your Midi files, just open Midi Typer and make the appropriate choice in the Open With menu.

The current version of Midi Typer provides almost no feedback while it's running. This is regrettable; however, processing is generally over so soon (I get about 10 files/second on a Mac IIfx) that I haven't felt the effort involved in creating a progress dialog was justified.

If you would like to see improvements made, write to me. My address is at the end of this document. Don't expect too much—this is a freeware project.

Open With

Cubase Audio
Encore
Finale
Lime
Max
Mosaic
Music Prose
Performer
ProTools
Studio Vision
Vision

✓ *None (Generic Midi File)*
Select Other Application...

Figure 1: The Open With Menu

📁 Max ▼

☐ C Developer Materials
☐ Examples
☐ lib Object Examples
◆ Max 2.2
☐ Max Tutorial
☐ max-help
☐ max-startup
☐ others
☐ Unsupported Objects

⊂ Daffy

[Eject]
[Desktop]
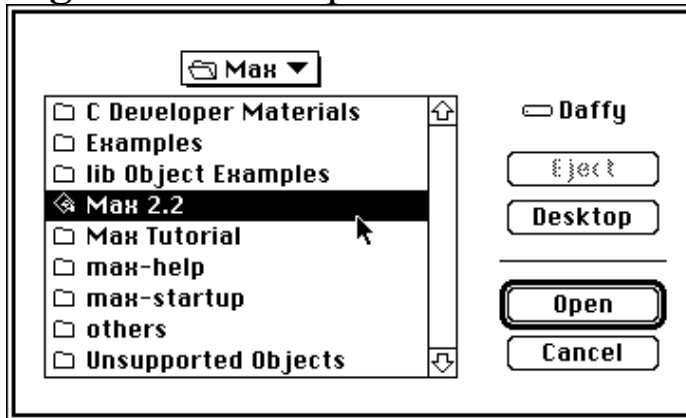
[Open]
[Cancel]

Figure 2: Selecting an application with the Open File dialog

4. How does it really work?

The following information is of a technical nature. You do not need to understand it to use Midi Typer.

The problem with most downloaded MIDI files (and with MIDI files taken from other systems) is that the files have the OSType 'TEXT' instead of 'Midi' in the file type field of the Finder Information record. Midi Typer looks at every file dropped on it and, if the first 20 bytes comprise a valid MIDI file Header Chunk, changes the file type and creator fields. I considered making Midi Typer look at the entire file, but all MIDI software I know of makes sanity checks while

interpreting MIDI Files, so the chosen solution seems satisfactory. It is also fast enough that a progress dialog is not absolutely necessary.

Midi Typer is based on Paul Hoffman's Dragonsmith application framework (v. 1.1.1) and was developed using Think C (v. 6.01). If you want to write your own drag-and-drop applications, you can find Dragonsmith at a number of archive sites—try the Info-Mac archives at Sumex-aim (ftp:\\sumex-aim.stanford.edu) or the archives at University of Michigan. Dragonsmith relies several on several System 7.0 features (in particular, Apple Events), so don't expect any joy under older system versions.

If you are familiar with Dragonsmith, you will know that a number of its features can be modified with a resource editor. The Open With menu is also resource based (I don't mean just a MENU resource, it also uses the custom resource type CREA, for which a template is provided.) You may tinker with the values in these resources, but you do so at your own risk. (And, hey, if you start adding creators that I don't know about, drop me a line, so I can add them to the next version of Midi Typer.)

5. Limitations and room for improvement

- No progress indicator. Not a problem for ten to twenty files, but if you drop your hard disk on Midi Typer, the program will need some time. At least it works cooperatively in the background and you can interrupt it with Command-Period.

- Similarly, no notification of errors.

- Midi Typer trusts you when you select an application using the Select Other Application command. If you tell it that you want to open your MIDI files with Excel, it will obediently do so. I have no idea what Excel will do with a MIDI file.

- Midi Typer has no Open command in the File menu. The only way to initiate file processing is with drag-and-drop.

- Midi Typer will not go further than twenty levels deep when looking at folders within folders within folders. This prevents problems that can

arise if you put an alias to a folder inside the folder the alias points to (if you know what infinite recursion is, you'll recognize the problem).

- Some future version of Midi Typer may offer you an option to strip off those stupid .MID suffixes from the file name.

- WARNING: If you used a pre-release version of Midi Typer, you must delete the old Preferences file (inside the Prefences folder in your System Folder). It is incompatible with this version of Midi Typer.

6. Legal Stuff

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That's it. Note that, at the time of this writing, I have every reason to believe that the software will work as advertised and that it will not cause any damage. I just cannot test it on every possible Macintosh configuration, so, *caveat emptor*.

7. Praise, Complaints, Offers of jobs…

Send them all to:

> Peter Castine
> Wildganssteig 28
> 13503 Berlin
> Germany
>
> e-mail: pcastine@prz.tu-berlin.de

If your favorite MIDI program is not currently on the menu, you can send me a postcard with the program's name and creator code. I'll get it into the next version of Midi Typer. If you send the information by e-mail, I'll e-mail the new version back to you.