What Is Hercules Entertainment Center?

Welcome!

Hercules Entertainment Center is a suite of tools for controlling the multimedia components of your PC. You can set the volume and balance of the various inputs and outputs of your sound card, and play audio CDs, wave files, MIDI files, and video files.   You can also arrange audio and video files into albums, perform sophisticated track programming, and configure each component to behave the way you'd like.

All of the components in Hercules Entertainment Center look and work the same way.   To get up and running right away, take a look at our Quick Start Guide.   You can also learn more about each component by clicking on the items below.

CD Player

Wave Player

MIDI Player

Video Player

Video Browser

Mixer

Configuration

{button Launch Hercules Entertainment Center,EF(`ETCENTER.EXE',`',1,`')}

Quick Start Guide

Hercules Entertainment Center takes a modular approach: each component is a separate item which operates in the same way.   The behavior of each can also be configured separately.

The Hercules Entertainment Center is designed to look like an audio/video entertainment center that you might have at home.

Perhaps the fastest way to learn how to use Hercules Entertainment Center is to start playing with it!   To active a component (or "turn it on"), just click on it.   You'll be shown a basic set of controls for opening files (or, in the case of the CD Player, ejecting the CD-DROM drive's drawer) and playing CD audio tracks or audio/video files.   Click the ▣ button and the component will be "maximized," giving you complete access to all the options.

Don't forget to take a look at the "bookshelf" near the top right corner, especially the "Configure" book. It will help you configure each component to do what you want.

The help section for each component includes a screen shot of each component.   You can click on any display area or control in each screen shot and see an explanation of its function.

Installing And Removing Hercules Entertainment Center

Your Hercules product came with one or more Windows 95 diskettes.   The first diskette contains the SETUP.EXE program which installs Touch 95 and the Hercules Entertainment Center.   Depending on which of our products you're using, SETUP.EXE may also install the display drivers for your Hercules card.

SETUP.EXE uses the familiar "wizard" interface to let you customize your installation.   If you like, you can install just one, all, or any combination of our Windows 95 tools and drivers.

All of the Hercules tools may be removed via Control Panel's *Add/Remove Programs* icon.   Just select "Hercules Utilities" from the list of installed software and Windows 95 will take care of the rest.

CD Player

This component plays audio CDs.   To play VideoCD titles, please use the <u>Video Player</u>.

Click on any of the controls or display areas on the images below for more information.

This is what the CD Player looks like when it's turned off:

To activate the CD Player, just click on it.   This is what it looks like when it's turned on:

When you click anywhere on the track index or time index displays, or around the border (in other words, anywhere but on one of the buttons) the CD Player shows you a minimal set of controls.   Click on any of the buttons below to learn more about it:

To see more features, click on the maximize button ().   This is what the CD Player looks like when it's maximized:

Note: this version of the CD Player allows you to assign names to CDs.   A future version of the CD Player will also allow you to name individual tracks, as well as assign both an artist and title name to a CD.

{button Launch The CD Player,EF(`AVDECK.EXE',`/CD',1)}

Wave Player

This component plays audio .WAV files.

Click on any of the controls or display areas on the images below for more information.

This is what the Wave Player looks like when it's turned off:

To activate the Wave Player, just click on it.   This is what it looks like when it's turned on:

When you click anywhere on the track index or time index displays, or around the border (in other words, anywhere but on one of the buttons) the CD Player shows you a minimal set of controls.   Click on any of the buttons below to learn more about it:

To see more features, click on the maximize button (▣).   This is what the Wave Player looks like when it's maximized:

{button Launch The Wave Player,EF(`AVDECK.EXE',`/WAVE',1)}

Video Browser

The video browser lets you see your entire collection of AVI files at a glance.

After you select the directory to view, each AVI file in the directory will be represented by a postage stamp image.   You may play a clip by double-clicking on the image or selecting the Play Video button.

The Preview control lets you select which frame is used to represent each clip.   You may select the first, second, middle or last frame, the second key frame, or just the filename, with no visual representation. These options can be useful when your collection includes clips that fade in or otherwise contain frames that don't work very well as a representation of the entire clip.

The video browser uses the Video Player to play video clips.

{button Launch Video Browser,EF(`PWRVIEW.EXE',`',1,`')}

MIDI Player

This component plays audio MIDI (.MID) files.

Click on any of the controls or display areas on the images below for more information.

This is what the MIDI Player looks like when it's turned off:

To activate the MIDI Player, just click on it.   This is what it looks like when it's turned on:

When you click anywhere on the track index or time index displays, or around the border (in other words, anywhere but on one of the buttons) the MIDI Player shows you a minimal set of controls.   Click on any of the buttons below to learn more about it:

To see more features, click on the maximize button (▣).   This is what the MIDI Player looks like when it's maximized:

{button Launch The MIDI Player,EF(`AVDECK.EXE',`/MIDI',1)}

Video Player

This component plays video files.   It can play AVI files as well as any other video file type supported by your system.

When you play a video, it appears in the "monitor" above the Video Player.   If you double-click on the monitor, the video is placed in a window which you can scale.   Double-clicking on the window places the video back within the monitor.

When the video is in a scaleable window, you can right-click on the window and choose a ratio of 50%, 100%, 200%, 300% or 400% of the video's original size, or full screen.

Click on any of the controls or display areas on the images below for more information.

This is what the Video Player looks like when it's turned off:

To activate the Video Player, just click on it.   This is what it looks like when it's turned on:

To see more features, click on the maximize button (   ).   This is what the Video Player looks like when it's maximized:

{button Launch The Video Player,EF(`AVDECK.EXE',`/VIDEO',1)}

Mixer

This component lets you adjust the playback volume and input levels for your audio devices. Depending on the capabilities of your sound card, you can change the master volume, the volume for wave file playback, FM synthesis (MIDI), audio CD playback, line-in volume, microphone volume, and PC speaker (amplified output) volume.

To adjust the volume of both the left and the right channel simultaneously, slide the vertical controls (or "faders") using the left mouse button. To adjust the left or right channel fader individually, move it with the right mouse button.

Click on any of the controls or display areas on the images below for more information.

Here's what the Mixer looks like when it's turned off:

To activate the Mixer, just click on it. This is what it looks like when it's turned on:
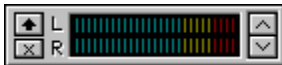
To see more features, click on the maximize button (). This is what the Mixer looks like when it's maximized:

{button Launch The Mixer,EF(`AVMIXER.EXE',`/VIDEO',1)}

Playback Level Control

This controls the master output of your sound card.   The volume for most devices is set using a combination of the level control for that device and the master level control.   Moving both faders to the bottom, or disabling the device by clicking on the green LED above the faders, will completely silence your sound card.

To move the left or right fader individually, slide the control with the right mouse button.

Wave Volume Control

This controls the volume of .WAV file playback, as well as the audio portion of video files and any other output from your sound card that's from a prerecorded source, and not synthesized "on the fly." Moving both faders to the bottom, or disabling the device by clicking on the green LED above the faders, will make wave files inaudible.

To move the left or right fader individually, slide the control with the right mouse button.

FM Synthesis Volume Control

This controls the volume of FM synthesis playback, including MIDI files and any other sounds which are synthesized ''on the fly,'' rather than pre-recorded.   Moving both faders to the bottom, or disabling the device by clicking on the green LED above the faders, will make wave files inaudible.

To move the left or right fader individually, slide the control with the right mouse button.

CD Volume Control

This controls the volume of an audio CD.   It works only when your CD-ROM is connected to your sound card via a CD audio connector.   If your CD-ROM is attached to your sound card via the line-in jack on the bracket, you'll want to use the Mixer's <u>Line In Volume Control</u>.   If your speakers are attached to your CD player via a 1/8" jack on the front panel, you won't be able to use the Mixer to adjust its volume.

To move the left or right fader individually, slide the control with the right mouse button. To control muting, click on the green LED above the faders.

Line In Volume Control

This controls the volume of an audio source connected to your sound card via the line in jack.

When the Mixer is in playback mode, this control adjusts the volume at which an external audio source is relayed to your speakers.   When the Mixer is in record mode and you're using another program to capture the line in signal (for example, to a .WAV file), this control adjusts the volume at which the source is recorded.

To move the left or right fader individually, slide the control with the right mouse button.   To control muting, click on the green LED above the faders.

Microphone Volume Control

This controls the volume of a microphone connected to the microphone jack on your sound card.   In playback mode it controls the level at which microphone input is relayed to the speakers, and in record mode it controls the level at which microphone input is captured (using a separate program).

To move the left or right fader individually, slide the control with the right mouse button.   To control muting, click on the green LED above the faders.

PC Speaker Volume Control

This controls the volume of speakers attached to the amplified "speaker out" connector on your sound card.   Depending on your sound card's configuration, this control may not be operational.

To move the left or right fader individually, slide the control with the right mouse button.   To control muting, click on the green LED above the faders.

Mixer Mode Selector

Use this to select the mode in which the mixer operates.   The availability of mixer modes depends on your sound card's capabilities.   When a particular mode is not available, it will be grayed out.   The mixer's mode determines which controls are available, and the mixer display will adjust dynamically to show all available controls.

Master Volume

This controls the master volume of your playback components.

Master Level Meter

This set of LEDs displays the overall output level of your sound card.   Important note: operation of this display depends on the capabilities of your sound card and driver.   In many instances, the audio driver does not support this feature.

Turned Off

This is what a component looks like when it's turned off.   To turn it on, just click on it.

Index Slider

Use this control to quickly scan through a video file or move to any point within the file.

CD Player Eject/Close Button

This button ejects or closes your CD-ROM's tray.

Stop Button

Stops playback and returns to the beginning of the track or file.

Forward Scan

Advances playback of the track or file.   Clicking once advances the track or file in one-second increments, and holding down the button scans rapidly.   This button may be used while the selection is playing, or while it's stopped or paused.

The scan buttons may be used when the track or file is playing, or when it's stopped or paused.   They can be particularly useful for setting the starting and ending points while in A-B Mode.

Reverse Scan

Reverts playback of the track or file.   Clicking once rewinds the track or file in one-second increments, and holding down the button scans rapidly.

The scan buttons may be used when the track or file is playing, or when it's stopped or paused.   They can be particularly useful for setting the starting and ending points while in A-B Mode.

Previous

Return to the previous track or file.

Next

Advance to the next track or file.

Close

Turns the component off.

Minimize

Returns the component to its minimal view within the Hercules Entertainment Center.

Menu

Displays a small floating menu which allows you to view program information, launch the help file, change the position of the component, or close it (turn it off).

Play Indicator

This portion of the display lights up when a track or file is playing.

Pause Indicator

This portion of the display lights up when playback has been paused.

Repeat Mode Indicator

This portion of the display lights up when <u>Repeat Mode</u> is enabled.   When this portion is dark, Repeat Mode is off.   When both the "R" and the surrounding box are lit, the entire collection of tracks or files is repeated.   When the "R" is lit but the surrounding box is dimmed, the current track or file is repeated.

Repeat Mode

Repeat mode is toggled with the <u>repeat button</u>.   Repeat Mode has three settings:

No Repeat: the <u>repeat mode indicator</u> is dimmed.

Track/File Repeat: the current track or file is repeated.   The "R" portion of the repeat mode indicator is lit.

Repeat All: the program selection will be played continuously.   For example, when playing an audio CD or an album of files, the entire CD or album is played, then begins again.   If shuffle play mode is enabled, all tracks or files in the CD or in the album are played once in random order, then the collection of tracks or files is shuffled again.   Both the "R" and the box around it are lit.
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Repeat Button

Toggles <u>repeat mode</u>.

Track Index

Displays the position of the track or file that's currently selected.   The first track on an audio CD or in an album of files is 1.

Time Index

Shows the elapsed playback time, in minutes and seconds, of the current track.

Play Mode Indicator

Displays the play mode in which the component is operating: <u>normal</u>, <u>intro</u>, <u>shuffle</u>, or <u>program</u>.   You can select the mode by clicking directly on this area of the display, or by using the <u>mode button</u>.

Note that not all modes are available with all components.

Program Play Mode

In this mode, a collection of tracks or files is played in a predetermined order.   The program is defined by clicking the edit button.

This mode is not available on the Video Player.

Edit Button

When this button is pressed, the component displays a dialog box which you may use to select the tracks or files to be played and their order.   You must also enable program play mode with the mode button; otherwise, the program will be ignored.

Mode Button

Press this button to toggle between play modes: <u>normal</u>, <u>intro</u>, <u>shuffle</u>, or <u>program</u>.

Nothing

This area doesn't do anything, but thank you for clicking here anyway.

A-B Indicator

This area of the display indicates A-B status.   You may use A-B to perform simple "looping" of sections of a track or file.   To repeat a section continuously, play the track or file and then press the <u>A-B button</u> at the beginning of the portion to be looped.   The A-B indicator will begin flashing.   Press the A-B button again at the end of the portion to be looped.   The A-B indicator will be solid yellow and the looped portion will play repeatedly.   You may cancel A-B mode by pressing the A-B button again, or by pressing the mode button.

A-B Button

This button controls the A-B function.   You may use A-B to perform simple "looping" of sections of a track or file.   To repeat a section continuously, play the track or file and then press the A-B button at the beginning of the portion to be looped.   The <u>A-B indicator</u> will begin flashing.   Press the A-B button again at the end of the portion to be looped.   The A-B indicator will be solid yellow and the looped portion will play repeatedly.   You may cancel A-B mode by pressing the A-B button again, or by pressing the mode button.

Track Map

Shows the index of the currently selected track or file.   You may also use this map to jump directly to a particular track or file by clicking on its index number.

Volume Control

Use these buttons to adjust the component's volume.   You can use the <u>Mixer</u> for more sophisticated control.

Video Volume Control

Use these buttons to adjust the Video Player's volume.   You can use the <u>Mixer</u> for more sophisticated control.

If the volume control isn't working, try using the <u>Configuration Menu</u> to select the audio source for video playback.   Normally, the audio portion of a video file is passed along to your sound card via the audio driver, but you may be using an MPEG decompression card or other hardware which feeds the audio portion to your sound card's line in jack.

CD Volume Control

Use these buttons to adjust the CD Player's volume.   You can use the <u>Mixer</u> for more sophisticated control.

If the volume control isn't working, try using the <u>Configuration Menu</u> to select the audio source for CD audio playback.   Normally, a CD-ROM drive is connected directly to the internal "CD audio input" connector on your sound card, but an alternate method is to attach the CD player or CD-ROM drive's audio output to the line in jack on your sound card.

Program Name / Progress Indicator

When the player is stopped, this portion of the display lists the file name or the title of the audio CD. When a track or file is playing, a progress indicator in the form of a horizontal bar is displayed. Using your mouse, you can drag this bar to quickly scan through the track or file.

Shuffle Play Mode

In this mode, a collection of tracks or files is played in random order.

Intro Play Mode

In this mode, only the first few seconds of each track or file is played. You can set the length via the <u>configuration menu</u>.

Configuration Menu

Use this dialog box to configure the operation of each of the components, as well as Hercules Entertainment Center itself.

The configuration menu is launched by clicking on the "book" labelled "Configure" at the upper right corner of Hercules Entertainment Center.

Here's what you can do:

Entertainment Center Tab: control how videos are displayed in the "monitor" and tell Hercules Entertainment Center which components you'd like automatically launched upon startup. For each component that's launched automatically, you can specify minimized mode (with a basic set of controls, but occupying less desktop space) or maximized mode (offering full functionality, but taking up more desktop space).

With the MIDI, Wave and Video Players, you have four standard options: whether you'd like the last file or album to automatically be loaded on startup, whether you'd like a file or album to automatically start playing when it's loaded, and whether you'd like the player to "float" on your desktop so it's always visible, or behave normally. You can also set the length of the intro time (between five and 15 seconds) when the player is in intro mode.

Some of the components have additional options, as well:

Video Tab: You can choose the audio source for video playback (either the sound card driver or the line-in jack of your sound card).

CD Tab: You can select the source of the CD Player's audio input (either the "CD audio in" internal connector on your sound card or the line-in jack on the sound card's bracket).

Mixer Tab: You can select whether you'd like the microphone to be activated on startup.

Configuration Menu: Entertainment Center

Configure Options

Entertainment Center | Video | CD | MIDI | Wave | Mixer

○ Stretch video to fit in video screen
◉ Center/Crop video in video screen

Turn on player on startup
☐ CD player   ☐ Show main player
☐ MIDI player   ☐ Show main player
☐ Wave player   ☐ Show main player
☐ Video player   ☐ Show main player
☐ Audio mixer   ☐ Show main player

OK   Cancel   Apply
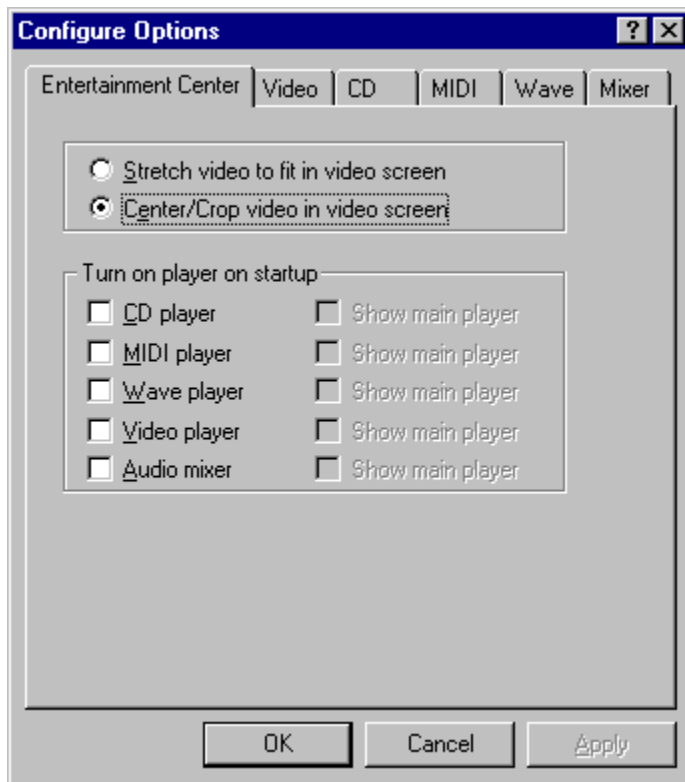
Configuration Menu: Video Player

Configure Options

Entertainment Center | Video | CD | MIDI | Wave | Mixer

☐ Load last file/album played on startup
☐ Start playing after file/album is loaded
☐ Main player always on top

Volume buttons control sound from
  ⦿ Computer's default source
  ○ Sound card's external line-in jack

[10] ⬍ Intro play length (5 - 15 seconds)

OK | Cancel | Apply
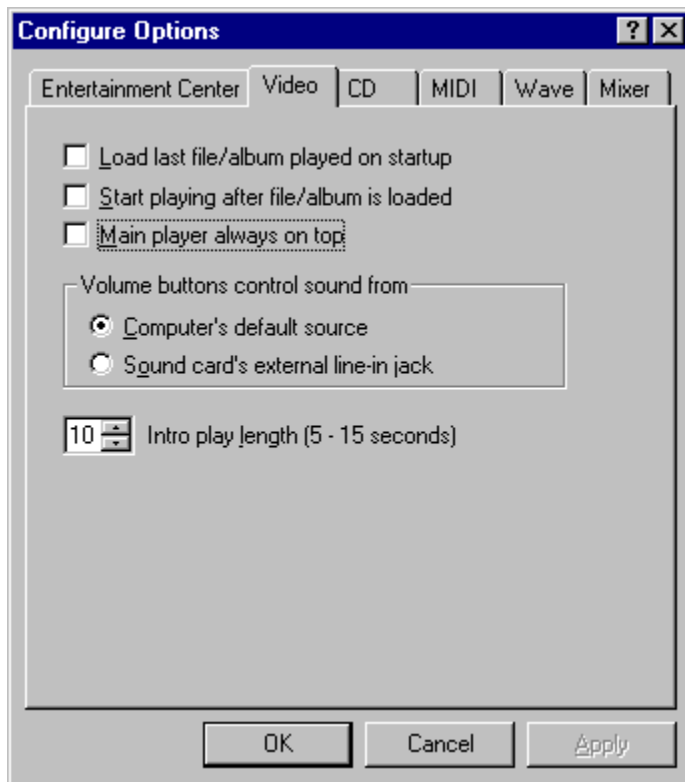
Configuration Menu: CD Player

Configure Options   �?☒

Entertainment Center | Video | CD | MIDI | Wave | Mixer

☑ Starting playing after CD is inserted

☐ Stop playing on exit

☐ Main player always on top

Volume buttons control sound from

◉ Sound card's CD connector

◯ Sound card's external line-in jack

10 ⬍   Intro play length (5 - 15 seconds)

OK   Cancel   Apply
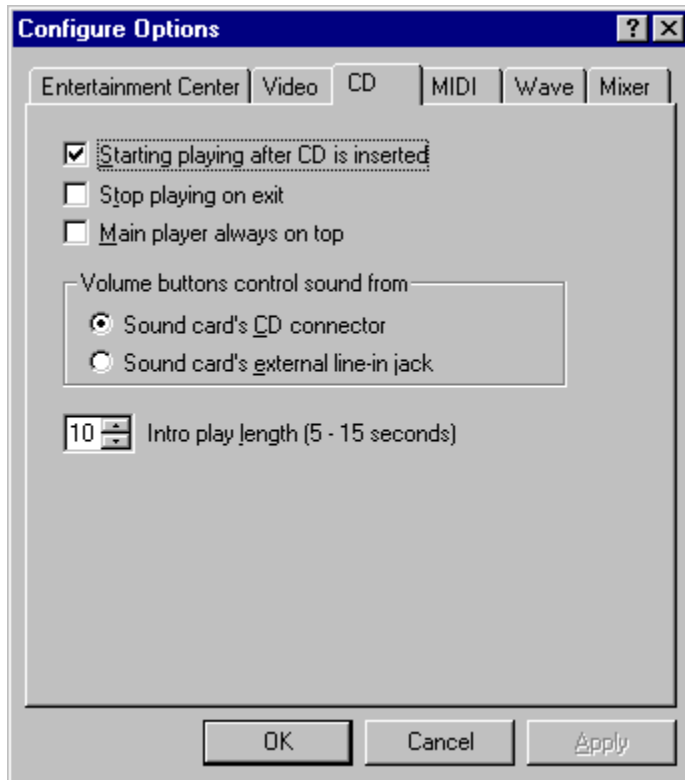
Configuration Menu: MIDI Player

Configure Options   ? ✕

| Entertainment Center | Video | CD | **MIDI** | Wave | Mixer |

☑ Load last file/album played on startup
☑ Start playing after file/album is loaded
☐ Main player always on top

[10] ⇅ Intro play length (5 - 15 seconds)

[OK]   [Cancel]   [Apply]
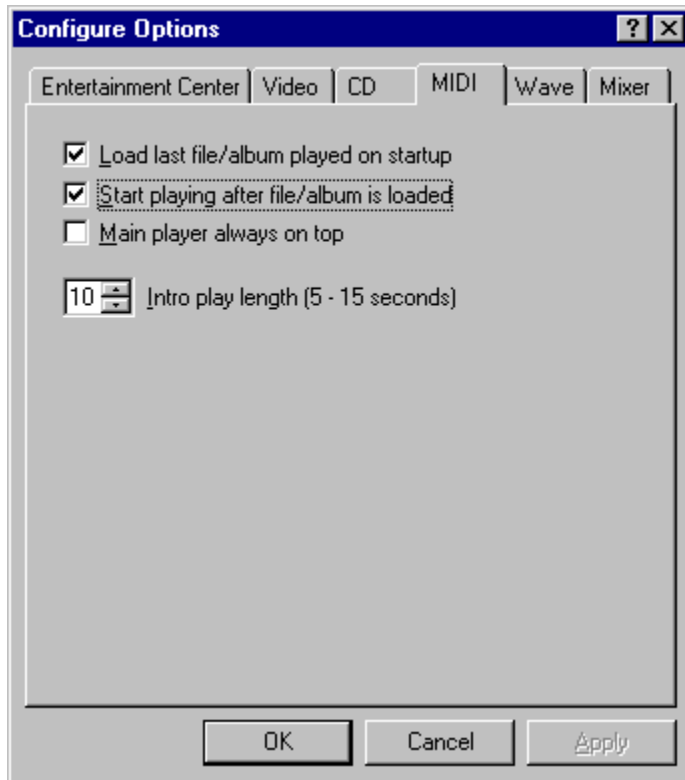
Configuration Menu: Wave Player

Configure Options [?] [X]

| Entertainment Center | Video | CD | MIDI | Wave | Mixer |

☑ Load last file/album played on startup
☑ Start playing after file/album is loaded
☐ Main player always on top

[10] ⬍ Intro play length (5 - 15 seconds)

[OK]   [Cancel]   [Apply]

Configuration Menu: Mixer

Configure Options   [?] [X]

| Entertainment Center | Video | CD | MIDI | Wave | Mixer |

☐ Main player always on top
☑ Turn off microphone output on startup

[OK]   [Cancel]   [Apply]
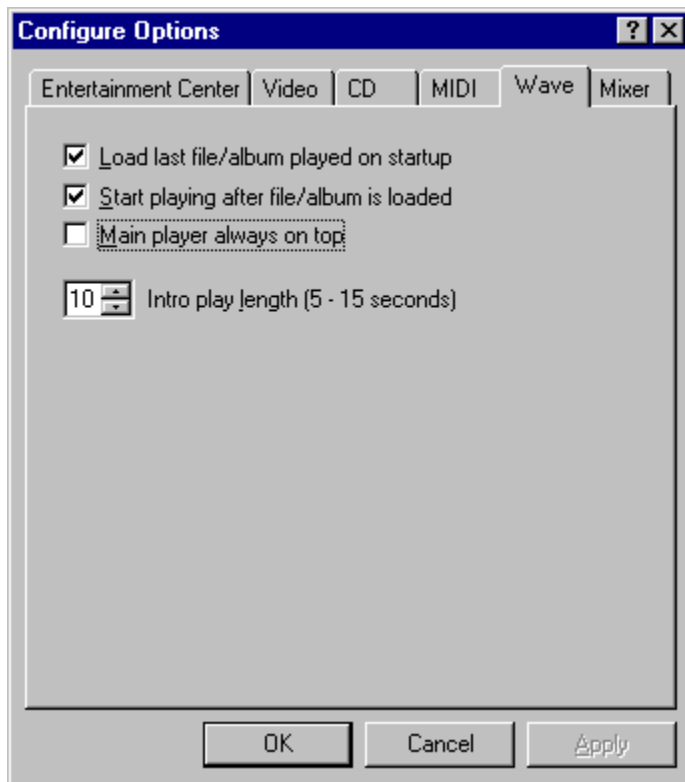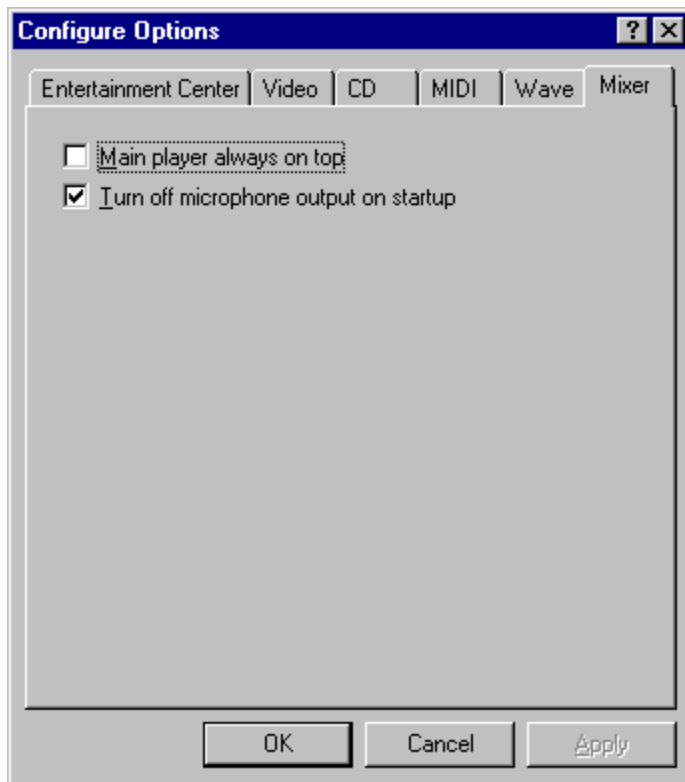
Normal Play Mode

The default play mode.   If the source is an audio CD, the entire CD is played once.   If the source is a single audio or video file, it's played once.   If the source is an album of audio or video files, the entire album is played once.

Play/Pause Button

Press this button to begin playback.   Press it again to pause playback without returning to the beginning of the track or file.   Pressing it again will resume playback.

Maximize

Click this button to show all of the component's options and features.   This gives you the most controls, but takes up more desktop space.

Return To Index View

Clicking this button on the CD Player restores it to the default minimized view showing the track index and time index.

Open Files

Pressing this button gives you a dialog box that you can use to open one or more audio or video files, and load and create ''albums'' of files.

Reach Us

Here's how to contact Hercules:

Via telephone:

Technical support: 800-323-0601 (toll-free in North America)
or 510-623-6050
Toll-free fax-back service: (800) 711-HERC
Sales hotline: 800-532-0600
Main number: 510-623-6030

In Germany: +49-89-8989-0228

Via fax:

In the United States: (510) 623-1112

In Germany: +49-89-8989-0585

Via the Internet:

World Wide Web: www.hercules.com
FTP: ftp.hercules.com
e-mail: support@hercules.com or
                     sales@hercules.com

We also offer the Hercules Information Server.   Subscribers *automatically* receive notification of new drivers and software for their Hercules product.

CompuServe:

GO HERCULES

BBS:

In the United States: (510) 623-7449

In Germany: +49-89-8989-0576

Our mailing address:

US Office:

Hercules Computer Technology, Inc.
3839 Spinnaker Court
Fremont, CA 94538

German Office:

Hercules Computer Technology, Europe
Bussardstr. 5
D-82116 Graefelfing
Munich
Germany

The Hercules Information Server

If you have an Internet e-mail address, we invite you to subscribe to the Hercules Information Server. Once you've joined, you'll automatically receive e-mail whenever new software for your Hercules product is available, or if there's other important news.   This is a free service, except for any charges from your service provider or online service for the time you spend reading your mail.

There are four mailing lists:

The **Dynamite** list is for owners of products in the Hercules Dynamite family.

The **Graphite** list is for owners of products in the original Hercules Graphite family (products based on IIT AGX chipsets).

The **Stingray** list is for owners of products in the Hercules Stingray family.

The **Terminator** list is for owners of products in the Hercules Terminator family.

How To Subscribe

To subscribe, send Internet e-mail to the following address:

update@hercules.com

with the following in the body of the message:

subscribe [list name] your name

For example, if your name is Mary Smith and you own a Terminator 64/Video, you might send us a note like this:

To: update@hercules.com
Subject: [you can leave this blank]

subscribe terminator Mary Smith

How To Unsubscribe

Unsubscribing is even easier.   Send a note to the same update@hercules.com address with the word "unsubscribe" followed by the name of the list in the body of your message.   For example:

To: update@hercules.com
Subject: [again, you can leave this blank]

unsubscribe terminator

How Do I Change The Balance?

You can change the left and right channel volume for any audio or video source by launching the <u>Mixer</u> and moving the appropriate left or right fader with the right mouse button.

How Do I Automatically Play A File When I Launch A Component?

You can use the <u>Configuration Menu</u> to tell each player whether you'd like it to open the last file or album, and whether you'd like the player to automatically start playing a file or album when it's loaded.   With the CD Player, you can configure whether you'd like it to go ahead and play an audio CD when inserted.