

EarMagic – Absolute Pitch Ear Training Partner

Basic Edition

Instruction Manual

December 2007

Pianistica

Introduction

Thank you very much for your interest in EarMagic Basic Edition.

First of all, we would like to explain the concept behind the product. When you face the need to acquire Absolute Pitch, the foremost problem is to find your partner. Without him/her, you just can not start. The computer is a perfect partner for this since you can use it anytime you want. So, what the program is supposed to do is what your partner is supposed to do. It contains all the necessary features you need to begin your practice. This is, however, not a computer training course where the computer takes an instructor role. Basic Edition is aimed to take the partner role. Please note this difference. Since you can customize the program, you can apply your favorite method, if you have one.

There are two more editions planned at this moment, namely Basic Plus Edition, which includes Guitar Interface and Standard Edition, which includes three features which assist your learning. There is also Pocket PC Edition planned at this moment, which should help your practice wherever you go. Please check our web site for any updates on this.

We hope that this program will become your good partner. Ear Training is a time consuming process, but the payoff is far greater than the price you pay.

Sincerely,

Pianistica Product Development Team

Disclaimer

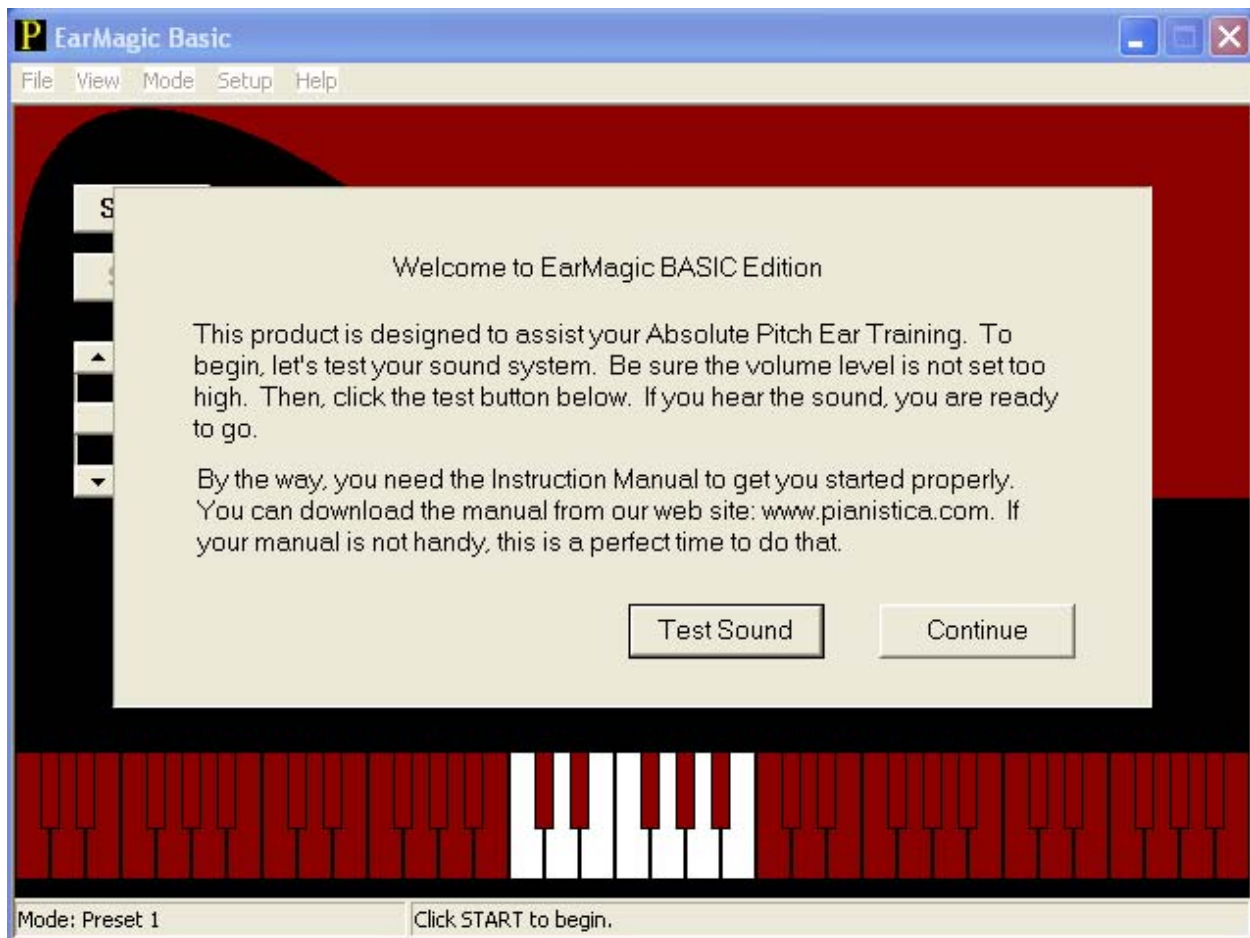
We have to start with the industry standard disclaimer. We spend a great deal of time making sure that the program does not cause any damage to your computer. However, you are solely responsible to determine the suitability or fitness of the program for your needs. We are not responsible for either direct or indirect damages by using this program. Generally speaking, it is very rare that this type of programs causes any damage to your computer. The program is not designed to collect your data nor change any of the computer settings. Nevertheless, it is you to decide whether the program is suitable for your needs.

Getting Started

We know that you might want to start using the program right away. We, however, feel strongly that just 10 minutes of your time upfront will save you a great deal of your time. You can actually try the program while reading this. If you are reading this far, we assume that you have already downloaded the program to your machine. If not, you are a careful reader. We like that. Please visit www.pianistica.com to download the program.

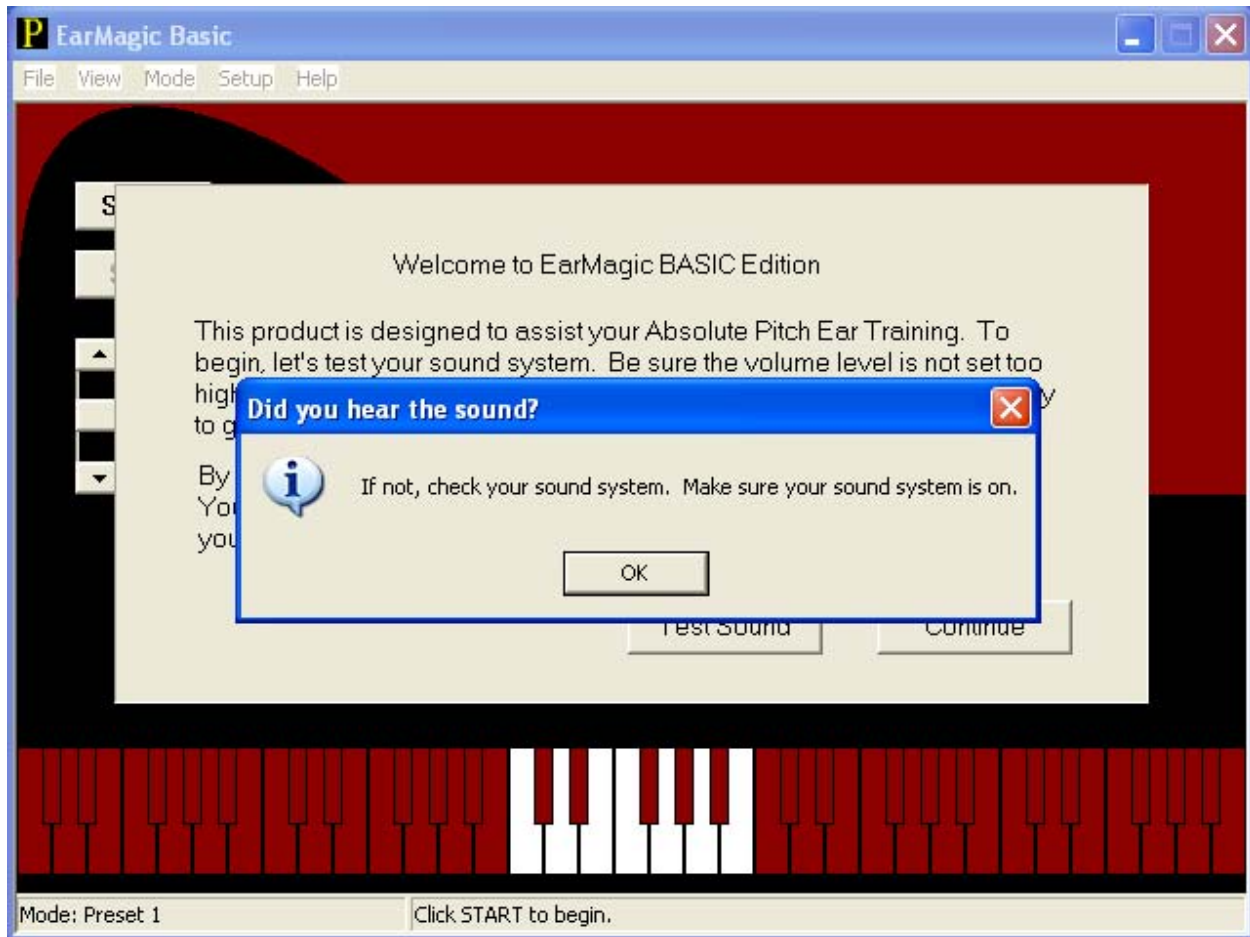
This program is designed to run on any Microsoft Windows computers. Well, Windows 95 and later editions to be precise. The other requirement is a sound card. Both of them are pretty standard these days. This program does not require Installation. You can just copy the program to your desired location and simple click on the icon to start.

Here is an opening screen for the first time:



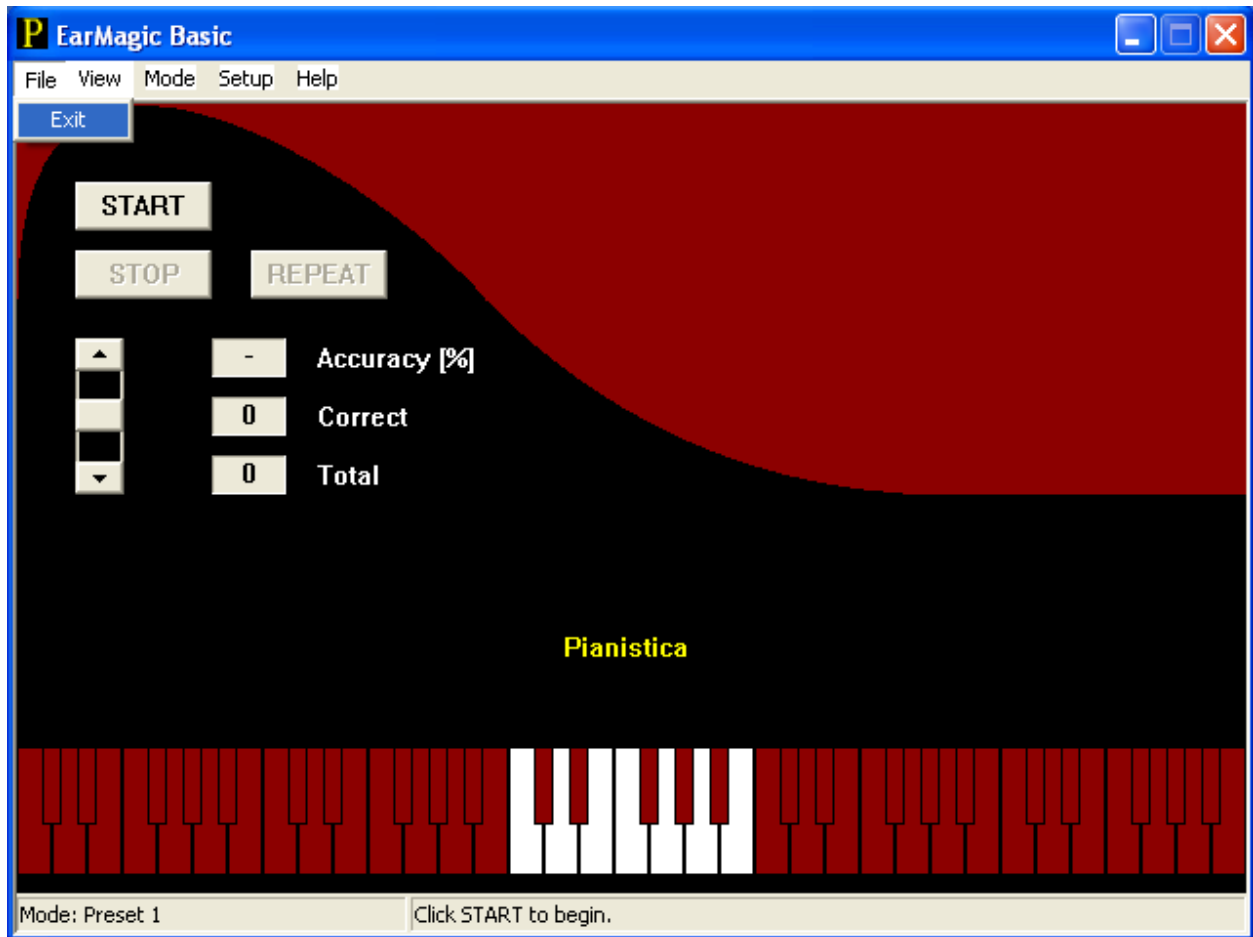
Warning: You should set your volume to a lower side to be safe. Don't blame us when you blow up your speakers.

Having said that, if you click on "Test Sound", you should hear something. You will see the following screen after the sound:



You click on "OK" button. You can repeat the process until you hear the sound. You can adjust the volume inside the program, too. If you are this far, your computer is compatible with this program. If you don't have a sound card installed in your computer, you will see an error message stating that. The program will terminate if that's the case. You need to find another computer. It shouldn't be too difficult. You can run this program pretty much any Windows computer. Outdated machines are just fine for this program as long as Windows 95 or any later edition is installed.

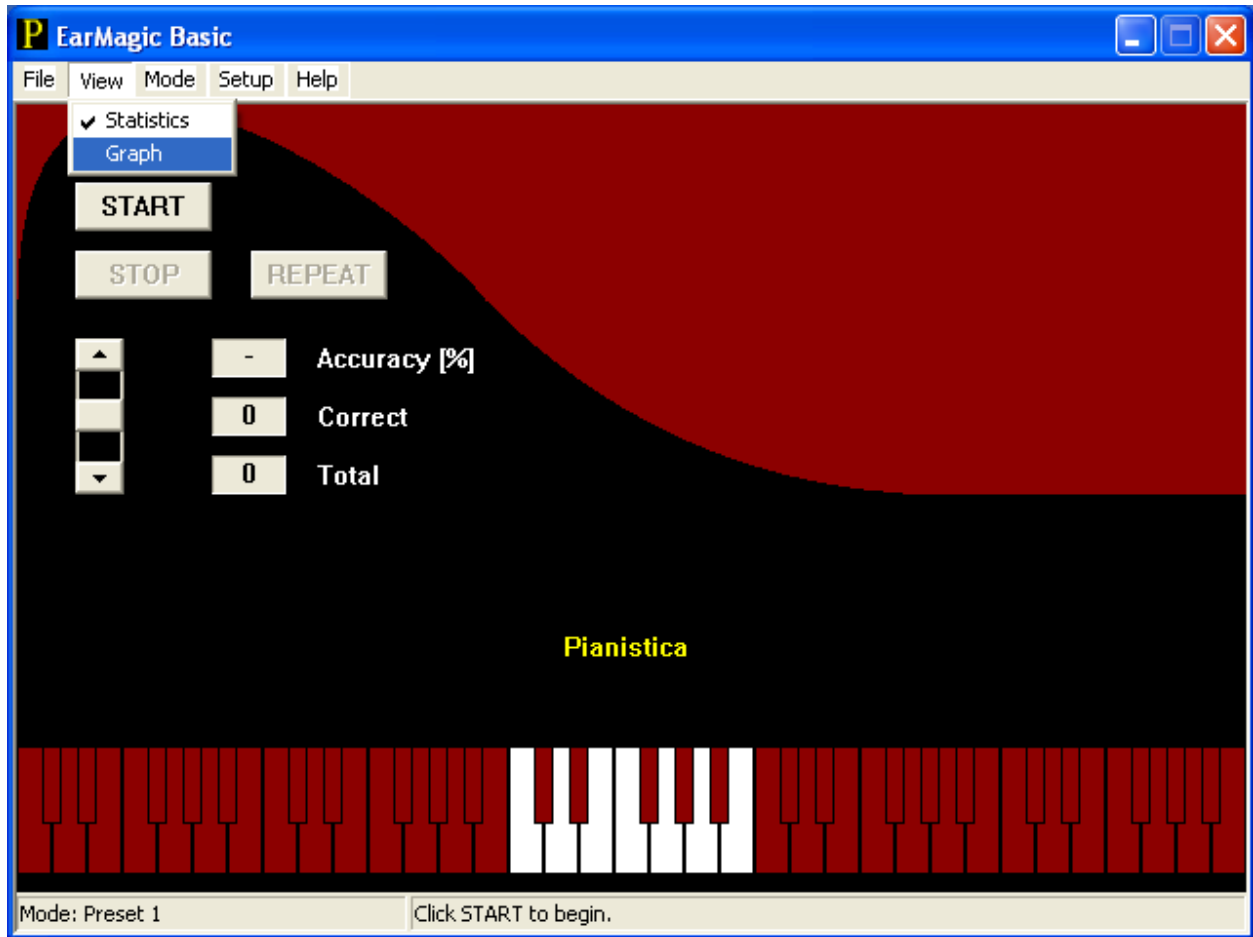
In the following session, we will look at menus and menu structure. The top menu contains File, View, Mode, Setup and Help as you see in the following pages. We will examine the content of the top menu starting File:



You will see “Exit” menu like any other Windows programs. You can exit the program through this menu or X box in the top right hand corner. There is no difference. Unlike other Windows program, however, there are no “Open” or “Save” menus. Because the program does it for you automatically. Once you exit the program, it saves everything. The next time you start the program, it will bring right back to where you left off. We hope you begin to understand why we said it was important to read the manual first. We know you eventually figure this out, but why not from the beginning. Note: If you use an evaluation copy, the automatic saving feature is disabled. Other than that, everything works exactly the same.

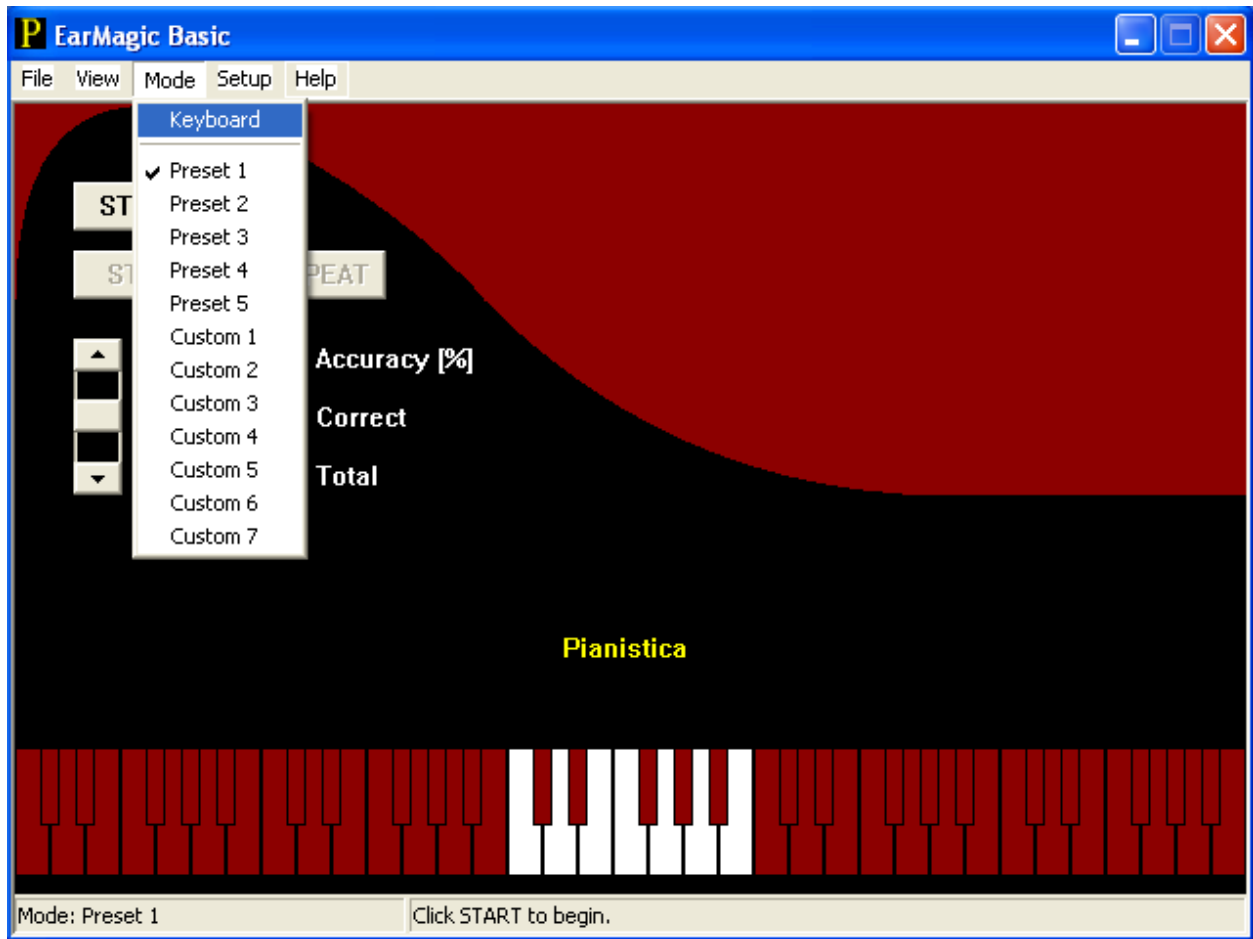
The next item: View

As you see in the following page, there are two menus underneath. Go ahead and try both of them. Statistics turn on and off “Accuracy [%]” and “Correct” counters. Graph turns on and off “Graph” View. You can turn them on and off even during your session. A session begins with “START” button and ends with “STOP” button you see on the screen. “STOP” is grayed right now since it is not available until you start a session. Don’t start it now. We will come back to that later. If you made a flying, just click on “STOP”.



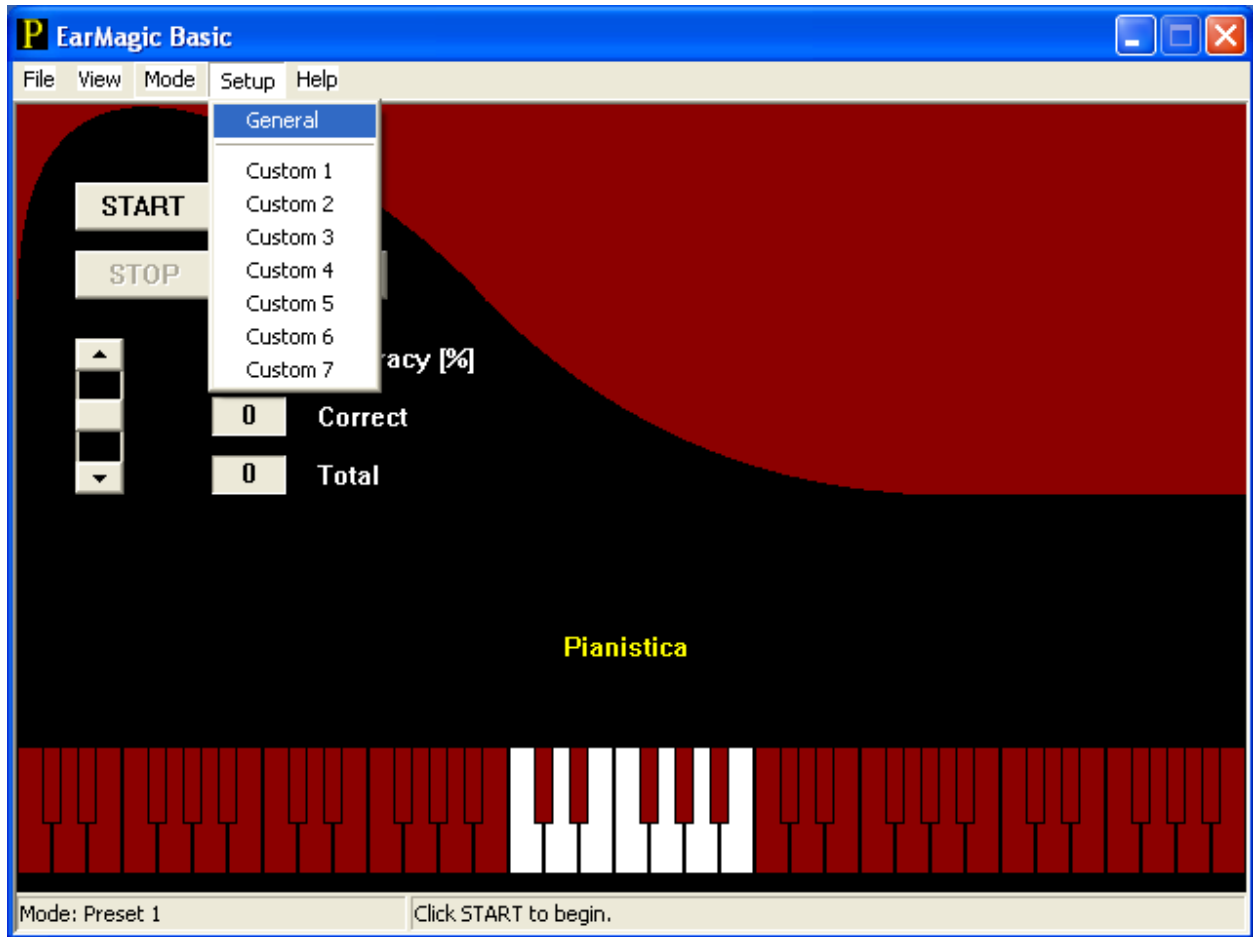
Now, let's move to menu: Mode

As you see in the next page, there are two categories here. One is "Keyboard", which lets you play a tune with your mouse. Sometimes you want to verify your sound in your head. We thought it might be handy to give you a keyboard for that purpose. It is a bit awkward to play the keyboard with mouse, but it is definitely useful when no other instruments are around you. The second category is "Preset" and "Custom". They are the same except Presets are set by us while you can customize Customs. We will cover it in the next session.



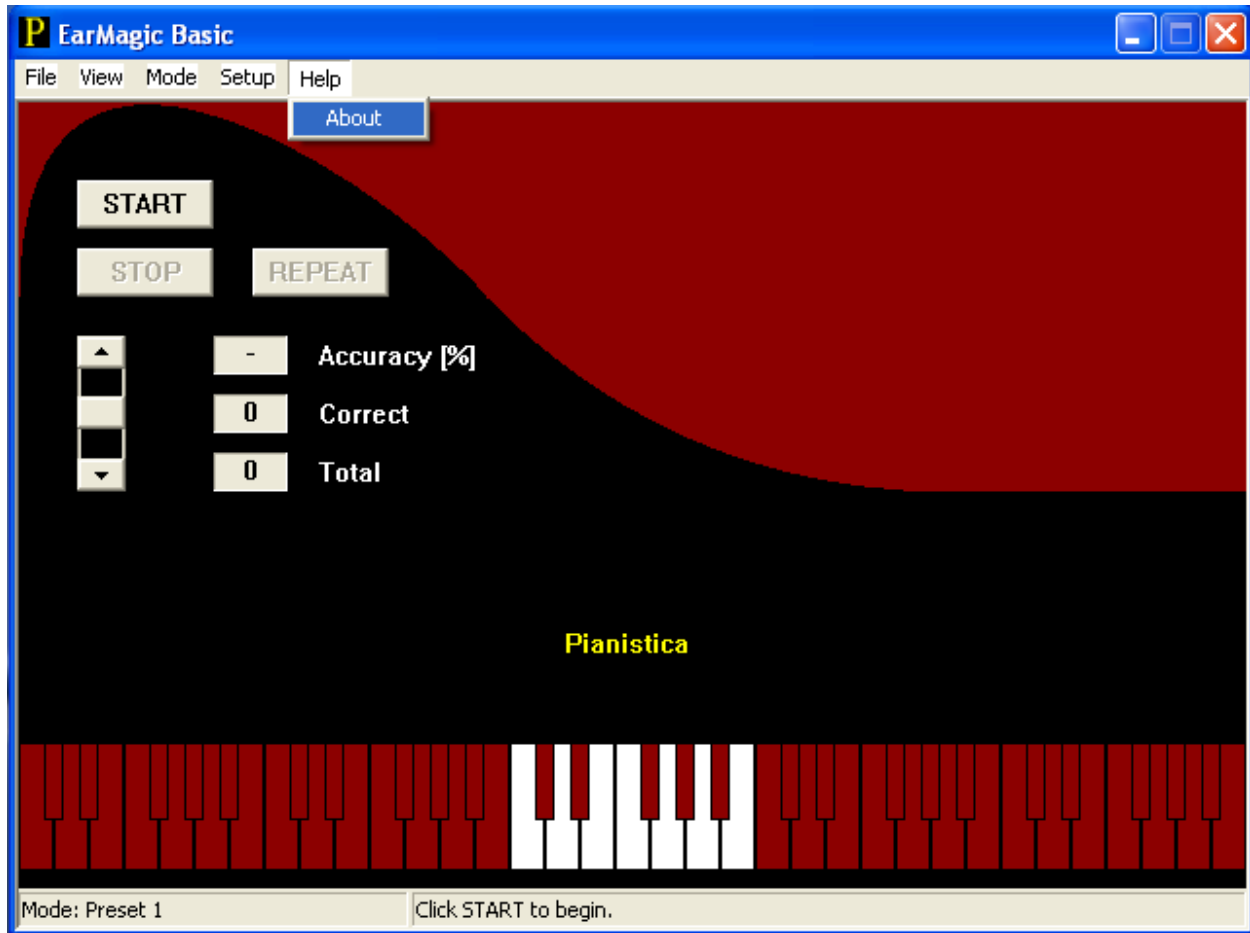
The next item: Setup

There are two categories under Setup as you see in the next page. One is General, which governs both Presets and Customs. And the other is Customs. Here you can customize which notes to be included in a session. You have Custom 1 through Custom 7: seven different configurations. We will cover the content of "General" and "Customs" later in details.



The next menu: Help

As you see in the next page, there is only one menu under “Help”, which is “About”. Here, you can find out the version number of the program. There is no other help facility in the program. We thought about it, but simple text explanations are not as effective as texts and graphics. We decided to use a traditional separate Instruction Manual, which is this.

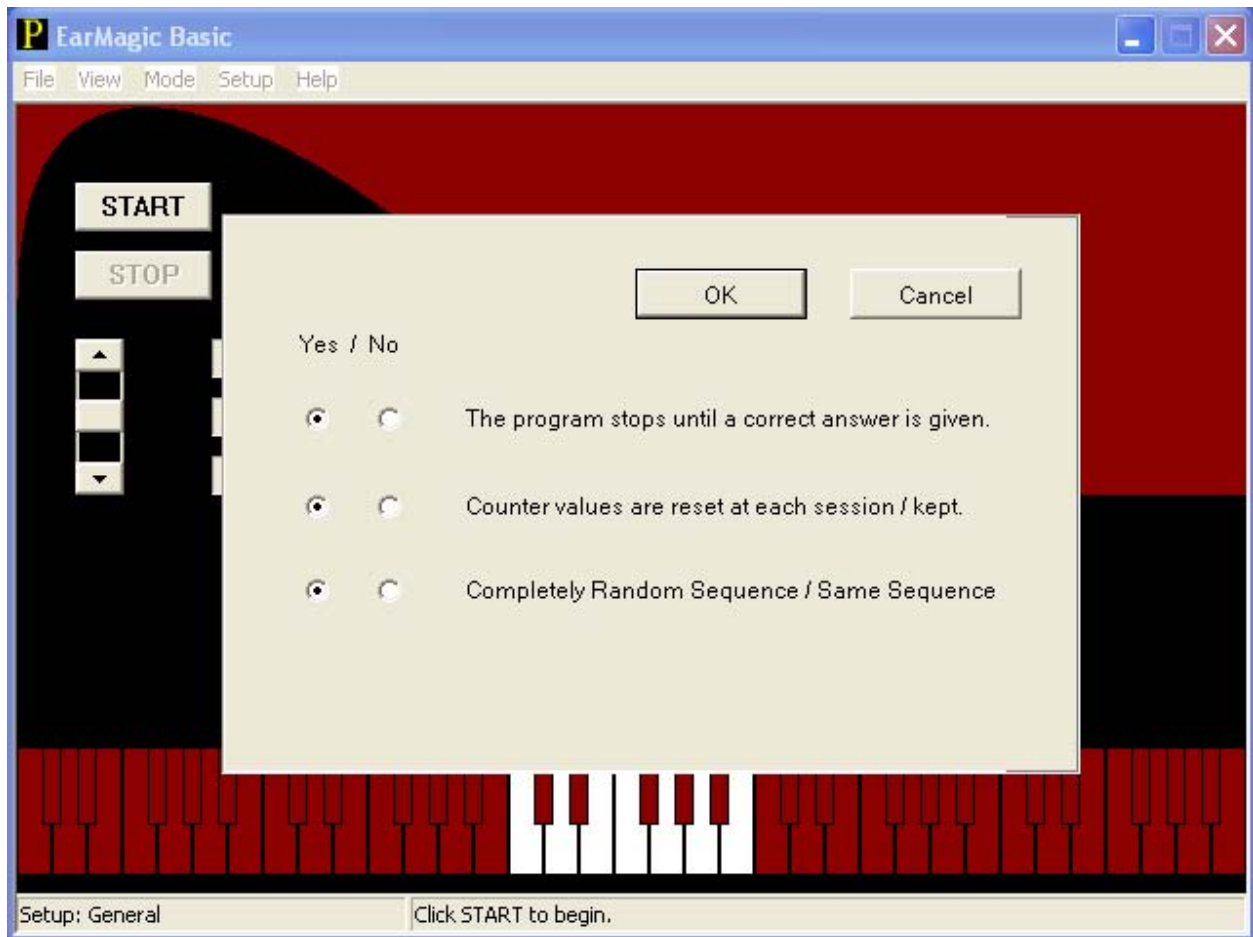


Now, somewhat you are situated. Why don't we jump into a session? "START" button will begin a session, but before that, please take a look at the left hand side, bottom corner. You will see what is selected under "Mode" in the Status Bar. You can change the mode through "Mode" in the top menu. We have already touched upon it. In the middle of the Status Bar, you will see a brief message indicating what you can do inside the main screen area.

Now, Preset 1 is just fine. Click "START" button to begin. You heard a note. Now, you need to select the note you heard on the keyboard using your mouse. Use the left mouse button. Red keys are irrelevant to this session. Did you hit it correct? Turns on both "Statistics" and "Graph" under "View" in the top menu if you have not already done so. If you made a correct choice, you should see a yellow bar in the graph and 100% in Accuracy. The Correct Counter should be 1. Total should be also 1. If not, you see no bar but a tiny yellow line above one of white keys, which indicates 0 % line. Each bar indicates 0 through 100 % divided by 10 red lines across, an increment of 10%. Now, it is not always a good idea to see both displays turned on during your sessions. You can, however, examine how you did at the end of the sessions. "REPEAT" button repeats the last note. "STOP" button will end the session. This is how each session works. You have 5 Presets and 7 Customs to work with.

General Setup

There are three parameters you can choose for your sessions as you see in the image below:



The program stops until a correct answer is given: Yes/No

Yes: The program does not proceed to the next note until you hit the correct note. This is the preferred setting for general practice.

No: The program will move to the next note regardless your answer. You can not calibrate yourself at each note. This setting can be useful to test whether you are relying on your absolute pitch.

Counter values are reset at each session/kept.

Yes: The program resets the counters at the beginning of each session.

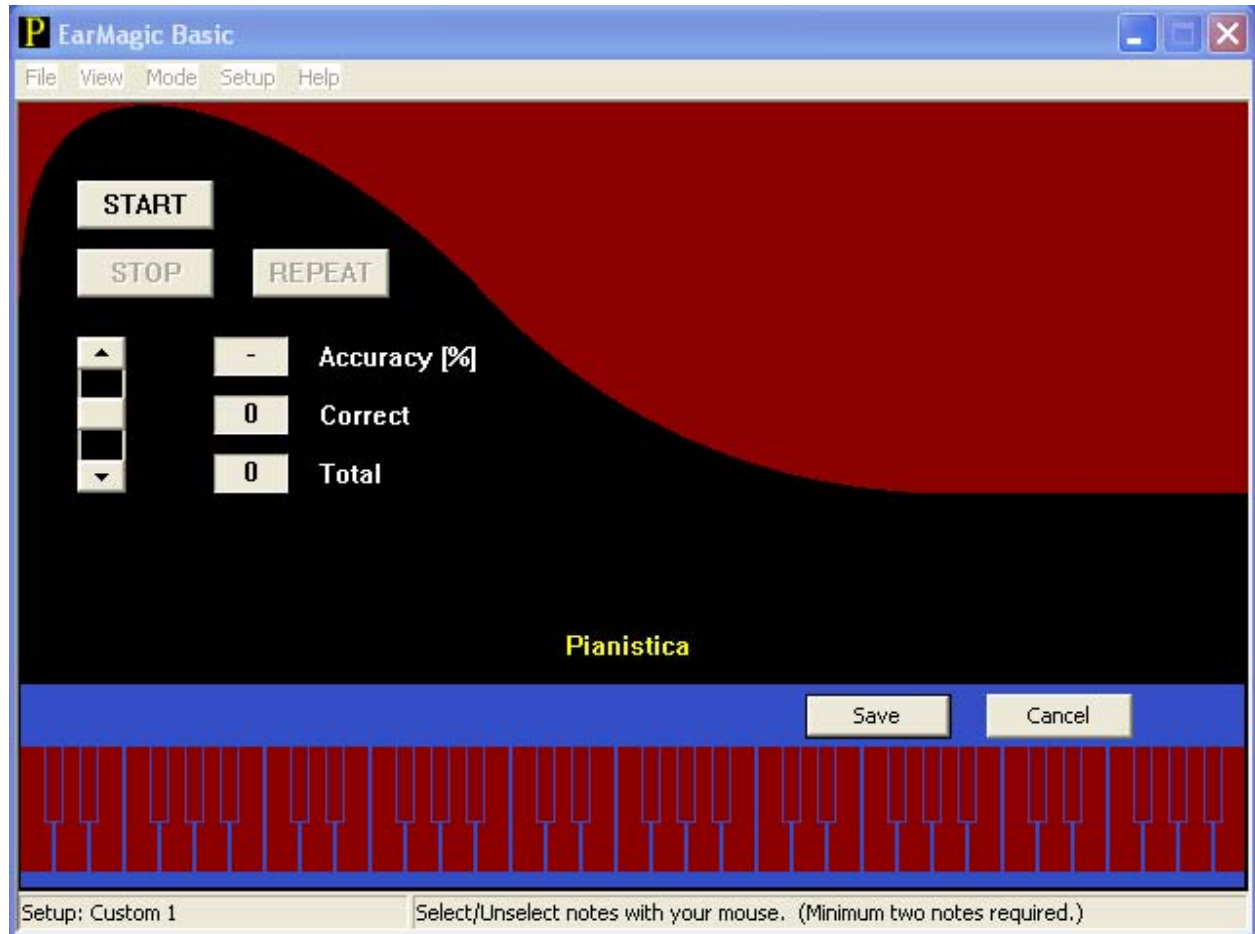
No: The counter values are retained. So, what you see will be the aggregate of all the sessions.

Completely Random Sequence / Same Sequence

Yes: Completely Random Sequence

No: The same Sequence – You might find it helpful to see what sequence of notes fools you.

Custom Setup



Here you can select which notes to be included in each Custom Setup. You can use your mouse to select or unselect any desired notes. There is one condition. You need to select at least two notes. Otherwise, you won't be able to start a session. There will be a warning when you click on "START" button. Otherwise, you can include any notes you desire.

Preset 1

All white keys: It is probably one of the easiest to start with. If this is still confusing, create your custom sessions. Custom 1 through 7 can be used to meet your needs.

Preset 2

All black keys: This key combination has an interesting effect. Many people who have absolute pitch yet not firmly, tend to be confused with half step difference. Try this one if you are one of them.

Preset 3

B Major: This is a combination of white and black keys and half step lower than C Major, which tend to confuse a lot of people.

Preset 4

The standard middle twelve notes: If you somewhat possess absolute pitch, this one is probably a good starting point. If this is too easy, try Preset 5.

Preset 5

This is hard. If this is not an issue, use one of the Customs to include all the notes. That makes everyone envy you.

Well, this is the end of the Getting Started section. You know everything you need to know to get started. We hope you can get a good use out of the program. Good Luck!

Maintenance

As long as you perform regular backups of your computer, there is nothing you need to add to your regular chores. There are, however, a couple of things you might want to know. The program creates two files, namely EarMagicBasic.ini and EarMagicBasic.log. EarMagicBasic.ini stores all of your settings and scores. EarMagicBasic.log is a log file. When something goes wrong, the program tries to save what has happened before exiting.

When you want to re-locate the program, you need to move EarMagicBasic.ini as well. Otherwise, you will see a splash (opening) screen again and need to set all of your Custom settings. Just erase EarMagicBasic.log file unless you observe anomalies. You can move it together if you want, but the file is overwritten every time you start the program.

If you happen to damage EarMagicBasic.ini file by accident, you can simply delete it. The program will create a new one for you. Yes, you have to set all of your Custom settings again. If you don't want to go through this, you can copy the file and save it in a safe place. If you regularly back up your system, you do this already.

System Requirement

This is a tentative specification, but the program is designed to run on all Microsoft Windows starting Windows 95. The earlier Windows (called 16-bit) up to 3.11 are not supported. You need a sound card with MIDI capabilities for Windows 95, 98, 98SE, ME and 2000. For Windows XP, any sound card is sufficient since Windows provide Software Synthesizer. Any CPU with speed greater than 90MHz is sufficient. Please note that Windows have their own requirements to run properly.

If you encounter any problems while meeting this requirement, please let us know. We need to revise our System Requirement to reflect it. Windows NT Workstation 3.5 and 4 are not supported since they were primarily for corporate computing environment. As a matter of fact, we do not have those versions handy. So, there is not much we can do. Windows Vista will be supported in the future. We have not had enough experience with it. But, it's quite possible that it just runs fine. We appreciate your feedback.

Our Current Plan

Following this release, we will be working on Basic Plus Edition, which includes Guitar interface. As we mentioned earlier, the standard edition is already on a design board. We do not know, however, if we finish the standard edition first or squeeze in Pocket PC Edition. Let us know if you are interested in Pocket PC edition. The first one is targeted on Palm 700 Windows Mobile phone. You can carry a cell phone, which is also your Ear Training Gear. You can practice anytime, anywhere. At least, that's the idea. It could run on regular Pocket PCs as well.

If you need a large quantity, please contact us. We might be able to set up a site license.

Sincerely,

Pianistica Product Development Team