



Welcome to the Spooktalkular technical manual. The reason that we decided to put this out is because we had to learn most of this through tough research and the kindness of some of our friends. We owe a great deal of thanks to ScottL over at Ghostly Talk. One of the last pieces that we couldn't get was the Skype recording part. Scott was good enough on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving to talk it through with me and then, a light bulb went off. Sadly, there seems to be quite a few "Gatekeepers" of information in the Podcast production world attempting to keep the information locked up.

Fortunately for us, Scott values the sharing of information as much as we do. By sharing our technical details, we can help each other and make a better production ourselves.

## Technical Overview

### Equipment Inventory

QTY	Item	Use
1	* PC or Laptop	Recording audio and Skype client
1	Behringer UB802 Mixer	Central audio connection point and control.
1	Behringer UCA202	USB Audio Analog to Digital conversion for Audacity
1	Behringer UCA200	USB Audio Analog to Digital conversion for Skype
2	Mics with cables	Host audio

\* The PC or laptop should be preloaded with Audacity and Skype.

### Connections for Audacity



The Tape out on the UB802 is connected to the Input on the UCA202 and the Tape in on the UB802 is connected to the Output on the UCA202. This is done using 2 dual RCA to RCA cables paying attention to the Left/Right (or Red/White) connections.



The Mics are connected using the XLR cables to the Inputs 1 and 2 on the UB802. These are for the show hosts.

Connect the USB cable on the UCA202 to an unused USB port on the PC or Laptop.

In order to monitor the audio, connect headphones to the Phones jack on the UB802. Multiple users can monitor by patching the phones into a Headphone Amplifier with an adequate number of phone jacks but we just use a 1/4" dual headphone jack since it's just the two of us and it seems to work great.

If Skype is not being recorded, this is all the connectivity necessary.

### **Skype Connections**



audio into the Mix.

Using a dual RCA to RCA cord with 1/4 Mono to RCA adapters in one end, connect the UB802 Input 3 and 4 to the Output of the UCA200. Again, paying attention to Left/Right and Red/White. This is how we get our Skype

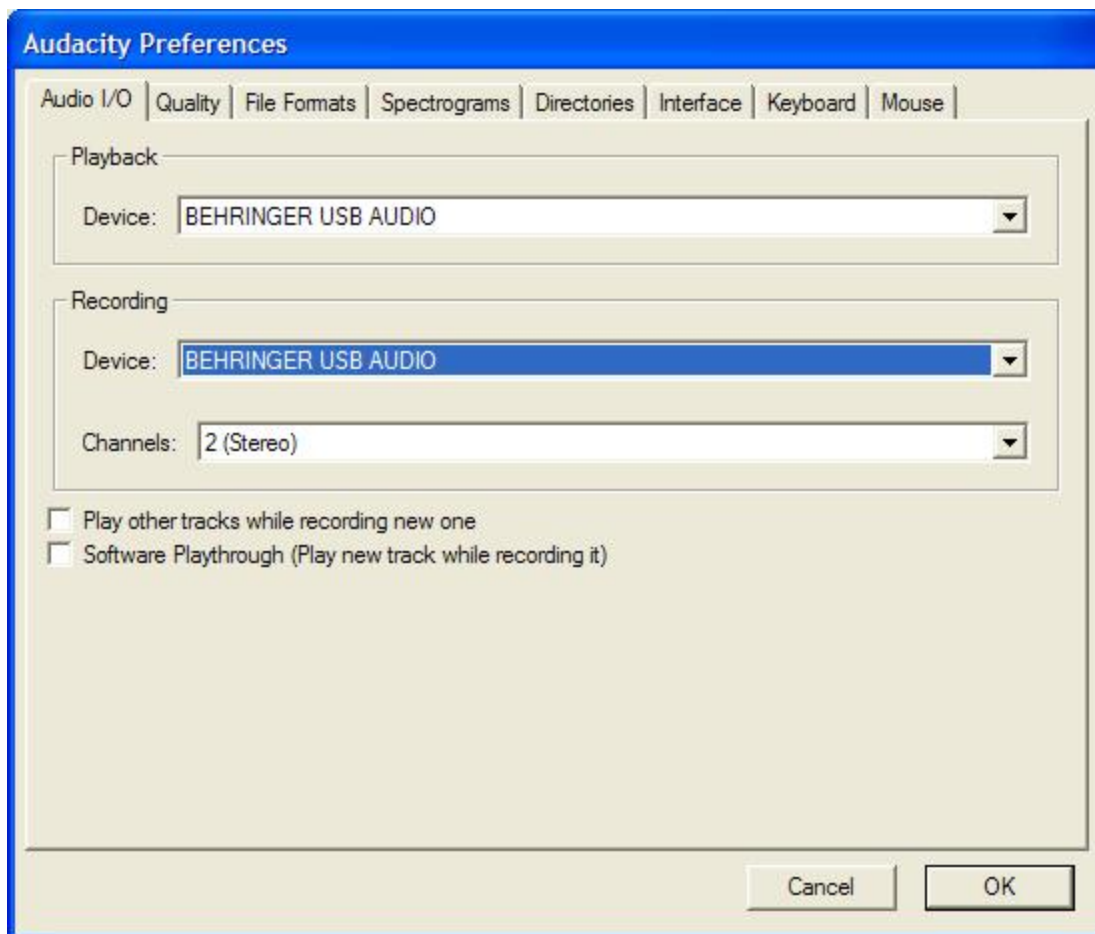


Now, with a 1/4 Stereo (using a 1/8 to 1/4 Stereo adapter if necessary) to Left/Right RCA splitter cord, connect the 1/4 side to the FX Send on the UB802 connecting to the Input of the UCA200.

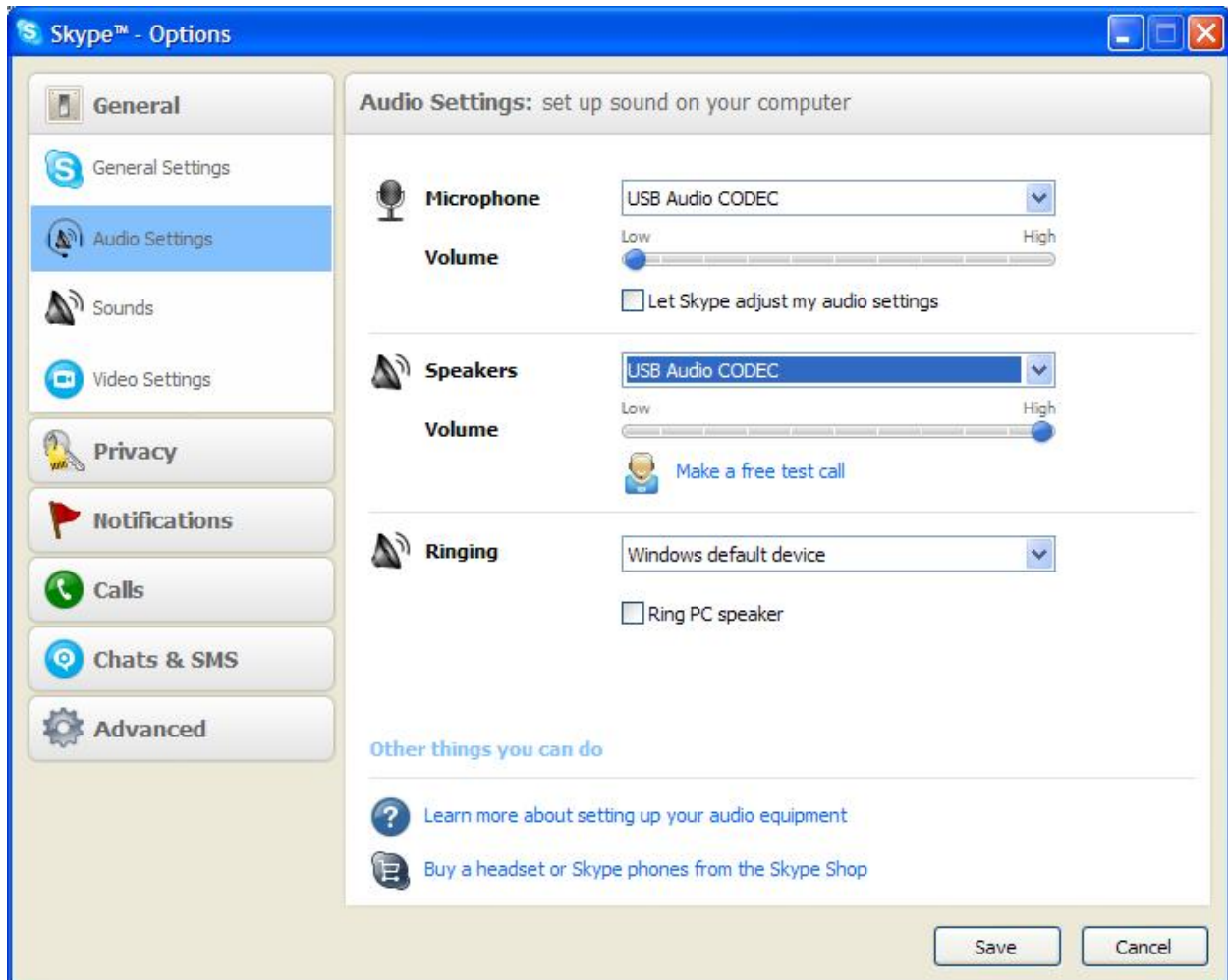
This completes all the connections. Next comes the software configuration and the Mixer setups.

### **Software Configuration**

Spooktalkular uses Audacity for our recording and editing platform. The reason we started using it was simple economics but the reason we keep using it is because it works exactly as expected. So far it has yet to fail us.

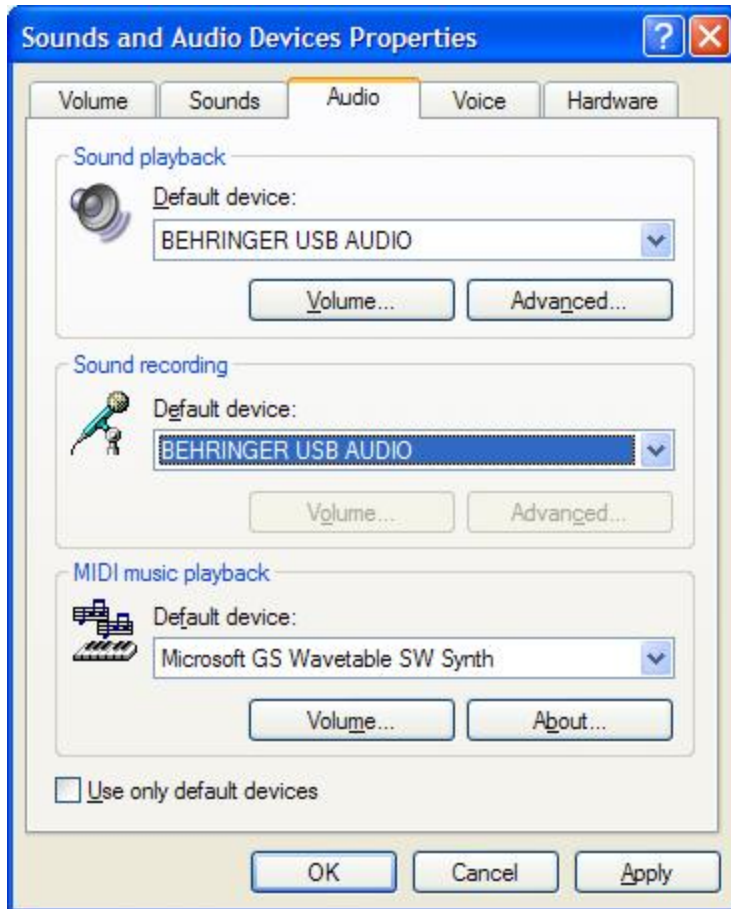


To set up Audacity to use the UCA202, go to 'Edit' and 'Preferences' and from the dropdown, select the Behringer USB Audio for both the input and output.



To set up Skype to use the UCA200, go to 'Tools' and 'Options' and select the USB Audio Codec for both the Mic and the Speakers.

### Using Sound Effects



We use quite a few audio clips from the shows we review and some voiceovers that we've had done to enhance the show. To arrange and queue them up, we use the program Soundboard. It lets you preload and even prequeue WAVs making it easy to play on demand. My only complaint is that the program doesn't use MP3s. To play audio through the UCA202 interface and thus enabling it to be recorded by Audacity, in the Audio control panel app, select it as the default Sound Playback and Recording Device. Thus, when you play your Soundboard clip, it plays through the UCA202. Check out soundboard at <http://www.zhornsoftware.co.uk/soundboard/index.html> and I think you'll be pleased as we are.

## **Mixer Settings**

Last but not least, Mixer settings for recording Skype are particularly important. Getting them wrong can result in an almost unusable Skype session. This assumes that you already have your levels set correctly for recording using Audacity for your 1 and 2 inputs. This is where we found the true power of the FX send feature of our Mixer. I'm not even sure if you could do this without it. Using the Skype test call as a testing session, adjust the FX send levels of the 1 and 2 inputs on the Mixer for the host levels. The Skype levels are controlled by the 3/4 level control.

It's important to note that the FX Send for input 3/4 should be turned all the way down. This keeps the caller from hearing his or her own voice from echoing back at them during a call. Even the slightest delay can disorient the caller on the other end.

With all this together, it's easy to record Skype conversations without any additional software. Please respond with any questions. Even more importantly, if you discover any additional tips, let me know and I'll include them.

To reach me, check out <http://www.spooktalkular.com> or email me at [frank@spooktalkular.com](mailto:frank@spooktalkular.com). I'm also on Twitter as spooktalkfrank.