

Johann Frenes: PSRUTI and the "Screen Reader" JAWS A guide for the visually impaired

PSRUTI is for people with visual impairment almost unrestrictedly without a mouse and can only be operated via the computer keyboard. The program does without any graphical bells and whistles and concentrates instead on the essential buttons, checkboxes and text boxes for editing a MIDI file. In PC Cursor or JAWS Cursor mode, JAWS recognizes all elements in the main window and in the various dialogs. Often, however, you have to rattle through all elements with the TAB key to get to the desired entry or to reach the "OK" or "Cancel" buttons, but JAWS reads all elements without difficulty. Unfortunately, the program does not know keyboard shortcuts such as ALT+O for the OK button. Some few entries in the main window can be called directly by the corresponding letter of the computer keyboard, e.g. "C" for "Controller and Effects", "E" for "Extras", "R" for "Revoicing" and "P" for "Play".

I'll mention the Play window separately here because it behaves a little differently with JAWS than other dialogs. In the Play window, JAWS does not work in "PC mode". For example, to mute individual tracks during playback or unmute them, you need to jump to the corresponding control fields with the "JAWS cursor" and activate or deactivate them with the "/" key in the numeric keypad (when the "Numlock" key is switched off - corresponds to a click with the left mouse button). I have not yet found a way to change the elements "Record / Chords", "Lyrics", "Tempo" and "Transpose" with JAWS. These elements seem "unreachable" to JAWS. The "M" key, on the other hand, allows you to jump to the playback time text box and specify a specific bar for playback.

The procedure is as follows:

The "m" key jumps to the text box where you can specify the start bar, then left using the arrow keys until JAWS speaks "colon". Replace the places to the left with the desired start bar and press Enter. JAWS will then speak "Switch" by pressing the space bar to start playback at the desired location. Sometimes it is necessary to re-enter the "M" key and then the Enter key to start playback. This may sound a bit complicated, but Heiko says it's the only way to control the start time when playing a MIDI. The key "E" stops the playback and the space bar stops or resumes the playback. The Escape key exits the Play dialog.

Caution! As long as a MIDI is playing or has been stopped with the space bar, you must not try to leave the dialog with the escape key. In this case, the program displays the error message: "Stop playback before". PSRUTI accepts the space bar or the input key for the button "OK" in this error message, but does not return the focus to the Play window.

JAWS users must press ALT+TAB to go to another program, and then press to PSRUTI and then press the "E" key to start playback correctly and now leave the play window with ESC.

In the "Controller/Controller" dialog, the volume of all tracks can be adjusted simultaneously by a certain percentage can be changed. The specification in the corresponding field is 100. If you now enter 90 in this field, the volume of all tracks will be is adjusted immediately when leaving the input field, which is a problem for a user with visual impairment cannot be "observed". If you jump back into the input field, this again shows the value 100, as if you did not change anything. If you don't know this behavior, you may be able to achieve effects. However, the changed values are only displayed after pressing the buttons "Apply" or "Execute" really changed.

Most other dialogs are intuitive and "understandable" to JAWS. I did not use the functions of PSRUTI for entering and editing Lyric because they understandably have little meaning to me.

I would like to mention one more detail from the manual of PSRUTI:

Quote

"PSRUTI provides in some program windows, e.g. Controller and Velocity Compressor, the voicenames in short form, which are based on GM. For the use of an instrument definition is used when the instrument is overrun. of the short names with the mouse cursor the correct name from the Instrument definition displayed."

End Quote

This is somewhat awkward when working with the "Controller and Effects" feature. If, for example, you use a "Super Articulation" voice for a channel, JAWS reads in PC cursor mode (preferred mode by me) for this track name only "SArt". So you have to either with the help of the JAWS cursor the appropriate "Aim" track to get the corresponding instrument name, or you have to remember the track contents easily (rarely succeeds). Do you have - like me - some own voices in the range "Expansion voices" filed, one receives for the track names by the GM interpretation altogether divergent Instrument name. I got used to having a text file in the background in which I put the actual instrument names for the 16 channels have registered. For later editing a MIDI file, I save this text file together with the MIDI of the same name. Maybe there is the ability to put the name of a track directly in MIDI in PSRUTI but I did not find that.

Conclusion:

If you know a few peculiarities of PSRUTI and the weaknesses of your own screenreader, working with PSRUTI is really fun. PSRUTI is one of the very few MIDI tools that can be used comfortably by visually impaired people. This program alone is invaluable to me. The possibilities that PSRUTI offers for editing MIDIs, especially the revoicing, which is coordinated with Yamaha.keyboards, makes this tool quite simply indispensable for me. This ingenious part is also available free of charge, even if you like to give something for it voluntarily.

Many comparable programs are simply not operable for the blind or visually impaired and very expensive, so thumbs up for PSRUTI.

Note by Heiko Plate:

You can download this tutorial under Downloads - PSRUTI from the homepage hpmusic: www.heikoplate.de/mambo

If necessary, an e-mail can be sent via "Contact" on this homepage to contact the author Johann Frenes.

End of this paper.