

Managing iTunes Loudness

by *Phil Russell*

When playing songs in iTunes, does one track suddenly blast your eardrums and then the next track play too softly to hear properly? If so, you have probably already gone to iTunes Preferences, selected the Effects tab and checked the Sound Check button.

Although this will level out the output from iTunes, it does not take into account the different levels of loudness within a single track.

Along comes Volume Logic 1.0 which brings real-time digital re-mastering to iTunes users (Fig. 1.). Volume Logic is an easy to use plug-in that automatically adjusts audio during playback. Volume Logic installs in the iTunes Window menu and has a keyboard shortcut of Command + 3.

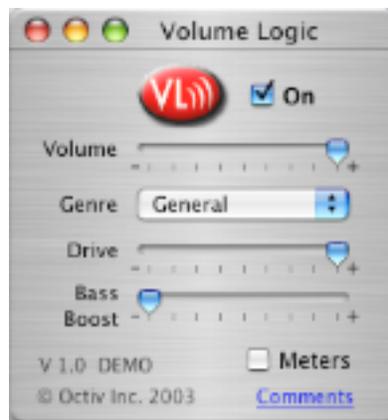


Fig. XXX. Volume Logic

Now you turn iTunes Sound Check off. Volume Also turn the iTunes volume all the way up, so it has the full audio signal to work with. Volume Logic suggests starting with Genre General. You can see a set of Meters if you press the Meters button or click the green button.

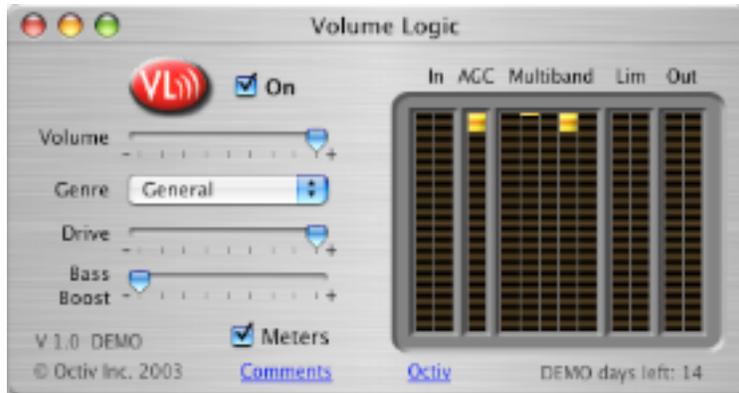


Fig. XXX. Volume Logic meters

Just cranking the volume up results in overdriving the bass, clipping the treble and considerable reduction in perceived quality. People know the sound of overdriven speakers, and identify this problem very quickly and immediately turn down the volume.

Volume Logic processing achieves greater loudness, clarity and intelligibility by working with audio elements that the ear can perceive -- not by a gross adjustment to the overall volume as in Sound Check. But using Volume Logic, low levels are intelligently raised and loud signals are kept under control, all in real-time.

The enhancements done in Volume Logic apply only to "played" music, so they will not carry over to "burned" music from iTunes to CD or while encoding to MP3 or AAC.

Find Volume Logic at <http://www.versiontracker.com> for \$19.95, or try it free for two weeks. Octave, the maker of Volume Logic, also has a hardware device for toning down loud commercials on your TV for \$49.95.