# HA4 Hybrid Audio Kit

## with the Focusrite 18i8

## OPERATION GUIDE

## About This Manual

This manual covers the installation and usage of the SoniClear Hybrid 4 Audio Kit, based on the Focusrite 18i8. This kit is designed for use with all SoniClear digital recording software products.

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Based on Focusrite Presets file: HA4Kit_Focusrite18i8_RevC.ff

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# HA4 Operation

## Overview

The SoniClear HA4 Hybrid Audio Kit uses the Focusrite 18i8 USB audio interface to make it easy to record in-person meetings, computer-based teleconferences, and hybrid meetings with high audio quality. It will work with any conferencing software, such as Zoom, Cisco WebEx, or Microsoft Teams. It also works with softphone programs, such as 8x8 Work, Vonage, and Avaya.

The kit includes one microphone and the Focusrite 18i8 USB audio interface for connecting microphones and headphones to the computer. Up to four microphones, a headphone, and a speaker can be attached.

The Focusrite 18i8 must be installed correctly before use. See the section below, “Focusrite 18i8 Loopback Kit Installation”. After installation, the Focusrite driver and control software will be ready to use when the computer is started, making it immediately ready for teleconferencing and for recording in SoniClear.

## Using Microphones

When working in-person, plug in up to four microphones and locate them in the meeting room to pick up all the participants. When working remotely, place one microphone so that it is close to where you are sitting without being in the way of your work. The microphone has a very directional pickup pattern, so it does not need to be right in front of your mouth. You will be heard clearly without needing to lean into the microphone.

Microphone levels are adjusted using the “GAIN” knobs on the front of the Focusrite 18i8: If the participants in the teleconference have trouble hearing you because the volume is too low or too high, the microphone level can be adjusted using these knobs.

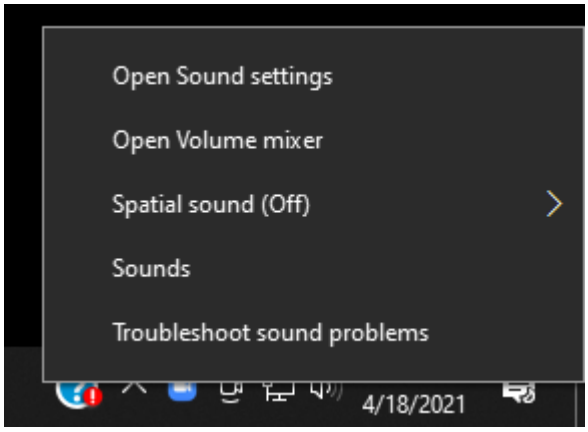
A typical microphone and participant will require the level to be set between 12 and 3 O’clock on the GAIN knob. When there is a signal, the light around the knob will light up green. When the signal is too high, the light will turn to red.

When no microphone is connected, the GAIN should be set to minimum (fully counterclockwise).

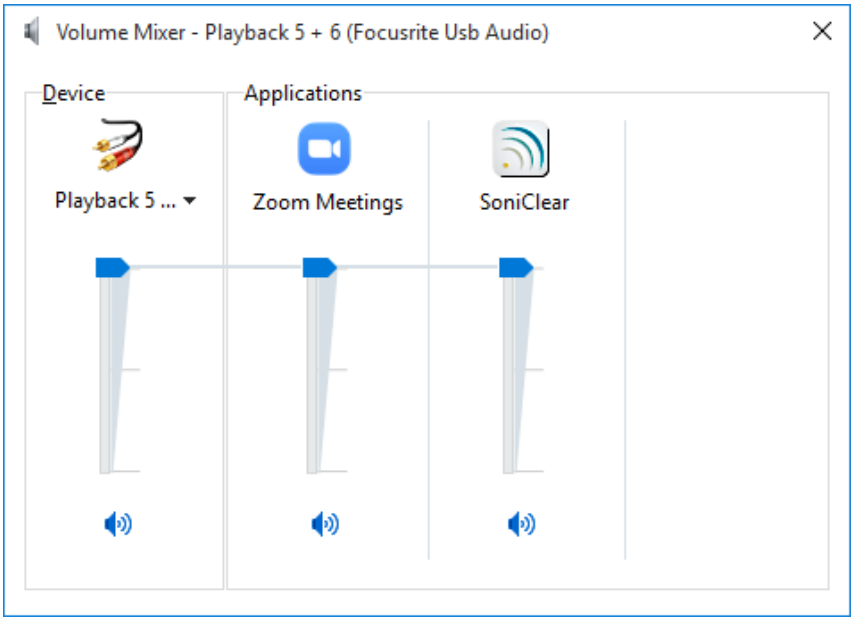
## Adjusting Remote Participant Volume

There are no controls on the Focusrite 18i8 for adjusting the playback level of Windows apps. To adjust the volume of remote participants, use the speaker control in the Windows Volume Mixer control panel.

Right click on the Speaker icon in the lower right corner of the screen (next to the Time and Date):



Then left click on Open Volume Mixer to display the mixer that controls playback levels:




Select the Device “Playback 5 + 6” and use the Volume Mixer sliders to adjust levels of the remoted participants as needed.

## Listening using Headphones

There are two headphone jacks on the front of the 18i8 interface. Headphone 1 is used for listening to participants and monitoring audio from SoniClear. Plug the monitor headphone into the Headphone1 jack. A ¼” to 3.5mm adapter is included for headphones that use a 3.5mm plug. Adjust the headphone loudness using the level knob above the jack.

## Listening using Speakers

If you want to listen to remote participants without headphones. a speaker can be attached to the Focusrite. The large “MONITOR” knob is provided for controlling the level of the speaker.

## Using a Backup Recorder

The second headphone jack can be used to connect to a backup recorder. The mix on this output includes all four microphones, the audio from the online participants, and any readback or audio playback heard by the online participants. It excludes the monitor audio, which can only be heard on Headphone 1.

To set up a backup recorder, connect a 3.5mm to 3.5mm stereo cable to the Headphone 2 jack, using the included ¼” to 3.5mm adapter. Set the volume of Headphone 2 to about the 12 O’clock position. Connect

that cable to the Line-In jack on the backup recorder. Adjust the backup recorder input to get the correct recording level. Always check the audio quality being captured by the backup recorder after setting it up, to ensure a good backup.

## Playback from Windows Software

You can play audio from any Windows program for remote participants to hear. For example presentations that contain video can play back directly into the conference feed.

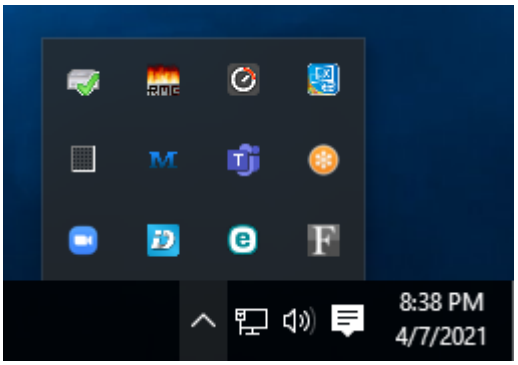
## Additional Usage Notes

1. The INST and PAD lights should be off. If they appear lit on the front panel, the settings must be changed in the Focusrite control panel. See the section “Resetting All Control” below for instructions.
2. The two buttons marked “48V” near the microphone jacks should always be on (illuminated red). Turning off the 48 volt phantom power will result in the microphone audio turning off.
3. Any type of monitoring headphone that you prefer can be used for listening to the Focusrite.

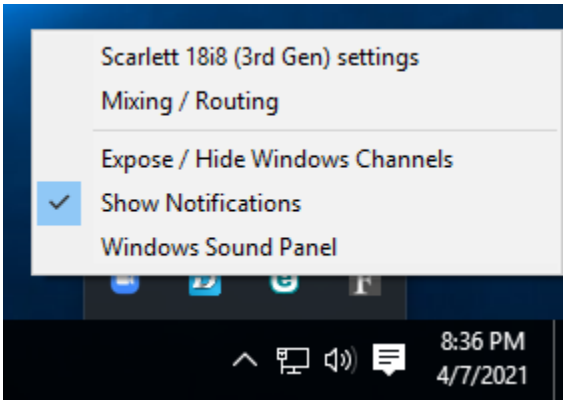
## Resetting All Controls

If any of the required Focusrite 18i8 settings are accidentally changed, the default settings can be restored with the following steps:

Left click on in the “Windows System Tray”. This is the little up-arrow icon in the lower right corner of the computer screen (next to the Time and Date):

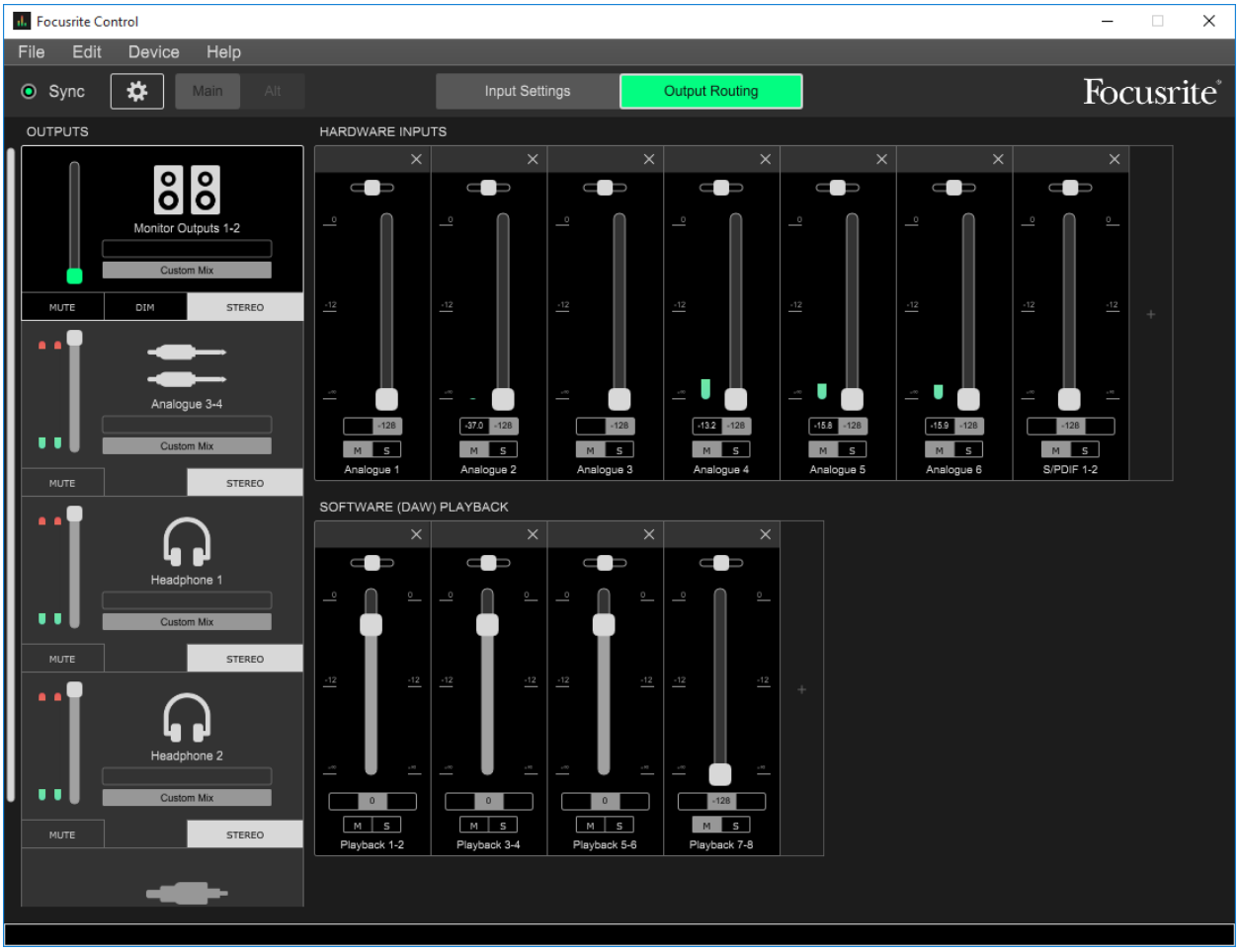



Then left click on the Focusrite control icon :




This will display the list of options for controlling the Focusrite interface.

Select “Mixing / Routing” to display the Focusrite control panel:




Click on the File pulldown menu and select “Load Snapshot” to open the preset selection dialog. Select the file HA4Kit_Focusrite18i8_RevC.ff (or preset file saved specifically for your preferred configuration). This may be stored in the SoniClear program directory (C:\Program Files (x86)\SoniClear97) or some other location where it has been saved when setting up the HA4 kit.

# Focusrite 18i8 Loopback Kit Installation

## Hardware Installation

### Overview

The Focusrite 18i8 Loopback Kit includes the parts needed for recording Windows communication software, such as a Zoom online conference, or VOIP (“softphone”) call. Included in the kit are:

- Focusrite 18i8 USB audio interface mixer (4 channels)
- Microphone Options: Samson C02 microphone and desk stand, or Audio Technica Pro44
- Headset Option: Noise Cancelling Headset with Rode VXLR+ Adapter
- Short ¼” TRS audio loopback cables (2)
- S/PDIF loopback cable, short Digital RCA to RCA
- Speaker Y cable, ¼” TRS to 3.5mm mini stereo jack
- Headphone adapters, 3.5mm to ¼” stereo plug

### USB Interface

The Focusrite 18i8 interface requires a USB 3.0 connection on the computer using the included USB C to USB A cable. The 18i8 should only be connected directly to a port on the computer or a manufacturer supplied docking station. Connecting it to a USB hub may result in unreliable operation. If the computer has a USB C port, a user supplied USB C to USB C cable can be used instead.

### Power Connection

The Focusrite 18i8 is powered using the included Focusrite power adapter.

### Microphone Connections

The HA4 Hybrid Kit can be configured with up to 4 microphones, or with a noise cancelling headset.

Connect at least one microphone or a headset to the 18i8 microphone inputs. This microphone or headset is used to record the local participant in the SoniClear software and is also used as the microphone for the online conferencing software, such as Zoom.

Any professional microphone with an XLR connector can be used with the 18i8. Up to four microphones can be connected.

### Headphone Connection

The noise cancelling headset, or a user supplied monitoring headphone can be plugged into Headphone 1

jack on the front of the 18i8 interface, using the supplied ¼” to 3.5mm adapter.

## Speaker Connection

A user-supplied speaker can be connected to the 18i8 using a standard stereo mini audio cable plugged into the included speaker Y cable. The speaker Y cable plugs into the ¼” TRS “Line Outputs 1 and 2 jacks on the back of the 18i8.

## Backup Recorder Connection

The user-supplied backup recorder connects to the Headphone 2 jack. The recorder must have an input for line-in audio. For recorders with a 3.5mm line-in input, connect a 3.5mm cable to it from the Headphone 2 jack (using the included ¼” to 3.5mm adapter). If the recorder uses a ¼” TRS type of line-in input, a user-supplied adapter or cable will need to connect from the headphone jack to the recorder.

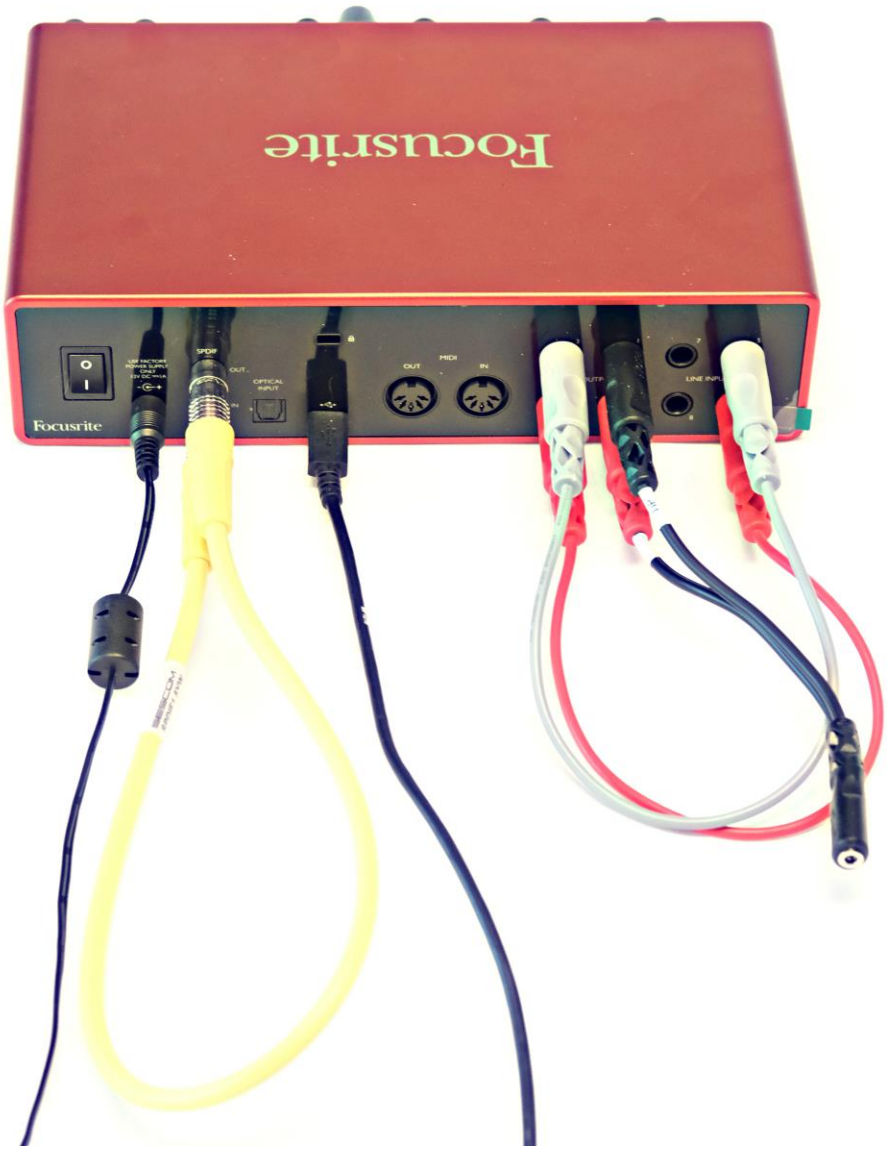
## Hardware Loopback Connections

Two audio loopback circuits are set up using cables. The microphones, readback audio, and playback audio, also referred to as a “Mix Minus” audio feed, are used to feed audio to the online communication software. A second loopback is used to create a separate channel for recording the online conference participants.

For the Mix-Minus audio feed, connect the two analog ¼” TRS cables on the back of the 18i8 interface:

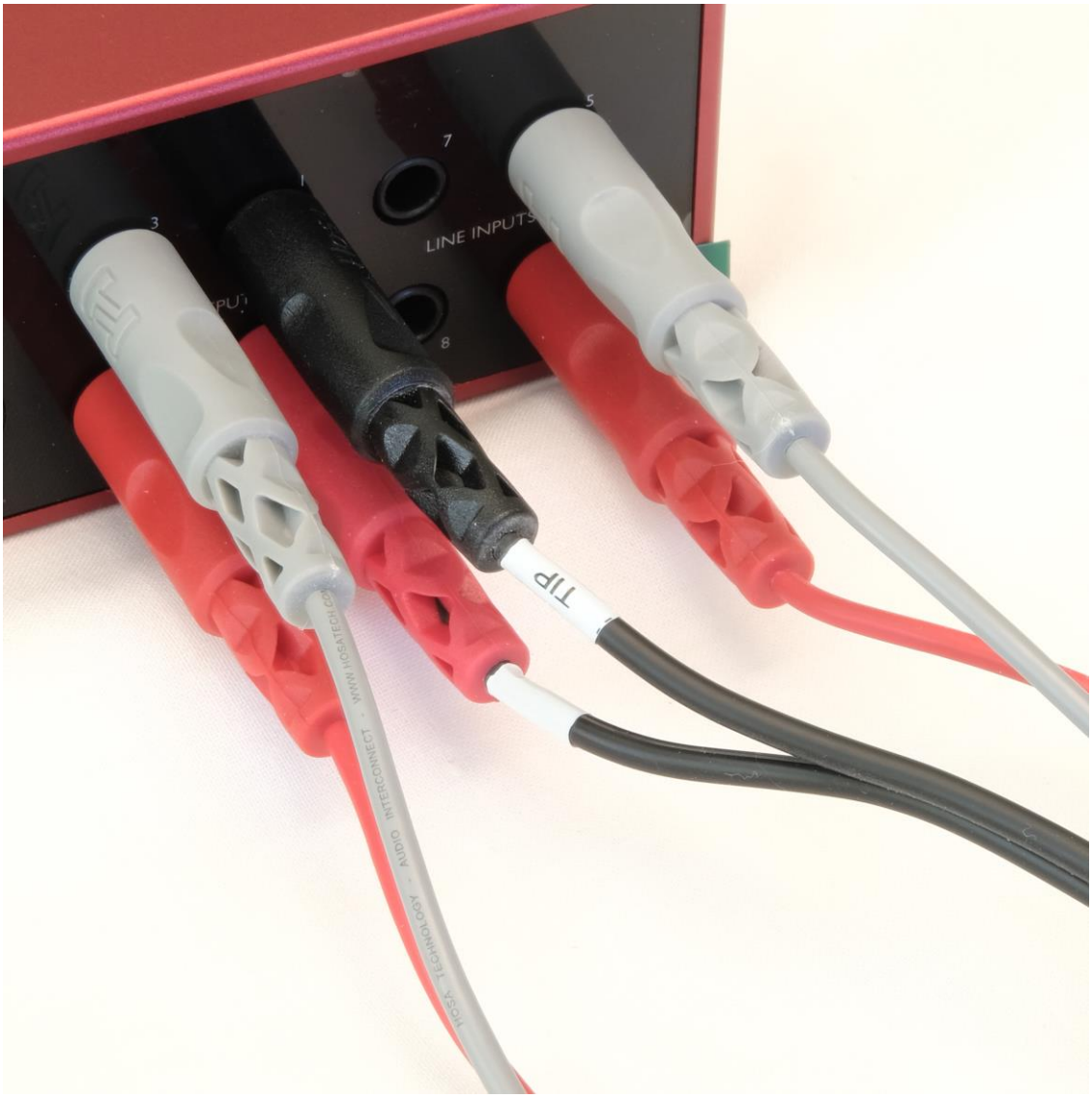
- Line Output 3 to the Line Input 5
- Line Output 4 and the Line Input 6

The included digital RCA to RCA cable provides digital stereo loopback of the online conference call audio for recording in a separate channel. This cable is connected between the S/PDIF Output and Input jacks on the back of the 18i8 interface.




Loopback Cables

S/PDIF Loopback Cable




¼” TRS Loopback Cables

XLR Microphone and Headphone Option

Headset Adapter Option

# Focusrite 18i8 Software Installation

## Drivers

The Focusrite 18i8 requires manual installation of product-specific Windows drivers. This provides custom control panel software for configuring the device. As of the last update to this manual, the download link for the driver installer was:

https://customer.focusrite.com/en/support/downloads?brand=Focusrite&product_by_type=1360&download_type=all

Only install software downloaded from the official Focusrite website. Do not install software from a third-party service.

The currently available driver does not provide any method to automatically update the driver or scan for updates. It is recommended that you periodically check the Focusrite support site to see if any updates have been made to the software.

## Loading Presets

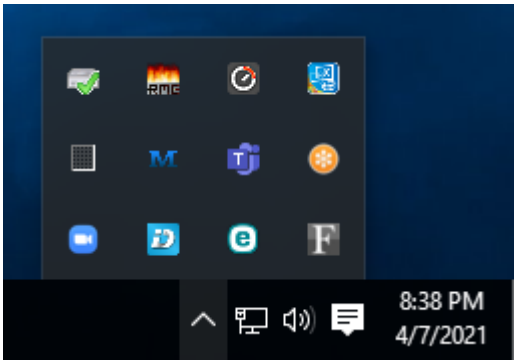
The Focusrite 18i8 requires configuration for compatibility with SoniClear. A default set of presets for use with SoniClear may be located in the SoniClear program directory (C:\Program Files (x86)\SoniClear97). If the presets are not available in the program directory, they can be downloaded from the SoniClear website:

https://download.soniclear.com/ha4/

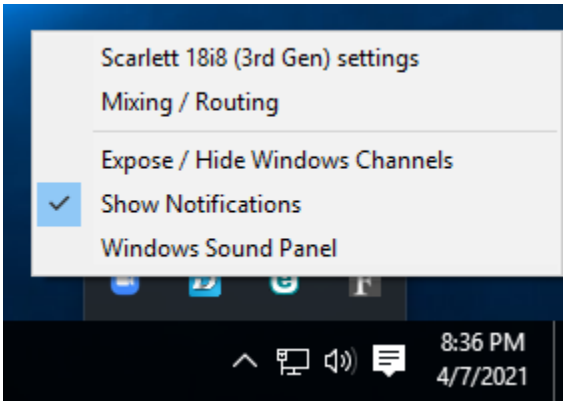
(HA4Kit_Focusrite18i8_RevC.ff)

After downloading and extracting the presets file, load those presets into the Focusrite 18i8 using the following steps.

Left click on in the “Windows System Tray”. This is the little up-arrow icon in the lower right corner of the computer screen:

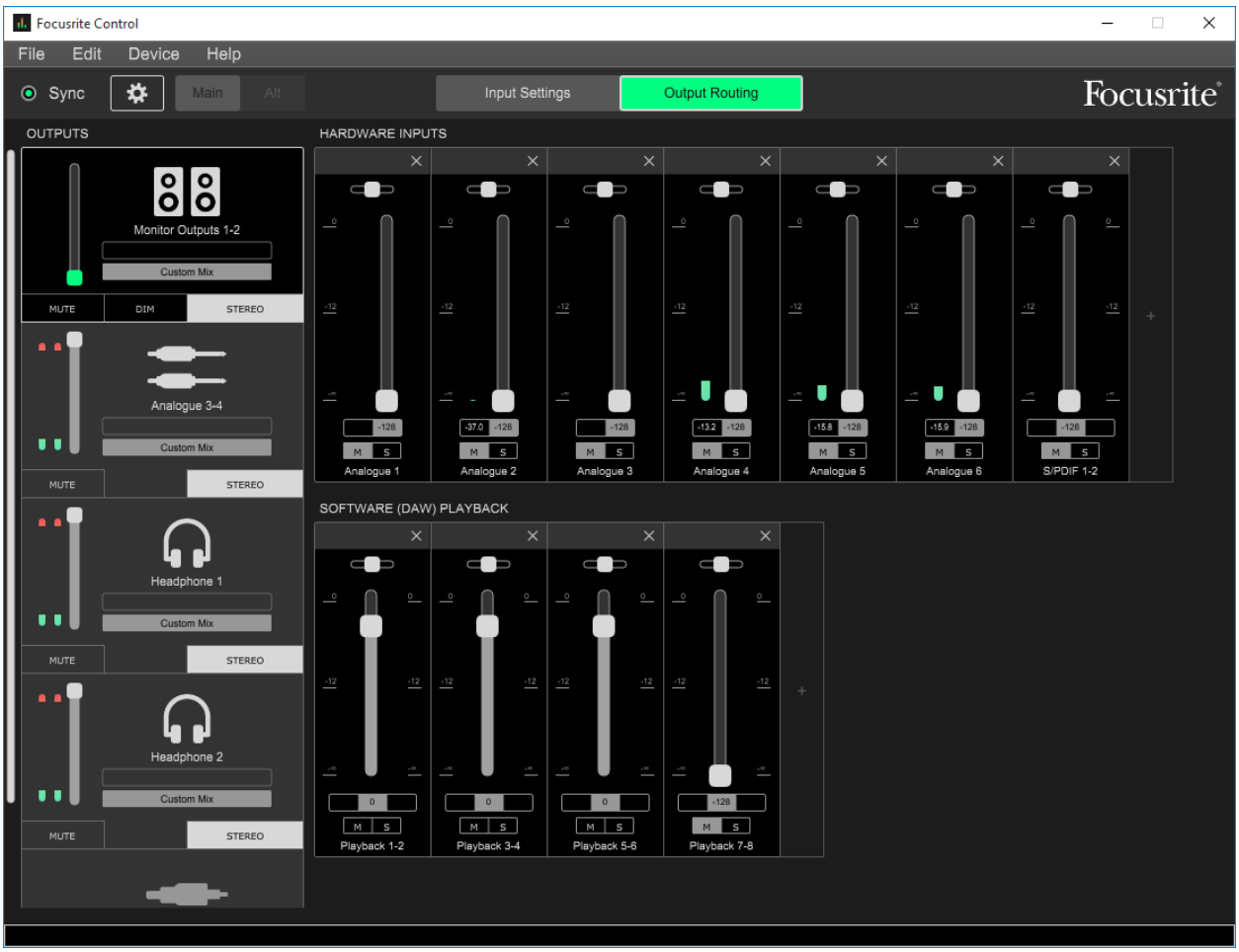


Then left click on the Focusrite control icon :




This will display the list of options for controlling the Focusrite 18i8.

Select “Mixing / Routing” to display the Focusrite control panel:



Click on the File pulldown menu and select “Load Snapshot” to open the preset selection dialog. Select the file Focusrite_18i8_CourtReporter_RevA.ff (or preset file saved specifically for your preferred configuration). This will usually be stored in the SoniClear program directory, C:\Program Files (x86)\SoniClear97, or a location where it has been saved.

## Saving Presets

After loading the presets, adjust the microphone and headphone levels to work optimally with the microphones and teleconference software. Then save these customized settings in a custom preset file for future use. It is important to save these customized presets so that the SoniClear user can restore the correct settings, in case they pressed one of the setting buttons by accident.

Select File/Save Snapshot from the pulldown menu in the control panel. It is recommended to save the presets file in the SoniClear Program directory (usually C:\Program Files (x86)\SoniClear97) to make it easier to find.

# Focusrite 18i8 Manual Configuration

The loopback mixer is configured properly after the supplied presets have been loaded, following the instructions above. To manually configure the settings without the presets, open the Focusrite 18i8 Mixing / Routing control panel and then follow the instructions provided in this section of the Operation Guide.

## Overview

To goal is to make it possible to use one setup for three applications:

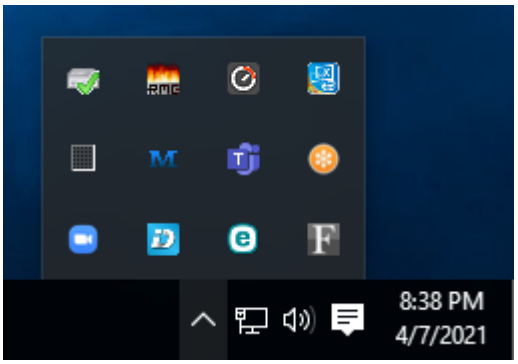
- In-Person Meetings
- Remote Meetings
- Hybrid Meetings

This requires the ability to capture audio from microphones in the room, and from any computer-based conferencing software. It is also necessary to be able to play back recorded audio to the participants (local and remote) and to play audio from other Windows apps.

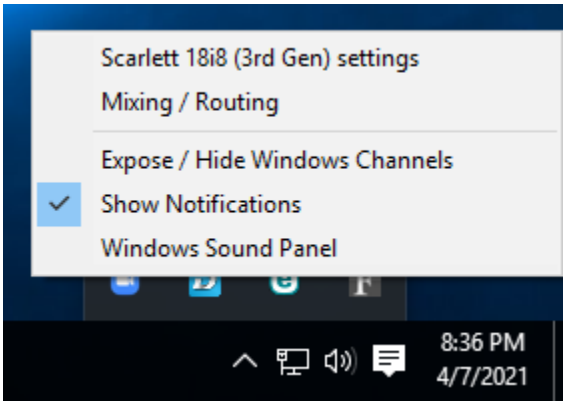
To accomplish this, the Focusrite 18i8 is set up to use the built-in loopback audio channel for recording a mix of the local microphone(s) and the remote participants. It also requires using a hardware audio loopback (through cables) to send a “mix minus” version of the audio to the online conference software. This excludes the output of the conferencing software to prevent echo or feedback. A second hardware loopback is used for recording the conference participants in a separate track in SoniClear.

## How to Open Focusrite Control Panels

Left click on in the “Windows System Tray”. This is the little up-arrow icon in the lower right corner of the computer screen (next to the Time and Date):



Then left click on the Focusrite control icon :



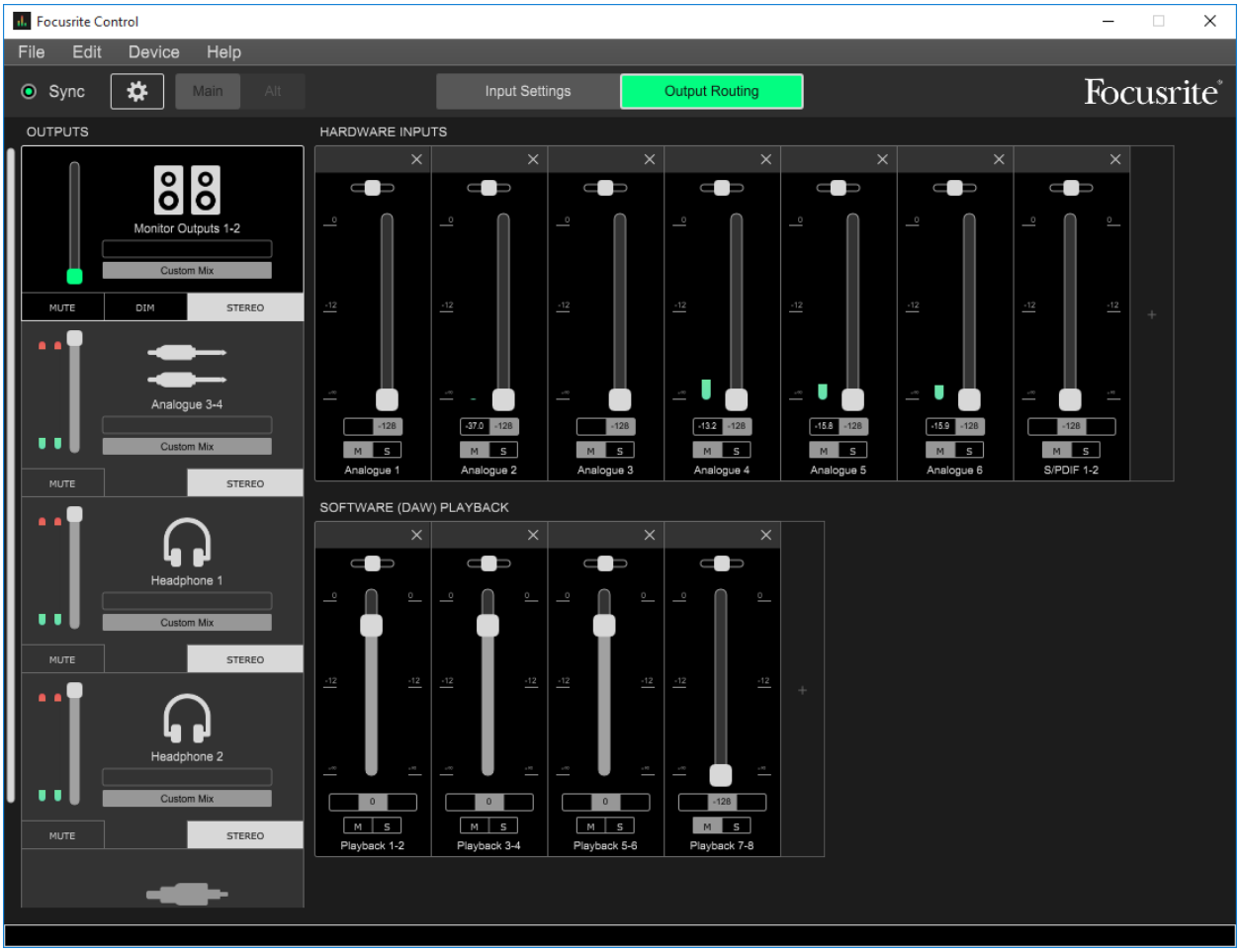

This will display the list of options for controlling the Focusrite interface, which are explained in the following instructions.

# Mixer Settings

Open the Focusrite 18i8 Mixer control panel from the Focusrite menu in the Windows System Tray by selecting the “Mixing / Routing” control panel. There are six mixers to configure:

- Monitor Output 1-2 — To speakers
- Analogue Outputs 3-4 — Mix Minus loopback to conference software
- Headphone 1 — For monitor headphones
- Headphone 2 — For backup recorder
- S/PDIF — Loopback of conference software for recording
- Looptback — Stereo Mix of all channels for recording

## Monitor Outputs 1-2




The Monitor Outputs 1-2 mix is sent to the Line-Out 1-2 jacks on the back of the 18i8 unit. This is the signal that can be connected to speakers. The microphone inputs must be excluded from this mix, with just computer playback being sent to the speaker output.

| | |
|---|---|
| Mic 1-4 | Mute |
| Line-In 5-6 (conference call mic feed) | Mute |
| S/PDIF (conference call participants) | Mute |
| Playback 1-2 (Windows App Playback) | On |
| Playback 3-4 (Readback Playback) | On |
| Playback 5-6 (Conference Call Participants) | On |
| Playback 7-8 (Headphone Monitor) | Mute |

| | |
|---|---|
| Mute Button | OFF |
| Dim Button | OFF |
| Stereo Button | ON |

## Analogue Outputs 3-4

The Analogue 3-4 mix is sent to the Line-Out 3-4 jacks. This provides the “Mix-Minus” signal of the audio to be sent to the remote participants. These jacks are connected back to the 18i8 hardware line inputs on the back of the 18i8 unit using one or two cables. This creates, in effect, a hardware loopback of the audio, making the signal available for the conference software.

| | |
|---|---|
| Mic 1-4 | On |
| Line-In 5-6 (conference call mic feed) | Mute |
| S/PDIF (conference call participants) | Mute |
| Playback 1-2 (Windows App Playback) | On |
| Playback 3-4 (Readback Playback) | On |
| Playback 5-6 (Conference Call Participants) | Mute |
| Playback 7-8 (Headphone Monitor) | Mute |

| | |
|---|---|
| Mute Button | OFF |
| Stereo Button | ON |

Mix Output Volume set to maximum (“0” at top of slider).

## Headphone 1

The Headphone 1 mix is sent to the first headphone jack on the front of the 18i8 unit. This is the signal that allows the SoniClear user to hear everything in the conference call, as well as for monitoring through the headphones from SoniClear.

| | |
|---|---|
| Mic 1-4 | On |
| Line-In 5-6 (conference call mic feed) | Mute |
| S/PDIF (conference call participants) | Mute |
| Playback 1-2 (Windows App Playback) | On |
| Playback 3-4 (Readback Playback) | On |
| Playback 5-6 (Conference Call Participants) | On |
| Playback 7-8 (Headphone Monitor) | On |

| | |
|---|---|
| Mute Button | OFF |
| Stereo Button | ON |

## Headphone 2

The Headphone 2 output is used to connect the Focusrite to a backup recorder. The audio included on the custom mix for this output includes all audio heard by the participants, and excludes audio heard by the court reporter headphone for monitoring. When connecting the backup device to this headphone jack, it will be necessary to adjust the volume of the headphone (for example, to the 12 O'clock position) and then adjust the input volume on the backup recorder to get a proper recording level.

## S/PDIF

This mix is for the S/PDIF output. It is used to provide hardware loopback of the conference all audio, making it possible to record the remoted participants in a separate track in SoniClear.

This mix is set to just the conference call playback device, Playback 5 + 6.

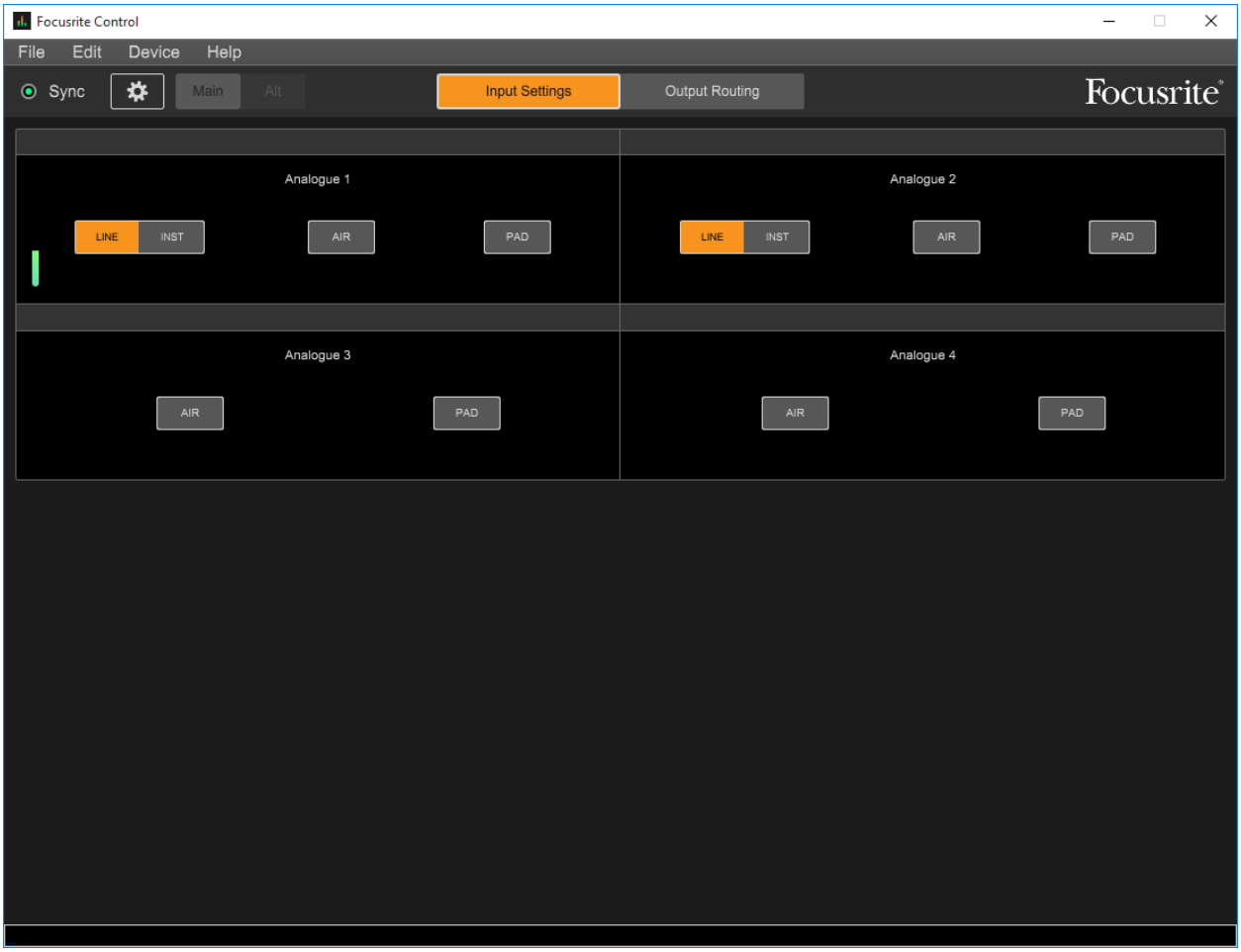
## Loopback

The loopback mix contains all of the audio being recorded in SoniClear.

| | |
|---|---|
| Mic 1-4 | On |
| Line-In 5-6 (conference call mic feed) | Mute |
| S/PDIF (conference call participants) | Mute |
| Playback 1-2 (Windows App Playback) | On |
| Playback 3-4 (Readback Playback) | On |
| Playback 5-6 (Conference Call Participants) | On |
| Playback 7-8 (Headphone Monitor) | Mute |

| | |
|---|---|
| Mute Button | OFF |
| Stereo Button | ON |

# Hardware Input Settings




While in the Focusrite Mixing / Routing Control panel, click on the Input Settings button (in the top middle of the panel). This will open the hardware settings buttons to adjust the input signal hardware behavior. Set these as follows:

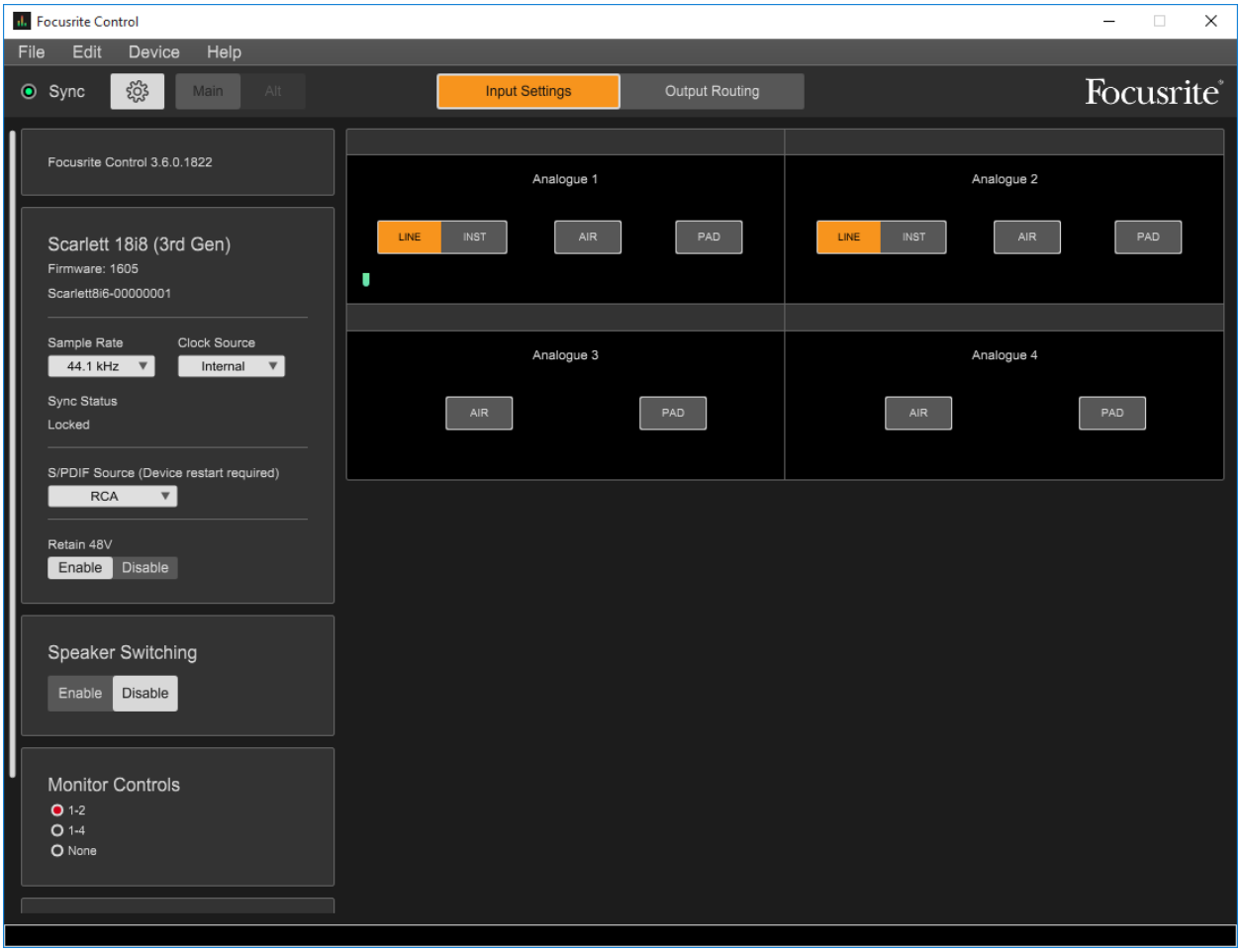
**Analogue 1 and 2**

Line - On
Air - Off
Pad - Off

**Analog 3 and 4**

Air - Off
Pad - Off

# Additional Settings



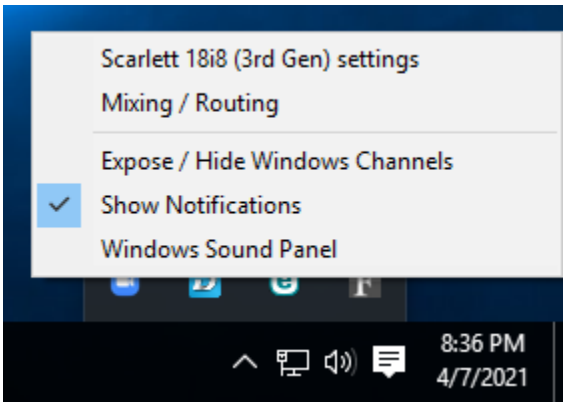

While in the Focusrite Mixing / Routing Control panel, click on the Settings gear button (at the top left of the control panel). This will display several additional driver hardware controls.

Set these control options as follows:

Sample Rate = 44.1 kHz
Internal Clock
S/PDIF = RCA
Retain 48V = Enable
Speaker Switching = Disable
Monitor Controls = 1-2

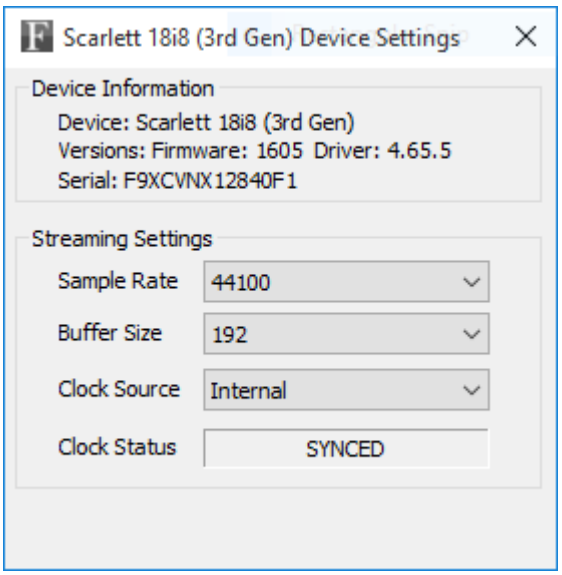
# Focusrite Driver Settings

In addition to the mixer settings, the driver settings must be configured from the Focusrite control panels. Access the control panels by clicking on the system tray up-arrow icon, then left click on the Focusrite icon :




## Streaming Settings

Select the "Scarlett 18i8 (3rd Gen) settings" option from the Focusrite control icon in the system tray. This will display the Streaming Settings control panel:

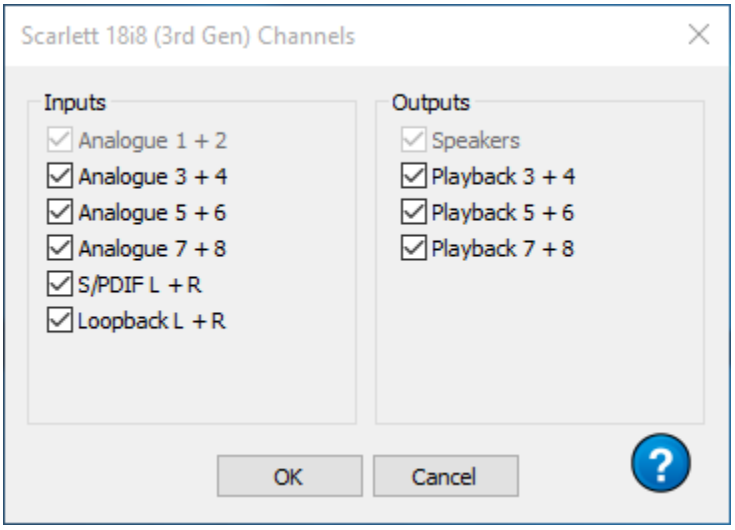



Set the following values:

| | |
|---|---|
| Sample Rate | 44100 |
| Buffer Size | 192 |
| Clock Source | Internal |

## Expose Windows Channels

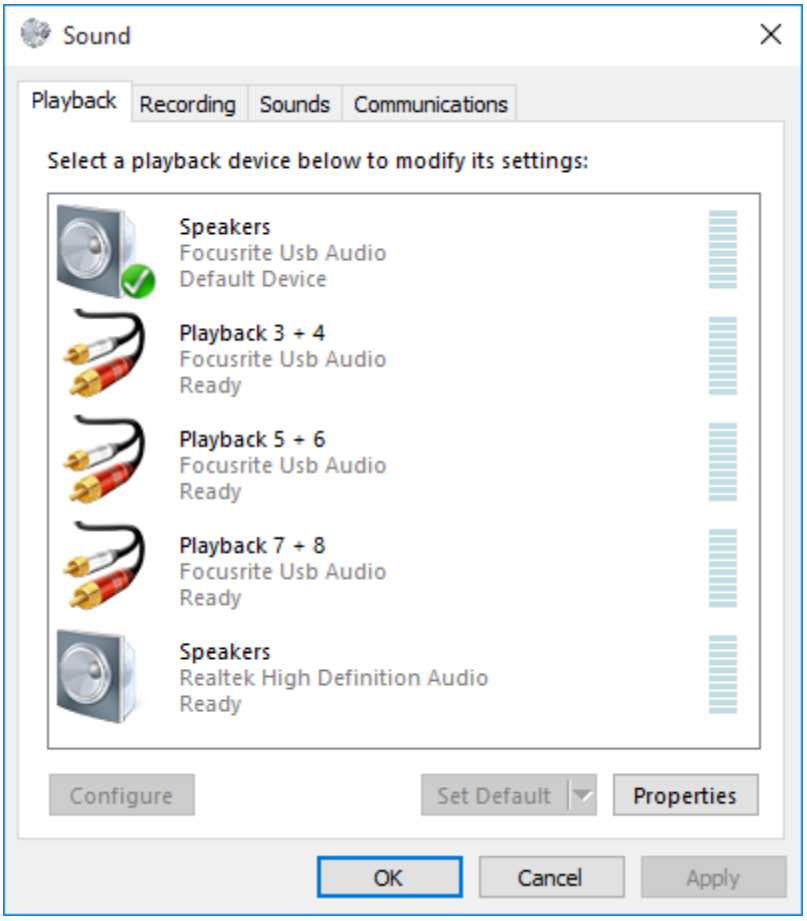
Select the “Expose / Hide Windows Channels” option from the Focusrite control icon in the system tray. This will display the Windows driver channels control panel. Enable (check) all inputs and outputs shown.



# Windows Sound Settings

## Default Playback Device

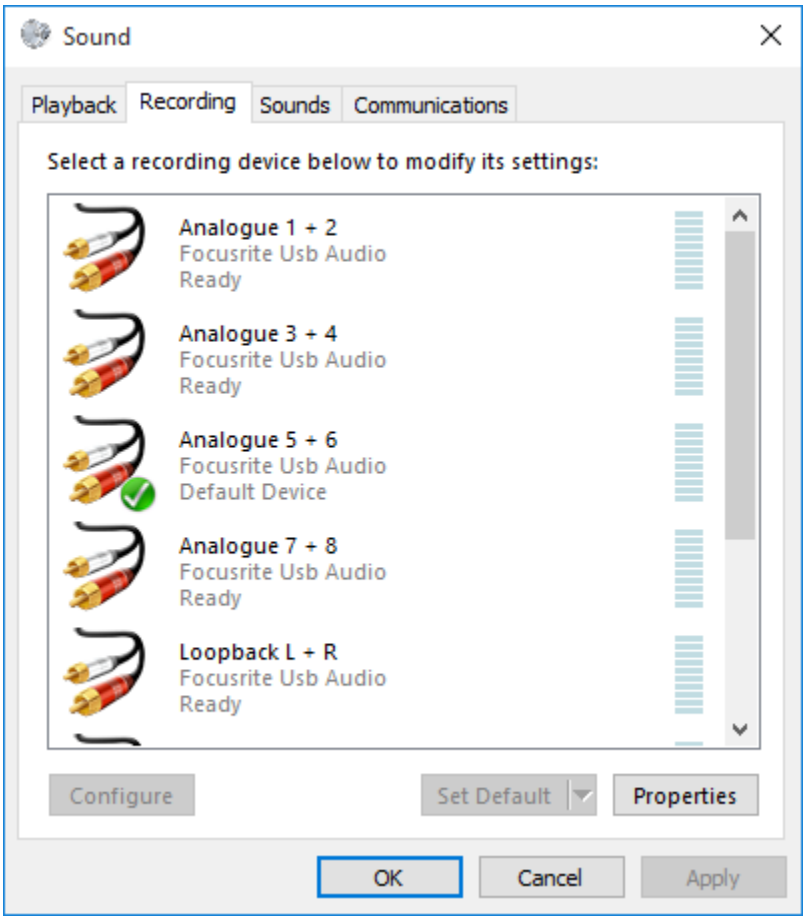
Select the “Windows Sound Panel” option from the Focusrite control icon in the system tray. This will display the Windows Playback settings control panel:




Set the Focusrite 18i8 Playback 1-2 audio to be the default playback device for Windows. Select the Focusrite Usb Audio and click the Set Default button.

## Default Recording Device

Set the Windows Sound Recording defaults by clicking on the Recording tab of the Sound panel:




Set the Analogue 5 + 6 device as the default recording device for Windows programs by clicking on that driver and then clicking the Set Default button.

# SoniClear Software Preferences

## Overview

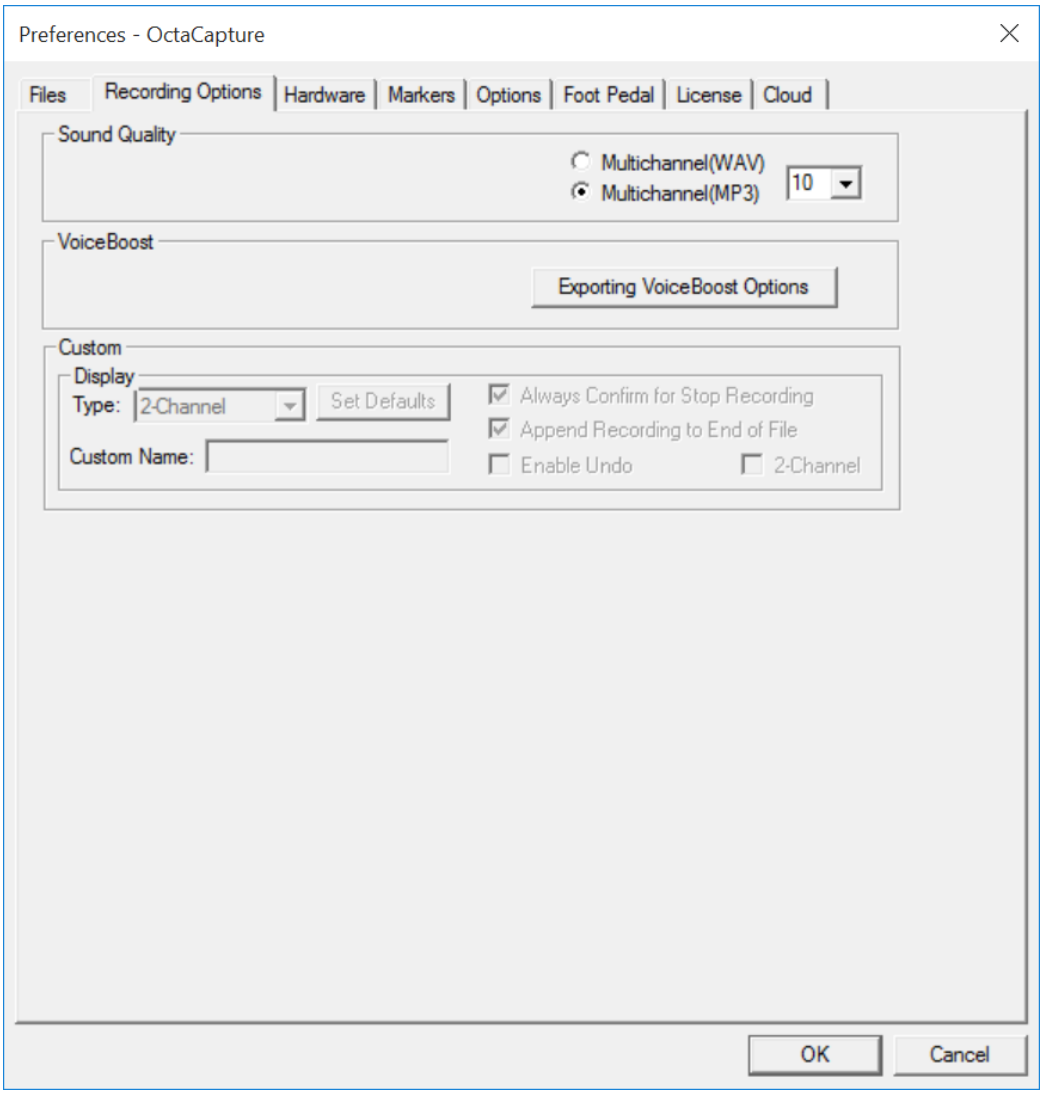
The SoniClear software preferences must be configured to work with the Focusrite 18i8 interface. To do this, start SoniClear and select Edit/Preferences from the pulldown menu.

The recordings created with this configuration will have the following channels:

| SoniClear Channel | Audio Recorded on Channel |
|---|---|
| **Stereo Mix** | Microphones 1 - 4 |
| | Remote Conference or Softphone Participants |
| | SoniClear Readback Audio |
| | Windows Program Playback |
| **Left** | Microphones 1 and 2 |
| | Remote Conference or Softphone Participants |
| | SoniClear Readback Audio |
| | Windows Program Playback - Left |
| **Right** | Microphones 3 and 4 |
| | Remote Conference or Softphone Participants |
| | SoniClear Readback Audio |
| | Windows Program Playback – Right |
| **1** | Microphone 1 |
| **2** | Microphone 2 |
| **3** | Microphone 3 |
| **4** | Microphone 4 |
| **5** | Microphones 1 – 4 |
| | SoniClear Readback Audio |
| | Windows Program Playback - Left |
| **6** | Microphones 1 – 4 |
| | SoniClear Readback Audio |
| | Windows Program Playback - Right |
| **7** | Conference Call/Softphone - Left |
| **8** | Conference Call/Softphone – Right |

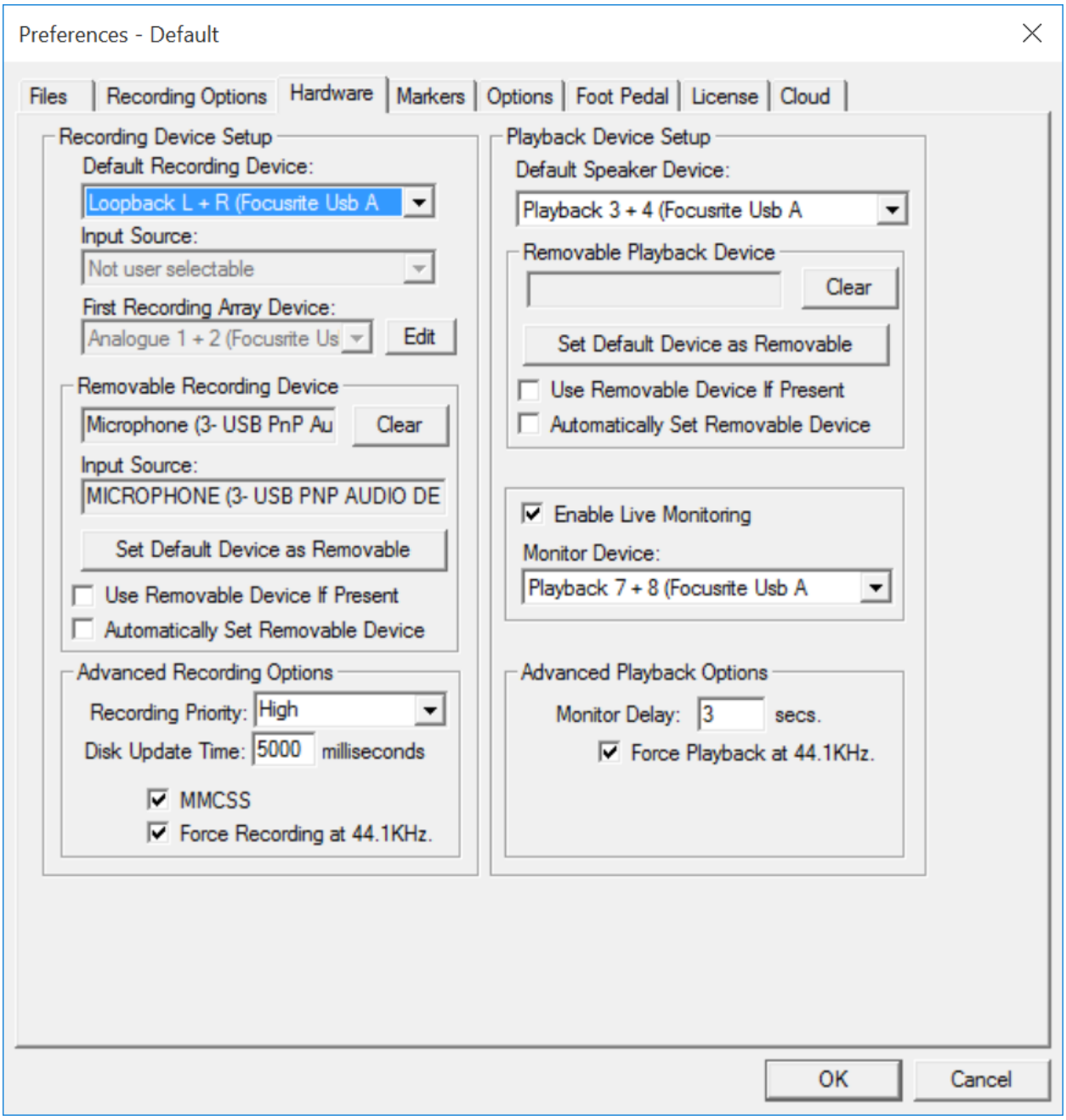
## Recording Options Tab - Sound Quality

In the Recording Options preferences tab, set the recording format. For Meeting Recorder 9 select Meeting (Stereo WAV). For All other SoniClear products, select Multichannel (MP3) and set the channels selector to 10 channels.




## Hardware Tab – Audio Device Selection

Select the Hardware tab and modify the settings according to the following instructions.




**Recording Device Setup**

The Recording Device Selection side of the Hardware tab controls the usage of the sound cards in the computer during recording.

### Default Recording Device

This is the sound card input for recording the stereo mix of all the participants. It should be set to "Loopback L+R". Note that the name may have an additional number included in that phrase.

This indicates that the 18i8 interface has been plugged into more than one USB jack on the computer at some point in time.

Once the Default Recording Device field has been set, the 18i8 must be plugged into the same USB jack on the computer each time it is used.

### First Recording Array Device

See below, “Recording Array Setup”.

### Removable Recording Device

“Use Removable Device If Present” and “Automatically Set Removable Device” options should be unchecked.

### Advanced Recording Options

These options control how recording is processed.

### Recording Process Priority

Default value should be set to High or Automatic.

### Disk Update Time

The default value should be set to 5000 milliseconds.

### MMCSS

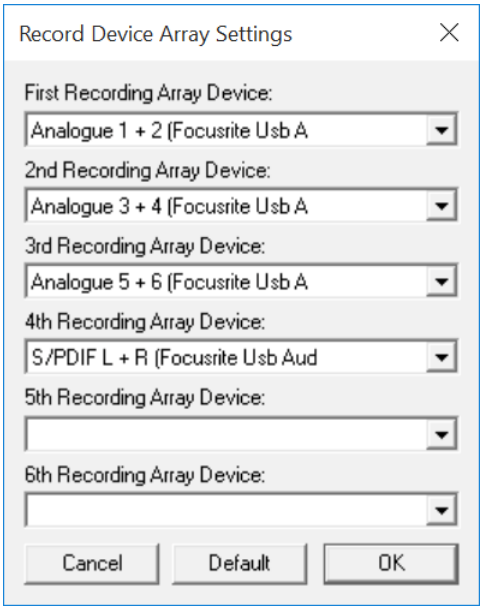
The value should be set to Checked.

### Force Recording at 44.1KHz

The value should be set to Checked.

## Recording Array Setup

Click on the Edit button next to the “First Recording Array Device” field to display the setup dialog for the individual microphone channels. This set of options controls how the individual inputs are recorded separately in SoniClear.




Set each of the recording array devices to the corresponding stereo pair device in the 18i8:

1. Analogue 1 + 2 (Microphones 1 and 2)
2. Analogue 3 + 4 (Microphones 3 and 4)
3. Analogue 5 + 6 (Microphones 1-4)
4. S/PDIF L + R (Remote Participant Audio Only)

## Playback Device Selection

The Playback Device Selection section of the Hardware tab controls the usage of the sound cards in the computer during playback.

### Default Speaker Device Selection

This is the sound card that will be used for playback to the participants in the room (through the speaker), and to the remote participants (through the conference software). It also sends the audio for playback to the headphones.

Set the Speaker Device Selection to “Playback 3-4”.

### Removable Recording Device

"Use Removable Device If Present" and "Automatically Set Removable Device" options should be unchecked.

### Enable Live Monitoring

Live monitoring should be enabled and the headphone device set to "Playback 7 + 8".

### Advanced Playback Options

These options control how playback is processed. These fields should only be changed in the event of problems with playback using the default settings. Consult SoniClear support for assistance.

### Monitor Delay

Monitor Delay should be set to the default of 3 seconds.

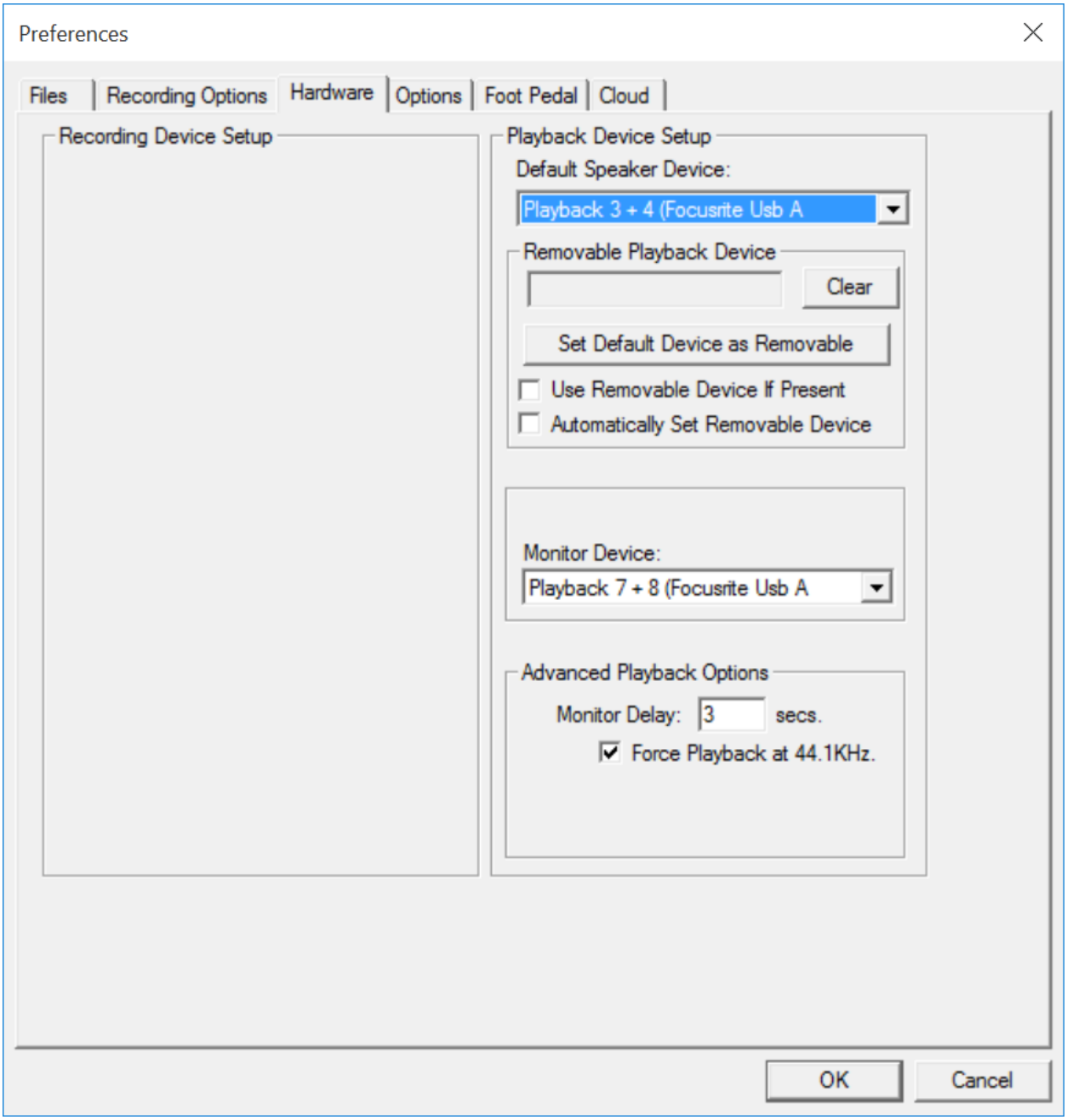
### Force Recording at 44.1KHz.

This field should be set to Checked.

# Transcriber Live Software Preferences

When Transcriber Live is used with SoniClear Court Recorder 9, the Focusrite 18i8 headphone can be used to monitor audio, and readbacks can be played so that the readback audio is heard by the teleconference participants.

Configure Transcriber Live for this usage in Edit/Preferences Hardware tab.



## Hardware Tab – Audio Device Selection

Select the Hardware tab and modify the settings according to the following instructions.

## Playback Device Selection

The Playback Device Selection section of the Hardware tab controls the usage of the sound cards in the computer during playback.

### Default Speaker Device Selection

This is the sound card that will be used for playback into the teleconference call (like playing into speakers in the room when meeting in person). Set the device to “Playback 3-4”.

### Removable Recording Device

The “Use Removable Device If Present” and “Automatically Set Removable Device” check boxes should be unchecked.

### Enable Live Monitoring

Enable live monitoring by checking this option. Set the Headphone device to “Playback 7 + 8”.

### Advanced Playback Options

These options control how playback is processed. These fields should only be changed in the event of problems with playback using the default settings. Consult SoniClear support for assistance if this happens.

### Monitor Delay

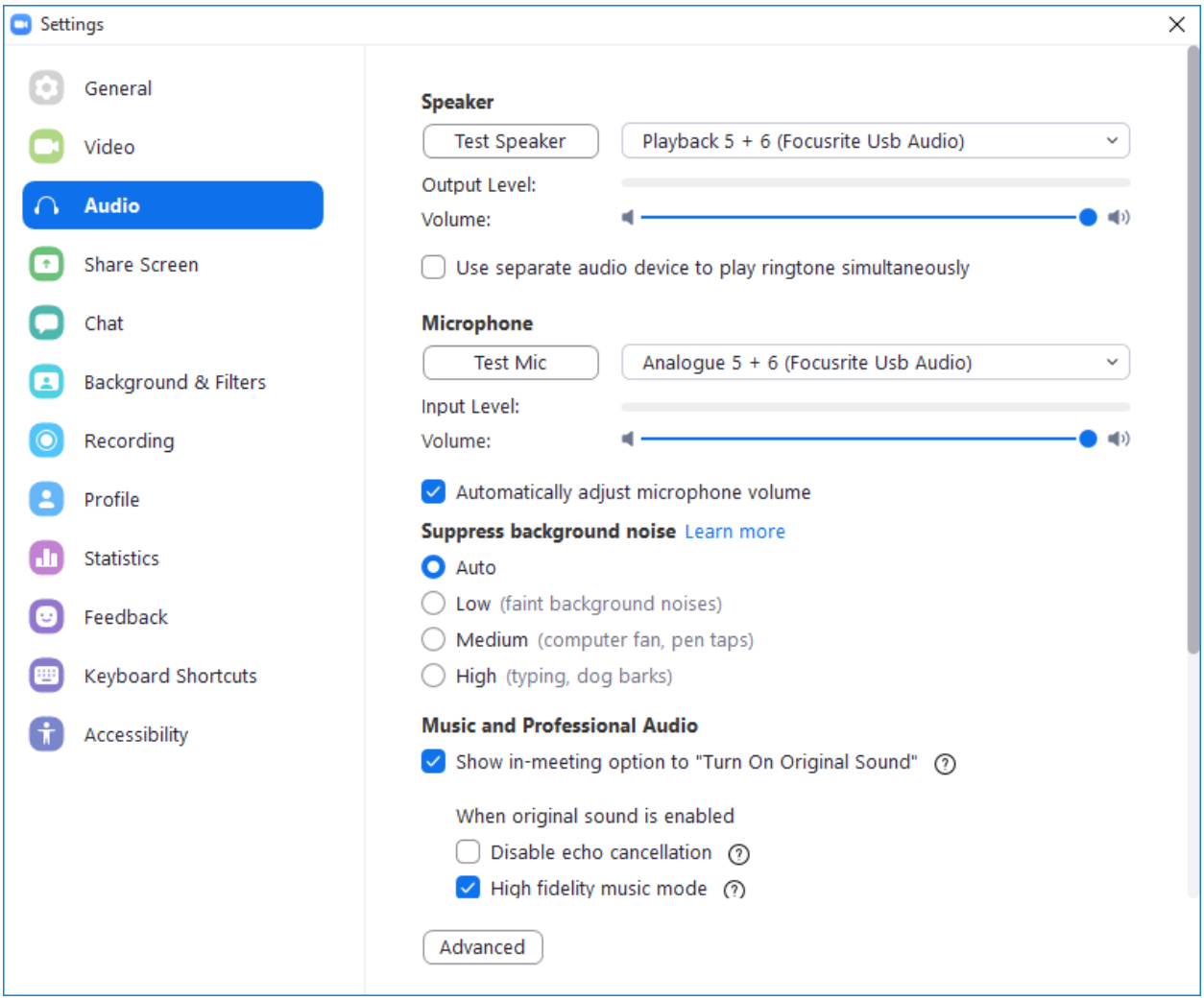
Monitor Delay should be set to the default of 3 seconds.

### Force Recording at 44.1KHz.

This field should be set to Checked.

# Zoom Conferencing Software Configuration

The Zoom conferencing application must be manually set to the correct configuration to work with the Focusrite 18i8 interface.

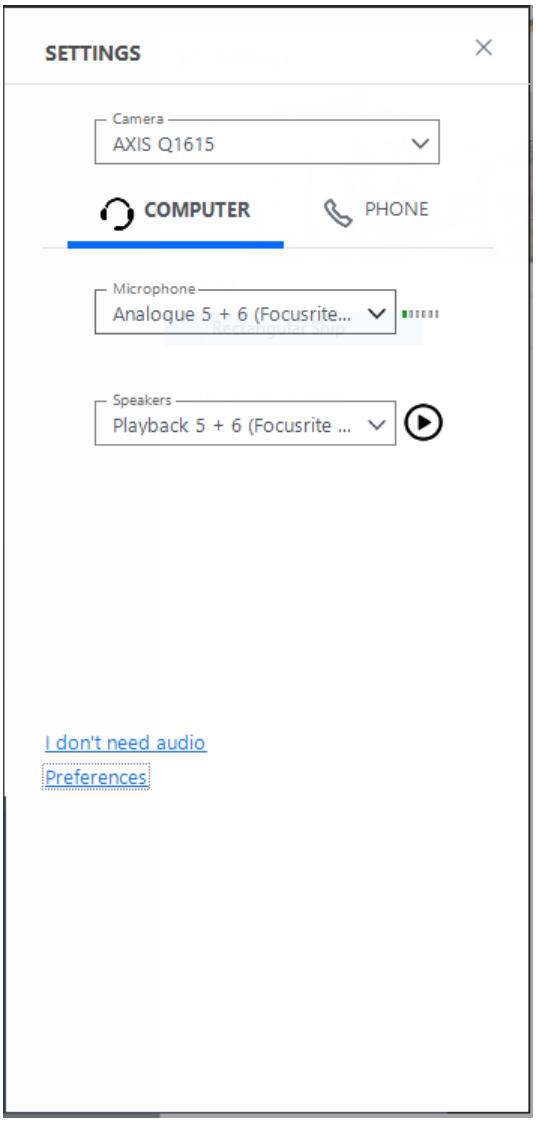



Set the Speaker device to “Playback 5-6”.

Set the Microphone device to “Analogue 5 + 6”.

# GoToMeeting Conferencing Software Configuration

The GoToMeeting conferencing application must be manually set to the correct configuration to work with the Focusrite 18i8 interface.

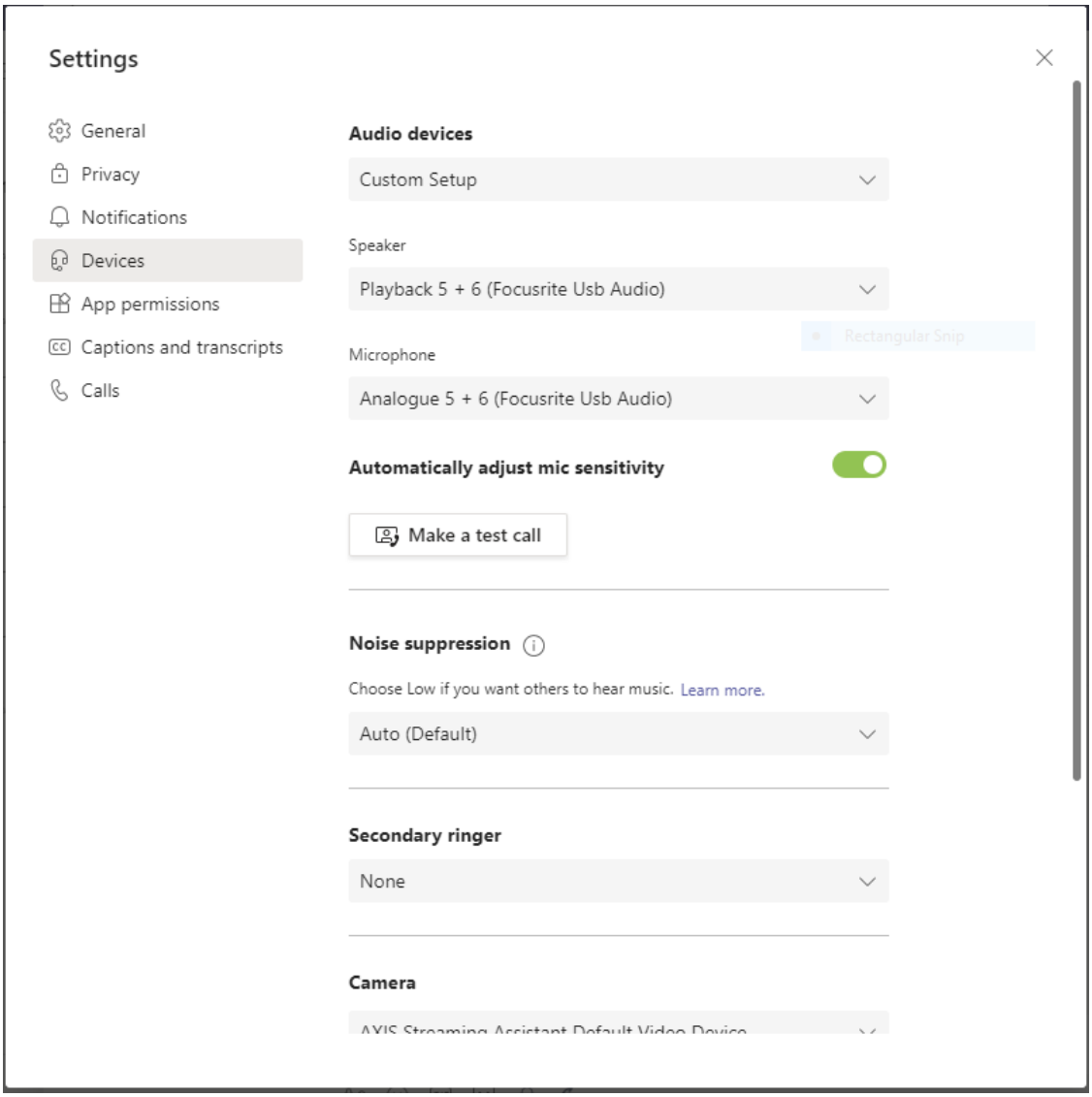



Set the Microphone device to “Analogue 5 + 6”.

Set the Speakers device to “Playback 5 + 6”.

# Teams Conferencing Software Configuration

The Microsoft Teams conferencing application must be manually set to the correct configuration to work with the Focusrite 18i8 interface.

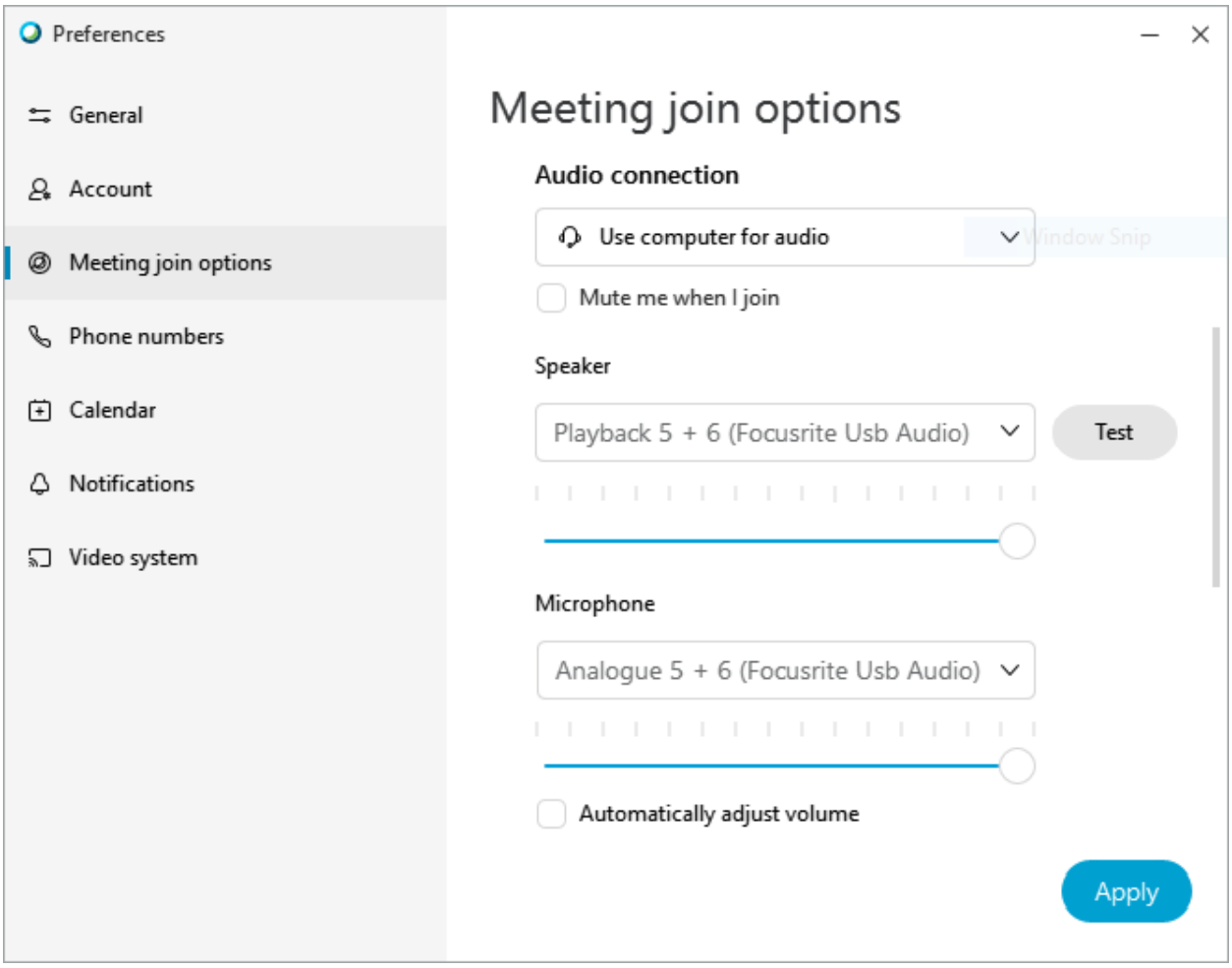



Set the Speaker device to “Playback 5 + 6”.

Set the Microphone device to “Analogue 5 + 6”.

# WebEx Conferencing Software Configuration

The Cisco WebEx conferencing application must be manually set to the correct configuration to work with the Focusrite 18i8 interface.




Set the Speaker device to “Playback 5 + 6”.

Set the Microphone device to “Analogue 5 + 6”.

# Other Communication Software Configuration

The communication software (such as a softphone app) must be set up to work with the Focusrite 18i8 interface. To do this, follow the instructions provided for the communication software for configuring audio devices.

Set speaker device to “Playback 5 + 6”.

Set the microphone device to “Line 5 + 6”.

# Windows App Software Playback Configuration

The Focusrite 18i8 can be used to play back audio from software programs on the computer. With this configuration the audio being played back can be heard by the conference call participants and on the 18i8 monitoring headphones. The playback audio will also be recorded in SoniClear.

A typical application would be to play a video file on the computer for conference participants to hear. Any software that plays to the default speaker will be heard and recorded properly.