

HA2 Hybrid Audio Kit
with the Focusrite 4i4 - 4th Gen
OPERATION GUIDE



About This Manual

This manual covers the installation and usage of the SoniClear Hybrid 4 Audio Kit, based on the Focusrite 4i4. This kit is designed for use with all SoniClear digital recording software products.

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Contents

HA2 Operation.....	5
Overview.....	5
Using Microphones.....	6
Adjusting Windows App Playback Volume.....	6
Adjusting Remote Participant Volume.....	7
Listening using Headphones.....	8
Listening using Speakers.....	8
Using a Backup Recorder.....	8
Playback from Windows Software.....	8
Additional Usage Notes.....	8
Resetting All Controls.....	9
Focusrite 4i4 Loopback Kit Installation.....	10
Hardware Installation.....	10
Overview.....	10
USB Interface.....	10
Power Connection.....	10
Microphone Connections.....	10
Speaker Connection.....	11
Backup Recorder Connection.....	11
Hardware Loopback Connections.....	11
Focusrite 4i4 Software Installation.....	13
Drivers.....	13
Installing Presets.....	13
Focusrite 4i4 Manual Configuration.....	14
Overview.....	14
How to Open Focusrite Control Panels.....	14
Input Controls.....	16
Mixer Controls.....	17
Mix A with Headphones Preset.....	18
Mix A with Speakers Preset.....	19
Mix B – Conference Call Loopback.....	20
Mix C – SoniClear Recording Audio.....	21
Preferences Settings.....	22
Focusrite Driver Settings.....	23
Expose Windows Channels.....	23

Windows Sound Settings	24
Default Playback Device.....	24
Default Recording Device.....	25
SoniClear Software Preferences.....	26
Overview.....	26
Recording Options Tab - Sound Quality.....	26
Hardware Tab – Audio Device Selection.....	28
Transcriber 10 Software Preferences	32
Hardware Tab – Audio Device Selection.....	33
Playback Device Selection.....	33
Zoom Conferencing Software Configuration.....	34
Teams Conferencing Software Configuration	35
WebEx Conferencing Software Configuration	36
Other Communication Software Configuration	37
Windows App Software Playback Configuration	37

HA2 Operation

Overview

The SoniClear HA2 Hybrid Audio Kit uses the Focusrite 4i4 4th Gen 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 the Focusrite 4i4 USB audio interface and cables kit. It can also be customized to include microphones, headphones, speakers, and backup recorders. Check the information provided with the shipment for details on any of these additions to the kit.

The Focusrite 4i4 must be installed correctly before use. See the section below, “Focusrite 4i4 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 one or two microphones and locate them in the meeting room to pick up all the participants. When working remotely, use one microphone and place it close to where you are sitting without being in the way of your work.

The HA2 kit is compatible with any professional microphone that uses an XLR connector. The kit can be customized with various microphone options when purchasing from SoniClear. Typical microphones that are included in the kit include:

- Audio Technica Pro44 conference microphone. Has a broad pickup from in front of the microphone, with rejection behind. It is suitable for recording several people sitting at a desk, or on one side of a conference table.
- Samson C02 hypercardioid pencil microphone. Has a very directional pickup pattern. This allows placement of the microphone (with the included desktop stand) on the table as arm's length distance from the user. It is suitable for picking up a single person sitting in front of the microphone.
- Acoustic Magic Voice Tracker 3 full room microphone. This microphone option allows for pickup of a large room, with range of about 20 feet around the microphone.
- Jabra Evolve Headset. Has an effective noise cancelling microphone for participating in remote conference calls while in a noisy environment.
- Stenomask microphone. For verbatim reporting, this option allows the court reporter to capture the mask track on one channel while using one microphone to record the speaking in the room on the second channel.

Microphone levels are adjusted using the "GAIN" knobs on the front of the Focusrite 4i4: 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. The best recording will be achieved when the ring lights up green and sometimes yellow (but not red), when participants are speaking at a normal level.

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

Note that when the gain on the 4i4 has been turned all the way down, it does not mute the sound entirely. To have complete silence on a channel, it is necessary to add an external XLR microphone mute switch, such as Whirlwind MicMute PPD desktop switch, or the Hosa GMS-274 in-line switch.

Adjusting Windows App Playback Volume

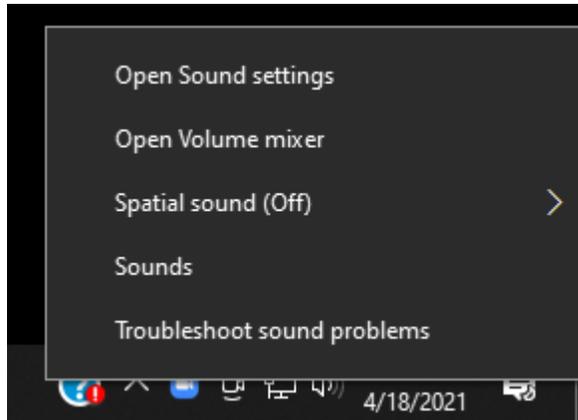
There are no physical controls on the Focusrite 4i4 for adjusting the playback level of Windows apps. You can adjust the volume for playback using the speaker control in the in the application involved, the speaker volume control for Windows. Alternatively, you can use the Focusrite mixer control panel to adjust the level of playback in the mix.

Adjusting Remote Participant Volume

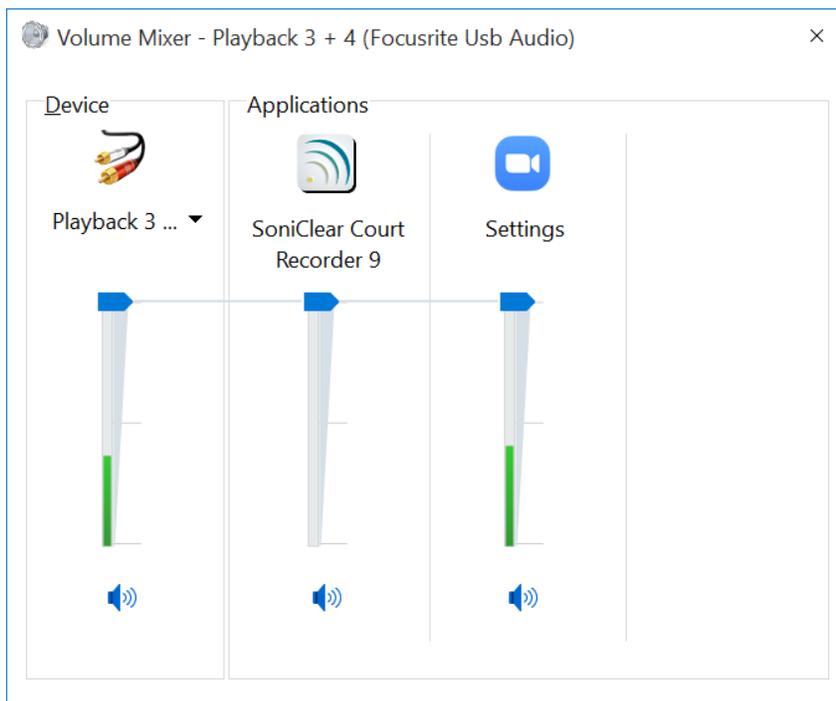
There are no physical controls on the Focusrite 4i4 for adjusting the playback level of remote callers on Zoom or softphones. Normally the automatic level of audio from the conferencing software will be correct using the default settings.

To adjust the volume of playback or remote callers, use the speaker control in the conferencing software (such as Zoom), or use the Windows Volume Mixer control panel using the following instructions.

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 3 + 4” and use the Volume Mixer sliders to adjust levels of the remoted participants as needed.

Alternatively, you can use the Focusrite mixer control panel to adjust the level of playback in the mix.

Listening using Headphones

There is a headphone jack on the front of the 4i4 interface for listening to participants and monitoring audio from SoniClear. Plug the monitor headphone into the Headphone jack. A ¼” to 3.5mm adapter is included for headphones that use a 3.5mm plug. Select the “Headphone” preset (in the lower left corner of the control panel) to enable the headphone mix. 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. Select the “Speakers” preset to enable the speaker mix. The large “MONITOR” knob is provided for controlling the level of the speaker.

Using a Backup Recorder

You can also use a backup recorder that has a Line-In input with the HA2 kit when using the Headphones preset option. Instead of connecting a speaker, the included Y adapter plugged into Output 1 and 2 can be plugged into the backup recorder. The mix provided by the output includes both microphones, the audio from the online participants, monitoring audio heard through the headphones, and any readback or audio playback heard by the online participants.

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 Select button switches the mode of the other switches between the two microphone inputs. Adjust both inputs according to the following instructions.
2. The INST, AIR, SAFE, and PAD lights should be off (white color). 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.
3. The button marked “48V” should always be on (illuminated green). Turning off the 48-volt phantom power will result in the microphone audio turning off.
4. 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 4i4 settings are accidentally changed, the default will need to be restored manually (see “*Focusrite 4i4 Manual Configuration*” below).

Focusrite 4i4 Loopback Kit Installation

Hardware Installation

Overview

The Focusrite 4i4 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 4i4 USB audio interface mixer (2 microphone channels)
- Short ¼” TRS audio loopback cables (2)
- Speaker/Backup Y cable, ¼” TRS to 3.5mm mini stereo jack (Hosa Y-MFS-2SP)
- Headphone adapter, 3.5mm to ¼” stereo plug

Options:

- Audio Technica Pro44 conference style microphone
- Samson C02 microphone and desk stand
- Acoustic Magic Voice Tracker 3
- Noise Cancelling Headset with Rode VXLRL+ Adapter
- Fostex Powered Speaker for medium-sized rooms

USB Interface

The Focusrite 4i4 interface requires a USB 3.0 connection on the computer using the included USB C to USB A cable. The 4i4 should only be connected directly to a port on the computer, a manufacturer supplied docking station, or a SoniClear approved USB Hub. Connecting it to a generic 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 of the USB C to USB A cable.

Power Connection

When using the included USB C to USB A cable, you will need to connect the included power supply. If you are using a USB C to USB C cable, the Focusrite 4i4 can be powered from the USB connection. In that case the power supply is not needed.

Microphone Connections

The HA2 Hybrid Kit can be configured with one or two microphones, or with a noise cancelling headset.

Connect at least one microphone or a headset to the 4i4 microphone input. 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 4i4.

Speaker Connection

A speaker can be plugged into Monitor outputs (Outputs 1-2) on the back of the 4i4, using the supplied Y cable. The Y cable plugs into the ¼” TRS “Line Outputs 1 and 2 jacks on the back of the 4i4. When using a speaker to listen to an online conference call, you will need to switch the Presets button to indicate “Speakers” option. The headphones will still be active but will not provide the ability to preview audio before playing back into the call.

Backup Recorder Connection

A user-supplied backup recorder can be connected to the speaker Y adapter cable that is plugged into Output 1 and 2 on the back of the mixer. The “HEADPHONES” preset must be selected. The recorder must have an input for line-level audio (it is not compatible with microphone-level inputs). For recorders with a 3.5mm line-in input, connect a 3.5mm cable to the speaker Y cable jack. If the recorder requires an XLR or ¼” TRS type of line-in input, a user-supplied cable can be used to connect to the recorder.

Hardware Loopback Connections

An audio loopback circuit is required for using the mixer with remote conference calls. This is set up using ¼” TRS cables.

Connect the two analog ¼” TRS cables on the back of the 4i4 interface:

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





Close up of 1/4" TRS Loopback Cables. Note: Color of cables may vary.

Focusrite 4i4 Software Installation

Drivers

The Focusrite 4i4 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://downloads.focusrite.com/focusrite/scarlett-4th-gen/scarlett-4i4-4th-gen>

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.

Installing Presets

The Focusrite 4i4 requires configuration for compatibility with SoniClear. At this time, the Focusrite Control 2 software does not support configuring the settings from a preset file. The manual instructions below will need to be followed to set up a new mixer or reset the mixer settings if a change has been made.

Focusrite 4i4 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 4i4 Mixing / Routing control panel and then follow the instructions provided in this section of the Operation Guide.

Overview

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

- In-Person Meetings
- Remote Meetings
- Hybrid Meetings

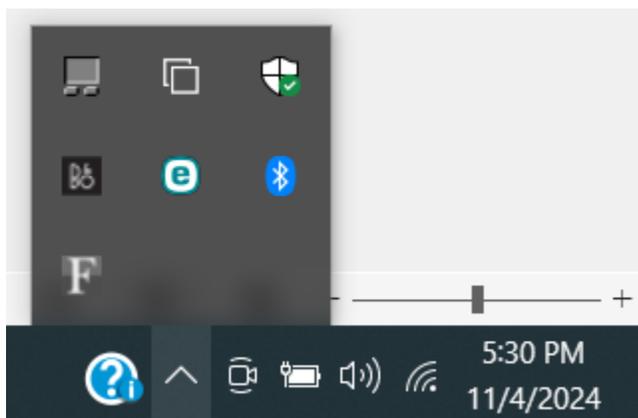
This requires the ability to capture audio from microphones in the room, and from any computer-based conferencing software. It is also necessary to be able to play back recorded audio to the participants (local and remote) and to play audio from other Windows applications.

To accomplish this, the Focusrite 4i4 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.

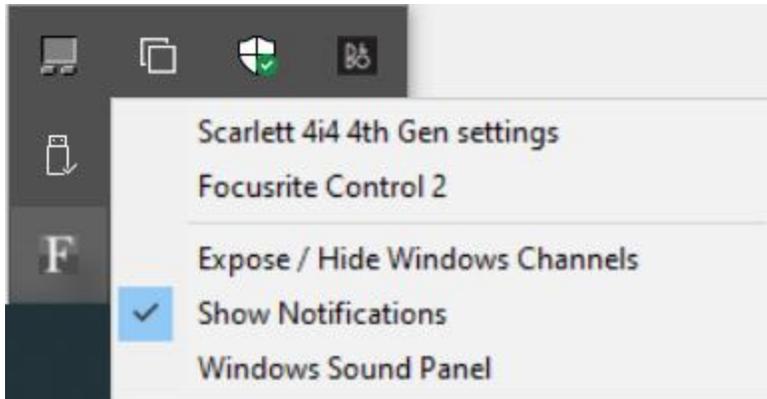
In addition, the preferences can be configured to support live monitoring from headphones or a powered speakers attached to the mixer.

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):



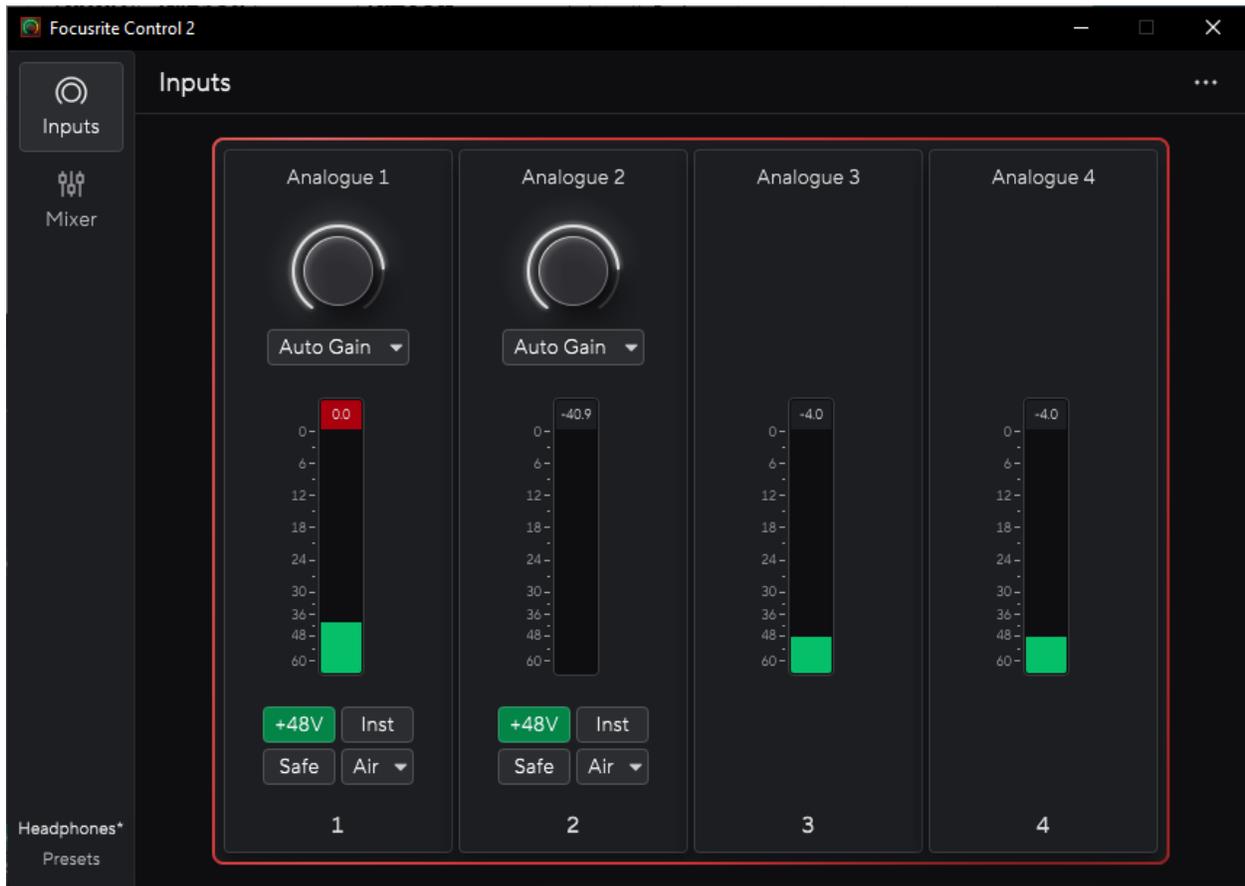
Then left click on the Focusrite control icon :



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

Select “Focusrite Control 2” to display the Focusrite control panel.

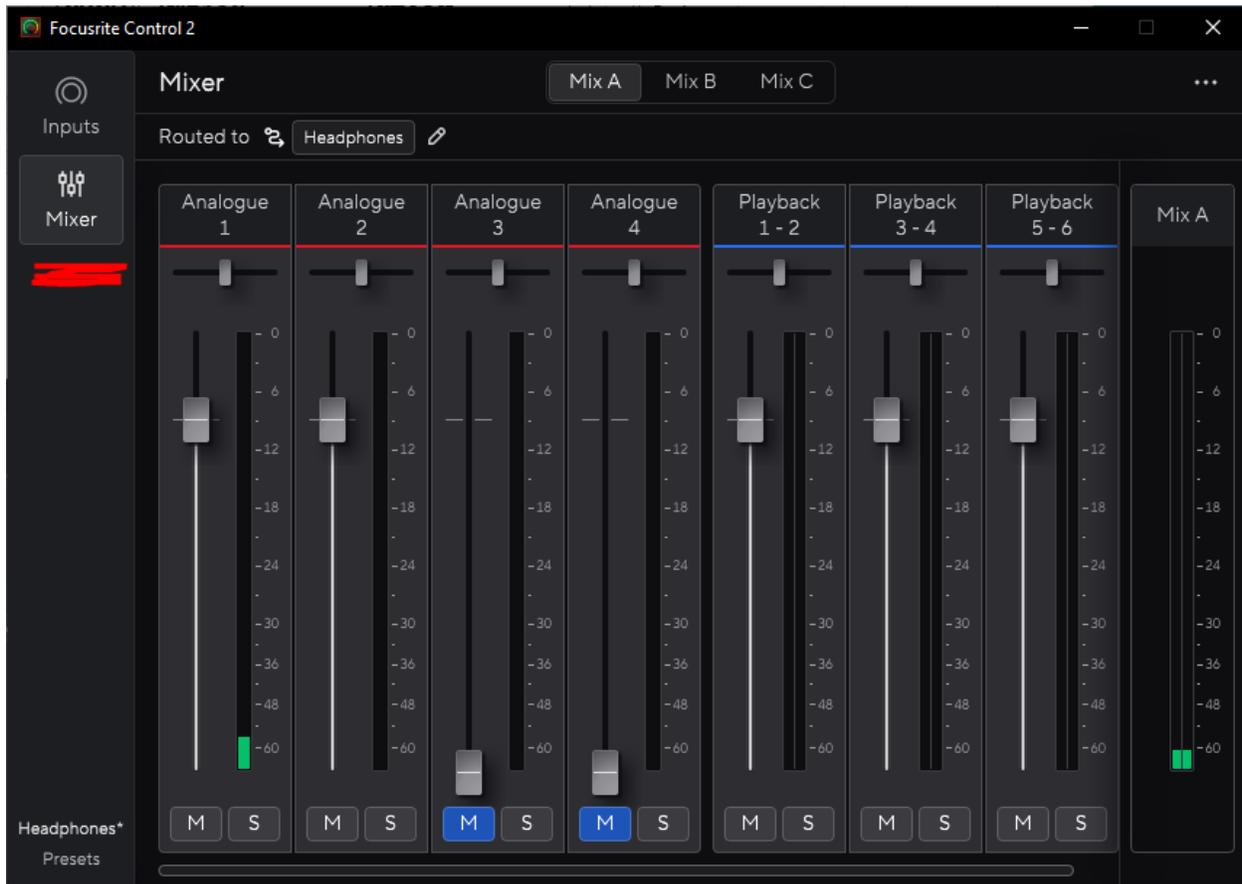
Input Controls



The Inputs section allows control of the microphone channels on the screen. These are the same as the hardware controls on the front of the mixer. The proper settings for SoniClear are:

- +48V – Phantom microphone power – ON
- Inst – Instrument input – OFF
- Safe – Automatic level overload adjustment – OFF
- Air – Music enhancement – OFF

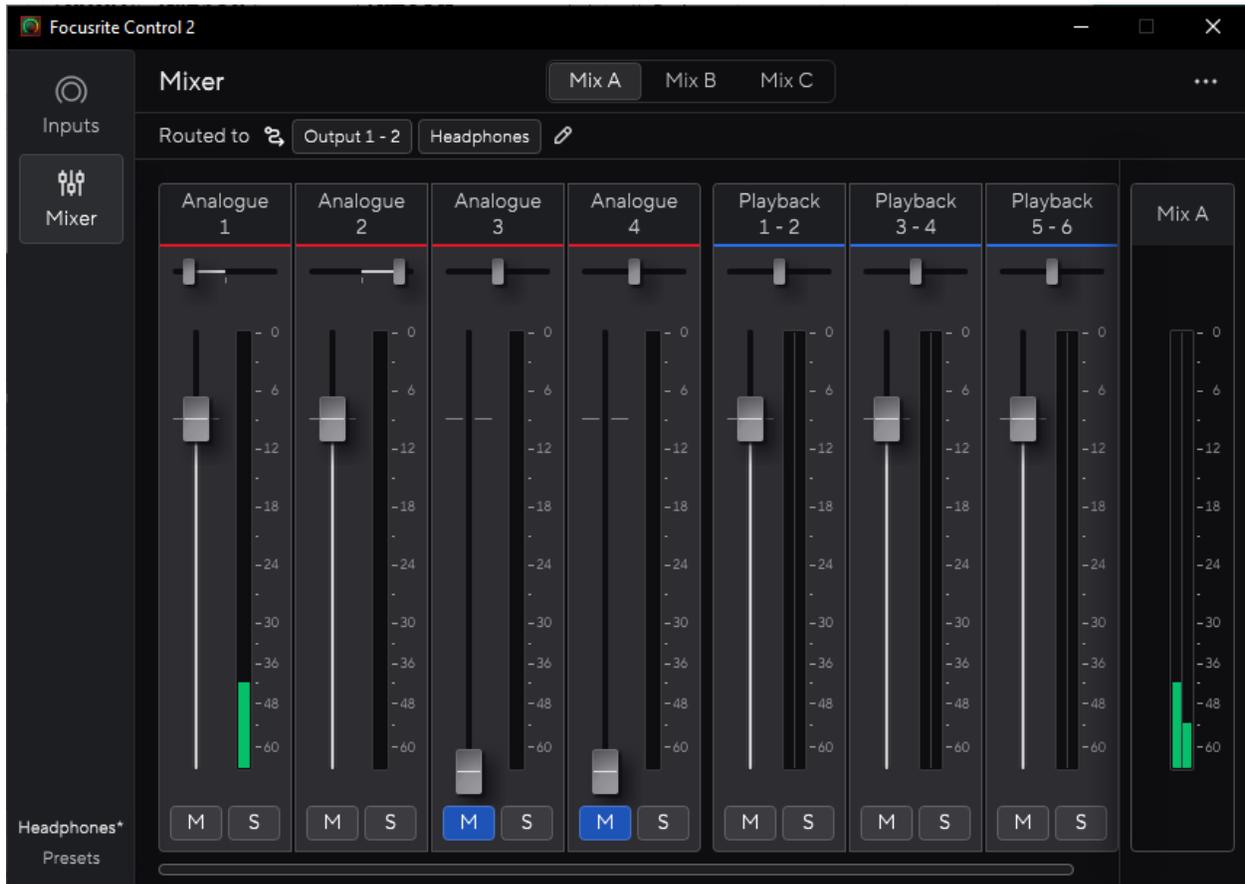
Mixer Controls



Open the Mixer panel by clicking the Mixer button in the left panel. There are three mixes to configure:

- Mix A** When the HEADPHONES preset is selected, this is a mix of all microphones, the conference call audio, the Windows default playback audio, and the Playback 5+6 preview playback channels.
- When the SPEAKERS preset is selected, this is a mix of just the playback channels for listening on the speakers (the conference call audio and the Windows playback audio, but no audio from the microphones or the Playback 5+6 preview channel).
- Mix B** Stereo Mix of all playback channels sent to Output 3+4 for providing a hardware loopback of the Mix-Minus signal sent to the conferencing software.
- Mix C** This is the audio recorded in SoniClear, which includes all microphones, the conference call audio, and the Windows default playback audio, but does not include the Playback 5+6 preview playback channels.

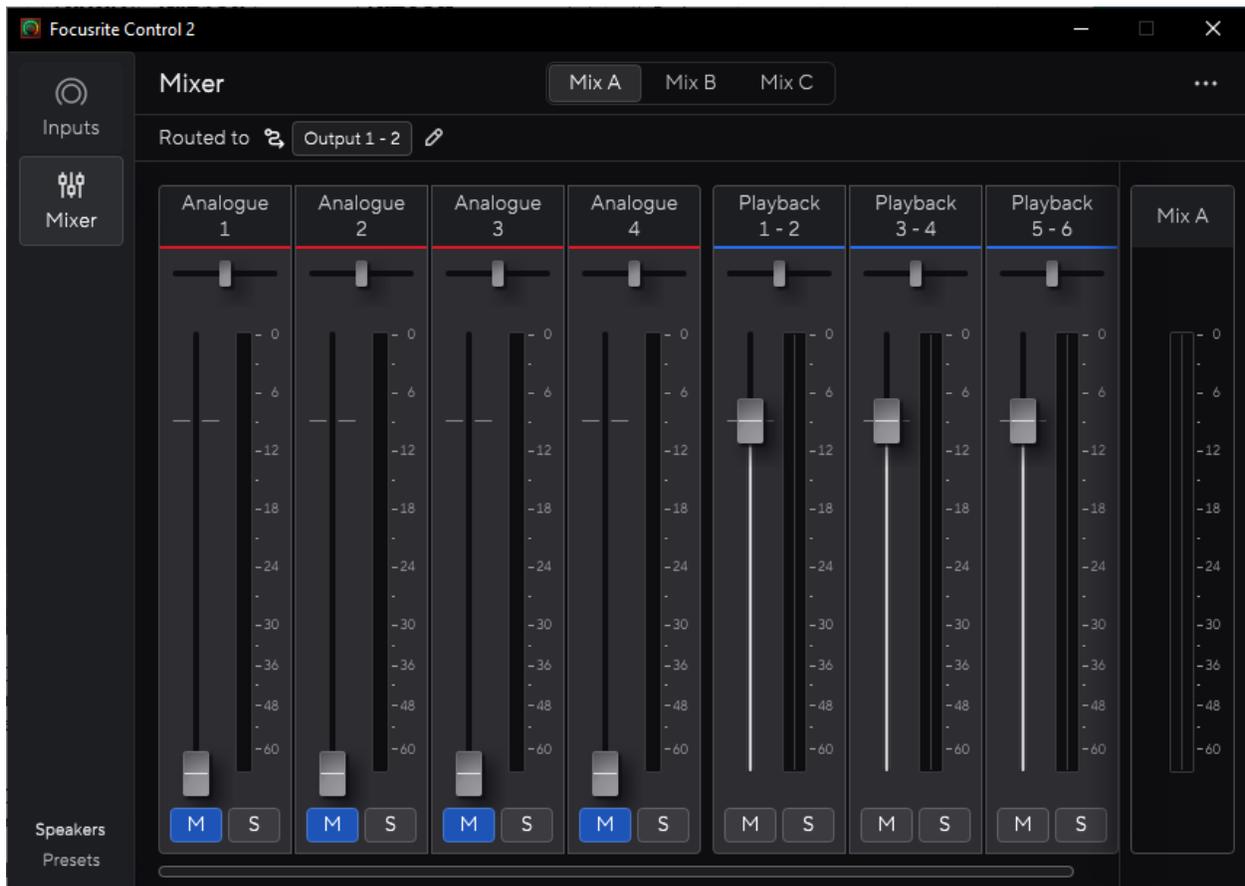
Mix A with Headphones Preset



The Monitor Outputs 1-2 mix is routed to the headphone jack on the front of the 4i4 unit and the Output 1-2 jacks on the back of the unit (for backup recording).

Mic 1-2		On
Line-In 3-4	(Mix-Minus for Conference App)	Mute
Playback 1-2	(SoniClear and Windows App Playback)	On
Playback 3-4	(Conference Call Participants Audio)	On
Playback 5-6	(Confidential Monitor and Playback)	On

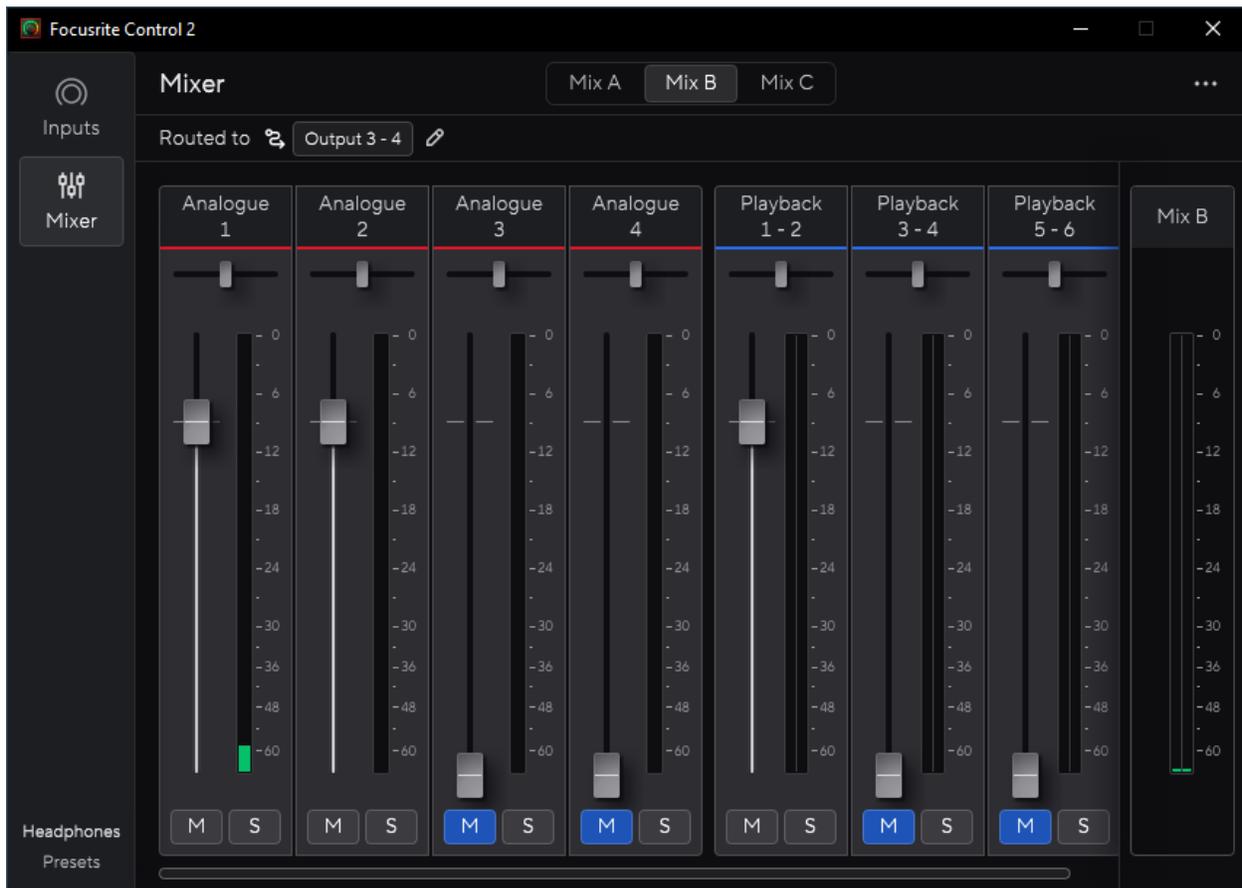
Mix A with Speakers Preset



The Monitor Outputs 1-2 mix is routed to the Output 1-2 line-out jacks on the back of the 4i4 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 1-2	Mute
Line-In 3-4 (Stereo Mix for Recording and Monitoring)	Mute
Playback 1-2 (SoniClear and Windows App Playback)	On
Playback 3-4 (Conference Call Participants Audio)	On
Playback 5-6 (Confidential Monitor and Playback)	Mute

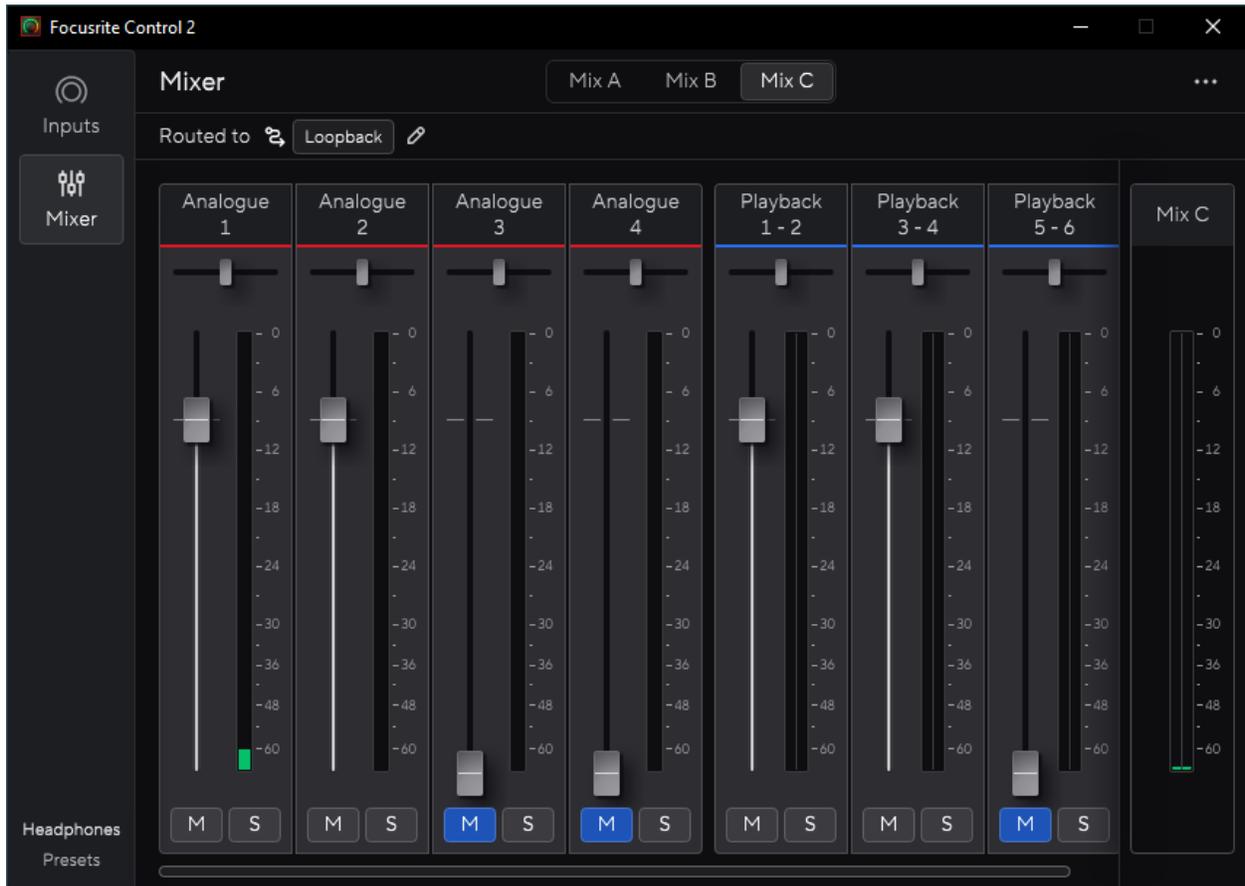
Mix B – Conference Call Loopback



Mix B is the audio sent to the conference call using the physical loopback cables on the back of the mixer.

Mic 1-2	On
Line-In 3-4 (Stereo Mix for conferencing software)	Mute
Playback 1-2 (SoniClear and Windows App Playback)	On
Playback 3-4 (Conference Call Participants Audio)	Mute

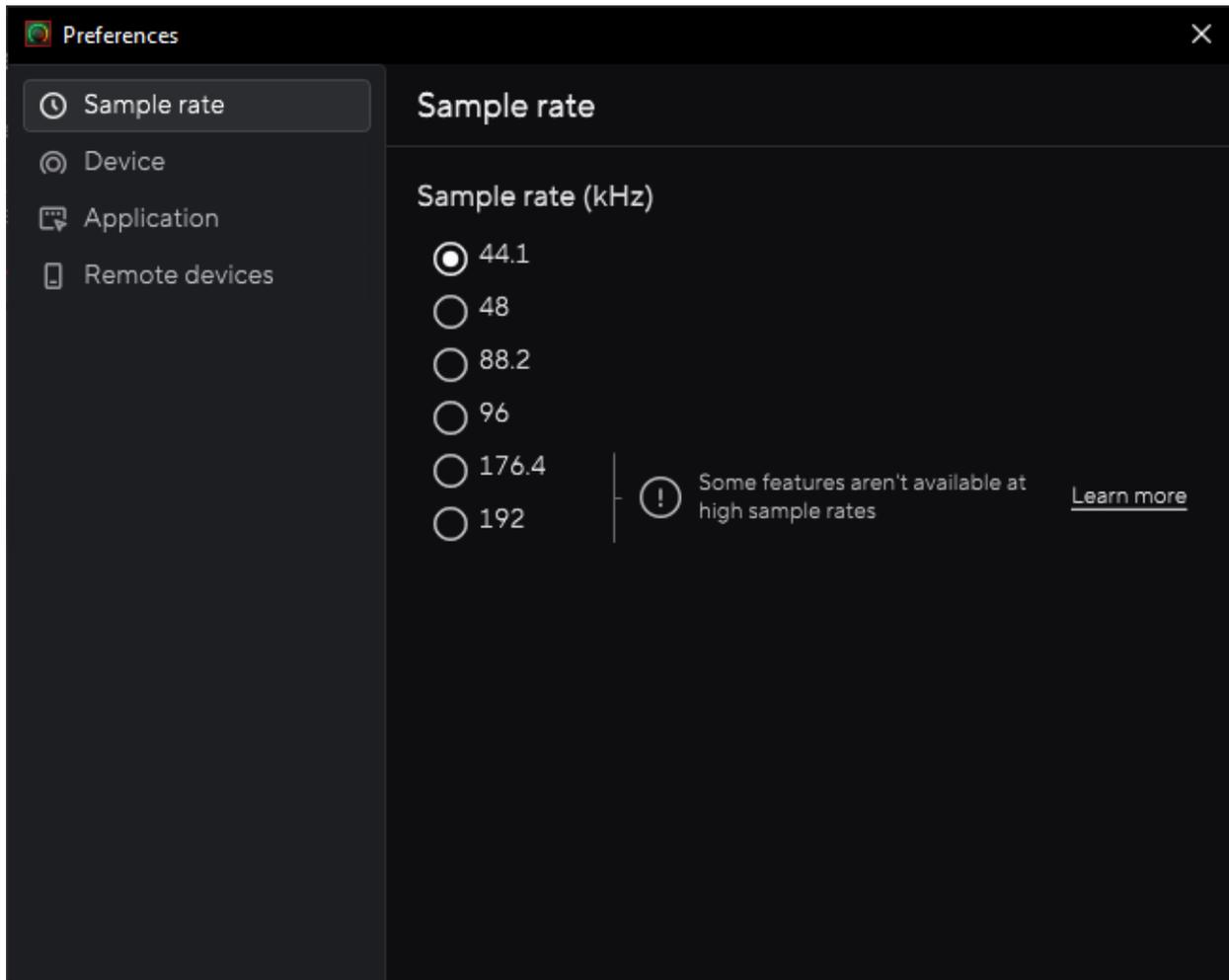
Mix C – SoniClear Recording Audio



Mix C contains all the audio being recorded in SoniClear.

Mic 1-2	On
Line-In 3-4 (Stereo Mix for conferencing software)	Mute
Playback 1-2 (SoniClear and Windows App Playback)	On
Playback 3-4 (Conference participant audio)	On
Playback 5-6 (Headphone monitoring audio)	Off

Preferences Settings



While in the Focusrite Control 2 display, click on the Settings button (three dots at the top right of the control panel). Then select Preferences.

Set the Sample Rate to 44.1 (kHz)

Focusrite Driver Settings

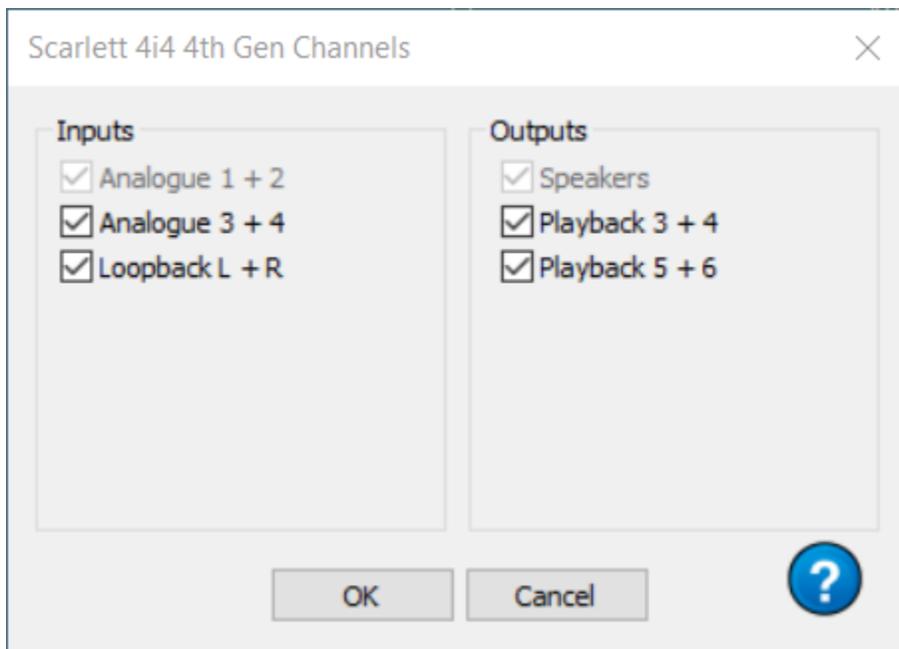
In addition to the mixer settings, the driver settings must be configured from the Focusrite control panels. Access the control panels by clicking on the system tray up-arrow icon, then left click on the Focusrite

icon :



Expose Windows Channels

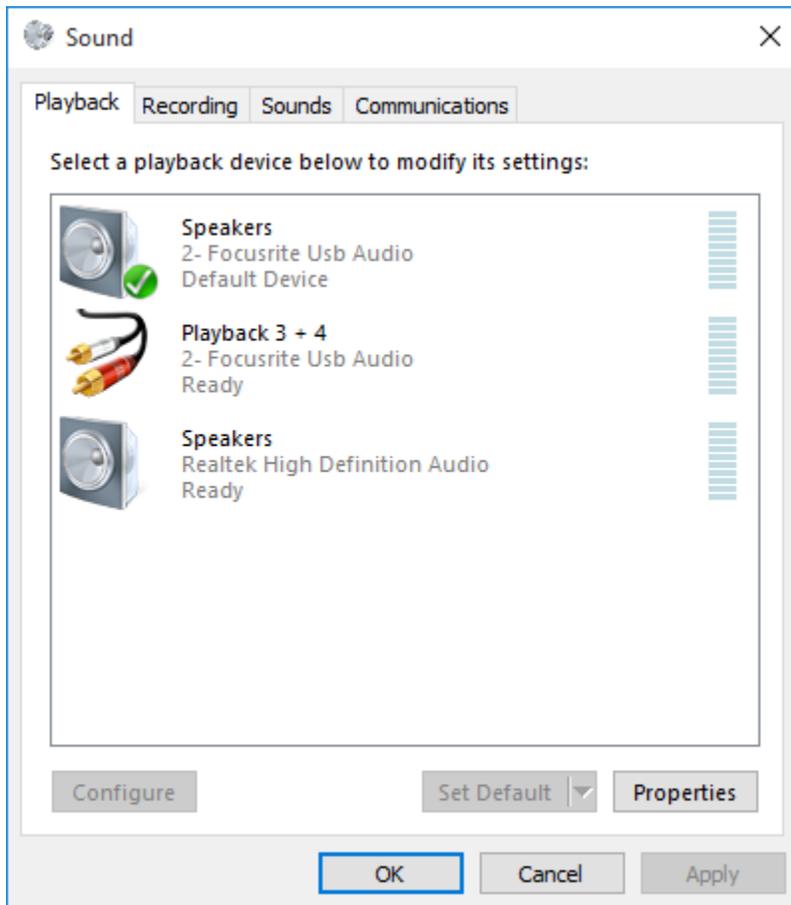
Select the “Expose / Hide Windows Channels” option from the above menu. This will display the Windows driver channels control panel. Enable (check) all inputs and outputs shown.



Windows Sound Settings

Default Playback Device

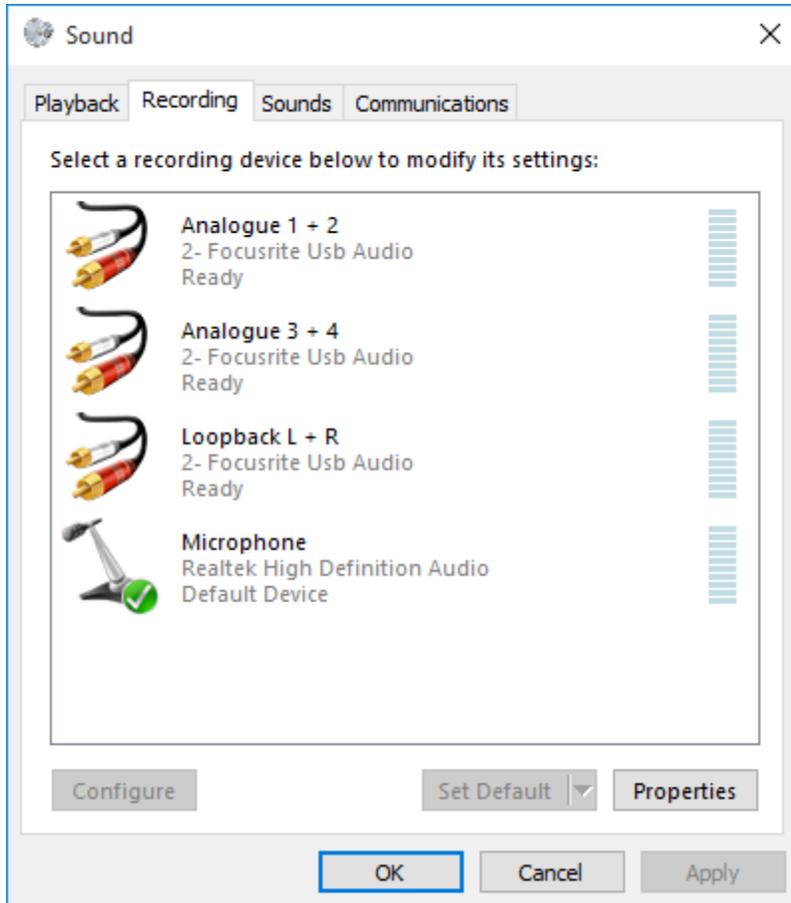
Select the “Windows Sound Panel” option from the Focusrite control icon in the system tray. This will display the Windows Playback settings control panel:



Set the Focusrite 4i4 Playback 1-2 audio to be the default playback device for Windows by selecting the Focusrite Usb Audio device 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 internal microphone 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 4i4 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 - 2
	Remote Conference or Softphone Participants
	SoniClear Readback Audio
	Windows Program Playback
Left	Microphone 1
	Remote Conference - Left
	SoniClear Playback Audio - Left
	Windows Program Playback - Left
Right	Microphone 2
	Remote Conference - Right
	SoniClear Playback Audio - Right
	Windows Program Playback – Right
1	Microphone 1
2	Microphone 2

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 4 channels.

Preferences - HA2 ✕

Files | Recording Options | Hardware | Markers | Options | Foot Pedal | License | Cloud

Sound Quality

Multichannel(WAV) Multichannel(MP3) 4 ▾

VoiceBoost

Exporting VoiceBoost Options

Custom

Display

Type: 2-Channel ▾ Set Defaults

Custom Name:

Always Confirm for Stop Recording
 Append Recording to End of File
 Enable Undo 2-Channel

OK Cancel

Hardware Tab – Audio Device Selection

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

The screenshot shows the 'Preferences - HA2' dialog box with the 'Hardware' tab selected. The dialog is divided into several sections:

- Recording Device Setup:**
 - Default Recording Device / Stereo Mix: Loopback L + R (2- Focusrite US)
 - Input Source: Not user selectable
 - First Recording Array Device: Analogue 1 + 2 (2- Focusrite US) [Edit]
- Removable Recording Device:**
 - Input Source: [Empty]
 - Buttons: Clear, Set Default Device as Removable
 - Options: Use Removable Device If Present, Automatically Set Removable Device
- Advanced Recording Options:**
 - Recording Priority: High
 - Disk Update Time: 5000 milliseconds
 - Options: MMCSS, Force Recording at 44.1KHz.
- Playback Device Setup:**
 - Default Speaker Device: Speakers (2- Focusrite USB Audi)
 - Removable Playback Device: [Empty] [Clear]
 - Buttons: Set Default Device as Removable
 - Options: Use Removable Device If Present, Automatically Set Removable Device
- Advanced Playback Options:**
 - Monitor Delay: 3 secs.
 - Options: Force Playback at 44.1KHz.

At the bottom right, there are 'OK' and 'Cancel' buttons.

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 4i4 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 4i4 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

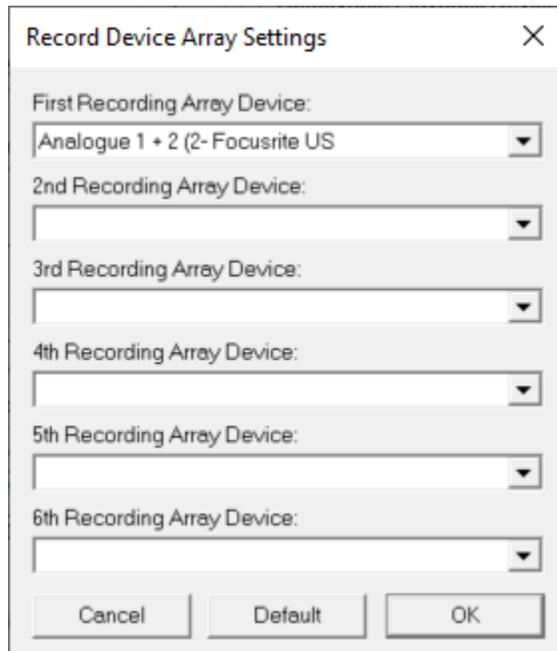
The value should be set to Checked.

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.



The image shows a dialog box titled "Record Device Array Settings" with a close button (X) in the top right corner. The dialog contains six dropdown menus, each labeled "Xth Recording Array Device" where X is a number from 1 to 6. The first dropdown menu is set to "Analogue 1 + 2 (2- Focusrite US)". The other five dropdown menus are empty. At the bottom of the dialog are three buttons: "Cancel", "Default", and "OK".

Set each of the recording array devices to the corresponding stereo pair device in the 4i4. Only the first Recording Array Device is used for recording the two microphone independently:

1. Analogue 1 + 2 (Microphones 1 and 2)

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 “Focusrite Audio”.

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 the internal headphone device on the computer.

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.

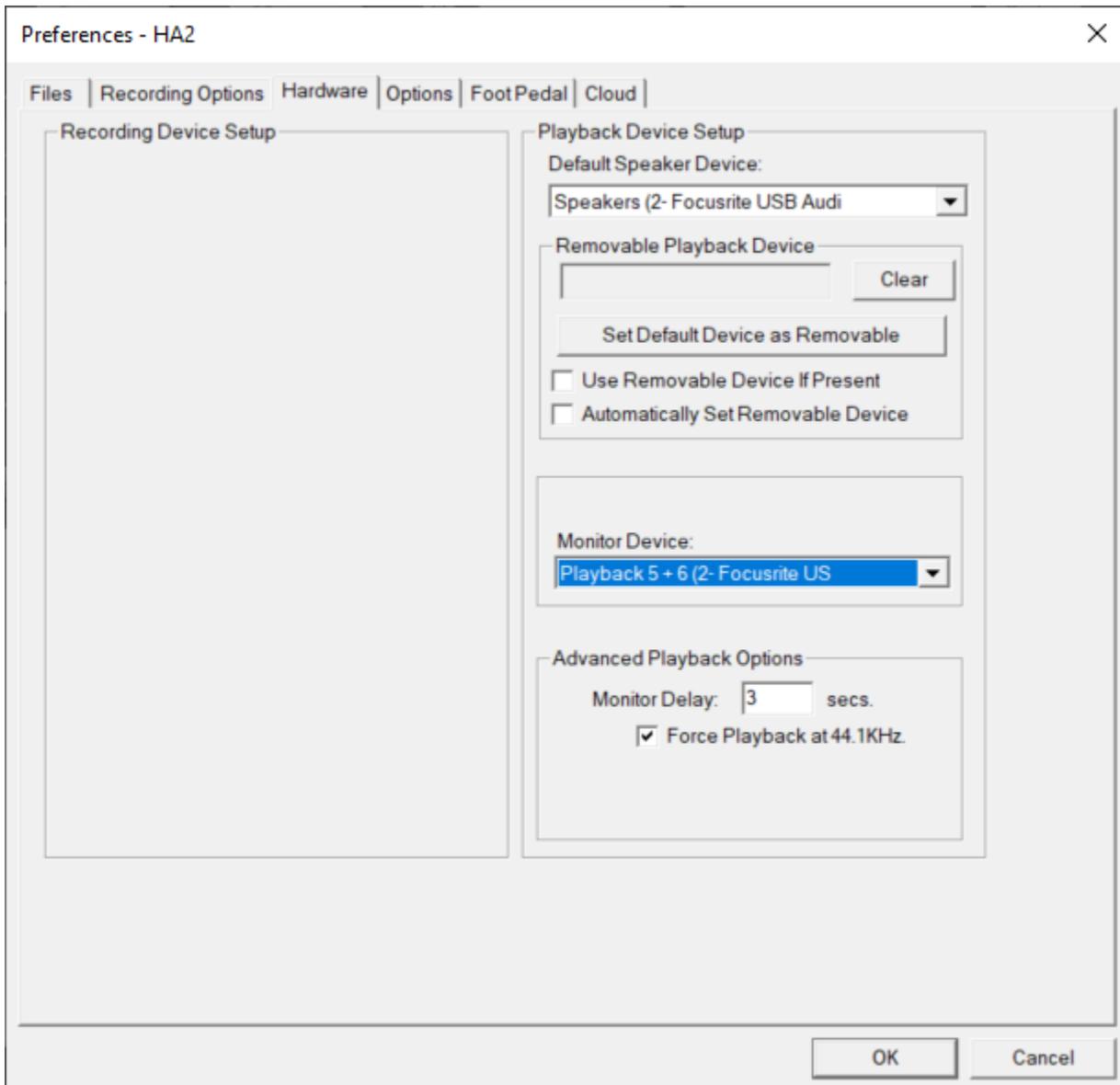
Force Recording at 44.1KHz.

This field should be set to Checked.

Transcriber 10 Software Preferences

When Transcriber 10 is used with SoniClear Court Recorder 10, the Focusrite 4i4 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 10 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 “Focusrite Audio”.

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 the Focusrite “Playback 5+6” device.

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

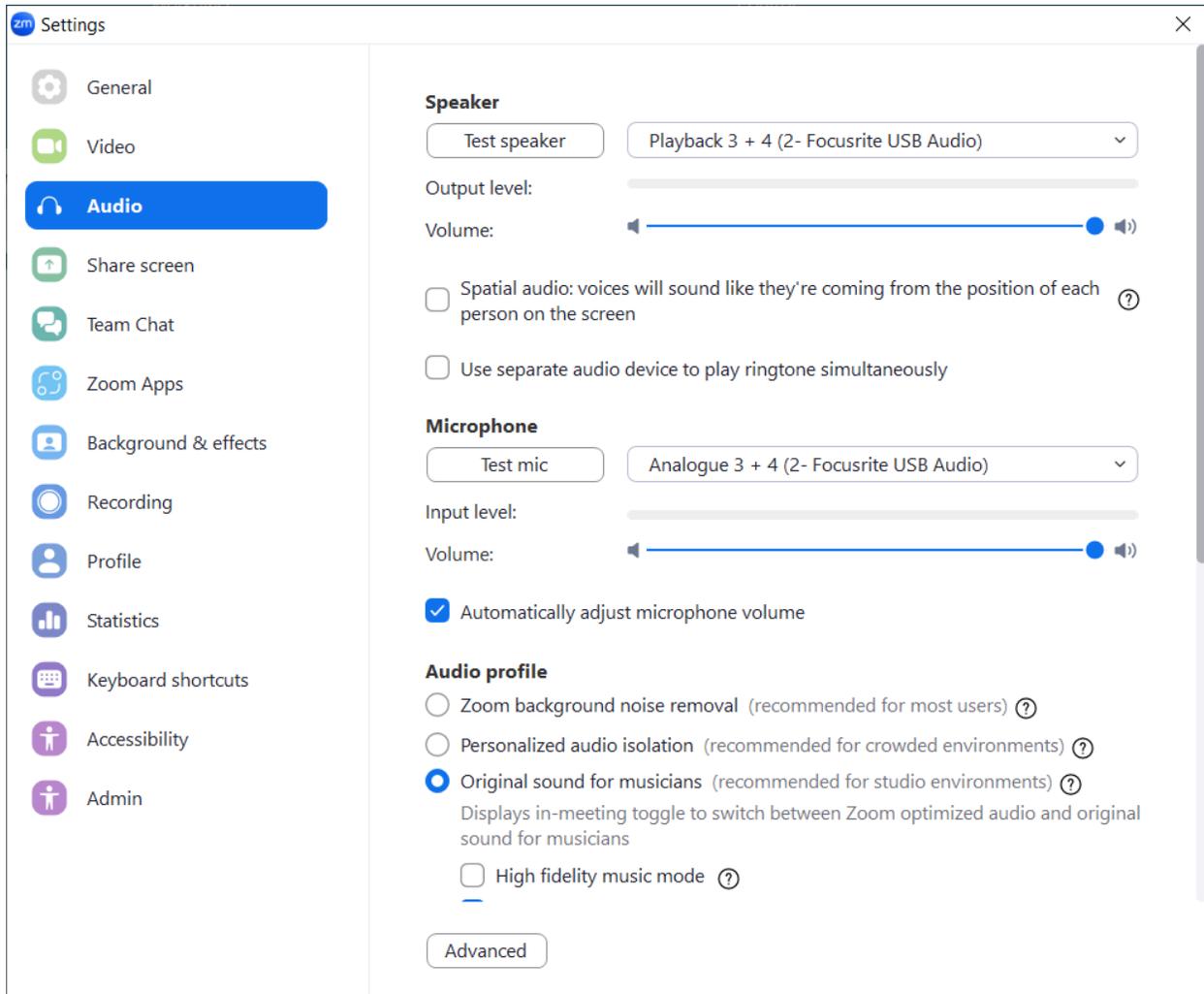
Monitor Delay should be set to the default of 3 seconds.

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 4i4 interface.



Set the Speaker device to “Playback 3 + 4”.

Set the Microphone device to “Analogue 3 + 4”.

Teams Conferencing Software Configuration

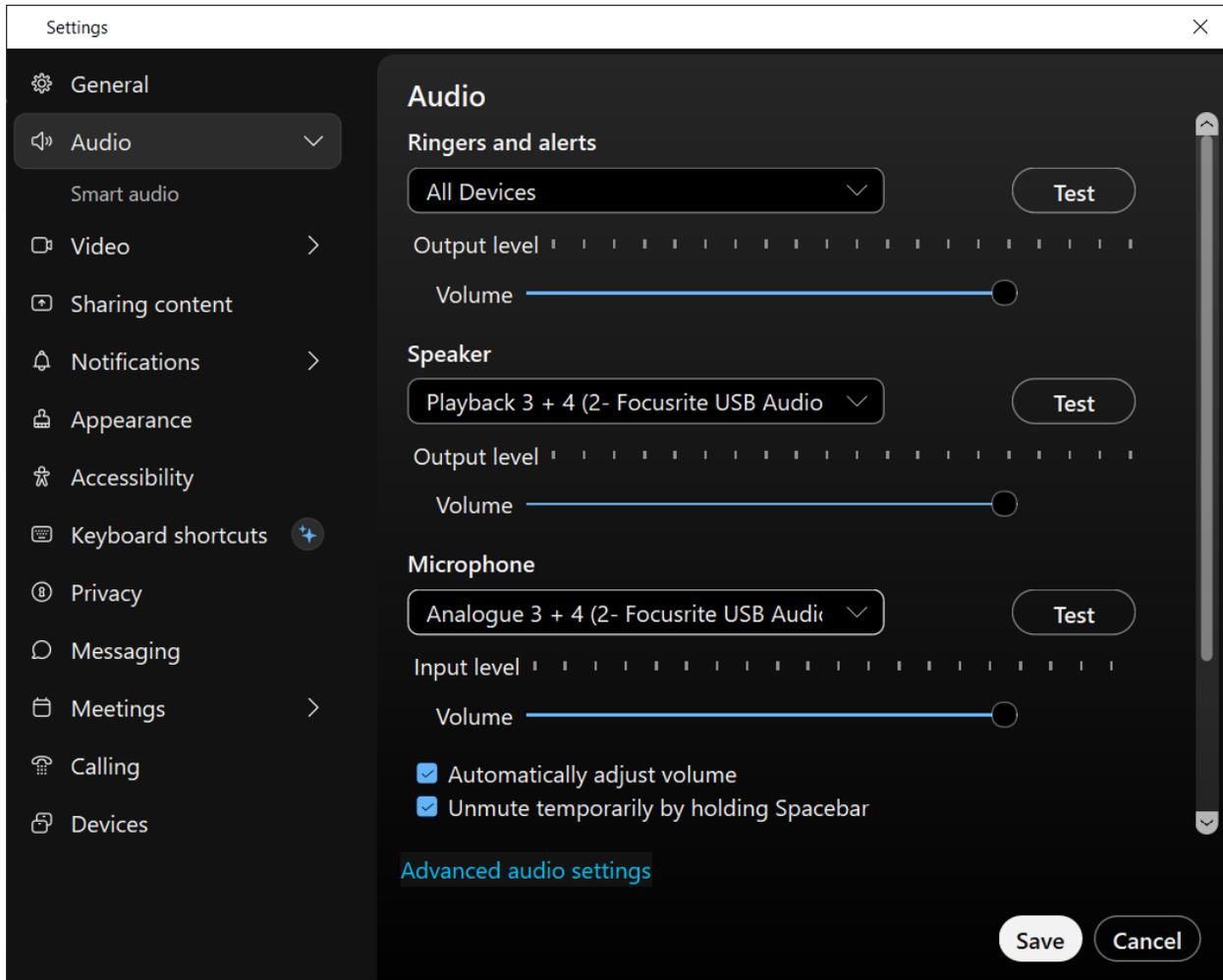
The Microsoft Teams conferencing application must be manually set to the correct configuration to work with the Focusrite 4i4 interface.

Set the Speaker device to “Playback 3 + 4”.

Set the Microphone device to “Analogue 3 + 4”.

WebEx Conferencing Software Configuration

The Cisco WebEx conferencing application must be manually set to the correct configuration to work with the Focusrite 4i4 interface.



Set the Speaker device to “Playback 3 + 4”.

Set the Microphone device to “Analogue 3 + 4”.

Other Communication Software Configuration

The communication software (such as a softphone app) must be set up to work with the Focusrite 4i4 interface. To do this, follow the instructions provided for the communication software for configuring audio devices, using the Mix Minus mix from the 4i4.

Set the Speaker device to “Playback 3 + 4”.

Set the Microphone device to “Analog 3 + 4”.

Windows App Software Playback Configuration

The Focusrite 4i4 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 4i4 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. If the Windows App has a setting for speaker playback, set to “Focusrite USB Audio”.