Windows Vista and Hercules Crystal Soundcards

We would like to draw your attention to some of the changes relative to Windows Vista that will affect how your Hercules soundcard will behave and operate:

1- Multi-channel rendering

With the launch of Windows Vista, Microsoft has removed DirectSound 3D Hardware support from Direct X. Applications using DirectSound and DirectSound3D will still function; however, they will no longer use hardware acceleration.

The card will react according to the source:

- Most sounds being Stereo (ex: iTunes), they will be outputted only through the Front speakers (and subwoofer, in case of a 2.1 system).

It is however possible for the card to reproduce the stereo signal on all outputs of a multi-channel speaker system (4.1 and superior). For this to take effect, be sure that **"Enable Virtualization"** is checked in the OTHER tab of the Hercules control panel before launching the application.

- Your Hercules soundcard is still be able to render multi-channel audio stream natively generated by an application (ex: a software DVD players), given that the appropriate speaker configuration has been set accordingly in the card's control panel.

2- Gameport

The use of the gameport connector for gaming accessories (such as joystick or wheel) is not possible under Windows Vista, as this functionality is no longer supported by Microsoft.

The MPU-401 function is however still present, so the gameport of your Hercules soundcard can still be used to connect external MIDI interfaces like music keyboards.

3- Digital Interface

Windows Vista now makes a distinction between analog and digital audio interfaces, making your soundcard appear as two separate playback devices.

This is important to remember when using the digital output (when playing DVDs for example), as it will need to be set as the default playback device. This can be done in **Control Panel > Sound > Playback**.

Also note that the default for the Digital Output Configuration in the Hercules Control panel is now set to "Power DVD software player"

4- <u>Headphone output</u>

Because of the way the soundcard is enumerated under Windows Vista, the headphone output will always be active (as a reproduction of the Front output), unless "7.1" channel configuration is selected. In this case, the headphone output will normally be used for Rear Center speakers. (for Fortissimo III 7.1 , Digifire 7.1 and GTXP 7.1).

5- <u>Default soundcard</u>

If another soundcard is present on your computer, it might be necessary to manually set your Hercules soundcard as default Playback and Recording device. This can be done from **Control Panel > Sound > Playback**.

6- <u>DLS soundbanks</u>

As Windows Vista doesn't support the use of hardware synths, the DLS soundbank tab is no longer accessible through the Hercules control panel.