

# Atlanta DistDance

## Information for Bands and Callers

V6, 12-11-2020. Updated for Zoom 5.4.4.

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## Introduction

*From the beginning, the Atlanta DistDance has been supported and assisted by these dedicated pioneers:*

- **Claire Takemori**
- **Eric Black**
- **Ian Brehm**
- **Drew Delaware**
- **Sherry Nevins**

*Eric and Ian published the earliest “how to” documents. We’ve taken ideas and some content from them and assert our gratitude to all listed above them.*

Atlanta DistDance puts on a mixed ECD and contra dance every Friday and an English Country Dance on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of each month as a service to our dance communities (and because it is a lot of fun).

Atlanta DistDance is these individuals: Seth Tepfer, Kimbi Hagen, Cis Hinkle, Robbin Marcus and Dave Marcus. (Dave and Robbin also form our house band – Reelplay.)

### *Tip Jars and Publicity*

We strongly push the artists’ tip jar and musicians and callers are bringing in about what you get for a usual gig. (Atlanta DistDance does not offer any guarantee.)

We publicize our dances fairly aggressively in order to serve the most dancers possible, which also helps the tip jar. **For publicity, we ask both band and caller to send Dave Marcus (dmarcus123@gmail.com) a picture of yourself or your band, preferably high-resolution, and a paragraph about yourself or your band as soon as your gig is confirmed. A lot of callers basically say the same thing (clear, fast calling**

## Programming

### Dance Timetable

Please allow for this timetable in your dance programming. (All times are Eastern time zone.) *Other than the sound check and dance start, all times are approximate and we are flexible.*

- 6:00 or 6:30: Sound check
  - 6:30 if musicians are all located in the same place.
  - 6:00 if musicians are not all located in the same place, sound check starts at 6:00
- 7:00: Hall opens for dancer socializing
- 7:10: Tai chi starts (most nights) and runs until 7:25
- 7:30: Dance begins
- 8:00: free waltz
- 8:05: Break with community-building activities such icebreakers or trivia quiz, usually including dancers going to small group breakouts.
- 8:20: Dance resumes
- 8:55: Last waltz begins
- 9:00: Last waltz over; announcements (please avoid announcement until after the waltz)
- 9:00 to 9:15+: After party! We ask those who will to share how their week was before we go back to our pods.
- 9:15: Staff debrief, if desired

### Programming: Caller

Calling must be gender-free (larks and robins or all-positional) and we prefer “right shoulder round” for the movement formerly known as gypsy.

### Program Contents

- **Friday Dances:**
  - Four contras (Squares, scatter mixers, circle mixers, triplets, and other contra-friendly formations can be substituted for contras as the caller desires.)
  - Four ECDs.
  - Two free waltzes.

Contras and ECDs are inter-mixed. Variety makes for a stronger program.

- **Monday Dances:**
  - Eight ECDs.
  - Two waltzes.
- **For both programs,** we encourage callers to take advantage of the full variety of English country dance forms: triple minors, triplets, dances in different time signatures etc.).

Dances are done 5-6 times through.

**Please let the band know your selected ECDs at least 5 days in advance** —ECD tunes may need more practice, depending on the tune and the band. **Please send the band your program 48 (or more) hours before the dance.** This is an important request because it is extremely difficult for a band to pick tunes on the fly in a Zoom dance. For one thing, that golden moment when a caller and band usually chat about the next dance while partners are invited and lines are forming doesn't exist in a Zoom dance, because – for the most part -- partners and lines don't exist.

When you are ready to plan your program, check [http://bit.ly/ADD\\_ECDs](http://bit.ly/ADD_ECDs) for a list of ECDs done recently at our dances. If you are working with our house band, you can see a list of their favorite ECDs at <http://www.ReelplayBand.com/FaveECDs> (this also includes some that the band prefers you to avoid).

#### *Programming: Band*

**Please send your tune list, with the key for each tune, to the caller the day of the dance so they can announce the tune name and key for each dance to help people who play along.**

Dances are done 5-6 times through. Generally, bands choose a single tune for each dance, but it is entirely up to the band. Occasionally callers do a three-dance medley, three times through each, and like three different tunes.

## Technology Topics

### Technology and Other Requirements - Band

- We strongly prefer that all band members are in one location. Having them in one location means fewer opportunities for ripple-effect technical snafus and better sound quality for the dancers.<sup>1</sup>
- Good Internet connection speed. We recommend a minimum of 20Mbps upload speed and 60Mbps download speed with a latency of <20ms.
  - Check internet speed with [www.speedtest.net](http://www.speedtest.net)
- Wired Ethernet connection. **Please do not use a wireless connection.**
  - A good source for inexpensive Ethernet cables, if you need one, is <http://monoprice.com>
- A computer (not a phone or iPad) that can run the Chrome browser.
- Either:
  - A single USB mic that all musicians cluster around
  - or-
  - A mixing board or digital audio interface with a USB output

### Technology and Other Requirements - Caller

- Good Internet connection speed. We recommend a **minimum** of 20Mbps upload speed and 60Mbps download speed with a latency of <20ms.
  - Check internet speed with [www.speedtest.com](http://www.speedtest.com)
  - **Please do not use a wireless connection.**
- A computer (not an iPad or phone) that can run the Chrome browser.
- Wired Ethernet connection. **No wireless.**
  - A good source for inexpensive Ethernet cables, if needed, is <http://monoprice.com>
- Headphones and microphone
  - Avoid earbuds! Use headphones to prevent audio leaking and echoing.
  - Avoid Bluetooth
  - Option 1: headphones and external microphone. These usually have higher audio quality and many good and inexpensive microphones str available online. If using this option, connect headphones directly to your computer and not through the external mic.
  - Option 2: headset with built-in microphone. These may have lower audio quality, but more are convenient and accessible

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<sup>1</sup> We are open to non-located bands that have already played for an on-line dance for another organization using the same people, technology, locations, etc. that would be used for their gig with us.

## *Tech Overview*

One of our goals is to provide high-quality audio. We use a web service called “Source-Connect Now” (SCN) to help do this. SCN runs on the band’s and the caller’s computer. It runs only within the Chrome browser and does not require a download or installation. Here’s how it works:

1. The band connects their sound board or USB mic to a computer running Chrome.
2. SCN ‘listens’ to the band on the band’s computer.
3. The caller also has SCN running on their computer, and it delivers the band sound to that computer.
4. The caller sets Zoom to pick up the computer sound and pass it to the meeting (along with the caller’s voice).

## *Communication between Caller and Band*

Different bands have different preferences about when and if they listen to Zoom but no bands listen to Zoom while playing. If they did, they would hear the music and caller with a 1/2-second or longer delay. As a result, the caller can only signal the band during a dance by holding up labeled cards. We have a PDF of cards available to print.

We recommend cards that are different colors. One caller has used a white board writing the critical information at the critical moment. The minimum information that needs to be conveyed:

- Stop – this means “stop now” and for sound check and for crash-and-burn during the dance.
- Play
- Return to Zoom Audio – used during sound check.
- 3
- 2
- 1
- 0 (or going out)

Some callers have also used:

- Faster
- Slower
- Make Louder and Make Softer in conjunction with a sign for each instrument

Other bands may prefer a different method of hearing the caller and dancers but what works for the musicians in our house band is to use a small external speaker system—one that gets its power from being plugged into the wall—as their computer speakers. They have a remote foot switch attached (<https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B07YBDB6VD>)\* that allows someone to turn the speakers off before they start to play and on as soon as they are done.

*\*Only the 9-foot version has a foot switch.*

## *Technical Walk-through*

We will schedule a technical walk-through in the week before your dance. This is to: 1) ensure that the technology setup works and 2) review operationally what the caller and band need to do during the dance. This takes between 30 and 90 minutes, depending on the caller and bands experience doing Zoom dances (and whether the technology goddess is in a good mood).

## *Sound*

### *Sound Responsibilities*

- The **band** is responsible for using their own equipment to adjust EQ and balance between instruments. This is set during sound check.
- The **caller** is responsible for the band and caller volume balance. The band volume can be adjusted in SCN; the caller volume is adjusted in Zoom.
- A **sound tech** serves as an extra set of ears. They have no ability to make sound corrections.
  - During sound check: The sound tech can be in the green room with the band and caller and make detailed suggestions via Zoom microphone.
  - During the dance: Sound techs are limited to non-trivial suggestions made via text message (Zoom chat messages tend to get lost in the clutter).

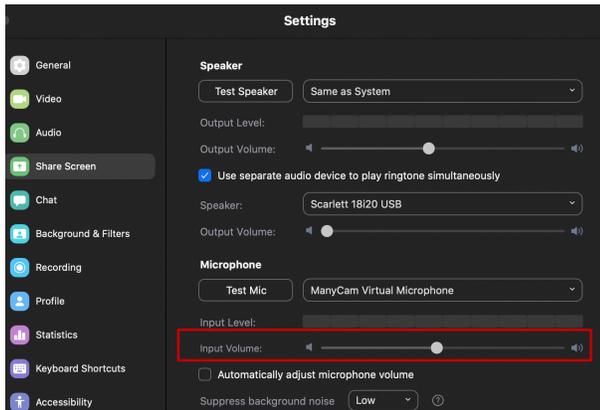
### *Sound Check*

We do the sound check in a Zoom meeting “green room”—a breakout room separate from the main room (i.e. the dance hall). The purpose of sound check is to: 1) verify that everything is working; 2) balance the instruments in the band with one another; 3) set the balance between caller and band; and 4) practice how the band and caller will communicate with each other and with the dance host.

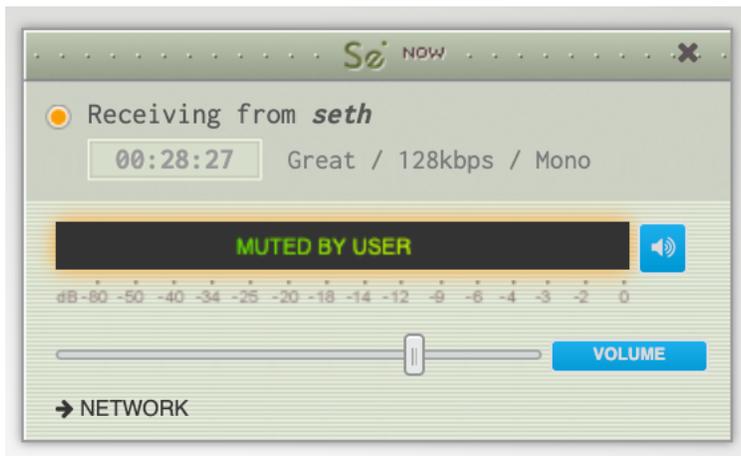
## Changing Sound Volume

Caller, you control the volume of your own voice as well as the band's volume. Note that once sound check is over, you probably won't need to adjust these.

Use Zoom's "Input Volume" audio settings to control your voice's volume:



Use the slider in SCN to control the band's volume:



## Caller Instructions

### *House Band*

Reelplay is our house band and plays about two-thirds of our dances. They (Dave Marcus, concertina, and Robbin Marcus on piano (and a bit of percussion)) are experienced dance musicians and excellent both for ECD and contra. For contra, Reelplay plays a New England-style mix of tunes including New England, Quebecois, bal folk, ECD, and originals.

Contact information for Reelplay is [dmarcus123@gmail.com](mailto:dmarcus123@gmail.com) and you can hear Reelplay at <https://www.reelplayband.com/listen-to-reelplay.html>.

### *Week of the Dance*

- Make sure you are running the latest version of Zoom (currently 5.4.4).
- Send program to the band. Make sure they know if you are doing each dance 5 times or 6 (or something other).
- Double-check internet speed with [www.speedtest.net](http://www.speedtest.net) - We recommend a minimum of 6Mbps upload speed and 19Mbps download speed with a latency of <20ms.
- Make signs to communicate with band (we have a file of these available):
  - 3, 2, 1, 0 [times to go]
  - Go [start music]
  - Faster
  - Slower
  - STOP [for crash and burn situations]
  - Back to Zoom (for use primarily during sound check)

## *Day of the Dance*

### *Getting to Sound Check*

**Please do this by no later than 6:20pm ET** – i.e. 10 minutes before sound check starts.

- 1) Turn off phone ringers, cell phones, etc.
- 2) Reboot computer and:
  - a. Make sure wireless is disabled
  - b. Kill any programs that automatically start if they would use a lot of bandwidth or CPU.
- 3) Remind any household members to conserve bandwidth
- 4) Open Chrome and login to Source Connect Now (SCN).
  - a. Mute self in SCN
  - b. Shrink screen so only band's display shows
- 5) Join Zoom meeting
- 6) Ask the host to make you a co-host
- 7) Make sure you have a group text set up between the caller, band & host/moderator
- 8) Ask host to send you to 'green room' (breakout room for sound check)

### *In the 'Green Room'*

- 1) In Zoom, turn on "Original Sound."
- 2) In Zoom, share computer sound (**Share screen** -> **Advanced** -> **Music or Computer Sound Only**; click **Share** button to save)
- 3) In Zoom audio settings, uncheck auto adjust volume and set the volume slider to about 2/3.
- 4) In SCN move the band slider to about 2/3 of the way from the left to start.
- 5) Mute yourself in SCN.

The sound check will have two parts:

- a. Balancing the instruments in the band and adjusting EQ. The sound tech provides feedback to the band about what is needed. It is up to the band to make adjustments.
- b. Balancing the band and caller. The sound tech provides feedback to the caller. It is up to the caller to adjust the band's volume in SCN and/or to adjust the caller's volume.

## *During the Dance*

- 1) Share computer sound again (it resets when returning from breakout room). You must do this after the soundcheck and then after the break).
- 2) Turn **Original Sound** (original sound is ON when the text on your screen says “Turn off original sound”)
- 3) For each dance:
  - a. **Mute all in Zoom.** (Open Participants list to get to the Mute All button)
  - b. **Announce** the dance
  - c. **For contras:**  
Announce the tune and key (if band has given them to you) for the benefit of people playing along at home  
**For English:**  
Ask the band to play part of the tune.
  - d. **Teach** the dance
  - e. Ask dancers to unmute themselves if they have a question
  - f. Again, Mute all
  - g. Cue band to start. (Reelplay will hear this)
  - h. Call the dance.
  - i. Use your cards to give band the countdown.
  - j. Encourage everyone to unmute themselves and clap loudly for the band, hosts, and sound tech.
- 4) After the break, repeat steps (1) and (2)
- 5) **Please promote the evening’s tip jar several times during each half of the dance. The host will put the tip jar information in the chat each time you mention it.**

The most common caller mistakes are:

- 1) Forgetting to unmute SCN at the beginning of a dance (with SCN muted, dancers cannot hear the band)
- 2) Forgetting to adjust their mic or voice levels up and down during the dance to ensure that their voice is loud enough to be heard over the band, but not so loud that they drown out the band. (Adjustments are needed only if the band changes volume).
- 3) **Forgetting to call all the way through the dance.** In a live dance, callers are accustomed to gradually dropping out as the dancers begin memorizing the sequence of moves. This works because, if (when) a dancer spaces out for a moment, they can always get right back on track with nary a missed step by glancing at their partner, neighbors, and all those people in the next line over. *Those options are not available in a Zoom dance.* In a Zoom dance, if (when) a dancer spaces out for a moment, they stay lost and confused until the next time the caller provides a prompt. **Zoom dancer polls consistently reveal that dancers overwhelmingly prefer callers to call all the way through every dance.**

## Band Instructions

### *Week of the Dance*

- Ask for the caller's program, if you have not yet received it.
- Create your set list and send to the caller (with the key for each tune).
- Check internet speed with [www.speedtest.net](http://www.speedtest.net). We recommend a minimum of 6Mbps upload speed and 19Mbps download speed with a latency of <20ms.

### *Day of the Dance*

**Please do this by no later than 10 minutes before the sound check starts.**

- 1) Turn off phone ringers, cell phones, etc.
- 2) Reboot computer and
  - a. Make sure wireless is disabled
  - b. Kill any programs that automatically start if they would use a lot of bandwidth or CPU.
- 3) Remind any household members to conserve bandwidth
- 4) Open Chrome
  - a. login to Source Connect Now (SCN).
  - b. Shrink the window as much as you can while still seeing the green VU meter bar.
- 5) Join Zoom meeting (in any browser)
- 6) Set up a group text between caller, band & host for communications during the dance.
- 7) Ask the host to send you to 'green room' (breakout room) for sound check

Sound check happens in two parts.

1. In the first part of sound check, the person acting as sound tech will listen to the band and make correction suggestions intended to optimize the balance between your instruments and improve any equalization issues.
2. In the second part of sound check, the person acting as sound tech will listen to the band and caller working together and will make suggestions to the caller about adjusting volume levels (to balance the caller and the band) and about mic position (to make sure the caller's voice can be clearly heard).

### *During the Dance*

- 1) In Zoom, pin the caller so they fill your screen in order to make sure you can see the flash cards the caller holds up.
- 2) Optionally have another screen in gallery view so you can watch the dancers. Some bands like to pick a graceful dancer or couple and pin them. *If you do this, recognize that there will always be a lag before the dancers hear your music. Even if they do not appear to you to be dancing on your beat, they probably are.*
- 3) Before each dance, if needed, mute your computer's sound and/or turn off your external speakers and/or take off headphones.
- 4) After each dance, enable sound to hear applause and also to listen to the caller teach the next dance so you know when to be ready to start.

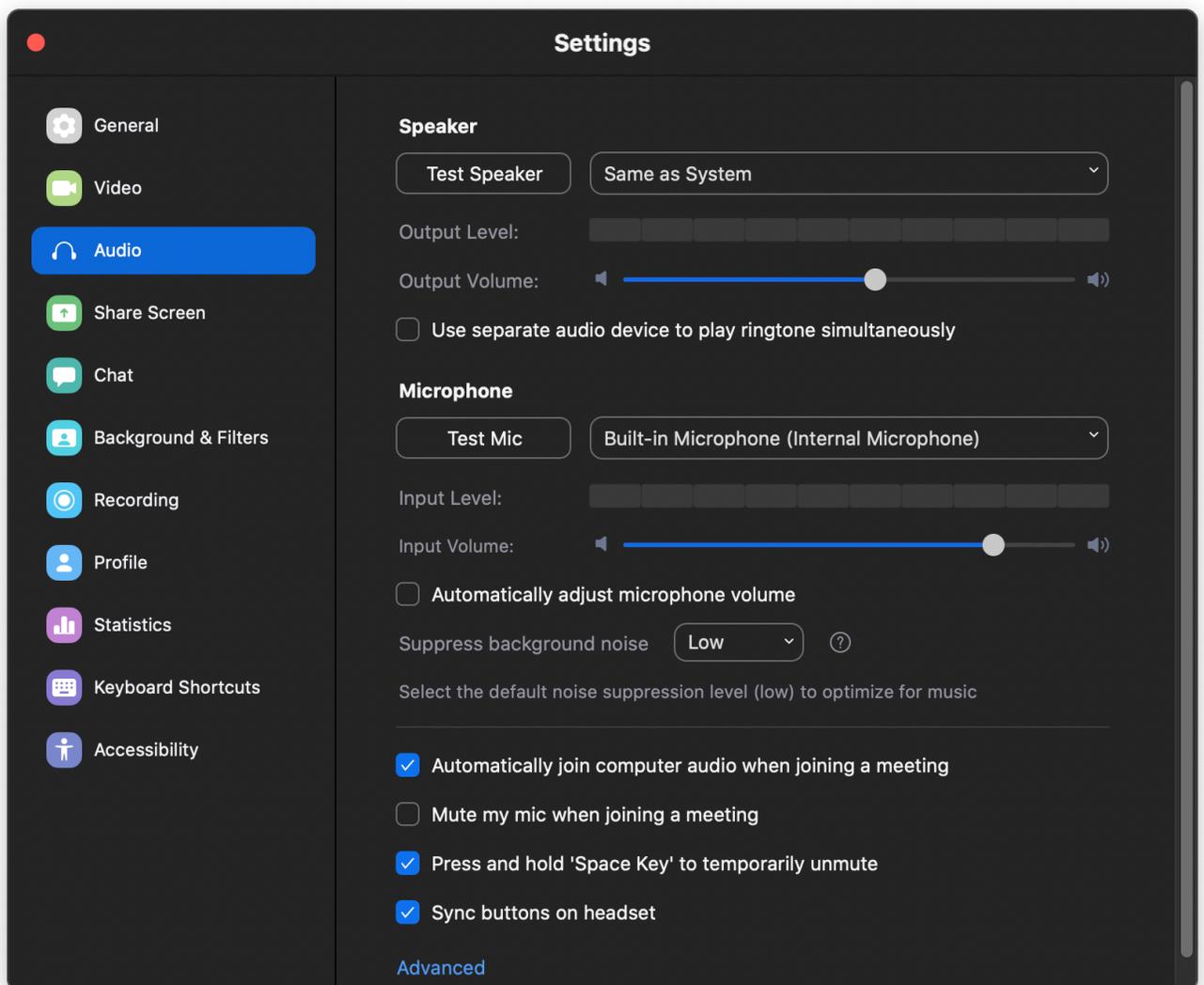
## Zoom Login and Settings

Zoom link: <http://contradance.link/ATLDistDance>

Below are settings for the caller. The band does not need these settings. They are on the Advanced tab of Zoom settings.

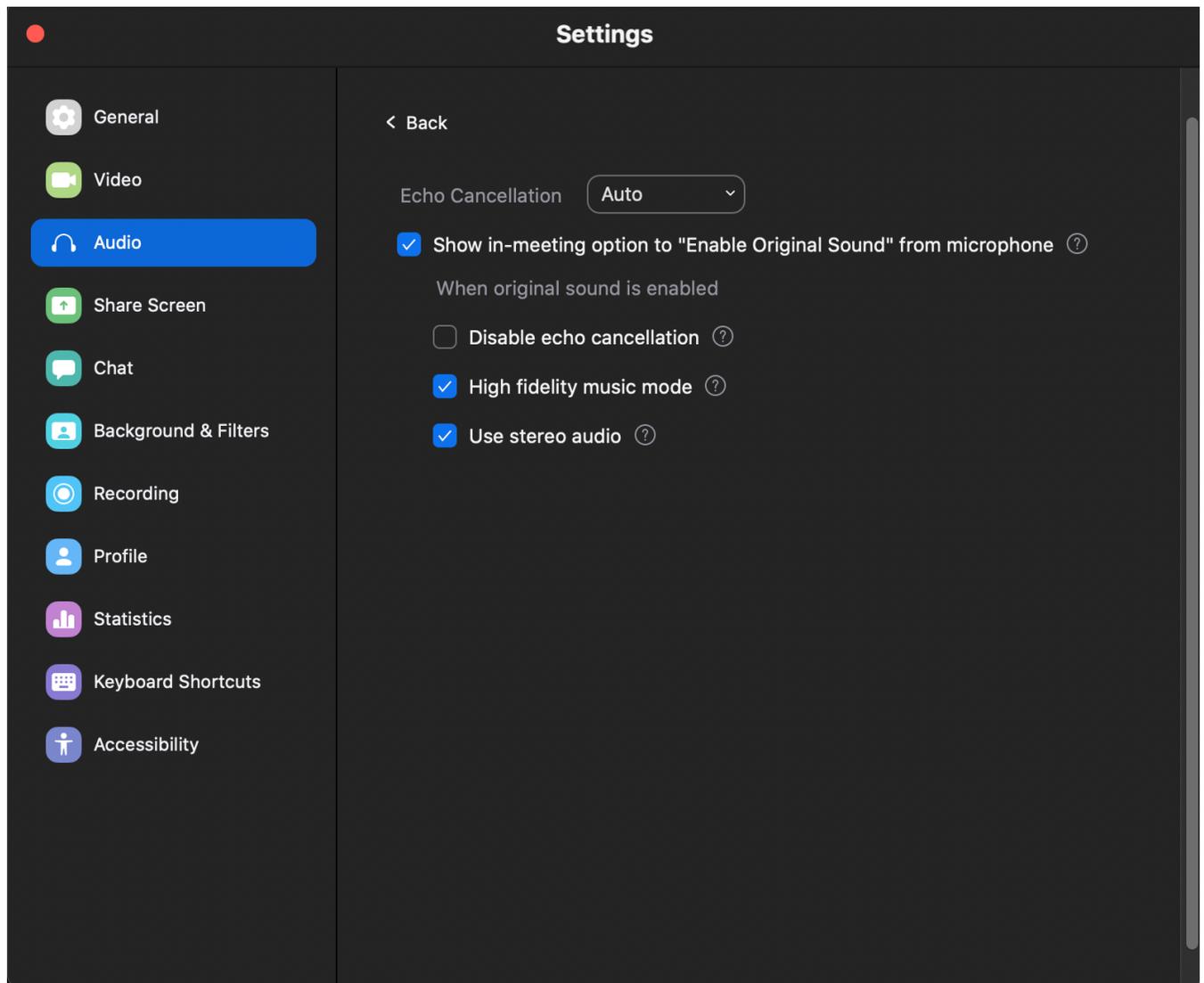
### Zoom Audio Settings – Caller Only

- 1) Open Zoom audio settings window.
- 2) Under “microphone,” uncheck **automatically adjust volume**.



- 3) Practice calling, adjusting your microphone volume slider until Input Level is meter is imth middle of the green area of the bar. (You will use this slider
- 4) Set **suppress background noise to Low**
- 5) Click **Advanced** to go to the next page

6) Choose all of the settings shown in this example:



## Source-Connect Now (SCN) Login and Settings

Go here to join source connect. <https://now.source-elements.com/#!/guest/dmarcus123>

Enter your name and the password: **ATL**

Set the **Send Quality** to Best / 512kbps / Stereo. We use this to maximize the sound quality. (Note that only Zoom attendees who are using a desktop or laptop will hear stereo. For them, this provides a more live ambience than mono.)

**▼ SIGN IN**

To get started, please enter your name and the pass key that you have been provided by Dave Marcus.

YOU ARE A GUEST OF:

Dave Marcus

YOUR NAME:

John Doe ✓

PLEASE ENTER THE PASSKEY:

..... 🔍 SHOW

OPTIONAL: YOUR SEND QUALITY

Best / 512kbps / Stereo ▼

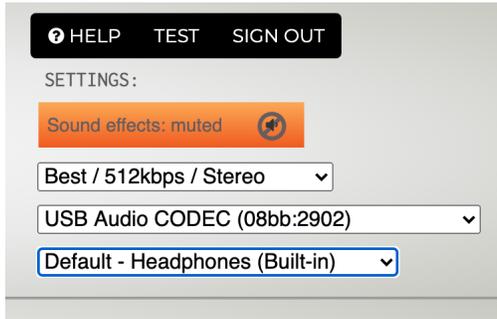
**CONNECT**

## Band

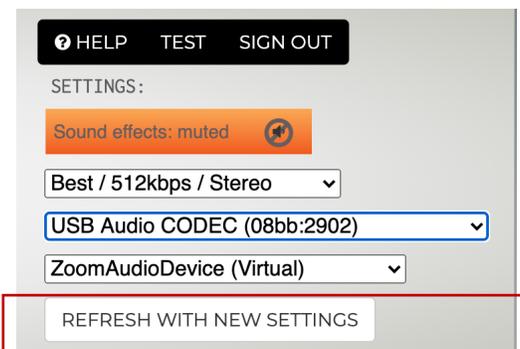
Once in SCN, make sure that

- 1) The sound quality is set to Best / 512kbps / Stereo.
- 2) Input Device (second drop-down) is set to your USB board or microphone.

(The output device doesn't matter.) Your settings will look something like this:



If you make a change and a **REFRESH WITH NEW SETTINGS** button appears under the three drop-downs (example below), click it. If you don't, your changes won't be used.

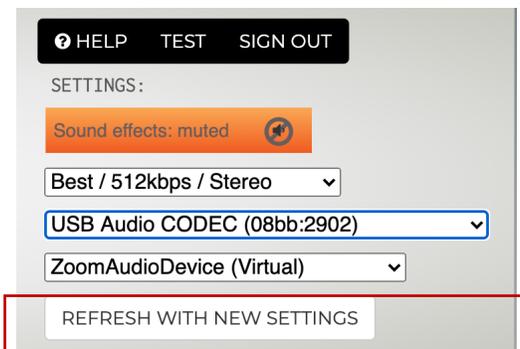


## Caller

Once in SCN, make sure that the

- 1) The sound quality is set to Best / 512kbps / Stereo.
- 2) If on a Mac, the Output Device (bottom drop-down) is set to ZoomAudioDevice.
- 3) If on a PC, the Output Device is set to your usual default.

The input device (middle drop-down) doesn't matter. Your settings will look something like this:



If you make a change and a REFRESH WITH NEW SETTINGS button (shown above) appears under the three drop-downs, click it. If you don't, your changes won't be used.

## Troubleshooting

[[incomplete]]

**Echo** is caused by one of two things:

- Not having Zoom or SCN muted when they should be. If the band hears echoes, they should make sure that everyone other than they are muted in SCN. The mute button is at the right hand end of the green volume indicator bar.
- Two computers in the earshot and both connected and unmuted.

If you have an echo issue, fix it early or it will drive you crazy.

**White noise** is caused by a microphone near a computer fan or other fan.

**A slowing down and speeding up effect** is usually caused by a wireless connection.

Leaving aside the above issues, the most common causes of problems seem to be settings in Source-Connect Now. This includes problems where the band is faint and/or of very low quality or cannot be heard; or the caller cannot be heard.

These are complete troubleshooting instructions, not specific to any problem but applying to most— not include echo, white noise, and slowing down/speeding up. Check them in order

1. **As a preliminary step**, the band and caller should each check all settings in SCN (see page 14 for Zoom and page 16 for SCN).
  - a. If SCN settings are changed click **REFRESH WITH NEW SETTINGS** if that button becomes visible.
  - b. If it does not, refresh the browser window.
2. **When in doubt, all people involved should reboot their computers.**

The above items will fix 90% or more of problems. If they don't fix a problem, follow these steps:

3. **Does the band see the green volume indicator for them in SCN? (If yes, go to the next step).**

If the band does not see the green volume indicator in SCN,

  - a. The SCN source is not set correctly. It should be set to something like **USB Codec** or USB something else. The equipment you have connected controls the name.
  - b. Your mic is muted or soundboard turned down. Or not connected to your computer.
  - c. Change the source, exit SCN, and re-enter.
2. **Does any green volume indicator flicker wildly? (If NO, go to the next step).**

If the band or caller sees a green volume indicator in SCN with a high rate of flicker:

  - a. Mute the caller in SCN and anyone else in it except the band.
  - b. **Everyone** should check their muting settings. The muting you do only prevents you from hearing the person you mute (unless you mute yourself, in which no one can hear you. The band should never do this).

3. **Does the caller see the green volume indicator for the band in SCN? (If yes, go to the next step).**

If the caller does not see a green volume indicator for the band in SCN,

- a. Exit SCN and come back into it.
- b. If this does not resolve the issue, restart the browser.
- c. If this does not resolve the issue, reboot the computer.

4. **Does the Zoom meeting hear the band? (If yes, go to the next step).**

If the Zoom meeting is not “hearing” the band ...

- a. The caller should check the SCN output device.
- b. The caller should make sure that they are sharing computer sound in Zoom.

If not, set it to this and refresh the browser window (which may not be necessary, but is prudent).

5. **Does the Zoom meeting hear the caller? (If yes, everything is good).**

If the Zoom meeting is not “hearing” the caller ...

- a. The caller should check that SCN is set to use ZoomAudioDevice.
- b. The caller should check Zoom audio settings. See page 14.

6. **Is the caller and/or band’s sound quality good in Zoom?**

If it is not, band and caller should check their available bandwidth. If one or the other is problematic, rebooting the computer *may* help.