

Lively Streams: A Beginner's Guide for Getting Great Live Streaming Audio

Let the joyous news be spread! You're a talented artist and have decided to do a live stream for your fans. This is a fun and easy way to connect with everyone from the comfort of your own home. All you have to do is prop up your phone against some old books and start streaming, right? Well, sure. But taking a little time to set up a microphone and some gear goes a long way, and will help translate your awesomeness to your fans on the other end. This step-by-step guide will show you how to easily set up great sounding audio for your live streams. These instructions are for Mac users, so if you have any questions regarding the set-up or life itself, reach out to me on Facebook or email me at avapanderson@gmail.com.

What You'll Need:

- **Audio Interface**

An audio interface is an external piece of hardware that allows you to connect microphones and instruments to your computer. There are many different brands of interfaces, but in this demonstration I will be referring to the Apollo MKII made by Universal Audio.

- **Thunderbolt Cable** (not included with the Apollo MKII)
- **Universal Audio Apollo DC Power Supply** (included with the Apollo, but if you lost yours, you can buy a new one online for \$29)
- **Computer and Computer Power Adapter**
- **XLR Cable(s)**
- **¼" Instrument Cable** (if you do not have pickups on your guitar, disregard this)
- **Microphone(s)**

Any microphone will work in this scenario. I will be referring to the Shure SM7B in this demonstration, which I highly recommend. It's great for singing and talking.

- **Microphone Stand(s)**
- **Acoustic Guitar with Pickups**

Also known as an "acoustic-electric" guitar. *If you do not have pickups on your guitar, grab another microphone and another XLR cable.*



Universal Audio Apollo MKII Interface



Thunderbolt Cable



Apollo DC Power Supply



MacBook Pro



Mac Charger



XLR Cable



¼" Instrument Cable



Shure SM7B Microphone



Microphone Stand



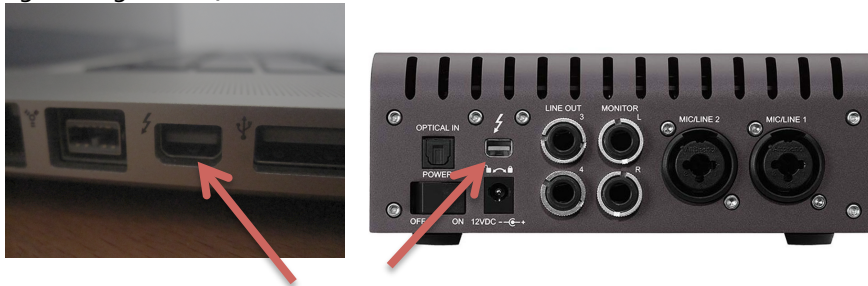
Acoustic guitar with pickups

STEP ONE

Plug in and power on your computer. Keeping your computer connected to a power source during your live stream is crucial. What if your computer dies during your live stream? Never leave anything up to chance.

STEP TWO

Set up your audio interface. Take your thunderbolt cable and plug one end into your computer (where the little lightening bolt is) and the other end into the Apollo (where the other little lightening bolt is), which will be found on the back of the device.



STEP THREE

Plug in the DC power supply. This will have to be near a wall socket. (Universal Audio recommends using the wall socket, but I have been guilty of using an extension cord because my house is 150 years old). The other end of the power supply goes into the back of the Apollo, next to where you plugged in the thunderbolt cable. Turning it gently will lock it into place.



STEP FOUR

Switch the power on. Once everything is plugged in and good to go, switch on the power on the back of the Apollo. Give it a second, then you will hear a clicking sound and it'll do a pretty light show for you. She's ready for take off.



STEP FIVE

Set up your microphone(s). Setting up microphones poorly can make or break the audio quality of your live stream and recording of any kind. Set up your microphone on the microphone stand and place it exactly how you want it to be during the live stream. Your vocal microphone should be just a few inches away from your mouth. If your guitar does not have pickups, place another microphone on a microphone stand about six-twelve inches away from your guitar, pointing towards the twelfth fret. Take time during this step. Situate yourself so you are comfortable.

STEP SIX

Plug in your microphone(s) and guitar. XLR cables have a male end, with prongs sticking out, and a female end, with holes. Strange, I know. Plug the male end of the XLR cable into the back of the Apollo, in Mic/Line 1 or Mic/Line 2. They will achieve the same result, so flip a coin. Plug the female end into the microphone. If your guitar does not have pickups, repeat that process and use the remaining open channel. If you do have pickups, plug one end of the instrument cable into the Apollo (on the front, opposite of the headphone input) and the other end into your guitar.



Plug the female end into the microphone



Plug the male end into mic/line 1 or mic/line 2

STEP SEVEN

Open the streaming device on your computer. There are a number of ways to go live, so I'll address a few popular ones here.

Facebook Live

To start a live stream on Facebook, go to your artist or personal page and select "Live" from the options above your timeline. You can also go live from the home page, as shown below. Facebook will prompt you with a few ways to start streaming. Select "Camera." Scroll down to the Setup window. Click the box next to the blue microphone icon. Select "Universal Audio Apollo..." or your audio interface.

YouTube Live

To start a live stream on YouTube, click the video camera icon on the top right of the screen. Select "Go Live." Fill out the Webcam Stream Information and scroll down. Select "More Options." Click the box next to the microphone icon and select your audio interface from the dropdown menu.

Instagram Live

Unfortunately, Instagram doesn't allow you to go live from your computer. Fortunately, I found a way around that, but it requires two kinds of software: YellowDuck and OBS*. The following instructions are for those who already have these installed on their computer.

Open YellowDuck and log into Instagram. YellowDuck will give you a RTMP URL and Stream Key code. Select "Save & Finish."

Open OBS. Go to "Preferences." Select "Stream" from the side menu. Enter the RTMP URL (in the Server section) and Stream Key from YellowDuck. Select "Audio" from the same menu. Close out of this once you have entered the information. In the Audio Mixer section there will be a settings wheel next to Mic/Aux. Click that and select "Properties." Select your audio interface from the drop down menu and press "OK."

Zoom

To use your audio interface on Zoom, open the Zoom App on your computer. Go to "Preferences." Select "Audio" from the side menu. Next to the Microphone section, there will be a drop down menu. Choose your audio interface from the menu.

**OBS can also be used to live stream via your personal website, but the instructions will vary depending on your website provider. The important thing to look for is always the Stream Key and the Server.*

STEP EIGHT

Sound check. Don't go live yet! As with recording or any live performance, of course you should sound check! Plug in your headphones to your audio interface. A great way to get levels (volume) is by playing the loudest part of your song or performance. As you play, your interface will light up and do that cute light show again. Green is good. Orange is fine. Red is bad. Red means too loud which means possible distorted audio. Take time getting levels and create a nice mix. If something sounds a little off but you don't know why, try flipping the phase* on one of the channels on your interface.

**I think of being in phase is like being in sync (no, not the band). When we're dealing with multiple microphones on a single source, we have to consider phase. Phase also needs to be considered when using a DI (direct box) or recording a signal directly (in this case, you might have plugged your guitar directly into your interface). When something is out of phase, it sounds a little wonky. In short, it's because you're losing certain frequencies (notes) and the waveforms are no longer identical – and out of sync with each other. Sound waves arrive places at different times in the air. It's a physical phenomenon that I could ponder all day, but if you want to read more, this is a great article on it: <https://www.uaudio.com/blog/understanding-audio-phase>*

Now you're ready to go live! Taking the time to set everything up can make all the difference and create a memorable experience for your fans. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to me on Facebook, Instagram or email me at avapanderson@gmail.com.

Yours in rock,

Ava Anderson

www.AvaAnderson.com

www.facebook.com/avaandersonmusic

www.instagram.com/itsavayall

www.youtube.com/AvaAnderson