

Arranging For Singers – Week 6 – Finishing Up Your Track

Recording Audio in GarageBand

As an extra credit project for this class, you can record audio for your “I’m Yours” track – you can put a vocal (lead and/or background), and replace or augment the guitar and bass tracks if you want to. It has not been an assignment because not everyone plays an instrument, and recording vocals in class is not much of an option because of the background noise.

However, you do NOT have to play and/or sing yourself – if you can get someone else to play and/or sing for you, you can be a producer! Make arrangements with a player or singer to come with you to the lab, and record them.

HERE’S WHAT YOU’LL NEED:

To record vocals, you will need:

- A microphone and mic cord (check out of Library)
- A set of headphones with a ¼” end – *not* a mini-plug (and one for your vocalist if you’re hiring one.)
- If you are recording someone else, you will need a headphone splitter. I don’t know if they have them in the Library, or whether they sell them at Players’ Supply, but they are not expensive and you can find them at Guitar Center (or any pro music store) or Radio Shack. But you will need to be able to monitor your singer while you’re recording, and the singer will need to hear him or herself too.

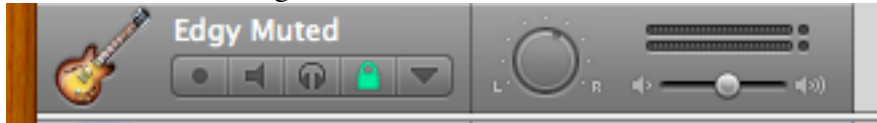
To record instruments, you will need:

- An instrument – bass or guitar – and an instrument cable (1/4” to 1/4”).
- A set of headphones (or two – see above.)

PREPARING TO RECORD AN AUDIO TRACK

Recording in GarageBand takes a lot of processing power, so you may need to **lock** your other tracks while you record.

This involves clicking the little ‘lock’ icon next to the Solo icon



When you lock a track, it is rendered to the hard drive, and protected from being edited, thus freeing up processing power for recording. When you’re done recording, you can unlock the tracks.

Another option is bouncing your track down to an audio file (Share→Export to Disk...), then starting a new GarageBand file and importing the bounced track as a reference to record to. It doesn’t have to be the final mix – you can then add your new audio guitar or vocal track to your original “I’m Yours” and mix it with your other tracks.

Either way, you want to make sure you have enough processing power to avoid freezing or crashing, so if this happens while you’re recording, try one of these methods to work around it.

SELECTING YOUR AUDIO INPUTS AND OUTPUTS

Go to GarageBand’s Preferences (under the GarageBand Menu at the top of the screen, or use the key command Command-comma) and choose (under Audio/MIDI) the M-Box for both Input and Output. If you still don’t have sound, check System Preferences (under the Apple Menu, far left) and choose Sound, then make sure the M-Box is selected.

CREATING A RECORDING TRACK

Shift-Command-N will give you a new Basic Track – that is, an audio track with no effects. You can also go to Track→New Basic Track on the Menu bar, or click the ‘Plus’ sign on the far left underneath the Track Window and choose Real Instrument Track.

Once you have your Basic Track, you need to choose an Input Source. Plug in your mic or instrument into one of the two channels of the M-Box. If the Track Info window is not open, click on the ‘i’ on the right of the Transport bar (**not** the Eye icon on the left!) to

open it up, then next to Input Source, choose the M-Box, and the mono track (either one or two) that you are plugged into.

Next to Monitor, choose On.

The input and output levels will now be adjusted from the M-Box. With your headphones plugged in to the M-Box, check the level of your tracks. Make sure you can hear them at a comfortable level – if not, adjust the output level on the M-Box.

Next, test the track you're going to record on. Make sure you've clicked the red Record button *on the track* (not on the Transport bar yet!) to record-enable it, and make sure you've checked Monitor-ON in your Track Info window.

At this point you should have sound from your mic or instrument. If not, go back and double-check to see if you've done everything on this list.

Test your mic or instrument. You should see a green indicator light on your Track Volume level to let you know you've got audio. It should be showing up on your Master Volume level as well. If you don't see them lighting up when you play or sing, you need to retrace your steps and find out if signal is getting to the M-Box. If you do see the lights lighting up, but you don't hear anything in your phones, check to see if Monitor-On is still selected in your Track Info (sometimes it de-selects itself!). If the Monitor is on and you still don't hear, check the volume dial on your phones output and the Main output on the M-Box.

EFFECTS

In the Track Info window, you have the option of selecting effects for your tracks. There are some really great guitar effects – try them out. There are a lot of different vocal effects also – experiment with them till you find one you like. You can also adjust the effects to suit you – check especially the echo and reverb to add more or less to your sound.

These effects do not print when you record – your track is still dry – so you can change the effects at any time, even after you've recorded. They only print when you bounce down.

ONCE YOU HAVE SOUND AND PROPER LEVELS...

You're ready to record!

Go to the Control Menu and make sure Metronome and Count In are selected with a check mark. This will give you a one-bar count-in before you record.

Now – drag your playhead to wherever you want to begin recording, and press R on your keyboard (or click the red button on the Transport bar.) Hit the Space Bar to stop recording.

If you don't like what you played, hit Undo (Command-Z) or select and delete it.

Also, check with the GarageBand Help menu for anything not covered here – or visit your good friend Google! Be your own teacher.

Mixing Your Track

Once you've added everything you want to your track, it's time to mix.

Yesterday we took a look at automation. We automated MIDI information by using the pencil tool in the Edit Window, but you can also automate Audio information. You will do this in the Track mixer. You can choose overall volume and pan by using the Volume slider and the Pan button next to the Level indicator, but you can do much more intensive track editing by clicking on the Arrow button next to the Lock on the Track.

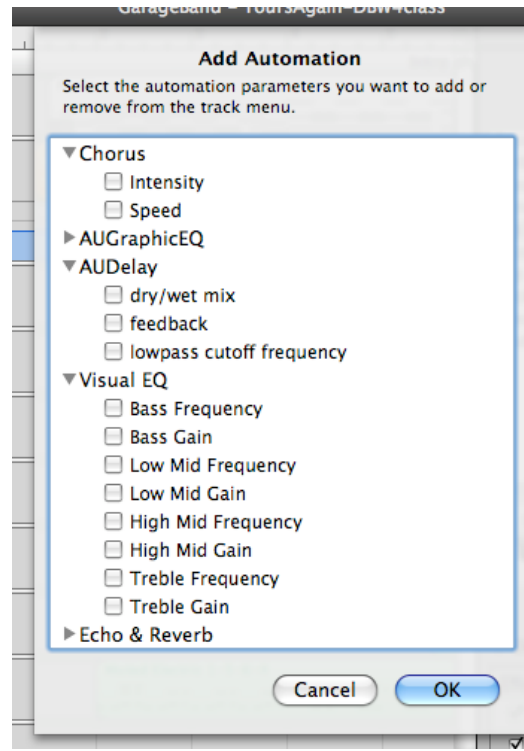
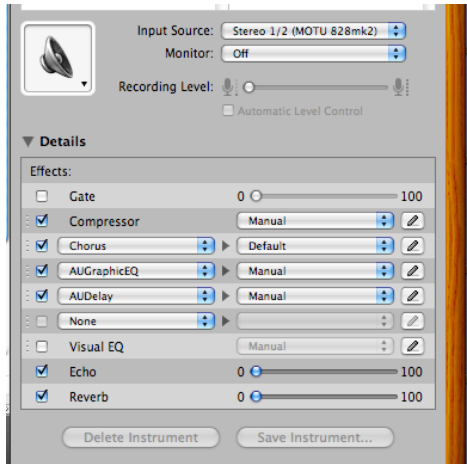


This will open up your Automation window. You can see that there is a line that indicated volume, and you can add dots to it by clicking on it, then moving the lines up and down, depending on where you want the volume levels to be.

The default is Volume, but you can click on the menu and choose Pan, or click on Add Automation and *automate any effect you are using*.

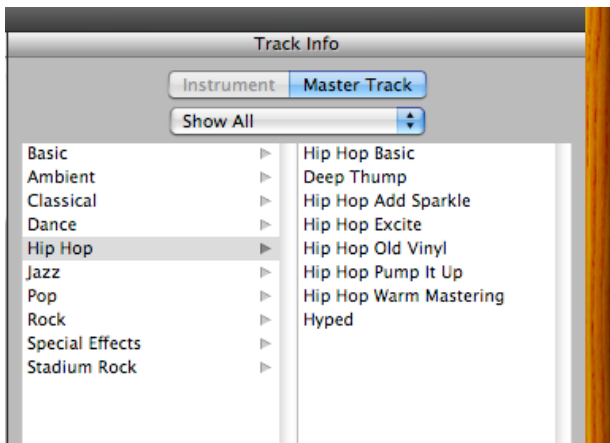


For instance, if I were using compression, chorus, those effects and automate them:



Any of these levels I could check off and then choose to automate by drawing an automation curve.

The Master Track - Mastering and Fading

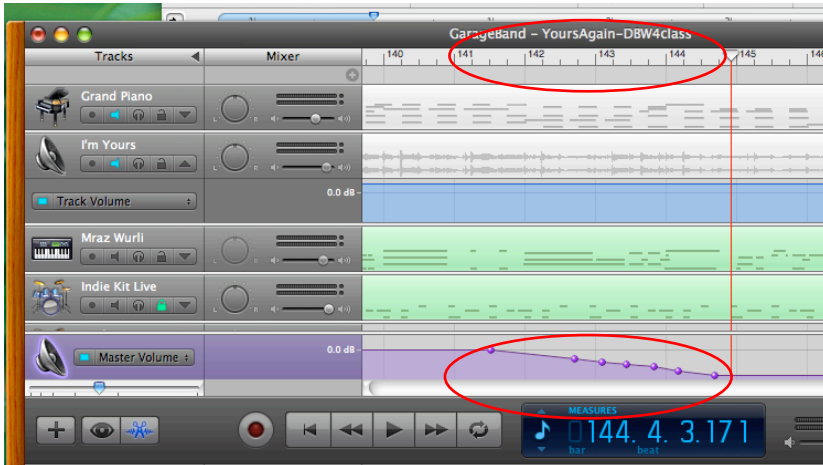


The final step to finishing this track is to master it – add overall effects such as compression, EQ and reverb to the track if you choose, or using any of the mastering presets available in the Track Info Window.

Choose the Master Track by going to Track→Show Master Track. This track controls the overall effects for your project. You can automate the Master Volume, the Master Pitch and the Master Tempo from the Track, and choose a

mastering preset from the Track Info window. There are tons of different presets that are suited to different genres of music, or you can tweak the settings yourself.

The one thing that you should do for the project is *fade out*. You can do this by going into your Master Track and automating the Master Volume. You should be faded out by Measure 144:



Once you have finished mixing and mastering your track –

Congratulations!

You are now ready to handle any kind of digital audio workstation. They may be a little more complicated, but you have the fundamentals to understand and work with any of them – ProTools, Logic, Sonar, Digital Performer, whatever. This will put you in a strong position to be totally in control of your music and your career, whichever musical path you end up taking.

Go out and conquer the world! You can do it!