How to compose multiple-track recordings

When creating an audio track, you will often want to include multiple tracks—for example, a vocal narration and music.

In Adobe Audition CS6 multitrack projects, you can mix together multiple audio clips to create layered soundtracks. The audio clips in a multitrack project are saved as a multitrack session, with the clips in each track stored in a common session folder. A single multitrack file serves as a container for viewing and editing the session. A multitrack project is saved as an Adobe Audition Session file (SESX). When you add a file to a multitrack project, a copy of the file is made and stored in the project. Multitrack sessions can also include a video preview to synchronize your sound to video.

The example (**Figure 1**) illustrates a multitrack project including the original video sound track from a sailing movie, theme music, audio narration, and the added sound of a foghorn. You can edit each track separately. After editing, you can export the entire session to Adobe Premiere Pro as individual sound clips or mixed down to a single mono, stereo, or 5.1 surround sound audio file.

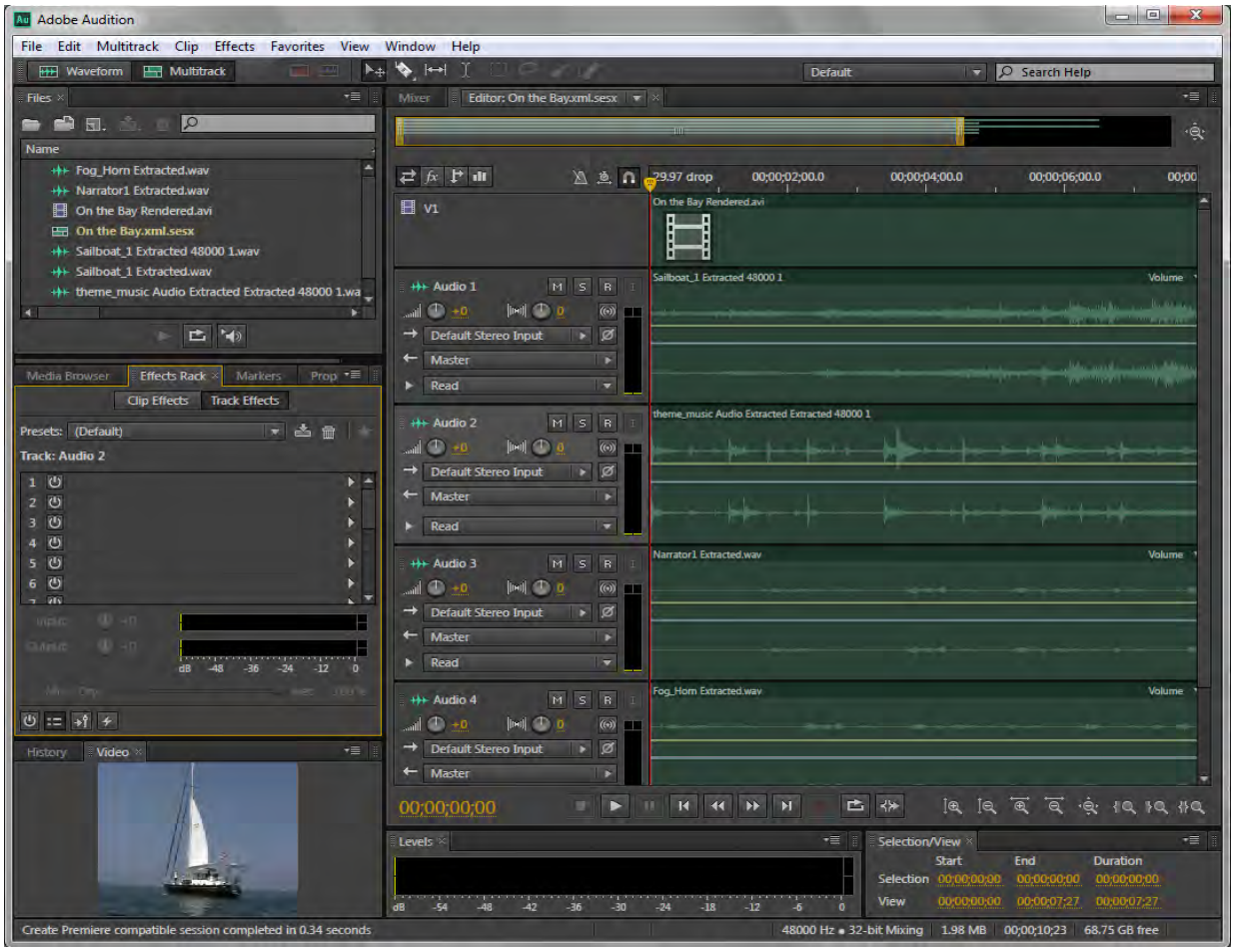

Figure 1 Multiple tracks in Adobe Audition

Creating a multitrack project

When you first create a multitrack project, it comes with six audio tracks and a master track, but you can add or remove tracks very easily.

To create a new multitrack project:

1. Start Adobe Audition and click the View Multitrack Editor button in the toolbar (**Figure 2**).

   The New Multitrack Session dialog box appears (**Figure 3**).

2. Enter a name for the new session.

   Note: You can change the default location for storing multitrack sessions by clicking Browse, selecting a new location, and clicking OK (Windows) or Choose (Mac OS) to close the Choose Destination Folder dialog box.

3. In the New Multitrack Session dialog box, open the Template menu (**Figure 4**).

   Several templates are available for beginning a new multitrack editing session. For example, you can choose a session with 24 tracks, or add tracks for working on film scores. There are even tracks designed specifically for mixing vocals and music.

4. Select None to create a session with the default six tracks.

5. Open the Master menu (**Figure 5**).

   The tracks you add can be mono, stereo, or 5.1 surround sound. Stereo is the default. Notice that you can also change the sample and bit for the session.

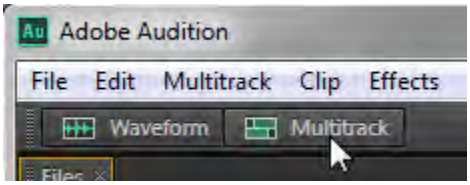

Figure 2 View Multitrack Editor button

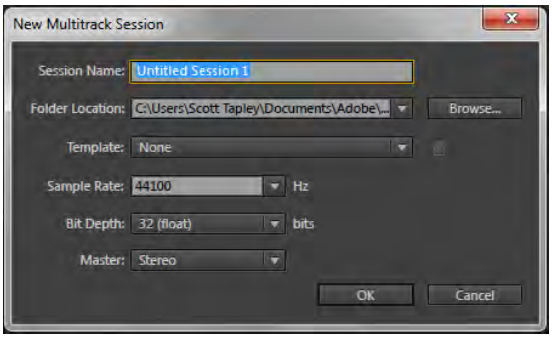

Figure 3 New Multitrack Session dialog box

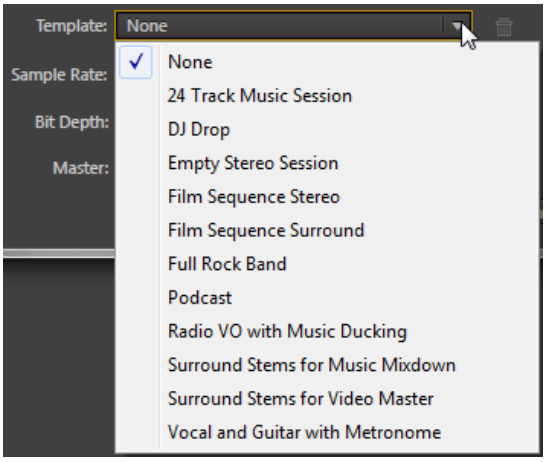

Figure 4 Multitrack recording templates

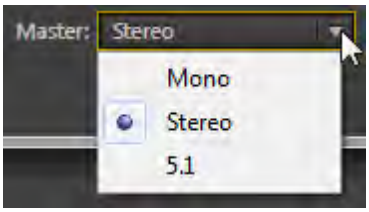

Figure 5 Master menu

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6. Click OK to close the New Multitrack Session dialog box and create a new multitrack session with six empty stereo tracks.

   The new multitrack session file appears in the Files panel (**Figure 6**).

   Six empty stereo tracks appear in the Editor panel (**Figure 7**). If you can't see all six tracks in the Editor panel, click the Zoom Out Full button in the Editor panel (**Figure 8**).

   Note: To add additional empty tracks, click Multitrack in the main menu, select Track, and choose the type of track to add. You can also duplicate or delete a selected track (**Figure 9**).

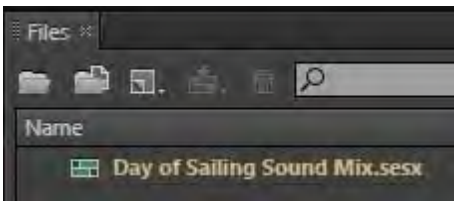

Figure 6 Files panel

Figure 7 Editor panel

Figure 8 Zoom Out Full button

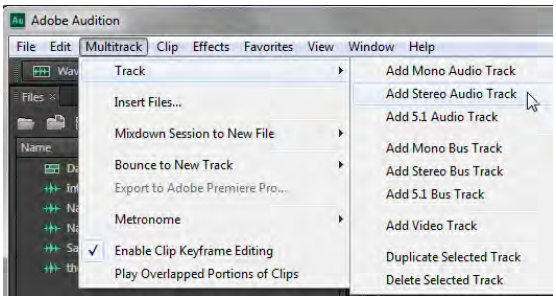

Figure 9 Multitrack menu

7. To add audio files to the project, choose File > Import > File.
8. In the Import File dialog box, select the files to import and click Open.

   The files you import appear in the Files panel (**Figure 10**).

   Note: While importing files, the workspace may change to the Waveform Editor. If this happens, click the View Multitrack Editor button to return to your multitrack session.
9. Drag audio files from to the Files panel to the empty audio tracks in the editor. You can position them to start at different times along the timeline (**Figure 11**).

   Note: If the sample rates in your audio files don't match the settings in the multitrack session, a message appears. Click OK to create copies of the files with new settings that match your project. This results in two versions of the same file in the Files panel. You can keep both copies, or delete the file versions that don't match your project settings.

   With several files added to a multitrack project, it can become difficult to see and work with the individual tracks.
10. To expand the view for an individual track, position the pointer along the bottom edge of the track and drag to expand it. (**Figure 12**).

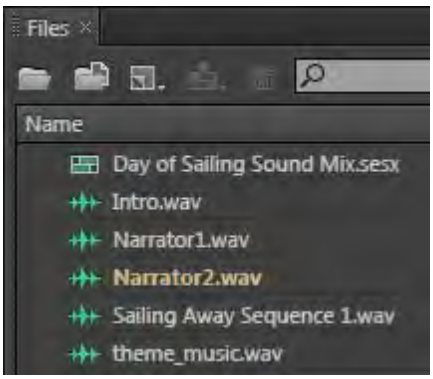

Figure 10 Files panel

Figure 11 Multitrack session

Figure 12 Expanded Track 1

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11. Examine the zoom controls at the bottom of the Editor panel (**Figure 13**).

You can zoom tracks in and out vertically (amplitude), which changes the magnification of each clip. You can also zoom horizontally to change the scale of the timeline, revealing more or less of each track.

When editing clips, you can zoom to designated In and Out points. Or, you can zoom in to focus on a selected area within a clip.

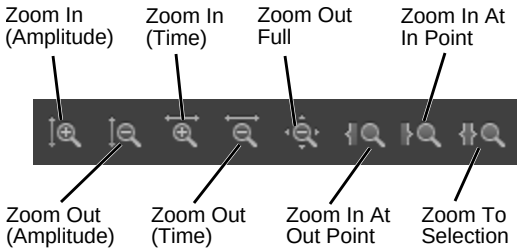

Figure 13 Zoom controls in the Editor panel

Editing a track individually

You can open and edit each track in a multitrack project without affecting the other tracks.

To edit a single audio track:

1. Select the track you want to edit by clicking it.
2. Select Clip > Edit Source File.

   The clip opens for editing in the Waveform Editor (**Figure 14**).
3. Make changes to the track, such as splitting it, applying effects, cleaning it up, removing noises, and lowering or raising the volume.

   Note: For more information on editing clips, see the guide titled “How to edit audio tracks.”
4. Click the View Multitrack Editor button to view your multitrack session in the Editor panel.

   Any changes you made to the file are reflected in the multitrack project.

Figure 14 File open in the Waveform Editor

Saving a multitrack project to a single audio file

This process is known as exporting a mixdown of the multiple tracks. When you do so, all of the tracks are mixed into a single file—a WAV file, AIF file, MP3 file, or other format, depending on your preference.

To save a multitrack project to a single audio file:

1. In the Files panel, select the multitrack project you want to save, and choose Multitrack > Mixdown Session To New File > Entire Session.

   Note: You can also choose File > Export > Multitrack Mixdown > Entire Session.

   The mixed file appears in the Files panel, along with the multitrack session file (**Figure 15**).
2. Double-click the mixdown file in the Files panel.

   A single file opens in the Editor panel. The entire multitrack session is a single file you can now add to other multitrack sessions.

Figure 15 Multitrack mixdown file

Adding a video preview track to a multitrack session

When editing audio for video, it can be helpful to open a video preview as part of your multitrack editing sessions. This allows you to see the video as you edit, splice, mix, and enhance your soundtrack.

In the Multitrack Editor, you can insert video files to precisely synchronize a session with a video preview. When you insert a video file, its video clip appears at the top of the track display, and its audio clip appears on the track below.

To insert a video preview in a multitrack session:

1. Open your multitrack session in the Editor.
2. In the Multitrack Editor, position the Current Time Indicator where you want the video to begin playing in the Timeline.
3. Select Multitrack > Insert Files.
4. In the Import File dialog box, browse to the location of the video file, select it, and click Open.

   Note: If the sample rate of the video's audio track is different from your multitrack session settings, a message appears. Click OK to create a copy of the file with a sample rate that matches your session.

   The video file is added to the topmost track in the multitrack session. If the video includes audio, its audio is placed in a new track directly below the video (**Figure 16**).

   A preview of the video plays in the Video panel (**Figure 17**).

   Note: You can move a video clip independent of the audio clip containing the original soundtrack. To synchronize such video and audio clips, click to select one of them, and then Ctrl-click (Windows) or Command+click (Mac OS) the other. Now when you drag either clip, the other moves with it.

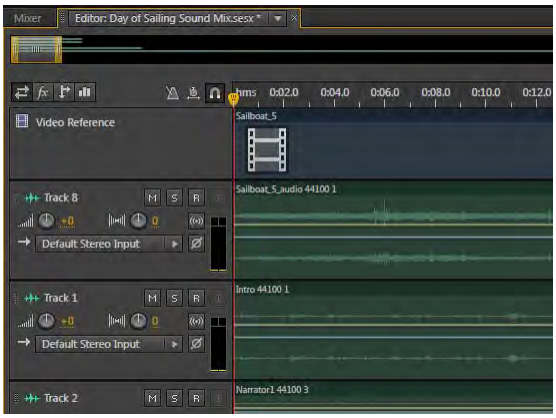

Figure 16 Video track in the Editor panel

Figure 17 Video panel

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