

# ABC Research Project 1

## Tips and suggestions for the Audio Portion

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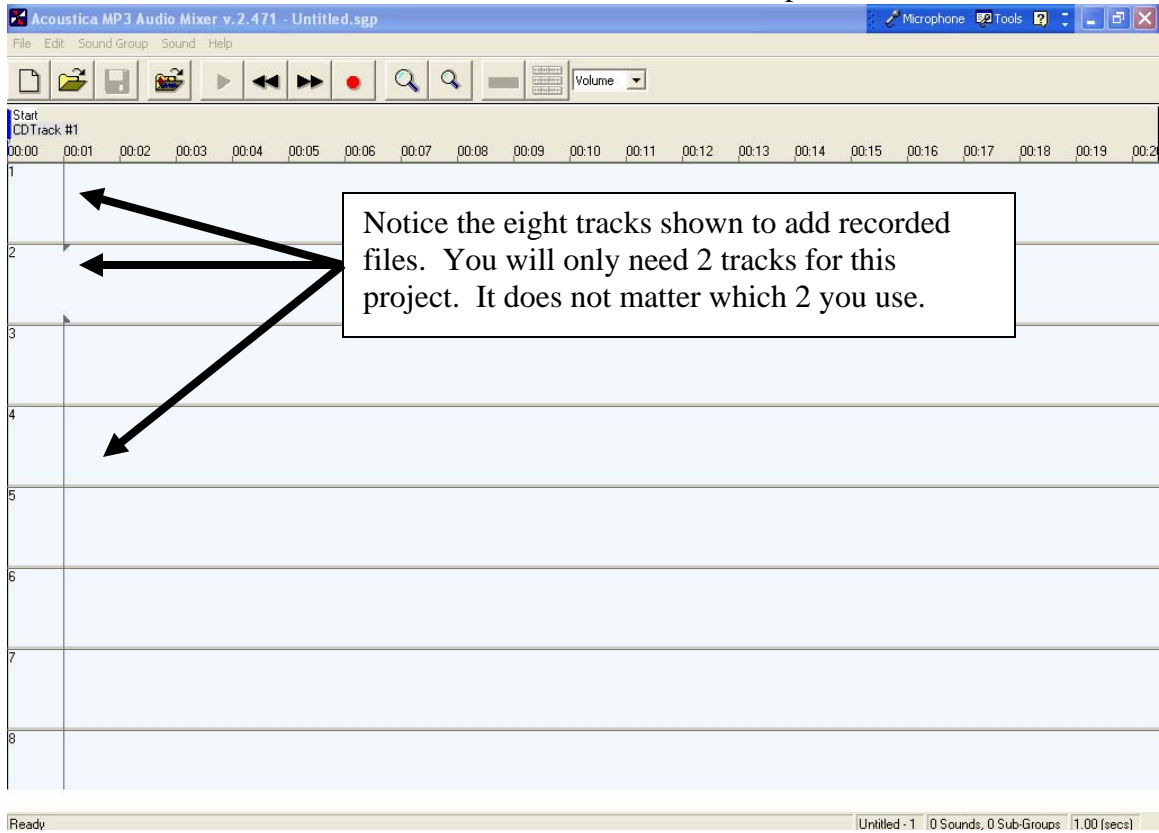
There are two sections to this project, the voice recording and the written. The Written Commentary is very straight-forward, just follow the Project Explanation and you will be fine. The Voice-Overdub presents some technical challenges that need to be overcome. I used a program called “Acoustica MP3 Audio Mixer” that I downloaded from <http://www.acoustica.com>. It worked really well for me, and I highly recommend using it for your project. (I use a PC and I do not know if this program is available for Apple users. Ask around ABC for this, or similar programs, to help you out with this project if you are an Apple user). The MP3 Audio mixer lets you import the MP3 audio files you will receive from ABC, record your voice comments, and mix final recording so that the bands and your voice comments can be clearly heard at the same time. It is very important that both the music and your voice are being heard at the same time.

Here are the basic steps I used to do the Audio portion of my Research Project 1:

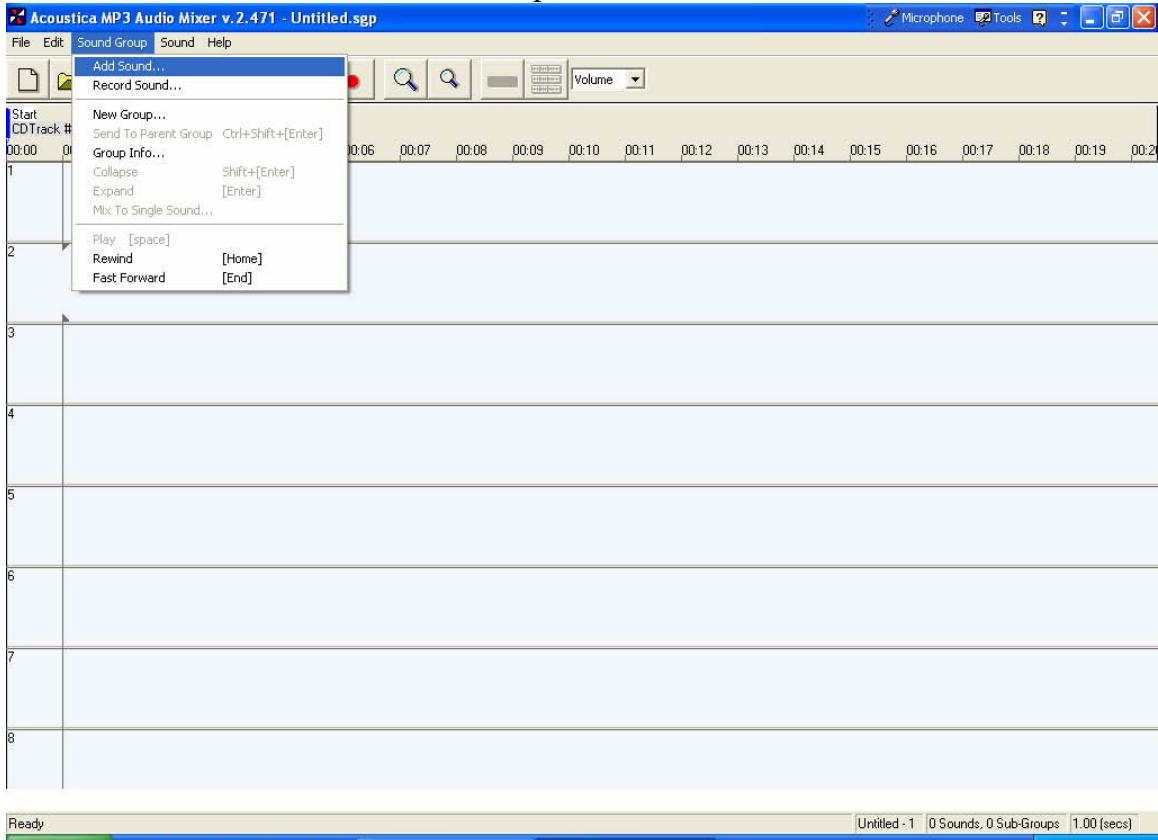
- 1.) Download and Install Acoustica MP3 Audio Mixer from the Acoustica Website (I believe they have a free trial period of a few days)
- 2.) Import (Add Sound) track from ABC MP3 files into Acoustica MP3 Audio Mixer.
- 3.) Listen to track and stop it to take written notes about what I want to comment on and when it occurs (trombones – 3:22) using the playback controls on the screen.
- 4.) Set microphone level for recording
- 5.) Select location to insert recording
- 6.) Record comment for that section while listening to Band on headphones
- 7.) Review recorded comment. Either save it, or re-record it.
- 8.) Repeat steps 5-7 for entire track.
- 9.) Adjust volume levels voice and band tracks
- 10.) Remember to record comments after the recording to touch on things you could not amply cover while the music was playing
- 11.) Review recording and save as MP3 file.
- 12.) Repeat steps 2-10 until all ABC tracks have been saved as MP3 files you’re your Voice-Overdub.
- 13.) Record all tracks with Voice-Overdub to Audio CD and submit for project.

Below is a more detailed explanation for using the Acoustica software. I hope this helps.

## Acoustica MP3 Audio Mixer when Opened



## Go to “Sound Group” and select “Add Sound”



## Open the ABC MP3 file you wish to work on

The screenshot displays the Acoustica MP3 Audio Mixer v. 2.471 interface. The main window title is "Acoustica MP3 Audio Mixer v. 2.471 - Untitled.sgp". The menu bar includes "File", "Edit", "Sound Group", "Sound", and "Help". The toolbar contains icons for file operations (New, Open, Save, Print), playback controls (Stop, Previous, Play, Next, Record), search, and volume. The main workspace shows a timeline from 00:00 to 00:20 and a track labeled "Start CDTrack #1".

A "Find A Sound..." dialog box is open, showing a list of files in the "Set B to Critique" folder. The files listed are:

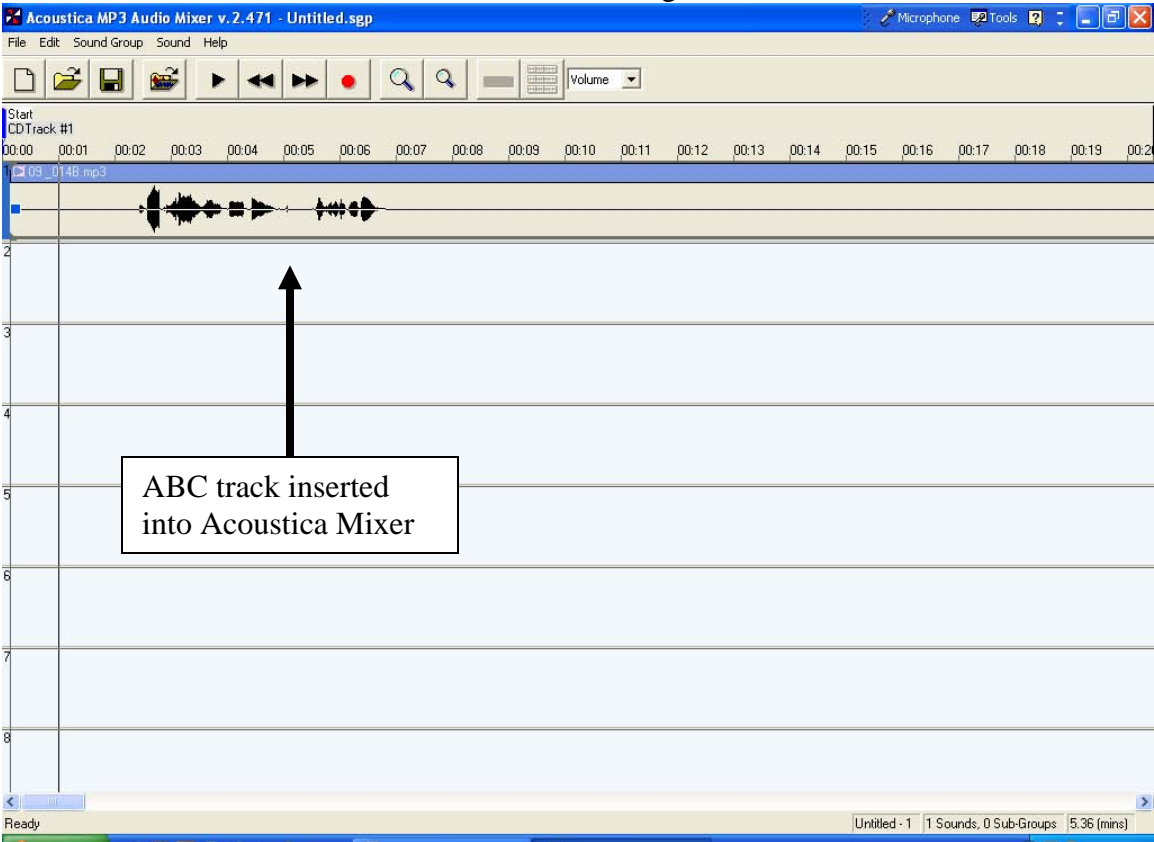
- 07\_012B
- 08\_013B
- 09\_014B (highlighted)
- 10\_015B
- 11\_016B
- 12\_017B

The dialog box also includes a "File name:" field with "09\_014B" entered, an "Open" button, and a "Files of type:" dropdown menu set to "Waves, MP3s, WMAs, Playlists or SoundGrc". There is a "Cancel" button and a checked "Preview Sounds" option. Below the preview option, the following details are shown:

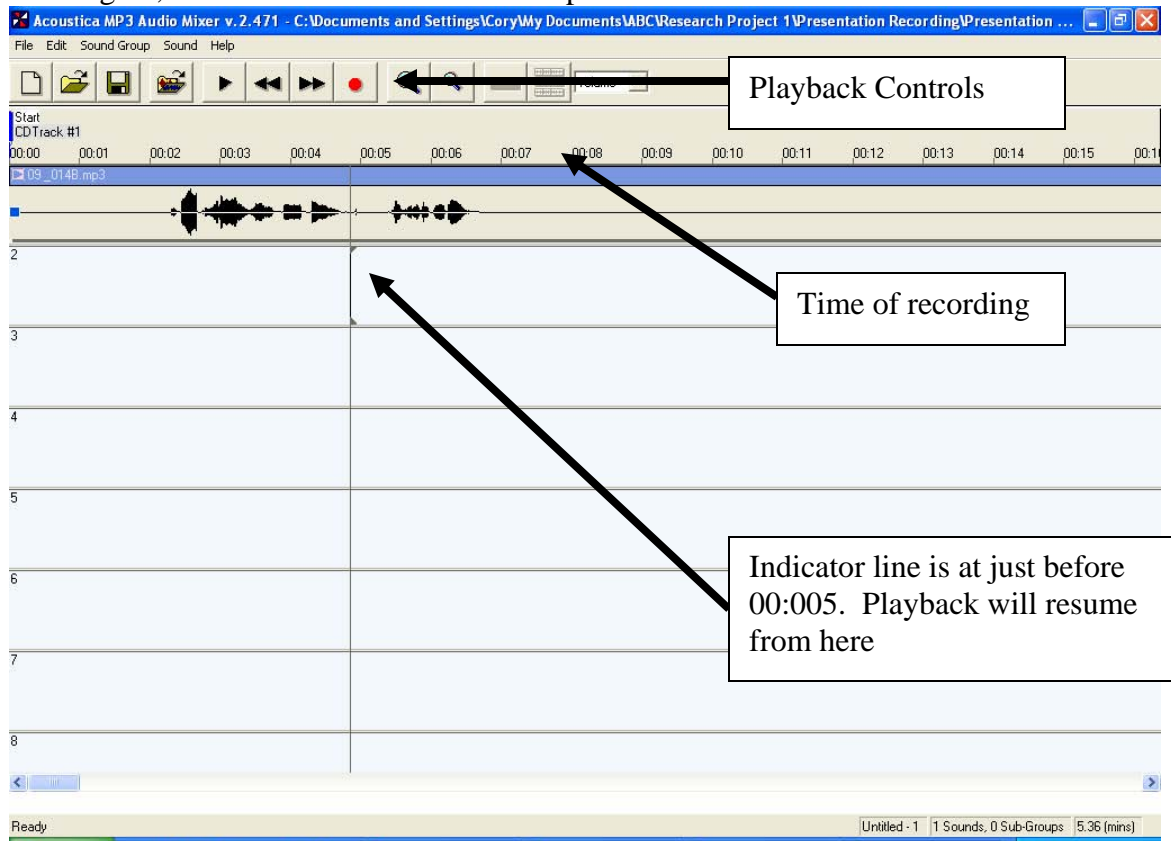
- Format: 80 kbps MPEG 1 Layer 3 mono
- Length: 5.36 (mins)
- Size (KB): 3218.54

The status bar at the bottom indicates "Ready" and "Untitled - 1 | 0 Sounds, 0 Sub-Groups | 1.00 (secs)".

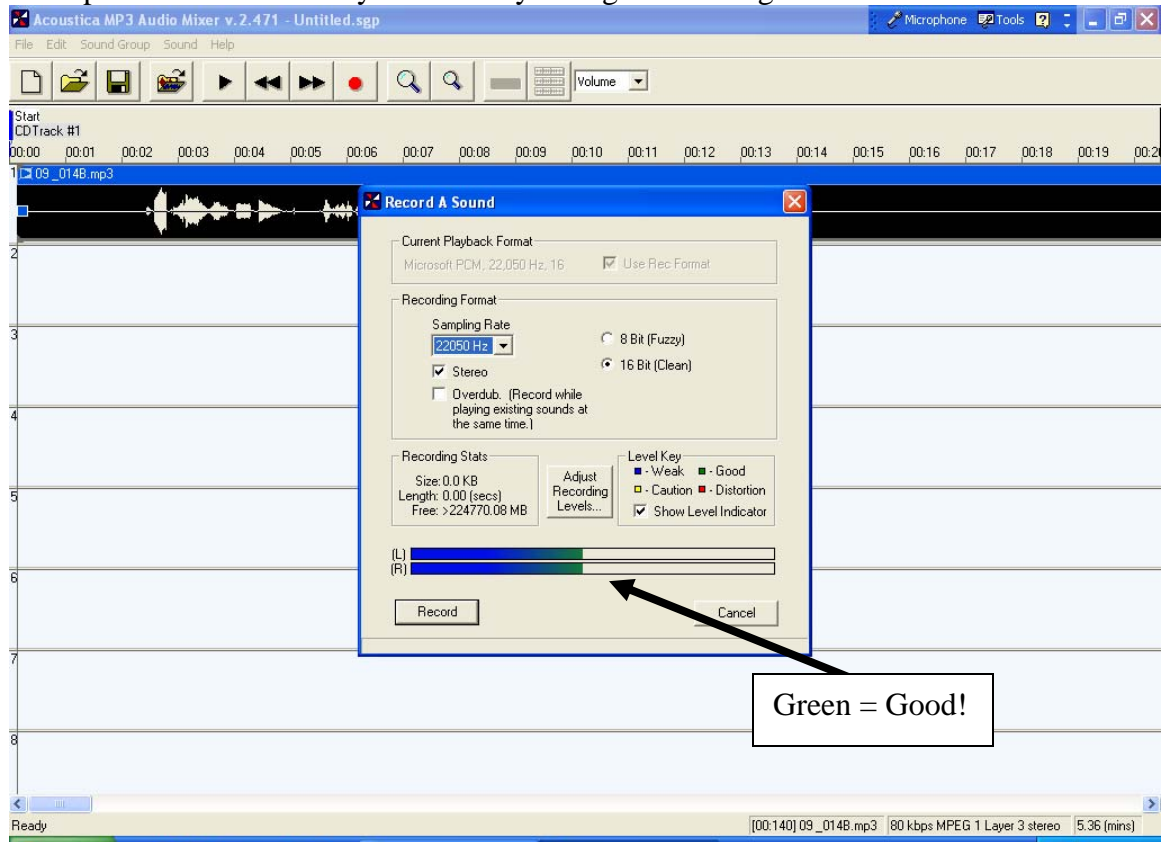
It should look something like this:



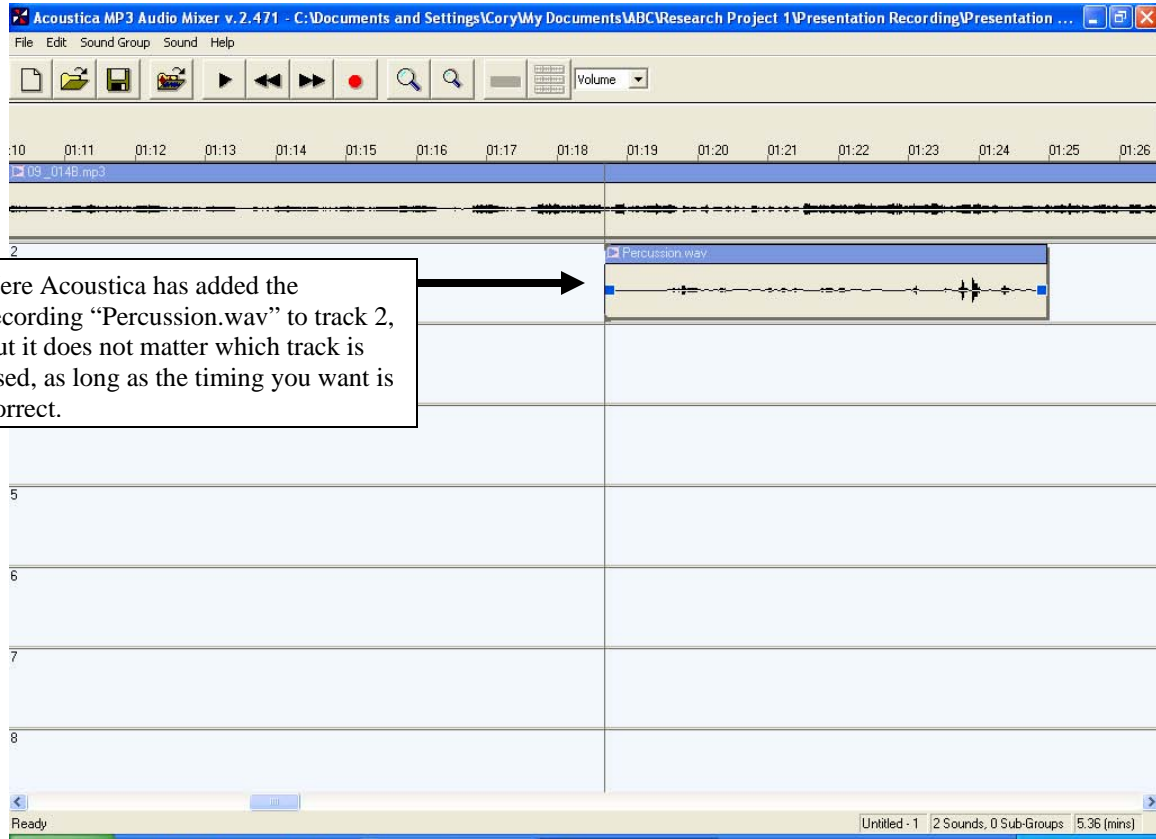
You can use the controls at the top of the page to listen to the recording and stop it whenever you need (The “play” button switches to the “stop” button when the track is playing). When I did this project, I stopped the recording and jotted down the things I knew I wanted to touch on, along with the approximate time that the event occurred in the recording, i.e. “Trombones need to clarify those running 16ths – 3:21” so that I could go back and record them later. The time is listed at the top of the recording area, and you can change the time indicated by using the “+” and “-” keys to zoom in and out on the recording. Once I finished my written comments for an entire track, I was ready to record. Hint: You can stop and start the track from whenever you want by moving the indicator line with your cursor. If you click anywhere other than in the track you are working on, the indicator will move to that position – see below



When ready to record, speak into the microphone to check the microphone level. Make sure the level indicator box is marked. This will cause colored bars to show up in the stereo bars to let you know if the level is weak, good, caution, or too high. Adjust your microphone as needed and you are ready to begin recording.

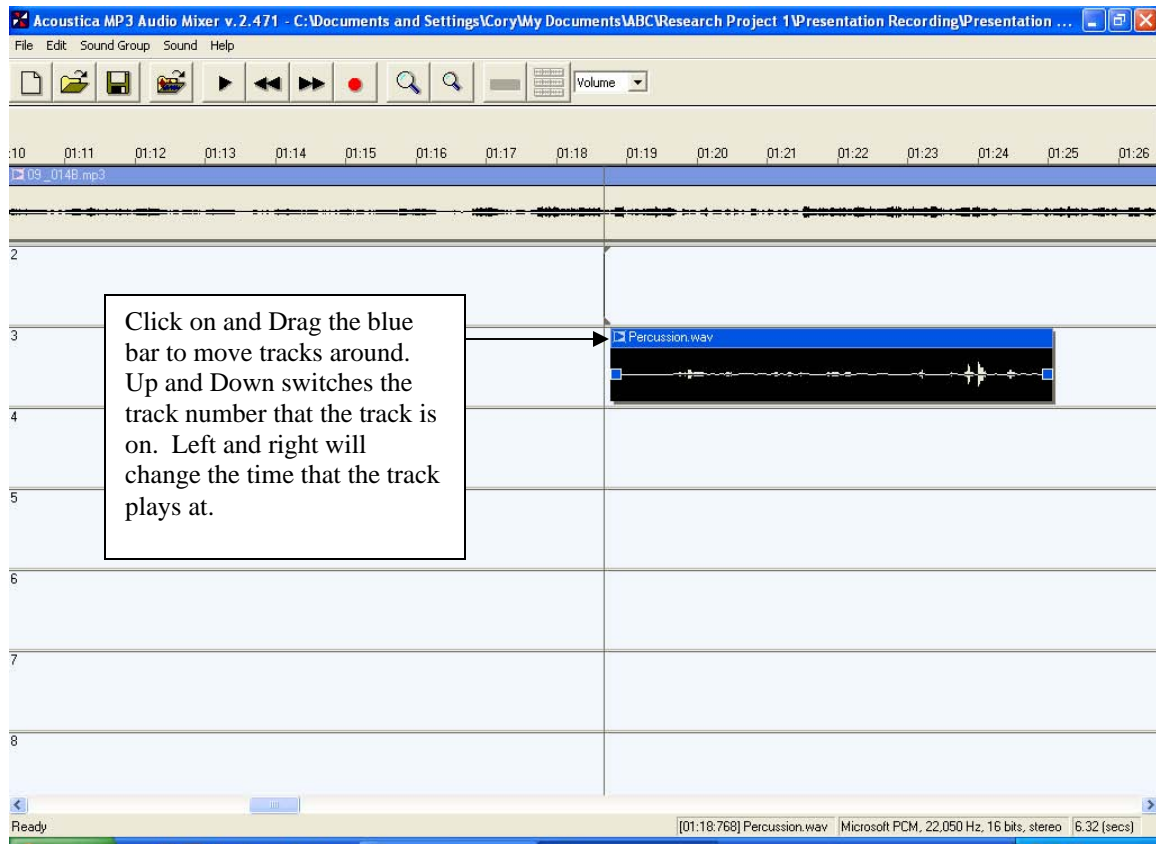


Select where in the recording you are going to insert a recorded comment by moving the indicator line to that spot. **When recording, I used the Overdub selection on the recording menu (see above). This allowed me to listen to the track while recording my voice.** I plugged my headphones into the computer so that the microphone did not pick up the music that was begin played. By having an independent voice track, I was able to manually adjust the levels as needed before submitting my final project. After you have recorded a comment, you will have the option to listen to it before you save it. Once you have saved the file, it is saved as a .wav file, and it is added as a separate track into your recording as below: See Percussion.wav

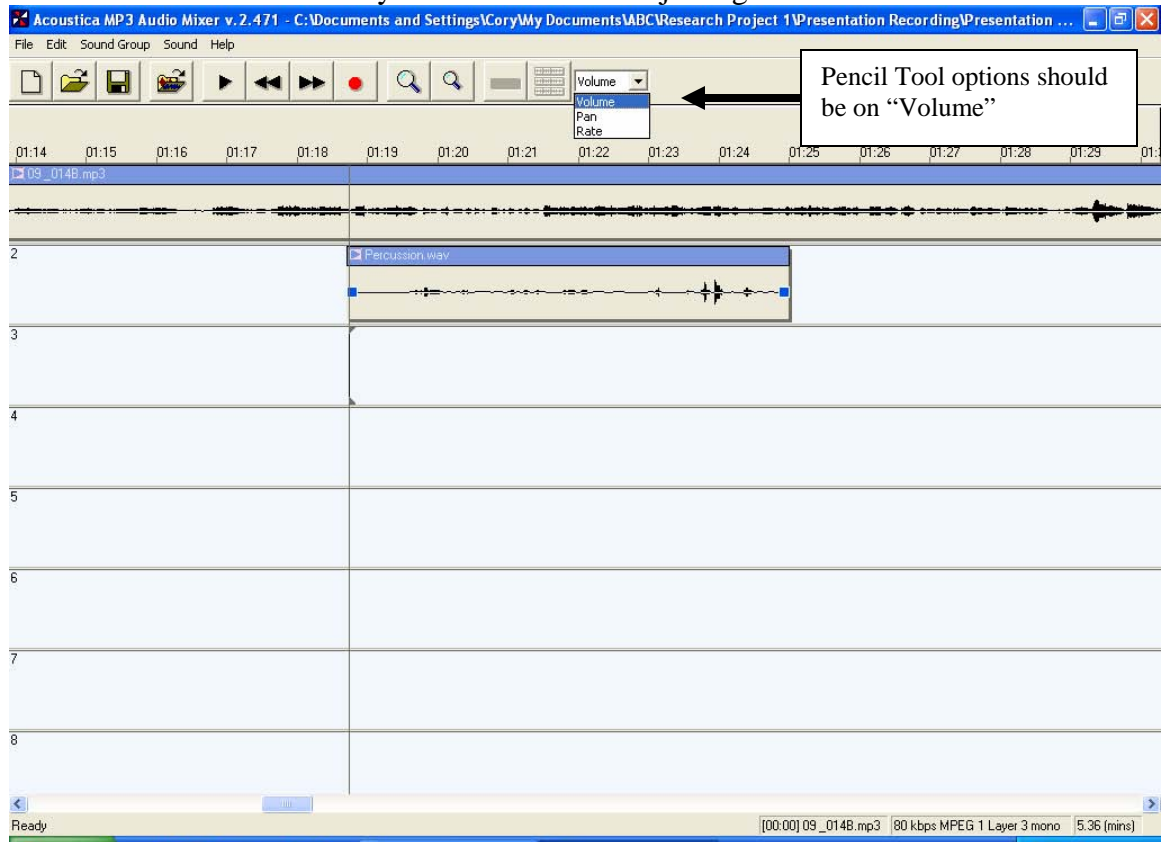


Here Acoustica has added the recording “Percussion.wav” to track 2, but it does not matter which track is used, as long as the timing you want is correct.

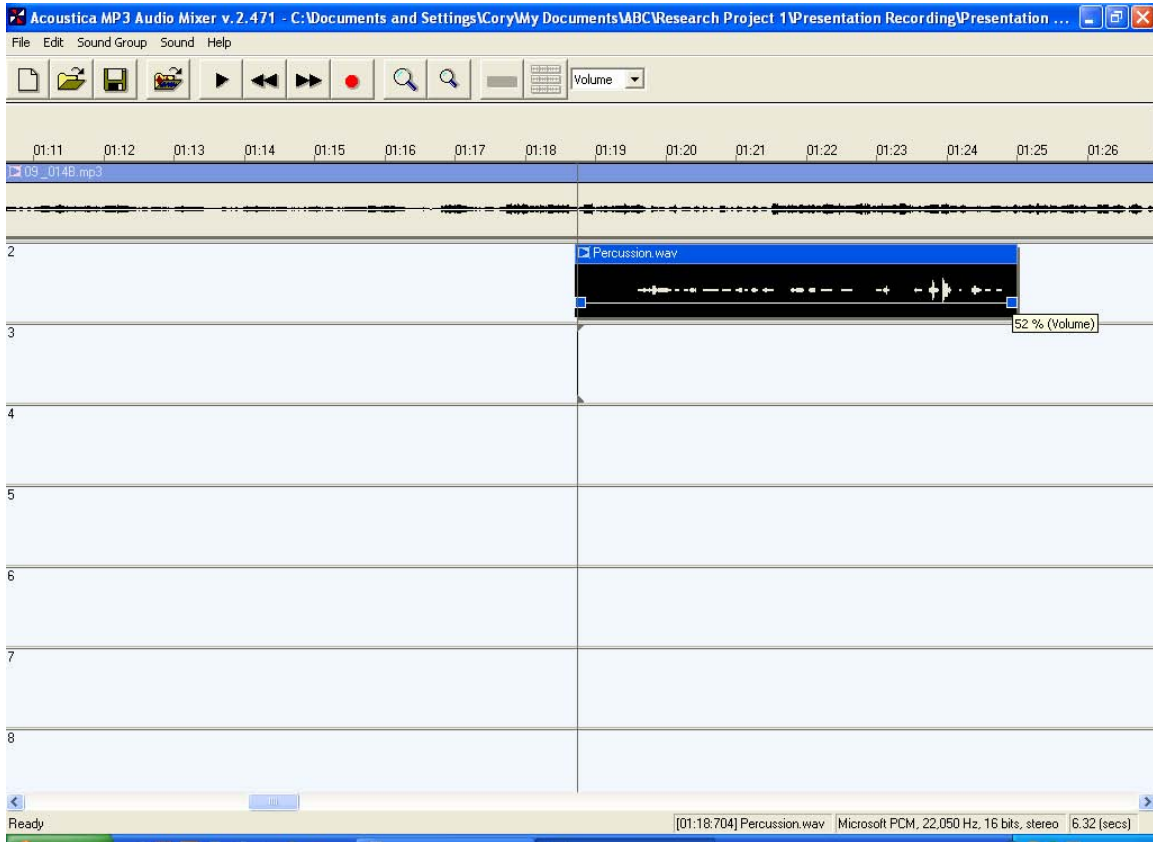
You can move tracks around by clicking and dragging on the blue bar with the track name on it. (In this case – Percussion.wav) Here I have moved the recording down to track 3, just for kicks. This will alter the recording at all.



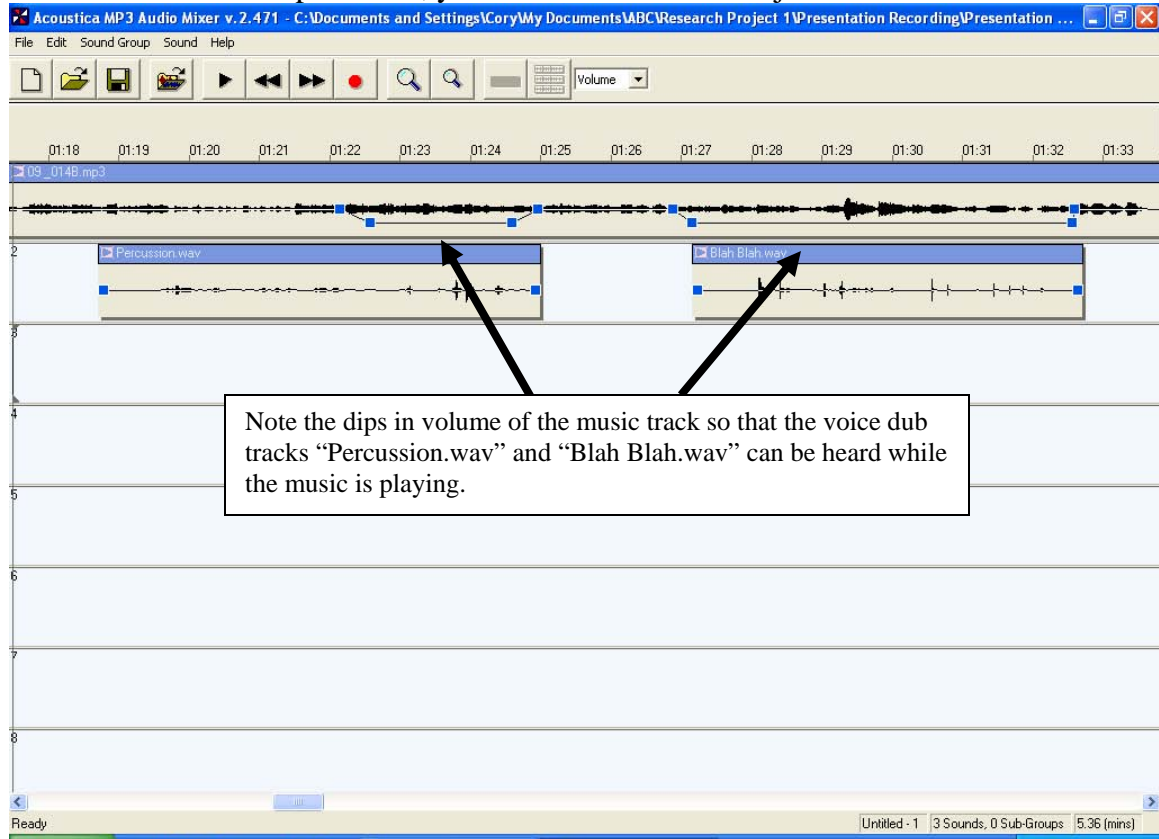
When you are done adding your voice recordings, it is important to go back and adjust the track volumes so that your voice and the music playing will be clearly heard for your project. This is done using the “pencil” tool. Be sure that the pencil tool menu is on “Volume” since that is what you will need to be adjusting.



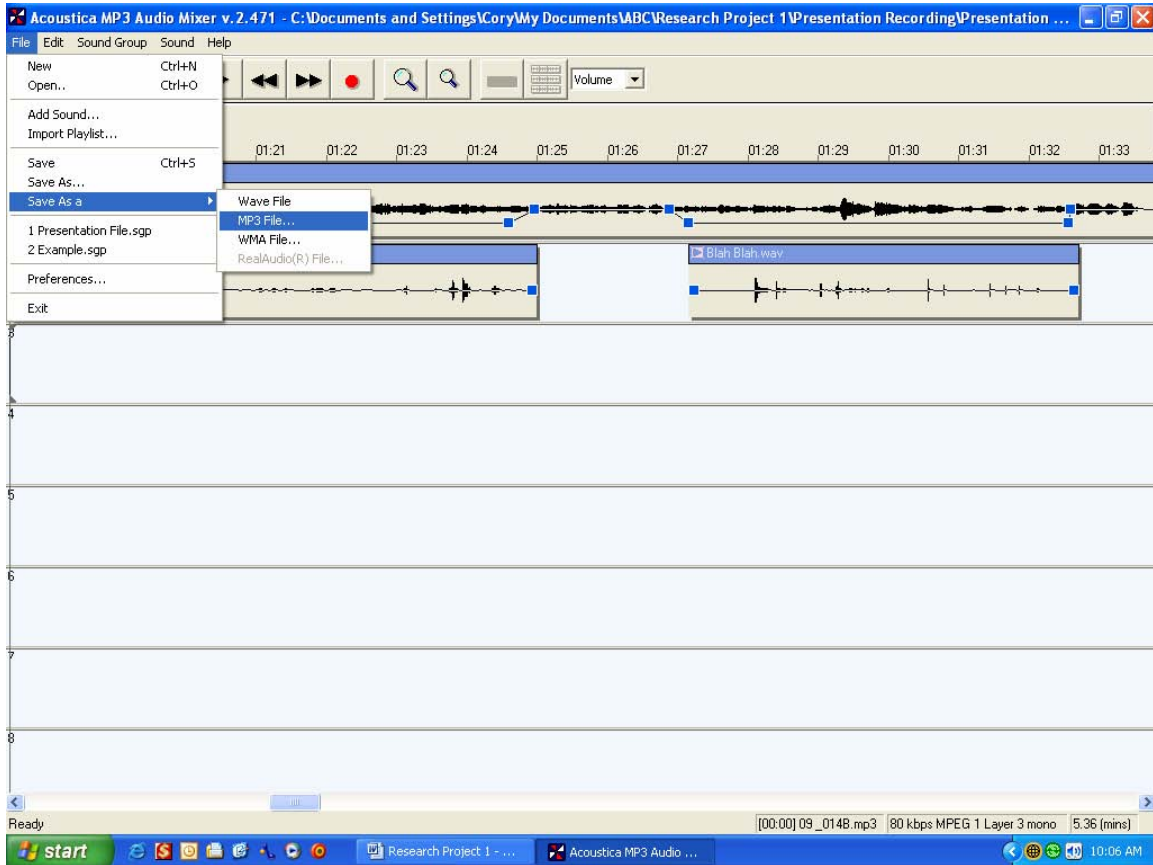
You can adjust the volume of an entire track, or portions of a track, by using the pencil tool. Move the cursor over the track and the cursor will change to a pencil with a percentage after it, click on the track to change the volume at that point to the percentage you wish. *Note that the volume will gradually change from your last point creating a crescendo or decrescendo on the track.* By adjusting the level of the blue boxes at either end, I have adjusted the Percussion.wav file below to 52% volume (softer).



It is important to go back and LISTEN to the file to be sure that you can hear the music and the voice recordings. I found that by primarily adjusting the Music's level, the recordings sounded most natural and flowing. When the music got too loud, I simply cut the music down a percentage so that my voice could be clearly hear without sounding distorted. In the example below, you can see the volume adjustment in the music track



When your entire file is adjusted to the levels you desire, save the combination of the music and the Voice-Overdub as an MP3 File. Select “File”, “Save as a”, “MP3 file”



Follow the menus to save the music and voice recordings as 1 MP3 file.

When you are done with all of the tracks, and you have them all saved as MP3 files, burn these files to CD as you would any other Audio CD on your computer, and you are set for the audio portion of your project.