

# 15 TIPS for AUDIO WORK

M Salo







M. Salo

# 15 Tips for Audio Work

© 2021 M.Salo

ISBN: 978-952-7379-05-9



Publisher: Planet 9, Helsinki, Finland

Printed by: BoD – Books on Demand, Norderstedt, Germany

Book cover & illustrations: M.Salo

Screenshots from Reaper.fm, Audacity

Original text: 15 äänityön vinkkiä (Finnish)

# Contents

Preface.....	1
1: Clip by clip toward the final victory.....	3
2: Recording loops.....	7
3: Authentic echo .....	13
4: Tape speed .....	15
5: Doubling .....	17
6: Analog and digital together.....	21
7: Recording drums .....	27
8: Recording tracks on-the-go .....	31
9: Bass matters .....	39
10: Vocals matter .....	41
11: Projects in a backpack .....	49
12: Studio in a camper?.....	51
13: Who could play drums for me? .....	53
14: How can people find my music?.....	55
15: Know your rights .....	67
Finally.....	69
Terms and their explanations.....	72



# PREFACE

Dear reader:

This booklet was written with a very casual attitude and style. It doesn't read like an official manual or a technical instruction book. Rather it offers some hopefully entertaining moments and a few useful tips to anyone interested in audio editing, be it analog, or digital.

I feel very relieved for finishing another larger writing project on the use of a computer for audio editing. Originally my intention was simply to update my original texts from 2004, but once I started, that project became a real burden. I realized that I had to rewrite the entire book. During this painstaking process I realized how some of the topics would function much better as a literary work of their own – the one you are currently reading. What was originally a collection of just a few audio work tips, grew into a collection of 15 topics presented in this booklet.

Sound is quite a miraculous phenomenon: Waves carried by air, caused by mechanical vibrations. We hear them as rhythm, noise, notes, speech. We attach meanings to these waves – vowels, consonants, words, sentences, and beats. Music. The most amazing thing is how our human brain interprets sounds and builds significance and structure into them. Why does a drop of the frequency of the middle tone of a major chord change the sound from jolly to sad in our minds?

Ok, but let's return to the point before this text starts to slip too far from its original intent! The first ten tips are directly linked to



computerized audio work and editing. The rest are other kinds of tips and tricks related to making music. I hope you find some of them helpful.

# 1: CLIP BY CLIP TOWARD THE FINAL VICTORY

Uh .. damn .. go again... The red ON-AIR light is blinking and you start to feel nervous... Fortunately, it is no longer necessary to get a recording done at once, instead a track can be put together little by little. Recording the whole track piece by piece was learned already early in the analog era.

In digital recording, and why not on a tape too, it is also easy to make parallel, alternative tracks. And unlike the physical tape, digital recording does not have much limitations with the number of tracks. You can easily make 5 or 10 or even 15 takes and keep them all in your project. That actually brings one downside: you might record a bit too many options and later it will be very time consuming to go through all of them.

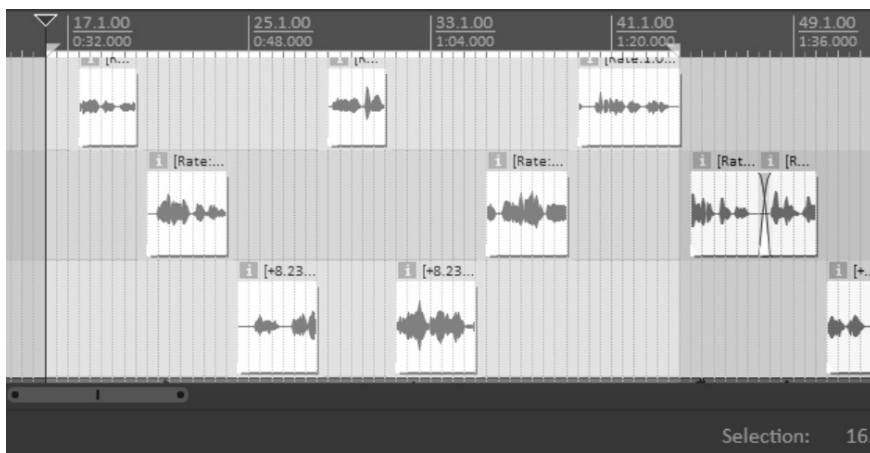
However, by using alternative tracks, you will be able to put together one really good track, when you collect the best parts from all the parallel versions and finally compile one final track.

Here is one example of how it can be done:

1. Record 2-3 instrument or vocal tracks. You should record them during the same session; with the microphone position, recording settings, amplifier settings or singer's voice being as similar as possible on each take. And I don't recommend recording unnecessarily too many versions, for the reason just mentioned: It is hard work to go through them later. Of course that is still doable.

**2.** Return to the project after a long enough time; for example, the next day. First, listen to the tracks one by one. Use the split function to divide them into shorter clips. First, remove all bad and unusable parts from all of them.

**3.** Then go through the tracks a little at a time. Take advantage of the listening loop tool. Split the tracks into as small clips as necessary. Then select the best clips within that playback loop. You should use time and judgment for this. Once you know which clips you want to keep, delete the others. I think a loop length of about 5 seconds is good. When done, go further and make another 5-8 seconds loop, and so on. Don't try to get the job done too quickly - you can use this step for even one month or so.



The picture shows three vocal tracks with their chosen “best parts”. Before rendering the final vocal track, you should listen to these three tracks (in SOLO mode) and pay special attention to the boundaries of the clips. Also, the volume should be in the same level in each clip. The lighter part is the loop area.

15 small tips for recording and mixing music.  
Something about promotion and owners' rights  
too.

