Lesson 3, Part 1

Welcome to lesson three of the Home Brew Audio production tutorial series. So far you've recorded and edited your own audio file, so now what? How about finishing up your own audio production?

In lesson one you learned how to get audio into your computer, that's called recording. In lesson two, you learned some very basic audio editing techniques. Now it's time to learn the final steps to completing your first audio production, adding more tracks to your project, like background music and mixing it all together to create the final product. Remember, for these first three lessons we're working with a budget of zero dollars. No expensive gear was used to create these early tutorials. I used the same zero dollar budget of the lesson to demonstrate the powerful potential already at your disposal. So are you ready to get to it?

I promised in this lesson we'd learn how to add tracks that would play at the same time as the original track. But if you're not a composer where do you get the music? The answer is Royalty free music. Royalty free music is audio that's been composed and recorded by someone else. Then anyone can use this music in their own productions. Such as commercials, podcasts, audio books, videos et cetera. And then they can sell or distribute those products without worrying about copyright infringement.

Most Royalty free music is sold as either individual downloads from websites or as part of libraries containing hundreds of music clips in all different genres. Go to Home Brew Audio's sound effects and royalty free music page for links to several of these audio library providers. But for the purposes of this tutorial, we have a clip of royalty free music available to you free of charge.

To download it go to the Home Brew Audio site, then go to the resources page at this link. Then once you're on the page, click on the link that says, "Royalty free music file download here". And then download that file, named RF35seconds.mp3, and as usual save it to your desktop or a folder that you'll remember.

Once you've got that mp3 downloaded, just remember where it is and open Audacity. That should be old hat to you by now, we're going to record and edit the same sentence we've been using for the first track. Which is "Hi and welcome to the first Home Brew Audio podcast". "Hi and welcome to the first Home Brew Audio podcast". Now once you've done that rewind and take a listen. "Hi and welcome to the first Home Brew Audio podcast".

Good, I've been calling these blue blobs, but it's probably time that we call it by it's real name which is a waveform. So you should have a waveform that looks like this. Okay, so first let's amplify this a little bit, turn up the audio. So let's go to Effect and Amplify, make sure New Peak Amplitude is set to 0.0 and the Allow Clipping box is unchecked, click Okay. That effect is basically normalizing, what's called normalizing the audio, which means that the loudest bit, the loudest part of the audio is going to 0 dB, is going to the loudest possible. There is an effect also, let's undo this... There is an effect in Audacity that is called normalize, let's check that out real quick. It does pretty much the same thing... Normalize and here you can just leave that checked and that checked, but here it says it would normalize the max amplitude to -1 dB, that's to leave a little bit of safety of one decibel.

But if you wanted the highest peak to go to the loudest possible, you could set that to zero and it

would do exactly the same thing as we did with the amplify effect. But let's just use the normalize effect to do the same thing, click Okay and there we go. Remember the next step... Yep, noise reduction. At the lowest budget level, like the one we're using. The audio will almost certainly have lot's of noise that we have to get rid off. So we grab a bit of the waveform with only the noise that's this stuff right here that's technically supposed to be silence, but isn't very silent. Then we go up to the drop down menu "Effect down to Noise Removal, select "Get Noise Profile". Then we select the entire track, Effect-Noise Removal. And remember the sensitivity, we found that putting it at about five worked best last time, so do that. Click Okay and there we have it, let's listen.

"Hi and welcome to the first Home Brew Audio podcast." That's sounding pretty good. Now let's do a little more editing. We need to clean up the parts we don't really need, all that extra space at the beginning and the end of the file. So let's just select the parts we don't need and delete them, by hitting the delete button on your keyboard.

Now, it's time to finally add something else to our production. We're going to add a second track and put music on it that will play at the same time as the talking bit on track one. This is where the real fun begins, we're going to add the royalty free music mp3 file that you downloaded earlier. Go to the file dropdown menu. Then click on "import," and then click on "audio." And then navigate your way to the RF music file that you downloaded earlier and, voila! You just added background music to your voice. The music comes in on a second track. So, let's hear what it sounds like. Hit the rewind button and click. "Hi, welcome to the first Home Brew audio podcast". Pretty cool, huh? But most of you probably notice that the music is louder than or as loud as, the voice. Definitely not background which is what we're going for. Also if we use this as an intro to say a podcast, we're probably gonna want the music to play by itself for a little while before the voice comes in. So we need to do two things: Get the mix of the volumes correct, and move the waveforms around on their tracks to get their timing right. Both are easy tasks, which we will do in part two of lesson three in the next video. See you there.