# Basic Sound Editing using Audacity 1.3

## 1 Getting Started

**By the end of this worksheet I should...**

- be able to explain the term freeware
- know how to open a sound file
- be able to describe the different parts of the audacity window.
- understand the difference between saving a project and exporting

## Introduction

The role of a sound editor is to take sound recordings and alter or change them. For movies this is done by first recording the soundtrack to fit the type of film. After that weeks are then spent cutting and pasting sections of the music together to match the mood and pace of each part of the movie.

(Note - The term cut and paste comes from when scissors were used to cut the tape into pieces which were then glued together again in a different order.)

With developments in computing, music can now be written, created and edited without using any instruments at all. Expensive studios and mixing desks have been replaced with computer programs like Cubase.

Studio with a Mixing Desk

Cubase - A professional sound editing computer program

## Audacity

The sound editing program you are going to use is called Audacity. (Audacity is freeware. This means it can be downloaded by anyone and used without having to pay for it. So, if you enjoy this unit you could try it at home.)

Load the "Audacity" program. You will find it by clicking on the *Start* menu, choosing *Programs* then *Audacity*.

Click on the *File* menu and select *Open*.

Open the file called "Beethoven Fur Elise". Your teacher will tell you where the file is located.

Some basic information about the Audacity window is shown below.

The "transport" toolbar is used to play, pause and stop the sound file.

The "Audacity tools" toolbar is used to select ways of editing or viewing the sound.

The "Audacity edit" toolbar is used to select editing tools.

The "timeline" tells us how long each sound is. This timeline is shown in minutes and seconds (eg 2:15).

By zooming in you can view fractions of a second.

Each sound is shown as a blue sound wave. When the music is quiet the peaks are low. When the peaks are high the sound is loud.

It's possible to have several sounds open at once and mix different sounds together.

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You can choose where to start the sound by clicking on the sound wave at the point you want it to play from.

Note – This only works when the sound is not playing.

The sound can be played, paused and stopped using the buttons shown below.

**Try - Click, play, pause and stop a few different sections of the sound.**

You can highlight sections of the sound by clicking and dragging the mouse across the sound wave. Again, this only works when the sound is not playing.

**Try - Highlight and play different sections of the sound.**

# Getting Started

When you have finished editing a sound, you can either select "Save Project As" or choose to "Export" the sound.

**Save Project As** does not save the actual sound. Instead it saves a list of all the changes (edits) you have made to the sound.

Opening a saved project will reload the sound and then redo all the edits.

The advantage of saving a project is that your original sound file is not changed.

**Export** is used create a brand new sound file.

Select *Export* from the *File* menu.

This brings up a Save window.

At the bottom of the window you have the option of selecting the type of file you want to create.

If you export an MP3 file, Audacity allows you to fill in Metadata for the file. Metadata contains the Artist Name, Song Title etc you would see displayed on your MP3 player.

In the next worksheet you will learn how to cut & trim your sound files.