

Making a Mix File with Audacity

A Learn in 30 presentation

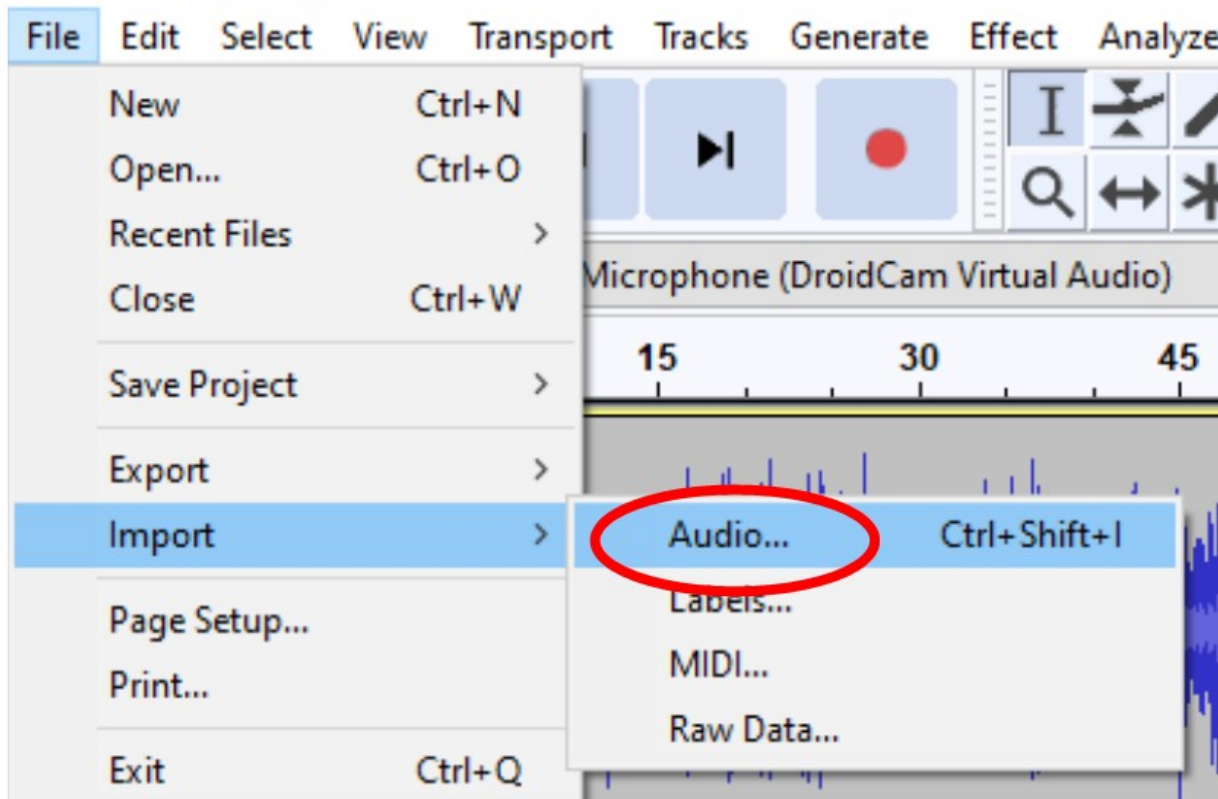
By John Krout

For PATACS + OPCUG

July 16, 2022

How to open a stereo digital song in an Audacity track pair

- Use **File** → **Import** → **Audio**



What is a Mix File?

- An audio **mix file** is simply a groups of songs, played one after the other, with no silence in between each song.
- Back in the 70s and 80s I made these on tape. Now I make the same thing in digital audio files.
- I make digital audio mix files for the pre-meeting slide shows shown at PATACS+OPCUG meetings.

What is a segue?

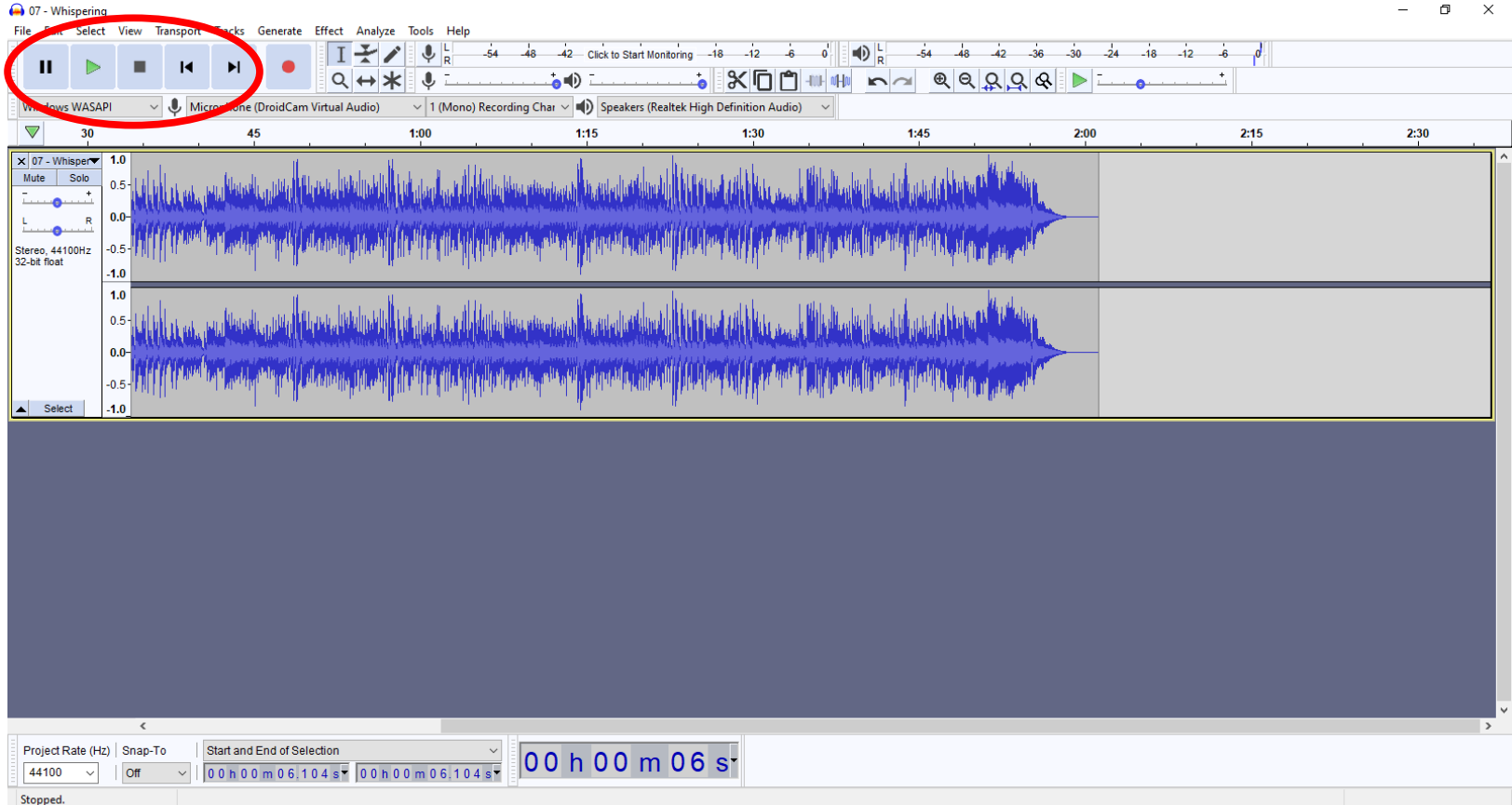
- Pronounced “seg-way”
- A segue is a **transition** from the end of one song to the start of the next, usually by overlapping the two slightly.
- A good segue makes the sonic experience continuous: no silence AKA “dead air”

How Audacity Displays a Digital Song

- Each song appears as an oscilloscope-like graph on a timeline.
- The beginning, timepoint zero, is on the left.
- The end is on the right.
- Along the top is a **time scale**.
- A stereo digital song appears as two **tracks**.

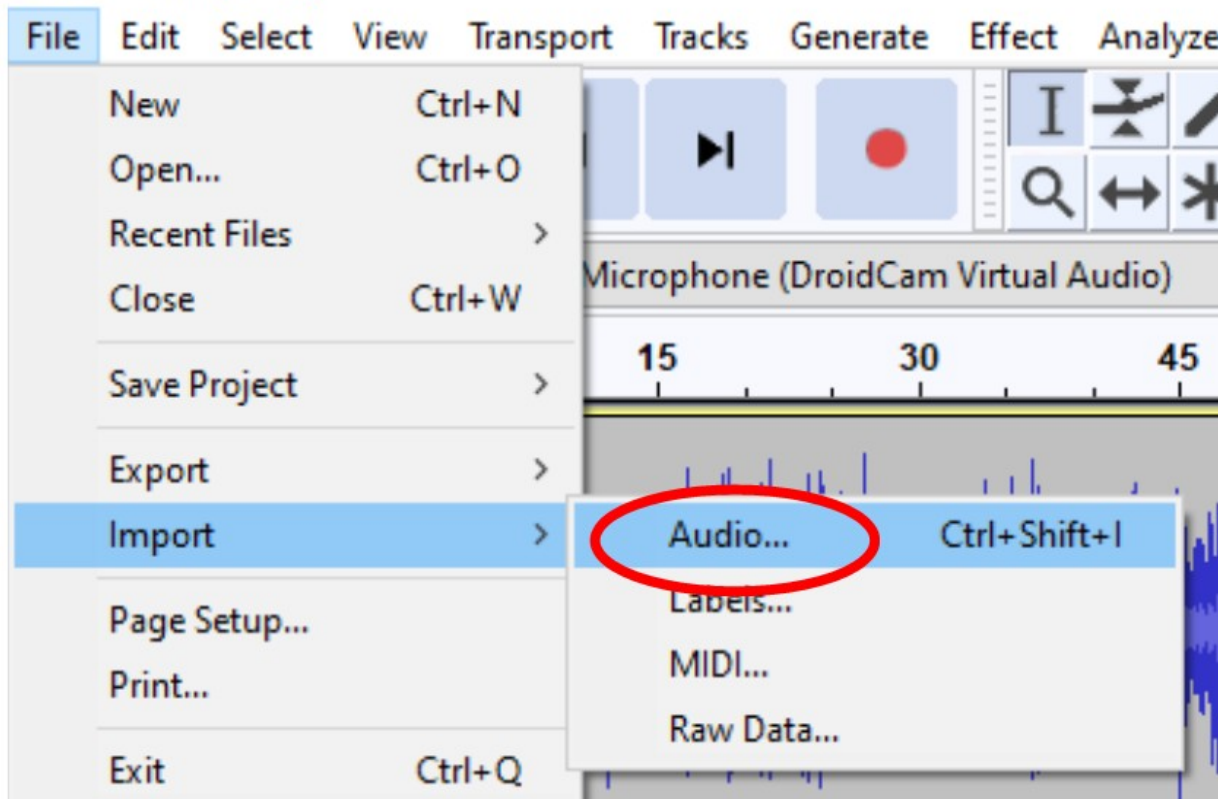
Use File → Import → audio to open a digital song in Audacity

Playback controls

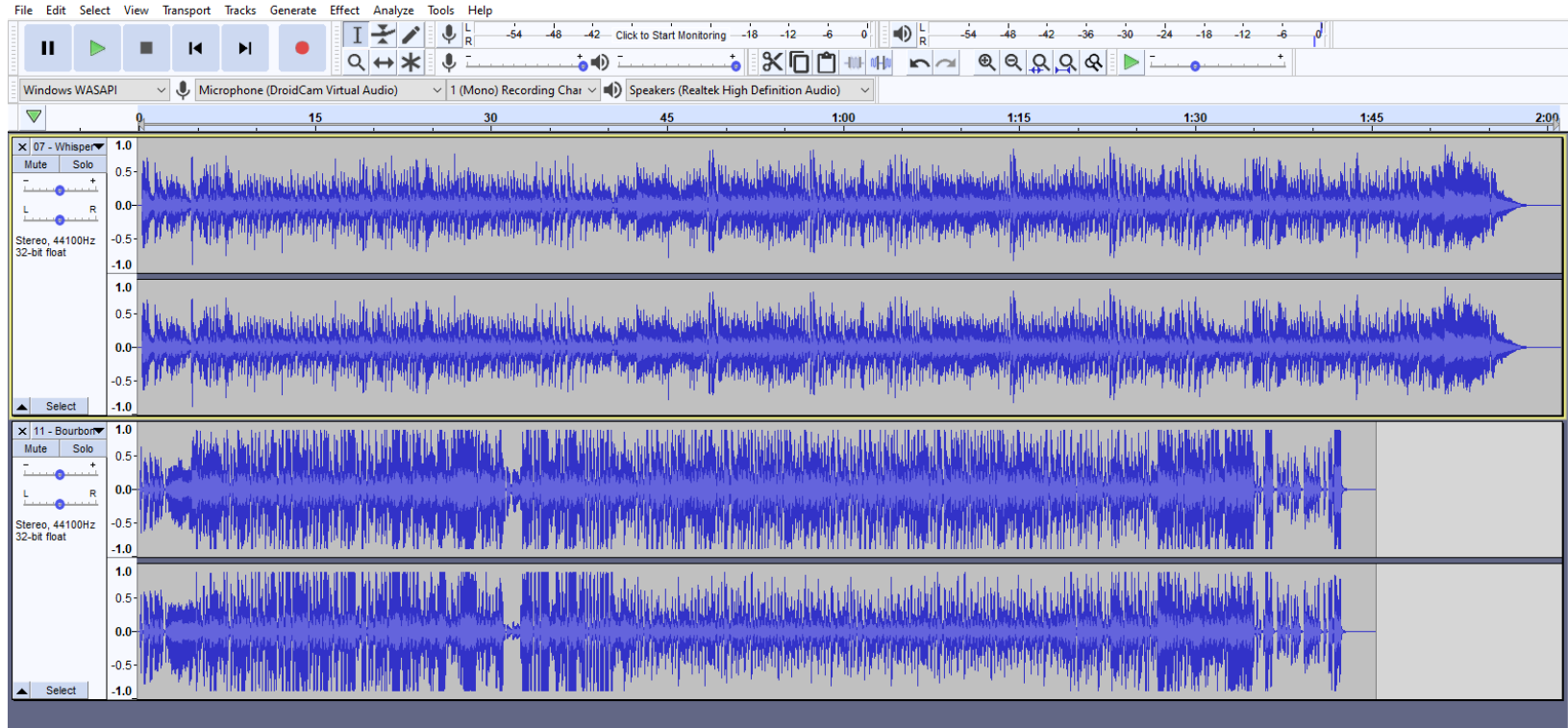


How to open **another** digital song in a separate Audacity track pair

- Use **File** → **Import** → **Audio**

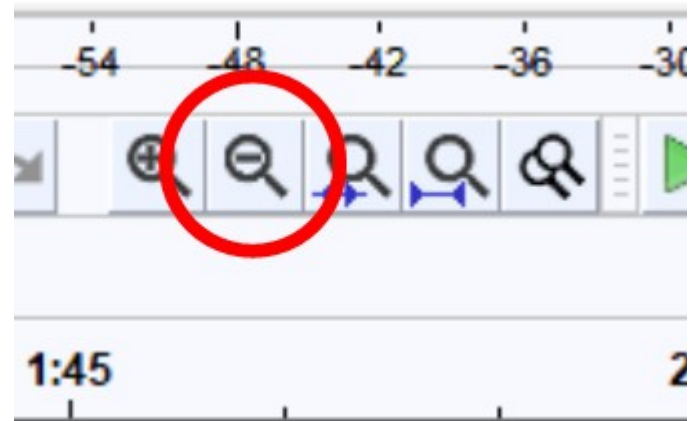


Audacity displays two digital songs

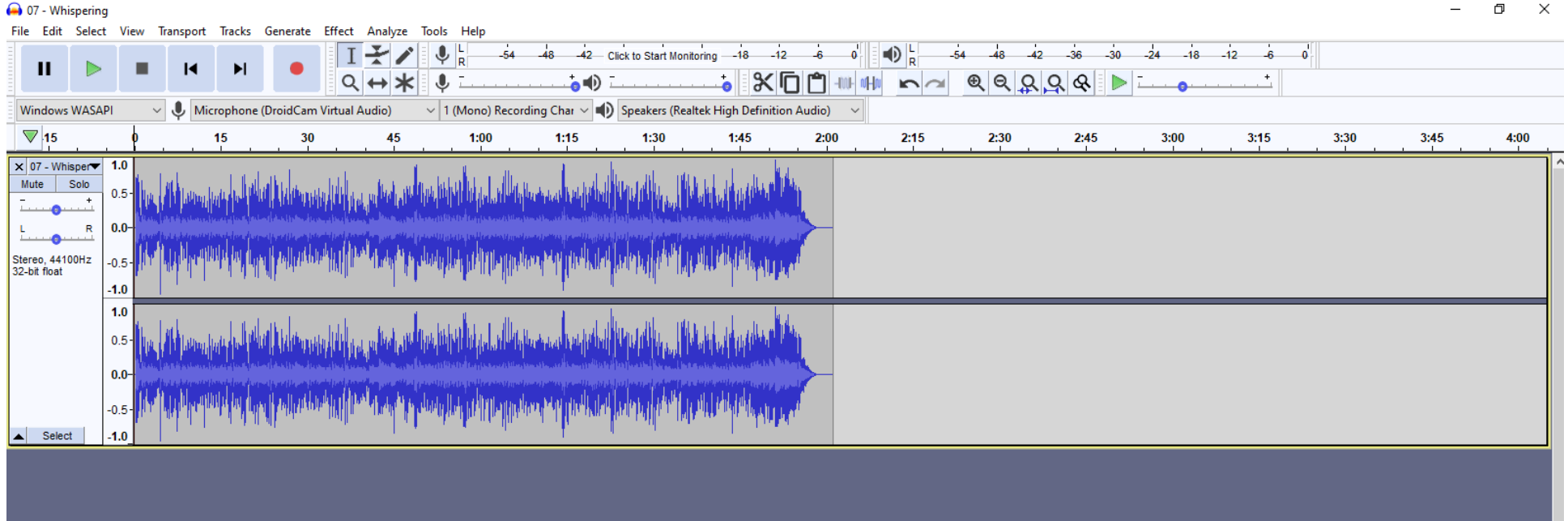


How to Zoom Out (add more time in the Audacity timeline)

- The Audacity control bar contains **magnifying glass** icons
- The magnifying glass with a minus sign is the **Zoom Out icon**



After Zooming out

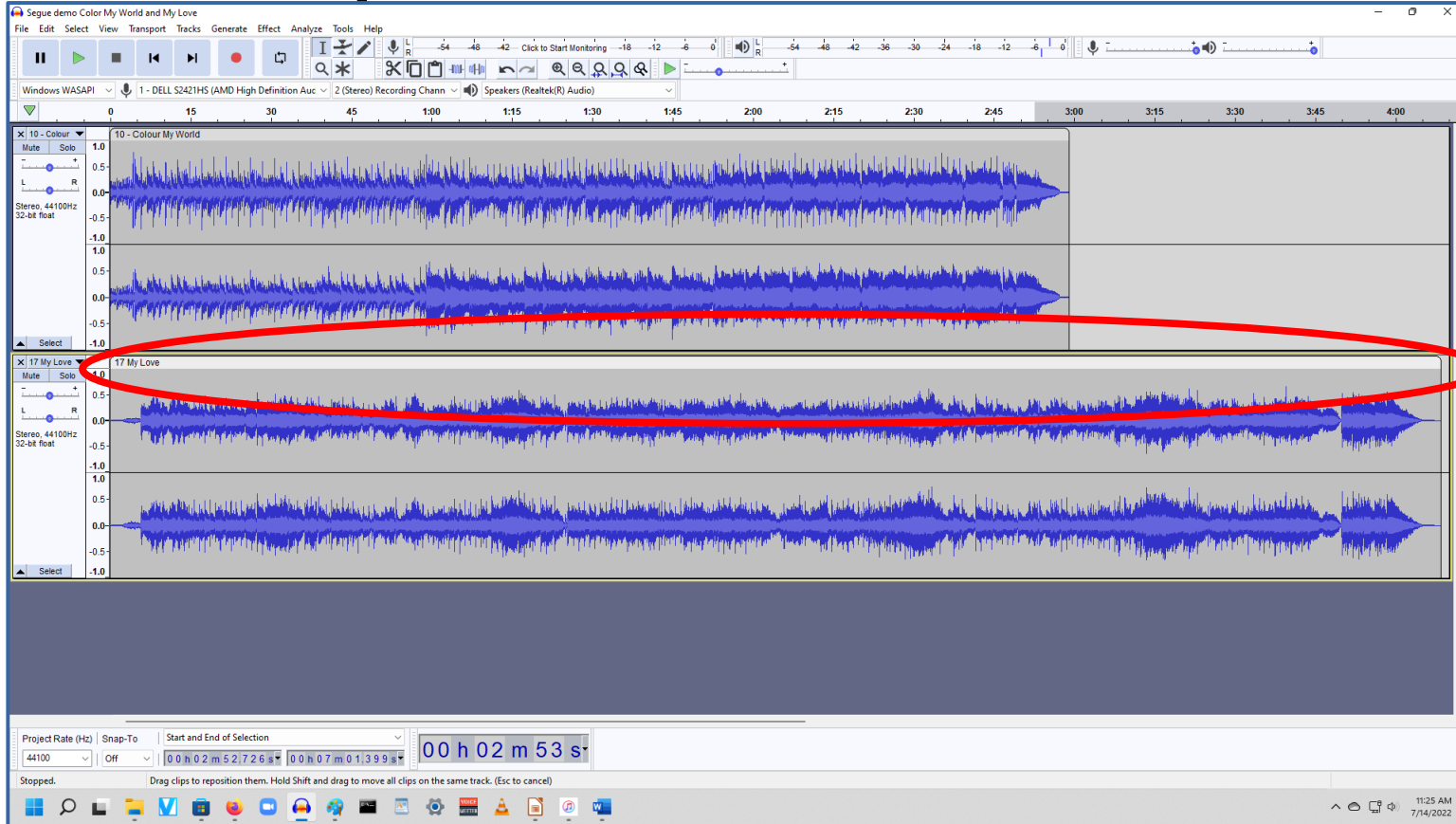


An easy way to create a segue

VLC 3.1.3 provides a simple process

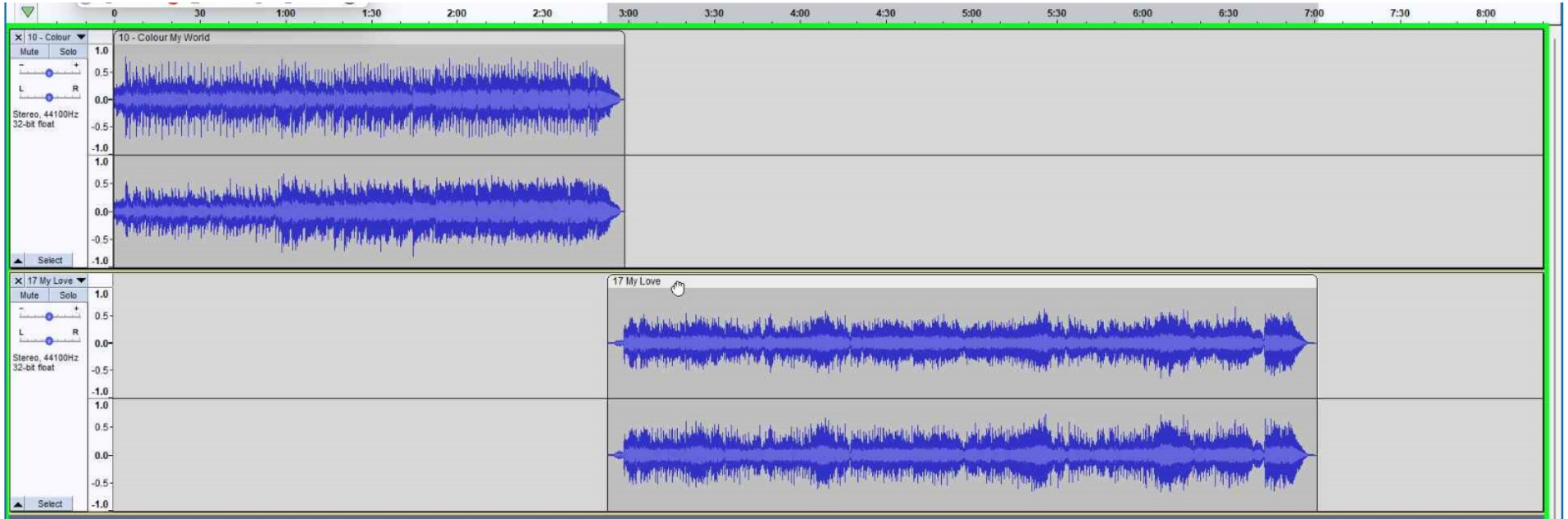
1. Move mouse pointer to the top border of second song; top border is highlighted
2. Drag & drop entire second song to segue location
3. Repeat to fine-tune the segue

Move Mouse pointer to top border of second song

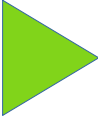



When you
to that,
the top
border is
highlighted

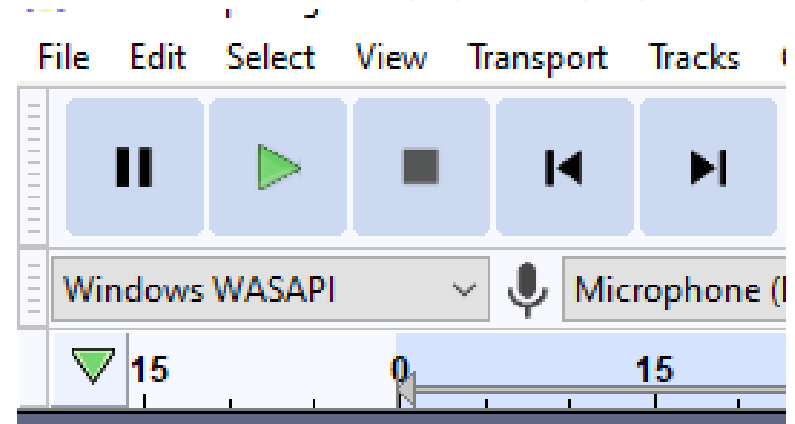
Drag & drop to segue location



Audition your first segue

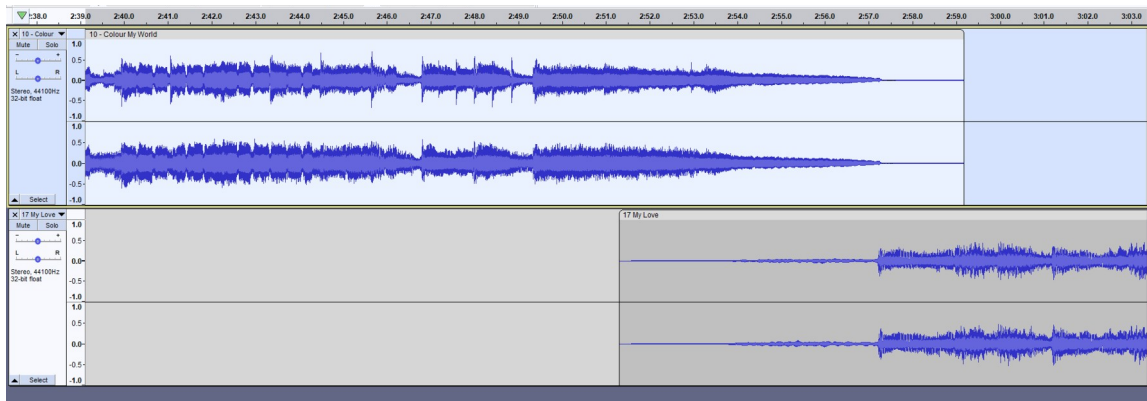
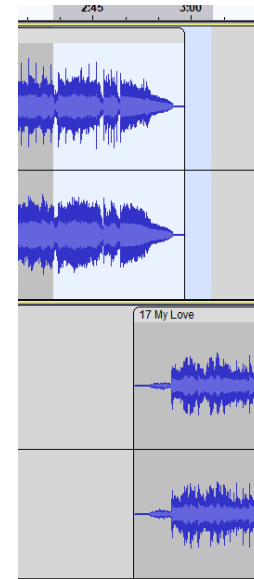
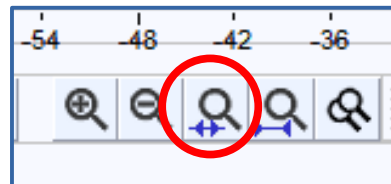
- Click the timeline near the end of the first song.
In VLC 3.1.3, that click starts playback.
- Click the Play button 
- Listen to the segue
- Click the Stop button 
- If necessary, move the second song to a better start point

Audacity Playback Controls

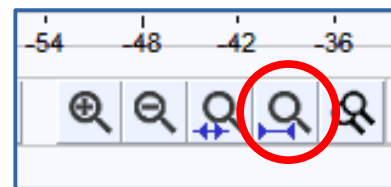


John's tip for fine-tuning a segue

- Highlight roughly 5 seconds of either song around the segue
- Click the VLC Zoom In button
- The view zooms to the highlighted portion



- After adjusting the segue, click the VLC Zoom Out button

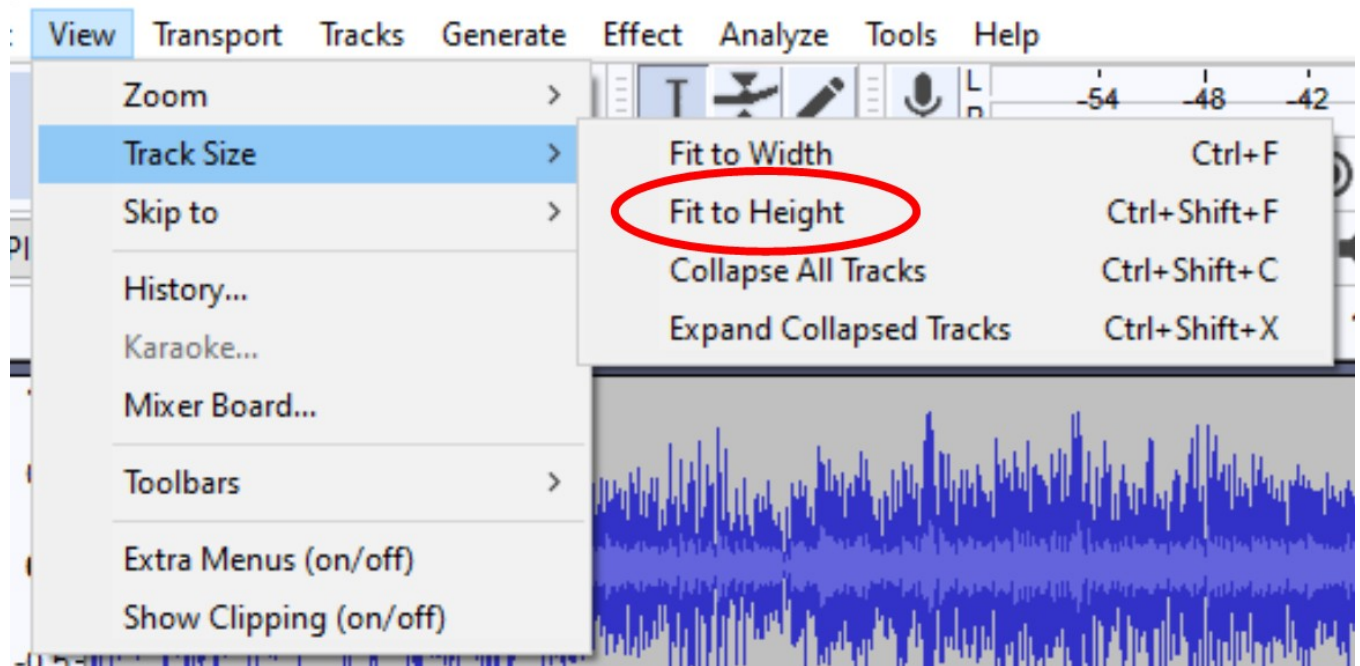


Import a third digital song

- Same process that you used for importing the second digital song: **File** → **Import** → **Audio**
- Audacity does NOT adjust vertical scale automatically. You may not see the third digital song immediately.
- You can use the Audacity **vertical scroll bar** on the right to scroll down to reveal the third song

Make all digital songs visible

- In the Audacity **View** menu, select **Track Size**
- A sub-menu appears
- In the sub-menu, select **Fit to Height**



Adjust audio volume for each song

- Select an entire song
- In the Audacity **Effects** menu, select **Normalize**
- This process adjusts song volume so song's peaks are 1 decibel lower than the max

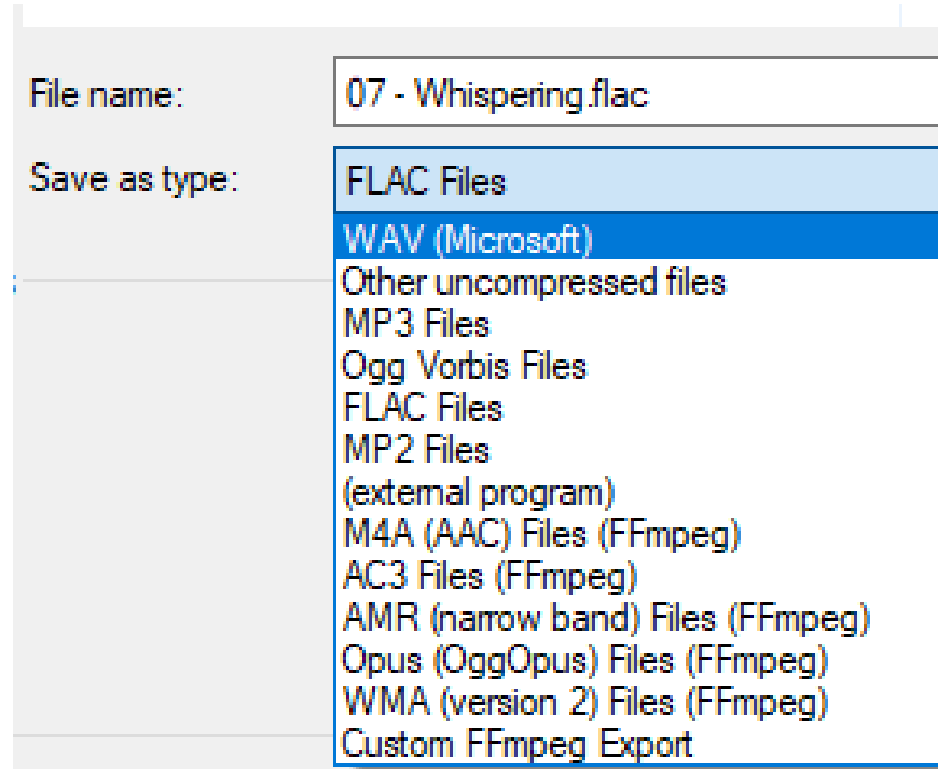
If you have to stop for a while

- In the Audacity **File** menu, select **Save** to record an Audacity **Project** file. The file extension is AUP3. Remember the project file name!
- The project file includes the song file name and position of each digital song in its stereo tracks.
- Later you can resume work: in the Audacity **File** menu, select **Recent Files**; in the sub-menu, select the Project file name.

Repeat process to add
more digital songs
and create more segues

When done, export the mix

- In the Audacity **File** menu, select the **Export Audio** choice
- This choice records the entire mix as an audio file
- Choose from several audio file types



The End