

LibriVox & GarageBand: A Short Tutorial

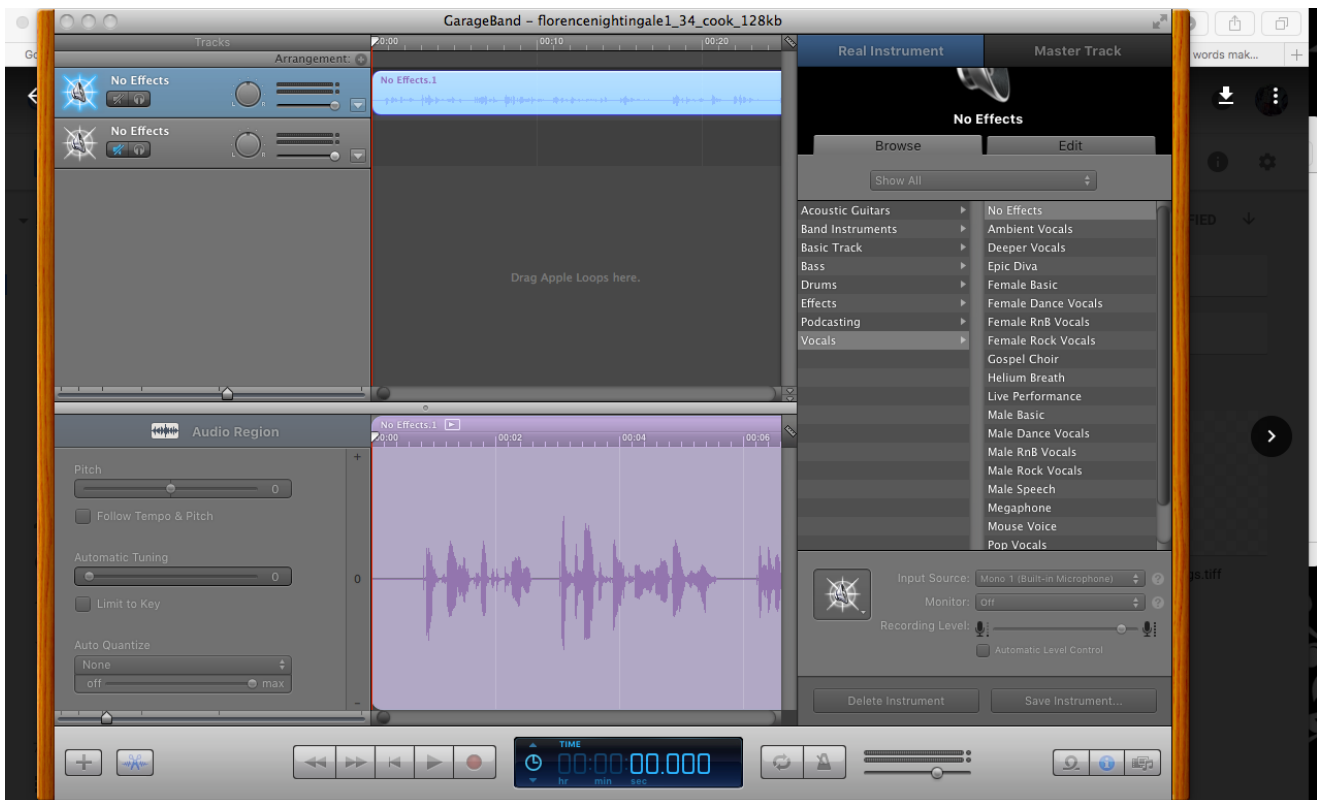
by Amelia Chesley (a.k.a *plaid* on the LibriVox forums)

Preface: This information is copied from a thread I originally posted in the LibriVox “Suggestions, Comments, News & Discussion” forums in October 2016 [<https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=24&t=61965>].¹ This tutorial is a brief example of the kind of informal, ad hoc, highly contextual technical writing commonly found within this specific online volunteer community. Since last October, I have acquired more experience with LibriVox and have recently been granted access to the LibriVox wiki. I am in the process of preparing a more formal version of this tutorial as contribution to the GarageBand help section of the community wiki [<http://wiki.librivox.org/index.php/GarageBand>].

Getting the Right LibriVox Settings in GarageBand

this little mini-tutorial assumes some basic familiarity with GarageBand (creating new projects, saving and exporting files, etc.)

the version of GarageBand I’m using is GarageBand '11, 6.0.5, on a Macbook Pro. the interface looks like this:



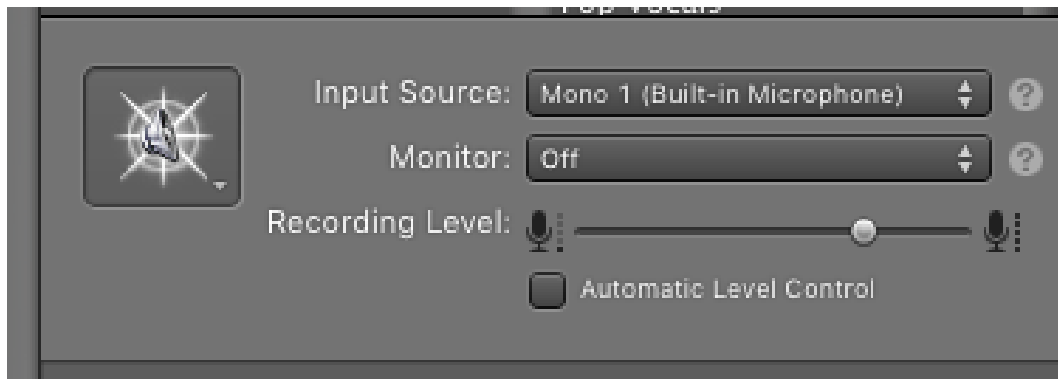
[GarageBand interface]

¹ Some formatting changes were made to present this piece properly in PDF format.

the trickiest parts about the LV technical specifications for me when I was starting out, using GarageBand, were getting the Channel to be Mono (not Stereo) and the Export bitrate to be 128 kbps. GB usually defaults to fancier settings than we need for LibriVox work, so part of the trickiness is figuring out how to undo those and replace them with the more basic settings LV requires.

getting the channel to Mono is extra tricky because there are multiple places to specify that setting in GB.

first, check the Input Source dropdown in the lower-right of the interface.



[input source controls]

"Mono" should be selected for the Input Source here. I don't mess with the other options in this box, and I assume it's okay to leave them as they are.

one other important adjustment for LV recordings has to do with the vocal track effects. every new Voice project in GarageBand defaults to one "Male Basic" track and one "Female Basic" track.

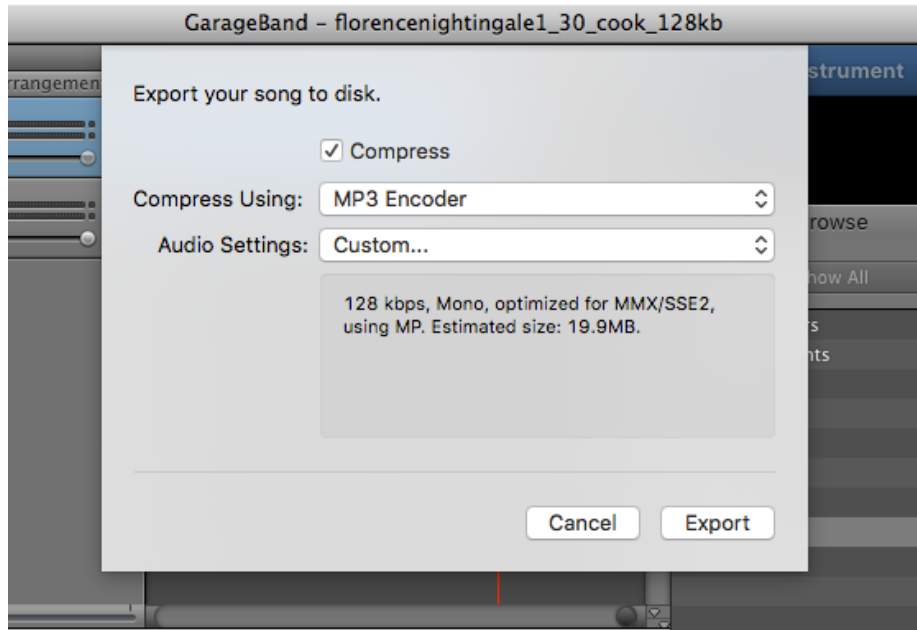
to get rid of this, look over to the "Real Instrument" panel on the right, under the "Browse" tab, where the "Vocals" menu has a list of many GB effects. I'm not sure what they all do, but for LibriVox work it's best to select "No Effects" (at the very top).



[No Effects settings]

and the last very important place to make sure GB has the right settings is when you're saving or exporting the file to MP3 format.

I find it much simpler to choose the "Export Song to Disc" option from the "Share" menu in GarageBand. with this option, I can save the file directly to my Librivoxing folder and I don't have to deal with digging around in iTunes at all.

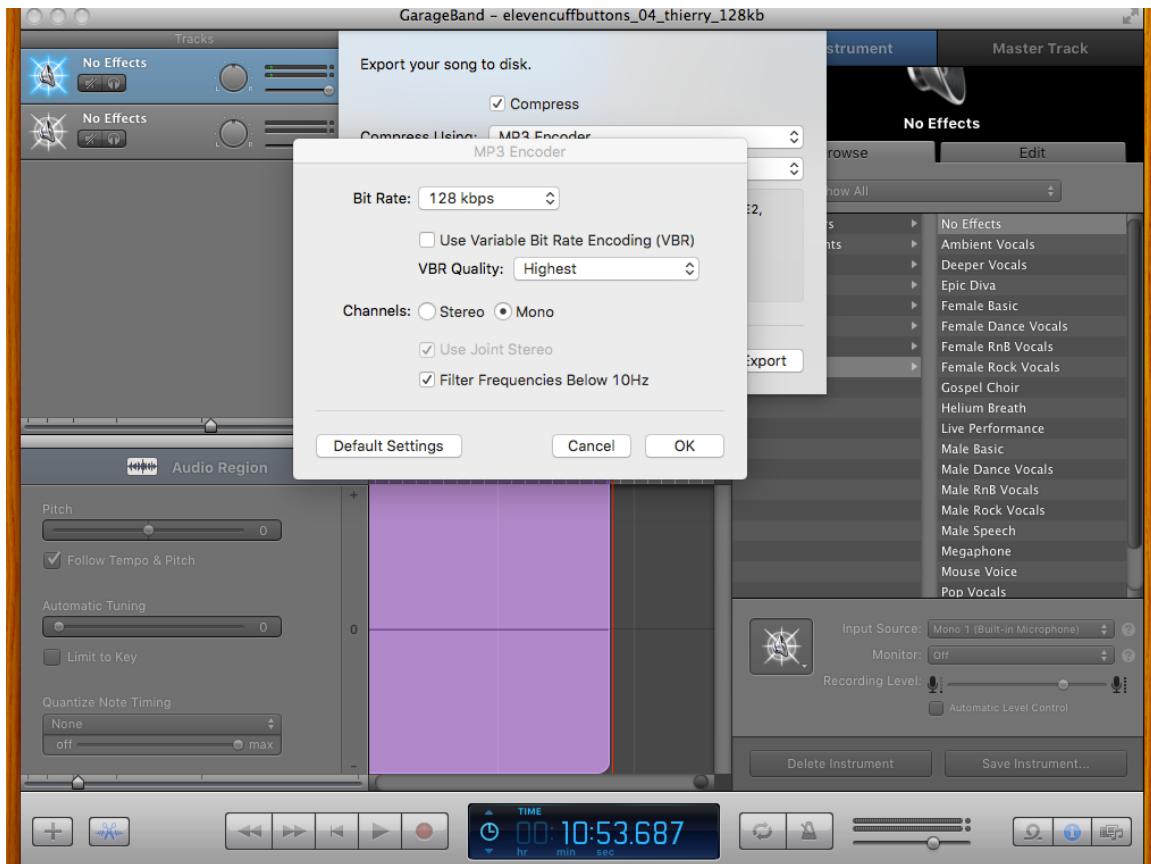


[Share > Export Song to Disc]

however you decide to export or "share" your recording, GarageBand will ask you to specify compression and audio settings.

you'll want to choose the "Compress using: MP3 Encoder" option (not AAC-- that will give you an M4A file).

under "Audio Settings," GB gives three default quality options (Good, High, and Higher) and a "Custom..." option. Choose "Custom..." and then a new dialog window will open, with more options.



[Custom export options]

for "Bit Rate," choose 128kbps, and make sure the "Channels" setting is in Mono here, too. then click "OK." you'll be back at the "Export" dialog, where you can click "Export" and wait for the MP3 file.

once you set these settings for one LV recording project, you can use "Save As" from that project to create and rename new GB files with the same settings, and never again have to worry about how to set it all up! that's what I do, and so far it's worked out pretty well.