Submixes in Logic Pro 9

Introduction to Music Production, Week 3

Joe Muscara - May 12, 2015

Introduction

My name is Joe Muscara and I live in Houston, Texas the origin of artists diverse as Beyonce, ZZ Top, DJ Screw (originator of the chopped and screwed DJ technique), and Lyle Lovett. This lesson is for week three of Introduction to Music Production at <u>coursera.org</u>. I will show how to configure a submix in Logic Pro 9.

Before We Begin

Logic Pro is a very deep and powerful program. There is usually more than one way to do something, whether it be a menu item, a keyboard shortcut, or a cursor tool. If you're familiar with Logic Pro, you may have a completely different method to do some of the steps I describe below. What's important is that you use what's best for your workflow. Also, while I am showing Logic Pro **9**, these techniques are the same or similar in Logic Pro 8 and X. Consult your documentation for specifics.

The examples below assume that you already have tracks or channels set up in a Logic Pro session and that you know some of Logic Pro's terminology. If you want to try these techniques and you do not have a session with tracks set up, you can use one of Logic Pro's templates from the File - New… dialog or simply create a few new tracks in an empty project.

Submix - What is it Good For?

A submix is a way to route the audio from different sources to a single channel. The most common example is drums. Drums are often recorded with multiple microphones located at the kick, snare, toms, overheads, room, and more depending upon the engineer and the kit. Each one of these mics will get its own track channel. Once the relative levels and possibly effects such as EQ for each one of these channels is set creating an overall sound for the drum kit, you may want to group these parts together so that the overall level, panning, and effects can be applied to the entire drum kit. This effectively creates a new channel that you might call *Drums* or *Drum Submix* that you use as part of the final mix, leaving the settings for the individual channels alone.
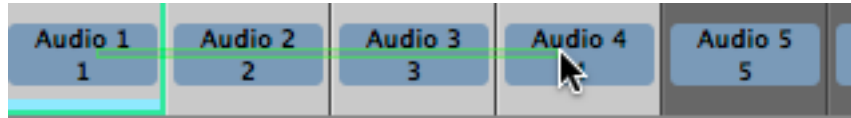
Other examples where submixes might be useful is for background vocals, layered guitars, or groups of orchestral instruments such as woodwinds, brass, percussion, etc. With submixes such as these configured, you can then manage the overall mix more easily, mixing a few submix channels instead of the many individual channels that were recorded.

Creating a Submix

In Logic Pro 9 you can quickly create a submix using the defaults that Logic Pro includes.

1. Open the Mixer (shortcut: X key)
2. Select the channels to submix.

If the channel strips are adjacent you can drag across their labels on the bottom of the Mixer. If they are not, you can Shift-click on the desired channel strips to select and deselect them.

3. Under I/O, click and hold the bottom slot of any of the selected channel strips. (This slot will usually say Stereo Out by default.) Choose the desired Bus from the pop-up menu. Logic Pro has 64 busses available and ready. All you need to do is choose one for your purpose.
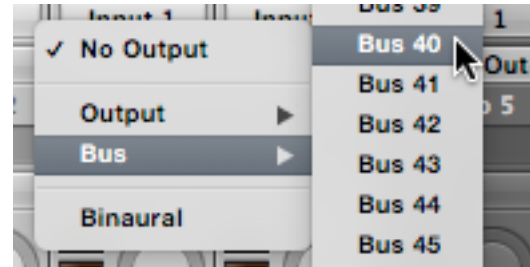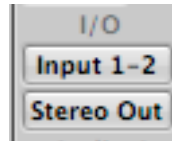
Logic will create a new stereo Aux channel with the selected Bus as the Input and Stereo Out (the main mix) as the Output. You can then process the submix by inserting effects, adjust the level and pan, and just about anything you can do with an individual channel. You can even route the Output of the Aux channel to another Bus to combine it with other channels, routing to yet another Aux channel. You can create come complex and creative routings this way.

Remember that the Output on the channels being sent to the submix is *post fader*, meaning that anything you do to the channel will appear at the Aux channel. Insert effects, pan, and level on an individual channel in the submix will affect that channel's sound in the submix.

4. Name the Aux channel. Double-click on the name of the Aux
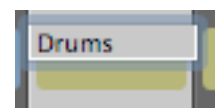
channel at the bottom of the Mixer and enter in the name for the submix such as Drums, Woodwinds, or BkVox. When you do this step, the Bus will take on the name of the Aux channel in the pop-up menu in step three. Instead of simply saying "Bus 40" it will now say "Bus 40 (Drums)" making it easier to find that Bus for any other channels you wish to add to the Bus.

The Inspector

When you have a channel selected in Logic Pro, the Inspector on the left side of the window shows two channel strips, the selected channel and its Output. By default, the Output is the Stereo Out channel. But, if you've changed the Output to a Bus as described above, the Inspector will show that Aux channel instead. This is very convenient when you have the Mixer closed, or if you have many channels and the Output channel is scrolled way outside of the Mixer's view.

Reflection

Once again, I learned the power of Logic Pro when I created this lesson. I was expecting to have to create an Aux channel, set its Input to be a Bus, and then route some channels to that Bus. Instead, I found out I could do most of that with one step (what became Step 3 above). Thanks for reading. I hope you found this useful, and I'm looking forward to your feedback.