

## Farmelo Recording

### *Preparing Audio for Mixing if You Are Using Pro Tools*

#### SONG INFO

Song Name \_\_\_\_\_

Key of song \_\_\_\_\_

Song Recorded to a Click Track? \_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_ no

Does the click tempo stay with the same tempo or vary throughout the song?

If yes, tempo? \_\_\_\_\_

If no, what are the different tempos for the different sections? \_\_\_\_\_

Please attach a lyric sheet.

#### AUDIO PREPARATION

##### *Dealing with Digital Distortion*

Make sure no tracks are clipping - digital distortion almost always and has no desirable artifacts (unless you're using them artistically, just let us know). The image below shows clipped waveforms.

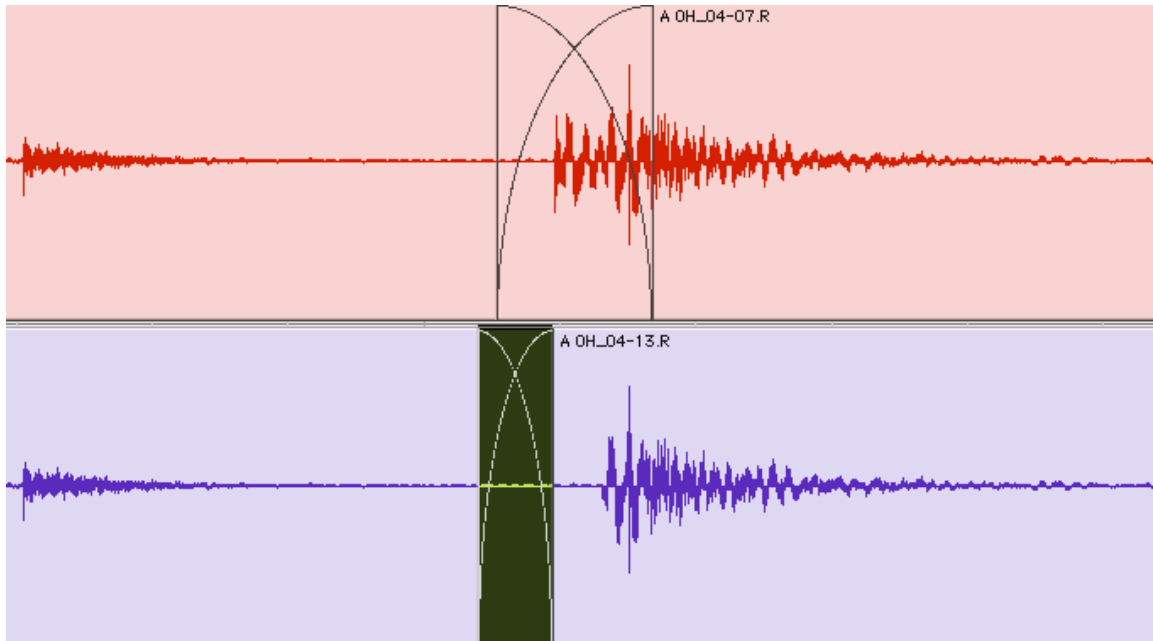


To find clipped tracks, use your ears first, and then your eyes. The sound can range from a longer ripping sound to a minor percussive distortion. To get rid of clipping if it's there, there are a number of solutions. Please refer to your engineer for help in dealing with digital distortion, or to me if you have no other recourse.

##### *Cross Fades*

All audio should be edited together seamlessly, with no pops, clicks or other unwanted noises, including lip smacks (common before someone takes a breath before singing a phrase), and other wonders of the human mouth. All edits should be cross faded, the shorter the better, to eliminate any noise generated from switching from one region to the next. (5 or 10 milliseconds are very common cross fade lengths for percussive instruments, but can often be longer on strings, bass, single note guitar solos, etc.) Cross fades should be done for any editing done while comp-ing a vocal, moving drums for timing, sliding a bass note, etc....

***When writing cross fades, watch that you don't catch any unwanted audio inside the cross fade.*** In the image below, you are looking at two identical mono drum tracks being sewn together with cross fades. The red one is bad because it catches part of a drum hit from the region to the left in the cross fade. The blue one is good because it does not catch any transient in the fade, allowing the next drum hit to sound clearly.



The red one would sound like this: **boom.....k'chick**

The blue one would sound like this: **boom.....chick**

If you're intentionally using blended transients or other noises (a la Fat Boy Slim) as a creative tool, please let me know.

### ***Watch the Tails and Breaks***

Wherever there are any breaks or silent passages, such as at the end of a song when a chord rings out, please make sure that any noises are either cleaned up or, if you want them in there for vibe, etc., please make a note of it. A common problem is click tracks bleeding into drum mics from headphones.

### ***Print All Special Effects***

If you are using a special effect plug-in to get a sound that must be in the mix, print that effect to a play list on that track so that we will have both the dry signal and the effected signal on separate play lists. Make any relevant notes in the comments box of that track. Typically, EQ and compression are not needed, unless used to generate a special effect.

## **PRO TOOLS SESSION PREPARATION**

### ***Automation***

Any fade-ins or fade-outs written in fader automation should be replaced with fades written into the region. Any panning or volume automation you want used in the mix should be described in the comments window. Typically it is my preference to receive no automation.

## Deactivate and Hide Unused Tracks

Make sure any tracks in the session that are not being used are deactivated. Select the unused tracks and select “Make Inactive” from the Track menu. Once the track is deactivated, it can be hidden by deselecting it in the track bin to the left of the mix window.

## Track Order and Color

*Note: if you are on version 7.2 or earlier of Pro Tools, you cannot color code the tracks.*

The remaining tracks should be organized in the sequence shown in the table below, starting with the kick drum in the far left of the mix window, to vocals and synths on the right. It is also helpful to arrange like parts in a way that makes sense, lead vocals before backing vocals, guitar for the verse before the chorus etc. They should be colored accordingly:

INSTRUMENTS	NAME	COLOR
kick drum	K	green
snare top mic	SnUp	green
snare bottom mic	SnDwn	green
high-hat	Hat	green
tom 1 (highest tom)	T1	green
tom 2	T2	green
tom 3 (lowest tom)	T3	green
overhead left	OH.L	green
overhead right	OH.R	green
room left	Room.L	green
room right	Room.R	green
drum machine	808, Fill etc.	light green
percussion	Tambo, Shaker etc.	light blue
bass	BassDI, BassAmp	dark red
guitar	Gtr, GtrSolo, GtrChorus etc.	light red
acoustic guitar	Acoustic	brown
acoustic instruments	Violin, Mandolin etc.	color to taste
piano	Pno	blue
synths	Swoosh, Strings, Organ etc.	color to taste
horns	Sax, Trumpet etc.	gold
male vocals	Vox1, Vox2, VerseVox, ChorusVox, ShoutVox, BUVOx etc.	purple
female vocals	Vox1, Vox2, VerseVox, ChorusVox, ShoutVox, BUVOx etc.	pink

## Mark the Arrangements

Create memory location markers to map out the arrangement of the song. These are placed by pressing “enter” at the desired spot. Name them in a clear manner: Intro, Verse 1, Chorus 1, Bridge, etc.

## Save the Mix Session

Once tracks are cleaned up and organized, save the session as “Song Title MIX.” Make sure all audio files save to the Audio Files folder associated with that ProTools session on the project drive or DVD that you are sending.