MUS 306 Lab 2
due 22 October 2004

The purpose of this Lab is to carefully edit and manipulate text, with three tasks for you to do (same tasks for either option 1 or 2):

1. Clean up and/or fix up the original recording, to make the reading as natural and perfect as possible—correct order of words, no bumps, extraneous noises, extra pauses, etc.

2. Make a different, intelligible poem by rearranging the words—make someone say something they didn't really say—such that it still sounds natural, but with a different meaning.

3. Make a (short) <u>unintelligible</u> abstract from the same source material, for example something rhythmic that uses small fragments of the recording to create a beat.

You can record the original text yourself, or you have the option of using the prerecorded text in the "Mac Extras" folder called "MU306 Source," in which case you should refer to Option 2 below.

If you make your own recording, you will need to record it onto DAT (as you did in HW1), and then transfer it to the computer and work from there in Pro Tools. See Appendix A for details on how to do the transfer.

Option 1: Find someone (or yourself) to read a poem, or short text of some kind. The piece should be around 2-3 minutes in length. Keep recording different "takes" until you are satisfied that you have a usable recording of each line. Try to get a good, clear recording of the speaker's voice. Check your recording for the level of room noise/ambience, and any background noise that may have crept in. And of course, you want to capture a good performance of the reading. The nice thing is that because you have a professional editing system at your disposal, you don't have record a perfect reading all the way through (and don't try, the point of the lab is to do some editing). You can record it in fragments and then assemble it later.

Now transfer your recording on to the computer. When you have all your tracks on the computer, edit the best sections ("takes") to create the perfect performance.

Things to listen for are: smooth transitions between sections, balanced/ consistent volume between sections, any pops or clicks caused by either the speaker or your editing, and finally a flow to the whole piece.

Option 2: This recording is excerpted from <u>So Long and Thanks for All the Fish</u>, by Douglas Adams. (See text below). Try to make this recording as faithful as possible to the original written text. You can easily change the order and the timing between words and phrases to improve the flow. Fix all the false takes to make the narrative identical to the written text. In addition, try to fix the "pops" and any other small problems you may have noticed.

You can also to make subtle changes to improve the *prosody* (the subtle *rhythm* and *pitch* variations of a real speaker—there is clearly more to editing text than simply rearranging the order of the words). This may be difficult to achieve. In this example, the words and phrases are out of order and occasionally repeated. Also, since this option would otherwise be too easy compared to option 1, *a word or two are missing—see if you can fix that somehow*—it's not easy!

Note that the original file is <u>mono</u>, so you don't need to maintain two channels in your edits. If you're recording something yourself, you can do it mono or stereo, as you wish.

The text:

"Rob McKenna was a miserable bastard and he knew it because he'd had a lot of people point it out to him over the years and he saw no reason to disagree with them except the obvious one which was that he liked disagreeing with people, particularly people he disliked, which included, at the last count, everybody."

Hand this in by using the DROP BOX folder in the MUS306 folder in CLASS FILES, including a README file which explains all the other files, including session, audio and write-up. Check to make sure your session opens and runs correctly, with no missing audio files etc. The write-up should explain your mic placement, mic selection (if you did a recording), and description of edits (especially tricky edits), and general comments on your recording and editing approach. The work will be assessed based on the quality of the edited file relative to the original recording, as well as the clarity of the write-up.

APPENDIX A: How to do a digital transfer from DAT to disk using Pro Tools.

1. Make your recording on DAT in the School of Music.
2. Take it over to the Lab in the Fine Arts Building and put it in the TASCAM DAT machine in the rack.
3. Run Pro Tools LE on the Macintosh next to the rack.
4. Create one or two new audio tracks, and click the "Record Enable" (rec) button for each track.
5. In the MIX window, set INPUT to S/PDIF for all channels you want to record/transfer. You should see the little meters in the edit window bounce around when you play the DAT.
6. Push the PLAY button on the DAT.
7. In the Transport, push the red RECORD button (it will flash). Then push the play button. You are now recording (doing the transfer).
8. You are now doing a digital transfer.   Stop Pro Tools and the DAT when you've finished the transfer.

You're now ready to start editing.

If you get an error: "Unable to allocate disk space. Your disk may be fragmented," try running your session on the other hard drive (not on the internal hard drive). You can do this be selecting "Save Session As…" in the File menu, and selecting the other hard disk. Now open it and try again. It should be OK.