An OPCUG Product Review

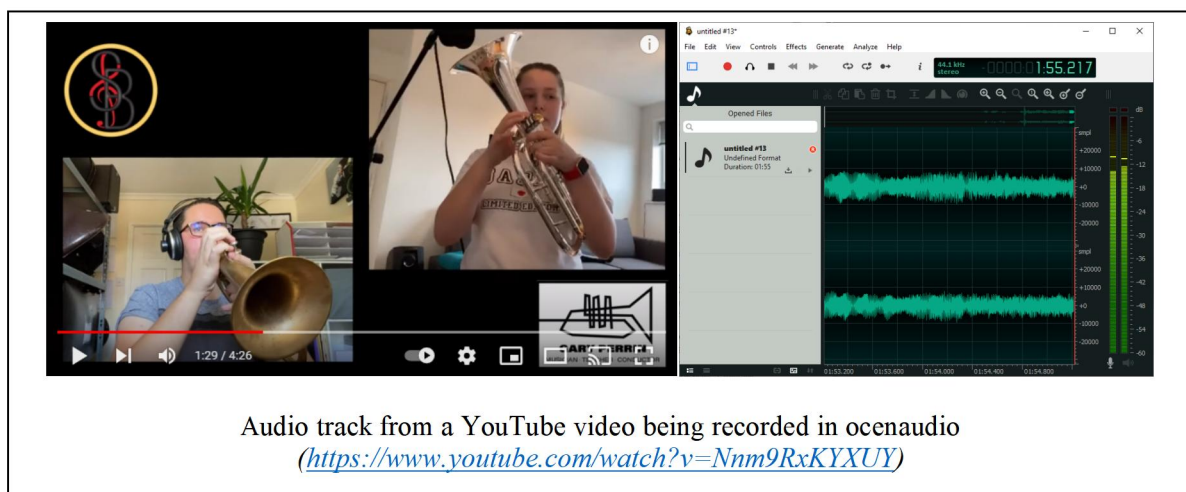## Ocenaudio - An Alternative Sound Editor

by Alan German

Those of you who have attended some of our past Q&A sessions will have followed the discussions about Audacity, an open-source sound editor that ran into some controversy when it was acquired by the Muse Group.   The issue was that the program's privacy policy was changed to allow certain data elements relating to the user to be collected and transmitted back to home base.   This raised a number of privacy concerns among members of the open-source community and, as a result, the program code was forked to create several new versions of the editor.   At the time of writing, the various forks appear to have been abandoned, have stalled, or are progressing quite slowly.   For anyone concerned about continuing to use Audacity as a sound editor, one viable alternative is ocenaudio.

Ocenaudio was originally developed by a group of university researchers in Brazil.   The program code is not open-source, but the package has been released as freeware. Multiple platforms are supported with versions for the Windows, Linux and Mac operating systems.
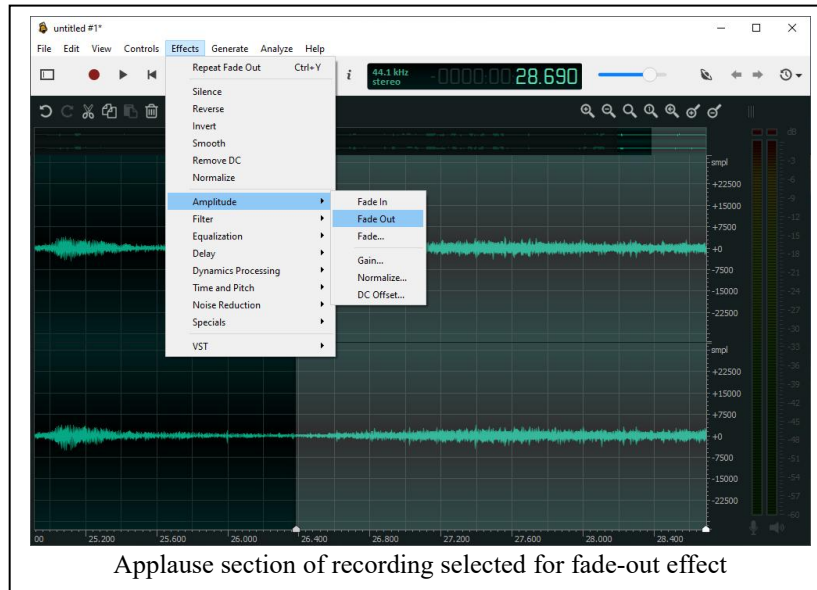
Installation of the program in Windows is a little odd.   The installer offers the option to browse to a folder but, whatever folder is selected, the program is installed in C:\Users\{username}\AppData\Local\ocenaudio. Nevertheless, a desktop icon points to the executable file in the installation directory so that the program launches correctly.

Once installed, the program is simple to use, while perhaps not being completely intuitive to navigate.   By default, the program selects the available microphone; however, the recording source can be changed by navigating to *Controls – Record Mixer Configuration*.   Such a change is desirable if the recording is to be made from either the Internet or a cable connection to an external music player using the line-in port on a sound card.

Audio track from a YouTube video being recorded in ocenaudio
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nnm9RxKYXUY)

Recording and playback are controlled by the conventional set of player icons in the program's menu.   Starting a recording is simply a matter of pressing the red *Record* button.   The recorded waveform is displayed in real time in the main program window, with the recording input levels shown on the right side.   The program can have multiple tracks open concurrently and the left sidebar displays a list of currently-available recordings.   Pressing the *Stop Playback* button (the black square) ends the recording and leaves the window open so that any additional processing can be undertaken.

It is convenient at this point to hide the left sidebar, using the icon on the left side of the menu, in order to focus on the recorded waveform.Two useful items are displayed immediately above the waveform.   A number of editing tools may be accessed using the groups of black-and-white icons.   The series of magnifying-glass icons on the right allow zooming the waveform in and out, both horizontally and vertically.   In addition, a timeline below these icons allows a specific section of the waveform to be displayed by clicking the mouse on the timeline and scrolling to the left or right.

Applause section of recording selected for fade-out effect

The icons on the left-side include options to cut, copy or delete the selected area of the recording, or to add fade-in or fade-out effects.   Some of these features are also accessible through keyboard shortcuts.   For example, the end of the recorded waveform can be trimmed by selecting the desired region and simply pressing *Delete* on the keyboard.

Fabulous Support – While reviewing the information about this software on the web site I came across a couple of minor typographical errors.   I notified the developers using the on-line feedback form and was amazed to find the page updated within just a few hours!   This speaks volumes about the care and attention paid to the software by ocenaudio's development team.

Once all the desired edits have been completed, the resulting waveform can be saved as an audio file in a variety of formats.   Selecting *File – Save As* defaults to saving the file as MP3, but other choices for *Save as type* include FLAC, OGG and Wav.   The edited file can also be stored using *Export*.   This provides a range of file types, including WAV, MP4 and OGG; however, each of these provides further options.   For example, selecting Export – MP4 allows choices for audio compression, bit rate, and audio quality to be selected.

If you have the need to make audio recordings, and perform simple editing tasks on the resulting product, ocenaudio may well be all you need.   And, since it's freeware, it won't cost you anything to try it out!

Bottom Line:

ocenaudio (Freeware)
Version 3.11.1
https://www.ocenaudio.com