Preparing, Exporting, and Importing an AFF into a new Pro Tools session

After completing your rough cut of a video, you'll need to pass it over to the sound post-production crew as an **AAF**. An AAF is an **Advanced Authoring Format** that allows for editorial to be exchanged between programs like Premiere Pro and Pro Tools. There is another file format just like this called **OMF**. Both AAF and OMF have their own pros and cons, but AAF was designed to replace OMF. Although AAF is a larger file size, it can retain important things from your rough cut including volume automation, fades, names of tracks, and all your metadata.
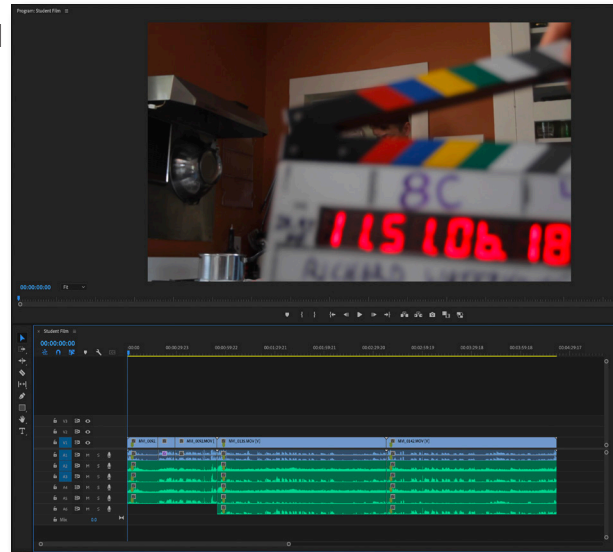

Start by exporting your video first. Go to **File > Export > Media** or just use the shortcut **Cmd + M**.
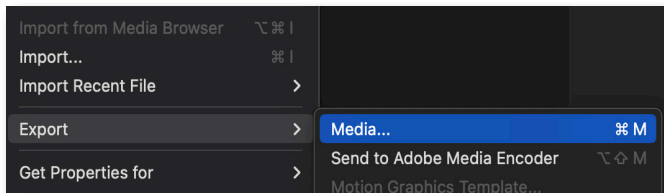
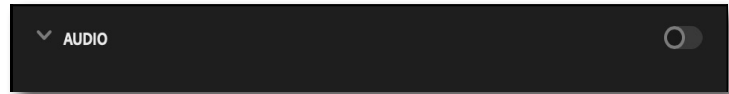Set the **Format** to **QuickTime** and then choose a destination to save it.
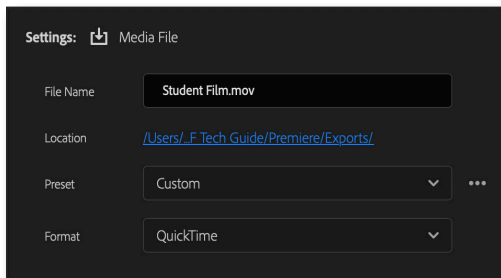
Change the video codec to a **low res proxy**. We are going to send a final video later down the line. But do take into account if you're in picture lock or not. Sending over an AAF before picture lock could lead to timing issues.
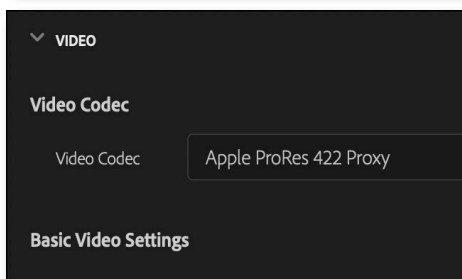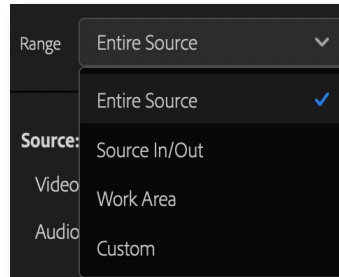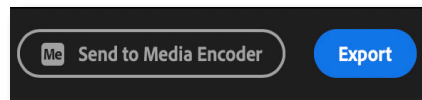
Disable the audio. We will be making our own separate audio export after this.

Change export **Range** to **Entire Source**. If it is currently set to **Source In/Out**, you may risk missing large chunks of your edit if your In & Out points are not set properly.

Now **export** your video proxy. Be sure to send the file to a secure folder that is organized within your project folder.

Now we're going to make the audio export. Start by **duplicating** your sequence in Premiere. Now **select** or **highlight** your entire rough cut, including both audio and video. **Right click** and select **Unlink** from the dropdown menu.
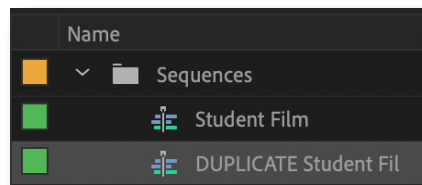
Now navigate to **File > Export > AAF**.
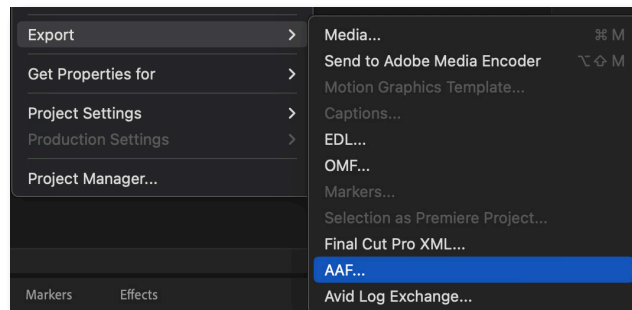
In your AAF export settings, check **Enable** under **Breakout to Mono**, which will split any stereo tracks into two mono tracks. Premiere handles its stereo/mono tracks much differently than Pro Tools, so checking this box can help prevent issues with importing your stereo tracks. Lastly, if you have any audio effects that are vital for the sound designer to hear or you think that they should be "**baked in**", select the **Render audio clip effects** box and **Include clip copies without effects** box. This will create one track containing your clips with effects and a duplicate track that doesn't contain effects. This will be great as a guide for your sound designer who will most likely replace your effects.
Check that your **sample rate** and **bit depth** are set correctly. We will need to match these settings in Pro Tools. Select **OK** when you're ready to export.
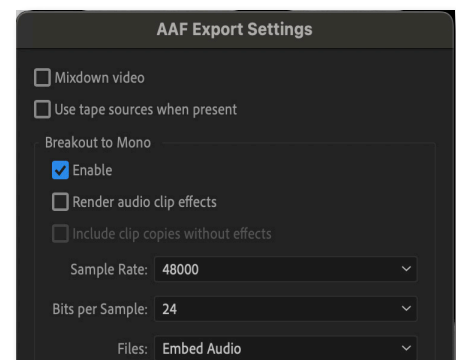
Let's get ready to import. **Launch Pro Tools**.
Give your session an appropriate name.
Be sure to select the same sample rate and
bit depth that you set in your AAF export within
Premiere. Choose a location to save this project.
Consider saving it within your overall work folder
for this project. Now select **Create**.

Copy your AAF file and place it in your Pro Tools
work folder for safety.
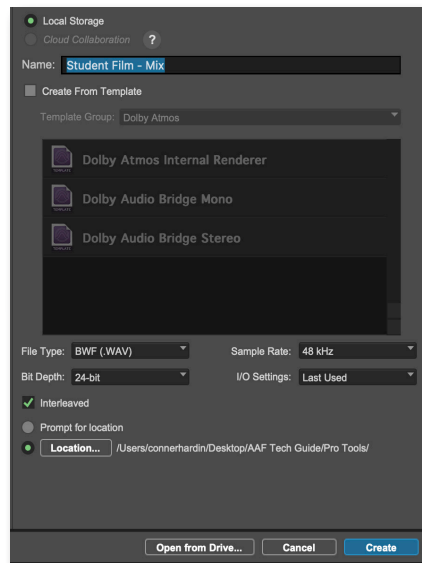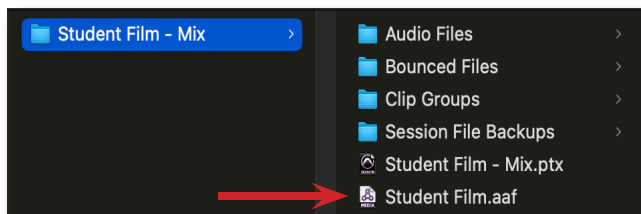
In your newly created blank session, navigate to
File > Import > Session Data or just use **Shift +
Opt + I**. Select your AAF file.
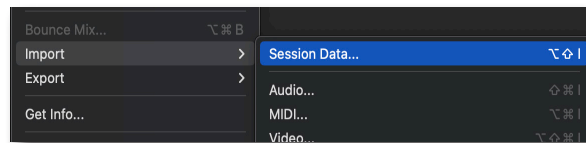
You are going to see a large dialogue window pop up
with many different options. For now, we're only going
to customize a few of these options. In **Timecode
Mapping Options**, select **Maintain absolute timecode
value**.
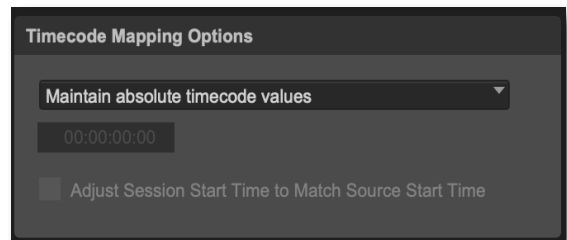
Under **Media Options** and **Audio Media Options**,
select **Force to target session format**. Then under
**Video Media Options**, select **Link to source media**.
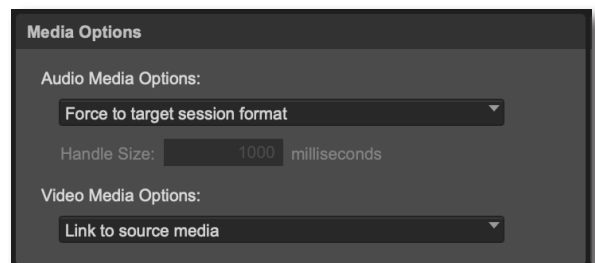
In the **Tracks** window at the bottom, you can manually
select all the tracks that you want to import. Select
all the tracks except for **V1 (video)** so that they are blue.
Within their dropdown menu for **Destination**, set them to
**New Track**. Anything not selected will not be imported.
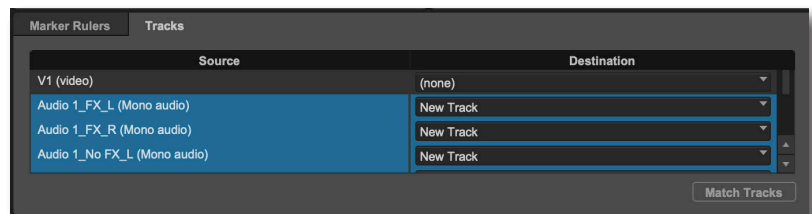
Lastly, under **Session Data**, check the boxes for **Import Clip Gain**, **Import Volume Automation**, and **Only Include Clips on Timeline**. Finally, click **OK** to confirm all your settings. Allow Pro Tools a moment to populate with new tracks containing all your clips from Premiere. Once that is done, take a moment to make sure all your sounds have imported properly. Rename and color code your tracks as needed.
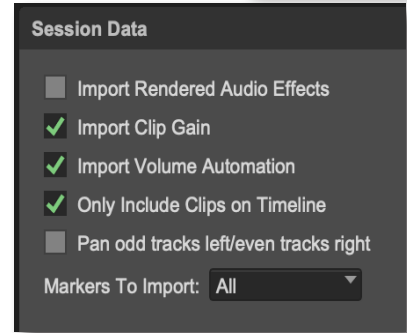
Remember the video export we made in Premiere at the beginning? For satety, **copy** it into your Pro Tools work folder so that it is nearby.
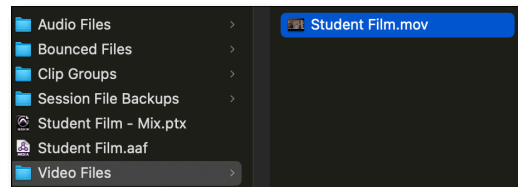
Let's **import** that video now into Pro Tools by navigating to **File > Import > Video** or by using **Shift + Cmd + Opt + I**.
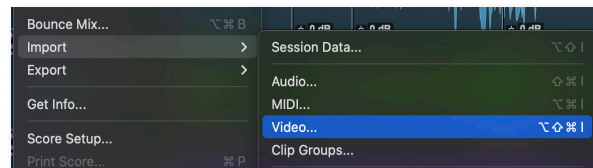
In **Video Import Options**, select **Session Start** as your video location. If you are starting at 1 hour (01:00:00:00) with an academy leader then you should select **Spot** instead. Now **deselect Import Audio from File**.
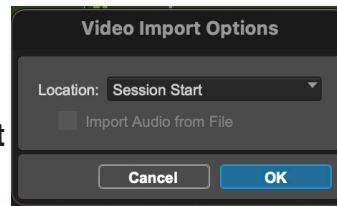
When your video imports successfully, make sure that the **frame rate text** on the video track is in **white**. If the text is red, then there is a problem with the session's frame rate.
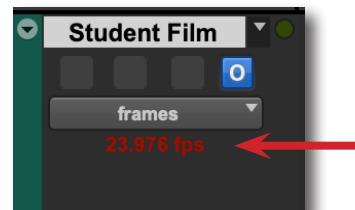
Navigate to **Setup > Session** or hit **Cmd + 2**. This is the session setup window where we can control the session's global parameters. Check out the right side where **Timecode Rate** is. Open the dropdown menu and find the correct frame rate that the video should be set to. Once you have the correct frame rate, the frame rate text on your video track should be white. Now playback your session to check for any other issues.
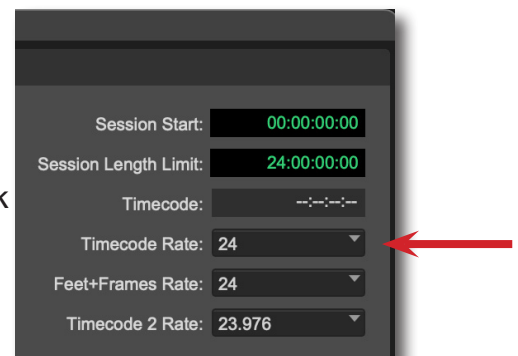
If there are any issues you are encountering here, it's mostly likely an issue where your audio is pitched up or down.
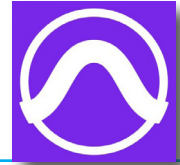
This means there is an issue with your sample rate. Check to make sure that the sample rate in your Pro Tools session matches the sample rate you set in Premiere. Navigate to **Setup > Session** or hit **Cmd + 2**.

Sample rate and bit depth can be found under **Format** within the **Session Setup** window. Fix the sample rate if it is not matching your Premiere AAF.
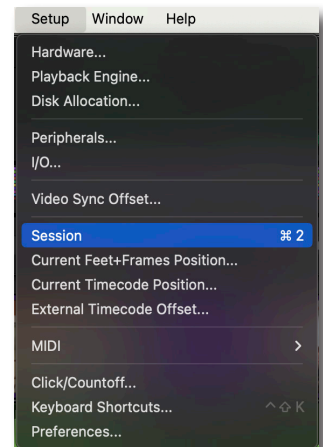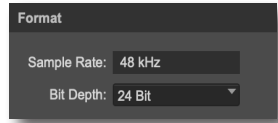
Are you still experiencing a bizarre pitch issue even after changing the sample rate in Session Setup? Let's navigate to **Setup > Hardware** instead.
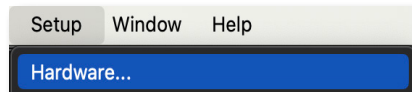
A **Hardware Setup** window will appear, displaying your output and audio devices within a list. Select **Launch Setup App**. This will then take you to your computer's **Audio Devices** window. Underneath **Output**, there should be a **Format** option that will allow you to change your sample rate. Change the sample rate here if it does not match what you set in Premiere or Pro Tools.
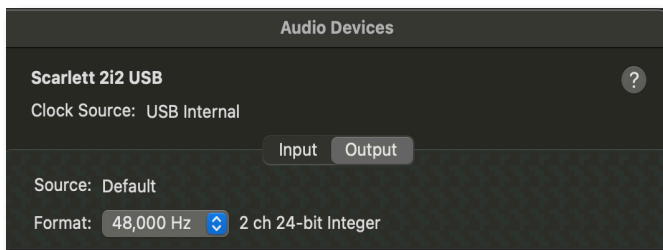
This pitch issue is a result of changing your sample rate either higher or lower than what was originally set in Premiere. Sample rate is a measure of how many times a sound is sampled per second. Altering the sample rate later can cause the sample rate to "Stretch" to meet the demands of either a higher or lower sample rate, meaning that the sound will result in a pitched up or pitched down quality.

Now that all of our troubleshooting is done, let's take one final look at how our session has imported. If you remember earlier from page 2 in the AAF export settings section, we talked about preserving audio effects. If you had an audio effect you thought was worth passing onto the sound designer, you would have selected the **Render audio clip effects** box and **Include clip copies without effects** box. This would result in a track that contains your rendered audio effects and a duplicate track that has no effects, which works great as a guide for the sound designer while not permanently **baking in** your effects. If you had checked these boxes, take a moment to note these duplicate tracks.
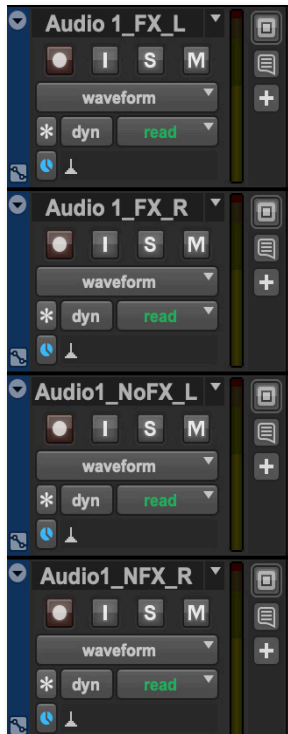
Note how there are 4 tracks instead of 2. This is because we **Enabled Breakout to Mono**, which split a stereo track in Premiere into a **left** and **right** channel in Pro tools. Then those two tracks were duplicated, this time without any rendered effects. Pro Tools has named these tracks for us as **FX_L** and **FX_R** for effects left and right and **NoFX_L** and **NoFX_R** for the duplicate tracks without effects.

You can also see this same thing reflected in how our clips have been cut. Note the splitting in the clips. These splits had originally been made in Premiere and each clip contains its own audio effect.
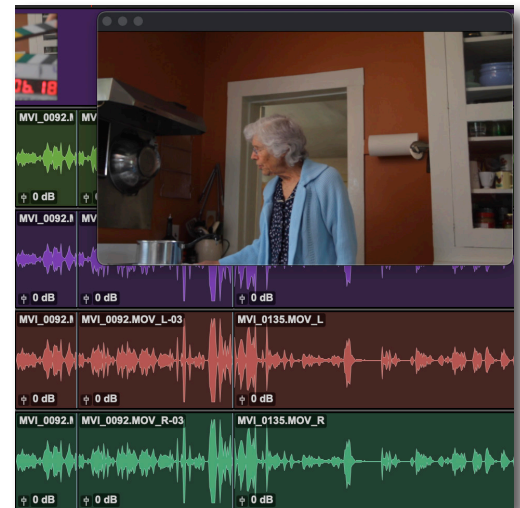
And that's it! You now have a full rought cut that has been successfully imported, troubleshooted, broken out to mono, and divided between effects tracks and non effects tracks. You should now be ready to edit and mix!