

# Lesson 12

## Composing Music for Podcasts

In this lesson, you will compose a 30-second piece of music to serve as a theme song for your podcast by using audio clips from the Soundtrap Loop Library. Whether you are a talented musician or someone who has never played or composed music before, Soundtrap makes it easy to create your own unique piece of music.

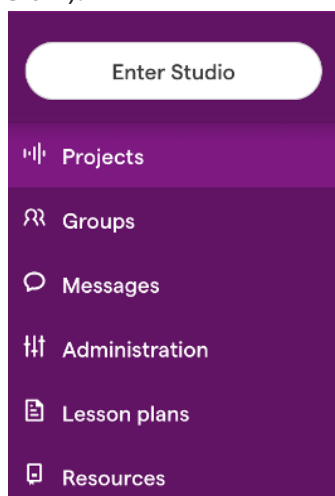
Just follow the step-by-step instructions in the **How to Compose Using Soundtrap** handout, and **have fun!**

### How to Compose Using Soundtrap

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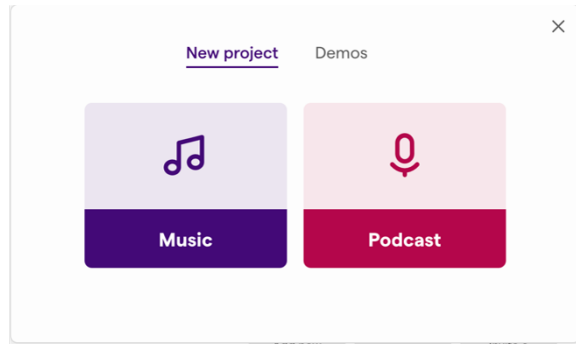
#### **Step 1: Launch Soundtrap and start a new podcast project.**

On your computer, launch *Soundtrap* however you normally would. You may need to ask your teacher how to access the software as there are several different platforms or methods for launching available to schools. Once you have successfully launched *Soundtrap*, first click the **Enter Studio** button in the upper left corner of the screen (see below).



## Composing Music for Podcasts

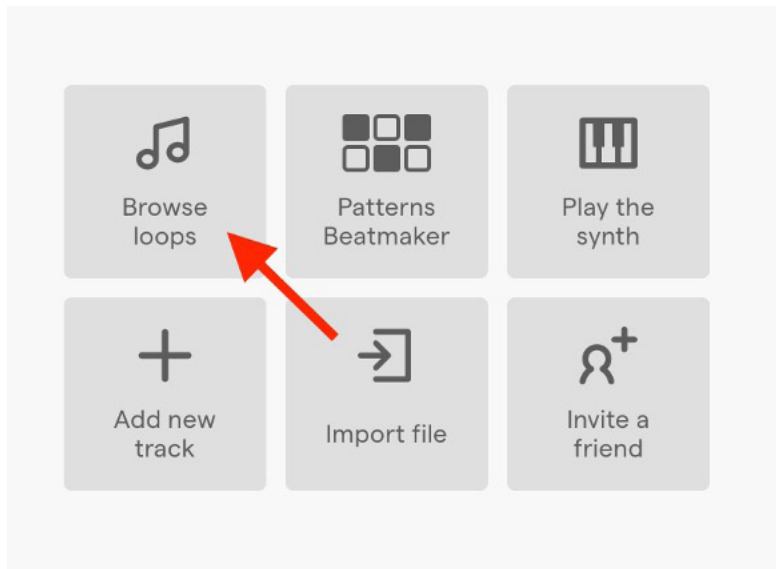
Next, click the **Music** option on the screen (see below). If you have recently worked in *Soundtrap*, you may need to first click Save or Discard on your previous project.



You are now ready to start composing!

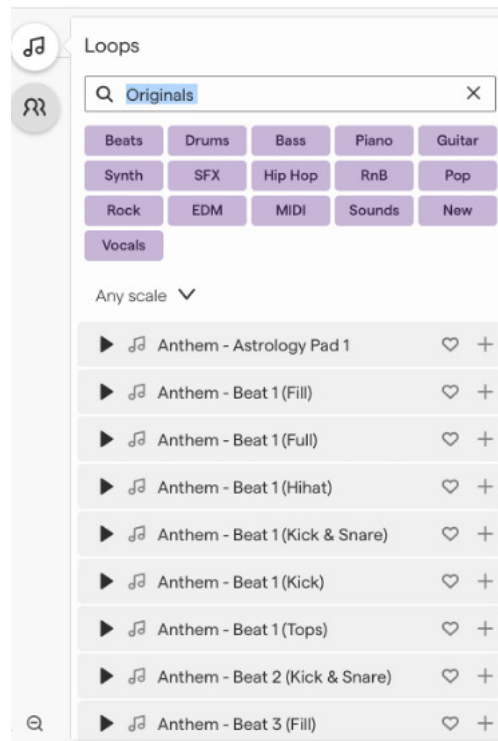
### Step 2: Browse the loop library.

Click on the **Browse Loops** button in the center of your screen (see below).



You should now see the Loop Library pop out of the right side of the screen (see below).

# Composing Music for Podcasts

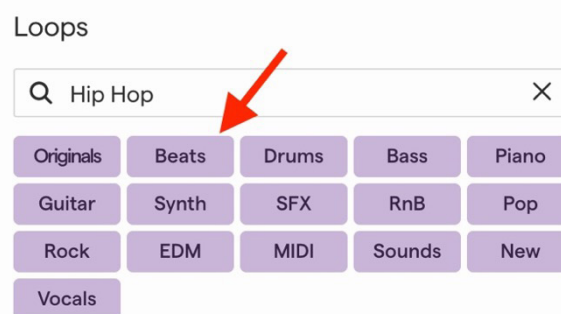


If you have an idea for what STYLE or GENRE of music you would like your theme music for you podcast to be, click on the relevant STYLE button (Hip Hop, RnB, Pop, Rock, EDM).

### Step 3: Audition loops.

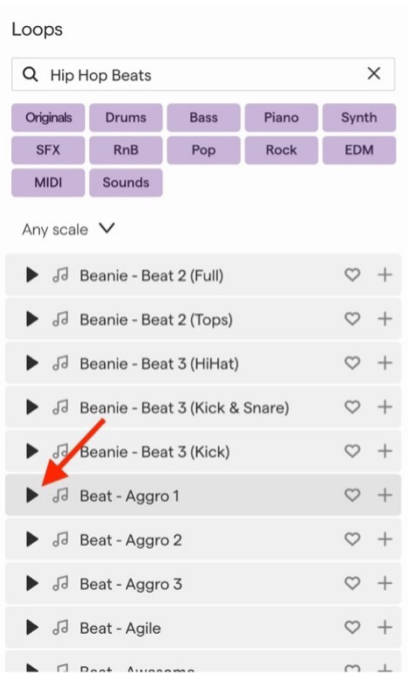
*For the purposes of this handout, Hip Hop has been selected as the preferred style. Of course, you can choose any style that you'd like, but the next few steps will focus on Hip Hop loops.*

Once you have selected your preferred style, click on **Beats**. This will lay the groundwork for your composition. If you are an experienced composer and have used *Soundtrap* before, feel free to make your own selections.



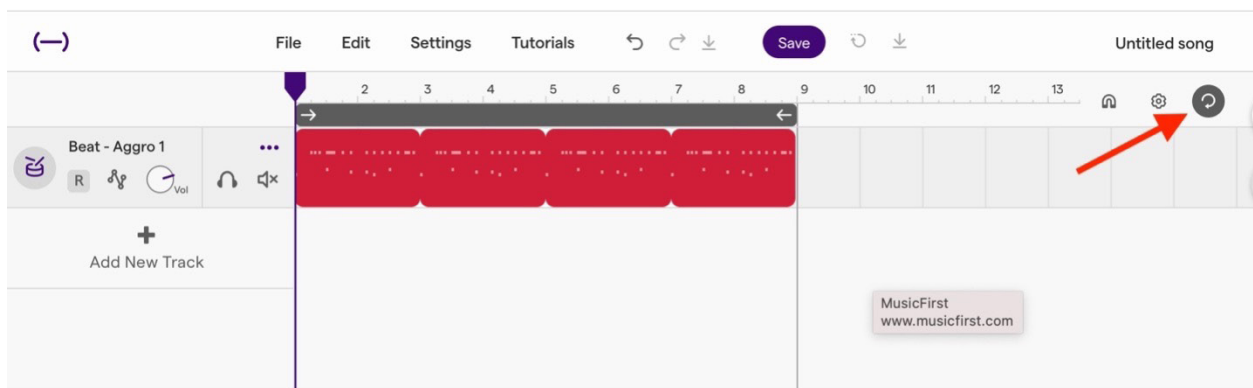
Once you click the **Beats** button, you will see a list of Loops appear. Next to each loop name is a **Play** button (see below). You can "audition" each loop play clicking once on the **Play** button. You can scroll down and continue trying out loops until you find one that you really like. Once you do, go on to **Step 4**.

# Composing Music for Podcasts



## Step 4: Add the first loop to your project.

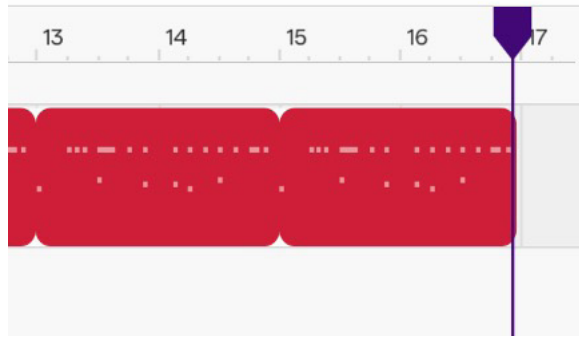
Once you find a **Beat** that you like, **double click** it and the loop will be sent to your workspace (see below). You will notice that the loop is now in your composition. This loop will play over and over if you click either the **Play** button on the **Transport** bar at the bottom of the screen, or by pressing the **space bar**. You will need to turn that looping function off by clicking on the **loop** button (see red arrow in the image below).



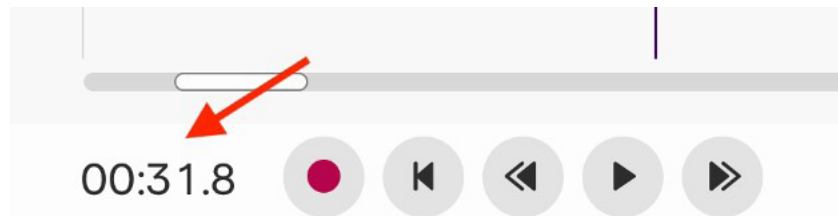
## Step 5: Extend the loop for 16 measures/30 seconds.

You can extend the loop that you selected to make it play for as long as you'd like by clicking on the **white loop button** in the upper right corner of the end of the loop (see below) and dragging the loop to the right. The default **tempo** for all *Soundtrap* composition is 120 beats per minute (bpm). At that tempo, a 30-second song will be approximately 16 measures long. You can see how many measures your loop is by looking at the numbers above your loop when you are dragging it. You should drag your loop to the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> bar (see below).

## Composing Music for Podcasts

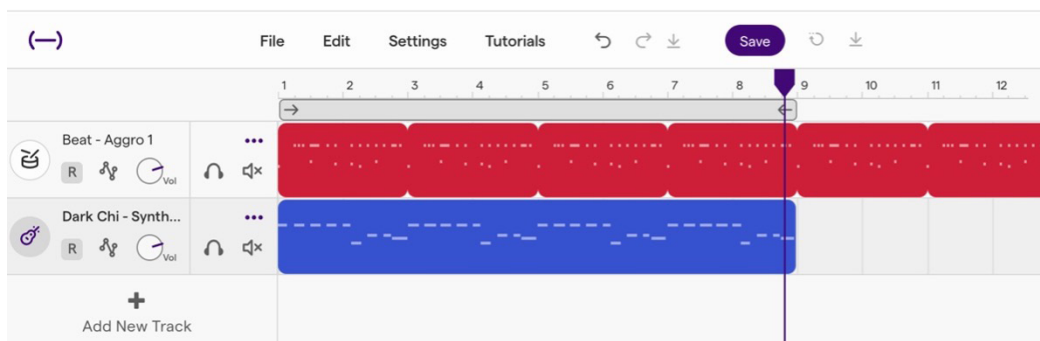


Just to be sure, once you have dragged your loop to be 16 measures long, press play and look at the **time clock** on the bottom left of your screen (see below) and see how long your composition is once the 16<sup>th</sup> measure has played. It should be about 30 seconds. You can make the composition longer by decreasing the tempo or shorter by increasing it.



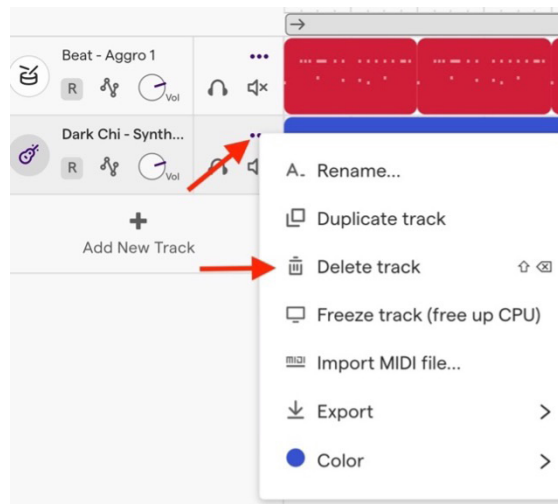
### Step 6: Add more loops.

It's time to start adding more loops! First you should click the **X** next to Hip Hop Beats in the Loop Library and then click **Hip Hop Bass** (you can choose any instrument you'd like, but we will start with a bass for this lesson). Once you select **Hip Hop Bass**, you can try out various bass loops until you find one that you think fits. Be careful not to click the loop twice or it will be added to your composition! If that should happen, just select **Edit>Undo Area Region** from the software menu at the top of the screen. Once you find a bass loop you like, you can either double click it or drag it to a new track in your workspace (see below).



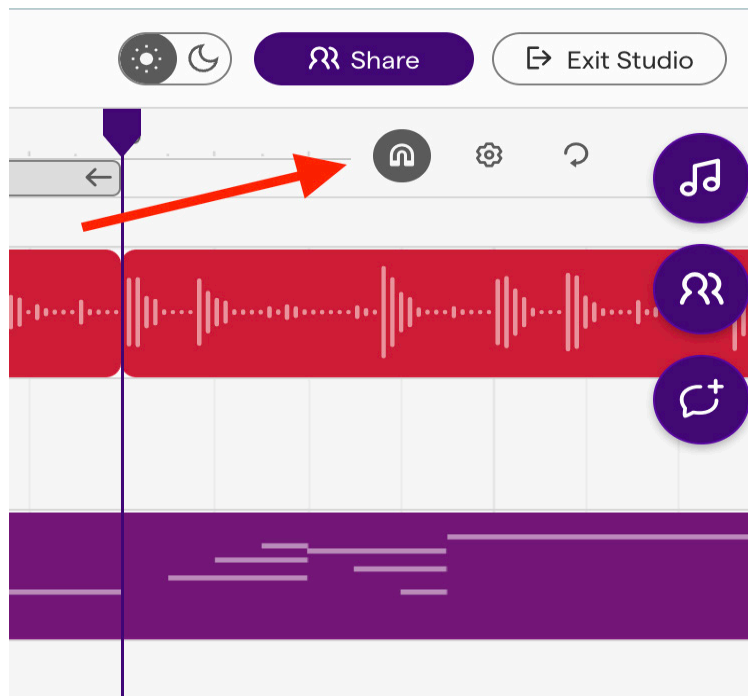
How does it sound? Do you like it? Does it fit what you were imagining for your theme song? Hopefully it does, but if it doesn't, don't be afraid to keep experimenting. Use the **Edit>Undo** function as much as you'd like. You can also **Delete** a track by clicking on the 3 dots and selecting **Delete Track** from the menu (see next page).

## Composing Music for Podcasts



### Step 7: Listen & adjust.

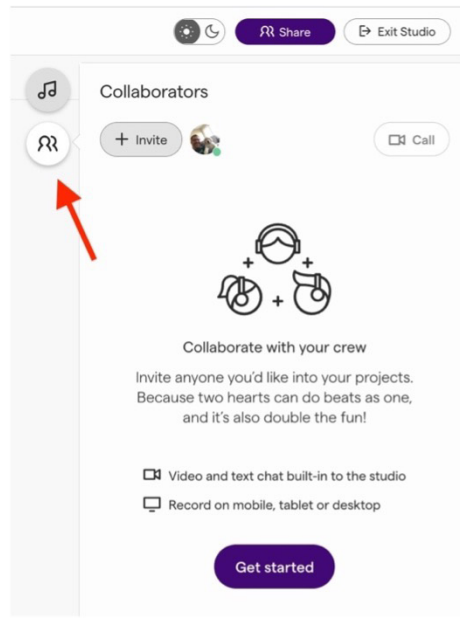
You can move your loops around by clicking and dragging them to the left or right, and you can extend them too. Make sure that if you move a loop, it starts at the beginning of a measure. If you don't know what a measure is, you can click the **magnet** icon at the top of your screen and drag your loop to the nearest vertical gray line in your track. This helps loops fit better with one another.



### Step 8: Add tracks and collaborators

Keep adding tracks until you feel like you have a good theme song for your podcast. There is no "right or wrong" when it comes to composing. This should be a fun process. Your teacher might put you into groups. If they do, you can use the **Collaborate** feature by clicking on the **Collaborate** button (see below) and inviting your partner(s) to join your composition.

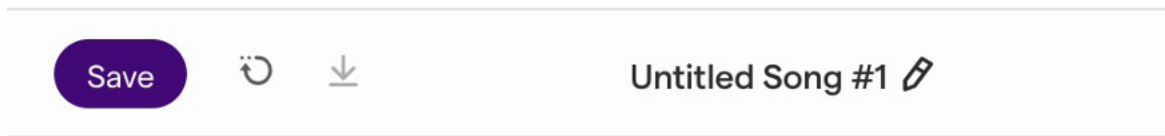
## Composing Music for Podcasts



### Last Step!

Once you have a 30-second theme song that you are happy with, click on **File>Save** from the menu and give your theme song a title. You can add the title to the top of the screen by clicking on the pencil icon or the title itself and typing in your preferred title (see below).

### Step 5: Mic check in Zoom



You are now ready to have others listen to your theme song. Well done! You are now a composer! You might need to go back and change things, take things away, and add things. Composing takes time, so keep working on it until you are satisfied with your results.

### Task:

Students will compose a 30-second theme song for their podcasts using *Soundtrap* and will submit them for peer review and discussion. Make sure to give your song a title and save it before submitting.