

# SONY®



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# sony sound forge 9 – best audio editor

In the world of audio editing, while there are any number of freeware/shareware packages do to specific things. For the serious audiophile, there are really only four packages that would be considered – ProTools, Sound Forge, Audacity and Audition (the old CoolEdit re-engineered by Adobe). These are all true Digital Audio Workstation applications (DAWs).

So what makes them special? The answer lies mainly in their ability to use VST plugins to perform highly complex tasks to “sweeten” audio, correct mistakes, add effects and generally, turn a computer into those huge and complex mixing desks with multitudes of knobs, buttons, meters and sliders that rocket scientists love to play with.

Today, these applications are simply amazing; they can do things with minimal operator effort that used to take much manual effort and time. If you want an example,

get yourself a copy of the DVD of how Pink Floyd made Dark Side of the Moon and compare it to say Audacity (which is about \$69).

Enter most top-end professional studios and you’ll find a copy of ProTools. Is it the best? Not necessarily, but it has become part of a comfortable workflow in the same way that Avid is used by television stations. It’s also very expensive.

But go into many work-from-home studios, and you’ll find the one that started it all at the desktop level, Sony (previously Sonic Foundry) Sound Forge. What allegedly caused the sudden interest in Sound Forge, was the release of its simply brilliant Noise Reduction plugin. With a few mouse clicks, all of a sudden stray air conditioning noise, aircraft flying over, a banging door and so on could be removed, quickly and easily.

You may not need the full power

of Sound Forge, and if so, then the “lite’ version, Sound Forge Audio Studio (\$169) can still do a hell of a lot more than Pink Floyd way back then could dream of.

– David Hague

**price** \$469

**we like** features and functionality.

**dislike** bit pricy for casual users, interface needs some getting used to

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# sonicfire pro 4 – best music generation

Obtaining music for use as a background bed, cinematic introduction and so on can be fraught with danger. It’s amazing how many people are still ignorant over this. While they might like Celine Warbler or Maria Shrieker over the top of their wedding video, strictly it’s (in Australia at the very least) illegal.

Yes we know that no-one will REALLY be hurt by it, but at the end of the day, the artist(s) make no moolah from their work. Tell me it doesn’t hurt when you find (as I have) that the wedding you shot on a guarantee of 20 copies at \$30 each generates not a cent. Why?

Because the happy bride and groom just duplicated them themselves and handed them out to the relatives to save some money. It’s not nice, and EXACTLY the same situation.

So, your choices of music are limited to asking the publisher (good luck!), finding a friendly garage band who will usually do

it for exposure and a carton of VB, get some royalty-free music from people such as Weaver Communications, Wavtracks or Freeup or generate your own from samples or loops via Sony Acid, Sony Cinescore or our winner in this category, Smartsound Sonicfire Pro 4.

What sets Sonicfire Pro 4 apart is the implementation last year of Mood Mapping, whereby a score you’ve built can be altered quickly and easily to be hard or soft, romantic or brash, subtle or in your face, and still retain the same feel. Think John Williams (StarWars) or other similar movies that have a central theme that runs through the whole movie.

The Smartsound library is growing and growing, and many NLE’s now come with the Smartsound engine built in (or as a plugin) meaning you only have to buy the libraries you want.

– David Hague

**price** \$235

**we like** flexibility, huge library, Mac and Windows versions available, value for money

**dislike** learning curve

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