Podcasting: Focusrite 2i2 in GarageBand

On a Macbook, GarageBand can do more with the Focusrite 2i2 than Audacity can.

The 2nd Gen 2i2 should work with your Macbook as soon as it is plugged in, but the 3rd Gen 2i2 may need a driver update. If it does not download automatically, you can find it here. Plug the 2i2 in first, and then open GarageBand.

There’s several ways you can use Garageband with the 2i2s, but below are two basic options.

Both Microphones on a Single Stereo Track

When creating a project in GarageBand, choose the Focusrite as the input device. Click the arrow to the right of “My instrument is connected with: ...” and in the Preferences dialog window, choose the Focusrite 2i2 as the input device. While you are at it, choose it as the output device so you can hear your recording playback through the monitor headphones connected to the 2i2. After you have done this, click the upper left red X to close this dialog.

Next, you choose how GarageBand handles the audio input it gets from the 2i2. Using the Input dropdown menu on the Choose a track type screen, choose whether you wish Garageband to record a single speaker or both speakers in the first track. The simplest configuration is to choose a single stereo track for both inputs, by clicking Input 1+2. This means one microphone will be heard in the lefthand speaker, the other microphone will be heard in the righthand speaker. This may be suitable for many projects.
One Microphone Per Track

In GarageBand, you can have each microphone on its own track through the 2i2. This requires several more steps, but may be worth it if you prefer both microphones to be heard in both speakers, or you would like to subsequently adjust the volume on each microphone within GarageBand.

Start the project by creating a track, but choose only 1 input.

Once that track is created, click the + button above that track to create another track.

You'll again see the Choose a track type screen. You need not specify the 2i2 again. But this time, using the Input dropdown, choose Input 2 for this track.
Now you have two tracks, each drawing from one of the microphones. But you need to tell GarageBand to record them both simultaneously. Right-click (or Control-Click) on either track, and choose Configure Track Header.... On the following dialog screen, check the box next to Record Enable.

Then, click the little Record icon within either track’s control box. When you click the master Record button up top, it will capture both tracks.

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