NEWSLETTER OF THE LONG ISLAND MACINTOSH USER GROUP

A not-for-profit, volunteer, member-supported organization

The LIMac FORUM

January 2009
www.limac.org

December Meeting *Scott Randell*

On Friday December 12 we had our annual holiday party and everyone had a great time. Being that it is the time for giving gifts (Christmas, Chanukah, etc) the presentation was holiday gift suggestions for Mac enthusiasts.

Bill Medlow started off taking about audio books, including benefits and all that is available.

Rick Matteson had quite a few suggestions:

- For iPod and iPhone users skins from iSkin *http://www.iskin.com/*
- Also for iPod and iPhone users as well as those who listen to music on their computer Bose Quiet Comfort headphones. $299.00 *http://www.bose.com/*
- For musicians the Korg USB nano controller. A midi keyboard you can use with Garage Band on other music creation software. ($49.00) *http://www.korg.com/gear/info.asp?A_PROD_NO=nanoSeries*
- The Casio EX-S10 digital camera. This camera is very small and takes great pictures. Used and recommended by Dave Marra (List pr$229.00) *http://exilim.casio.com/browse_cameras/exilim_card/EX-S10/*
- The Tivoli Audio iPal. About $200.00. Small portable speaker system to connect to your iPod output. Sounds very good for its size and also has built in AM/FM tuner. *http://www.tivoliaudio.com/product.php?productid=161&cat=264&page=1*

The next presenter was **George Canellis** suggesting the following products:

- For iPhone users the Clarifi Case with lens from Griffin Technology. Close-up lens focuses close for incredible detail; perfect for capturing business cards, document text. Lens slides in place for close-ups, then back for normal photography. *http://www.griffintechnology.com/devices/iphone* ($34.99)
- Also from Griffin Technology The iTrip Auto Pilot.

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January Meeting *Rick Matteson*

Steve Jobs not delivering the Macworld keynote!? Apple not participating in Macworld Expo after 2009!? This just can't be! That is so wrong in so many ways! Well folks, it's true. Check Apple's press release of December 16th <*http://www.apple.com/pr/library/2008/12/16macworld.html*>, reports on the 'Net, in the blogs and in no less than The New York Times <*http://tinyurl.com/a6pfeq*>.

In spite of this disturbing news, LIMac will have a Macworld report outlined by members of our board of directors. We'll describe what's new at Apple; announcements of products, hardware and software updates and the buzz on the bad news announced in mid-December. We'll also try to cover what the rest of the Macintosh community of hardware and software companies are showcasing.

The meeting will begin with our ever-popular Q&A sessions (Bradley's and the MacBasics'). Then our Macworld report by our board members will be the main presentation. Of course our raffle will follow the heart of the meeting and regular announcements. And to close the evening our SIGs will meet for an hour.

If you want the latest from this year's historic Macworld, you won't want to miss this meeting. Join us and share your Macworld news. We'll be looking for you!

(See Tonya Angst letter to Apple on Page 3)

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LIMac was established in 1984, when the Mac was introduced. Annual dues for membership are $36. *(The first meeting is free.)*

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General meeting time schedule:
Meetings are held at The New York Institute of Technology, Building 300 (Anna Rubin Hall), Old Westbury, Long Island.

Meetings start promptly at ***7:00*** **P.M.**
Bradley's Q&A: 7:00 – 7:30 P.M.
MacBasics Q&A: 7:00 – 7:30 P.M.
There are some very useful, interesting and funny widgets out there! For January's MacBasic meeting, the plan is to cover what they are, where a person can get them, what is available, how they work, and how they're downloaded and installed. If you already use them, bring your favorite one to share with members. We will begin the meeting with our MacBasics Q & A.
Featured Presentation: 7:30 – 8:20 P.M.
followed by announcements and raffle drawings.

SIG Meetings: (*Special Interest Groups*)
DTP/Photoshop SIG 2009: 8:30 – 10:00 P.M.
Photoshop CS 3 Tips

- In bad weather, call (516) 686-7789.
- The next LIMac board meeting will be at the Plainedge Library, (516) 735-4133, on Wednesday, January 14th, at 7:45 P.M.

Bradley's Tech Session

Bradley Dichter
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▶ I'm trying to hook up two USB printers for use in *Parallels Desktop*. It only acknowledges one and not the other. What about my Epson Perfection 1650 scanner?

■ You can't expect every old printer to work. Some of the biggest problems is that the printer software for Mac OS X won't let go and play nice with the request from the guest OS in *Parallels' Desktop*. Particularly mettlesome are the multifunction printers, as their scanner drivers are always polling the printer/scanner for input. I found this knowledgebase article to be of use: *http://kb.parallels.com/en/5156* and *http://kb.parallels.com/en/5053* You may find it easier to just change the default printer within Mac OS X's System Preferences - Print & Fax pane and let Parallels send the print job to that, rather than installing print drivers for the two printers within Windows. While Windows should detect the scanner, you may find that the Windows based scanner driver may not see it. Try leaving the scanner off until you start Windows. I hear USB hubs can interfere with proper communications and you are forced to plug in directly. Besides all that, people seem to prefer *VMware Fusion 2.0.1* to *Parallels' Desktop 4*.

▶ I have that same scanner, the Epson 1650, I hear I can't use it if I get a new Intel Mac.

■ That's not entirely true. They don't have a universal binary scanner driver for the old scanners, but the *Epson Scan* application, while only having PowerPC code, can still run with the transparent Rosetta emulation part of Mac OS X 10.5 and thus you can scan and save the scanned image and then open that image with a Intel native version of *Photoshop CS3* or *CS4* or *Photoshop Elements 6*. As a matter of fact Adobe no longer included the twain (scanner) plug-in with *Photoshop CS4*, as they claim it can cause crashes. Without the twain plug-in, even a native scanner driver would not allow you to see the scanner in Photoshop's import menu choice under the File menu. If you wish to take the small risk, you can download the *Photoshop CS4* optional plug-ins which includes TWAIN, PhotomergeUI, ContactSheet II and Web Contact Sheet II. *http://www.adobe.com/support/downloads/detail.jsp?ftpID=4047* By the way,

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President's Message

Bill Medlow
President
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Where did the time go, another year has passed us. Not counting the economy it was a good year for Mac users with the appearance of new Apple products throughout the year, Mac Pros, iPods, iPhones, iPod touches, MacBook Air, etc. For our group too. We had some great meetings, some new members, a SUPER Party and hopefully spend some enjoyable evenings getting together. As president, together with our board of directors, I want to wish you all a HAPPY NEW YEAR!

December Meeting

December Meeting *continued from Page 1*

AutoPilot controls iPod playback from your dash or console's cigarette lighter with the touch of a finger. Industry-leading SmartScan does all the work — scans the radio dial for the three best frequencies then saves them automatically to 3 programmable presets for easy recall at the touch of a button. *http://www.griffintechnology.com/products/itripautopilot* ($99.99)

■ Again from Griffin Technology, The Evolve Wireless Sound System for iPod. You can move these speakers to wherever you want to hear music and you can add as many speakers as you need. ($349.99) *http://www.griffintechnology.com/products/evolve*

Bradley (Bradley Dichter of course) did his portion of the presentation on selecting inexpensive gifts.

■ He started out with something we all can make use of, iKlear Polish and polishing clothes. There are types for displays, and for iPods and iPhones. The kits vary in price. *http://www.klearscreen.com/iKlear.aspx*

■ Then something every computer user should have, cans of air to blow dust from your computer. You can get this locally at about $10.00 for 3 cans.

■ He also suggested spindles of blank CD's and DVD's. Brad recommends Verbatim or TDK brands. To go along with these he showed various cases to hold and transport them.

Everyone got some ideas from the suggestions. Many thanks to our presenters. *http://www.limac.org/holiday.html*

Bradley's Tech Session

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there is a more expensive but perhaps more satisfactory solution, buy a new scanner. I had a Epson Perfection 4180 scanner which was fine and offered 4800 DPI scanning, but like your 1650 scanner it was an older model and Epson didn't release a updated scanner driver that was universal binary, which would be needed if I wanted to preserve that traditional option of importing directly into *Photoshop* on my next Intel based Mac Pro. It was a refurbished model I bought for $99 when my old scanner gave up, which was a Epson 1670. If you checked now, the Epson Store has a Perfection V300 Photo for $99.99 which supports version 3.50A universal binary TWAIN scanner driver. When I checked I saw the Perfection V500 Photo which has a superior 3.4 Dmax and DIGITAL ICE which had gotten great reviews for removing scratches and dust. It uses a LED "ReadyScan" light source instead of the old cold cathode fluorescent bulb, so it didn't take any time to warm up and better for the environment when IT'S time comes. It also came with the better *ABBYY FineReader 5 Sprint+* which was a step newer and better than what I had before. It was $126.65 with free shipping and no sales tax. On top of that deal, there was a $50 rebate coupon for any purchase of the V500, refurbished or not, so I figured it's a bargain for a better and faster scanner. Heck it was black and silver, so it better matched the Epson Stylus Photo R280 printer near it anyway.

▶ I understand the Mac OS X is UNIX based. Can I run .rpm packages on it directly?

■ RPM package files are for Red Hat Linux which is based on a different flavor of UNIX. There is a Mac OS X application called RPMinator for working with the files in these packages. A more fully functional solution is to run *VMware Fusion* which is best know for supporting Windows on the Mac, but it also supports four different varieties of Red Hat. See *http://www.vmware.com/products/fusion/resources/system_requirements.html*. Theoretically you should be able to recompile the source code for a Linux application to run on the Mac natively. As the Mac comes with the Xcode development environment, a simple program should be able to be recompile without too much trouble. The latest version for Leopard is 3.1.2 and the update is free to any ADC member and anyone can sign up for free for a download such as this. I would expect the average user would just go with the *VMware Fusion* route and not start programming and testing a converted application. On the other hand, if you find a X11 (X Window System) based application, then Mac OS X can run and X11r7 compatible application un-modified. For older Mac's the X11 part was a optional install. For more info, read *http://developer.apple.com/opensource/tools/runningx11.html*

▶ I have a Power Mac G5 with two internal hard drives. One has Tiger, my usual boot disk and one has Leopard. The Tiger drive is failing, so I want to copy the whole hard drive to it's replacement. Should I use *SuperDuper!* or *Carbon Copy Cloner?* The new drive should work just like the old one, right?

■ Either should do the job, but in my testing, I found *Carbon Copy Cloner* to be much slower. I ran *Activity Monitor* and looked at the disk activity and found long pauses and thus low throughput with *Carbon Copy Cloner.* The free version of *SuperDuper!* should be enough for a basic clone. Just pull the Leopard drive out, move the soft screw-in bumpers to the new drive and put in the replacement blank drive and Tiger will realize the drive is unformatted, so you can then format it with *Disk Utility* and then clone it with *SuperDuper!* When finished, remove the old failing Tiger and put back the Leopard drive. Of course with the Power Mac G5, in order to remove the drive in the upper bay, you have to pull the lower drive out as well as it does not come out straight. As for the replacement drive working just like the old one, the only trick is to name it the same as the old one. That can be a little tricky when it comes to cloning from the old drive to the new one if they have the same name, you could be confused. So you have two choices to tell them apart; you could give the old drive a custom icon so you can tell them apart or you can give the new drive a different name initially, run *SuperDuper!* and then change the name afterwards.

▶ What type of drive would I need? I'm thinking about 500GB.

■ You need a serial ATA style drive, usually shown as SATA. The Samsung Spinpoint F1 series are the fastest. I see at newegg.com, the 500GB model with 16GB buffer is $59.99 while the 750GB model with the 32GB buffer is just $74.99. There is no sales tax charged and free shipping.

▶ I have a G5 running Mac OS 10.4. Will Photoshop CS4 run on that?

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TIP! *from* TidBITS
Mac news for the rest of us
http://db.tidbits.com/

A Mother's Letter to Apple about Macworld Expo

by Tonya Engst

Dear Apple,

Just because you're old enough to issue a press release doesn't mean you're too old to listen to some common sense from your mother. What's this I hear about how you don't plan to come to Macworld Expo in 2010? I've been reading about it in the tech tabloids, and I'm shocked, just shocked, to hear that you've let the suits take over - you were so Bohemian as a child, so free-spirited. Don't get me wrong, I think it's marvelous that every Apple employee can afford a pony, and I'm very proud of your Macs and iPods and that new iPhone thing, but you need to act your age.

You are old enough to realize that the world does not revolve around you. Macworld Expo is our family's annual reunion. You don't go to reunions because they are convenient, or because they are cheap. You go to reunions because you are a member of the family, and that's what families do. Yes, Uncle Shawn will be loud and bring a few women wearing neoprene catsuits. And yes, Cousin Paul will make that guy who runs you - what's his name? Mobs? I think I saw him on "The Simpsons" - anyway, Cousin Paul will make him stand up in front of everyone and talk about what you've been up to this past year. I'm sorry if he doesn't have much to say this time or he's not feeling well, but that's just how it is with family. Oh, and could you tell him that it's okay to wear a brighter shirt? Some of us in the back can't see all that well,

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and frankly, with times being as they are, more cheerful attire wouldn't go amiss.
But the most important thing that you need to realize is that Macworld Expo is not all about you. You don't have to impress us with amazing products and revolutionary technologies each year. Sure, we want you to grow and prosper, but we also love you just the way you are. A family reunion is about the entire family, and there's no shame in changing your talk to make it about everyone. You've been so busy telling us about your newest products and all the money you've made that I think you've forgotten to share all the wonderful things we're doing with your computers. Is NASA using them? Are Macs going into space anytime soon? How are they being used to make the world a better place? Your grandmother wants to know if any Nobel prize winners are using them, and if they are being used in cancer research.

Now, about how some people think that Apple Stores are like mini family reunions. Your Apple Stores are certainly showplaces. I'd like to see you use more wood and less steel, and that glass staircase in the New York City Soho store is just an accident waiting to happen. But Apple Stores are hardly places where you can sit down and catch up with the Australian cousins. They're your stores, and you can do what you want with them. But once a year, would it kill you to come to the reunion, where everyone can get together at the same time?

Frankly, you are acting every ounce a spoiled child and you're hurting people's feelings. Who do you think made your iPod a success? And your iPhone? Was it strangers? No. It was your Mac family. We were the ones who moved all the iPods into more promi-

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■ Yes, you need a G5 as a minimum with Mac OS 10.4.11 and 512MB of RAM and a 1024 by 768 resolution display at the least. Most Power Macintosh G5 models in use I would hope meet that requirement, but the lowest end models came with just 256MB of RAM and many iMac G5 models came with just 256MB. So while Mac OS 10.4 could run with that little memory, I wouldn't advise it in any case, certainly not for a Photoshop user.

▶ Can a user upgrade his Mac running Mac OS 10.2 upgrade to 10.4 without ever owning 10.4?

■ Yes, the retail version of Mac OS 10.4 could upgrade from 10.2 or even Mac OS 9. There was a drop-in Mac OS 10.4 upgrade DVD shipped with some Macs that shipped shortly after Mac OS 10.4 came out. This disc could only upgrade from 10.3. Of course the Mac in question would have to meet the system requirements for Tiger, so it has to have a native G3 or G4 processor and have built-in FireWire and the aforementioned 256MB of RAM memory and at least 3GB of disk space left. Mac OS 10.4 uses up more RAM than 10.2 did. Also the retail version came on a DVD-ROM, so ideally the Mac needs a optical drive that can read DVDs, otherwise you would need to find the four CD-ROM installation set. It may be hard to find these nowadays. Also if searching for old Mac OS X install discs, avoid buying the kind that came with a particular Macintosh. They don't have the resources needed by every kind of Mac, just that model, so while it may install without an error message, it's not likely to be fully functional and will be unstable on a different model Mac then it was intended for. You should look for the retail boxed version which is multi-purpose. Of course updating from two generations old a operating system begs the next question, what about all the other software on the computer? All kinds of drivers for scanners and printers would need an update if available, and all the applications and utilities. Be very wary of any old startup items and system preferences panels that will need to be removed before updating to avoid a problem with the new system. *Norton Utilities* for example would have to be removed first.

▶ I used to use *PaperPort Page Manager* under Windows. What is the preferred thing for the Mac?

■ What is pretty cool is DEVONtechnologies *DEVONthink*

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User Group News

George Canellis
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I. Live presentation

A. Rick's picks

1. iSkin Duo for iPod nano (4G): dual-layer design (MSRP $34.99)
   http://www.iskin.com/nanoduo/
   a) Case for iPod nano (4G)
2. Bose QuietComfort® 2 headphones (MSRP $299/SALE $269)
   http://tinyurl.com/4yqd9g

B. George's choices

1. Griffin Clarifi
   http://www.griffintechnology.com/products/clarifi
   a) Protective case with built-in close-up lens for iPhone 3G
2. iTrip AutoPilot
   http://www.griffintechnology.com/products/itripautopilot
   a) Charge/control/play your iPod or iPhone on your car stereo
3. Evolve
   http://www.griffintechnology.com/products/evolve
   a) Wireless Sound System for iPod
4. ”GoodShop”
   http://www.goodsearch.com/goodshop.aspx

C. Bradley's suggestions

1. iKlear (Apple Polish Kit)
   http://www.klearscreen.com/iKlear.aspx
   a) screen and computer cleaner and microfiber cloth to maintain the computer
2. Verbatim CD-R or DVD-R discs
   http://tinyurl.com/62w73t
   a) CDs or DVDs for archiving photos, music, data

D. Richard's selections

1. MacUpdate Holiday [software] Bundle
   http://www.mupromo.com/winter.php
   a) Ten applications, valued at $447.69 for an unheard of price of $49.99
2. NewerTechology 11-piece tool kit
   http://eshop.macsales.com/item/Newer%20Technology/

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Bradley's Tech Session

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Pro Office. It works with serious Fujitsu scanners like the ScanSnap S510M Sheet-Fed Scanner and *ReadIris Pro OCR* software. There is also Ironic Software's *Yep* and of course *Adobe Bridge* and *Acrobat Professional*. There hasn't been a PaperPort for the Visioneer compact scanner for the Mac in almost a decade and it's wasn't much good. I know that Nuance sells *PaperPort Pro* for Windows still.

▶ **How do I make a NTFS volume read/write to the Mac?**

■ You could try (I wouldn't) the free *MacFUSE* version 2.0.3.2 and *NTFS-3G* version 1.5130U2 or use Paragon Software's *NTFS for Mac OS X* version 6.5.1 which is $40. The Mac OS X has built-in support for read-only access to Window's NTFS format volumes. This would be most useful for people using NTFS formatted external hard drives or folks using Boot Camp. You can download a 10-day trial version of the preference pane at *http://www.paragon-software.com/home/ntfs-mac/download.html* On a related if reciprocal note, there is a program for Windows machines called *MacDrive* by Mediafour which allows Windows to read Mac's HFS volumes, which can be used in Boot Camp's Windows environment so it can see the Mac partition or perhaps for a Windows machine to read a Mac formatted external flash or hard disk drive.

▶ **I have a white Intel iMac 24" and sometimes I get this pattern on the screen which I can wipe away by moving a window around. I can also clean it up by invoking the screen saver by taking advantage of a hot corner. Sometime I get big squares. Any idea what is causing this?**

■ This is a known problem. I've seen it on other iMacs, even the earlier iMac G5 with the Radeon video chip. It seems a video card driver defect or a hardware defect. Apple has said it can be fixed with a software update. I'd suggest installing *smcFanControl* *http://81.169.182.62/smcfancontrol_2_1_3_1.zip*, and up the lower fan speed limit to keep the innards cooler. I've heard that installing *ATI Displays* software can help with the ATI Radeon X1600 video card problems. See *http://ati.amd.com/support/drivers/mac/atidisplays4-5-7.html*

User Group News

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TOOLKIT11/

a) Portable Toolkit perfect for the technician on the go

E. From our good friend Dave Marra

1. Korg NanoKEY USB-MIDI controller (Street price≈$50)
   http://www.korg.com/gear/info.asp?a_prod_no=NanoSeries
2. Casio Exilim EX-S10 digital point-and-shoot camera (Street price≈$149–195)
   http://exilim.casio.com/browse_cameras/exilim_card/EX-S10/

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nent locations on the shelves in Target. We were the ones who got all our friends hooked on listening to podcasts. And, we were the ones who stuck with you through thick and thin, sometimes even jeopardizing our own careers, while you were mired in indecision and doubt in the late 1990s.

Functional families have reunions and everyone comes if they possibly can. Your deciding not to come isn't okay, and you should reconsider. Aunt Lesa is in tears, Cousin Andy thinks that if you're not coming maybe he won't come either, and some of the more distant relatives are so fed up with your acting like a drama queen that they seem unlikely to support you the next time you hit hard times.

I'm your mother, so I'll always love you, and I hope you know that if you change your mind on coming to our Macworld Expo family reunion, there will always be a place at the table for you.

Love, Mom

PS: When are you going to come out with an address book that I can share sensibly with your father?

PPS: In case you didn't write it down, the dates for the 2010 Macworld Expo are January 4th through 8th. There's nothing wrong with making nice with Cousin Paul between then and now, and I'm sure you can still get a decent hotel room for not too much.

PPPS: You know I only wrote this letter because I love you. Call me soon.

Renewal

Membership renewal for 2009 takes place from October onwards. A bonus discount was passed by the Board of Directors a few years ago: Bring in a new dues-paying member and get a **$12**, discount off your membership renewal. Bring in three new members and your renewal is free!

Bringing in a new member also includes getting a past member back into the group.

Make your **$36** check out to LIMac and bring it to the next meeting, or mail to LIMac, Post Office Box 2048, Seaford NY 11783-0180

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For a Year's membership
Send your $36 check to:

LI Macintosh Users Group,
P.O. Box 2048
Seaford, NY 11783-0180

Review - *iPlayMusic Beginner Guitar*

Let me start out by saying it took me a while to go through this software package. I had to determine who would be the audience for this software, and if it would benefit the target audience. The iPlayMusic system is advertised as a way to learn "the essentials you need to start playing songs right away, without learning complex theory or reading music!" (This is a quote from the company's website http://www.iplaymusic.com/store/product_info.php?cPath=22_23&products_id=33). In looking through the software I can safely say that a person willing to put in the time, and dig into the program can accomplish just that.

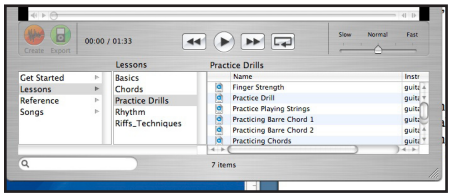
Installing the program requires a minimum of a

- Macintosh computer with a PowerPC G4, PowerPC G5, or Intel Core processor 733 MHz or faster
- 512 MB RAM
- GarageBand 3 or later required to use the included GarageBand projects
- Mac OS X v10.3.9 or v10.4.3 or later, v10.4.4 recommended
- iTunes 6.0.2 and Quicktime 7.0.4
- DVD drive for installation
- 10 GB of available disk space*

Now that the software is installed, you are ready to begin your lessons. The interface is simple and straightforward. (See screenshot below) The software works quite well and I found no problems running it. On the right you will find a control that says slow - normal - fast. I found the normal made the most sense the slow and fast setting sounded funny. If you are a beginner I suggest you start out by viewing the Quickstart video, and proceed to the Step-by-step Guide. The videos correspond to the guide and should be viewed in the same order. You might need to stay on a particular lesson longer but that is OK. I suggest you start out by learning a couple of chords, and then jump to a song using these Chords. It may take you a while to go through the introductory material, so be patient.

Once you have gotten through the introductory exercises, etc. the program gives you a few songs to learn. There are songs from several different styles of music: blues, country, folk, rock, and a few others. You should follow the songs that go along with the lessons, because they include the chords needed for that song. There is also a section in the lessons called "Practice Drills". These are exercises meant to increase finger strength, and they are good for all students. When your fingers get stronger you will play better. See the screenshot below.

**The software must be installed on the startup drive, so make sure you have 10 GB to spare, not merely 10 GB available*



The lessons on chords teach you to play the various types of minor, major, and seventh chords. Each of these is contained in an individual lesson. When you get more advanced you can go through the lessons on "Rhythm" and "Riffs_Techniques". These will take you a while to go through.

The coolest part of this program is that you can create your own version of each included song in GarageBand. You can then add and delete tracks. You can for example delete the rhythm guitar track, add your own, or just play along. If you want to add your own track, iPlay music gives you instructions on how to do so. In order to do this you will need some additional equipment. To be able to record your guitar, you will need a USB microphone, or something like the Griffin iMic *http://www.griffintechnology.com/products/imic* and a standard microphone. You can also use the Griffin iMic to plug an electric guitar, or acoustic guitar with a pickup directly in. The image below shows the button to hit in order to export your song to GarageBand.

In conclusion, this is a very good product for people who want to begin learning the guitar. Like anything else however, you must put in the time for this to work for you. If you do you can easily learn the basics and be able to play a some songs within a few weeks. If you already play a bit, you will love the GarageBand integration. The price of this software is quite reasonable for what you get. The level one DVD is $19.95. You can buy all three DVD's (Level 1, Level 2, and Lets Play Music Together) for $39.95. You would pay much more for one lesson with an experienced teacher. I would suggest however, that after a while going to a teacher would be beneficial. An experienced teacher can check you hand positions, and answer any questions you may have immediately. You also get that interactive guidance that a technical solution such as this cannot have. Even though the package is advertised as a way to learn without reading music, I think that not learning to read music notation will put you at a disadvantage in the long run. Once you can read you can pick up any piece of music and learn to play it. Perhaps the iPlayMusic people will include some sections on reading in a future version. Just to summarize, iPlayMusic is quite good for getting you started playing the guitar, or as an extra resource for those who already play a bit. If however you want to go further, find an experienced teacher with a good reputation. ***Scott Randell***