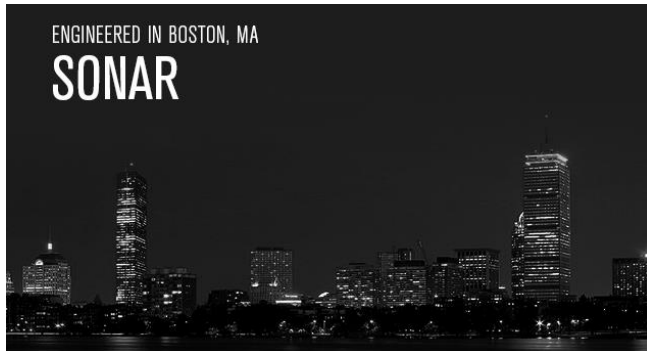


# SONAR 2016.07 Update



## SONAR 2016.07 Update



We totally understand why you like Themes, so now we're taking a giant step forward with our new Theme Editor. This is a separate program that's part of the Platinum membership, so if you want mauve record buttons on a heliotrope background—go for it! You can even modify the images, not just the colors.

And with Smart Swipe being such a hit, we couldn't resist taking that further as well. Now more controls respond to Smart Swiping, and it's easier to back out of a swipe if you change your mind while mid-swipe. What's more, the LP MB supports sidechaining (yeah!) and, along with the LP EQ, offers additional improvements. Rounding out our features, Russian localization is now complete for all versions of SONAR. Добро пожаловать, друг!

Then there's an "Anatomy of a SONAR Project" based around recording classical harpsichordist Kathleen McIntosh, a review of Audified's "MixChecker" program (it's designed to help you create more transportable mixes), the latest "Top 10 Chart," and a new feature: *Surfboard*. If you haven't surfed the SONAR boards lately you've been missing out on some great tips, so we've assembled links from some of the more popular topics for your web surfing pleasure.

Summer vacation? *What's that?* See you next month with more goodies. – *The Cakewalk Team*



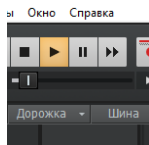
**Theme Editor:** Whether you just want to change one button or create an entirely different theme, SONAR's Theme Editor offers the tools you need. You can change colors, and with a suitable image editing program, change the very images themselves. We can hardly wait to see what the SONAR community creates...



**Linear-Phase Processors—New Features and Enhancements:** The LP MP and LP EQ continue to be further refined. The LP MB includes sidechaining for added flexibility, and also, the non-linear mode crossover is now linear phase. Various UI and other enhancements make these processors better than ever.



**Smart Swipe Enhancements:** Smart Swipe now ignores hidden tracks—and if you change your mind while swiping, you can cancel the swipe by swiping back to the same control where the operation started, and then releasing the mouse button. Furthermore, several more controls are now eligible for Smart Swipe.



**Davajtye Poznakomimsya (Part 2):** Last month, SONAR was localized in Russian for the Steam edition. Now we've taken the next step, and all SONAR versions as well as the Cakewalk Command Center have been localized in Russian—joining English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Japanese, and Chinese.



**Fixes and Enhancements:** This month was mostly about tightening down some loose ends with the Linear Phase EQ and Linear Phase Multiband plug-ins, as well as tweaking Smart Swipe. However we also fixed a couple pesky problems, like occasional improper resizing of VST3 plug-ins and long delays for global un-solo.



**Charting Now in SONAR | The Top 10 Memory Configurations:** We all know that memory is good for DAWs, so how much memory does the typical SONAR computer have? We asked analytics to find out for us, and while 8 GB remains the favorite, 16 GB is coming on strong.



**Review | Audified MixChecker Plug-In:** Curious what your mix will sound like over a smartphone, telephone, laptop, radio, earbuds, or various other consumer playback devices that don't necessarily represent the state of the art? Now there's a plug-in that will help you find out.



**SurfBoard:** Surfing the internet can be fun, but surfing the Cakewalk forums can be downright instructive because community members are constantly sharing tips and techniques. We've scoured the forums for the latest threads that can help you get the most out of SONAR, and compiled them here.

## How to Download the SONAR 2016.07 Update

Open the **Cakewalk Command Center**. If you don't have the latest version (CakewalkCommandCenterSetup\_1.1.6.2.exe), please download it from the Cakewalk Command Center [home page](#).

To download the **SONAR 2016.07** core update, download from the core SONAR Artist, Professional, or Platinum category. **Platinum** members should also download the **Engineering Suite** to install the latest versions of the LP MB and LP EQ.

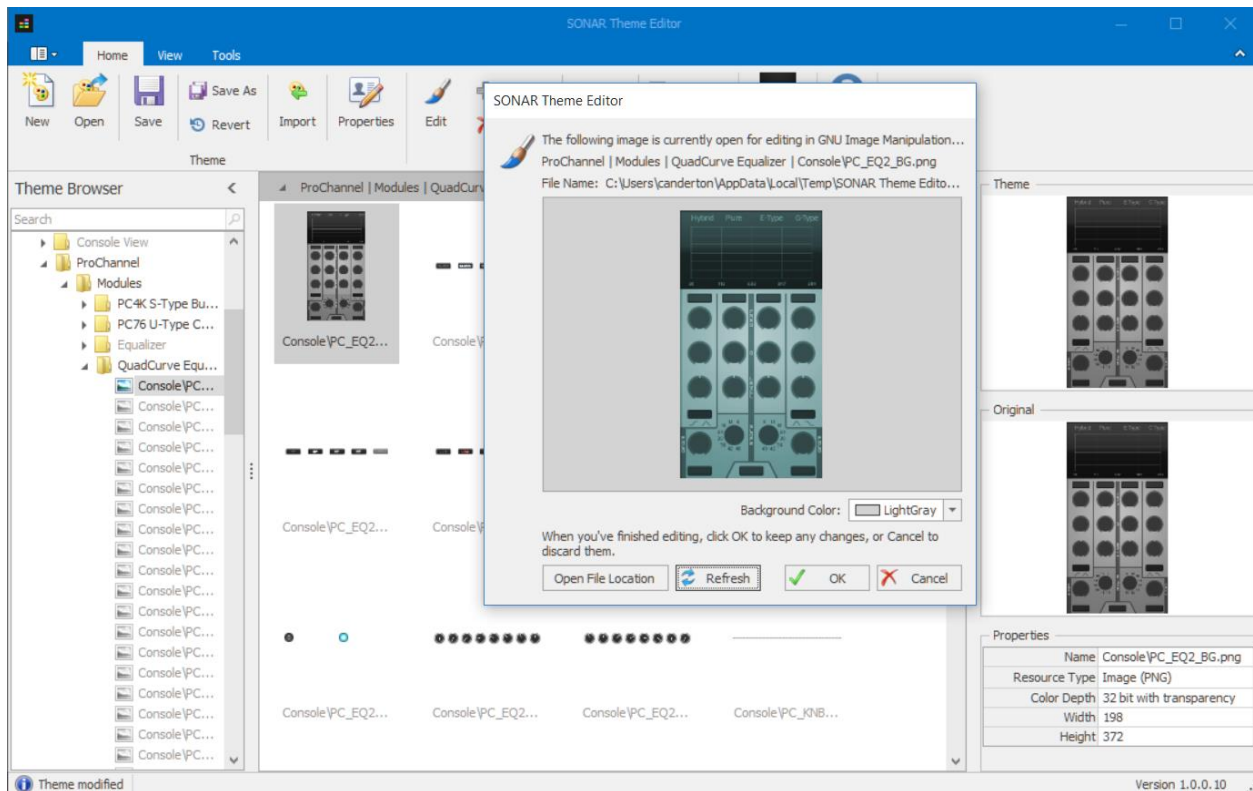
The **Theme Editor** is a separate, Platinum-only program that shows up under Connected Products and needs to be downloaded separately from the core program.



# SONAR Theme Editor

## Platinum

You asked for it, and here it is: not just new themes for SONAR, but a way to edit existing themes or even create your own themes. In addition to changing colors, you can customize images to anything you want with an external image editor such as Adobe Photoshop, or free options like [Paint.net](https://www.paint.net/) or the [GNU Image Manipulation Program \(GIMP\)](https://www.gimp.org/). Note that the image editor must be able to support .PNG and .BMP files, as well as support transparency. Microsoft Paint is not a suitable editor, because it doesn't support transparency.



The Theme Editor is a separate, Platinum-only installation, and needs to be installed via the Cakewalk Command Center. Once installed, to open the theme editor:

- Choose SONAR Theme Editor from the Utilities menu
- Choose *Edit > Preferences > Customization > Themes*, select the theme you want to edit, and then click on Edit

After opening the theme editor, then you can begin to modify the Theme Editor elements and save your themes to C:\Cakewalk Content\SONAR Themes. Note that a custom theme adds overlays to the factory themes, so you don't have to be concerned about doing something so

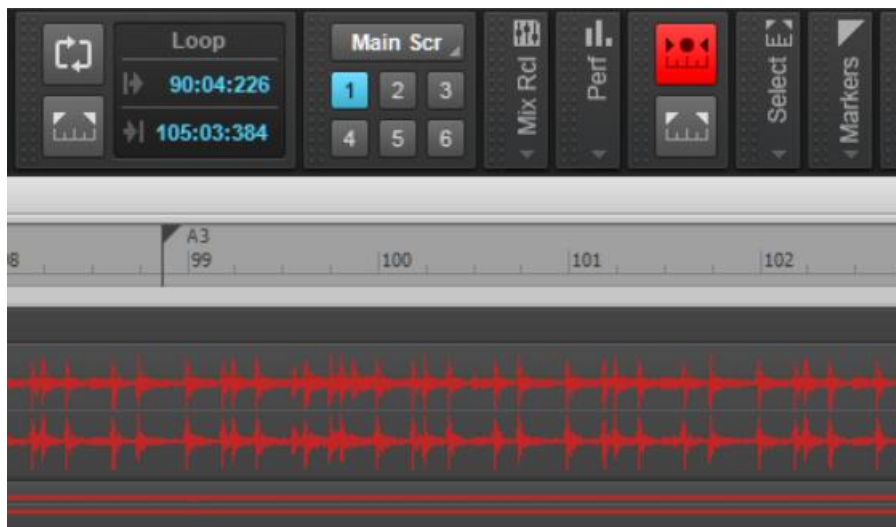
weird you can't get back to the factory themes. Also, the Theme Editor helpfully bolds elements that have been changed.

You can open the Theme Editor after you've opened SONAR, and note that you don't have to close SONAR to save any Theme changes. You can temporarily switch to another theme in SONAR, save any edits in Theme Editor, then switch back to the recently-saved theme in SONAR. However if you create a new theme, you have to close and re-open the Preferences dialog in order to see the new theme.

Note that some elements contain many individual images; for example, with some knobs, the element contains all possible knob positions. As a result to fit within an image editor's window, the view may be zoomed out so far that it appears to be a straight line. Zoom in, and you'll be able to see what makes up the element. This also means you can do tricks like overlay a gradient, so that the knobs change color as you rotate them (as done with some of the Anderton Collection FX Chains).

## THE THEME EDITOR IN ACTION

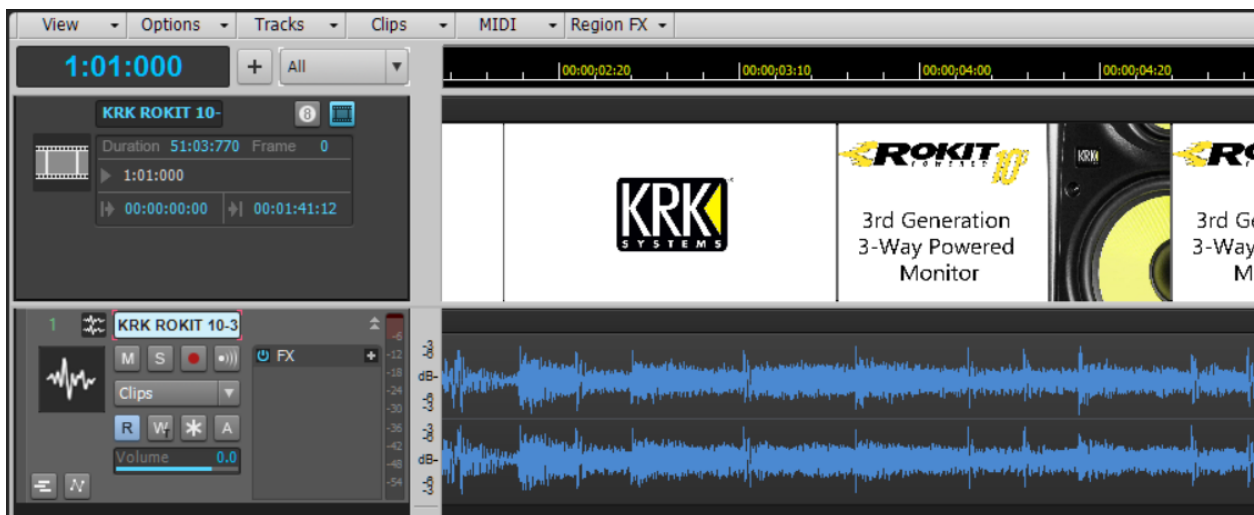
Although doing a complete theme is not for the faint of heart—if you try, you'll find out just how difficult it is to have consistent, useable colorization—it's very easy to make small and useful modifications. For example, if you always wanted the punch in active button to be a really, really bright red so you wouldn't run into one of those “Hey, record doesn't work!” situations only to realize punch points were set beyond where you could see them on the timeline, try this:



You can also get whimsical, hideous, or even be both at the same time...like this modified U-type compressor. We don't know if the Blue Man Group uses SONAR or not, but if so, this compressor is ready for them.



The theme editor also has utilitarian purposes, like increasing contrast on the timeline calibrations when the numeric values are important (like when locking events to SMPTE times). In this example, the background is black, the tick marks white, and the times yellow.



To get deep into the theme editor—and before you think you’ve found a “bug”—please check the online help, which provides detailed instructions.

## EASY EDITS

SONAR Theme Editor also installs lots of images you can use to modify a theme, without requiring any graphics skills. These images are installed to C:\Cakewalk Content\SONAR Themes\Theme Editor Toolkit, and allow you to modify common elements easily.

The SONAR community has a lot of professionals who want specific color edits to help their workflow, as well as artists with a strong visual sense. We very much look forward to seeing the kinds of themes that SONAR users develop with this new tool—the same basic tool we used to create the Tungsten theme.



## Linear-Phase Processors—New Features and Enhancements

### Platinum

Yes, they just keep getting better...here are the latest improvements.



### LP MB

- The Multiband Compressor includes sidechaining because...well, you asked for it, and besides, we wanted it too
- The non-linear mode's crossover is now phase-compensated
- Separating bands makes enough room for another band
- The Slope in non-linear mode has been adjusted to 24 dB/octave for better phase accuracy
- Selecting bands in Solo mode now fades from one band to another
- Vertical drag while holding Alt displays the gain value in the plot
- The range setting goes to 30 dB instead of 29.9 dB

### LP EQ AND LP MB

- You can display mono meters on both the left and right channels
- Preset names now persist when loading two presets in the A and B slots
- The GUI contrast (e.g., the contrast between the Presets and background) has been improved for better readability

## Smart Swipe Enhancements

Artist, Professional, Platinum



Only a month after being introduced, Smart Swipe has already been proven as a major workflow enhancement concept for DAWs. So, Cakewalk has updated SONAR's Smart Swipe with greater functionality and more swiping options.

Smart Swipe now ignores hidden tracks; and if you change your mind while swiping, you can cancel the swipe by swiping back to the same control where the operation started, and then releasing the mouse button. Furthermore, the following controls are now eligible for Smart Swipe.

### Piano Roll View

- Mute
- Solo
- Arm for Recording
- Show/Hide Track
- Enable/Disable Track Editing controls in the Track pane

**Staff View**

- Mute
- Solo
- Arm for Recording controls in the Track pane

**Step Sequencer**

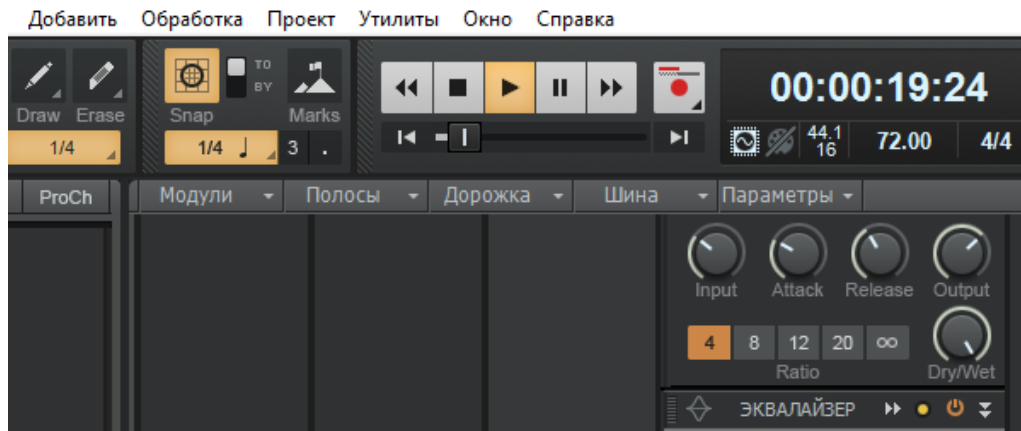
- Mute
- Solo

**Console View**

- Pre/Post controls.
- Send Enable controls (works vertically on the same track, and horizontally across tracks)
- Hardware output Mute and Link Channels controls (the “Link Faders” button is now a “Link Channels” button because it affects mute as well as faders)

## Davajtye Poznakomimsya, Part 2

Artist, Professional, Platinum



Last month, SONAR was localized in Russian for the Steam edition. Now we've taken the next step, and all SONAR versions—as well as the Cakewalk Command Center—have had their menu items and many other elements translated to Russian.

SONAR's availability in English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Japanese, and Chinese reflects its growing importance in the global market. We'd like to thank our users around the world who have made this possible.

## Fixes and Enhancements

Fixed SONAR issues where:

- The LP EQ frequency display was off by 1 or 2 Hz compared to the knob
- The LP EQ/MP Preset names didn't persist when loading two presets in both A & B
- Smart Swipe didn't swipe across track folders properly
- The mouse cursor didn't behave as expected after Smart Swiping the FX Bins Bypass control
- Smart Swipe didn't work with Grouped controls
- Swiping the Console View Mains controls didn't work properly
- Smart Swipe didn't handle hidden tracks properly
- Global un-solo with large projects incurred a long delay
- Error handling with track references when loading a project needed improvement
- Adjusting a crossfade on multiple tracks caused an improper result
- The Add Track "Record Enable" option for "MIDI Only" track didn't enable record properly
- Some VST3 plug-ins (e.g., HALion 5) would not re-size properly

## Charting Now in SONAR: The Top 10 Memory Configurations



There's an old saying that you can never be too rich or too thin, but when it comes to computers, it seems you can never have too much memory. So how much memory do SONAR users install on their machines? We asked Cakewalk Analytics to tell us, and here are the results.

### **#1: 8 GB**

Still holding on to #1, 8 GB is pretty much the minimum you can get away with these days for smooth operation with SONAR and other DAWs.

### **#2: 16 GB**

Coming on strong and likely to overtake 8 GB before too long, 16 GB gives a comfortable amount of "memory headroom" with SONAR. Both the #1 and #2 hits were way ahead of the rest of the pack.

### **#3: 4 GB**

It was a very tight race for third place, but 4 GB prevailed. Those running 32-bit operating systems can't address bigger amounts of memory anyway, which probably accounts for 4 GB's enduring popularity. However as the world continues its inexorable move to 64 bits, although 4 GB may be listed as a minimum system requirement all it can really do is make sure your computer wakes up and starts running a program.

### **#4: 32 GB**

We suspect those running 64-bit systems and using lots of virtual instruments are the ones who find 32 GB not just "nice to have," but a necessity. As 32-bit systems fade into the twilight, expect 32 GB to take over #3 in the not-too-distant future.

### **#5: 12 GB**

Neither fish nor fowl, 12 GB gives a little more slack than 8 GB, and in most machines, probably represents an existing 4 GB system with two 2 GB RAM sticks being upgraded with two 4 GB RAM sticks.

### **#6: 6 GB**

Trailing behind 12 GB, 6 GB is probably another situation where someone upgraded an existing under-powered system with some more memory.



**#7: 24 GB**

For most people, 24 GB will do the job almost as well as 32 GB. Those with existing 8 GB systems who added another 16 GB are likely responsible for 24 GB's popularity.

**#8: 20 GB**

Now we're definitely getting into the outliers—users of 20 GB of RAM are few and far between, but they're hanging in there.

**#9: 64 GB**

These are probably the power users who load their multi-gigabyte sound libraries into RAM and stream the data, or have industrial-strength computers that handle other intensive software gigs (like video editing) as well as running SONAR.

**#10: 10 GB**

It's an interesting coincidence that #6 was 6 GB and #10 was 10 GB, but it does indeed seem fitting that the highly unusual choice of 10 GB of RAM closed out the Top 10.

## Anatomy of a SONAR Project: In Search of the Lost (Harpsi) Chord

By Craig Anderton

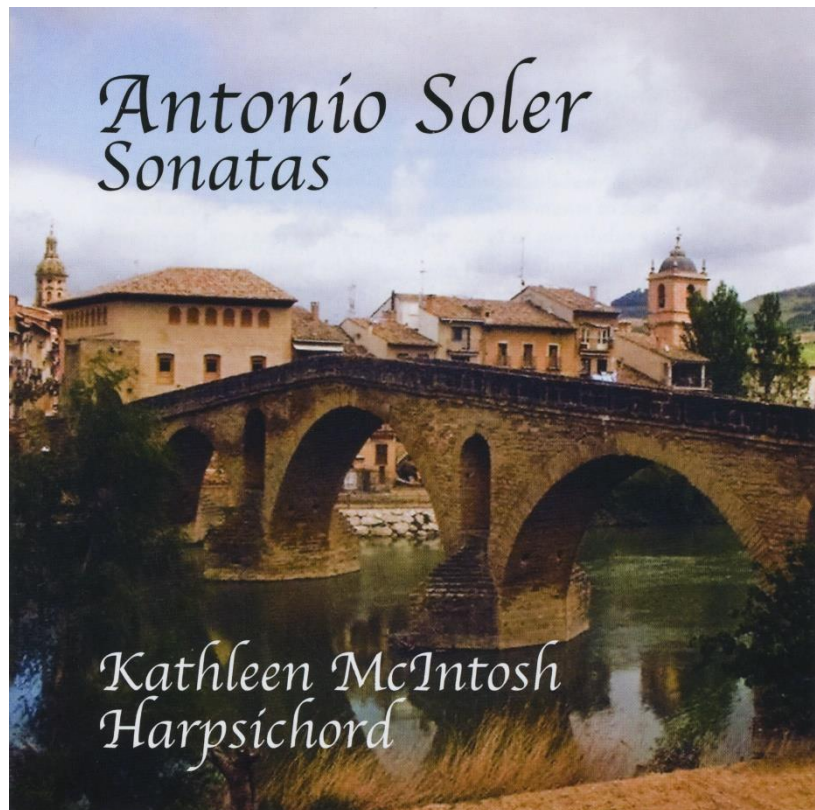
You've probably figured out that if this had just been a regular harpsichord recording session, it wouldn't have been interesting enough for the eZine, even though all the editing and mixing occurred in SONAR. But we'll be talking about a very different take on the "classical harpsichord CD," and a lot of what I learned applies to all kinds of music. Such as...

### IF YOU WANT TO LOOK GOOD, WORK WITH AN ANTI-DIVA

The harpsichordist being recorded, Kathleen McIntosh, has zero attitude, great technique, and is a total workhorse. She's a renowned veteran of recording and live performance, and has appeared as a soloist with the Solistas de La Habana in Havana, Chamber Orchestra Kremlin in Moscow, National Symphony Orchestra of Vietnam in Hanoi, Sinfonica de Santiago in Santiago de Cuba, New American Chamber Orchestra in Spain, Camerata de la Casa del Lago in Mexico City . . . and the list goes on.

Most importantly, she doesn't regard classical music as museum pieces for musical historians, but as vibrant music that's as relevant today as when it was written. When she plays Bach, it sounds like Bach had come over that afternoon and said "Hey Kathleen, check out this new concerto I wrote today, it's pretty cool." Fortunately she carried that attitude over to recording, and so she was open to experimentation to get the best possible sound.

For example, we started the sessions (at Maricam Studio in Santa Fe, NM) using some classic Telefunken mics and completed all the tracks. But then a stereo pair of Microtech Gefell M-930s (personally tuned by the venerable Jochem Kuhnast) became part of Maricam's mic locker, and when we checked them out, there was no question that the high end was better



suited to harpsichord. Kathleen was willing to re-record all her tracks—with not one word of complaint. These mics had the side benefit of sounding so “right” I needed EQ later on only to solve some specific problems related to the harpsichord itself.

## **PERFORMER VS. AUDIENCE PERSPECTIVE**

I prefer miking so that the final result sounds like you’re the performer playing the instrument, not someone sitting in the audience. This goes against the rule of “make a harpsichord sound like it does in the room” but hey, rules are made to be broken. Both Kathleen and Pete Sheehey, the producer, were willing to give it a try—so I did two different mikings. The first was the more traditional way to mic a harpsichord, with X-Y-configured microphones in the room, several feet away from the harpsichord. This helps minimize the noise of the mechanism, yet picks up most of the harpsichord’s truly weird soundfield. For the second miking attempt, I set up one M-930 close to the performer, pointing toward the higher strings. Due to the length of the harpsichord, I was able to set up the second M-930 toward the bass strings end of the instrument, yet have it far enough away from the “treble” M-930 that there were no phase issues when checking in mono.



*Miking the harpsichord with close miking.*

I played both without identifying the sound source, and asked Kathleen which she preferred. She chose the close-miked version, with the understanding that it could be made to sound

more “traditional” in the mix if necessary. The resulting sound was very present, recalling the sound of an FM synthesis plucked string algorithm: Metallic, bright, and defined. It wasn’t the kind of “tinkly” harpsichord sound you hear on a lot of recordings, but a substantial, big sound. Although you might think close-miking would accentuate the sound of the keyboard mechanism, the stronger signal from the strings themselves helped to compensate (but as discussed later, some DSP turned out to be important as well).

To prevent the harpsichord from sounding *too* synthetic, we set up two Dirk Brauner Phantom V room mics to provide a “softer” element. The room sound provided a perfect complement; Maricam was designed exclusively for recording classical music, so the room sound tends to be “warm” instead of “hard” due to having rosewood panels. The main mics went through Great River MP-2NV Mercenary Edition preamps, and the room mics through Millennia STT-1 preamps.

## TRACKING AND EDITING

Maricam’s Scott Irving and I split up the tracking duties. Due to Scott’s background with the Los Angeles Philharmonic (and a Masters in music from the Royal Conservatory in Madrid, Spain), he was comfortable tracking by himself although about half the time we worked on the tracking together. Maricam was a Mac-based studio, so he tracked with Digidesign’s Pro Tools HD3 at 96k Hz but when I was tracking, I used MOTU’s Digital Performer, again at 96 kHz. Ultimately, though, these DAWs were solely about capturing the sound as cleanly as possible, because I took the audio files back to my studio so I could edit and mix them in SONAR. Part of this was because of the workflow and having the dedicated V-Studio control surface, but another factor was SONAR’s 64-bit audio engine. Although I remain unconvinced that this matters for most music, with delicate, extremely dynamic acoustic recordings, the 64-bit engine does seem to make a difference.

## ARTIFACT PROBLEMS

As alluded to previously, harpsichords are noisy instruments, what with string releases and such. But the body of Kathleen’s harpsichord had a wicked resonance at around 50 Hz, and because of the close-miking, the main mics dutifully picked it up as a booming, distracting “bump.” Ultimately, I found that the only solution was to “master” each track individually prior to mixing; I used Har-Bal to zero in on these phantom artifacts, and cut them out. As this was mostly below the “real” range of the harpsichord, I could cut pretty drastically without affecting the tone. In a way, this process was like cutting out subsonics from other sources; it’s just that the harpsichord’s resonance was a little higher than I would have liked, which made the choice of cut frequencies crucial—the cutoffs were *extremely* steep and surgical.

In addition to reducing the resonances, there were also some other very low frequency artifacts due to undesired, low-frequency “thumps.” Adding a sharp, linear phase highpass filter from Waves (this was back when SONAR’s older Linear Phase EQ wasn’t really suitable for tracking) solved the problem and produced no undesirable side effects.

## EDITING

The DAW editing process was a bit unusual, as the main focus wasn’t fixing mistakes—Kathleen has prodigious, unerring technique, so she’d only do three or so takes. However, the first project we did together was based around pieces by Antonio Soler, an 18th century Spanish priest/musician whose pieces recall Domenico Scarlatti but are devilishly difficult and in many places, whimsical. Kathleen loves the pieces, and plays them with a lot of dynamics and feeling; as a result, although different takes could be technically identical, they would often have slightly different “feels” in some sections.

I found it almost impossible to choose which individual take was the “best,” so I asked Kathleen if she’d be willing to give up creative control of the editing, and let me just pick which parts I liked best from the various takes and put them together. She agreed, which resulted in the unusual situation of my often replacing a perfectly-played part with another perfectly-played part just because I liked some little millisecond timing difference, or some other element of the “feel.” Generally, these edits were broad strokes (e.g., replacing the first half of one take with the first half of a different take) in order to maintain a good “flow” to the pieces.



The process of doing this involved assembling a new version further down on the timeline, as shown in the above screen shot of the Bach project. I'd choose the desired section of a take, split it, then slide it over to where it needed to be in the new version. After all the pieces were assembled, then it was time to make sure that any transitions or crossfades were completely seamless.

I also encouraged Kathleen to "annotate" her performances by speaking into the mic between takes (e.g., "I really liked the second half on that one"). It was better than taking notes, because her comments were right there on the track. However, I didn't always agree with her assessments of her playing, so although I trust my artistic judgment I didn't know if Kathleen would agree. Therefore after editing, I would send her "performance checks" in MP3 format to make sure she was okay with my decisions. Aside from a few small tweaks, she was fine with the edits—which also emphasizes just how helpful it can be for an artist to work with someone who offers a fresh perspective. I then sent a CD with all the tweaked performances to Pete, who signed off on them as well.

Another interesting element was that Kathleen wondered about the possibility of using DAW editing techniques to reduce the level on a few of the release sounds. I suppose that would be heresy in some classical recordings, but she identified spots where the music was very soft, and thought the release sounds had a negative effect on the mood. With traditional room miking this probably wouldn't have been an issue, but the close-miking brought up the sounds of the release to a louder level than they appeared to be if you were just sitting in the room and listening. So I isolated the release sounds and brought them down 4-6dB, which paradoxically, made the harpsichord sound *more* like "the real thing" that you'd hear in the room because in a real-world listening situation, your ears wouldn't be right next to the keyboard.

## **ALL MIXED UP**

Using the four mics gave a lot of mixing options. Panning the "bass" mic to the 10 o'clock position and the "treble" mic to the 2 o'clock position gave a natural, psycho-acoustic sense of placement; you could almost "see" the harpsichord in front of you. The room mics were panned far left and far right—something I almost never do (I usually pull back a bit from the extremes). But in this case, I could bring up the room mic levels to where they added just a bit of a soft, "pillowy" component to the sound that contrasted well with the ultra-present main mics. As a result, the stereo image was satisfying without seeming exaggerated.

Kathleen wanted an intimate sound rather than a big concert hall effect; I suggested an ambience as if you were in a small chapel, with about 30 people in the room, and that struck her as the best approach. To get some of the hardness of stone walls into the sound, I used a Waves convolution reverb (this was before REmatrix Solo became part of SONAR) to add just a bit of ambience, but only to the room mics—not the main mics—and panned it to center. This



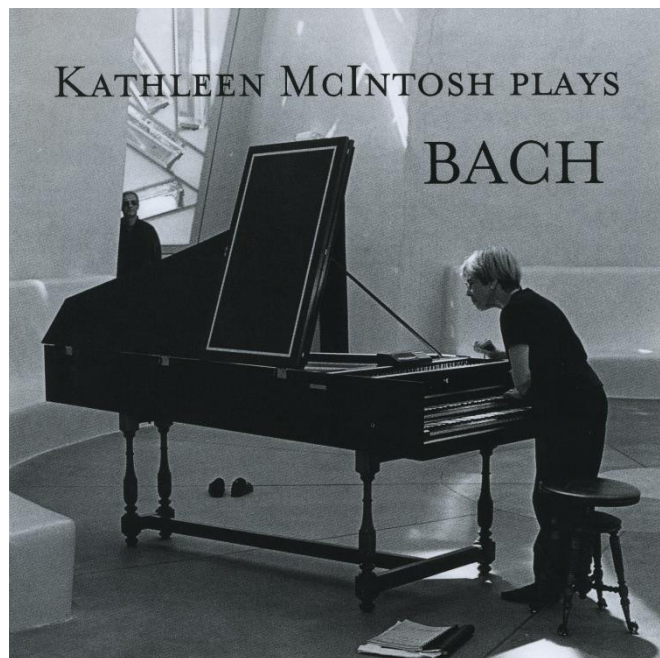
created an ideal soundstage: Harpsichord front and center sitting in a cushiony room sound, while a bit of a harder sound filled in the center “hole” by adding reflections from the “virtual walls” to give more depth.

Basically, I was doing rock miking techniques in a classical context, so I was a bit concerned that it might not sit well with Kathleen and Pete. So, I did two test mixes: One with a full-on, in-your-face, performer orientation, along with a more traditional classical mix with lots of room sound and a somewhat more genteel sound. I actually thought it was a very good mix in the classical style, and fully expected Kathleen and Pete to choose it. Yet they had absolutely no interest in the “traditional” approach; both vastly preferred the more present sound. Kathleen said it sounded just like what a harpsichord sounded like to her as she played, which I later found out was a sound she’d always wanted to achieve in her recordings but never had. Pete was even more emphatic: When I put on the “traditional” mix, he just said “no way!”

For our second project together of Bach pieces, we decided on a different approach for the mix that had a lot more room and was more traditional. The close-miking remained, however, and again the overall sound—despite being more traditional—had a more present and stronger vibe. The techniques described here were pretty much the same as what we used on the Bach album.

## MASTERING

With the individual tracks having already been “mastered,” and with the mix doing most of the heavy lifting, mastering was really a question of picking the right order for the 11 sonatas she chose, and doing a few EQ tweaks. In addition to the 50Hz peak mentioned earlier, there was another very strong resonance in the 200Hz range. Although this contributes much of her harpsichord’s “character,” it was emphasized a bit too much due to the close-miking. I again brought this down just a couple dB, retaining the character yet making sure it didn’t overshadow the rest of the sound.



The other tweak that surprised me because it worked so well was reducing everything above 15 kHz or so. We all wanted a sound that was inherently contradictory: Something brash and present, yet with a smooth, honeyed tone. After experimenting for a bit, I found that cutting off the really high frequencies provided exactly the sound we wanted. I thought about it for a bit, and realized why: The close-miking was picking up all the highs what would normally be lost in a

room, if you were sitting back some distance from the harpsichord and there were people soaking up the highs. While part of me chafed at the idea of deliberately cutting the highs, it gave the right sound.

### **MISSION ACCOMPLISHED**

The most important lesson I learned from this project was never to shy away from experimentation, even in supposedly tradition-bound fields. I could have done the album like a traditional harpsichord album, and given the level of her playing, it would have done just fine. But the close-miking and a “rock and roll” sensibility provided a unique element that not only gave the artist what she wanted, but also garnered extremely positive reviews. Yet none of this would have happened if Kathleen hadn’t been willing to try something new and different. No matter how good your gear or your technique, artistic success always comes down to the artist.

[Click here](#) to play selections from the album Antonio Soler Sonatas, and [click here](#) to listen to Kathleen McIntosh Plays Bach.

## Review: Audified MixChecker Plug-In

By Craig Anderton

Back in the days when big studios ruled the earth, it was common practice to complement your way-cool, expensive studio monitors with cheapo little speakers so you'd get an idea of what your music would sound like upon encountering the real-world sonic violence of AM radio, televisions, car audio systems (which didn't used to be as good as they are now), and bad consumer electronics. If the mix sounded okay after you'd checked it on the alternate speakers and when riding around in a car, you decided it was done.

Fast forward to today's world, where you have even less of an idea of how your music will be reproduced. It could be Beats headphones that kill the high frequencies, computer laptops that kill the low frequencies, those 26-cent disposable earbuds they pass out on airline flights that make listening to music painful, smart phones, car stereos, and even—really!—actual speakers in someone's living room (rumor has it that hardy bands of audiophiles still exist in isolated parts of the world).

But where we see a problem, Audified saw an opportunity and designed MixChecker, a VST2/VST3/AU/AAX plug-in that simulates 12 different types of playback devices. Note that MixChecker is not like [Focusrite's VRM box](#), whose goal is to emulate specific speakers and rooms. Instead, Audified measured multiple examples of each listening device, and took an average. This makes sense; for example, no two models of smart phone have exactly the same response, but they share particular characteristics.



The models include two speaker types, on-ear headphones, smartphone, tablet, laptop, car, television, “micro hi-fi” stereo system, radio, desktop speakers, and earbuds. These don't just represent an average; to my ears, they sound more like a worst-case scenario, which actually is what you want. If your mix can survive all these

different playback scenarios, it probably is a truly transportable mix, and the listener will at least hear an approximation of what you intended. (Or as someone pointed out to me when I said it was getting very difficult to master knowing that the music would sound really horrible on some systems, “Don’t worry, everyone else’s music will sound equally bad so no one will blame you.”)

## USING IT

MixChecker is super-easy to use. Insert it in your master bus, and then compensate for your particular monitoring system—choose whether you’re monitoring over 5-inch speakers, 8-inch speakers, or headphones. With high-quality, accurate monitoring systems, you can turn off compensation.

Second, click through the various buttons to hear what your mix will sound like in the real world (check out [a video I made](#) that demonstrates how these different options affect the sound). Again, it’s worth emphasizing that MixChecker doesn’t emulate a specific playback transducer, but instead creates an average response. So you may find, for example, that your headphones are way better than the emulated headphone sound because hey, you’re a SONAR user and you’ve hopefully invested in good headphones...but not all consumers are as educated in their choices. Ditto the earbuds; I’ve heard good earbuds that have a more accurate response than Beats, and earbuds that are so bad they sound defective even though they’re not. MixChecker won’t provide all those variations, but remember that the goal is to give a reality check for different playback devices.

## THE BACKSTORY

Audified posted an article, “[MixChecker: Behind the Scenes](#),” in their blog that describes the process of creating MixChecker. The effort Audified put into creating the simulations makes for interesting reading, and also explains why something that seems like it *should* be simple costs \$149.

Note that MixChecker uses iLok protection—but you don’t need the hardware dongle, just the License Manager software. (Personally, given the option these days I choose the hardware dongle because iLok 2 is way better than the original, and it makes life easy if I ever need to re-install an iLok-protected program.) Audified gives you two authorizations per purchase, so you can use MixChecker at the same time on two different computers—very considerate if you have a team working on a project, and want to do independent A/B comparisons.

I was sufficiently impressed by MixChecker that I told Cakewalk about it, and now it's being [carried in the Cakewalk store](#); furthermore, Audified offers a free [30-day trial](#) so you can determine whether this is something that would be a useful to you. In any event, I sure prefer it to the “old school” approach of yesteryear where you needed one of each hardware device, and then had to build a mechanical switcher to switch among them. It's a *lot* easier to insert MixChecker in the master bus, and click around—no soldering required, either.

## Surfboard



Surfing the boards in the SONAR forum can uncover a wealth of great tips, like these...

### [Best Way of Exporting Audio Tracks from SONAR to other DAWs and Stay in Sync](#)

From exporting stems to Broadcast WAV time-stamping to OMF, there are plenty of ways to transfer audio from SONAR to other DAWs.

### [Imported WAV Files from FL Studio Play 2x Faster](#)

The question about why this happens pops up frequently in the forums, so here's the definitive answer and the solution.

### [Bus Prochannel Compressors Switched on by Themselves](#)

Although some people think processes happening by themselves may be due to poltergeists, there's a logical explanation involving Quick Groups—and knowing how that works can not only prevent mysterious “problems,” but provide a shortcut to your workflow.

### [Can't Drag and Drop WAV or MP3 into Track View](#)

This is another question that appears regularly. It turns out the answer doesn't lie with SONAR, but with the right Windows settings.

### [Track Icon Trick](#)

Yes, you really can turn any picture into a track icon with a simple drag and drop—but this thread also explains the “right” way of accomplishing the same function.



## **SONAR 2016.07 Release eZine**

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