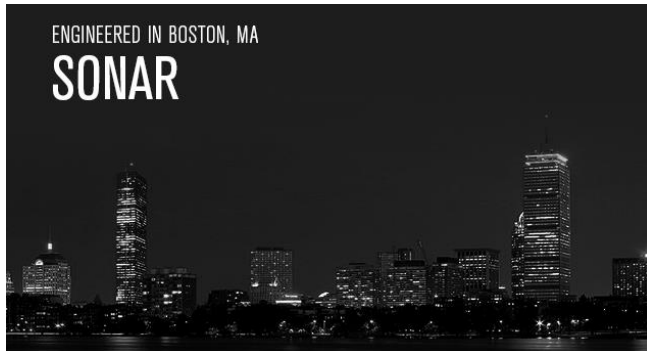


SONAR 2016.08 Update



SONAR 2016.08 Update

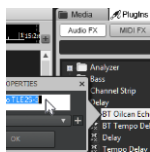


The big news for this update is plug-in Browser improvements. We've been fielding a lot of suggestions on how to improve the Plug-In Manager, but then we thought how much cooler it would be if we incorporated those kinds of changes into the plug-in Browser itself. So now there are new ways to sort, easy options for friendly names, re-organization, and more—all without leaving the Browser. Because plug-

ins are such an important part of today's productions, we're sure you'll appreciate the enhanced plug-in organization.

This update also brings Phase 1 of Comping and Lane Management improvements, which are mostly about streamlining the user interface, reducing clutter, and making the process more user friendly. We're not stopping here, though...stay tuned for more developments.

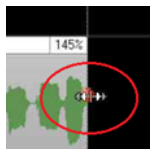
In other news, you can now add an effect to multiple tracks via Quick Grouping. Also as you've probably noticed, it looks like we've created a monster with the Theme Editor—so we're putting the spotlight on some of the creative themes the community is generating, as well Theme Editor language localization. Of course, there's our usual relentless quest to stamp out bugs, and popular eZine features like Surfboard, the latest Top 10 Chart (frankly, we were shocked at what it told us), and more. So settle back, boot up, have fun, and...see you next month. – *The Cakewalk Team*



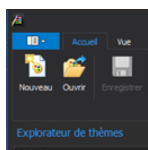
Plug-In Browser Enhancements: Now you can sort, move, create, copy, and organize plug-ins with much greater flexibility. Give plug-ins friendly names easily, mix VST2 and VST3 plug-ins along with DirectX, and much more...as well as still use the Plug-In Manager for custom layouts.



Comping and Lane Enhancements (Phase 1): From having more freedom to set Lane height, to having new Takes stack on top of or below other Takes, to eliminating visual clutter left over from yesteryear's operating systems, to smoother workflow, Phase 1 adds quite a few improvements to comping.



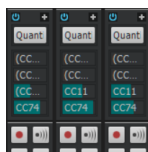
User Interface Improvements: While working on the comping improvements, we saw some ways to carry over those improvements to the program as a whole. These enhancements make crossfades easier to see even when zoomed out, and uses the standard stretch cursor when stretching Clips and Takes.



SONAR Theme Editor Localization: We knew there were lots of requests for a way to edit themes, but we didn't realize just how popular this feature would be. So the Theme Editor continues to evolve, and now version 1.1.0.22 follows whatever language is selected in the Windows OS.



Themes from the SONAR Community: The SONAR community never ceases to amaze us with the constant flow of great ideas and suggestions—it's because of you that many of these features exist. And now, you've been creating some very cool—and downloadable—themes. We suspect more will be forthcoming...



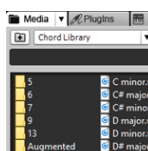
Quick Group Insert FX: Here's another feature that many users have wanted: the ability to insert the same effect into multiple selected tracks, simultaneously. So, this update expands Quick Grouping to allow opening the same MIDI or Audio effect in multiple tracks at once.



Fixes and Enhancements: Some long-standing bugs were terminated with extreme prejudice this month, including VST3 plug-ins not showing up properly in custom menus, MIDI clips splitting if you used nudge, Track Manager not remembering some settings when switching from Track to Console view, and more.



Charting Now in SONAR | The Top 10 Audio Outputs: So which interface outputs log the most session time? If you were thinking some cool USB or FireWire interface would be #1, well, the answer is not what you might expect...as you'll find out when you look over this month's Top 10 chart.



Anatomy of a SONAR Project | Creating a Chord Library: Sometimes you need to kick start the songwriting process, find the right chord for a chord progression, or crash through a creative roadblock. So, find out how to make a Chord Library—a collection of chords you can drag-and-drop from the Media Browser.



Review | Universal Audio Apollo Twin USB Audio Interface: USB 2.0 not fast enough? Tired of waiting for Thunderbolt? USB 3.0 can deliver lower latency and better performance, but Universal Audio's take on the audio interface folds in DSP-based effects too.



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 2016.08 Update

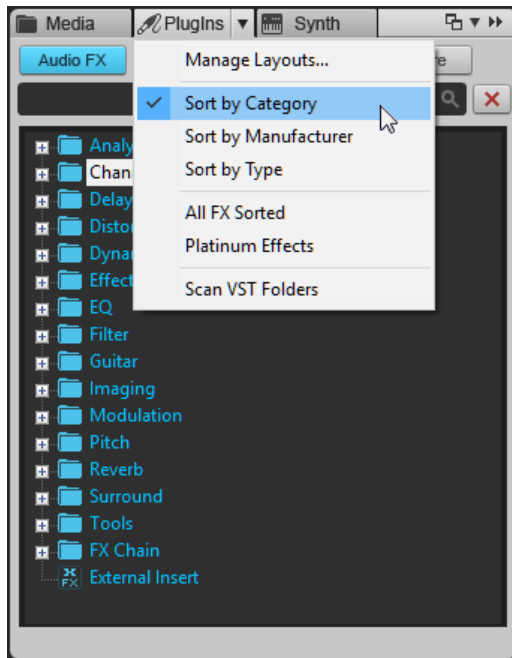
Open the **Cakewalk Command Center**. If you don't have the latest version (CakewalkCommandCenterSetup_1.1.6.2.exe), please download it from the Cakewalk Command Center [home page](#).

To download the **SONAR 2016.08** core update, download from the core SONAR Artist, Professional, or Platinum category. **Platinum** members should also download the latest version of the **Theme Editor**, which is a separate program and appears under Connected Products.

Plug-in Browser Enhancements

Artist, Professional, Platinum

You could always create custom plug-in layouts in SONAR via the Plug-In Manager utility, but now you can sort/organize plug-ins, assign plug-ins to categories, and create new categories within the Browser itself. This organizational overhaul streamlines workflow in many ways.



There are three options to sort plug-ins—by Category, Type, or Manufacturer—from the Browser's PlugIns drop-down menu.

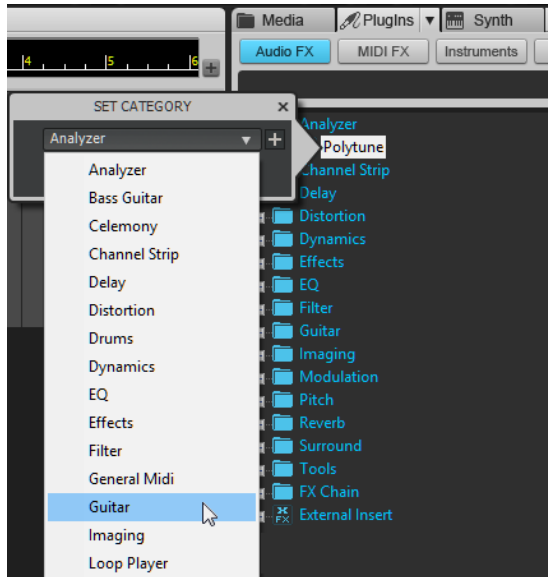
Sort by Manufacturer sorts plug-ins alphabetically by manufacturer name.

Sort by Type sorts plug-ins by their native format (VST3, VST2, and DirectX) and within each format folder, sorts alphabetically by manufacturer.

Sort by Category, the default layout, organizes plug-ins into category subfolders such as EQ, Dynamics, Reverb, and the like. If a plug-in has more than one category, it will be listed in each category subfolder. For example, a plug-in could be in both a "Reverb" and "Favorites" category.

Furthermore, you can now:

- Move plug-ins to any of the default categories
- Copy plug-ins to any of the default categories
- Create your own custom categories, without using the Plug-In Manager
- Combine VST3, VST2, and DirectX plug-ins in the same category
- Take advantage of automatic categorization for many popular VST2 plug-ins from companies like UAD, iZotope, SoundToys, and Native Instruments
- Customize friendly plug-in names via the Browser



MOVE A PLUG-IN TO A CATEGORY

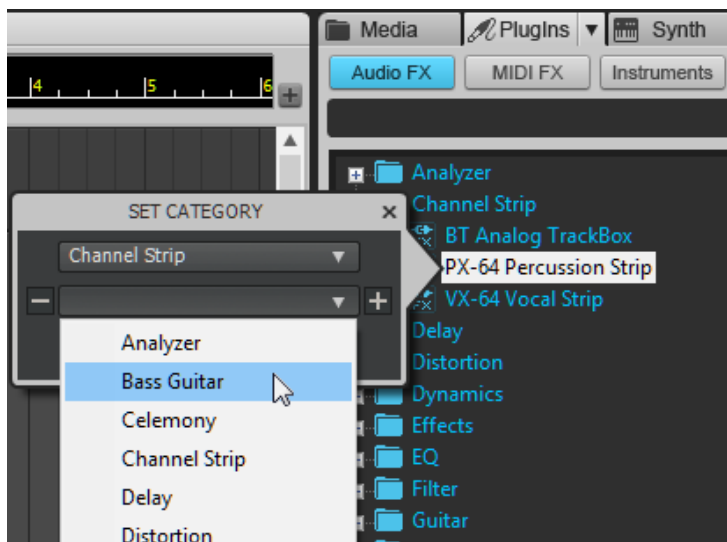
1. Choose “Sort by Category” from the Browser’s PlugIns drop-down menu.
2. If necessary, open the folder needed to reveal a plug-in.
3. Right-click on the plug-in and choose the category from the Set Category’s drop-down menu.

For example, TC’s Polytune tuner was originally assigned to the “Analyzer” category. You might think it’s more appropriate in the Guitar category, because that’s when you use it. The screen shot shows how you would move Polytune to the Guitar category after right-clicking on the Polytune plug-in.

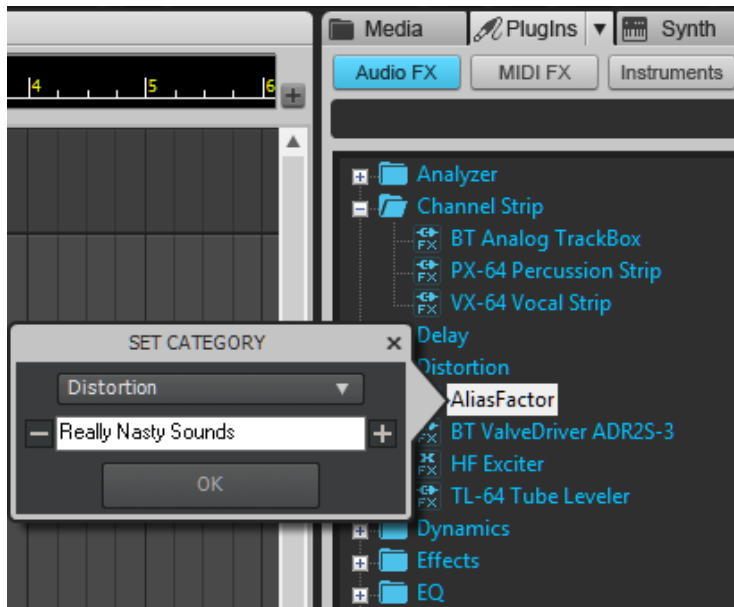
Note: Moving all plug-ins out of a Category removes the associated folder automatically.

COPY A PLUG-IN TO A DIFFERENT CATEGORY

You may want a plug-in in more than one category. For example, although the PX-64 drum processor is in the Channel Strip category, it’s also excellent with bass so you might like to have it in the Bass category as well...or copy it to a “Favorites” category.



1. Choose “Sort by Category” from the Browser’s PlugIns drop-down menu.
2. If necessary, open the folder needed to reveal a plug-in.
3. Right-click on the plug-in and click on the + sign to the right of the current Category. This opens up a new field.
4. Choose the category from the Set Category’s drop-down menu, then click OK.

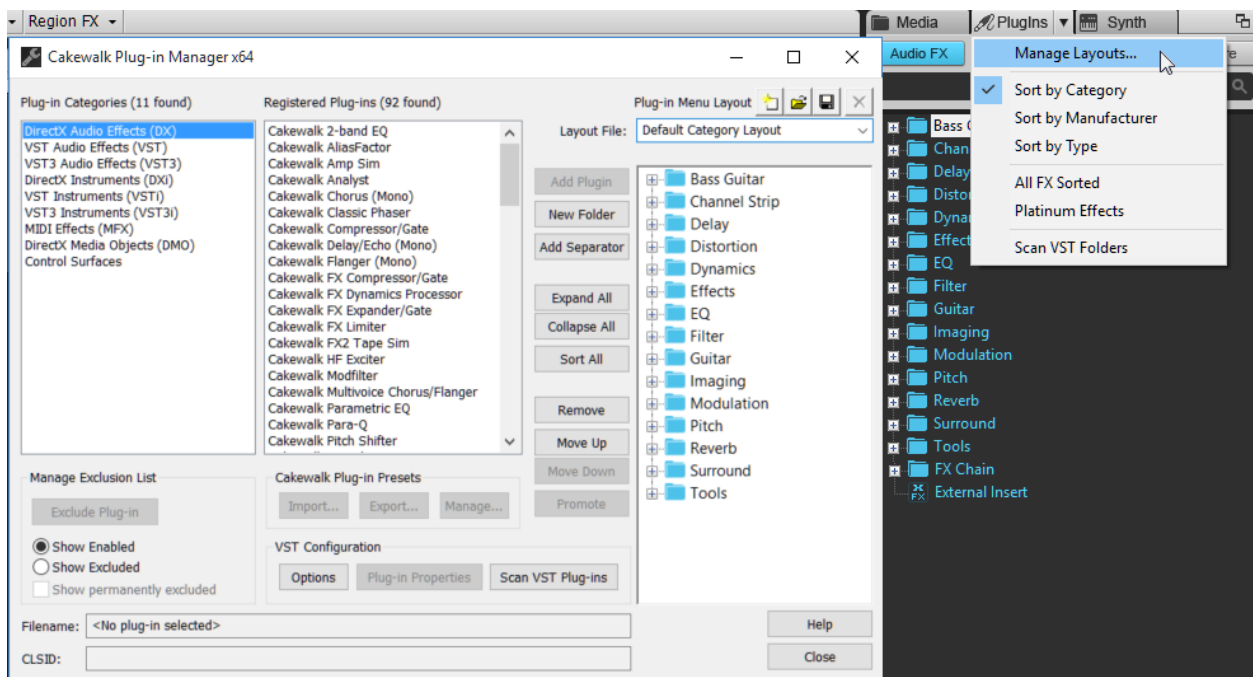


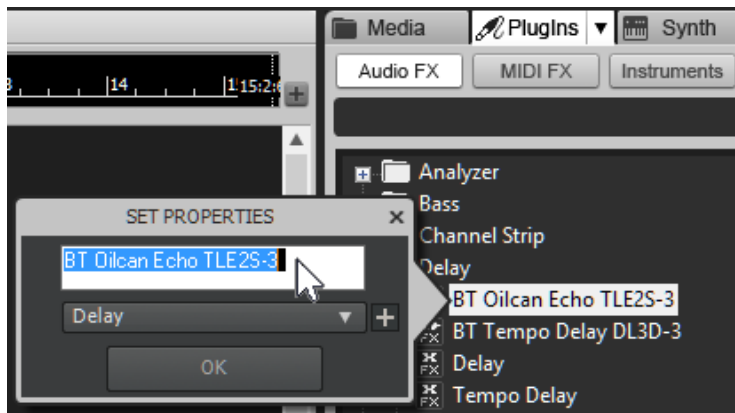
CREATE A NEW CATEGORY

1. Choose “Sort by Category” from the Browser’s PlugIns drop-down menu.
2. If necessary, open the folder needed to reveal a plug-in.
3. Right-click on the plug-in and click on the + sign to the right of the current Category. This opens up a new field.
4. Click in the category field, type in a new name, and then click OK.

SAVE THE DEFAULT CATEGORY SETUP

From the Browser’s PlugIns drop-down menu, choose Manage Layouts. The Plug-In Manager will be populated with the current configuration. Enter a name for the layout file, and then click the Save button (floppy disk icon).





GIVE A PLUG-IN A “FRIENDLY NAME”

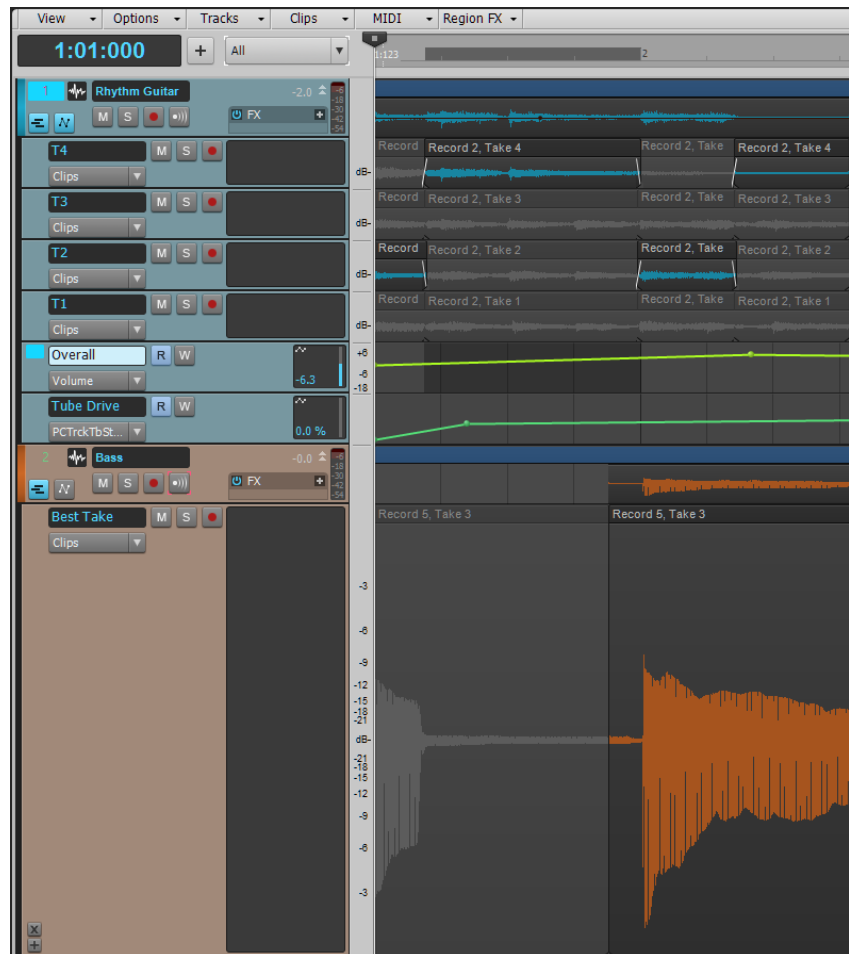
1. Choose “Sort by Category” from the Browser’s Plugins drop-down menu.
2. If necessary, open the folder needed to reveal a plug-in.
3. Right-click on the plug-in, click in the name field, and type in a new name.
4. Click OK.

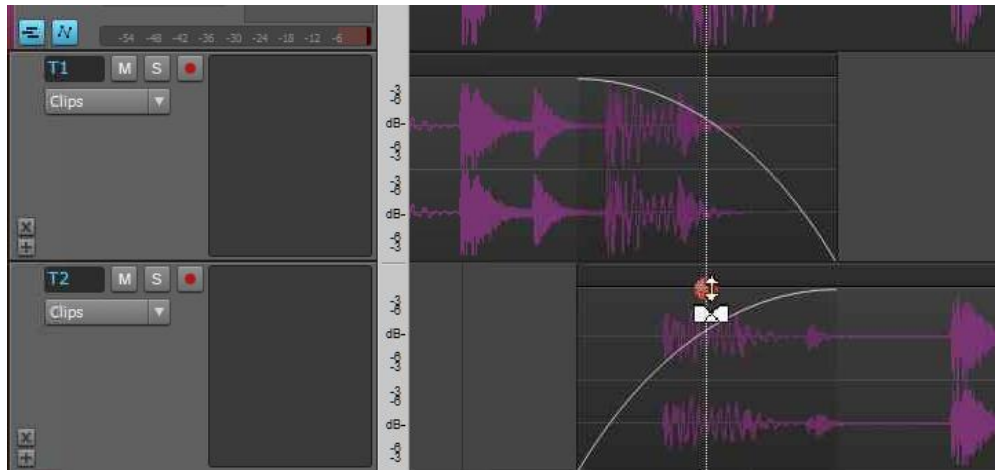
Comping and Lane Enhancements (Phase 1)

Artist, Professional, Platinum

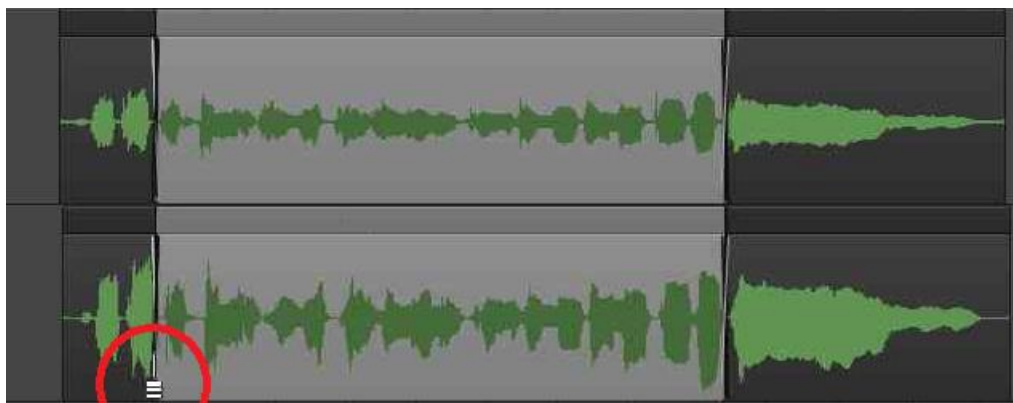
This update provides several improvements to the editing tools, and visual feedback for comping. Also, some of the user interface “clutter” has been removed to streamline the visual look and overall workflow.

- Automation and Take Lane heights can now be as short as tracks, with a maximum height up to double what it was previously.
- Lanes with a highlighted name background are the “Active” Lane. Not only has cut and paste been improved, but there’s better visual feedback—a pasted clip or automation selection “lands” at the Now time in the Active Lane.
- Automation Lanes have a name field where you can enter custom names up to 128 characters long.
- Splits no longer go vertically across the entire clip, which improves visual feedback of promoted clips. Instead, there’s a small triangle at the bottom of Clips where the split points occur.
- You can choose in *Preferences > Project > Record* whether new Takes are placed at the top of a stack of Takes (check “New Takes on Top”) or at the bottom (uncheck “New Takes on Top”).





- To adjust crossfade durations, hold down Ctrl, hover the mouse over a Take Lane split until the cursor turns into the Crossfade icon with up/down arrows, then click+drag vertically (up to increase crossfade time, down to decrease).



- There's a new cursor for Comping.

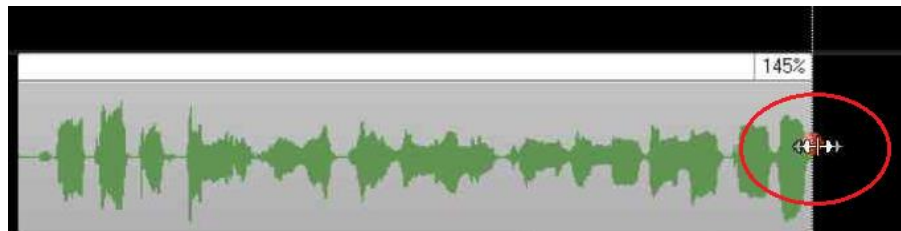
User Interface Improvements

Artist, Professional, Platinum

While working on the Comping and Take Lane management, we decided to clean up some aspects of the user interface in general. These apply whether you're using comping, or working in the Track View with standard tracks.

NEW TIME-STRETCHING PROTOCOL

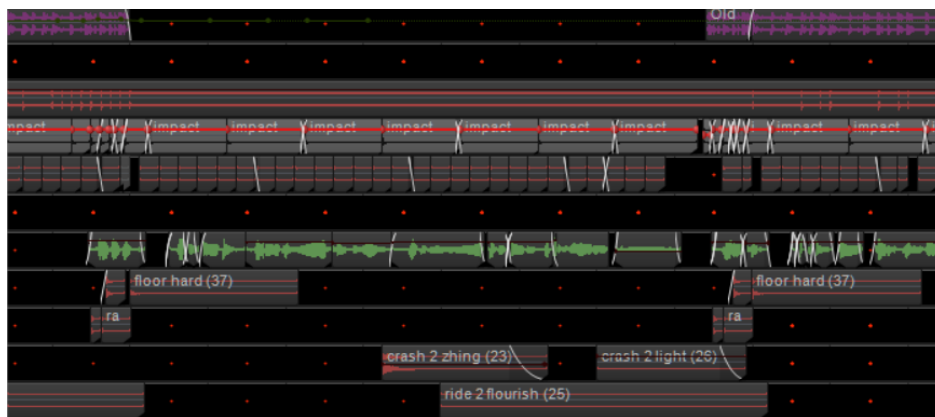
Previous versions used the same cursor to slip-edit and stretch, which could be confusing—especially because there already was a dedicated stretching cursor (formerly, a yellow line added to the clip edge indicated that stretching was occurring). Now, the same stretch cursor appears for all stretching functions.



To time-stretch a Clip or Take, you now need to hold *both* Ctrl+Shift instead of only Ctrl when click+dragging on a Clip or Take edge to stretch.

BETTER CROSSFADING VISIBILITY

Crossfading is an important part of comping, so now the automatic fades on clips are much easier to see, even when zoomed out relatively far. However this improvement also helps when looking at tracks, particularly when assembling and crossfading loop-based material.

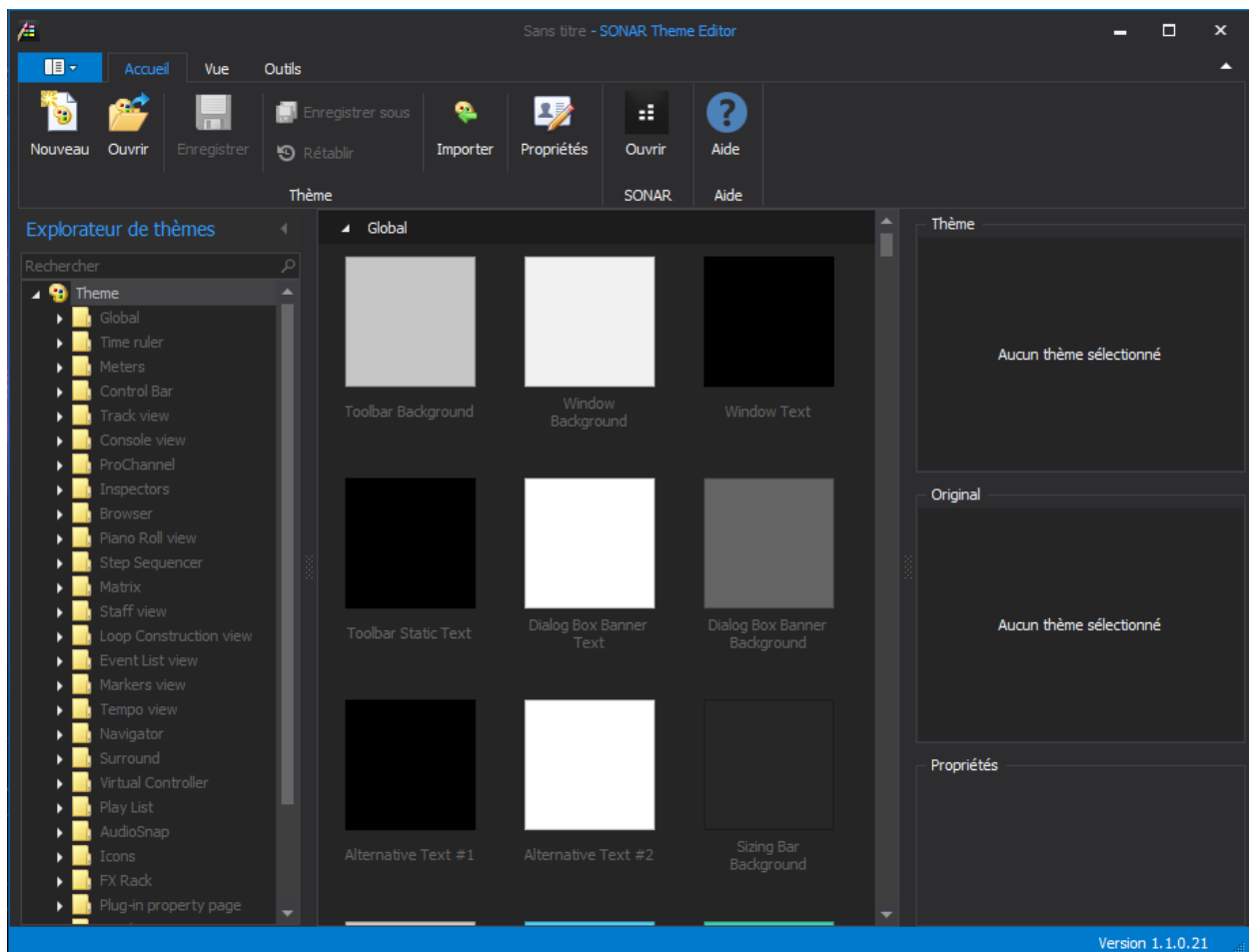


SONAR Theme Editor Localization

Platinum

The Theme Editor continues to evolve, and now version 1.1.0.22 follows whatever language is selected in the Windows OS. Please note that localization does not necessarily follow SONAR's selected language (Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, or Spanish), nor does it follow the language preference specified in the Cakewalk Command Center.

Okay...we're ready for those cool international themes!



Themes from the SONAR Community

Artist, Professional, Platinum

Once the Theme Editor appeared, we expected that the community would start creating and exchanging themes—and there are *plenty* of choices. For descriptions and comments visit the [SONAR Resources and Utilities](#) thread in the [Software](#) forum. Here's just one example of a new theme—a “hybrid” theme that combines elements of both Mercury and Tungsten.



Quick Group Insert FX

Artist, Professional, Platinum

Ever wanted to insert the same effect simultaneously in multiple tracks? Now you can, thanks to this addition to Quick Grouping. Here's how:

1. Select the tracks where you want to insert the effect.
2. Hold the Ctrl key.
3. Right-click in the FX bin for any selected track, and then choose the effect.
4. Release the mouse button and the Ctrl key.



Done! If you make a mistake, hit Ctrl+Z to undo adding all the effects.

Note that this works for MIDI as well as audio tracks. In the screen shot, drum sounds recorded in real time to individual tracks now have the Quantize MIDI plug-in inserted so they can all be quantized non-destructively during playback.

Fixes and Enhancements

Fixed SONAR issues where:

- VST3 plugins weren't listed in *Insert Effect > Audio Effects* with custom layouts
- Process Audio commands ran slowly on multiple split clips
- Track View snap settings didn't work with all tools
- Nudging MIDI notes inside the inline PRV could cause clips to split and notes to disappear
- SONAR could crash under some conditions when adding an envelope
- Stop At Project End could cause unexpected playback behavior in new projects with loop points
- Double-clicking on drum-mapped clips didn't open them in the Piano Roll view when Click Sets Now was turned off
- Ctrl+Alt+Scroll Wheel in the PRV Timeline would zoom in and out at non-linear and opposing rates
- Mouse movement over the tracks pane could cause dropouts when using TH3
- Track folders didn't open/close properly after initially switching screensets
- Invoking the Replace Synth function could cause SONAR to hang
- Track View wouldn't scroll when moving a clip with Shift held down, or copying a clip with Shift+Ctrl held down
- The Track Manager "Keep Track / Console Visibility In Sync" function could fail
- Drawing notes in Lanes could display temporarily in another Lane
- Adjusting the background color of multiple clips could change the foreground color unexpectedly

Charting Now in SONAR: The Top 10 Audio Outputs



You can't run SONAR without an audio interface (well actually you can...but why would you?), and we thought it would be interesting to find out what the community uses. USB? FireWire? Sound cards? We asked Cakewalk Analytics to tell us, and here are the results. Note the rankings are based on how many *sessions* each of the following was used as the audio output—not the total number of interfaces, or popularity of particular units.

#1: ASIO4ALL

ASIO4ALL was used for *far* more sessions than any other output option. Maybe it's because a lot of people are using laptops, or maybe it's because they don't have a proper interface, but suffice it to say no one expected that ASIO4ALL would hit #1.

#2: Realtek High Definition Speakers

Yes, this option is #2 and begs the same questions as above. Maybe this is a laptop world.

#3: Focusrite USB 2.0 Audio Driver

When it comes to actual audio interfaces, Focusrite rules with more "output share" than any other audio interface. But nipping on its heels, you'll find....

#4: Roland Octa-Series Interfaces

These hardy perennials continue to be the interface of choice for quite a few SONARians.

#5: RME Fireface USB

Whether analog, SDPIF, or ADAT outputs, the FireFace is a workhorse—in fact Fireface fans are the most prolific users of the ADAT outputs. (However note that overall, the USB flavor predominates: Cakewalk Analytics confirm that FireWire is definitely in its twilight years, at least for SONAR users.)

#6: MOTU

MOTU's line of interfaces holds a solid position in the middle of the pack, particularly in terms of audio outputs although there are quite a few people using S/PDIF outputs as well.

#7: Native Instruments Komplete Audio 6

As a relative newcomer to the audio interface world, Native Instruments has broken into the Top 10 with the Komplete Audio 6.

#8: PreSonus AudioBox

Although this doesn't have anywhere the number of ADAT outputs represented as the Fireface, it comes in second but also, a lot of folks use the analog and S/PDIF outputs.

#9: TASCAM US-Series

Like Cakewalk, TASCAM is a Gibson Brand—so we're happy to see their interfaces breaking into the Top 10.

#10: "Others"

As you might expect, there are a zillion interfaces in use so rather than come up with a definitive #10, here are other interface outputs that get used a lot on sessions: Universal Audio Apollo, various E-Mu ASIO interfaces, Steinberg UR44, M-Audio Delta, VS-type Roland interfaces, PreSonus FireStudio, RME Hammerfall, and more. There are even some diehard Creamware SCOPE users in there, as well as a whole lot of interfaces we've never even heard of that were used on a few sessions.

So what conclusions can we draw? USB is way ahead of FireWire, Focusrite is really popular, and the number of people using ASIO4ALL and Realtek sound chips is...surprising, to say the least. If you're in that category and using a desktop machine, consider using an audio interface with dedicated ASIO drivers. Although ASIO4ALL is clever, it works by trying to fool programs into thinking they're using ASIO and not the Windows sound drivers. Some users report no problems at all with ASIO4ALL, while others report that uninstalling it solved many vexing problems, and/or allowed true ASIO interfaces to work much more efficiently if both driver types were installed on the same machine.

Would the number of "I have a problem with SONAR" posts in the forum go down dramatically if everyone stopped using ASIO4ALL? Unfortunately, Cakewalk Analytics can't tell us that...but it wouldn't surprise us.

Anatomy of a SONAR Project: Creating a Chord Library

By Craig Anderton

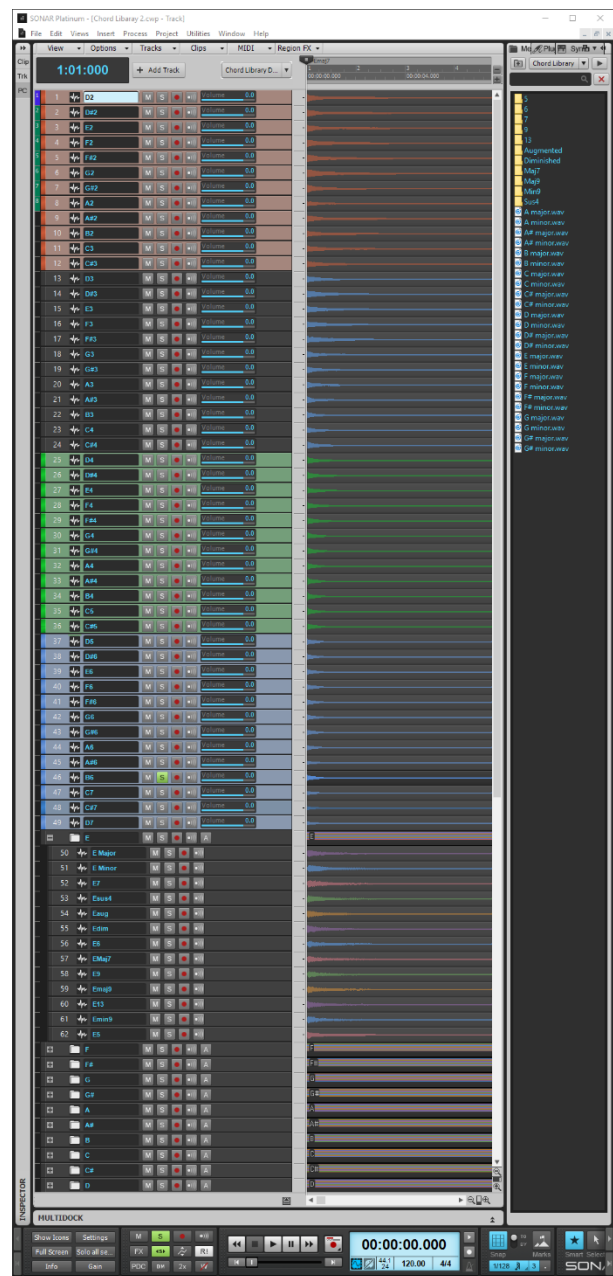
When I was learning guitar, I had books with diagrams of every chord type possible. Not only did it teach me chords, but whenever I hit a creative block, I'd experiment with playing different chords to get out of "chord progression ruts."

I wanted to have a similar creative tool for SONAR, but take it to the next level and integrate a "virtual chord library" into the songwriting process. The object was to have a folder in SONAR's Media Browser with all possible chords, so I could simply click on chords to test out different progressions (to do this, in the Browser's Media drop-down menu check "Auto-Preview," then uncheck "Preview at Host Tempo" and "Loop Preview"). If I liked a particular progression, I could then drag the chords into Take Lanes and flesh out an arrangement. To make the Chord Library more flexible, I also created four instruments that map chords to keyboards (e.g., the middle octave is major chords, the octave below minor chords, etc.) so I could play chord progressions directly from a keyboard.

The virtual Chord Library actually turned out to be far more useful than I had expected; three songs on my upcoming album were the direct result of using the Chord Library to come up with chord progressions I wouldn't have thought of otherwise. Furthermore, whenever I demo the Chord Library at workshops, people want to know where they can get it. You can't, so this article shows how to create your own.

CREATING THE CHORDS

As shown in the screen shot, the "development system" for the Chord Library was a SONAR project that sampled every guitar note up to A 440 from a Les Paul Gold Top from the Gibson Custom Shop, using a consistent picking technique to give a consistent sound (as well as normalizing to the same peak level). Then I could create any chord I wanted, in any voicing, by soloing individual notes and bouncing the chord notes to a file. These ended



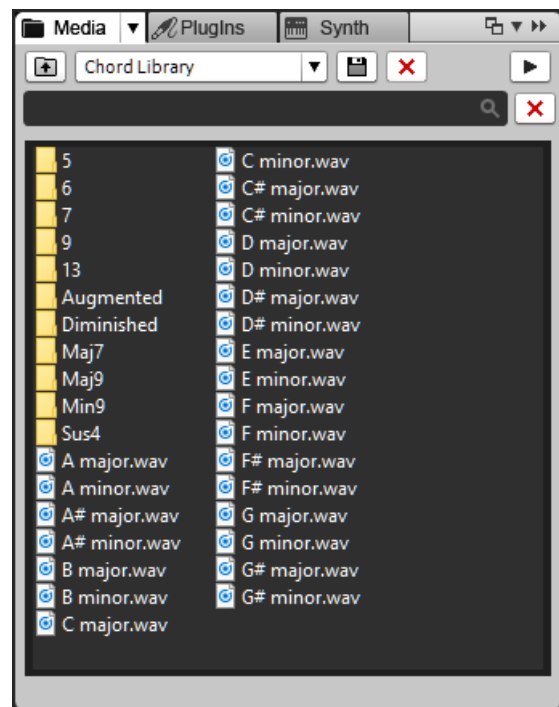
up in folders for particular keys. However before bouncing, I'd spread the timing of the notes a bit, with higher strings hitting slightly later to emulate the sound of a quick strum. This made the chords sound much more realistic.

While this may seem like overkill, during my first attempts I soon found out that just playing chords and recording them didn't cut it. Different levels, picking, and tones were distractions; consistency turned out to be important. Furthermore, I wanted to be able to create unlimited chord voicings...you never know when you're going to need a 13th add 9+7, right? This approach can create any voicing, any time.

ORGANIZATION

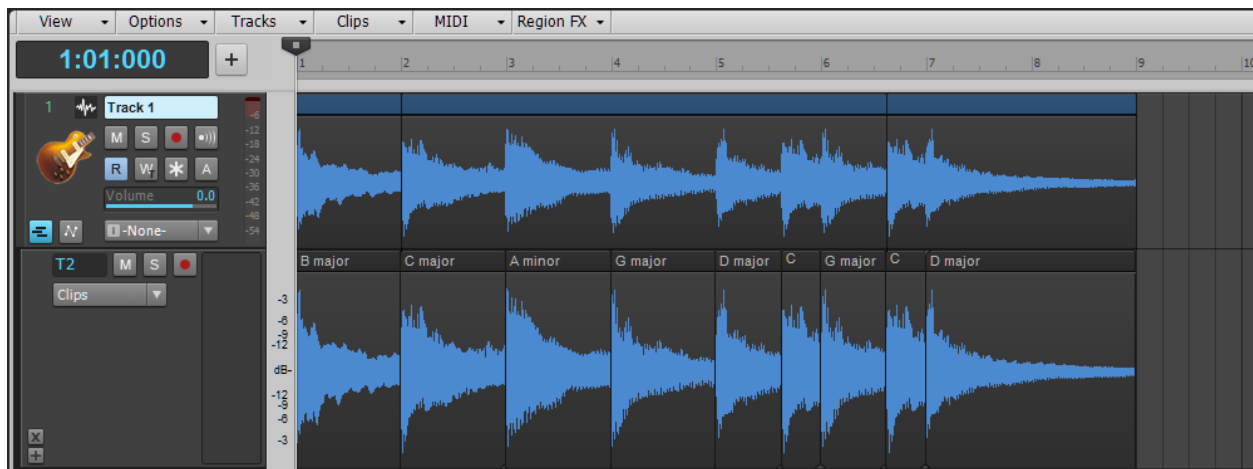
I wanted to start with 13 chord voicings: Major, minor, 5, 6, 7, 9, 13, Maj7, Maj9, Min9, Sus4, Augmented, and Diminished. That meant creating 156 chords, which surprisingly, wasn't as time-consuming as I anticipated because of being able to drag the bounced chords directly into the Browser. However, having all 156 chords visible simultaneously in the Browser was a visual overload, so I made the major and minor chords available directly from the Chord Library folder (which I added to the Browser's Content Location drop-down menu), and placed the less-used voicings in folders. That made it easy to craft a song's basic chord progression, then use the "color" chords as substitutions.

By the way if you don't know how to add a custom content location to the Browser, it's easy: Navigate in the Browser to the desired content folder, then click on the floppy disk icon.



USING IT

The main way I use this is by dragging chords in from the Browser to a Take Lane—not a Track. This is because the chords have a natural decay that's probably longer than the length you'll want for the chord, so when you bring in the next chord and overlap the end of the previous chord in a Take Lane, the "tail" of the previous chord will end where the new chord begins. If you did this in a Track, the overlap would either crossfade if *Options > Auto-Crossfade* was enabled, or the two overlapping sections would play simultaneously.



Another advantage of arranging chords linearly in a Take Lane is that when you reach the end of the progression and don't know which chord should follow next, just click on chords in the Browser until you find one that fits.

However, note that changing tempo after creating the progression isn't advisable as there are individual chords. If you slow down, there will be gaps between chords and if you speed up, overlaps will play at the same time. Assuming the chord progression is as desired and you just want to change the tempo, there's a simple solution: Bounce all the chords together to create a single Clip, and then either use the time stretch function, or convert the Clip to a Groove Clip to conform to the new tempo.



THE INSTRUMENTS

For more spontaneous experimentation, the Chord Library Instruments do the job. I created four instruments for Dimension Pro (which I'm going to re-do for Rapture Pro/Session) that use synth processing to change the basic guitar chord sounds. *Pads* cuts off the attack and gives a sustained sound, *Synth 1* and *Synth 2* are two different synth-type sounds, while *Standard* is simply the sound of the chords. As alluded to earlier, the chords

are mapped per-octave; on a four-octave keyboard there's one octave of major chords, one of minor chords, one of 7th chords, and another with just tonic+5th (the "power chord" voicing).

AND FINALLY, A PLEASANT SURPRISE

With one song I laid out the entire progression using the Chord Library, and fully intended to replace the chords with a “real” guitar part. However as the song developed, the Chord Library chords did what was needed. In fact, the consistent sound worked very well. So I created a “clean” track for the chorus with the Blue Tubes Analog Channel and a Sonitus Delay, a “dirty” track for the verse with the CA-X Hard Rock amp and a Sonitus Delay, and moved the Chord Library clips to the appropriate tracks. Although I did overdub a J-45 acoustic guitar at the end, the Chord Library parts did the heavy lifting—so I guess they do have more uses than just songwriting.

Review: Universal Audio Apollo Twin USB Audio Interface

By Craig Anderton

When Apple and Intel introduced Thunderbolt, it seemed like audio latency issues would be over. Everything would be lickety-split fast, our older stuff would still run fine with the help of some adapters, and we'd all live happily ever after in a world where you *heard* a note when you *played* a note.

Well, Thunderbolt hasn't gotten traction with Windows. I won't repeat the conspiracy theories (which are probably true!) from various developers, but suffice it to say even if your Windows computer does have Thunderbolt, what you want to run on it may not have drivers. Of course, this is a great source of merriment for the Mac fans (*"Ha ha! Windows can't do Thunderbolt! Suckers!!"*) but they don't know the dirty little secret:

Windows users can *already* attain Thunderbolt speeds, and have for years.

This is because several Windows audio interfaces are based around PCI cards. Thunderbolt essentially takes the PCI bus and brings it outside the computer, so if you have something like a Lynx or MOTU PCI interface card, you already have the potential to run at Thunderbolt speeds.

Unfortunately, though, that's not always an ideal situation. Laptops rarely include card slots any more, and computers have ever-fewer PCI slots. Also, you can't outfit a PCI card with the kind of I/O an audio interface needs, which leads to breakout cables and the like. Fortunately, we have an alternative that's a lot more convenient: USB 3.0.



We already covered TASCAM's US-20x20 interface for USB 3.0, and I was very impressed by its performance for a variety of reason, not just the extra speed. Although more manufacturers are getting into USB 3.0, now we have a different twist on the USB 3.0 theme, courtesy of Universal Audio.

I've been aware of, and using, Universal Audio's plug-ins since the days of their first PCI card. Simply stated, this is a high-end company that does great work: their analog plug-ins truly sound analog. Furthermore, back in the days when native systems could barely run a reverb without choking, UA put their plug-ins on hardware DSP so the DSP did the heavy lifting, not your CPU. What's more, you could "red-line" the DSP because it wouldn't get asked by your computer to do anything else. UA has also had great success with their Apollo interfaces, which feature refined sound quality and low latency.

However, they realized that with Thunderbolt dragging its feet with Windows, if they wanted to make something relevant for Windows they needed a different solution—which brings us to Apollo Twin USB, a USB 3.0 interface dedicated exclusively to Windows-based systems.

YES, IT'S AN INTERFACE, BUT...

Technically speaking, Apollo Twin USB is a 2 x 6 USB 3.0 interface. And technically speaking, a Ferrari is a car but you wouldn't put it in the same category as a Ford Focus (then again, nor would you put it in the same price range).

Apollo Twin USB might give you sticker shock (it "costs" for around \$900) until you look deeper. First, the 2 x 6 designation isn't the whole story, because there are also 8 channels of ADAT optical input—ideal for adding, for example, eight more mic pres (although note this reduces to 4 channels at 96 kHz, and 2 channels at 192 kHz). There's also onboard DSP for running UA's Powered Plug-Ins, which offer several advantages we'll get to shortly.



The two mic preamps are excellent, but I need to address those people who say they feel UA's preamps lack "color" or "personality"—I feel that's missing the point, because UA makes plug-ins like channel strip emulations that model very subtle nuances of different pieces of gear. The preamps *have* to be neutral to avoid hiding those nuances. Think of it this way: If you're going

to paint an oil painting, you want to start with a stark white canvas, otherwise the colors won't translate correctly.

THE "SECRET SAUCE"

What makes Apollo Twin USB way different from standard interfaces is that the DSP-based processing allows recording or monitoring through effects with, for all practical purposes, zero latency. But it's actually more versatile than you might think, because UA's plug-ins can work in SONAR's effects rack like standard plug-ins, as well as in real time using Apollo's DSP; and there's a

sophisticated Console applet that allows for various routing options.

So consider this scenario...you're a guitarist. You can place a DSP-based amp sim at the input, hear it with zero latency, and record the processed sound. Ah, but you

say you need to record a dry track in case you change your mind. Okay, then monitor through the amp sim, and record dry. Then when it's time to mix down, insert the amp sim as you would any other plug-in. Throughout this entire process, you've been playing guitar and hearing the amp sim sound with no latency.

Another "secret sauce" is what UA calls "Unison Mode." While that might conjure up images of 16 sawtooth waveforms playing simultaneously to produce the Bass Sound of the Gods, it actually has nothing to do with synthesis. Rather, the Apollo Twin USB preamps are digitally controlled, and can mimic the characteristics of hardware analog inputs (not through digital modeling, but by altering the analog circuitry). An obvious example is changing the input impedance to match a particular guitar amp.

The interface comes with a reasonable selection of UA's Powered Plug-Ins: UA 610-B Tube Preamp and EQ, the Rat-like Raw distortion plug-in, Softube Amp Room Half-Stack, Softube Bass Amp Room, 1176SE and 1176LN limiters, Pultec equalizer, LA-2A Leveling Amplifier, Channel Strip, Delay/Modulation processor, Reflection Engine, and RealVerb Pro reverb. Of



course UA would like you to augment that collection with their many optional-at-extra-cost plug-ins, but the included plug-ins meet UA's usual level of quality.

AND ALSO...

The industrial design is classy, and the unit is portable. However, USB bus power alone is not sufficient; you need to use the included AC adapter. This isn't surprising given that power has to feed the DSP as well as the preamps, display, headphone amp, etc.

The bottom line is you're paying for a USB 3.0 audio interface, but you're also paying for plug-ins that sound very much like—if not identical to—the gear being modeled, and can run with zero latency (well there *is* the latency involved in analog-to-digital conversion and back to analog, but that's such a small part of the picture we can ignore it).

There's more that deserves coverage, like the Console application and some of the other bells and whistles, but I mostly wanted to give the big picture in this review. For a detailed, in-depth look at the Apollo Twin USB, I've been doing a [Pro Review](#) over on Harmony Central (where you can also ask questions or make comments if you're so inclined). The review is still evolving and is about to segue into a new direction on how to assemble a Windows-based recording system—you'll *never* guess which DAW I'll be using—but there's a lot more detail, as well as plenty of screen shots and some audio/video examples for those who want to know more.

Surfboard



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

[High Pass, Low CPU](#)

When mixing, a lot of engineers like to insert a high pass filter on various channels to reduce low frequency “mud.” But which high pass filter gives the most effective performance for the least amount of CPU power? This thread offers a bunch of suggestions.

[Selection Time View and Splitting by Selection](#)

Curious about a clip’s length? Need to do more advanced splitting than just using the Scissors tool

or typing “S” at the Now Time? There are some great power user tips here that you’ll likely use a lot in the future.

[Recorded Clips Randomly Disappear when Recording Stops](#)

This problem has bedeviled users for quite some time, but there’s a simple fix—and this thread reads like a detective novel as the SONAR community analyzes the clues, and solves the mystery.

[Help with Graphics Tablet Control of SONAR](#)

Yes, you can control SONAR with a graphics tablet...but you’ll have a smoother time getting your tablet to work with SONAR if you read this thread first.

[Friday’s Tip of the Week](#)

This thread has over 100 tips to help you get the most out of SONAR, and is periodically “compacted” to include reader comments in the tips themselves. There’s also an index in the first post, with a description for each tip, to help you find what you want more easily. Some tips also have audio and video examples.

SONAR 2016.08 Release eZine

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