Guitar Tracks Pro and AlphaTrack
(using Sonar Plug-in v1.0.3)

Changes in plug-in v1.0.3:
- Removed old code that changed track when left encoder was pushed in PAN mode.
- Added 'Shift + **Tap** touch-strip' to toggle audible scrub.

There is no released v1.0.2:

Changes in plug-in v1.0.1:

New Features:
- You can now arm fader automation while you are in Auto Mode.
- Added more keys to user -definable settings in AlphaTrack Tools menu.
  (arrow keys, page up/down, home/end).
- Added audio scrubbing (SHIFT + Touch Strip).
- Unnamed markers are displayed with their timeline position.
- Improved EQ selection when changing tracks.

Bugs Fixed:
- Crashing GT Pro when navigating unnamed markers with the encoder.

This document assumes that you have already installed the AlphaTrack Windows driver (if not, see the AlphaTrack User's Guide or Quick Start Guide for installation details). It is based on using AlphaTrack v1.1.0 drivers with Guitar Tracks Pro 3, and the v1.0.3 SONAR control plug-in, but may apply to later versions of software as well.

Guitar Tracks Pro Set-up

If you chose to install the SONAR plug-in file during the AlphaTrack driver installation procedure, then you can skip ahead to the next paragraph. If not, then you'll need to run the AlphaTrack installer again and check the option box that includes the SONAR plug-in file (for more details, see "Installing Drivers in Windows 2000/XP" in the AlphaTrack User's Guide). This will place a file called "AlphaTrack.dll" inside the Program Files/Cakewalk/ Shared Surfaces folder where Guitar Tracks Pro is installed on your computer. Then restart your computer.

Before starting GT Pro again, right-click on the AlphaTrack applet in your taskbar and set the control mode to "AlphaTrack Native" which configures AlphaTrack to send and receive the correct set of MIDI messages for GT Pro. For more information on Control Modes see the AlphaTrack User's Guide.

Start GT Pro and open the Options/MIDI Devices window. Enable the AlphaTrack MIDI port for both the Inputs and Outputs sections of the window, and then click OK. Next, open the Options/Control Surfaces window within GT Pro and click the yellow "+" symbol on the right to open the "Control Surface Settings" pop-up menu. Select "Frontier AlphaTrack" from the list, set both the Input and Output ports to the AlphaTrack, then click OK. You can confirm your selections in the "Connected Surfaces" list, and then click Close if everything is correct. GT Pro is now configured to operate with AlphaTrack.

GT Pro does support multiple control surfaces, and allows AlphaTrack to co-exist with other types of hardware controllers. We recommend having all configured devices connected to your computer prior to launching GT Pro to prevent MIDI port assignments from being changed unexpectedly. **If AlphaTrack, or any other control device stops working properly, the first thing to check is that the MIDI port assignments are still correct in the Options/Control Surfaces panel.**

Overview

AlphaTrack features a variety of controls, as well as an LCD display and LEDs for feedback, organized into four basic groups:

A. Fader and Encoder controls. This group consists of the 100mm, touch-sensitive, motorized fader, the adjacent SOLO, MUTE, and REC illuminated buttons, the 3 touch-sensitive encoders, the LCD display, and the 5 mode buttons (PAN, SEND, EQ, PLUG-IN, AUTO). These controls provide comprehensive access to the GT Pro parameters associated with the *current track* – the GT Pro track which is selected either from AlphaTrack or by clicking on the track on the main GT Pro display.

B. Programmable Function buttons. The AlphaTrack buttons labeled F1 through F4 are user-programmable. They also have alternate functions (F5-F8), which are accessed by pressing SHIFT in combination with the F1-F4 button. User programmability is accomplished through a GT Pro dialog available from the Tools/AlphaTrack menu item.

C. Transport controls. A set of standard transport buttons (REW, FFWD, STOP, PLAY, and RECORD) provide instant access to their equivalents on the GT Pro display. These buttons have additional functions when pressed in combination with the SHIFT button (more details later in this document). Located just below the transport button, AlphaTrack's touch-sensitive strip provides three ways to navigate along the timeline in your project: scroll, shuttle, and marker-locate.

D. Other AlphaTrack controls:

    - The row of buttons above AlphaTrack's transport controls contains track navigation buttons (for selecting the *current track*).

    - The LOOP button toggles Guitar Track Pro's loop function on/off.
      Pressing SHIFT+LOOP toggles Guitar Track Pro's punch-in mode on/off.

    - The FLIP button swaps a selected encoder function to the 100mm fader, for precise control during automation (for example, you might want to adjust an EQ parameter using the high-resolution fader rather than the encoder knob). Pressing SHIFT+FLIP toggles AlphaTrack's fader motor on/off (for example, you might want to disable the fader motor to conserve battery capacity when using AlphaTrack with a notebook computer).

    - The SHIFT button can be used with other AlphaTrack buttons to provide additional functionality. The SHIFT button can be used in a "sticky" mode to permit one-handed access to the alternate functionality (see "Operational Details" below).

    - Footswitch input. A number of functions can be assigned to the external footswitch input using the dialog in the Tools/AlphaTrack menu of GT Pro.

Operational Details

> **SHIFT and "STICKY SHIFT"**
>
> The SHIFT button allows other buttons to perform more then one function, expanding the range of control that AlphaTrack has with GT Pro. Press and hold SHIFT while pressing another button to access its expanded function. Note that SHIFT has a "sticky" feature to simplify one-handed operation. Pressing SHIFT alone locks it in the enabled position (and the SHIFT LED blinks steadily). Now multiple shifted functions can be performed without holding the SHIFT key. Press SHIFT again to exit "sticky" mode.
>
> The chart included in the "Button Functions" section of this User's Guide provides a list of AlphaTrack's normal and shifted button functions.

Selecting Tracks or Buses

Most of the Fader and Encoder functions that AlphaTrack performs are applied to a track identified as the *current track.* There are several ways to select the current track:

- Two dedicated buttons just above AlphaTrack's REW and FFWD transport buttons let you navigate one track at a time. The buttons are labeled with left/right arrows for selecting the previous/next track. This is handy when working on small projects, or within a narrow range of tracks.

- Alternatively, you can turn the left encoder to scroll through tracks in a rapid manner. When AlphaTrack is in PAN or AUTO mode, the left encoder always has this function. When AlphaTrack is in any other mode, you can press SHIFT while turning the left encoder to scroll through your tracks. Note that the fader position will not update until you release the encoder knob – this keeps the fader from continually jumping back and forth while you're navigating through the tracks.

- Finally, you can select a track by clicking in the Edit or Mix window of GT Pro, and AlphaTrack will update the *current track*. This is handy for many two-handed operations. For example, you can use your mouse to click a track in GT Pro, and then with your other hand adjust the track's gain, pan, or other parameter using the AlphaTrack fader or encoders.

AlphaTrack is also able to navigate the split Track/Bus architecture of GT Pro. Anytime the left encoder is in track select mode, press and turn the encoder one click clockwise to select Bus control. Now you can use one of the above track select methods to select the project buses. Press and turn the left encoder counter-clockwise to return to Track control mode. (Because a Bus cannot be armed for record, the REC button is not available while in bus mode.)

Note – If the "Skip Archived Tracks" option is checked in the Frontier AlphaTrack tools panel then any archived tracks will not appear in the AlphaTrack display. This helps to streamline workflow when working with a project that contains many tracks that are completed, or that you do not need to access.

AlphaTrack's 'Clear All' functions, including Solo, Mute, and Record Arm are also affected by the Track or Bus mode selection. For example, pressing SHIFT+SOLO while in Track mode will clear all soloed Tracks only; no soloed Buses will be affected. Likewise, SHIFT+SOLO while in Bus mode will only clear soloed Buses.

Encoders, Mode buttons and the LCD

AlphaTrack's LCD display, the adjacent three encoders just below the display, and the 5 mode buttons just below the encoders work together to provide a quick and powerful way to work with many of the parameters in your GT Pro projects. The basic procedure for adjusting parameters is:

1. Select the desired track.
2. Press the AlphaTrack mode button for the basic type of parameter you want to adjust (PAN, SEND, EQ, PLUG-IN, or AUTO).
3. Use the encoders to adjust the parameters shown in AlphaTrack's LCD display.

To familiarize yourself with this procedure, try navigating through one of your projects with AlphaTrack. When you first open the project, AlphaTrack resets to PAN mode, and shows the name of the current track or bus on the top line of the display. The bottom line of the display shows up to three adjustable parameters, one for each of the touch-sensitive encoders. In PAN mode, the display shows the track number, "Mark," and the current Pan value. As soon as an encoder or the fader is touched, the display instantly updates with additional information about that parameter. Turn or press the appropriate encoder to make changes. In many cases, pressing while turning the encoder allows for fine-resolution adjustments. Releasing the encoder returns to the previous display. This cooperative behavior between the encoders, mode buttons, and LCD display is an important part of AlphaTrack's overall design.

The following table shows the functions that are mapped to the encoders in each mode. Note that some modes (SEND, for example) have two pages. Press the mode button to alternate between the pages.

Encoder Modes

	Encoder 1	Encoder 2	Encoder 3
PAN	Track Select (turn) Track/Bus (push + turn)	Marker Select (turn) Marker Add (push)	Pan Position
SEND	Send Select (see below)	Send Level	Send Pan
Page 2	Send Select (see below)	Enable/Disable Send	Pre/Post Fader
Shift	Track Select		
EQ	Frequency	Gain	Q
Page 2	Band Select	Filter Type	Band Enable/Disable
Shift	Track Select	EQ Type Select (see below)	
PLUG-IN	Plug-In Select	Parameter Select	Value Adjust
Shift	Track Select		
AUTO	Track Select		Write On/Off

SEND Mode

In GT Pro 3, only Send 1 is accessible via external control. Pressing SEND mode allows you to set the level and pan position of Send 1. Press SEND a second time to set enable/disable and Pre/Post.

EQ Mode

If a Sonitus Equalizer plug-in is inserted in a tracks FX bin, AlphaTrack will automatically detect it and treat it like a dedicated channel EQ. Press the EQ mode button a second time to access 'Page 2' functions. The EQ Type Select option is not functional in GT Pro 3.

PLUG-IN Mode

When Plug-In mode is enabled, the AlphaTrack encoders are mapped to Plug-in Select, Parameter Select, and Value adjust. The values displayed on AlphaTrack appear just as they are reported by the application. Often they are on a simple 0.0 to 1.0 scale that doesn't necessarily match the on-screen value. Toggled parameters (on/off for example) usually toggle at a value of 0.5.

AUTO(mation) Mode

AlphaTrack's high-resolution fader and encoders can be used to write fader, pan, send level/pan, and other parameter automation where available. There are two ways to select which of these parameters to automate:

- To select a specific track parameter for write automation, select the desired encoder mode, then press the AUTO button once **while** touching the fader or desired encoder. This will not change the current encoder mode but will arm that parameter on the selected track for write automation, and the red AUTO Write LED will illuminate whenever you touch that control to remind you. Likewise, that parameter will be outlined in red on screen. Repeat the procedure to arm or disarm write automation for that and other parameters. Once the parameter is armed you can click the 'Record Automation' button on screen to begin recording.

- To arm ALL available track parameters for write automation, select AUTO mode, and press or turn the right encoder to "ON." This will only affect the *current track*.

AlphaTrack recognizes when you change modes or tracks so that automation is not accidentally written to the wrong parameter or track.

Fader section

The high-resolution, 100mm motorized fader is also touch-sensitive to provide smooth operation and automation recording. Next to the fader are 3 illuminated buttons for setting and indicating the *current track*'s solo, mute, and record arm status, as well as LEDs for automation status. An "ANY SOLO" LED illuminates to alert you whenever at least one track in the project is being soloed. As with the encoders, the fader and buttons affect the currently selected track or bus, regardless of how it was selected.

Function Buttons

There are 8 function buttons with individual LEDs in the center portion of AlphaTrack. Each of these buttons also has a shifted function. The bottom row is pre-assigned and labeled Track Down, Track Up, LOOP and FLIP. Pressing SHIFT along with these buttons changes their functions to IN, OUT, RECORD MODE, and Motor On/Off. The top row is labeled F1 - F4 (which become F5 - F8 when SHIFT is pressed). The F1 – F8 buttons are entirely user-programmable from the Tools/AlphaTrack menu item in GT Pro. All of the commands in the standard GT Pro key-bindings menu, as well as several custom commands are available.

The following chart describes the normal and shifted functions of each function button.

Button Functions

Name	Normal Function	SHIFT + Function
REW	Rewind	Return to Zero
FFWD	Fast Forward	Go to End
STOP	Stop	Local Settings (hold buttons)
PLAY	Play	Toggle Playback Metronome
RECORD	Record	Toggle Record Metronome
TRACK ◄	Move 1 Track Left/Up	Set Loop In Point
TRACK ►	Move 1 Track Right/Down	Set Loop Out Point
LOOP	Toggle Loop Mode	Select Record Mode
FLIP	Swap Fader and Selected Encoder	Motor On/Off (w/LED)
F1	F1 - User Definable	F5 - User Definable
F2	F2 - User Definable	F6 - User Definable
F3	F3 - User Definable	F7 - User Definable
F4	F4 - User Definable	F8 - User Definable
REC	Track's Record Arm On/off	Clear All Record Arms (All Safe)
SOLO	Track's Solo On/off	Clear All Solos
MUTE	Track's Mute On/off	Clear All Mutes
FOOTSWITCH	User Definable	

Transport Controls

The 5 standard transport buttons are located just above the touch strip near the bottom of AlphaTrack. In addition to the basic REW, FFWD, STOP, PLAY, and RECORD functions, these buttons can also be used with the SHIFT button for Return-To-Zero, (go to) END, and toggle playback (SHIFT+PLAY) and record Metronome (SHIFT+RECORD) functions.

Touch Strip

Near the bottom edge of AlphaTrack is an innovative feature called the touch strip, which is similar to a ribbon controller and is another touch-sensitive surface that can be used in several ways:

- Move one fingertip along the strip in either direction to scroll through the project timeline in the same direction. Scroll resolution is user-definable on the Tools/AlphaTrack panel. Select from Measures, Beats, Ticks, Samples, Milliseconds, or Frames. You can also enter a multiplier value.

- Move two fingers along the strip and it will act like a shuttle wheel, allowing you to move the current project timeline with a direction and speed proportional to the movement of your fingers.

- A brief tap of a finger at either end of the touch strip will cause a jump to the nearest marker in that direction. Additional taps will continue to move the timeline from one marker to the next in that direction.

- **Audio Scrubbing** - Hold Shift and tap the touch Strip to enable/disable audible scrubbing. This is a change from earlier versions of the SONAR control plug-in. The display will momentarily indicate "Audible On" or "Audible Off". When audible scrub is enabled move one or two fingers to scrub or shuttle audio. Scrub resolution is determined by the Tools/AlphaTrack setting, however audio shuttle resolution is determined by the distance you move your fingers with a maximum of normal playback speed.

FLIP

The FLIP button lets you swap the functionality of the fader with one of the encoders. In this mode the high-resolution fader can be used to adjust a parameter that would normally be assigned to an encoder. At the same time, the *selected track's* channel level will be temporarily assigned to the encoder while this mode is enabled. To make this feature even more flexible, in some modes you can choose which encoder is flipped. While holding down the FLIP button, the LCD display will show the word "FLIP" next to each encoder which is eligible to be swapped to the fader. While continuing to hold down the FLIP button, touch the desired encoder to assign it as the flipped encoder for the mode. Note that if the word "FLIP" does not appear when holding the FLIP button then no other assignments can be made in that mode.

Remember, even though an encoder is assigned to flip, it will not actually be flipped unless the FLIP mode button is enabled and its LED is lit.

Note - With some plug-ins, including EQ plug-ins, there may be parameters that do not respond well to encoder adjustment. This is not the fault of AlphaTrack but rather a limitation of the plug-in's interface. In these cases you may find that flipping the parameter to the high-resolution fader provides improved control.

Motor On/Off

If you want to turn off AlphaTrack's fader motor for any reason (for example, to conserve battery power when using AlphaTrack with a notebook computer) you can do so by pressing Shift + FLIP. The FLIP LED will reflect the motor status while the SHIFT button is held down.

AlphaTrack 'Tools' panel

The AlphaTrack tools panel (accessible at the bottom of the Tools menu in GT Pro 3) provides an easy way to customize the behavior of your AlphaTrack, and to store multiple setups for quick recall. Each of the sections is described in detail below.
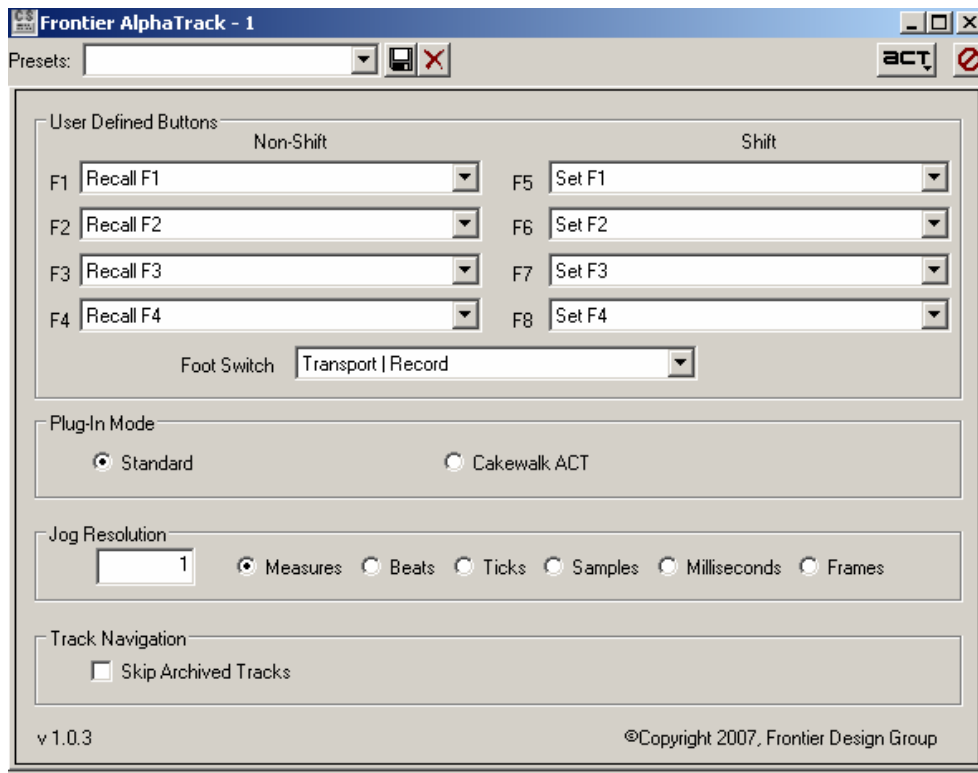
User-Definable Buttons

User-definable buttons and the footswitch can be programmed either via the GT Pro/Options/ Key Bindings menu, or from the GT Pro/Tools/AlphaTrack panel. The Tools menu panel makes it easy to assign custom commands to the available function key and footswitch combinations, and to save multiple versions of this setup for different working scenarios. Available commands include options from all of the GT Pro menus as well as several 'virtual-keys' such as Enter, Esc, Spacebar, and Arrow key combinations to access special functions.

By default, F1 through F8 are preset to store and recall the currently selected track. These two sets of custom commands let you quickly navigate among any four tracks that you may be working on at the moment.

To change the function of F1 through F8, simply choose a function from the pull-down list corresponding to the button. Then save that command set by entering a name in the Presets field in the upper left corner and clicking on the diskette icon next to it.

Plug-In Mode

For GT Pro, the plug-in mode is automatically set to "Standard" parameter control. The ACT parameter control mode is only available in Cakewalk's Sonar (not in Guitar Tracks).

Jog Resolution

Select Measures, Beats, Ticks, etc., to set the resolution of the AlphaTrack touch strip. There is also a box to enter a multiplier value so that you can set specific intervals like 10x Frames.

Track Navigation

If the "Skip Archived Tracks" option is checked in the AlphaTrack tools panel then any archived tracks will be bypassed by AlphaTrack, and will not appear in the AlphaTrack display. This helps to streamline workflow when working with a project that contains many tracks that are completed, or that you do not need to access.

Scrub/Shuttle with Audio

Hold SHIFT and tap the touch strip to enable and disable audible scrubbing. The AlphaTrack display will momentarily indicate "Audible On" or "Audible Off".

When audible scrub is enabled, move one or two fingers along the touch strip to scrub or shuttle audio. Audio scrub resolution is determined by the Tools/AlphaTrack setting, however audio shuttle resolution is also determined by the distance you move your fingers, with a maximum of normal playback speed. You can keep the AlphaTrack Tools window open and experiment with different settings to find the resolution that best fits your needs.

GT Pro will stay in audible scrub mode until you hold SHIFT and tap the touch strip again.