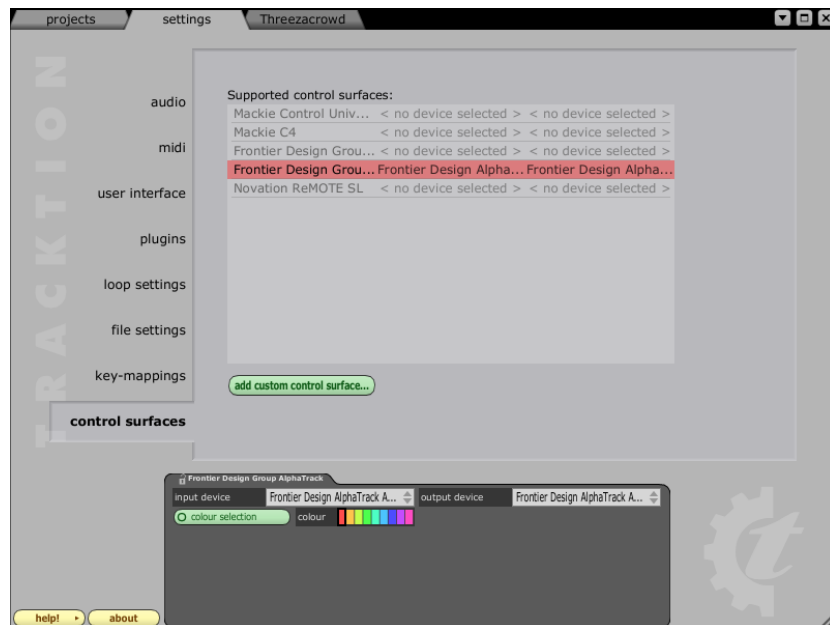# Mackie's Tracktion 3 and AlphaTrack

This document assumes you have already installed the AlphaTrack drivers, and have the AlphaTrack ready for operation. (If not, see the AlphaTrack User's Guide or Quick Start Guide for installation details.) It is based on using Tracktion 3.0.2.6, but may apply to later versions of Tracktion as well.

Set-up

Before starting Tracktion, open the AlphaTrack Manager or right-click on the AlphaTrack applet in your taskbar, and set the control mode to "Native Mode." For more information about control modes, see the AlphaTrack User's Guide.

Open Tracktion, go to the MIDI tab of the Settings panel, and enable AlphaTrack for MIDI Input and Output. Go to the Control Surfaces tab and highlight "Frontier Design Group AlphaTrack." At the bottom of the page, set the Input and Output device to AlphaTrack. That's it, you're ready to go. AlphaTrack's LCD display should reflect the currently selected track and other project information.

Overview

AlphaTrack features a high-resolution, 100mm, touch-sensitive, motorized fader with channel dependent backlit Record, Solo, and Mute buttons, 3 touch-sensitive encoders, 5 mode select buttons, 8 function buttons, 5 standard transport buttons, SHIFT key, touch-sensitive scroll strip, a 32-character LCD display, and 17 LED indicators. Silk-screened labels indicate the basic functions of the buttons. On the back panel, next to the USB connection, is a ¼" jack for a standard momentary footswitch. The footswitch is user-programmable, as described below.

Pressing AlphaTrack's Play button begins playback just as if you had clicked the play button in Tracktion. Similarly, many AlphaTrack controls function just like their on-screen equivalents. While AlphaTrack includes many advanced features, it is designed for ease of use right out of the box.

Fader Section

AlphaTrack's high-resolution, 100mm motorized fader is also touch-sensitive to provide smooth level control. When the fader is touched, the LCD automatically updates to show the numeric value of the current track's volume level.

There are also illuminated buttons next to the fader for setting the current track's solo, mute and record arm status. The Any Solo LED alerts you if any track in the entire project is soloed. Pressing the SHIFT button together with these buttons lets you clear all mutes, solos, or record-enabled tracks (so you don't have to navigate through all of your projects tracks to find one muted track, for example).

Transport Controls

The five standard transport buttons (Rewind, Fast-Forward, Stop, Play, and Record) are located just above AlphaTrack's touch strip at the bottom. Pressing the SHIFT button together with a transport button changes its function to Go to Start, Go to End, Escape, Enter, and Select Record Mode. For example, press SHIFT + FFWD to go to the end of your project.

SHIFT

The SHIFT button allows some of AlphaTrack's other buttons to perform more then one function, expanding the range of control that AlphaTrack has over Tracktion. Note that with Tracktion, SHIFT is a "sticky" function, meaning that it remains enabled until you press it a second time to release it, which simplifies one-handed operation. Press and release SHIFT to lock it in the enabled position. The SHIFT button's red LED will light to indicate that SHIFT is enabled. Press SHIFT again at any time to disable it.

Touch Strip

AlphaTrack includes an innovative touch-sensitive strip, located near the bottom edge of the unit. The touch strip is similar to a ribbon controller and can be used in several ways.

Moving one fingertip along the strip in either direction lets you scroll through the project timeline in the same direction. This makes a fast and convenient way to locate anywhere within your project.

Tapping your finger on either end of the touch strip moves the timeline to the next marker in that direction, providing quick access to previously-defined points such as a verse or chorus.

Encoders, Mode Buttons and the LCD

When you first open a Tracktion 3 project, the PAN light will be lit and the AlphaTrack LCD will display the currently selected track name on the top line, and its pan position on the left side of the lower line, above the left encoder. 'Mar' is displayed on the lower line above the right encoder. You can turn the left encoder to adjust the current track's pan position, and you can press the right encoder to insert a Marker at the current timeline position.

If you press any of the five mode buttons below the AlphaTrack display (PAN, SEND, EQ, PLUG-IN, AUTO), AlphaTrack's encoders and display change to focus on the selected mode, with labels showing specific parameters above each encoder. In many cases, touching any of the encoders immediately refreshes the LCD display with more information about the current value or the encoder's function. This cooperative behavior between the touch-sensitive encoders and LCD are an important part of AlphaTrack's overall design. The following chart lists all of the functions available in each of the encoder modes.

Encoder Modes

	Encoder 1	Encoder 2	Encoder 3
PAN	Track Pan	no function	Press to add marker
SEND	First Send level	Second Send level	Third Send level
EQ (see notes below)	EQ Band Frequency	EQ Band Gain	EQ band 'Q'
PLUG-IN (see notes below)	Press to select plug-in. Press/Turn to edit parameter	Press to select plug-in. Press/Turn to edit parameter	Press to select plug-in. Press/Turn to edit parameter
AUTO	Press to enable Read automation	no function	Press to enable Write automation

Special notes:

SEND – The LCD display and encoders let you adjust the levels of up to 3 sends per track.

EQ – Press the EQ mode button to display the EQ filter if inserted. Press the EQ mode button repeatedly to select an EQ band to edit. Then use the encoders to adjust the frequency, gain, and Q for the selected EQ band.

PLUG-IN – existing plug-in filters are displayed on the LCD. Press an encoder to select a Plug-In to edit. Parameters appear in the display above each encoder. Press or turn an encoder to edit a parameter. Press the PLUG-IN mode button to display the next page of parameters. Repeatedly press the PLUG-IN mode button to display additional pages of parameters.

Function Buttons

Eight function buttons with discrete LEDs occupy the center portion of AlphaTrack. The bottom row is labeled TRACK DOWN, TRACK UP, LOOP and FLIP. The Track buttons behave just as they are labeled. In PAN mode you can use either the Track buttons, or the left encoder, to select tracks. Pressing the LOOP button toggles Loop mode on/off. **Pressing the FLIP button assigns to the fader whatever parameter is currently assigned to the left encoder.** The FLIP function is particularly useful where more accurate adjustments are required, such as adjusting an EQ frequency. When SHIFT is enabled, the button functions change to Set In, Set Out, Enable Punch, and Show/Hide Inputs, Filters and Controls, as shown in the chart below.

The other function buttons are labeled F1 – F4, and when SHIFT is enabled, F5 – F8 respectively. By default F1 – F4 are programmed as Split, Cut , Copy and Paste. However, you can program the F1 – F8 buttons as shortcut keys, as described in User-Progammable Buttons below.

AlphaTrack Button Functions

The following chart lists the normal and shifted functions of each button. The file called "Tracktion 3 Layout_v1.1.pdf" on the AlphaTrack downloads page also provides a quick visual guide for these AlphaTrack functions. You may want to print out that document for quick reference.

Button label	Normal Function	With SHIFT Enabled
REW	Rewind	Go to Start
FFWD	Fast Forward	Go To End
STOP	Stop	Escape
PLAY	Play	Enter
RECORD	Record	Mode
TRACK ◄	Move 1 Track Up	Set In
TRACK ►	Move 1 Track Down	Set Out
LOOP	Toggle Loop Mode	Toggle Punch Mode
FLIP	Move Encoder 1 parameter to fader	Show/Hide inputs, filters, and controls on display
F1	F1 – user-programmable	F5 – user-programmable
F2	F2 see below	F6 see below
F3	F3	F7
F4	F4	F8
REC	Toggle Track's Record Arm	Clear all Armed Tracks
SOLO	Toggle Track's Solo On/off	Clear all Solos
MUTE	Toggle Track's Mute On/off	Clear all Mutes
FOOTSWITCH	User-programmable	Not used

User-programmable buttons

Each of the F1 – F8 function buttons and the footswitch can be programmed to perform shortcuts from a list of available commands in the Tracktion 'key-mappings' menu. F1 – F4 are pre-programmed as Split, Cut, Copy and Paste, but they can be changed to any command.

To assign commands to F1 through F8 and the footswitch:

1. Open the Settings window and select the 'key-mappings' tab.

2. Find the command that you want to assign in the list and click on the "+" symbol to its right. (If there is no "+" symbol shown then that command already has the maximum of 3 key assignments. You must right-click on one of the existing assignments and select the option to change it, or select a different command.)

3. Press the button (for F1 – F4), or SHIFT+button (for F5 – F8), or the footswitch and click 'OK'.

4. Repeat step 2 and 3 to program other buttons. Then return to your project window when complete.