

# SONAR™ X3 Power!

## The Comprehensive Guide

Scott R. Garrigus

**Cengage Learning PTR**



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- ▷ Power Books ([garrigus.com?PowerBooks](http://garrigus.com?PowerBooks)): Author of the Cakewalk *SONAR Power!* book series and the *Sony Sound Forge Power* book series.
- ▷ ProAudioTutor ([garrigus.com?ProAudioTutor](http://garrigus.com?ProAudioTutor)): Author of the ProAudioTutor music technology tutorial series.
- ▷ DigiFreq ([garrigus.com?DigiFreq](http://garrigus.com?DigiFreq)): Publisher of the DigiFreq music technology newsletter and website, a free resource for professional musicians and home recording users.
- ▷ NewTechReview ([garrigus.com?NewTechReview](http://garrigus.com?NewTechReview)): Publisher of the NewTechReview consumer technology newsletter and website, a free resource for consumers and technology enthusiasts.

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# Introduction

With SONAR X1, Cakewalk introduced an entirely new paradigm for working with the popular music recording software. SONAR X1 included the Skylight interface, Control Bar, Inspector, MultiDock, Browser, Screensets, Smart Tools, ProChannel, and FX Chains. As such, SONAR X1 required even veteran users to relearn the application. Still, the redesigned user interface and the entirely new workflow made for a much better music making experience once the learning curve was tackled.

With SONAR X2, Cakewalk refined the features introduced in SONAR X1 and added some additional features to further improve the workflow. SONAR X2 added Take Lanes, Automation Lanes, ProChannel modules, Full Screen mode, FX Chains 2.0, and MusicXML export. It also provided improvements to many of the major features, including the Track, Piano Roll, and Matrix views. Plus, enhancements were made to the Smart Tools, Snap to Grid, Arpeggiator, Recording, Metronome, Zooming, Scrolling, Selection, Grouping, Key Binding, and Automation features.

Now at version X3, SONAR has been refined even further with Skylight and Media Browser enhancements, support for VST3 plug-ins, more flexible color customization, a new comping workflow for Take Lanes, new Region FX, support for ARA and the inclusion of Melodyne for pitch correction, as well as new audio-to-MIDI conversion, and more.

This *SONAR X3 Power!* book provides the information you need to get comfortable with SONAR X3. If you are a new SONAR user, I'll show you each of the features with information on what they are, why you need them, and how to use them. If you are a seasoned SONAR user, I'll let you know the differences between versions X2 and X3. I will also cover what you need to know about the refined workflow.

## What You Need to Begin

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I'm going to assume that SONAR is installed on your computer and that you know how to start the program. In addition, you should have at least skimmed through the user's guide that comes with the software, and you should have all your external audio and MIDI gear set up already. I'm also going to assume that you know how to use your mouse for clicking, dragging, double-clicking, right-clicking, and so on. You also should know how to work with basic Windows features (such as Windows Explorer), and you should have access to the Internet.

In addition, a basic knowledge of music, MIDI, and digital audio concepts is required to use SONAR. Before going any further, I would recommend that you look at some of the following resources if you are just getting started with computer-based music creation:

- ▷ *Desktop Music Handbook*: [garrigus.com?DesktopMusic](http://garrigus.com?DesktopMusic)
- ▷ *MIDI Power!*: [garrigus.com?MIDIPower](http://garrigus.com?MIDIPower)
- ▷ *The MIDI Manual*: [garrigus.com?MIDIManual](http://garrigus.com?MIDIManual)
- ▷ *Audio Made Easy*: [garrigus.com?AudioMadeEasy](http://garrigus.com?AudioMadeEasy)

## Conventions Used in This Book

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Throughout this book, you'll find a sort of shorthand to describe the various actions you need to take in order to perform tasks. Here is what you need to know before reading any further:

- ▷ **Clicking:** Whenever I say to click [*item*], it means to use the left mouse button to click the mentioned item. I may also tell you to Ctrl+click, Shift+click, or Alt+click an item, which means you need to hold the specific PC keyboard key while left-clicking the item. Right-clicking will be mentioned explicitly.

- ▷ **Choosing:** Whenever I say to choose *item > item*, it means to left-click on the specified SONAR menus. Most of the time, I will be talking about SONAR's main menu, but each view also has its own menu, so I will mention a specific menu when necessary.
- ▷ **Pressing:** Whenever I say to press *item* or press *item+item*, it means to press the specified key or key+key on your keyboard.
- ▷ **Preferences:** Whenever I mention SONAR's Preferences dialog box, I'm going to assume that you have the Advanced option activated. To do this, start SONAR and choose Edit > Preferences from the main menu. In the dialog box, choose the Advanced option, which is located at the bottom left. Click OK.
- ▷ **Website Links:** Whenever I provide a website link, type in exactly what is shown in **bold** and don't include any punctuation that may surround the link, such as a link to my website (**[garrigus.com?SonarEventInspector](http://garrigus.com?SonarEventInspector)**). For that link you would type **[garrigus.com?SonarEventInspector](http://garrigus.com?SonarEventInspector)** without including the parentheses or period.

Lastly, be sure to sign up for my free music recording newsletter (**[garrigus.com?DigiFreq](http://garrigus.com?DigiFreq)**) for additional SONAR articles, book updates, and free video tutorials. You can also find me on the following social sites:

- ▷ Amazon: **[amazon.com/author/garrigus](http://amazon.com/author/garrigus)**
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Thanks, and I hope you enjoy the book!

