StrumWorks Studio

User manual

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A practical guide to your song project, from importing stems to editable drum and bass MIDI and finished chord-and-lyric charts.

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Read the latest edition online

1. What Studio does

One song project. Three tools. Start with Song Editor, then work through ReDrum, ReBass and ReChart.

From stems to a finished performance

StrumWorks Studio works with stems: separate audio files for the instruments in your song. It turns drum and bass performances into MIDI you can edit, audition through virtual instruments and export to your DAW. ReChart works with chords and lyrics in the same project to create charts for musicians.

The original audio remains your reference. Listen, make changes and compare the result with the recording throughout the process.

Your workflow

1. Song Editor: import your stems, confirm track roles, check timing and mark song sections.
2. ReDrum: convert the drum performance to MIDI, repair missing hits and edit your drums.
3. ReBass: transcribe the bass, edit notes and articulations, and line up the bass with the drums.
4. ReChart: check the chords, add your lyrics and prepare a chart.
5. Finish: compare your work, save the project and export the MIDI and charts you need.

Before you begin

- Have your separated stems ready. Studio does not separate a stereo mix into stems. Stems should share the same song start so they line up when imported.
- This guide describes the Mac app. A recording made to a click makes checking the musical grid easier.
- Install your own drum or bass virtual instruments if you want to audition with those sounds. Third-party instruments are separate products.
- Keep the stem files with your project. Saving a project is different from exporting MIDI or a chart.

2. Song Editor: prepare your song

Song Editor is the shared foundation. Get the song timing and sections right before editing drums or bass.

Set up the project

1. Start a project and import your stems. You can drag audio files into Song Editor. Check that the tracks begin at the correct song position.
2. Confirm each track's role in its track header: Kick, Snare, Hi-Hat, Bass, vocals and the other instruments. Treat filename suggestions as a starting point; your role selection determines how Studio uses the track.
3. Listen from the beginning. Use mute, solo and track volume to hear the parts clearly. Space starts and pauses playback.
4. Check the downbeat and tempo against the recording. Establish where the Intro begins and confirm that bar lines follow the performance.
5. Mark the song's sections through to the end: Intro, Verse, Pre-Chorus, Chorus, Bridge, Outro or the names your arrangement needs. Name them clearly and check their boundaries by listening.
6. Save the project before moving into ReDrum.

Sections and the musical grid

ReDrum and ReBass work on one selected section at a time. Section buttons let you move between parts of the song while keeping each section's own MIDI and settings.

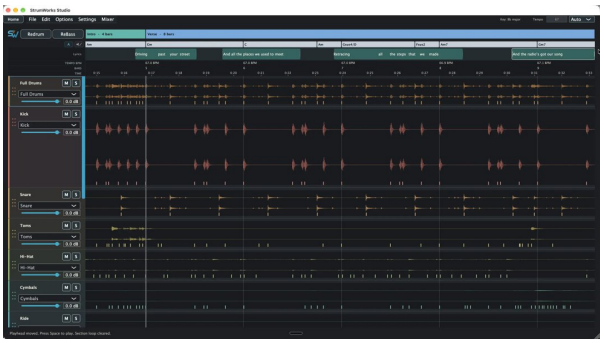
A section boundary divides the arrangement; it does not move the source audio or make a short section fit a whole number of bars. If you change a boundary later, listen to the affected sections again.

Useful navigation

• Click a waveform or the seconds ruler to move the playhead.

• Drag along a ruler to loop a passage. Use short loops when checking a drum hit, bass phrase or chord change.

• Use the track's Mute and Solo controls to isolate what you need to hear.



Song Editor keeps the arrangement, source tracks, chords and lyrics together.

3. ReDrum: rebuild and edit the drums

Work section by section. Begin with what was played, then repair gaps or choose a different part where needed.

Make your first drum pass

1. Open ReDrum and select a song section. Start with the All Drums view to see the kit, then open an individual drum to inspect its waveform and notes.
2. Listen to the source and compare the detected hits with what you hear. Sensitivity, Gate and Retrigger help distinguish real hits from bleed or double triggers.
3. Remember that detection markers and MIDI notes are different. Detection changes update the evidence; use the appropriate ReDrum action deliberately to apply changes to the performance.
4. Correct obvious mistakes: add a missing hit, delete a false hit, drag a note to adjust its timing or change its velocity.
5. Load your drum instrument and select its matching map. Check that kicks, snares, hats and other articulations play the intended sounds.
6. Loop the passage and use Compare to switch between the source audio and your MIDI instrument. Repeat for the remaining sections.

Replace, repair or generate

• Replace: use the hits found in the recording to rebuild the original performance as MIDI.

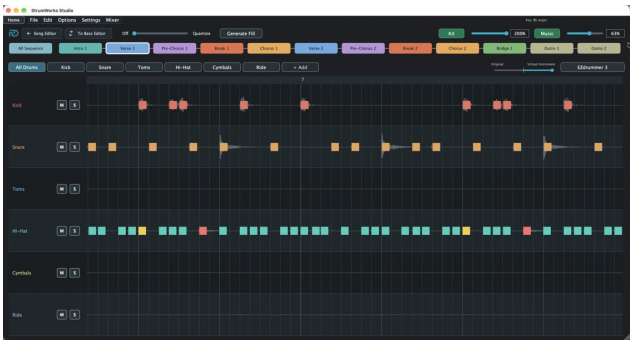
• Repair: use ReDrum reconstruction to suggest missing hits from supported repeating phrases. Keep intentional rests and listen to every repair; a suggestion is not proof of what was played.

• Generate: use a pattern or Generate Fill when you want a new part. Generated notes remain editable.

Editing and sounds

In an individual drum view, double-click an empty grid position to add a hit. Select a note and press Delete to remove it. Drag notes to adjust timing and use the velocity lane for dynamics. Undo lets you compare an edit with the previous state.

Right-click a note to choose sounds and articulations supported by the selected drum map. Use closed or open hats, rimshots and other named sounds where your library supports them. Check the mapping again when changing instruments.



All Drums shows the kit together; individual views let you inspect each drum.

4. Timing and dynamics

Adjust consistency, contrast and overall strength separately, while listening to the performance.

Choose the feel before tightening it

The Straight grid uses evenly spaced timing targets. Follow Performance uses targets based on the source performance. Choose the grid and subdivision that suit the passage, then use Quantize to move notes toward those targets.

Start with a small amount. More quantization is not always better: a part can look tidy and lose the timing that made it work. Changing the grid alone does not move the source audio.

Three velocity controls

• Smooth: make repeated notes more consistent without flattening their musical roles and accents.

• Range: widen or narrow the difference between softer and stronger notes.

• Level: raise or lower the overall MIDI velocity of the part.

A practical order

1. Correct notes that are clearly wrong before applying broader timing or dynamics changes.
2. Select the passage you want to change and check the current view's editing scope.
3. Use Smooth to tame uneven repetitions. Adjust Range for the amount of contrast, then Level for the overall strength.
4. Listen through your instrument and compare with the original. MIDI velocity can change tone as well as loudness, depending on the library.
5. Check the passage with the rest of the song, not only in solo.



Smooth, Range and Level control three different aspects of the performance.

5. ReBass: transcribe and shape the bass

Use the bass recording as your starting point, then check pitch, phrasing and its relationship with the drums.

Build the bass performance

1. Open ReBass and select the section you are working on. Use Detect Bass to transcribe the bass recording.
2. Listen to the source beside the MIDI. Check the pitch of each phrase, particularly low notes, slides and passages with unclear attacks.
3. Drag a note to change its pitch or start. Drag its edges to change its length. Double-click empty piano-roll space to add a note; select and delete notes that do not belong.
4. Use the kick and snare reference lanes to see where the bass lands against the drums. Tighten only the starts that need it; keep deliberate gaps and joins in the phrase.
5. Load your bass virtual instrument and choose its matching Key Switch Layout. This connects named articulations to the instrument's supported sounds.
6. Compare the MIDI with the original bass and listen to it with the drums before moving to the next section.

Phrasing and articulations

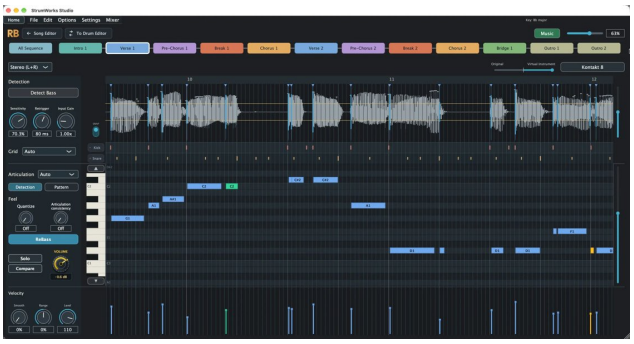
Right-click a bass note to choose an articulation your instrument supports, such as a mute, slide or harmonic. Available choices depend on the selected layout.

Legato fills a note to the next MIDI note's start. Use it where the phrase should connect; keep intentional rests where the player left space. Check note lengths after timing edits.

Repair and patterns

The ReBass reconstruction action can add supported missing notes from matching phrases while retaining your existing edits. Use it for gaps in a recognizable performance, then listen to the additions.

Pattern mode gives you a different starting part when the source is unusable or you want a new bass line. Review the rhythm and pitches before treating the result as finished.



ReBass places the bass notes beside the recording and drum references.

6. ReChart: chords, lyrics and charts

ReChart completes the song workflow by turning the same project into a chart musicians can read.

Check the harmony

1. Return to Song Editor and enable Chord Detection in Settings if needed. Review the chord lane alongside the marked song sections.
2. Listen to each passage and check the detected names. Right-click a chord to choose an alternative or change its root, type or bass note.
3. Adjust chord boundaries where the actual changes happen. Split, add or remove blocks as needed instead of accepting every detection unchanged.

Add and align lyrics

Enable Lyrics & Charts in Settings, then choose File > Import Lyrics to supply the lyrics for the song. Choose the main vocal stem and check the resulting line positions by ear. Studio works with lyrics you provide; it does not write them.

Automatic vocal alignment uses the separate Lyrics Tools download and supports English. You can also edit the lyrics bar manually. Double-click a line to edit its text, drag it to move it and adjust its edges to correct timing.

Export your chart

1. Choose File > Export Lyrics & Chord Chart.
2. Enter the song and artist, choose the export format and set the key or transposition.
3. For PDF, choose a print, tablet or scrolling layout and check text size, paper and guitar chord diagrams where applicable.
4. Export and read the result from beginning to end. Check chord placement, section names, lyric spelling and page breaks.

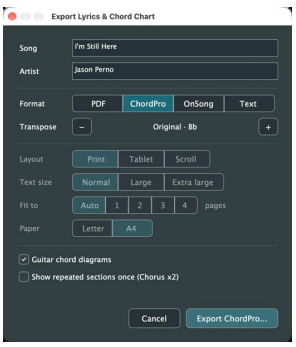
Choose a format

• PDF: a fixed layout for printing or reading on a device.

• ChordPro: a chord-and-lyric file for a compatible chart app.

• OnSong: a chart file for OnSong.

• Text: a plain-text chart you can copy or edit.



ReChart exports the song's chords and supplied lyrics in several reading formats.

7. Save, compare and export

Keep the editable project, and export the files you need for your DAW or your musicians.

Your final listening pass

- Play through all sections and their transitions. Check that short breaks, fills and bass joins sound intentional.
- Compare source and MIDI at similar listening levels. Check the drum map and bass articulation layout before exporting.
- Listen with the other stems as well as in solo. A technically correct note can still need a musical adjustment.

Export MIDI

The File menu offers Export Drum MIDI, Export Bass MIDI and Export All MIDI. Drum exports contain separate instrument tracks; Export All MIDI also includes the bass. Choose the scope and output you need.

Import the MIDI into your DAW and check its alignment with the source audio. Review the DAW's tempo-map and track-import choices. Use the matching drum map and bass library so the exported notes and articulation switches play the intended sounds.

Keep your project

Save Project keeps your editable song. Save Project As creates a copy under another name or location. Studio projects use the .strumworks extension; MIDI and chart exports do not replace that project file.

When moving a project, copy its stem files too, including any mono files created by splitting a source. The receiving computer also needs the virtual instruments you used.

Studio keeps recovery checkpoints while you work. If offered recovery after an unexpected close, inspect the recovered project and save it deliberately. Recovery is a backup, not a substitute for normal saves.

Demo and licensed export

The demo lets you work on and save projects, but export is locked. A licensed build unlocks export after activation. Keep your projects so you can continue the same work when you activate.

8. Troubleshooting and support

When something looks or sounds wrong, start with the source, track role, section and instrument mapping.

Quick checks

- Missing or extra drum notes: solo the stem, inspect its detections and check Sensitivity, Gate and Retrigger before changing the MIDI.
- Wrong bass pitch: listen to the isolated bass and correct the note in ReBass. Check whether a slide or noisy attack confused the transcription.
- Wrong sound or articulation: confirm the drum map or bass Key Switch Layout matches your loaded instrument.
- Timing drift: check the song's downbeat and tempo first, then the grid and quantization amount. Avoid fixing a song-level timing problem one note at a time.
- Missing source audio after moving a project: confirm that you copied the stem files and that they are available on the new computer.
- Incorrect chart: listen to the chord changes, check lyric timing and proofread the exported chart.

Report a bug

1. In the app, choose Help > Report a Bug and save the JSON report. Use Show File to find it, or look in the folder you chose.
2. Describe what you were doing, what you expected and what actually happened. Include your Mac version, app version and the steps that reproduce the problem.
3. Attach the JSON file to an email addressed to bugs@strumworksstudio.com. Read the report before sending it. If the app cannot reopen, email what you know without waiting for a report.

General help

For questions about using Studio, contact support@strumworksstudio.com. For bug reports, use bugs@strumworksstudio.com. Reports stay on your computer until you attach and send them yourself.

This first edition covers the main workflow. Studio is still being developed, so screenshots and individual control labels may change between builds. Check the online manual for updates.