

Strumpy (Pro) Release Notes (v 4.1.0)



Thank you for downloading or upgrading to Strumpy (Pro)

Strumpy was conceived and developed by Nigel Smith, an IT professional with musical interests located in the United Kingdom (and the author of this document). Nigel can be contacted at smiffs4u@gmail.com.

It would be helpful to get some feedback from Strumpy users out there in order to understand whether or not this tool is fulfilling a useful gap in the market, and to better understand how people are using it.

Release 4.1.0 (version 40100)

1.0 Summary

Maintenance release primarily focused on targeting support Android 14 API level 34 plus a few additional bug fixes.

2.0 Detail

2.1 Additional Android Version Support

The application build now targets Android 14 API level 34. Compatibility continues to be provided down to Android 6.0 (API level 23). A deprecated API call was also changed (replaced a deprecated Integer class constructor call using the static Integer class 'ValueOf' method).

2.2 Workflow Improvement When Switching Projects

Corrected a workflow issue when navigating to the 'Project Selection View' in order to open a different project. Previously opening a project having navigated back to the project selection view from the mixing desk view opened the project that was previously open and not the one selected. Navigating back to the project selection view using the device 'back' feature was able to reset the problem allowing the correct project to be opened on next project selection. That behaviour has now been corrected and that app now immediately opens the right project following navigation back to the project selection view from the mixing desk view.

Release 4.0.8 (version 40008)

1.0 Summary

Major release with significant impact on user workflow within the app which should now appear more logical to end users. Whilst there has been a major reorganisation of the user interface the underlying core functionality remains the same. Existing projects are fully compatible with the new release as there are no changes in project configuration. The release also includes bug fixes.

2.0 Detail

2.1 Mixing Desk View Becomes Core Project View.

Previously when you opened a project you were initially directed to the Track Explorer view which always opened within the context of the first track in the project showing its list of phrases. When you created a new project it would open the Phrase Edit view within the context of an automatically created initial track and phrase within that track. The Track Explorer view options menu contained many global project functions (export, import et al) yet the view itself operated within the context of a specific track, you were not positioned in a project centric view like the Mixing Desk view. From this release on this has changed. The Mixing Desk view is now the first view you see when you create or open an existing project and the option menu previously attached to the Track Explorer view has now been relocated to the Mixing Desk view.

Release 3.1.8 (version 30108)

1.0 Summary

Maintenance release including bug fixes and minor functionality improvements.

2.0 Detail

2.1 Aligned with Google's August 2023 target API requirement.

Google's August 2023 target API requirement is that all applications should target API 33 (i.e. Android 13). That change has now been applied to the app. Previous API levels down to API level 23 are still supported.

2.2 Prevented a user removing all tracks in the Track Lanes View.

Removing all tracks in the Track Lanes View caused an exception in the Track Explorer View when it next attempted to render strum parts for what had now become a non-existent track. To prevent that exception the option to remove all tracks in the associated context menu has now been disabled.

2.3 Note Picker Improvement.

The Note Picker tool now pre-selects strum part notes already set on opening allowing a user to add or remove notes to those previously set. Previously a user always had to set all the notes (up to 6) that were required in the strum part's chord.

2.4 Prevented a user's device going to sleep during playback.

If a user's device entered sleep mode during project content playback inconsistent behaviour ensued when the device subsequently came out of sleep mode. For example a user would usually have to initiate playback again within the context of transport controls having been left in an inconsistent state (i.e. a user would have to correct this by clicking the 'Stop' button in order to reset the transport controls). To avoid this behaviour a device is now prevented from entering sleep mode during project content playback.

Release 3.1.6 (version 30106)

1.0 Summary

Patch update to fix some exceptions and improve minor usability issues.

2.0 Detail

2.1 Playback in Track Lanes view causes exception/unexpected behaviour on initiating subsequent edit activities.

Fixed an exception following any sort of project playback in Track Lanes view on initiating a subsequent activity to edit one of the project elements displayed in that view (e.g. a phrase).

2.2 Stopped a user initiating simultaneous playback activities in Track Lanes View.

Prevented the simultaneous playback of multiple project tracks, phrases and/or phase elements when initiated from the context menu in Track Lanes View. If playback of a project element is initiated from the context menu whilst playback of another (or the same element) is already playing the application now stops the current playback. This reduces the consumption of application resources, eliminates discordant sound output and stops the pointless display of multiple simultaneous track cursors.

2.3 Corrected the inconsistent setting of the play and stop buttons in Track Lanes view.

Tidied user availability of the play and stop buttons in the Track Lanes view to eliminate scenarios where they were being set inconsistently.

2.4 Prevented a 'Random' Velocity Allocation exception on equal Min/Max values.

An unhandled exception occurred during playback when a phrase contained a strum element (i.e. a note) with a velocity allocation type of 'Random' and where the minimum and maximum velocity settings were set to the same value. This behaviour has now been corrected.

2.5 New velocity allocation type 'Random2' introduced.

An additional velocity allocation type has been added to the list of note velocity allocation algorithms. 'Random2' is a variation of the existing 'Random' velocity allocation type adding even more variability to the way the 'loudness' of individual notes is distributed. With this algorithm each note in the strum is allocated a random velocity level between the minimum and maximum velocity levels (either set globally for a phrase or as overridden on a note by note basis). Each time a project is played new velocity levels will have been assigned leading to subtle variations in the resulting sound of the output.

Release 3.1.4 (version 30104)

1.0 Summary

Patch update to fix a few exceptions and to comply with scheduled google play API requirements as well as minor functional improvements.

2.0 Detail

2.1 Stopping track playback following a track switch causes exception.

Fixed exception where switching tracks in the Track Explorer view caused an exception in track play mode when attempting to stop playback when playback had already finished. Very rare circumstance but has been observed within the installed user base.

2.2 Unable to stop playback after changing device orientation.

Fixed an issue in the Mixing Desk view that occurs when a user changes device orientation whilst an element of the project is playing. In local play mode the play and stop buttons are set assuming nothing is currently playing and it is impossible to stop play as the stop button is disabled. The app now stops playback when a user changes device orientation to avoid this situation occurring.

2.3 App now targets API level 31 (Android 12).

The app is now aligned with google play's November 2022 API requirement that requires all application's uploaded to Google Play to target API 31 (Android 12). Whilst compiled at API level 31 the app is backward compatible with API levels between 23 (Android 6) and 31 (Android 12).

2.4 Muted/Solo track highlighting inconsistencies

Muting or soloing a track in the Mixing Desk view would often result in the erroneous mirror highlighting of other 'unmuted' or 'unsolod' tracks. This issue is now fixed.

2.5 Cosmetic change to the project list.

This release includes a small functional change in the form of a cosmetic change to the Project Selection view. The dividing line between each project in the project list has been removed.

2.5 Muted track visibility improved in the Track Explorer view.

Previously if you selected a muted track in the Track Explorer view you might have wondered why the playback controls were disabled as there was no clear indication that you had selected a muted track. Muted tracks now have the text " (Muted)" appended to their track names in the Track List drop down control. This additional cue will help users understand why the playback controls are disabled. Note that you can still view/edit the content of individual phrases in a muted track and playback their 'note' content from this view, you just can't playback the complete track without first unmuting the track from the Mixing Desk view.

Release 3.1.1 (version 30101)

1.0 Summary

Minor accessibility change.

2.0 Detail

2.1 Stopping track playback following a track switch causes exception.

Changed the minimum width of a clickable text field in the Phrase Edit view to make it easier to activate.

Release 3.1.0 (version 30100)

1.0 Summary

Minor feature update plus a number of significant operational improvements.

2.0 Detail

2.1 Note Picker feature added.

A new piano keyboard widget ('Note Picker') is now available in the Phrase Editor. It provides an alternative way of setting a phrase's note pitches in addition to the note name drop downs and the chord wizard. A preview facility allows any notes picked to be heard before committing them to the phrase being edited.

2.2 Track Lanes view scrolling performance improvement

Significantly improved the scrolling performance of the Track Lanes view on devices running Android API level 29 and below.

2.3 Corrected a synchronisation issue associated with tied rests.

Corrected an issue with tied rests. Previously tied rest element durations were not being added on to the durations of the rest elements that they were extending.

2.4 Removed the constraint requiring a phrase to have at least one note pitch set.

Previously a phrase had to have at least one note pitch set and this was inconsistent with phrases that only contained rest based strum elements. Such phrases are silent and therefore insisting you had to have at least one note pitch set was illogical as there was nothing to play.

This constraint has been removed, you can now configure a phrase without setting any note pitches and you can remove all currently set note pitches in a phrase. If you do this, any strum elements in the phrase that would normally generate hard midi note events are changed to rests in order to maintain track timing. Previously Strumpy would have ignored all phrase events during midi file generation and would have failed to advance the track time position offset appropriately in order to ensure notes in later phrases were synchronized.

2.5 Reset phrase note pitches in a single action.

You can now reset all the chord note pitches to 'None' by long clicking on the keyboard widget.

2.6 Adding patterns in a phrase with no note pitches is now restricted.

If you add a new pattern or template to an existing set of strum elements in a phrase and that phrase has no note pitches set then you can now only strum elements with a strum technique of 'rest' and 'tie'.

2.7 Improved enablement/diss-enablement of the transpose buttons in the phrase editor.

Strumpy now disables the transpose buttons in the Phrase Editor if a user unsets all the note pitches.

2.8 Track Explorer phrase list scroll positioning improvements.

Improved track explorer phrase list scroll positioning after its content has been changed as a result of various edits. Currently Strumpy always repositions the phrase list at the top after adding, moving, copying and deleting phrases. This loses a user's focus when making a series of phrase list edits. The tool now ensures list positioning after any such action is logical for the type of action being performed and thereby minimising the need for the user to 'hunt the phrase' in order to reset list context during a series of related phrase list edits.

Release 3.0.3 (version 30003)

1.0 Summary

Functional release targeting Android API level 30 with legacy support for Android API levels 23-30 (Android 6 – Marshmallow) through Android 11 – Red Velvet Cake). Also tested successfully on Android 12 (at API level 31).

This release is focussed on further enhancing the end user experience which it realizes through a series of added visualizations. Together these are expected to enable users to better understand the relationship between composition configuration and the musical experience it generates.

2.0 Detail

2.1 Added a keyboard chord visualization control to the Track Explorer page.

This illustrates user selected phrase pitches by highlighting their position on a 96 note piano keyboard.

2.2 Added both keyboard and guitar chord visualization controls to the Phrase Edit page.

Illustrates user selected pitches by highlighting their position on a 96 note piano keyboard and also sample frettings on a guitar. Strumpy was originally conceived as tool for home keyboardists to fashion guitar strumming in their musical compositions. That's why a piano keyboard was seen as the primary composition instrument, however many of Strumpy's users may instead prefer the guitar as an alternative composition instrument. To support those users phrase pitches can now be visualized on a guitar fretboard in the phrase editor in addition to a piano keyboard. Refer to the user guide for further information and insight into this new feature.

2.3 Added visualization of phrase and strum element playback.

Previously when composition or track playback was initiated on the Track Explorer page there was no feedback, a user was unable to see which phrases in the phrase list where in play as the music played. This has now been rectified. Phrases are highlighted during playback helping users to more easily identify phrases responsible for composition timing issues. A similar visualization has been added in the Phrase Editor page allowing users to see which strum elements (i.e. notes/rests) are in play at a particular point in time during phrase playback. This too helps identify the location of musical timing issues, but in this case within an individual phrase.

2.4 Track playback cursor highlighting in the Track Lanes page.

When a single track was selected for playback in the Track Lanes view it was difficult to focus on which track was playing amongst all the others. Strumpy now highlights the relevant track by changing the colour of the playback cursor where it crosses the track in play.

2.5 Phrase Editor is now single task.

An end user was inadvertently allowed to open multiple phrase editor instances at the same time and this was a source of unexpected behaviour and possibly project corruptions. This often happened accidentally when opening the phrase editor by clicking a phrase in the phrase editor on the Track Explorer page. If the Phrase Editor took just too long to open a user might click on it again before the initial page had opened thereby triggering the creation of another instance. Users may also have purposely double clicked on a phrase and this may have been interpreted by Strumpy as two single clicks resulting once again in two instances of the phrase editor being instantiated. This behaviour should no longer occur as the Phrase Editor activity has been constrained to be single task so only one instance can be active at any one point in time. Hopefully this should eliminate the inconvenience of inadvertently opening two instances and avoid any issues that may have occurred as a result.

2.6 Improved phrase editing workflow on smaller devices

On smaller pixel density phone devices the phrase editor separates general parameter editing from strum element editing with the latter being hosted in a drawer UI element.

When a user opens the drawer to edit strum elements (i.e. to add more notes and/or rests of various durations to articulate phrase musicality) it overlays (i.e. hides) the parameter editing page which hosts the playback and phrase navigation controls. This was a cumbersome arrangement because if a user wanted to edit the strum elements they had to keep opening and shutting the drawer to flip between editing and playing strum elements to hear any changes made.

In this release additional phrase play and stop controls have been added to the drawer page so a user can immediately initiate playback of any strum element changes made.

Similarly, 'Next' and 'Previous' phrase navigation buttons have also been added to the drawer page so that a user can move between phrase strum element editing (and playing) without ever leaving that page having once opened it. This will improve the process of editing strum elements making it a more efficient and pleasant experience.

Note that on larger phones and tablets a more efficient layout automatically places strum elements alongside other phrase parameters, all within a single page. Those on larger devices will already be enjoying this experience so will not benefit from this change.

2.7 Improved Track Explorer Workflow.

An additional button has been added to the Track Explorer page to navigate back to the Project List page. This avoids a user having to seek out the device back button in order to return to the project list page.

2.8 Improved emailing of project configuration and midi files

Corrected the MIME type used when attaching 'project configuration' and 'midi' files to emails to support those particular functions in the app. Previously emails may have been sent without the relevant files being attached when using particular email programs (as chosen by the user from the

selection of email apps installed on their device).

2.9 Chord Wizard changes

The interval patterns used to generate the ‘ninth’ and ‘eleventh’ chord variation types has been changed to make improvements.

2.10 Percussion instrument name correction.

Corrected a fault that resulted in percussion instrument names being slightly truncated.

2.11 User interface colour scheme

The colour scheme of certain page layout elements and backgrounds have been changed to give the new release a fresher look.

Release 2.1.7 (version 20107)

1.0 Summary

A maintenance release to target API level 30 (23-30). Was conceived at release level 2.1.0 but went through several iterations (2.1.0 – 2.1.6) before finally being released to users at the 2.1.7 release.

This release involved the removed of all significant deprecations, those remaining were mostly those that could not be supported through Androidx support libraries and instead were managed programmatically by invoking different code depending on the API level tested at runtime.

Androidx support libraries were introduced (for the first time) in this release.

Replaced Android ‘task’ usage with an alternative threading mechanism.

Using the Storage Access Framework (SAF) to access external storage when importing project files and exporting project and midi files (required at API level 29+).

Introducing Android fragments for the first time where it was necessary to work around certain deprecations (particularly for some dialogues). Deprecations also required changes to the way intents were started and their associated callback mechanism.

Some tidying up of the code base.

Added a track’s name to phrase headers in the Track Lanes view to improve visual context as users scroll the lanes horizontally. Also changed the playback cursor in this view to the colour white

(previously black) as this makes it stand out more.

Made a number of accessibility and touch target improvements such as setting content descriptions in various UI elements so they can be processed by screen readers and setting the minimum height (and sometimes their corresponding minimum width) to 48dp in line with the latest Google standards. This improved the look and feel of some of the key pages in the app and make it easier for a user to connect with a UI element when trying to activate its function.

Release 2.0.4 (version 20004)

1.0 Summary

Patch release to optimize for Android 9 (28). There are no functional changes.

Release 2.0.3 (version 20003)

1.0 Summary

Patch release that fixes a problem inserting strum element templates into a phrase from the phrase element editor. When the template selection dialogue first opened the 'OK' button was enabled by default. If you failed to select an item from the displayed list of templates and then clicked the OK button an exception would be thrown and the application would crash. This has now been rectified, the OK button is now disabled until an item in the list has been clicked.

Release 2.0.2 (version 20002)

1.0 Summary

Patch release that fixes a problem in phrases where the first strum element had a strum element technique with a technique option that fell above the Tie' option in the list of available strum element techniques. Impacted all the arpeggio strum element techniques specified on the first strum element of a phrase. This caused the app to crash, notably when the strum element edit dialogue was opened on such a phrase although it might also have manifested itself in other ways.

Release 2.0.1 (version 20001)

1.0 Summary

Patch release that fixes a problem with partial composition playback when initiated from a track lane context menu in the Track Lanes View. When using one of the '..all tracks' options if any track other than the topic of the phrase or note selected as the playback start point had any phrase repeat groups configured with a break-out, the break would not be respected in those tracks. They would play for longer than expected and would not match their drawn lane content in the track lanes view.

Release 2.0.0 (version 20000)

1.0 Summary

This major functional release delivers some new key features, improves a few existing features, fixes some outstanding bugs and improves alignment with the Android platform. The most notable change is the introduction of a new 'Track Lanes View' which provides users with a significant step up in how they view and edit project content. Another significant feature is that you can now break out of phrase repeat groups to better implement first and second endings when working with repeating sections of project content. For further information on these new features and other changes made please refer to the detail section that follows. Don't forget that you can also download the updated user guide from the website that accompanies the app (see the link on the Google Play entry).

This release is forward compatible with any previously created project configuration files so you can load in your existing projects. Please be aware that if you use the new phrase repeat group 'break-out' feature it is only supported from this release. If a project is saved by this release and it contains one or more break-out points the results of loading that project configuration file into a previous release are considered to be undefined (not tested and therefore supported by the author).

2.0 Detail

2.1 New Track Lanes View

This is the most significant feature of the release. This new view lays out track content over time and is the first time Strumpy users have been able to visualize the musical alignment of one or more tracks. A scrolling cursor, visible only in this view during playback, marks the current playback song position. The view also supports a wide range of editing facilities and it's likely to become the view of choice when composing song content moving forward. Always, check the user guide out for more detail.

2.2 Phrase Repeat Group Break-Outs (first and second endings)

The mechanism to repeat a group of phrases has been extended to allow a break-out on the last iteration through the phrase set involved.

The break out transfers playback to the phrase that follows the phrase repeat group end point on the repeat group's final iteration and can be set on any phrase in the repeat group except the phrase marked as the repeat end point (and this includes a phrase marked as the start of a phrase repeat group).

The break out occurs after the phrase marked as a break-out phrase completes playback. You can use this feature to simulate the configuration of alternative endings to a block of repeated phrases. Without this feature you could only achieve this by abandoning the repeated phrase group approach and duplicating phrases instead which is far less efficient. This should help to minimise composition effort and reduce project size (fewer phrases to build and maintain) and may even open up further avenues of creativity.

2.3 Track Balancing Reinvented

The mechanism previously used to balance track playback levels has been changed.

Previously the volume slider that controlled this (refer to the Track Details View) directed the level of a midi controller channel volume message that was set at the beginning of each track. This is fine if every Strumpy track is mapped onto its own unique midi channel. Whilst this can easily be arranged for instrument tracks it doesn't work too well for drum tracks as each one has to be mapped to midi channel (channel 10) to satisfy midi's requirements. If you were to create separate Strumpy tracks for different drum instruments (e.g. bass drum, snare drum, symbols etc) all would have to be mapped onto midi channel 10.

Whilst Strumpy would issue a volume controller channel volume message for each track on playback those messages would override one another with the last drum track in the project list taking preference. This means you could set the individual track volume settings to any value you like but the volume setting associated with the last drum track in the project track list would set the volume for all drum tracks mapped onto midi channel 10, hence you are unable to effectively balance the volume of individual drum instruments.

To remedy the above the sending of a channel volume message for each track at the start of playback has been removed in favour of using the track volume setting to modify the velocity of individual midi note-on events. When set to its maximum value the velocity of all note-on events dispatched will be set as configured at the phrase or velocity parameter override levels. By reducing a track's volume setting in the track details view you can now proportionally reduce those velocities (aka volume) on a Strumpy track by track basis thereby promoting a more effective balance of volumes amongst tracks that are mapped onto the same midi channel. Whilst this was primarily aimed at improving drum track composition it applies equally well to instrument tracks that are also mapped onto the same midi channel.

2.4 Improved handling of 'Tied' notes

Previously you were able to select the strum element technique of 'Tie' for the first strum element in a phrase. This clearly makes no sense as there is no preceding note in the phrase to which the tie can be associated and it doesn't make sense to allow ties across phrase boundaries as the last note in a preceding phrase might be mapped to completely different note pitches. Strumpy previously detected this scenario and automatically changed the strum element technique from 'Tie' to a 'Rest' and this may have led to some confusion amongst users. It did the same thing if you moved a 'Tie' to the first position in a phrase. In this release Strumpy now removes the 'Tie' option from the available strum element technique options for a strum element sitting in the opening position of a phrase. This may help to reduce any future confusion. If you move a 'Tie' to the opening position of a phrase Strumpy doesn't prevent you doing that and still changes the 'Tie' into a 'Rest' but it now outputs a message to remind the user why the change was made.

2.4 Mixing Desk Transpose Option

You can now transpose a selected track from the Mixing Desk track list context menu, or indeed all tracks in the current project. Added for consistency with the new Track Lanes View where this feature was included.

2.5 Other Technical Changes

Previous versions of the app used a deprecated means of displaying dialogues. This release was an ideal opportunity to remove that dependency before it was formally removed from the Android platform significantly impacting users. All the dialogues now use the Fragment class (and its derivation) API's which is the current recommended approach.

Release 1.5.0 (version 9)

1.0 Summary

Fixes problems experienced by some devices running android 6.0 Marshmallow (23) and above caused by support for deprecated features being removed from the OS. User interface look and feel was also refreshed slightly and some layout issues addressed.

Release 1.4.1 (version 8)

1.0 Summary

Maintenance release to fix an issue with the project import facility.

2.0 Detail

Currently the contents of a project with the same name as the one being imported will be overwritten despite Strumpy prompting for, and actually importing, the external project under a new name. This could result in an unexpected loss of work so users are advised to upgrade as soon as possible.

Release 1.4.0 (version 7)

1.0 Summary

This release introduces an arpeggio feature. Build complex sounding rising and/or falling melodic background tracks to add colour and interest to your compositions.

2.0 New Arpeggio Feature

The current range of strum element techniques has been extended to include the following arpeggio style techniques.

ARP I Up

ARP I Down

ARP I Up/Down

ARP II Up

ARP II Down

ARP II Up/Down

These generate rising, falling (or both) sequences of note pitches based on those you have configured for the containing phrase (i.e. up to six). To try these out, simply configure a strum element in a phrase with some note pitches set (say a 'minim' duration) and choose one of the above techniques to hear the effect.

You can set the note pitches using either the chord wizard or by setting them manually.

You can easily generate more unusual note pitch sequences by selecting one of the 'shuffle' chord wizard sequence properties. This will give a more random feel to the resulting arpeggios.

Add sequences of this nature to brighten up your compositions.

For further information refer to the 'Strum Techniques' section of the user guide where each of the above arpeggio styles is described along with further supportive information.

Also check out the new 'Arpeggios At Play' Multitrack Demo sample project to see this feature being used in practice.

Release 1.3.1 (version 6)

1.0 Summary

Maintenance release to fix a track list maintenance issue in the Mixing Desk View concerning the removal of the current track.

2.0 Detail

A crash could occur if a user attempted to remove the first track in the Mixing Desk View track list if that track was also the current track (i.e. the one previously selected in the Track Explorer View before navigating to the Mixing Desk View). The crash would occur on return to the Track Explorer view due to the current track index having an invalid value. This problem has now been fixed. If the current track is removed the tool now sets the first track in the list (whatever that may be) as the current track (there will always be at least one track in the track list).

Release 1.3.0 (version 5)

1.0 Summary

This release adds a new feature that should make it easier to synchronise phrases across tracks.

2.0 New Track Phrase Synchronise Feature

As you will be aware, Strumpy doesn't use a traditional 'piano roll' style user interface where musical events are laid out across a song composition time-line. With that model you do not have to account for time when nothing is happening (rests), you only specify event start and end times and the system automatically accounts for any intervening gaps.

In Strumpy, all musical time has to be accounted for using phrase strum elements, and of course some of these will be 'rests' indicating time when no 'sonic' musical events are happening.

This approach is fine when you're building busy tracks as you can easily keep track of where you are in time, but it can become rather cumbersome, and even somewhat complicated, on less populated tracks where you have to calculate the combination of rests needed to fill out the time between key event trigger points.

Often those trigger points coincide with key musical events on other tracks and therefore having the ability to synchronise an existing track to a key event (read phrase) in another track without having to manually calculate the intervening rests would be a useful feature. In fact some would say this was rather 'essential' when building serious multi-track compositions using Strumpy's rather unique approach to composition.

Well, from this release you can now do this.

A new menu option has been added to the track list context menu in the Mixing Desk view. If you want to synchronise that track to a key event in another track simply call up the context menu in that view for the track you wish to synchronise. You are then presented with dialogue where you can select the track that you know contains the particular phrase to which you wish to synchronise.

When you select that track, a further drop down list box is populated with phrases that start later than the end of the last phrase in the track you are trying to synchronise. The list is a propagation of all the phrases in the track and respects any repetitions you may have configured in that track. The same phrase may therefore occur more than once in the list of phrases presented.

Only the phrase name is presented in the control so it is important that you assign suitable names to phrases in a track that are likely to act as key synchronisation points so that you can recognise them when attempting to synchronise with them using this feature. You can change phrase names at any time so this is fairly trivial to do and can be left until a particular need for synchronisation occurs.

Select the desired synchronisation phrase and 'ok' the dialogue. Behind the scenes Strumpy appends one or more phrases in the topic track containing sufficient 'rest' strum elements to account for the time difference up to the beginning of the chosen phrase in the synchronisation track. You can then add additional compositional elements knowing that they will start at the chosen point of synchronisation.

This powerful new feature will significantly improve efficiency when building multi-track Strumpy compositions allowing you to focus on the music rather than Strumpy mechanics. Have fun with it.

Release 1.2.0 (version 4)

1.0 Summary

This release adds a new feature and tidies up a few outstanding issues.

2.0 New Pitch Bend Feature

You can now add pitch bends to strum elements configured with the 'Down' and 'Up' strum element technique. You have complete control over bend depth, the delay before a bend kicks in, bend speed and finally bend type. The following bend types are provided.

'Up and Down', 'Down and Up', 'Down Only' and 'Up Only'.

This feature was added to provide greater realism in building guitar strumming patterns. The occasional pitch bend helps to better simulate the action of a real guitar players who often use this technique to add colour and interest.

Note that this feature can significantly add to the number of midi file events generated. This in turn will increase the time delay between initiating playback and actually hearing the resulting sound, *so*

use it sparingly throughout your compositions.

The pitch bend feature is inappropriate for drum tracks (i.e. those assigned to midi channel 10) so if you re-purpose a non drum track to midi channel 10 after you had previously added pitch bends to some of strum elements in that track, don't be too surprised to see your pitch bends disappear. Pitch bend properties will also be removed if you change a strum element's technique to anything other than 'Down' or 'Up'.

This is a great new feature and you should find that it adds an extra dimension to your Strumpy compositions.

3.0 Fixes

1. Span override properties not loading correctly from configuration files

It was found that the status flag that indicated that a strum element had span loading set was not being loaded properly from project configuration files, even though the property values associated with this feature were being correctly loaded. This resulted in the icon image that indicated that span loading was set for a strum element not being displayed. This issue has now been fixed.

2. Span Override 'loading' parameter not functioning properly.

When you configure the percentage of note pitches to be struck from the six available you are also able to configure whether those notes are allocated from the 'front', 'middle' or 'back'. Unfortunately, whilst the percentage of pitches to be struck (i.e. chord notes) was being calculated correctly the tool was failing to pick them based on the configured loading parameter (i.e. front, middle or back). This fault prevented the full potential of this feature being exploited. This fault has now been fixed.

3. Improvements in the way that strum element property icon images are displayed.

The layout of the images that indicate the activation of certain strum element properties (i.e. velocity override, delay override, span loading and now pitch bend) has changed to make better use of the screen space available. Before they were lined up to the right of the strum technique text but this often resulted in the image to the extreme right being clipped. This issue would only have got worse with the introduction of the new pitch bend feature. The location of these images has been moved, they are now located under the strum technique textual description.

Release 1.1.0 (version 3)

1.0 Summary

This release adds a new feature that will improve productivity during project construction in addition to fixing some further issues.

2.0 New Song Positioning Feature

Anyone who has attempted to build a complete song rather than just short clips will have recognised that having to listen through the whole composition each time a playback is actioned is not particularly productive. Often you want to start playback around an area you are working on so that you can quickly hear the effect of changes made to specific phrases on one or more tracks.

From this release you can now do that.

A song position pointer control has been added to both the Track Explorer and Mixing Desk views that allows you to select a start position within the overall composition. Positioning is based on a percentage of the overall length of the composition, so if you set the song position pointer control half way (50%) then the next time you initiate a playback of your composition it will start from the next note on event on or after that position.

You can further control the position of the song position pointer by using the +/- controls which increment/decrement the song position pointer control by 1 unit (i.e. 1%) in either direction.

Long clicking the + control resets the song position pointer to zero.

The new feature is similar to the 'Now' pointer in many Digital Audio Workstations (DAWs) and should significantly improve productivity during project construction.

Refer to the user guide for further details.

2.0 Fixes

1. Returning to the Track Explorer view from the mixing Desk view using the device 'back' button was failing to stop any playback already in progress. The fix in this release ensures consistent exit from that view regardless of the method used to exit.
2. The function to mark a phrase as being at the start of a repetition group was not available for selection in the phrase list context menu in all the allowed circumstances. For example, when attempting to add a second phrase repetition group. This release now fixes that issue.

Release 1.0.1 (version 2)

1.0 Background

This is a maintenance release to fix issues spotted after the initial release was published.

2.0 Various Fixes

1. When a track was copied (cloned) the copied track did not include any group repetition properties. This would cause the cloned track to go out of musical time with the source track

should that source track contain repeated phrase groups. This release now fixes that problem.

2. When a track was copied it retained the midi channels assigned to the source track instead of attempting to assign new channels. This problem has now been fixed.
3. Switching between the Track Explorer and Mixing Desk views now terminates any playback in progress to ensure that the play/stop button states are kept consistent with playback state. Also a minor issue with setting the state of the track playback control stop button on return from the Mixing Desk view has now been fixed.

Release 1.0.0 (version 1)

This is the Initial Release.

1.0 Release Background

Strumpy (Pro) is an evolution of Strumpy (Lite) but the changes are so significant that its creator thought it would be better if the new version was released as another product rather than being treated as another upgrade to the 'Lite' product.

Releasing (Pro) as a new product allowed it to be targeted at later versions of Android rather than having to support legacy versions going back to version 2.3.3, which of course the Lite version does and will continue to do so whilst there are still active users. This product supports Android 4.0.3 (API level 15) and above and therefore significantly reduces the number of previous Android versions that need to be tested and/or supported. This also allows the creator to use Android features that were not available on those earlier versions.

It's natural that existing Strumpy (Lite) users will be interested in the new features of Strumpy (Pro) and so I've summarised the key changes below.

I would encourage all Strumpy users to download the Strumpy (Pro) user guide from the website to get the most out of the application. Existing Strumpy (Lite) users may also find it a useful read if they are considering upgrading either now, or in the future (assuming they have a device with a version of Android that's capable of supporting it).

2.0 Key differences from Strumpy (Lite)

2.1 Multitracking - including support for drum tracks

The main difference is that the application has now gone multi-track. In 'Lite' you essentially had a single track to compose with, although there was a form of multi-tracking with the second instrument facility (added in version 1.6.0) the additional midi track generated couldn't be edited in any way as it was sourced from events in the primary instrument output track. In 'Pro' that is no longer the case.

You can create as many independent tracks as you want. Better still those tracks are not just limited to traditional instruments, you can now create drum tracks by assigning tracks to midi channel 10 (the standard midi output channel for triggering drum sounds).

All this is a massive improvement over the 'Lite' version of the product. The change required a significant redesign of the user interface in order to support the new data model (namely the introduction of a 'Track' concept) but existing 'Lite' users will still recognise the Phrase Edit view which is the heart of both Strumpy products, so they should soon become familiar with the new product.

Be sure to check out the new multi-tracking samples, all of which have project names which begin with the text

“Multitrack Demo -”

2.2 Improved UI Widget Display

In addition to embracing multi-tracking, the .apk file is now built specifically for Android 4.0.3 and above.

Previously the 'Lite' .apk was always built and distributed as a 2.3.3 binary. This meant that users on higher versions of Android were stuck with the user interface widget set bundled with that API level.

As Android has evolved, the look and feel of some of the standard Android UI widgets has improved. For example, seek bars looked pretty horrible at 2.3.3, but in later versions they were transformed into a more stylish form. The author became aware of this as a consequence of testing the product at .apk level 4.0.3 on a Samsung 10” tablet (his own personal Android device). Certain UI widgets had a different appearance to that observed running the same source code built at 2.3.3 through the emulators.

A consequence of this is that over half the 'Lite' users have to suffer the older widget set even though their devices are running a version of Android that would indeed support the later set. If I upgraded the .apk to 4.0.3 in order to satisfy those users, I would inadvertently remove Strumpy from the market for any users with devices running versions of Android below 4.0.3. The best solution all round was to introduce (Pro) as a new product, leaving the (Lite) version still available to users whose devices run older versions of the operating system.

So the good news is that many 'Lite' users that upgrade will not only appreciate the increased functionality offered by this new product, they will also be able to appreciate Strumpy's improved look and feel.

Please note that Strumpy (Pro) becomes the primary development line. This means that new features will only be added to the (Pro) product. The level of support for the (Lite) product has been reduced to that of critical 'bug fix' only. Faults found in (Pro) that also apply to (Lite) will be back fixed. Similarly any faults found in (Lite) that also impact (Pro) will be forward fixed.

3.0 Compatibility with 'Lite' project configuration files.

The configuration file structure has changed significantly to support the new product, but the author was conscious that existing 'Lite' users probably wouldn't be too happy if they couldn't load their existing projects into the 'Pro' version.

The new product is designed to cope with the existing 'Lite' configuration file format and therefore should load your existing files. When you save your projects from Strumpy (Pro) they will then be written in the updated native 'Pro' format which has support for multiple tracks.

Note that these new files are not compatible with Strumpy (Lite) so do not attempt to load them back into that product as you are quite likely get an application crash.

Happy Strumpying!