

INTRO TO THE AVID S6 – Some Basics



The S6 is capable of some very sophisticated tricks – tricks that most of us have no use for because we are not sitting at one day after day.



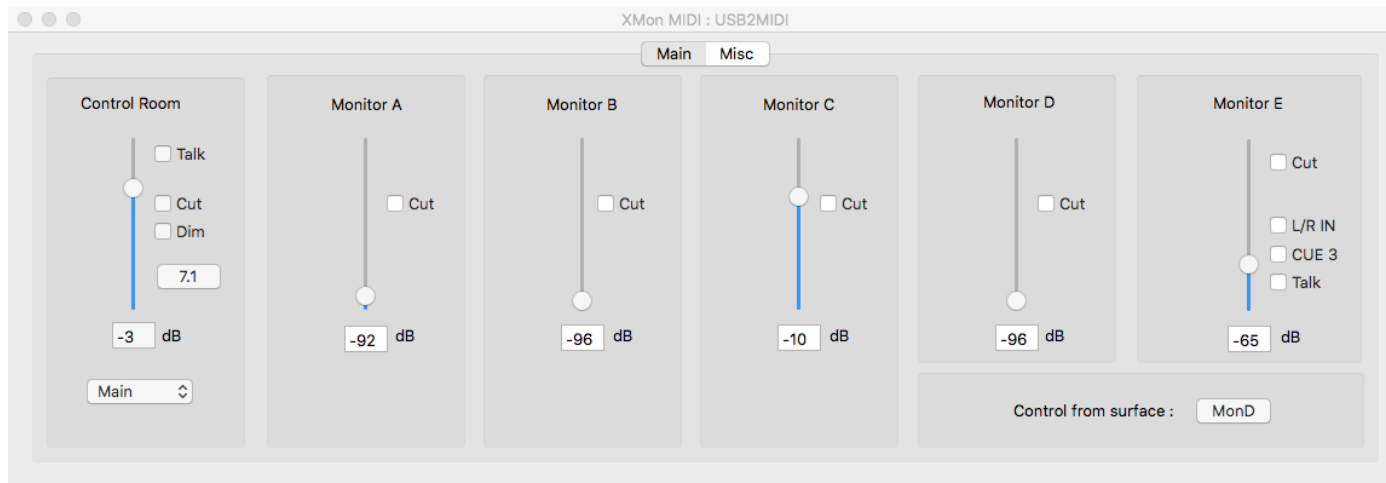
So the best rule is: ***if you don't know what some particular button does, don't mess with it!*** You can dig yourself into a pretty deep hole just by experimenting at random. And that could complicate things for the next person who comes in to work.

The following Intro Guide will attempt to describe the most common features you are likely to need.

PART 1: START UP & SHUT DOWN

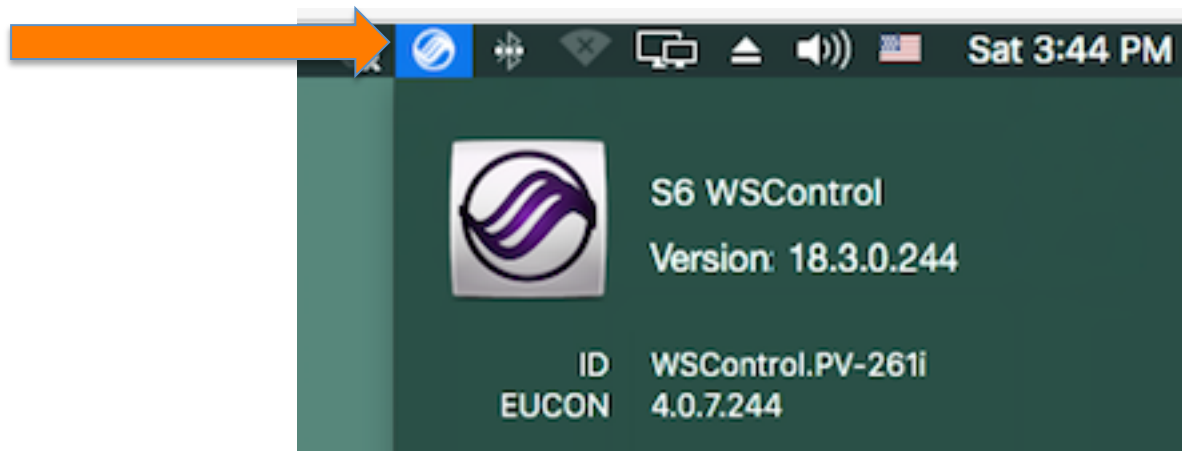
The Mac and the S6 perform a kind of “handshake” to link up, and the most reliable method to ensure a smooth link-up is:

1. The S6 should normally be left powered up. So if the S6 is on, start the Mac. If the S6 is off, power it up first.* (There is a round rubber button just behind the Master Module. Push it and wait until the flashing lights settle down, then start the Mac.)
2. **Do not launch Pro Tools until the S6 links up to the Mac.**
3. After the Mac is fully booted, the “Xmon” application panel should come to foreground. This is a normal step in the “handshake.” You don’t have to do anything with this Xmon panel. In fact, you can hide it in the Dock. It looks like this:



*If you get the order wrong, and start the Mac first with the S6 off, don’t panic – chances are the S6 will link up. If not, you can try restarting the Mac.

In the upper right corner of the Mac, you may notice an icon doing a bit of “progress spinning”. This is normal – it is the “WSControl” panel looking for the ethernet connection that will link Pro Tools and the S6.



When that stops spinning, you are probably linked up. The best way to make sure is to examine the Touch Screen in the Master Module of the S6. At the bottom of the Touch Screen are some choices for Home, Tracks, Monitoring, and **Settings**. Go to **Settings>Workstations**.

The top figure shows what the display should look like: a single Mac listed in the Network column and the same Mac appearing in the Connected column. (Our Macs are named after the rooms in which they live.) If the Mac in the “Connected” column is colored *red*, it means that it was connected in the past but is failing to connect now.

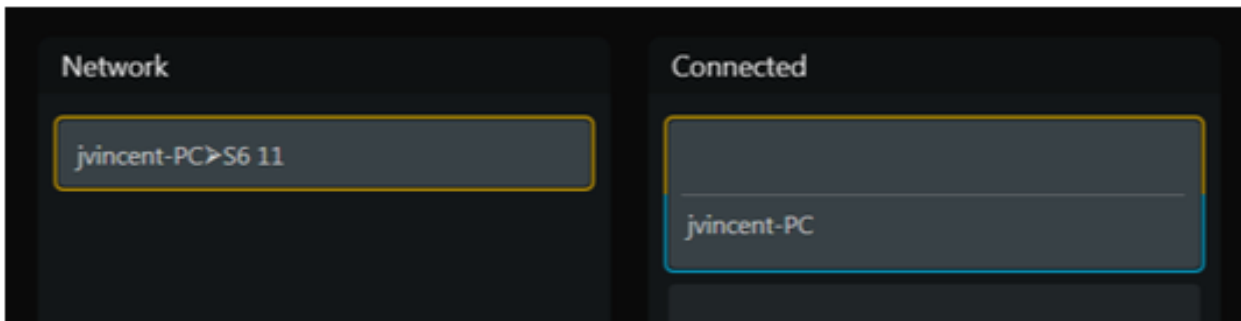


Figure 23. Workstation connected

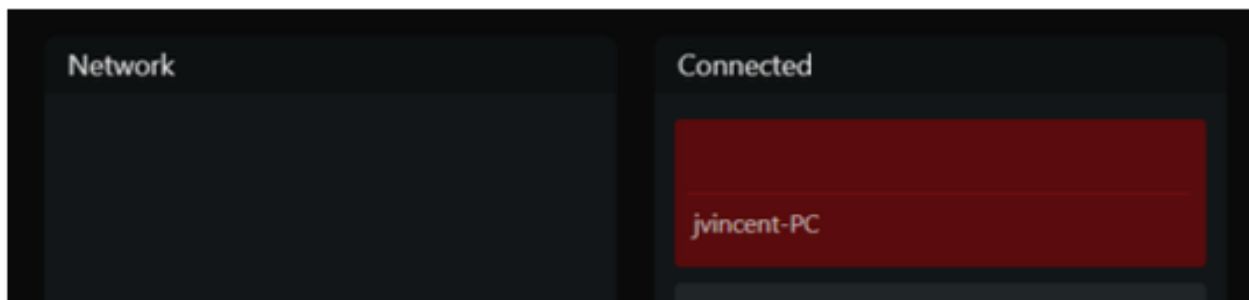


Figure 24. Workstation offline

If you see the name of your workstation listed on the left, but not the right, you can try dragging the name from the left to the right column.



Assuming that the Mac and S6 have linked up, launch Pro Tools and open a session. The S6 should very quickly “populate” its faders from the tracks in your session.

If the system does not link, your trouble-shooting options are limited.

The connection requires that a number of factors are selected. One of them is that EUCON connectivity is enabled. To check this, in Pro Tools go to Setup>Peripherals. Check that Eucon is *enabled*.



If *Enable EUCON* is not checked, you can try to enable it and restart Pro Tools to see if that will make the system link up.

IMPORTANT: Do not “uncheck” this button if it is already enabled.

If the system still does not link, do not attempt any other trouble-shooting yourself; call for RECA/Post-Production support.

SHUTTING DOWN THE S6

Please leave the S6 powered on. If it becomes necessary to shut it down, NEVER shut the power off when the Master Module is running. Instead, follow these steps:

1. Quit Pro Tools
2. On the Home Page of the Master Module, Choose **Settings**
3. Under Settings, choose “**About**” (not an obvious choice, is it?)
4. At the bottom of the “About” page, choose **Shutdown**. *Do not choose “Logout.”*
5. The S6 will then de-link and shut itself down.

Choose
“Settings” via
Touchpad



PART 2: S6 BASIC FUNCTIONS & CONCEPTS

The S6 is a “modular” system – assembled from different components, some of them optional. These are the modules currently installed on SFTV systems.



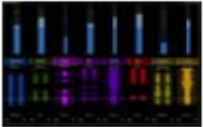
Master Module

This is the central hub for S6 operations. It uses a touchscreen and other controls to let you select, mute, solo, enable record and input, and edit track functions. All S6 configurations must have one Master Module. The Master Module displays the Home, Tracks, Monitoring, and Settings Screens, and provides knobs, switches, and a touchscreen that let you configure and manage your system, navigate through your session’s tracks, and perform many recording, monitoring, routing, and mixing tasks.



Automation Module

This module includes Transport Controls, Jog/Shuttle Wheel, Attention Track Fader, and other controls.



Display Module

Each of its eight strips can display metering, editable waveforms, and other functions. Display Modules can also be configured as Master Meter Modules.



Knob Module

Each of its eight strips has four knob sections with displays.



Fader Module

Each of its eight strips has a motorized fader, meter, mute, solo, automation and other switches, an Attention key, and a display.

Remember: if you find some functions of the S6 to be intimidating, it is only a software controller. You can continue to use the Mac keyboard and mouse to do much of your mixing within Pro Tools.

But at a minimum, you will need to make sure you are monitoring your mix correctly. You do that from the Master Module.

Depending on what your Touch Screen Display is showing, it is probably easiest to start from **Home**.

HOME



BASIC MONITORING

1. Push the Home Button on the Master Module.
2. Go to **Monitoring** by either touching on the Touch Pad itself, or pushing the button below.

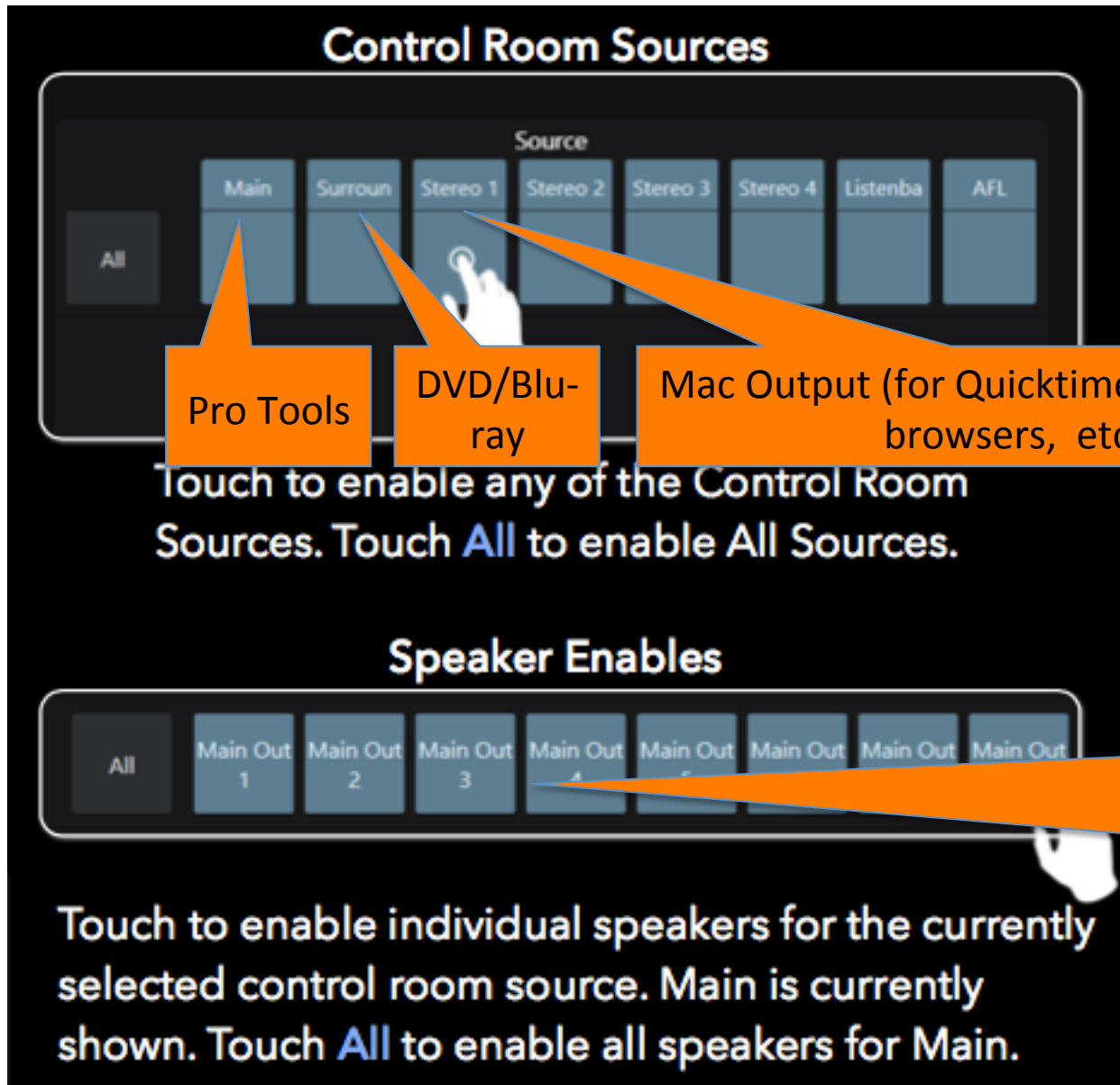


Choose
"Monitoring"
via
Touchpad

HOME



Once you're on the Monitoring Page, the choices are fairly simple.



For Pro Tools mixing, choose **MAIN**.

We have labeled these Left, Center, Right, etc. You can toggle speakers on/off if needed

NEXT, CHECK YOUR MONITOR LEVEL!!!



Select **MAIN** speakers

Reduces volume (for momentary breaks)



Display will show "0" for Unity
(Calibrated = 85 dB SPL @ favored listening position)

VOLUME control for Main Speakers

MUTE Main Speakers

Monitor Level Tips (Room BRY 261 only)

- Pro Tools playback at full level (“0” or Unity Gain) gives students in the second row the equivalent of ***theatrical loudness (approximately 85 dB SPL.)*** That’s pretty loud for a medium-sized classroom! You will probably want to cheat it down by at least 3 dB.
- Sitting at the board, you are getting about 6 dB more than the students. You may want to adjust it down by approximately 10 dB for your own comfort level. This should produce a level of about 81 dB SPL when seated at the S6. (This is still adequate for most of the student seating positions.)
- Blu-ray/DVD playback is from a consumer level deck, so for “full volume” you may need to boost the monitor to +6 to +8.
- Soundproofing of BRY 261 and 230 is quite good; at full volume there is some faint subwoofer leakage, but very little else.

Before you start mixing...

The S6 has lots of customizable preferences, and some choices that might make sense to one person might be utterly baffling to others. So we encourage you to stick with the default file called “SFTV User Prefs Locked” and not change any settings.

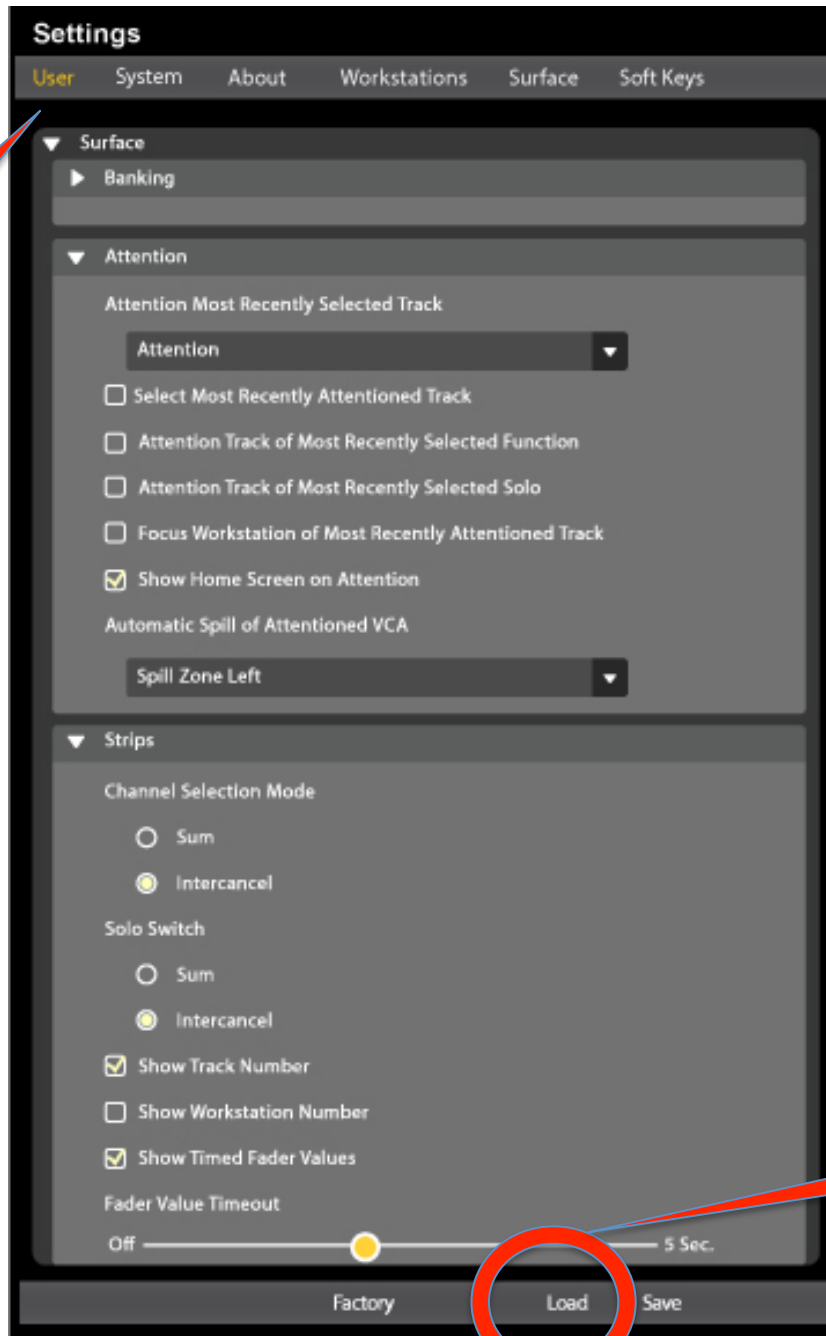
Unfortunately, if the person before you made a lot of modifications and failed to restore the S6 to defaults when they finished, those mods now affect you, and you might experience some “odd behavior” on the S6. The next page tells you how to restore the SFTV preferences.

At the bottom of the Master Module TouchScreen, select “Settings”, then “User.”



SETTINGS

USER

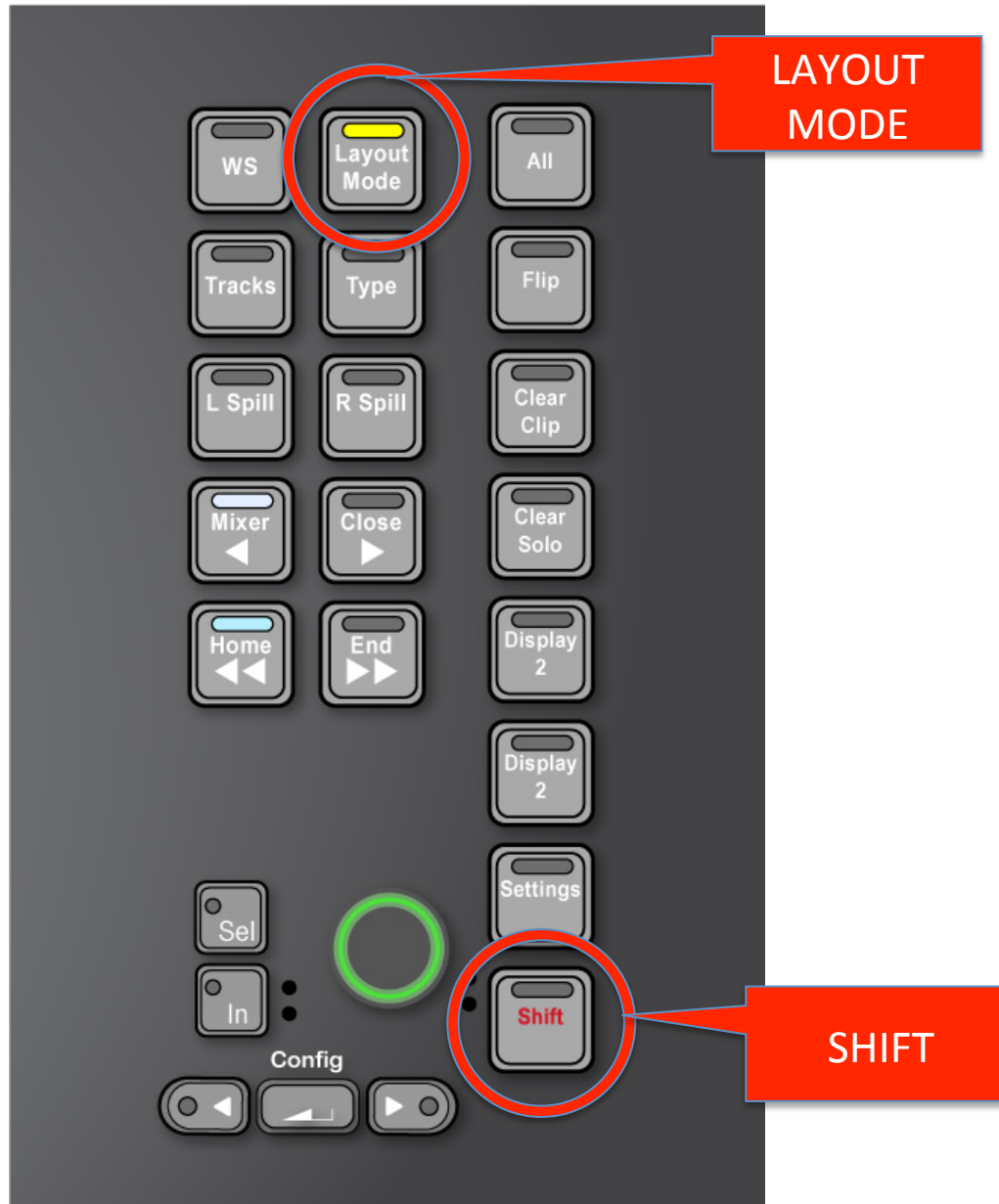


Then choose “LOAD”
(**not** “Factory”)

The Load screen will resemble a PC Windows display. Locate the file called “SFTV User Prefs Locked.” Touch the filename to select it, then touch Open.

LOAD

If Pro Tools tracks do not “populate” the faders...



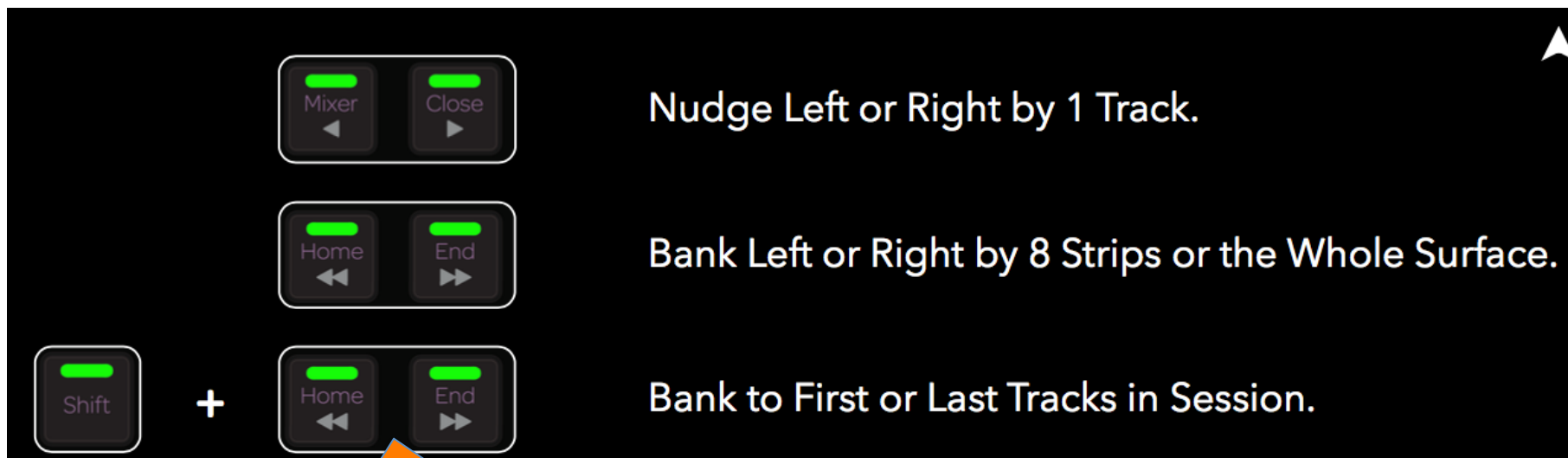
When you open a Pro Tools session, the first set of tracks in your session should end up controlled by the first set of faders on the S6. If they do not – if those faders are unassigned – chances are that someone has enabled a feature called “Layout Mode.” At the bottom left of the Master Module, check to see if the LAYOUT MODE button is lit. If so, turn it off by pressing SHIFT + LAYOUT MODE.

BASIC MIXING

If you've used a C24 interface, many of the basic functions are the same. The 24 faders are arranged in "banks" of 8. If you have more Pro Tools tracks than physical faders, you can navigate through the Pro Tools tracks by *banking* or *nudging*.

On the Master Module, these multi-function buttons can control banking/nudging.

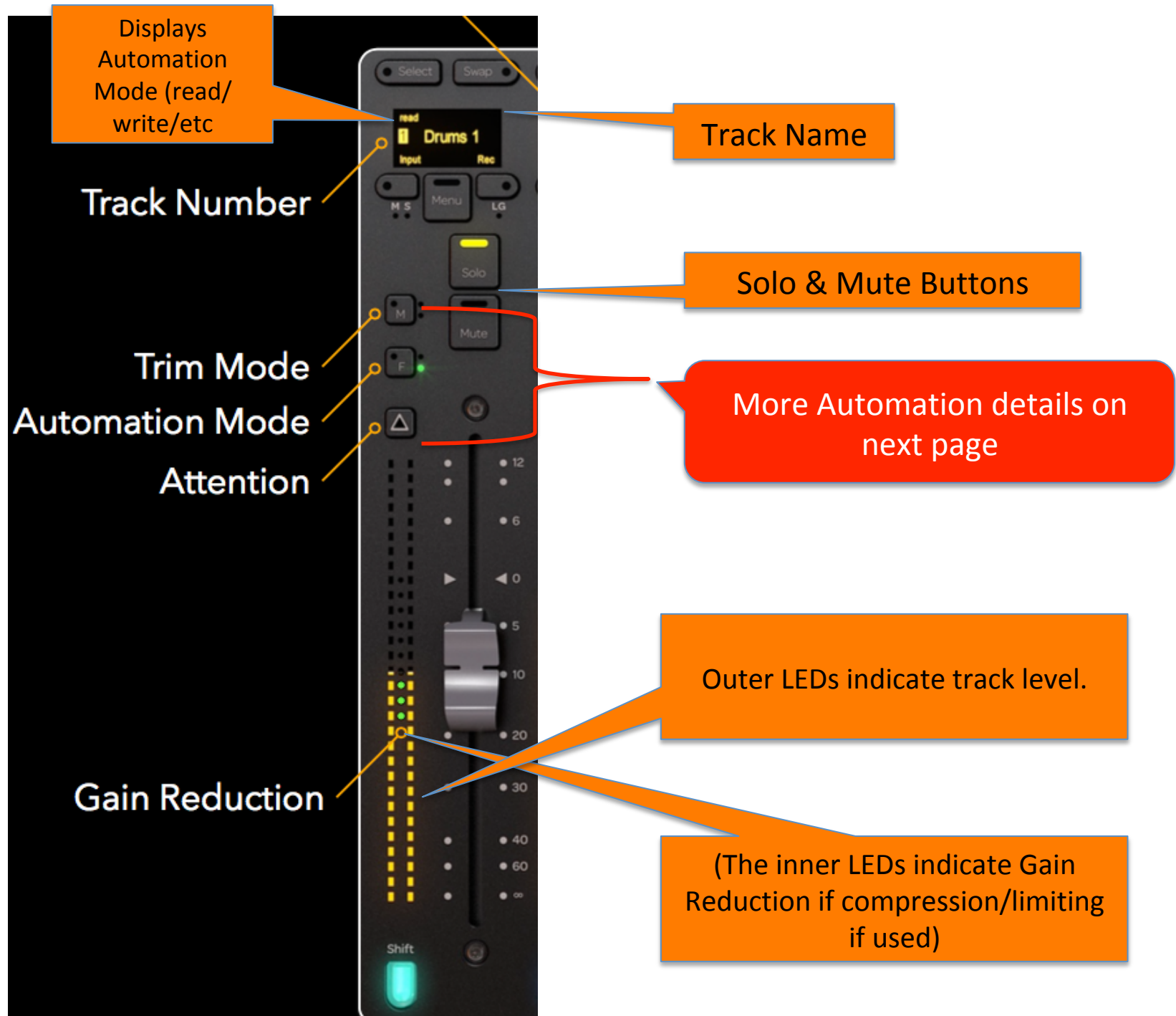




A quick double-tap can also bank to the first/last tracks in your session.

Note that when you rearrange tracks in the Pro Tools window, that faders will follow the new arrangement. This is sometimes an easy way to configure the physical faders in a convenient sequence.

ON THE NEXT PAGE, WE CAN VIEW A SINGLE FADER AND ITS CONTROL FUNCTIONS.



AUTOMATION

(Unfortunately, the letters/symbols they chose for these buttons are not too helpful in remembering the functions. I've noted hints that may help.)

Track Number

Trim Mode
Automation Mode
Attention

Gain Reduction

"M" Toggles "Trim" Mode on/off

"F" toggles thru Automation Functions
(Read, Write, Latch, Trim, Off)
The light shows GREEN for "READ" and
RED for any of the "WRITE" modes.



Directly above each fader is a **Process Module**. The functions you are most likely to need are indicated.

Depending on the preference setup, if you tap the EQ button on a track, Pro Tools may automatically create a 7 band EQ plug-in for that track (if there isn't one already.) In the same way, for the DYN button, a compressor/limiter will be created.

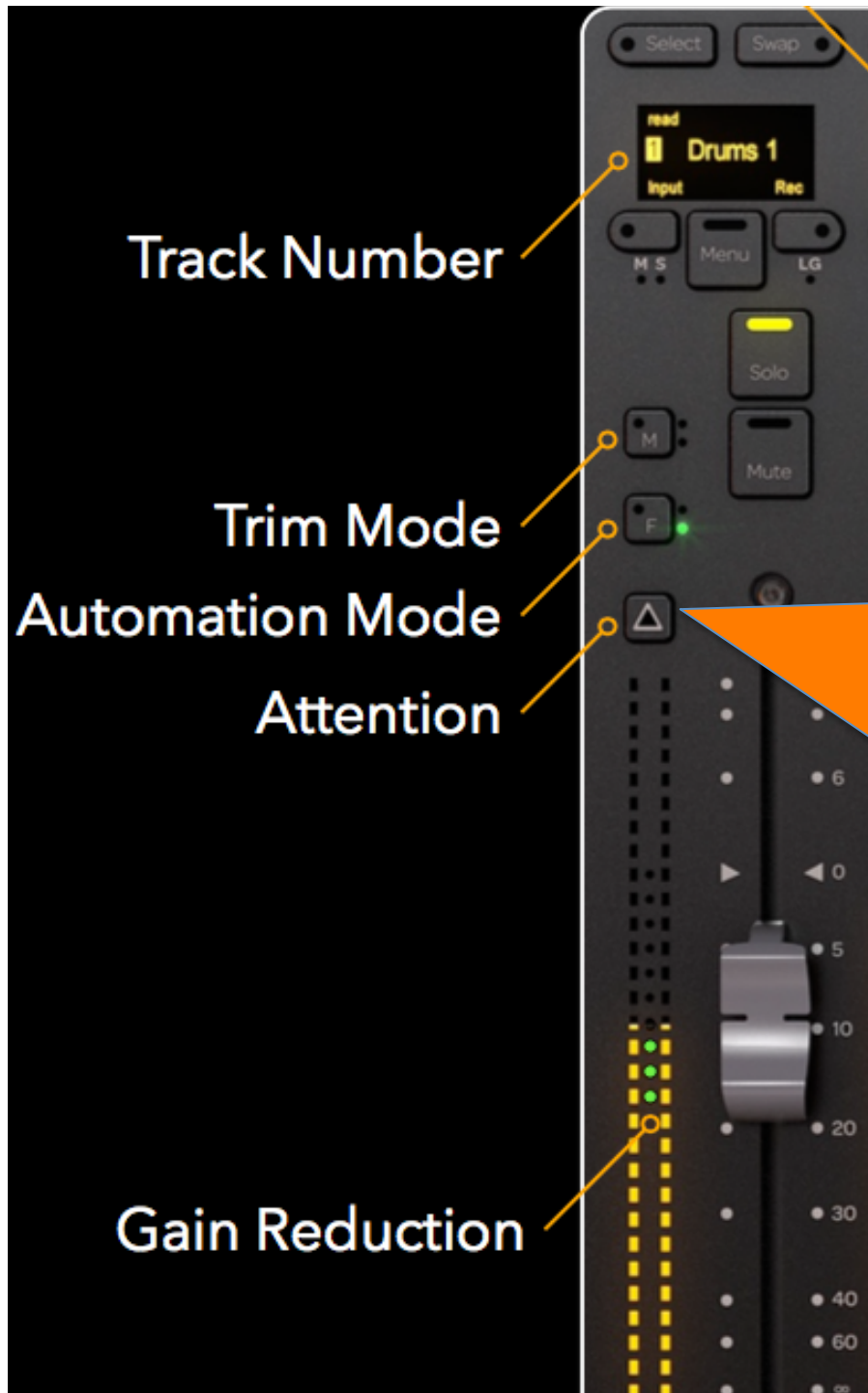
By default this is a PAN KNOB. (Although you can assign other functions to it.)



Above the Process Module is a **Knob Module** with 4 knobs that can adjust default parameters (in this case, for a 7 band EQ.)

Although you can do a lot of adjusting by working with individual channels in a way typical of analog consoles, it may be easier if you use the ATTENTION feature to bring a track to the Attention Fader on the Master Module.

TO “ATTENTION” A TRACK*



“**Attention**” is a key feature of the S6 – it allows you to pick any track and control it from the Master Module.

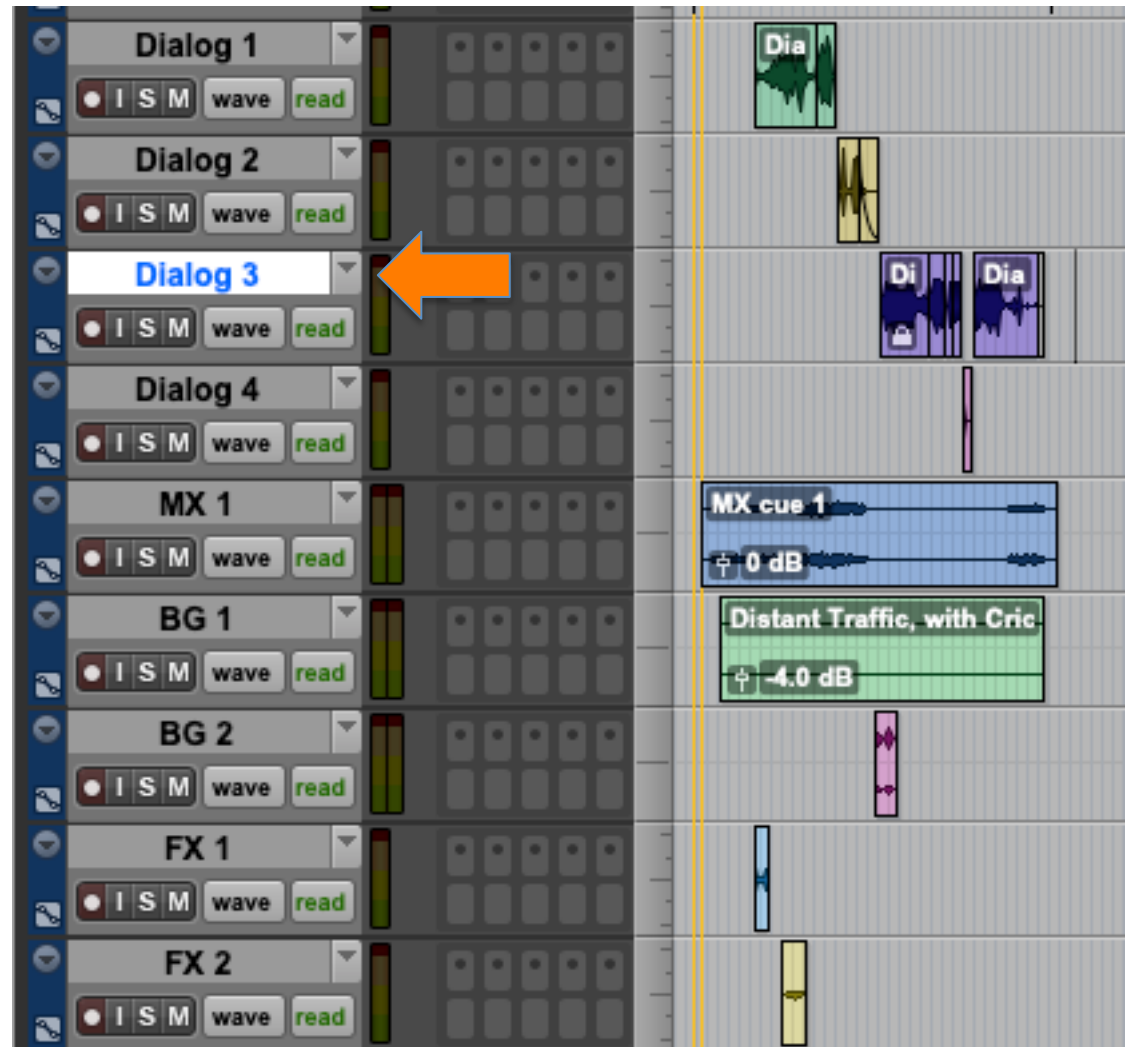
You can toggle this Attention Focus by pressing the TRIANGLE BUTTON.

(We also set a preference so that if you merely select a track name in Pro Tools, that Track will also get “attention” from the Master Module.)

(*Yes, they actually use “attention” as a verb.)

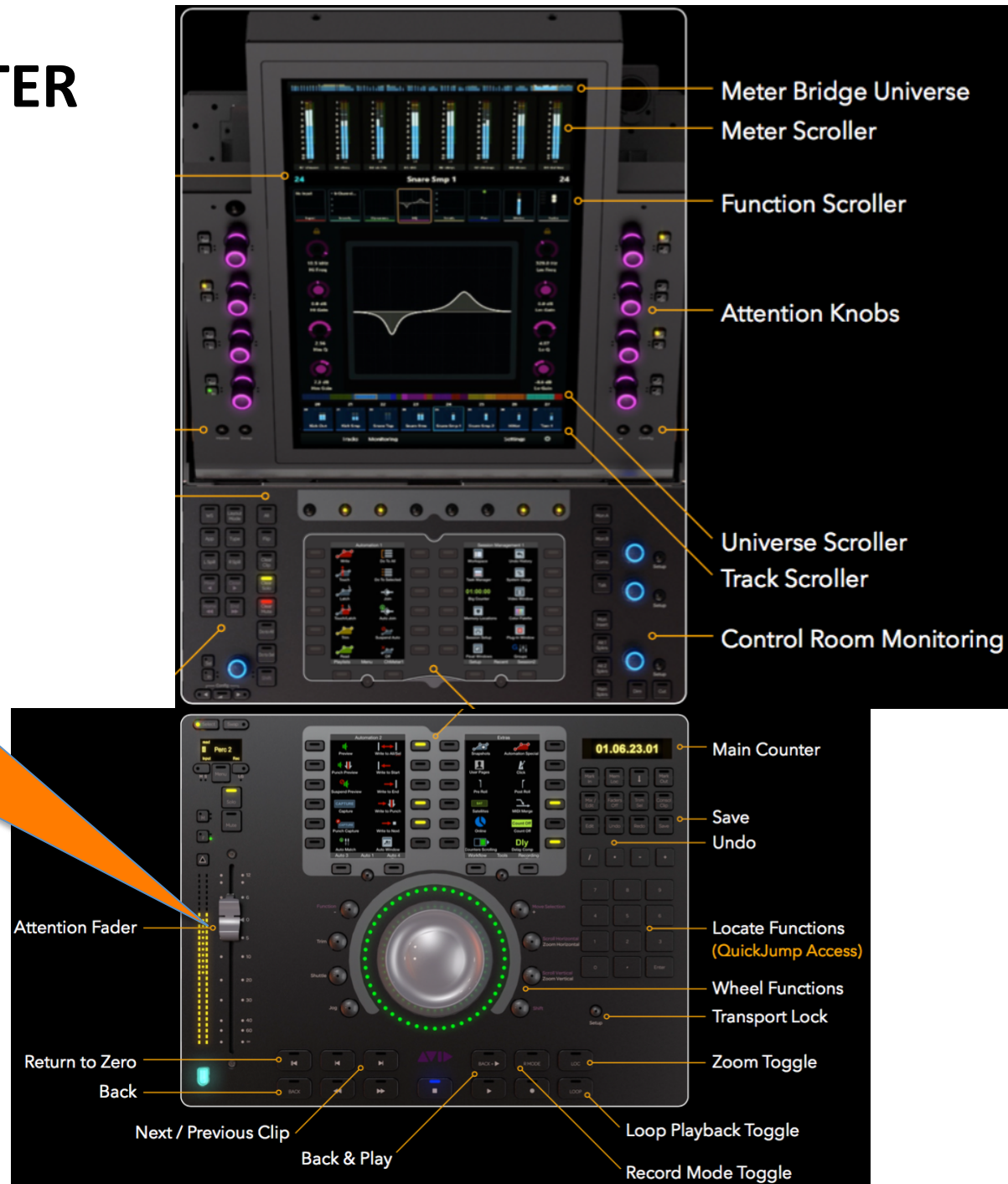
You can also bring a track to the “Attention” of the Master Module by selecting the track name in the Pro Tools Edit/Mix Window.

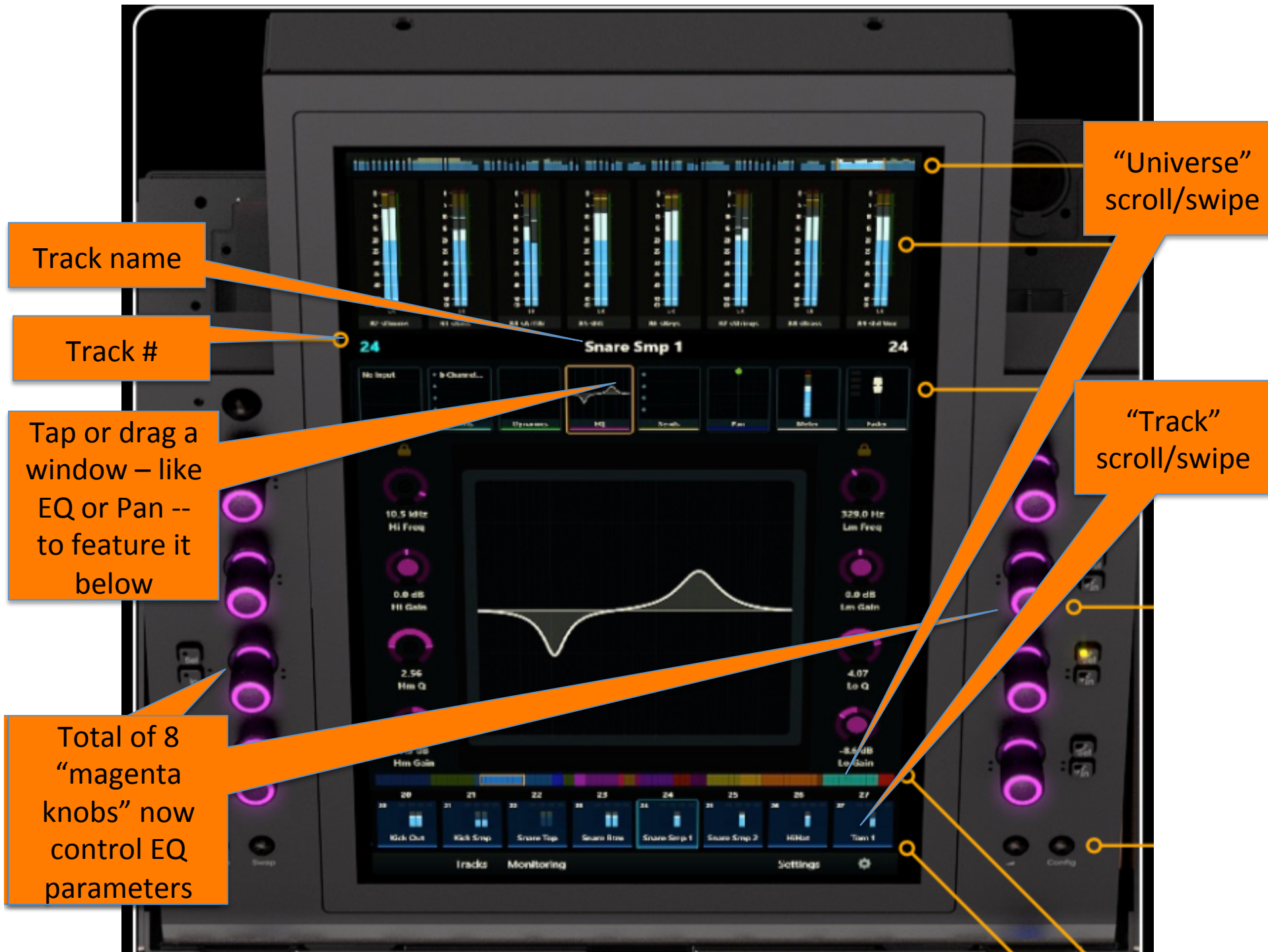
This can be handy if you have a track that isn’t visible on the S6 fader modules and you might otherwise have to bank to it in order to attention the track.



THE MASTER MODULE

This fader can control the track that is "attentioned" (or, you can continue to use the original fader)





Panning with the touch pad is one of the S6's nicer features for surround mixing.

If you unlink the panner, you can touch and pan the left & right channels of this sound independently.

Note: just as with the Pro Tools software panner display, tapping a speaker icon should hard assign a track to that speaker. (But in actual practice the screen seems finicky.)



AUTOMATION MODULE

In this short guide we will skip the advanced features of the Soft Keys altogether. Please resist the urge to experiment with them unless you've gotten instruction on their use.



Using the Transport Controls

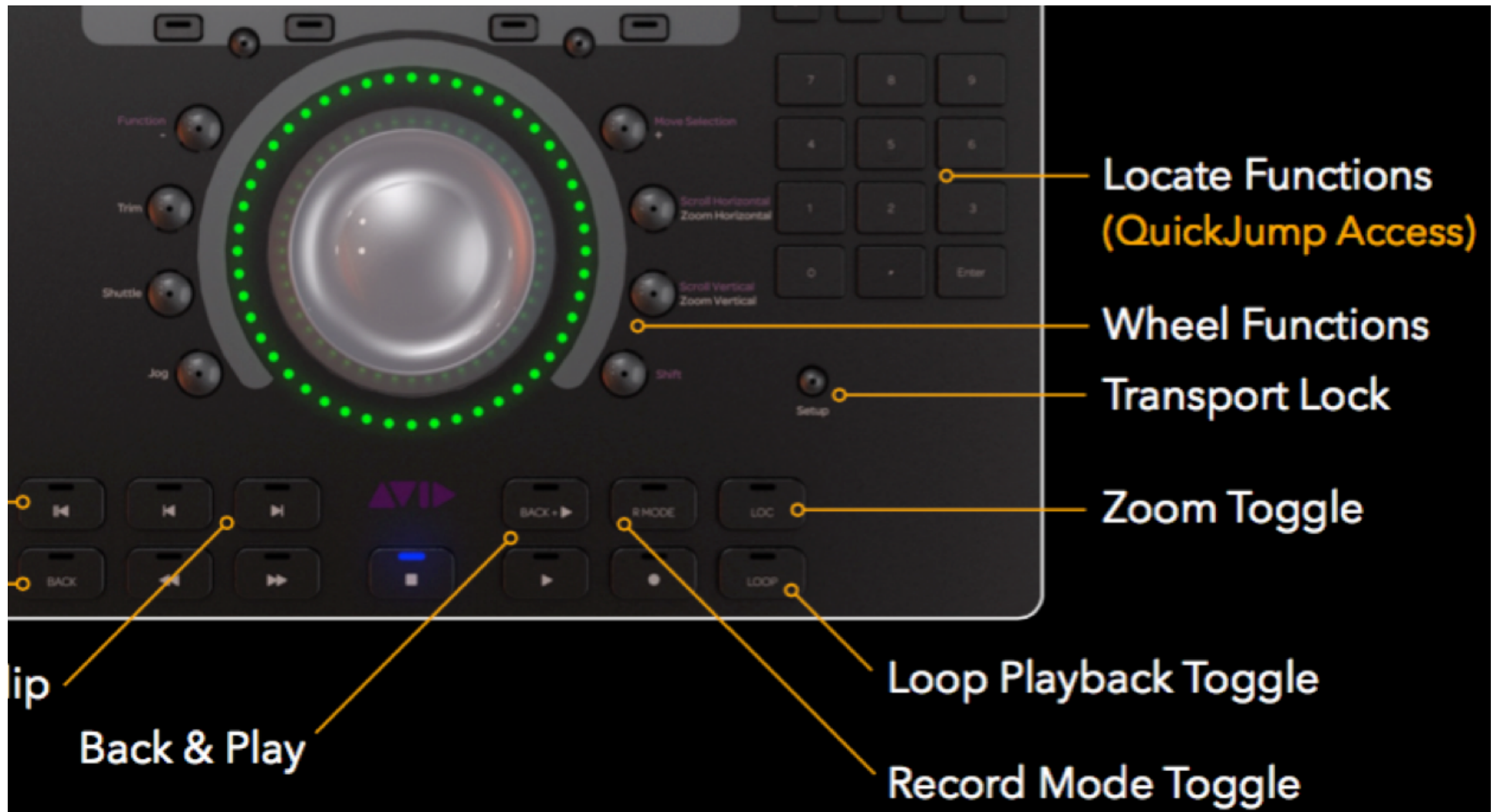


Figure 64. Transport controls

The following table lists the primary and **Shift** functions of the Transport switches. Other functions require use of the modifier keys on the Fader Module or computer keyboard.

Legend	Switch Label	Primary Function	Shift Function	Other Functions
1	<	RTZ (Return to Zero)	End of Session	
2	<	Select Previous Clip	Shift (Add to Selection)	Previous Clip (Opt/Win)
3	>	Select Next Clip	Shift (Add to Selection)	Next Clip (Opt/Win)
4	Back + >	Back and Play	Forward and Play	
5	R Mode	Record Mode	Abort Record	
6	Loc	Zoom Toggle	Zoom to Selection	Zoom to Session (Opt/Win) Previous Zoom (Cmd/Alt)
7	Back	Back	Forward	
8	<<	Rewind		
9	>>	Fast Forward		
10	□	Stop		
11	>	Play		
12	●	Record		
13	Loop	Loop Playback		

You may want to experiment with the jog/shuttle wheel. **Jog** is straightforward; you spin the wheel, the selector position advances or rewinds depending on how fast you spin the wheel, and when you release the wheel it stops. **Shuttle** scrolling continues after you release the wheel, and doesn't stop unless you push the Jog wheel again to disengage it, or press some other button. (I recommend trying **Jog** for most uses.)



PART 3: THE DISPLAY MODULE

The Display Mode preference features 7 different user selectable display views.

Settings User System

Display Module
Display
Layout:

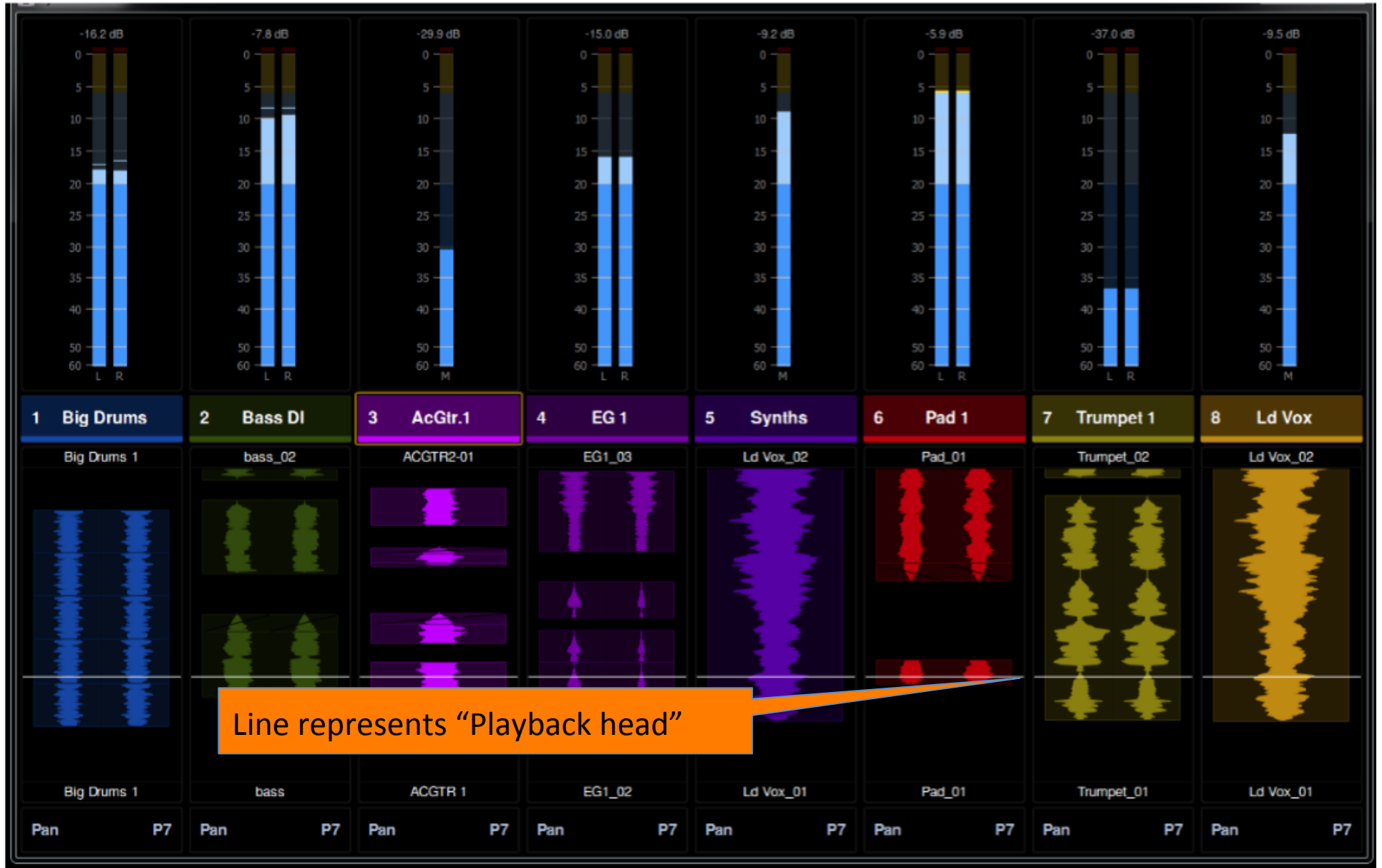
- Large Meters
- Large Waveforms
- Meters and Waveforms
- Meters and Function
- Waveforms and Function
- Waveforms and Dual Function
- Waveforms and Dual Function + Route
- Waveforms and Function

See the [Automation](#) page for displaying Automation curves on the Display Modules

Large Meters Large Waveforms Meters & Waveforms Meters & Function Waveforms & Function Waveforms & Dual Function Waveforms & Dual Function + Route

We have chosen “Meters & Waveforms” for our default view.

Each track displays an audio meter and the waveform/clip name for each clip as it passes by the “playback head.” By default, we have chosen to display volume graph automation superimposed over the waveforms. (Not shown on this screenshot.)



PART 4 – MISC, & STUFF WE WON'T TRY TO COVER IN THIS BASIC GUIDE

You might assume that this knob defaults to Pro Tools panning, like a similar knob on each individual fader. **It does not** – it only works with programs like Logic, Cubase, & Nuendo. (customized assigning)



Remember that for now we are skipping the SOFT KEYS pad.

