

PHIL SPEISER

THE_EQ

USER MANUAL



Draw it, hear it, move it — the dynamic EQ you sculpt right on the spectrum.

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The latest version is always at philspeiser.com/manual/the_eq

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What It Is

THE EQ is the equalizer you've always wished you had open: almost the *entire* plugin window is one giant, dark, living frequency-response display, and you shape your sound by drawing directly on it. Double-click anywhere on the display to drop a band. Drag it left/right for frequency, up/down for gain. Scroll to tighten the Q. A real-time spectrum analyzer pulses behind everything so you can see the kick, the sibilance, the rumble, the harshness — and then carve it out with your hands. No guessing. Draw it, hear it, move it.

But don't let the friendly workflow fool you — under the hood this is a serious, mastering-grade machine. Up to **24 fully parametric bands**, ten filter shapes, slopes up to a near-brick-wall **96 dB/oct**, full **Mid/Side and per-channel processing**, and three engine modes including true **linear phase**. And here's the part that makes it special: *any* band can flip into **dynamic mode**, turning into a frequency-selective compressor/expander with threshold, range, attack, release and even sidechain. One plugin does your static tone shaping, your surgical cleanup, your dynamic de-essing, and your master-bus polish.

In a mix, THE EQ is the tool you reach for constantly — to clean up a muddy low end, to tame a resonant guitar that only rings out when it's loud, to add air to the sides of a master without smearing the center, or to make two clashing instruments finally sit together. It's fast enough for everyday moves and deep enough to be the only EQ you need.

Why You'll Love It

- **You draw the EQ, you don't dial it.** Double-click to add, drag to shape, scroll for Q — the most intuitive EQ workflow there is.
- **Up to 24 bands, 10 filter shapes, slopes to 96 dB/oct.** From one gentle shelf to a full surgical sculpt.
- **Every band can go dynamic.** Per-frequency compression, expansion, and de-essing — only acts when the signal needs it.
- **Per-band sidechain** for frequency-selective ducking driven by another track — from your DAW's sidechain input or straight from another THE EQ in your session.
- **Three engine modes:** Fast (zero latency), Analog (filters run at double sample rate), and Linear Phase for mastering.
- **True Mid/Side and per-band channel modes** (Left, Right, Mid, Side) for stereo cleanup and mastering.
- **A real-time analyzer** with a clickable peak Freeze, perceptual Tilt, a sidechain view — plus a **PHASE view** and **All Pass** bands for phase alignment.
- **Honest decisions, always:** Auto-Gain, Gain Match, per-band Solo, and instant A/B compare.
- **Pitch Surfing, Snap-to-Note and a musical scale overlay** for in-key, resonance-chasing precision.
- **EQ Match** — capture a reference and let THE EQ build the bands that move your track toward it.
- **Multi-instance sync** with a Spectral Allocation Map and collision highlighting so your tracks stop fighting for the same frequencies.
- **Smart Profiles** — 43 signal-adaptive starting points in eight categories (Vocal, Drums, Bass, Guitar, Keys, Mix, Strings, Horns).
- **Built-in AI assistant, docs, undo/redo, a resizable window and one-click bypass** — plus tooltips in five languages.

The Interface at a Glance

The window opens at 1300 x 700, and almost all of it is the work surface — a dark, logarithmic **20 Hz–20 kHz** grid. Behind your editable EQ curve runs the live analyzer; on top of it sit your colored, draggable band nodes. Along the bottom edge of the display run a frequency ruler and a thin piano strip, and a stereo output meter sits at the right edge.

A slim **top bar** carries a help line on the left (it explains whatever your mouse is over), the Phil Speiser logo in the center, and on the right: the **A** and **A>B** compare buttons, the **Output** level readout, the **Undo/Redo** arrows, and round icon buttons for the **AI Assistant** (robot), **Docs** (book), **Settings** (gear) and global **Bypass** (power). When an update is available, a banner at the top left offers the free download.

The **bottom bar** holds the global settings in five groups: **MULTI** and **MAP · MODE**, **AUTO GAIN** and a gear (Lookahead, Gain Match) · **ANALYZER**, a gear (analyzer settings) and **PHASE · SCALE** and **SNAP · EQ MATCH** and **PROFILES**.

Click a band and two things appear: a compact **band pop-up** right above the node, and the **band panel** near the bottom of the display with every per-band control. **MULTI** and **EQ MATCH** open panels on the left, **PROFILES** opens one on the right, and a **corner grip** in the bottom-right resizes the whole window.

Controls — In Depth

Spectrum / EQ Display (the interactive surface)

What it does: The main work surface. Double-click an empty spot to ADD a band at that frequency and gain — or click right on the curve line to add a band and keep dragging in one move. Drag any band horizontally for frequency, vertically for gain. Drag across empty space to lasso several bands at once.

Range/units: Frequency 20 Hz–20,000 Hz (logarithmic); up to 24 bands. A new band picks its shape from where you place it: Low Cut below 60 Hz, Low Shelf from 60 to 200 Hz, Bell from 200 Hz to 8 kHz, High Shelf from 8 to 16 kHz, High Cut above 16 kHz. The vertical scale follows your moves automatically, from ± 6 dB up to ± 30 dB.

In your music: Carve, boost, notch and shelf any part of the spectrum by hand while watching the live analyzer react.

Pro tip: Watch the curve and the analyzer together — when a hump in the analyzer lines up with a frequency you don't like, that's exactly where to drop a band.

Band Node (per band)

What it does: Each placed band is a colored, draggable handle that shows its filter shape. Drag for frequency (horizontal) and gain (vertical); hold Shift for fine moves. Scroll over it to change Q. Double-click it to reset its gain to 0 dB. Cmd-click (Ctrl-click on Windows) steps through the filter shapes, Alt-click (Option-click on Mac) switches the band off and on, and right-click opens the band menu. Shift-click adds bands to a selection — drag one and the whole selection moves together.

Range/units: Up to 24 bands; a fresh instance starts flat, with no bands.

In your music: The core of the EQ — from a single corrective notch to a full 24-band sculpt.

Pro tip: Build big-to-small. Get the broad tonal balance with a couple of wide bands first, then add narrow surgical bands on top.

Band Pop-up

What it does: Appears right above the band you select. The top row holds the band's power icon, its frequency, gain and Q readouts (click one to type a value), the wave icon (Pitch Surfing), the headphones (Solo — hold it) and an X to close. The bottom row shows all ten filter shapes — click one to switch.

In your music: The fastest way to retype a value or swap a Bell for a shelf without leaving the curve.

Pro tip: Click the frequency readout and type a note name like A1 to land a band exactly on a bass fundamental.

Band Panel

What it does: The full control strip for the selected band, floating near the bottom of the display under the band. From left to right: < (previous band), power, **TYPE**, the **FREQ**, **GAIN** and **Q** knobs (with the Gain/Q link icon between GAIN and Q), **SLOPE**, **CHAN**, the dynamics button, then — once dynamics are on — **DYN**, **THR**, **ATK**, **REL** and the sidechain button, followed by the trash can and > (next band).

Range/units: Drag a knob or value up/down to change it (Shift for fine), scroll over it, or double-click it to type. Click TYPE or CHAN to step to the next option; click SLOPE for a list. SLOPE is hidden on

Notch, Band Pass and All Pass.

In your music: Every per-band setting in one row, right where you're working.

Pro tip: Scroll over TYPE or CHAN to flip through the options while you listen.

Frequency (per-band)

What it does: Sets the band's center/cutoff frequency — drag the node, turn **FREQ**, or type a value.

Range/units: 20 Hz–20,000 Hz. The readouts also show the nearest note and how many cents you are off it. When typing, you can enter Hz, kHz ("2.5k") or a note name ("A2", "C#3", "Bb1").

In your music: Targets exactly which part of the spectrum the band affects.

Pro tip: Click the frequency in the band pop-up and type the value when you already know it (e.g. 60 Hz for a kick's weight).

Gain (per-band)

What it does: Boosts or cuts the band.

Range/units: -30 dB to +30 dB; default 0 dB. Double-click a node to send its gain back to 0 dB.

In your music: Small values give gentle tonal tilts; the extremes are for aggressive correction.

Pro tip: When hunting a problem frequency, boost hard and sweep to find it — then flip to a cut once you've located it.

Q / Bandwidth (per-band)

What it does: Sets how wide or narrow the affected range is — scroll over the node or turn the **Q** knob.

Range/units: 0.025 to 40. Higher **Q** = narrower band. New bands start at a **Q** that suits their shape: 1.0 for Bell and Band Pass, 0.71 for shelves, cuts and All Pass, 3.0 for Notch, 0.5 for the tilts.

In your music: Low **Q** = broad, musical shaping; high **Q** = surgical notching.

Pro tip: Use low **Q** (broad) for boosts so they sound natural, and high **Q** (narrow) for cuts so you only remove the problem.

Gain/Q Link

What it does: The small chain-link icon between **GAIN** and **Q** in the band panel. When it's on, dragging a Bell's gain (on the node or the **GAIN** knob) also moves its **Q**: boosts get wider, cuts get narrower.

Range/units: On/off (default off); works on all Bell bands.

In your music: Boosts stay broad and musical, cuts tighten up around the problem — automatically.

Pro tip: Turn it on for quick broad-boost/narrow-cut moves; leave it off when you need a fixed, predictable bandwidth.

Filter Type (per-band)

What it does: Chooses the band's filter shape — click a shape in the band pop-up, click **TYPE** in the band panel, Cmd-click (Ctrl-click on Windows) the node, or use the right-click menu. Switching shapes resets **Q** and slope to that shape's starting values.

Range/units: Bell, Low Shelf, High Shelf, Low Cut, High Cut, Notch, Band Pass, Tilt Shelf, Flat Tilt, All Pass.

In your music: Everything from broad shelving and tonal tilts to steep cuts, surgical notches and band-pass isolation. All Pass changes no tone at all — it only rotates phase around its frequency, which

is how you align kick and bass or fix a smeared multi-mic recording. Picking All Pass switches the PHASE view on automatically so you can see what you're rotating.

Pro tip: Reach for Tilt Shelf when a whole track is a touch dark or bright — it lifts one end while lowering the other in a single move.

Slope (per-band)

What it does: Sets how steep the band's edges are — on cuts, shelves and tilts, and on Bells (where steeper slopes give the bell steeper sides).

Range/units: 6, 12, 18, 24, 30, 36, 48, 72, 96 dB/oct (6 dB/oct isn't offered on Bell). New bands start at 12 dB/oct; Low Cut and High Cut start at 24 dB/oct. Not available on Notch, Band Pass and All Pass. Press **S** to step up, **Shift+S** to step down, or click SLOPE for the list.

In your music: Gentle slopes for natural roll-offs; up to near-brick-wall 96 dB/oct for tight, aggressive filtering.

Pro tip: Use a steep Low Cut (48–96 dB/oct) to scoop sub rumble out of vocals and guitars without thinning the body.

Channel Mode (per-band)

What it does: Selects which part of the stereo image the band processes. Click CHAN to step through, or use the right-click menu.

Range/units: Stereo (default), Left, Right, Mid, Side. Non-stereo bands show a small L, R, M or S under the node.

In your music: EQ only the sides, only the mid, or a single channel — ideal for mastering and stereo cleanup.

Pro tip: Set a Low Cut to Side only to mono-up the low end while leaving the centered bass solid.

Dynamics Toggle (per-band)

What it does: The dynamics button in the band panel turns the band into a dynamic processor whose gain reacts to the signal level, and opens its DYN, THR, ATK and REL controls plus the sidechain button. A band switched on this way starts at DYN -6 dB, THR -20 dB, ATK 10 ms and REL 100 ms. To make a band fully static again, right-click it and choose Dynamics > Disable Dynamics.

Range/units: On/off.

In your music: Any band becomes a frequency-selective compressor/expander — dynamic de-essing, taming resonances only when loud, and more.

Pro tip: Set a static cut first to find the problem frequency, then enable dynamics so it only cuts when the frequency actually jumps out.

Dynamic Threshold (per-band)

What it does: THR — the level at which dynamic processing begins.

Range/units: -60 dB to 0 dB; default -20 dB.

In your music: Decides how loud the band's content must get before the dynamic move kicks in.

Pro tip: Raise the threshold until the band only reacts on the loudest, most offensive moments — leave everything else untouched.

Dynamic Gain / Range (per-band)

What it does: DYN — how far the band moves once its signal passes the threshold. Negative values cut (compress), positive values boost (expand). The move eases in over a soft knee around the threshold. On the display, a shaded area and a small triangle show the range — drag the triangle up or down to set it, or Alt-drag (Option-drag) the node.

Range/units: -30 dB to +30 dB.

In your music: Sets how much the band can compress (down) or expand/boost (up) once triggered.

Pro tip: A small negative range (-3 to -6 dB) is plenty for transparent de-essing; save the big numbers for obvious resonances.

Dynamic Attack (per-band)

What it does: ATK — how fast dynamics respond to rising level.

Range/units: 0.1 ms to 500 ms; default 10 ms.

In your music: Fast catches transients and sibilance; slow lets the initial attack punch through.

Pro tip: For de-essing, go fast (a few ms) so it grabs the "S" before it stings.

Dynamic Release (per-band)

What it does: REL — how fast dynamics recover after the level drops.

Range/units: 1 ms to 5000 ms; default 100 ms. Tempo sync: right-click the band > Dynamics > Release > Tempo Sync, then pick a note value (1/4D to 1/32); with sync on, dragging REL steps through note values from 1/1 to 1/64T.

In your music: Short = snappy and pumping; long = smooth and transparent; sync to lock to tempo.

Pro tip: If a dynamic band sounds like it's "chattering," lengthen the release until the gain movement smooths out.

Sidechain Source (per-band)

What it does: The sidechain button in the band panel (shown once dynamics are on) chooses the signal that triggers the band's dynamics.

Range/units: Local (the band reacts to its own track; default — the button reads SC) · External (DAW Sidechain) — the sidechain input you route in your DAW; the button reads EXT · Network — another THE EQ in your session; the button shows its name · Network Group — the combined signal of an instance group; the button shows the group name. Picking Network or Network Group switches dynamics on at -3 dB if they were off.

In your music: Frequency-selective ducking driven by another track or input.

Pro tip: Feed the kick to the External sidechain on a bass band so only the bass's low frequencies duck on each kick hit — leaving the rest of the bass full.

Solo (per-band)

What it does: Hold the headphones icon in the band pop-up to hear only the frequency range this band affects. While holding, drag left/right to sweep the band's frequency and up/down to set the listening level. Let go and you're back to the full mix.

Range/units: Momentary (active while you hold); listening level -30 dB to +12 dB.

In your music: Isolate exactly what a band is touching to pinpoint problem frequencies.

Pro tip: Hold Solo on a narrow band and sweep it across the track to hunt down ringing resonances before you cut.

Pitch Surfing (per-band)

What it does: The band's frequency follows the strongest spectral peak within ± 1 octave of where it was when you switched surfing on. A faint ghost ring shows where it's tracking right now.

Range/units: On/off (wave icon in the band pop-up, or right-click > Pitch Surfing).

In your music: The band "chases" a drifting resonance or note automatically.

Pro tip: Great on bass or vocal resonances that move with the performance — set it loose and let it track.

Power / Enable (per-band)

What it does: Enables or disables the individual band — power icon in the band pop-up or band panel, Alt-click (Option-click) on the node, or right-click > Disable/Enable.

Range/units: On/off.

In your music: A/B a single band without deleting it.

Pro tip: Toggle a finished band on and off to make sure each move is actually earning its place.

Delete Band

What it does: Removes the selected band — trash icon in the band panel, the Delete/Backspace key, or right-click > Delete. With several bands selected, Delete/Backspace removes them all.

Pro tip: Cleaning up unused bands keeps the display readable and your CPU happy.

Previous / Next Band

What it does: < and > at the ends of the band panel step through your bands from low to high frequency, wrapping around. The Tab key also jumps to the next band.

Pro tip: Use these to step through a dense sculpt without hunting for tiny nodes on the display.

Close (band pop-up)

What it does: The X in the band pop-up deselects the band and closes the pop-up. Esc does the same.

Band Right-Click Menu

What it does: Right-click any node for Filter Type, Slope, Channel, Dynamics (Enable/Disable Dynamics, quick Threshold, Dynamic Gain, Attack and Release values, Tempo Sync, Use Sidechain), Dynamic Presets, Pitch Surfing, Enable/Disable and Delete. Cleanup bands add Convert to regular band; linked bands add Unlink from group.

Range/units: Dynamic Presets, all at a -20 dB threshold: Compress (cut above threshold, -6 dB), Expand (boost above threshold, +6 dB), Gate / Cut (deep cut above threshold, -30 dB), Boost (strong boost above threshold, +12 dB). Enable Dynamics (+6 dB) starts the band as a +6 dB upward move.

In your music: One right-click turns a static band into a de-esser, a resonance tamer or an upward expander.

Pro tip: Pick Compress on a harsh band, then fine-tune THR until it only bites on the loud moments.

Bottom Bar

What it does: Holds the global settings, grouped left to right: MULTI, MAP · MODE, AUTO GAIN, gear · ANALYZER, gear, PHASE · SCALE, SNAP · EQ MATCH, PROFILES. On/off chips light a small blue LED when they're on; MODE, SCALE and SNAP show their current value; the gears open small settings windows above the bar.

Pro tip: The LED tells you everything at a glance — lit means on, dark means off.

Processing Mode (global)

What it does: The MODE chip — click to cycle the EQ's engine.

Range/units: FAST (minimum phase, zero latency) / ANALOG (the filters run at double sample rate so bells and shelves keep their natural shape right up to the top of the spectrum; adds a small latency) / LINEAR (linear phase, 8,192 samples of latency — about 0.17 s at 48 kHz); default FAST.

In your music: Choose zero-latency mixing, true-to-shape top end, or phase-perfect linear phase for mastering.

Pro tip: Track and mix in FAST, then switch to LINEAR for the final master where phase coherence matters most.

Auto-Gain (global)

What it does: The AUTO GAIN chip offsets the average boost or cut of your EQ curve so the output stays about as loud as the input. It weighs the 1–4 kHz range most — where your ears are most sensitive — and ignores Low Cut and High Cut bands.

Range/units: On/off (default off).

In your music: Keeps perceived loudness consistent so boosts don't trick you into thinking it just sounds "better" because it's louder.

Pro tip: Leave it on while you tweak so every EQ decision is judged on tone, not volume.

Gain Match (global)

What it does: In the gear next to AUTO GAIN. Press and hold GAIN MATCH while the music plays (it reads MEASURING); let go and THE EQ sets the Output Gain so the output is as loud as the input.

Range/units: Press-and-hold; the correction lands in Output Gain (-12 to +12 dB).

In your music: Fair, level-matched comparisons between your EQ'd sound and the original.

Pro tip: Always Gain Match before judging a move with Bypass — louder almost always *sounds* better even when it isn't.

Lookahead (global)

What it does: LOOKAHEAD in the gear next to AUTO GAIN gives dynamic bands a head start so they catch transients early (adds a little latency).

Range/units: On/off (5 ms). Only available when at least one band has dynamics switched on.

In your music: Tighter, more accurate dynamic response on fast transient material.

Pro tip: Turn it on for drums and percussive de-essing; the small latency is worth the precision.

Output Gain (global)

What it does: Overall output level — the readout in the top bar next to A/B. Drag it up/down (Shift for fine), scroll over it (0.5 dB steps, 0.1 dB with Shift), or double-click to reset. Gain Match writes its correction here.

Range/units: -12 dB to +12 dB; default 0 dB.

In your music: Trims the EQ stage's output to keep your gain staging clean.

Pro tip: If big cuts dropped your level, nudge Output Gain up to match the rest of your chain.

Bypass (global power button, top-right)

What it does: Bypasses all EQ processing and shows a "BYPASSED - CLICK ANYWHERE TO RE-ENABLE PROCESSING" overlay; click the overlay to re-enable.

Range/units: On/off.

In your music: Instant true A/B of processed vs. unprocessed signal.

Pro tip: Bypass often — your ears adapt fast, and the raw signal is the truest reference.

A/B Toggle

What it does: The A button in the top bar shows which slot you're on (A or B); click it to switch between two complete EQ states. Both slots survive closing the window and reloading your session.

In your music: Compare two full EQ versions instantly.

Pro tip: Build version A, copy it to B, then push B further — flip back and forth to find the sweet spot.

A/B Copy

What it does: A>B (B>A when you're on B) copies the current EQ state into the other slot.

Pro tip: Seed B with A as a starting point so you're comparing variations, not starting from scratch.

Analyzer On/Off

What it does: The ANALYZER chip shows or hides the real-time spectrum of THE EQ's output. When a sidechain signal is coming in, its spectrum shows in amber behind it.

Range/units: On/off (on by default).

In your music: A visual reference of actual frequency content while EQing.

Pro tip: Turn it off occasionally and EQ by ear only — your eyes can lie about what sounds good.

Spectrum Tilt

What it does: TILT in the analyzer gear applies a slope to the analyzer display, pivoting at 1 kHz, for a more perceptual readout (visual only).

Range/units: FLAT (default), 3 DB or 4.5 DB per octave.

In your music: Makes the spectrum read more like perceived loudness.

Pro tip: With Tilt on, a roughly flat-looking spectrum often correlates with a balanced-sounding mix — handy as a sanity check.

Freeze (Spectrum Hold)

What it does: FREEZE in the analyzer gear draws a peak-hold line while your mouse is over the display. Hold the mouse still for a moment and the line freezes with its peaks marked; click a marked peak to

drop a Bell right there and drag up/down to set its gain. Click empty space to release the freeze.

Range/units: On/off (default off).

In your music: Catch the exact frequency of a ringing peak and turn it into a band in one click.

Pro tip: Let a loud chorus play with Freeze on, park the mouse, then click the tallest peak and pull it down a couple of dB.

Phase View

What it does: The PHASE chip overlays the true phase response of your EQ as a dashed blue line, wrapped to $\pm 180^\circ$ like a phase analyzer. The selected band's own contribution shows as a pink dashed line. In LINEAR mode the line is flat — because the phase is.

Range/units: On/off (default off); switches on automatically when you pick All Pass.

In your music: See exactly what your moves do to phase — essential when you're aligning kick and bass with All Pass bands.

Pro tip: Compare FAST and LINEAR with PHASE on to decide whether a mastering move really needs linear phase.

Display Range (automatic)

What it does: The vertical dB scale follows your EQ: it zooms in to ± 6 dB for gentle moves and opens up as far as ± 30 dB when you push bands harder, always leaving a little headroom above your biggest boost or cut.

Range/units: ± 6 dB to ± 30 dB.

In your music: Delicate mastering moves stay big and easy to see; big shelves never fall off the screen.

Pro tip: If the scale jumps out wide, look for one extreme band — a forgotten +20 dB boost shows up instantly.

Window Size (corner grip)

What it does: Drag the grip in the bottom-right corner to resize the whole plugin window, or click it to pick a fixed size.

Range/units: 50% to 300% of the 1300 x 700 default; the click list offers 50%, 75%, 100%, 125%, 150% and 200% (sizes that don't fit your screen are left out). Settings > Reset Zoom brings back the default.

Pro tip: Go big on a second monitor for detailed surgical work.

Musical Scale

What it does: The SCALE chip opens a menu with Root Note (C to B) and Scale. Scale notes light up gold on the piano strip at the bottom of the display; the root glows brightest.

Range/units: Major, Natural Minor, Harmonic Minor, Pentatonic Major, Pentatonic Minor, Blues, Off (Chromatic); default OFF.

In your music: Reference EQ band positions against musical pitches and scales.

Pro tip: Set the scale to your song's key so band frequencies line up with notes that matter.

Snap to Note

What it does: The SNAP chip snaps band frequencies to musical notes while you drag. ON lands them on notes of your scale (or on any semitone when SCALE is OFF); INVERT lands them on the nearest

note outside the scale.

Range/units: OFF / ON / INVERT (default OFF).

In your music: Tune bands to in-key pitches — great for resonance and tonal work.

Pro tip: Use ON to land surgical notches exactly on a ringing note instead of fishing for the frequency by hand — and INVERT to hunt down out-of-key resonances.

Piano Strip & Glow

What it does: The piano strip along the bottom of the display is always there: hover a key to see its note and frequency, click a key to move the selected band to that note, double-click a key to add a Bell exactly on it. GLOW in the analyzer gear lights up the keys of notes that are currently loud in your audio.

Range/units: GLOW on/off (default off).

In your music: See which notes your track is ringing on — and EQ them by pitch.

Pro tip: Turn on GLOW over a bass line, then double-click the key that keeps lighting up to put a band right on the boomy note.

EQ Match

What it does: The EQ MATCH chip opens the CURVE MATCH panel on the left. Choose what to match to — Sidechain (route the reference into the sidechain input), Network (another THE EQ in your session) or File (Browse... for a WAV, AIFF, MP3, FLAC or OGG file). Click Capture (Capture Source in File mode) and play your track; THE EQ listens for about five seconds. Then set Match Amount and Max Bands and click Apply. Reset clears the capture.

Range/units: Match Amount 0–100% (default 50%); Max Bands 1–24 (default 12). Apply replaces your current bands (Undo brings them back).

In your music: Move a track toward the tone of a reference mix, a favorite take, or another track in your session.

Pro tip: Start at 50% and a handful of bands — a partial match keeps your track's character while borrowing the reference's balance.

Smart Profiles

What it does: The PROFILES chip opens the SMART PROFILES panel on the right. Pick a category tab, click a profile card and play audio: the panel shows "Analyzing signal..." for about three seconds of actual signal, then morphs your EQ into that profile adapted to what it heard — gains tuned to your track's balance, the low cut moved to just below your lowest real content, and up to three narrow dynamic bands on resonances it finds. Applying a profile replaces your current bands — store anything you want to keep in the other A/B slot first.

Range/units: 43 profiles in eight categories:

Category	Profiles
Vocal	Lead Vocal Female, Lead Vocal Male, Background Vocals, Rap / Hip-Hop, Podcast / Voiceover, Choir / Group
Drums	Full Kit, Kick Drum, Snare, Hi-Hat / Cymbals, Toms, Electronic / 808
Bass	Electric (Finger), Electric (Pick/Slap), Upright / Acoustic, Sub Bass / 808, Synth Bass

Guitar	Acoustic, Electric Clean, Electric Drive, High Gain, Nylon / Classical
Keys	Grand Piano, Rhodes / EP, Organ, Synth Lead, Synth Pad
Mix	Pop, Rock, Hip-Hop / Trap, Electronic / EDM, Acoustic / Folk, Orchestral
Strings	Solo Violin, Cello, String Section, Chamber Ensemble, Pizzicato
Horns	Trumpet, Saxophone, Woodwind Ensemble, Brass Section, French Horn

In your music: Fast starting points tailored to the source material.

Pro tip: Start from a profile, then use Bypass with Gain Match to keep only the moves that actually help.

Multi-Instance Sync

What it does: The MULTI chip (it reads MULTI (n) with a green dot when other THE EQ instances are running) opens the INSTANCES sidebar — a card for every THE EQ in your session. Click a card to edit that instance right here; an "EDITING:" banner shows whose curve you're shaping. The eye icon on a card shows that instance's curve and spectrum on your display. With more than three instances, a Filter field helps you find one.

Range/units: On/off + instance list.

In your music: See and coordinate EQ across multiple tracks in the session.

Pro tip: Enable it across a group of related tracks so you can balance their EQ moves against each other.

Spectral Allocation Map

What it does: The MAP chip swaps the analyzer for a stacked map of how much of each frequency region every visible instance occupies. Hover for exact percentages; when you have groups, the GRP button stacks the map by group.

Range/units: On/off. Needs the MULTI sidebar open and at least two visible instances; band editing pauses while the map is on.

In your music: Spot and resolve frequency clashes between tracks.

Pro tip: If two parts feel "fighting," check the map — give each one its own little pocket of the spectrum.

Collisions

What it does: The C button in the INSTANCES header highlights frequency regions where your track and the other visible instances compete. Right-click a highlighted zone for Create cleanup band here or Auto-Unmask.

Range/units: On/off (on by default).

In your music: Quickly find where instruments compete for the same frequencies.

Pro tip: Cut one instrument exactly where another is highlighted as colliding — instant clarity.

Cleanup Bands & Auto-Unmask

What it does: A cleanup band is a dynamic Bell that dips only when the other track is loud in that region — it listens to that instance through the Network sidechain. It wears a dashed ring and an "SC:" label with the other track's name. Auto-Unmask (right-click a collision zone, or the U button on an instance card) previews a whole set of cleanup bands at once: set Intensity and Bands, then Apply or Cancel.

Right-click a cleanup band > Convert to regular band to keep it as a normal band. If the other instance disappears, a banner tells you its cleanup bands are orphaned.

Range/units: Bands: Auto, 1, 2, 3 or 4.

In your music: Your track steps aside only at the moments the other one needs the space — and stays full the rest of the time.

Pro tip: Run Auto-Unmask on the less important track so the lead keeps its frequencies.

Linked Bands

What it does: Shift-click instance cards in the sidebar to select them; a band you then add is created on all selected instances as a linked band (chain icon), and editing it moves it on all of them. Right-click > Unlink from group frees a band again.

In your music: One move shapes a whole stack of tracks — every backing vocal, every guitar double.

Pro tip: Link a gentle low cut across all your pad and synth layers to clean up the low end in one go.

Per-Instance Controls (multi-instance view)

What it does: Each card in the INSTANCES sidebar has a Focus icon (shows only this instance), the eye (shows or hides its curve and spectrum), a volume fader (drag sideways, double-click for 0 dB), a pan knob (drag up/down, double-click to center), M (mute), S (solo — several cards can be soloed at once) and, when collisions are found, U (Auto-Unmask). Double-click a name to rename it; drag cards to reorder them.

In your music: Cross-track EQ context and quick level and pan checks of whole instances.

Pro tip: Use Focus to clear the clutter and concentrate on the one track you're editing.

Instance Groups

What it does: Right-click a card (or several Shift-selected cards) > Move to Group > New Group... or an existing group; Remove from Group takes it out again. Each group header has collapse/expand, a combined curve, group mute and group solo; right-click a header to Rename Group, Delete Group, Focus Group or Unfocus Group. Applying a Smart Profile files an ungrouped instance into a matching group (Vocals, Drums, Bass and so on).

In your music: Manage related tracks (e.g. all your drums) together.

Pro tip: Group your drum instances and view the combined curve to balance the whole kit's tone at once.

Settings

What it does: The gear icon in the top bar opens Language, Show Tooltips, the Version, the email you're registered with, Reset Zoom and Tutorial (opens the tutorials page in your browser).

Pro tip: New to the interactive workflow? Open Settings and follow the tutorial first.

AI Assistant (robot button)

What it does: Opens an AI-powered chat panel. It can see your current EQ settings, so you can ask about exactly what you've dialed in.

In your music: Ask how to achieve a sound or get EQ guidance right inside the plugin.

Pro tip: Stuck on a muddy mix? Describe the problem to the assistant for a suggested approach.

Documentation (book button)

What it does: Opens this manual inside the plugin window.

Undo

What it does: The two arrows in the top bar undo and redo your EQ edits — every drag, add, delete and EQ Match.

Range/units: Up to 50 steps; the history starts fresh each session. Cmd+Z / Cmd+Shift+Z (Ctrl+Z / Ctrl+Shift+Z on Windows) work too.

Pro tip: Experiment freely — every drag, add and delete can be walked back.

Keyboard Shortcuts

What it does: Speeds up editing. Click the display first so it has keyboard focus.

Range/units: Cmd+Z / Cmd+Shift+Z (Ctrl on Windows): undo / redo · Cmd+C / Cmd+V (Ctrl on Windows): copy / paste the whole EQ — also into another THE EQ instance · Tab: next band · Esc: deselect · Delete or Backspace: delete the selected band(s) · S / Shift+S: slope up / down. With the mouse: Shift-drag for fine moves, scroll over a node for Q, double-click a node to reset its gain, Alt-click (Option-click) to switch a band off/on, Alt-drag (Option-drag) to set its dynamic range, Cmd-click (Ctrl-click on Windows) to change its shape.

Pro tip: Cmd+C on one track and Cmd+V on another copies a finished EQ in a second.

Language

What it does: Sets the language of the help line and tooltips.

Range/units: English, Deutsch, Francais, Espanol, Italiano.

Show Tooltips

What it does: Shows or hides the help line in the top bar that explains whatever your mouse is over.

Pro tip: Leave tooltips on while you learn the surface; turn them off once it's second nature.

Visual Feedback & Metering

The whole window is feedback. You get a logarithmic 20 Hz–20 kHz grid with a frequency ruler, a real-time spectrum analyzer of the output behind your combined EQ response curve, and individual colored band nodes you can grab — each band also tints its own area under the curve. **Freeze** builds a peak line you can click to place bands, **Tilt** re-slopes the analyzer for a perceptual readout, and a sidechain signal shows as an amber spectrum. The vertical dB scale follows your moves automatically, from ± 6 to ± 30 dB, and a stereo output meter runs up the right edge.

Each node shows its filter shape, and non-stereo bands carry an L, R, M or S. The band pop-up shows live frequency (with note name), gain and Q readouts plus its power, Pitch Surfing, Solo and close icons; the band panel shows every per-band value. Dynamic bands show a shaded range with a draggable triangle, a small "T" where the threshold sits (when it falls inside the visible scale), and a second, fainter curve that moves live as the band reacts. A surfing band leaves a ghost ring at the frequency it's tracking. During Solo, everything except the soloed band dims.

The **PHASE** view adds a dashed phase trace, and the piano strip along the bottom highlights your scale in gold and — with GLOW on — lights up the notes that are loud right now. In the multi-instance view, other tracks' curves and spectra overlay your own, with collision highlighting, cleanup-band rings and the Spectral Allocation Map. A clear "BYPASSED" banner overlays the display whenever global bypass is engaged.

How to Use It — Real-World Workflows

Surgical cleanup (any source with a ringing resonance)

1. Double-click on the display roughly where you hear the problem to add a band (between 200 Hz and 8 kHz it starts as a Bell), then scroll up over the node to make it narrow.
2. Hold the headphones icon and drag left/right until the resonance is loudest — that's the spot.
3. Let go, pull the gain down (or switch the band to Notch for a full cut).
4. Verify with Bypass.

Dynamic de-essing (lead vocal)

1. Add a band around 5–8 kHz where the "S" sounds live; set a tight-ish Bell.
2. Switch on dynamics in the band panel; set ATK fast and DYN to a modest -3 to -6 dB.
3. Raise THR until the band only reacts on the harsh sibilant peaks.
4. Turn on Lookahead for tighter capture, then Gain Match and check with Bypass.

Mastering polish (Mid/Side, Linear Phase)

1. Switch MODE to LINEAR for phase-perfect moves.
2. Add a wide High Shelf, set CHAN to Side, and lift gently for air without smearing the center.
3. Add a Bell on the Mid channel to tighten or firm up the central low end.
4. Enable Auto-Gain so loudness stays honest, then Bypass to confirm the master is genuinely better.

Making two tracks fit (multi-instance)

1. Place THE EQ on both clashing tracks and click MULTI.
2. Click the eye on the other track's card; collision zones light up where they fight (MAP shows the big picture).
3. On the less important track, cut exactly where the collision is highlighted — or right-click the zone and choose Create cleanup band here.
4. Use the cards' S and M buttons to check each track in context.

Pro Tips & Creative Techniques

- **Boost to find, cut to fix:** sweep a high-gain narrow Bell to locate problem frequencies, then convert to a cut.
- **Dynamic instead of static:** if a cut only sounds right sometimes, make the band dynamic so it acts only when the frequency jumps out.
- **Side-only Low Cut** mono-ups your low end and tightens the mix without thinning the centered bass.
- **External sidechain ducking:** duck just the bass's lows on each kick hit for a clean, frequency-specific groove.
- **Pitch Surfing on moving resonances** lets a band chase a drifting tone hands-free.
- **Snap-to-Note** lands surgical notches on exact musical pitches instead of fishing by ear.
- **Freeze, park, click:** let the loudest part play with Freeze on, then click the tallest peak to drop a band on it.
- **All Pass for punch:** if kick and bass feel weak together, rotate the bass's phase around the kick's fundamental with an All Pass band — watch it in the PHASE view.
- **Tilt Shelf** rebalances a whole track's brightness in one move — perfect for quick tonal matching.
- **Steep cuts (48–96 dB/oct)** remove rumble and hiss aggressively without touching the body.
- **Gain Match before you judge** so you never get fooled by a louder version.

Quick Start

1. Drop THE EQ on a track and play audio — the analyzer comes alive. (The first time, log in with your philspeiser.com email and password.)
2. **Double-click** on the display where you want to make a move to add a band.
3. **Drag** the node: left/right for frequency, up/down for gain.
4. **Scroll** over the node (or turn the Q knob in the band panel) to set bandwidth.
5. Pick a different shape in the band pop-up if you want a shelf, cut, or notch instead of what THE EQ chose.
6. Toggle **Bypass** to A/B, and turn on **AUTO GAIN** so you're judging tone, not volume.

Specs

- **Formats:** VST3, AU (macOS), AAX (macOS and Windows). No standalone version.
- **Plugin type:** Advanced interactive dynamic equalizer — up to 24 fully parametric bands edited directly on a full-window spectrum display.
- **Filter shapes:** Bell, Low Shelf, High Shelf, Low Cut, High Cut, Notch, Band Pass, Tilt Shelf, Flat Tilt, All Pass.
- **Slopes:** 6, 12, 18, 24, 30, 36, 48, 72, 96 dB/oct (default 12; Low/High Cut start at 24; no slope on Notch, Band Pass and All Pass).
- **Ranges:** Frequency 20 Hz–20 kHz · Gain ± 30 dB · Q 0.025–40 · Threshold -60 to 0 dB · Dynamic range ± 30 dB · Attack 0.1–500 ms · Release 1–5000 ms (or tempo-synced) · Output ± 12 dB · Display ± 6 to ± 30 dB (automatic).
- **Engine modes:** Fast (minimum phase, zero latency), Analog (filters at double sample rate, small latency), Linear (linear phase, 8,192 samples of latency).
- **Dynamics extras:** per-band sidechain (Local, External, Network, Network Group), 5 ms Lookahead.
- **Channel processing:** Stereo / Left / Right / Mid / Side, per band.
- **Window:** 1300 x 700 by default, resizable from 50% to 300%.
- **CPU note:** Fast mode is zero-latency and efficient for everyday mixing; Analog and Linear trade a little CPU and latency for true-to-shape top end and phase-perfect mastering.
- **Languages:** English, German, French, Spanish, Italian (help line and tooltips).

Stuck, or found something this manual doesn't cover? Write to me at philspeiser.com/support. I answer support myself.