PHIL SPEISER

THE_SHAPER 2

USER MANUAL

A dozen processors on one timeline. Draw *when* each one happens and *how* it moves — then save the whole thing as a pattern and play it from your keyboard.

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The latest version is always at philspeiser.com/manual/the_shaper-2

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What It Is

THE_SHAPER 2 is a **block-grid modulation sequencer**. Instead of one effect with a knob, you get a timeline: **lanes are effects**, **time runs left to right**, and you **draw blocks** onto the grid to say *when* an effect happens. Inside every block you draw a **curve** that says *how* it happens — a gate shape, a filter sweep, a pitch drop, a reverb swell.

Eight effect lanes are available: **GAIN, PAN, FILTER, REVERB, PITCH, SLICE, DRIVE, MOD**. You stack up to eight lanes per pattern, save up to eight patterns (A–H), and switch between them by hand, by MIDI note, or with an automatic **PATTERN CHAIN**.

Under the grid sits a **MASTER row** that runs on everything: a 3-band **compressor**, a global **DUCK** (the sidechain pump — grid-synced or fired by an actual kick), a **limiter**, output level, and a global **MIX**.

Drop a loop in. Draw a gate. Sweep a filter across the second bar. Throw one snare into a reverb that cuts itself off before the downbeat. Slice the last beat into a stutter that pitches down as it repeats, and let a wavefolder chew what's left.

That's five processors, each one *moving in time*, all locked to the same clock, all saved as one pattern you can switch with a MIDI note. It took about a minute.

The Rack You're Replacing

It's worth being specific about what's actually in here, because "a modulation plugin" undersells it by an order of magnitude. Every one of these is a processor you'd otherwise buy, insert, and automate separately:

Lane	What you'd normally reach for
GAIN	A trance gate / tremolo / volume shaper — plus a transient booster, since every block carries its own ±24 dB TRIM
PAN	An auto-panner, **a stereo widener**, and **a Haas delay-panner** — with four selectable pan laws
FILTER	A multimode filter (LP/HP/BP/NOTCH/PEAK, four slopes), **a formant/vowel filter**, and — past RESO 1.00 — **a playable resonant oscillator**. With its own saturator in front of it.
REVERB	An algorithmic reverb with pre-delay, damping, width and dedicated wet-only EQ — and in CUT mode, **a gated reverb**
PITCH	**Three separate tools**: a varispeed/tape pitcher, a time-preserving granular pitch shifter, and an independent formant shifter
SLICE	A beat-repeat / glitch unit (stutter, reverse, half-time, double-time) **and** a tape emulator — because in TIME mode the same lane does tape stops, wow, flutter and vibrato
DRIVE	**Three pedals in one**: six analog saturation models, a bitcrusher (with dither and dynamic treble taming), a sample-rate reducer (with clock jitter and anti-alias filtering), two rectifiers and four wavefolders — 14 modes
MOD	**Four classic modulation pedals**: chorus, flanger, phaser (2–12 notches) and a tuned comb resonator — each with its own wet-path filter
MASTER	A **3-band multiband compressor**, a **sidechain ducker** with its own transient detector, and a **brickwall limiter** with lookahead and three saturation characters
Under all of it	A **3-band crossover** available *per lane*, an **envelope follower / transient detector**, a **curve editor** with ~50 shapes, and a **pattern sequencer** with 8 slots, chaining, swing, polymeter and MIDI switching

That's roughly a dozen processors, a multiband rack and a sequencer — and the honest version of the pitch isn't that it's cheaper than buying them.

It's that owning all of them still wouldn't get you here. Automation lanes are tied to song position, so you can't save a move as a pattern, can't switch it with a MIDI note, and can't chain eight of them into an arrangement. You can't give an automation lane a 40% chance of happening, or tell it to fire only every fourth time round. You can't set your filter to loop every 3 beats while the gate loops every 4 and let them drift against each other for twelve bars. You can't tell a stock filter to only touch the mids without building a multiband rack around it. And a chain like that racks up latency — pitch shifters, limiters and multiband stages all take their cut — where this one reports **zero** unless you deliberately switch the limiter's lookahead on.

The grid isn't a convenience layer over a rack of effects. It's a different way of writing them.

Why You'll Love It

- **You draw the effect, you don't automate it.** A block is a decision — "distortion here, for half a bar, sweeping in". No automation lanes, no host dependency, no hunting for the right envelope.
- **A dozen processors on one timeline.** Gate, panner, widener, filter, vowel filter, reverb, three kinds of pitch shifter, glitch unit, tape emulator, 14 distortions, four modulation pedals, a multiband compressor, a ducker and a limiter — all sharing one clock and one pattern.
- **Moves you can save, switch and perform.** An automation lane is stuck to song position. A pattern isn't: eight slots, bar-quantized switching, MIDI note select, and a CHAIN locked to the host timeline — jump anywhere in the song and it's already in the right place.
- **The curve means the musical thing.** On GAIN the curve is *volume*. On FILTER it's *openness*. On REVERB it's *send*. On PITCH it's *semitones*. You're never translating "0.7" into anything.
- **Bit-clean when nothing is happening.** An empty grid, a muted lane, a gap between blocks — the audio passes through untouched. This is a device you can leave inserted.
- **Zero latency by default.** Nothing in the instrument delays your audio unless you deliberately switch the limiter's LOOKAHEAD on. It stays playable live.
- **Nothing here is a stripped-down version.** The filter self-oscillates. The pitch shifter is granular *and* formant-independent. The distortion has 14 models including wavefolders. The reverb has its own wet-only EQ. These are full processors that happen to live on a grid.
- **90 factory presets and a GENERATE button** that mutates *real* patterns instead of rolling dice, so the results play like music.
- **Per-lane multiband.** Any lane can act on LOW, MID or HIGH only — filter just the bass, gate just the top, distort just the mids.
- **Trigger anything off audio.** A lane or the master DUCK can fire from a sidechain transient instead of the grid, so a duck follows the actual kick.
- **Multilingual tooltips (EN/DE/FR/ES/IT), full undo/redo, in-app docs and an AI assistant.**

The Big Idea (read this once)

Three words explain the whole instrument.

LANE — an effect. A lane says *what*. One lane, one effect, top to bottom in the order they process.

BLOCK — a timed activation on a lane. A block says *when* and *for how long*. Outside its blocks, a lane does nothing at all.

CURVE (the *figure*) — the shape drawn inside a block. It says *how the effect moves* while the block is playing. The curve's meaning depends on the lane:

Lane	What the curve height means	Top of the curve	Bottom of the curve
GAIN	volume	loud	silent
PAN	position	hard right	hard left
FILTER	openness	open	closed
REVERB	send level	fully wet	dry
PITCH	semitones	the TOP value	the BASE value
SLICE	replay speed / read position	—	—
DRIVE	amount of dirt	driven hard	clean
MOD	intensity, or sweep position	—	—

A block **with no curve** is full engagement: on GAIN and FILTER that means fully muted / fully closed; on REVERB, DRIVE and PAN it means full send, full drive, full pan. PITCH is the exception — with no curve it simply holds its TOP value, which defaults to 0, so an undrawn pitch block is neutral.

AMOUNT scales whatever the curve does. Draw once, then use AMOUNT to decide whether it's a whisper or a slam.

Everything else in this manual is detail on top of those three words.

The Interface at a Glance

One screen, top to bottom:

- **Top bar** — the tooltip readout (hover anything and it explains itself), undo/redo, AI assistant, documentation, settings and bypass. The corner grip resizes the whole UI.
- **Header row** — **TOOLS** (EDIT / STAMP / POINTS / DRAW) | **GRID** (SNAP, LENGTH, SWING) | **BRUSH** (quick figures + the figure library) | **PRESETS** (library, step arrows, GENERATE).
- **View band** — the thin strip above the lane stack: row-height toggle (FIT / TALL) on the left, zoom controls and FOLLOW over the ruler.
- **Lane rail** (left column) — one row per lane: effect name, band badge, loop-length badge, mute/solo, reorder handle, and **+ ADD LANE** at the bottom.
- **The grid** — bar.beat ruler, snap gridlines, your blocks with their curves drawn inside, gold playhead, magenta selection.
- **RESULT strip** — a thin timeline under the grid showing the processed output over the input, both locked to the pattern.
- **Inspector** — the settings panel. With a block selected it edits *that block*; with only a lane selected it edits *the lane*.
- **MASTER row** — full-width modules that run on the output for the whole plugin: **COMP**, **DUCK**, **LIMIT**, **OUT** and **MIX**.
- **Pattern bar** — slots **A–H**, **CHAIN**, **EACH**, **FOLLOW**, and the **MIDI** chip, sitting in the MASTER row's left slot so "which pattern" lives beside "what the master does to it".

The Four Tools

Pick them from the header, or press **1 2 3 4**.

EDIT (key 1)

The default. Move, resize and select blocks.

- Drag a block to move it, drag its edge to resize.
- **ALT-drag** to copy.
- **SHIFT-click** to add to the selection; drag empty space (or SHIFT-drag from a block) to rubber-band select.
- **Double-click empty space** for a 1-bar block; **double-click an edge** to fill the gap up to the neighbour.

STAMP (key 2)

Paint the loaded figure straight onto the grid. Load a shape from the BRUSH strip or the figure library, then drag on empty grid to place a block of that width carrying that curve. **SHIFT-drag** paints a whole row of them. Stamping onto an existing block swaps its curve. **ESC** leaves STAMP.

POINTS (key 3)

Shape the selected block's curve. Drag points, click the line to add one, double-click a point to remove it. The mouse wheel over a point or its handle bends the segment.

Sub-tools, keys **Q W E R T** (picking one also enters POINTS):

- **SELECT (Q)** — move points, bend segments.
- **PENCIL (W)** — place points freehand.
- **LINE (E)** — draw straight runs.
- **STEP (R)** — draw flat stairs (instant gate shapes).
- **SHAPE (T)** — drop a whole figure across the drag.

SNAP in the point HUD locks new and dragged points to the grid division; hold **SHIFT** for the opposite while dragging. Hold **CMD/CTRL** to borrow EDIT for one move.

FLIP turns the whole curve upside down in one press — what rose now falls. It works on the selected block's curve, or on the DUCK's while its panel is up, and it is one undo step. The quickest way to turn a follow-the-audio shape into a duck-under-it shape, or to hear the opposite of an idea before committing to it.

The point HUD floats at the top right of the grid, so the curve tools sit next to the curve rather than across the window.

DRAW (key 4)

Sketch a stroke over a lane and it becomes a block carrying exactly that curve. The fastest way from "I hear it in my head" to "it's on the grid".

CAPTURE and RECORD — get the movement in without drawing it

Drawing a curve is the slow way to describe a rhythm you can already hear. CAPTURE listens to one pass of audio and turns what it heard into blocks and curves — which you can then edit by hand like anything else on the grid.

What it captures follows your selection

- **A lane selected, no block — RECORD.** The lane's whole loop is the window, and the pass lands as a finished take. You do not need a block to exist first: add a lane, arm it, play a bar, and the lane *is* the track's movement.
- **A block selected — CAPTURE** into that block's own curve, over that block's own span.
- **The DUCK panel open — the duck's curve.**

Arming, and the transport

Pressing the chip **arms** it; the **transport starts it**. With your track stopped there is nothing to record, so the chip reads **WAITING FOR PLAY** until you roll the transport and the pass begins from there. Arm it, hit play, get a take. If you are already playing when you press it, it starts straight away. Press the chip again to cancel, and Cmd/Ctrl+Z undoes a take you do not want.

INV, and what it listens to

INV flips the take. Upright, the curve follows the audio — loud is open. Inverted, it ducks underneath — loud is closed, which is exactly what a sidechain curve is. Set it before you capture.

CAPTURE listens to the same source the trigger does, so with a **sidechain** routed it traces the kick rather than the mix. The chip tells you which it is on: **IN** or **SC**.

The take is read as a rhythm, not a waveform

Tracing a peak envelope is right for a sustained source and wrong for a percussive one — the envelope of a drum loop is a squiggle, and a squiggle only wobbles a sustained note instead of making it play in that loop's rhythm.

So a percussive take is **analysed**: where the hits are, how hard each one was, and how long it rang. You get **one block per hit**, each carrying a real percussive curve that decays at the rate that hit decayed, running until the next hit. The blocks tile the loop, so a pad through a GAIN lane comes out playing the loop's **rhythm** rather than its waveform.

Each block's AMOUNT comes from how hard that hit was. The loudest peak in the take is the 100% baseline and everything else sits in relation to it, so the kick slams the lane and a ghost note only nudges it — and you can see it on the grid, because the quieter hits are visibly shallower blocks. Without it every hit would land at full depth and the lane would play the right rhythm with the life flattened out of it.

If nothing percussive is found you get the sustained curve instead, scaled by how loud the pass was. Either way it lands as points you can drag.

Drop an audio file straight onto a lane

The fastest version of the whole idea: you do not have to play the loop in and wait a bar for it, because the file already **is** the bar. Drag any audio file onto a lane and it runs the same analysis a live take does and lands the same way — dynamics and all.

The file's length decides the lane's loop. A 2-bar loop dropped on a lane inside a 4-bar pattern makes that lane 2 bars, rather than being stretched to half speed. Polymeter is a first-class idea here, so that is the honest reading of "this file is the loop".

A short menu opens on every drop showing what the file was read as, with **x0.5** and **x2** corrections one click away, so a wrong reading never lands silently.

Pro tip: this is the quickest way to make one part follow another. Drop your drum loop onto a GAIN lane over the pad and the pad breathes with the kit. Drop it with **INV** on and the pad ducks out of its way instead.

The Eight Lanes — In Depth

Lanes process **top to bottom**. Reorder them by dragging the handle in the rail — a filter before a distortion is a different sound from a distortion before a filter.

Every lane also has the shared settings covered in *Lane Settings* below: **BAND**, **CLOCK**, **LOOP**, **MUTE/SOLO**.

GAIN — the gate, the pump, the chop

What it does: Rides the level. The curve is volume: high is loud, the bottom of the curve is silence. This is your trance gate, your tremolo, your stutter chop, your manual sidechain.

Block controls

- **AMOUNT** — how deep the curve cuts. At 1.00 the bottom of the curve is silence; lower it and the same drawing only dips.
- **TRIM** (±24 dB) — level for the whole block. The curve only ever *cuts* (it tops out at unity), so TRIM is how you draw a transient **boost**.
- **LOOK** (lookahead, ms) — starts closing the gate this many ms early so a hard step lands clean instead of clicking. It reads the *curve* ahead, not the audio, so it costs **no latency**.

In your music: Sidechain-style pumping without a sidechain. 1/16 gates on pads. Half-bar mutes as an arrangement tool. Transient boosts on a snare with TRIM.

Pro tip: Draw a gate with STEP (key R) — flat stairs give you a hard, machine-tight chop. Then add 1–2 ms of LOOK and it stops clicking without softening the edge.

PAN — movement across the image

What it does: Places the sound left and right. The curve is position: top is hard right, bottom is hard left.

Block controls

- **AMOUNT** — how far the curve throws the sound. At 1.00 the ends are hard left and hard right.
- **WIDTH** (0–2.00) — stereo width *before* panning. 1.00 leaves it alone, 0 folds to mono, 2.00 spreads it wide.
- **HAAS** (0–1) — blends level panning into **delay** panning. Delaying the far channel instead of turning it down moves a mono drum across the image without losing any level.
- **RANGE** (ms) — how much Haas delay a full pan is worth. About 2 ms is real-world spacing; higher is larger than life.
- **LAW** — 0 DB / 3 DB / 4.5 / 6 DB pan law. 0 DB only ever turns a channel down (a hard-panned hat loses energy); the compensated laws push the other channel up to hold the level.

In your music: Ping-pong hats. A wide pad that folds to mono for one bar. A percussion loop that swings across the stereo field with the groove.

Pro tip: HAAS is the "how did they get it that wide" trick — but always check in mono. Keep RANGE near 2 ms for something that still sums.

FILTER — the sweep

What it does: A filter you draw. The curve is openness: top is open, bottom is closed.

Block controls

- **MODE** — **LP**, **HP**, **BP**, **NOTCH**, **VOWEL**, **PEAK**.
  - **PEAK** boosts the band around the cutoff instead of cutting it — the opposite of NOTCH.
  - **VOWEL** ignores the frequency range entirely: the curve morphs a vowel **A-E-I-O-U** and AMOUNT blends it in.
- **AMOUNT** — how far the curve closes the filter.
- **RESO** (0–2.00) — resonance. Up to 1.00 is the classic range; past that it climbs to a *singing* Q where the filter rings on its own and can be played as an oscillator (a kick, a zap, a bleep). You can't get there by accident.
- **LO / HI** — the frequencies the curve sweeps from and to. Leave at default for the classic endpoints.
- **SKEW** (0.1–1.00) — how the curve spreads over that range. 1.00 is a plain log sweep; lower spends more of the curve down low, where the ear notices most.
- **DRIVE** (0–24 dB) — gain into a saturator *before* the filter, so the resonance itself distorts.
- **SLOPE** — 6 / 12 / 24 / 48 dB per octave.
- **STEREO** (semitones, signed) — pushes the left and right cutoffs apart, so a sweep moves *across* the image instead of in front of you.

In your music: Risers, builds, wah pulses, telephone verses, filtered breakdowns. NOTCH or PEAK with STEREO is the classic "moving air" trick on a pad.

Pro tip: For a build, draw a slow rise across four bars with SKEW around 0.4 — most of the movement lands in the low mids where the lift is felt, not just heard.

REVERB — space on demand

What it does: A reverb whose *send* you draw. The curve is send level: high is wet. Tails ring on past the end of the block, exactly like a real room.

Block controls

- **TAIL** — **RING** (the tail rings on past the block, like a real room) or **CUT** (the tail fades to silence into the block end and is cleared, so nothing bleeds into the next block or pattern).
- **AMOUNT** — how much of the block is *sent* to the tail. The curve rides this, so a swell feeds the reverb gradually.
- **SIZE** — length of the tail, from a short room to about six seconds.
- **DAMP** — how fast the high end dies in the tail. Up is darker and further back.
- **PRE** (0–500 ms) — pre-delay. Puts space between a transient and its own tail: the hit stays close while the room stays big.
-

LO CUT / HI CUT — filters on the **wet only**. LO CUT is the one that stops a reverb from mudding up everything under it; DAMP cannot do that job.

- **WIDTH** (0–2) — stereo width of the tail alone. The dry stays exactly as it was.
- **WET** — level of the tail against the dry. The dry is never turned down, so raising this *adds* rather than trades.

In your music: Throw reverb on the last snare of a bar. Swell a vocal into the chorus. One wet beat before a drop, then CUT so the drop lands in silence.

Pro tip: Reverb throws want a short block with **CUT** and a fast decaying curve. Reverb *washes* want RING and a slow swell. Two completely different moves, same lane.

PITCH — tape stops, drops, chipmunks

What it does: Transposes. The curve travels between two semitone values you set.

Block controls

- **ENGINE** — **TAPE** (varispeed like a sampler or tape: pitch and *time* move together; zero latency, and the default) or **GRAIN** (a real pitch shift that keeps the block *in time*, so a transposed block still lines up with the bar).
- **FORMANT** — **LINK** (formants ride the pitch curve, the way tape does — this is the chipmunk, and it's free) or **FREE** (formants hold still while the pitch sweeps, so a voice keeps its character).
- **RANGE** — **COARSE** (±24 semitones) or **FINE** (±3 semitones, read out in cents) for drift and detune.
- **TOP / BASE** — the semitone values at the top and bottom of the curve. Set TOP above zero and BASE below it for a sweep that crosses the original pitch.
- **AMOUNT** — scales the whole pitch move. At 0.50 a -12 semitone drawing only bends down six.
- **FORMANT** (amount) — moves the resonances — the vowel, the body — without moving the pitch. Up thins and brightens, down thickens.
- **GRAIN** (ms) — window size for the GRAIN engine. Longer is smoother on sustained sounds, shorter keeps transients tight.

In your music: The tape stop before the drop. A falling 808. Octave-up vocal stabs. A quarter-tone of drift on a pad so it breathes.

Pro tip: A tape stop is one falling curve over TAPE engine with BASE at -24 and TOP at 0. Draw a **fast fall** (the Exp Decay figure) rather than a straight line — real machines don't decelerate linearly.

SLICE — stutters, rolls, reverse, wow

What it does: Captures the incoming audio continuously and replays it. This is the beat-repeat lane, and its **TIME** mode is the deepest thing in the instrument.

Block controls

- **MODE**
  - **LOOP** — repeats a slice of the chosen division.
  - **REV** — plays the captured audio backwards.

  - **HALF** — half speed.
  - **2X** — double speed.
  - **TIME** — the drawn curve becomes a **read position** in the captured audio. Stutters, reverse, tape stops, half speed and vibrato all come out of one drawing.
- **DIV** — the slice length for LOOP/REV (1/4, 1/8, 1/16, 1/32).
- **AMOUNT** — how much of the replayed slice you hear against the live signal.
- **BEND** (semitones) — how far the curve bends the replay speed. 0 replays flat.
- **PITCH/REP** (semitones, signed) — transposes each repeat one more step, so a stutter climbs or falls as it repeats.
- **DECAY** — fades the repeats away inside the block, so a stutter **lands** instead of running flat into the next one.
- **DECLICK** — ramps every repeat in and out, sized as a share of the repeat. Small amounts remove the click a loop restart leaves on bass-heavy material; at 100% the two ramps meet in the middle.
- **RANGE MS** — how far back in ms the curve can reach (TIME mode). A few ms turns the same drawing into tape wow or vibrato instead of a stutter. Does **not** follow tempo.
- **RANGE BT** — the same reach in **beats**, so it follows tempo. 0 uses the block's own length.

In your music: The 1/32 roll into the chorus. A reversed half-beat before the downbeat. Vocal chopping. Wow and flutter on a whole loop with a tiny RANGE MS.

Pro tip: A roll that *lands* needs three things: DIV at 1/16 or 1/32, **DECAY** around 0.5, and **PITCH/REP** at +1 or -1. That's the difference between a stutter and a fill.

DRIVE — dirt, with a shape

What it does: Distortion you draw. The curve is amount of dirt: high is hot and crushed.

14 modes:

- **Analog clippers** (2x oversampled, clean): **TUBE**, **XFMR**, **FET**, **TAPE**, **DIODE**, **CONSOLE**
- **Digital destroyers** (base rate on purpose — the fold *is* the effect): **CRUSH** (bit depth), **LOFI** (sample rate)
- **Rectifiers and wavefolders**: **S-RECT**, **H-RECT**, **SINE**, **TRI**, **SAW**, **XFOLD** — a folder keeps generating new harmonics as you drive it instead of flattening out, so it sounds like a different instrument rather than a louder one.

Block controls

- **AMOUNT** — how hard the curve drives the shaper.
- **TONE** (signed) — tilts the distorted signal darker or brighter. 0 is neutral.
- **PUSH** (signed) — offsets the signal into the curve so its two halves shape differently. That asymmetry is what makes **even** harmonics, the warm ones. Removed again afterwards, so it colours without shifting the signal.
- **GRIP** — pushes the quiet part of the signal down *inside* the distortion, so driving a loop hard stops dragging its room tone and bleed up with it.
-

IN / OUT — gain into the shaper and trim afterwards. Overdrive with IN, bring the level back with OUT.

- **CRUSH only: BITS** (the depth the curve crushes down to), **RATE** (sample-and-hold factor swept alongside), **DITHER** (a whisper of noise before the crusher, trading hiss for the harsh ringing a bare quantiser makes), **TREBLE** (closes the top end as the crush drives harder, taming harshness exactly when it appears).
- **LOFI only: RATE**, **JITTER** (wobbles the sample-and-hold clock — a perfectly steady clock is the one thing old samplers never had), **ALIAS FLT** (filters before the rate reduction so you get the lo-fi rate without the fizz; off is the raw, dirtier sound).

In your music: A dirty accent on beat 4. Crushed hats. A whole chorus through XFOLD for the modern sound-design distortion. TAPE at low AMOUNT as glue.

Pro tip: GRIP is the secret weapon on sampled loops. Drive a break hard and it normally drags up all the room tone with it — a touch of GRIP keeps the dirt on the hits and off the air.

MOD — chorus, flanger, phaser, comb

What it does: Classic delay-line and allpass modulators. The drawn curve **is** the LFO (or the intensity — your choice).

Block controls

- **MODE** — **CHORUS**, **FLANGER**, **PHASER**, **COMB**. Picking a mode re-homes MIX, FEEDBACK and DEPTH to that mode's voicing, because a chorus at 50/50 with no regeneration and a comb that only sings when resonating are not the same control set.
- **DRAWS** — **AMOUNT** (the drawn curve is the *intensity*, and the block's own LFO does the sweeping) or **SWEEP** (the drawn curve **is** the LFO — it drives the sweep position).
- **MIX** — how much of the modulated signal you hear. A chorus lives near 0.50; a flanger or phaser wants it all the way up.
- **FEEDBK** (signed) — feeds the effect back into itself, deepening the notches. Negative flips the polarity for a hollower voicing.
- **DEPTH** — how far the sweep travels.
- **RATE** (Hz) — speed of the block's own LFO. Ignored in SWEEP mode.
- **NOTE** — the note the comb is tuned to (COMB). The curve sweeps two octaves up from there.
- **NOTCHES** (2–12) — how many peaks the phaser fans across the spectrum. More is thicker and more resonant.
- **WIDTH** — offsets the LFO *phase* between left and right, so the two channels move through the sweep a step apart.
- **STEREO** (semitones) — splits the left and right sweep centres. Unlike WIDTH, this holds the image open even when the LFO is barely moving.
- **WET FILTER** — **OFF / LP / HP** plus **WET FLT** (cutoff) and **WET RES**, on the modulated path only. Darken a flanger or air out a chorus without touching the dry underneath.

In your music: A chorus that fades in over two bars (DRAWS = AMOUNT with a swell). A flanger that sweeps exactly on the bar (DRAWS = SWEEP). A tuned comb that plays a note under your drums.

Pro tip: SWEEP mode plus a slow S-curve gives you a jet flange that's locked to the grid instead of drifting — something no free-running LFO can do.

Lane Settings

Select a lane (click its header, no block selected) and the inspector becomes the lane editor.

EFFECT (lane type)

What it does: Which effect the lane runs. Changing it re-homes every block in the lane onto the new effect's musical defaults.
Pro tip: Try changing a working GAIN gate to FILTER — same rhythm, completely different move, zero redrawing.

BAND

What it does: FULL / LOW / MID / HIGH. A banded lane's effect only touches that band; the other two are summed back around it untouched. The split is magnitude-flat, so band + rest sums back correctly.
Range: The crossover points are set once in **BANDS** (shared by every banded lane and by the master compressor), so LOW means the same thing everywhere.
In your music: Gate only the top end. Distort only the mids. Duck only the bass under a kick.
Pro tip: SLICE and PITCH ignore BAND — they replay captured audio, so a band assignment has no meaning there.

CLOCK

What it does: GRID plays the lane's blocks on the pattern clock. **TRIGGER** replays them as a **one-shot** from every hit the audio trigger detects, then stops until the next one.
In your music: A gate lane on TRIGGER becomes a real transient-following ducker. A DRIVE lane on TRIGGER only dirties actual hits.
Pro tip: A TRIGGER lane is a one-shot, so it has no loop length. Set what it listens to in the trigger panel (see MASTER row / TRIG).

LOOP

What it does: The length of the section this lane repeats. Steps in beats below a bar and in bars above it, up to the pattern length. **PATTERN** keeps following the pattern.
In your music: Polymeter. Set the pattern to 4 bars and one lane's loop to 3 beats — the two drift against each other and never repeat the same way until they line back up.
Pro tip: Each lane is drawn across the full grid width using its *own* loop length, so a short-loop lane is bigger and easier to edit, not squeezed into a corner.

MUTE / SOLO

What it does: MUTE skips the lane's effect entirely — the audio passes through untouched. SOLO skips every *other* lane's effect. Click more lanes to add them to the solo; **ALT-click** to solo one alone.
Pro tip: It's an *effect* solo, not an audio solo — a silenced lane still passes its audio, and SLICE capture rings keep recording, so unmuting a slice lane has history immediately.

CLEAR LANE

Empties the lane but keeps it: effect type, loop length, band, clock and mute/solo all stay. Also on the lane's right-click menu, next to **Copy lane**, **Paste lane**, **Duplicate lane** and **Remove lane**.

Block Settings

Select a block and the inspector shows the effect controls on the left and the block's own behaviour on the right.

CURVE — LENGTH and OFFSET

What it does: LENGTH is how long **one repeat** of the shape lasts in musical time. Resizing the block therefore **re-tiles** the curve instead of stretching it — a 1/8-note gate stays a 1/8-note gate when you drag the block wider. Hold **ALT** while resizing to stretch instead. **OFFSET** slides the starting point inside the shape.
Pro tip: This is why one drawn gate works at any block length. Draw it once at 1/16, then paint blocks of any width.

CHANCE and the cycle condition

What it does: CHANCE is the odds the block plays on each pass. The **cycle condition** plays it only once every 2, 3 or 4 times round the loop.
In your music: Together they turn a fixed pattern into one that keeps moving — a fill that only happens every fourth bar, a stutter that shows up 30% of the time.
Pro tip: Set your main groove to 100% and put CHANCE on the *accents* only. Randomness on the foundation just sounds broken.

HOLD / RELEASE

What it does: What the lane does when the block **stops**. **RELEASE** returns it to neutral at the block's end — the default, and why scrubbing is safe: a position sounds the same however you got there. **HOLD** parks the block's last curve value until the next block starts or the loop wraps — draw a filter sweep down and it *stays* down. The dashed line on the grid shows exactly how far the held value carries.
Available on: GAIN, PAN, FILTER and DRIVE. (The history/tail lanes — REVERB, PITCH, SLICE, MOD — are excluded: holding a buffer position forever isn't a thing.)
Pro tip: HOLD turns the grid into automation. Sweep a filter closed on beat 1, hold it, open it again on beat 3 — two blocks instead of a drawn line across the whole bar.

Block editing gestures

- **Right-click a block:** Copy, Cut, Duplicate, Paste here, **Consolidate**, **Split here**, Delete block, Remove curve. **Hover "Split here"** and a gold cut line appears on the grid behind the menu, showing exactly where the cut would land before you commit to it.
- **Cmd/Ctrl+E** splits the selection at the snapped mouse position (SHIFT for free position) — the Ableton split key. **Hold CMD/CTRL** and the same cut line tracks the pointer.

Either way the line marks every block the cut would divide, including across lanes when the selection spans several. No line means no cut: the beat is too close to a block edge, or nothing under the mouse is selected. It is the same test the split itself runs, so what you are shown is what you get. (The menu

covers the grid below where you clicked, so on a multi-lane selection the lower lanes' lines sit behind it — hold CMD/CTRL with no menu up to see all of them at once.)

- **Consolidate** merges touching blocks into one.
- **Remove curve** strips the figure and leaves a full-engagement block.

Patterns

Pattern slots A–H

What it does: Eight complete patterns per patch. Click a slot to edit and play it. A switch lands on the **next bar**, so it always drops in musically.
Pro tip: Filled slots are drawn bright and empty ones dim, so the chain's route is readable at a glance.

LENGTH (bars)

What it does: The length of the current pattern, 1–8 bars (default 2). Each pattern has its own length. The popover is the pattern-timing panel — bars, SCALE PATTERN and SHIFT in one place:

- **LENGTH IN BARS** (1–8) — resizes the **grid** only. Every block stays exactly where it is, so growing 4 → 8 bars hands you four empty bars to fill.
- **SCALE PATTERN** (**x0.5**, **x2**) — resizes the grid **and stretches the patch to match**, in one press. Every block on every lane keeps its position and its share of the pattern, and curve lengths and lane loop lengths scale with it. **x2** relays the patch over twice the bars, so the same figure plays at **half speed**; **x0.5** packs it into half the bars for **double speed**. Each chip prints the length it will land on — **x2 → 8 BARS** against a 4-bar pattern.

Pro tip: SCALE is how you fit a preset to a tempo. FLUTTER sits right at 120 BPM; at 150 it runs hot, so hit **x2** and the whole thing halves in speed with every lane's timing intact. It applies to the pattern you are editing, so a chained patch gets it per slot. Cmd/Ctrl+Z undoes the whole stretch in one step.

A chip greys out when its result would not be a whole number of bars between 1 and 8 — at 8 bars **x2** would need 16, and at 3 bars **x0.5** would need 1.5. At 5 and 7 bars neither fits and the row says so. The chips keep their place either way, so a dead one tells you *why* the move is unavailable instead of quietly disappearing.

Note: Only musical time moves. Levels, filter frequencies, drive amounts, millisecond envelopes and MOD's free-running RATE stay put — a pattern that plays half as fast should still sound like itself. The master DUCK is global rather than part of any one pattern, so it keeps its own rate.

SNAP

What it does: The grid division blocks snap to: **1/4, 1/8, 1/8T, 1/16, 1/16T, 1/32**. It also drives point snapping in the POINTS tools and the arrow-key nudge step.

SHIFT (rotate the pattern in its loop)

What it does: Lives at the bottom of the **LENGTH** popover: two rows of nudges — **-BAR**, **- **, **+ **, **+BAR**, where ** ** is the current SNAP division. The top row moves **every lane at once**, the bottom row moves **only the selected lane**. Anything running off the end of the loop wraps around to the beginning.

Why it's special: The pattern is not edited, only re-phased. A block that crosses the loop boundary becomes two pieces that play exactly what the one played, and nothing else moves — same blocks,

same curves, same relationships, different starting point. The panel stays open on a nudge, so you can sit on it and tap while the music runs.

Pro tip: This is how you match a preset to what you are playing rather than the other way round. If a pattern feels right but lands wrong against your chord changes, nudge it a bar and try again — the same pattern at a different offset is often a completely different groove. Shifting one lane on its own is the quickest way to make a variation of a preset: move the FILTER lane a beat against everything else and the whole thing re-reads.

Note: Each lane rotates inside **its own loop** — a lane set to loop every 2 bars inside a 4-bar pattern rotates within those 2 bars, which is what keeps it in phase with itself. A shift clears the block selection (the wrap renumbers the blocks), leaving the lane selected.

SWING

What it does: Slides the off-16ths toward the triplet position, 0–100%. Blocks follow it *and* the curve repeats inside a block swing with it. The master DUCK stays straight — pumps should stay straight.
Pro tip: Match your DAW's groove amount here and the shaper locks to the rest of the track instead of fighting it.

PATTERN CHAIN + EACH

What it does: With CHAIN on, the **filled** slots play in order, each holding for **EACH** repeats of its own length (x1, x2, x4 or x8). Empty slots are skipped — an untouched slot is not a rest.
Why it's special: The route is a pure function of the host timeline. Jump anywhere in your song and the chain is already where it should be; loop the whole cycle and it repeats identically. Manual or MIDI selection overrides it for that bar.
Pro tip: Four slots at EACH x2 gives you an 8-bar arrangement that writes itself. Build A as the verse, B as a variation, C as the fill, D as the drop.

FOLLOW (pattern bar)

What it does: The slot the engine is playing is the one on screen, so you always watch what you hear. The moment you click a slot to edit, editing stays there.

MIDI pattern select

What it does: Notes on the plugin's track choose the slot: the **root note** is A and the next seven semitones are B to H. Default root is **C1 (note 36)**.
Range: Click the chip to switch it off if stray notes keep changing patterns; the mouse wheel over the chip moves the root note.
In your music: Play your patterns from a keyboard or draw them as a MIDI clip — pattern switching becomes part of the arrangement, not a mouse move.

The MASTER Row

Effects that run at the output, under the whole grid, for the whole plugin — not per pattern and not per lane. The signal order is:

the lane grid → COMP → DUCK → OUT → LIMIT → MIX blend against the dry input

COMP (master multiband compressor)

What it does: A 3-band compressor placed **ahead of the DUCK** on purpose — a duck is a deliberate rhythmic gain move, and a compressor placed after one spends its life undoing it. Glue first, pump second.
Controls:

- **AMOUNT** — the one control that matters. It walks all three band thresholds down together.
- **MODE** — picks the character as a set (ratio, attack, release and knee move together, because on a master bus they aren't four independent decisions): **GLUE** (a gentle bus compressor), **PUNCH** (lets the transient through and grabs the body), **SQUASH** (pumps).
- **MIX** — blends the compressed signal under the dry one.
- **Per-band second pass** — **THRESH** offsets (which band leans into AMOUNT) and **GAIN** trims, plus the **SPLIT** points. Those are the *same* crossovers the banded lanes use.
  Metering: Gain reduction per band — LOW, MID, HIGH — growing downward, because reduction is something being taken away.
  Pro tip: Ride AMOUNT and nothing else until it sounds right. Only then lean on the lows or let the highs breathe with the per-band offsets.

DUCK (global pump)

What it does: One gain curve applied under the entire grid. Off means the audio is left untouched.
Controls:

- **On/off**, **CURVE** (pick any shape from the figure library), **DEPTH** (how far it pulls the level down).
- **CLOCK** — **SYNC** loops the curve on the beat grid (the classic tempo-synced pump) or **TRIG** fires it once per detected hit and then holds — ducking that follows the actual kick.
- **RATE** — how long one pass of the curve lasts: **1/1, 1/2, 1/4, 1/8, 1/16**. On SYNC that's the loop length; on TRIG it's the length of the one-shot.
  Pro tip: The classic house pump is the **Sidechain** figure at 1/4 on SYNC. For a mix where the kick isn't perfectly quantized, switch to **TRIG** and route the kick to the sidechain — it follows the performance.

TRIG (trigger settings)

What it does: Sets what the transient detector listens to. It feeds both the master DUCK on TRIG clock and every lane set to TRIGGER clock.
Controls:

- **INPUT** — **SIDECHAIN** (the sidechain bus) or **SELF** (this plugin's own signal). SIDECHAIN greys out until the host actually delivers something on that bus.

- **SENSE** — how eagerly the detector fires. The lamp at the top of the panel flashes once per detected hit.
- **BAND** — narrows the detector so a kick trigger doesn't also hear the hats (full range, low, mid, or high presets).
  Pro tip: Set BAND to the low preset and watch the lamp while the loop plays. If it flashes twice a beat, you're hearing the hats — narrow it further or drop SENSE.

LIMIT (master limiter)

What it does: The last processing stage — only the global MIX blend comes after it. **CEILING** is the level it will not let through; the scope shows how much it's taking. Switched off, a plain safety clipper still guards the ceiling.
Controls:

- **CEILING** — dB, default **-0.3**. Nothing leaves the plugin above this.
- **CLIP / AHEAD** — **CLIP** is a fast, zero-latency clipper. **AHEAD** (lookahead) reads ahead of the audio to catch peaks before they land — a true brickwall. **This is the only latency the plugin ever reports.** Leave it off for zero-latency live playing; the host compensates it during mixing.
- **CLIP shape** — **SOFT** or **HARD**.
- **CHAR** — adds character on the way in: **XFMR**, **TUBE** or **TAPE**.
  Pro tip: A shaper patch with heavy DRIVE and a deep DUCK can spike hard on the transitions. LIMIT on CLIP catches it without costing you a single sample of latency.

OUT

What it does: Master output volume, -24 to +12 dB — after the DUCK, ahead of the limiter, so a boost here is still caught by the ceiling. The meter beside it shows the level actually leaving the plugin.
Gestures: Drag to set, double-click for unity, right-click to type a value.

MIX (global)

What it does: The whole plugin in parallel against the dry signal — the **final** stage in the chain, blended after the master section. At 0% you get your untouched input back, not a dry signal that has been through the compressor and the limiter. The dry path is delay-aligned to whatever latency the limiter reports, so the blend stays phase-correct at every setting.
Range: 0–100%, default 100%. Drag to set, double-click for full wet, right-click to type. **Automatable in your DAW.**
In your music: Wind the whole instrument in and out over a build. Parallel-blend a heavy chop under the original groove so the transients stay intact.
Pro tip: MIX is the honest "how much of this do I want" control. Set the patch at 100% until it's exciting, then pull MIX back to 60–70% and it'll sit in the mix instead of taking it over.

BANDS

What it does: The crossover points shared by every banded lane *and* the master compressor — so LOW means the same thing everywhere, and the band a lane filters is the band the compressor controls. Drag to move; LOW always stays below HIGH.

Presets, Figures and GENERATE

The preset library (PRESETS)

What it does: A preset is the **whole patch**: all 8 patterns, the master DUCK, the COMP, the LIMIT, the bands and the trigger.
How to use it: Click a preset to load the whole patch, or hover the row and hit the **SLOT x** chip to drop just its pattern A into the slot you're editing. **SAVE** stores your current patch. Type to search. **Cmd/Ctrl+Z** undoes a load.
Which slot does a preset land in? Because a preset *is* all 8 slots, a plain click replaces every one of them, and the patch's content sits wherever its author put it — for almost every factory preset that is **A**. The view follows it there, so you always land on the pattern that just loaded. If you want a preset in the slot you're currently on instead — building a chain out of several presets, say — that's what the per-row **SLOT** chip is for: it leaves every other slot alone.
Factory content: 90 presets across **RHYTHMIC**, **GLITCH**, **FILTER** and **TEXTURE**.
Pro tip: The **step arrows** next to the PRESETS button walk the whole library in order — factory first, then yours. Hold your loop playing and just step through until something grabs you.

The figure library (BRUSH / FIGURES)

What it does: ~50 curve shapes across ten categories — **Shape** (Sidechain, GATE1, SSSS, DOUBLEPLUCK, Triangle, Saw…), **Linear**, **Step**, **LFO**, **Exponential**, **Logarithmic**, **S-Curve**, **Envelope** (Fast Attack, Pluck, Swell, AD…), **Pulse** and **Smooth**.
How to use it: With a block selected, clicking a shape gives that block the curve. With nothing selected, it loads the **STAMP** brush so you can paint it. **ESC** unloads it. The **quick figures** strip in the header keeps your most-used shapes one click away.

GENERATE

What it does: Builds a whole pattern into the slot you're editing. Pick a **STYLE** and a **MUTATE** depth, then press GENERATE — every press rerolls.
STYLE: ANY, **PUMP**, **GATE**, **STUTTER**, **BUILD**, **WOBBLE**, **GRIT**, **SPACE**.
MUTATE: SUBTLE, **NORMAL**, **WILD** — how far the result may stray from what it started with.
Why it works: It doesn't roll dice. It starts from **real authored preset material** matching your style, keeps *where* activity happens in time (that arrangement is the musical value), and applies bounded musical mutations — swapping figures within the same category, halving or doubling repeat lengths, jittering amounts, adding chance and cycle conditions. At NORMAL and above it may borrow one lane from another matching preset, but only if it passes a compatibility check. The results play like patterns, not like noise.
Undo: One undo step takes it back.
Pro tip: Press GENERATE five times in a row with your loop playing and keep the one that makes you look up. Then edit it — the generator gets you to a starting point in ten seconds, not to a finished patch.

Visual Feedback & Metering

- **The blocks themselves** show their curve drawn inside — you read the patch at a glance without selecting anything.
- **Gold playhead** sweeps the grid; **magenta** marks the selection.
- **Dashed lines** after a block show exactly how far a **HOLD** value carries.
- **RESULT strip** under the grid: the processed output drawn over the input, both locked to the pattern, so you *see* what the grid did to your audio.
- **Pattern bar** dims empty slots and lights the playing one.
- **COMP gain reduction** per band (LOW / MID / HIGH), growing downward.
- **LIMIT scope** shows how much the limiter is taking.
- **OUT meter** shows the level leaving the plugin.
- **TRIG lamp** flashes once per detected transient — the fastest way to dial SENSE and BAND.
- **FOLLOW** keeps the playhead in view while zoomed. Panning or zooming by hand pauses it (the chip dims) until the playhead comes back on its own.
- **Row modes**: **FIT** keeps every lane on screen at once (a pattern is a relationship between lanes); **TALL** gives fixed, comfortable rows and scrolls the stack. The **expand** button in a lane's rail header blows that lane up to **fullscreen** for deep curve work (the up/down arrows then become a lane switcher); the same button or **ESC** brings the stack back.
- **The waveform behind the lanes. Right-click the ruler** (or the grid) for three states. **GHOST** is the default faint backdrop. **FULL** raises it to a readable input waveform and adds a tick wherever the transient detector fired — the only way to *see* what SENSE is hearing, and therefore where a TRIG lane will actually fire. Turn SENSE down and watch the marks thin out. **OFF** gives you a bare grid.
- **SHOW OVER BLOCKS** (same menu) draws the waveform on top of the block cards as well as behind them. On a packed pattern the blocks cover exactly the audio you are trying to cut against, so switch it on while you place cuts and off again afterwards. It is off by default.
- **Multilingual tooltips** (EN/DE/FR/ES/IT) on every zone in the interface.

How to Use It — Real-World Workflows

The 60-second gate (any loop)

1. Insert THE_SHAPER 2 on your loop. Click the lane header and set its effect to **GAIN** (or **+ ADD LANE** → GAIN).
2. Press **2** for STAMP, click the **Sidechain** or **GATE1** quick figure, and drag one bar across the lane.
3. In the inspector set **CURVE LENGTH** to 1/8 — the shape re-tiles eight times across the bar.
4. Ride **AMOUNT** until the depth feels right. Done.

Sidechain pump without a sidechain

1. Turn **DUCK** on in the master row.
2. Set its curve to **Sidechain**, **CLOCK** = SYNC, **RATE** = 1/4.
3. Set **DEPTH** to taste. It pumps in perfect time with no kick routing and no compressor.
4. If your kick isn't quantized, switch **CLOCK** to **TRIG**, route the kick to the sidechain bus, and set the trigger **BAND** to lows.

The build and the drop

1. Pattern **A** = your groove. Copy it to **B** (right-click the pattern bar → Copy pattern → paste into B).
2. On B, add a **FILTER** lane with one long block: a slow rise across the whole pattern, **LP**, **SKEW** 0.4.
3. On the last beat of B, add a **SLICE** block: **LOOP**, DIV 1/32, **DECAY** 0.5, **PITCH/REP** +1.
4. Set B's last GAIN block to **HOLD** so the pattern ends silent into the drop.
5. Switch A → B by hand, by MIDI note, or with the CHAIN.

An 8-bar arrangement that writes itself

1. Fill slots **A, B, C, D** — groove, variation, texture, fill.
2. Turn **CHAIN** on and set **EACH** to x2.
3. Turn **FOLLOW** on so you watch what you hear.
4. Because the chain is locked to the host timeline, you can locate anywhere in the song and it's already correct.

Multiband: gate the top, keep the bass

1. Add a **GAIN** lane, set its **BAND** to **HIGH**.
2. Draw a 1/16 gate on it. The low end stays completely solid while the top chops.
3. Add a second GAIN lane on **LOW** with a slow half-note pump for weight.
4. Adjust the crossovers once in **BANDS** and both lanes follow.

Turn a boring vocal loop into a hook

1. **SLICE** lane, **TIME** mode, one block over the whole bar. Draw a staircase (POINTS → STEP) — the vocal rearranges itself.
2. **PITCH** lane, **GRAIN** engine, **FORMANT FREE**, +7 semitones on the second half.
3. **REVERB** lane, one short block with **CUT** on the last beat for a throw that doesn't bleed.
4. Set **CHANCE** to 60% on the slice block so it doesn't repeat identically.

Live performance rig

1. Build eight patterns in one patch, from "barely there" (A) to "destroyed" (H).
2. Leave the limiter's **LOOKAHEAD off** so the plugin reports zero latency.
3. Turn **MIDI** pattern select on and map notes C1–G1 to A–H.
4. Perform the effects from your keyboard while the track plays.

Pro Tips & Creative Techniques

- **Start with one lane.** A gate that's right beats six lanes that are busy. Add the second lane only once the first one grooves.
- **Draw once, reuse forever.** CURVE LENGTH is a musical size, so one gate shape works in any block width. Save your favourites to the quick-figures strip.
- **HOLD is automation.** Sweep down, hold, sweep back — three moves that would be a full automation lane in your DAW become two blocks.
- **Lane order is a sound.** FILTER above DRIVE is a filtered distortion; DRIVE above FILTER is a distorted filter. Drag the handles and hear the difference.
- **Use CHANCE on accents only.** Foundation at 100%, accents at 40–70%. That's the difference between "alive" and "broken".
- **Polymeter is free.** Set one lane's LOOP to 3 beats in a 4-bar pattern and it won't repeat identically for twelve bars.
- **RESO past 1.00 is an instrument.** Set FILTER RESO to 1.5 and draw short blocks — the filter rings and plays pitched blips over your track.
- **TRIG clock is the "follows the music" switch.** Anything on TRIGGER stops being a pattern and starts being a response.
- **Check HAAS and WIDTH in mono.** Delay-based width is enormous and mono-fragile. If it survives the fold, keep it.
- **GRIP before you reach for a gate.** On a driven break, GRIP does what a noise gate does but from inside the distortion curve, with none of the chatter.
- **MIX is the taste control.** Build the patch at 100% and blend back. Everything still compresses and pumps because MIX blends ahead of both.
- **CUT for throws, RING for washes.** One reverb lane does both — the difference is the TAIL chip.
- **GENERATE, then edit.** Ten seconds to a starting point that already plays like music, then make it yours.
- **Cmd/Ctrl+Z everywhere.** Preset loads, GENERATE results, block edits, curve edits — all undoable. Experiment freely.

Keyboard Shortcuts

Key	Action
1 / 2 / 3 / 4	EDIT / STAMP / POINTS / DRAW tool
Q W E R T	POINTS sub-tools: SELECT / PENCIL / LINE / STEP / SHAPE
+ / -	Zoom in / out (around the pointer when over the grid)
F	Frame the selection
0 or **ESC**	Whole pattern
ESC	Also: drop a half-drawn line, clear the point selection, leave STAMP, exit fullscreen lane
Arrow ← →	Nudge the selection by one snap division (SHIFT = fine 1/32)
Arrow ↑ ↓	Carry the selection to the lane above/below (or walk the lane selection)
TAB	Step from block to block in time order
Delete / Backspace	Delete the selection (in POINTS, deletes points)
Cmd/Ctrl+A	Select all blocks (in POINTS, all points)
Cmd/Ctrl+C / X / V	Copy / Cut / Paste blocks (paste lands at the mouse when over the grid)
Cmd/Ctrl+D	Duplicate the selection after itself
Cmd/Ctrl+E	Split the selection at the mouse (SHIFT = free, unsnapped). Holding CMD/CTRL shows the cut line first
Cmd/Ctrl+Z / Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+Z	Undo / Redo
ALT-drag	Copy a block
ALT-resize	Stretch the curve instead of re-tiling it
SHIFT-click	Add to the selection
SHIFT-drag (STAMP)	Paint a row of blocks
CMD/CTRL (hold, in POINTS)	Borrow the EDIT tool for one move
Double-click empty grid	Add a 1-bar block
Double-click a block edge	Fill the gap up to the neighbour
Double-click a block	Jump into curve editing: fullscreens the lane, switches to POINTS and zooms to the block
Expand button (lane rail)	Fullscreen that lane; ESC or the button again returns

Wheel over the grid	Zoom around the pointer
SHIFT + wheel	Pan the timeline
Drag the ruler	Slide the view
Wheel over a curve point	Bend that segment
Right-click	Context menus for blocks, lanes, patterns and the view

In hosts that swallow Cmd/Ctrl combos, every one of these is mirrored on the right-click menu.

Quick Start

1. **Insert** THE_SHAPER 2 on a loop, a bus or a whole mix.
2. **Press PRESETS** and step through the library with the arrows until something grabs you.
3. **Press GENERATE** a few times if you want a fresh pattern in the current slot.
4. **Edit what you hear**: drag a block, redraw a curve with POINTS, ride AMOUNT.
5. **Fill more slots** (A–H), turn **CHAIN** on, set **EACH** to x2 — an arrangement.
6. **Pull MIX back** until it sits in the track. Turn **LIMIT** on if the peaks jump.

Specs

- **Plugin type:** Block-grid modulation sequencer / multi-effect (audio effect, with MIDI input and sidechain input).
- **Lanes:** 8 effect types — GAIN, PAN, FILTER, REVERB, PITCH (tape + granular), SLICE, DRIVE (14 modes), MOD (chorus / flanger / phaser / comb). Up to 8 lanes per pattern.
- **Patterns:** 8 slots (A–H), 1–8 bars each, per-lane loop lengths for polymeter, swing, bar-quantized switching, MIDI note select (default root C1), and a timeline-locked PATTERN CHAIN with x1/x2/x4/x8 repeats.
- **Per lane:** multiband assignment (FULL / LOW / MID / HIGH on shared crossovers), GRID or audio-TRIGGER clock, mute / solo, loop length.
- **Per block:** curve (figure) with musical repeat length and offset, amount, effect parameters, play chance, cycle condition, HOLD / RELEASE (GAIN, PAN, FILTER, DRIVE).
- **Master section:** 3-band compressor (GLUE / PUNCH / SQUASH, macro AMOUNT, per-band THRESH + GAIN, parallel MIX), global DUCK (SYNC or TRIG clock, any curve, 1/1–1/16 rate), limiter (CEILING, CLIP or LOOKAHEAD, SOFT / HARD clip, XFMR / TUBE / TAPE character), output volume (-24 to +12 dB) and global MIX.
- **Audio trigger:** transient detector on the sidechain bus or the plugin's own input, with sensitivity and a band-limited detector.
- **Latency: zero**, unless the limiter's LOOKAHEAD is switched on (the host compensates it). Empty grid and inactive lanes are bit-clean passthrough.
- **Automation:** global MIX (Dry/Wet) and PATTERN (A–H) are host parameters, alongside switch quantize, free run, edge fade, MIDI enable/root, soft bypass, output volume and the four trigger settings.
- **Content:** 90 factory presets (RHYTHMIC / GLITCH / FILTER / TEXTURE), ~50 factory curve figures across 10 categories, and a pattern GENERATE engine with 8 styles and 3 mutation depths.
- **UI:** Single-page 1100×800 surface with UI zoom, full undo/redo, multilingual tooltips (EN/DE/FR/ES/IT), in-app documentation and AI assistant.
- **Formats: VST3, AU (macOS), AAX** - macOS (Apple Silicon & Intel) and Windows. No standalone version.

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