MASTERLOOP

MIDI LOOP COMPOSER · VST3

User Manual

Version 1.0



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01 Welcome to MasterLoop

MasterLoop is a MIDI loop composer for your DAW. With one press it writes a complete, musically linked loop of four layers — **Chords, Bass, Arp and Melody** — and lets you shape, edit and drag the result straight into your project.

MasterLoop contains no synthesizer and produces no audio. It generates MIDI and sends it to the instruments you already own, so every loop sounds like your own sound palette. All four layers are composed together: the bass locks to the chord roots, the arp fills the gaps in the groove, the melody sits on the rhythm the other layers leave free, and the last bar leads back into bar 1 so the loop restarts without a seam.

What makes it different

- **Four layers, one idea.** Chords, Bass, Arp and Melody share one plan — key, progression, rhythm family, motif and energy — instead of being four unrelated generators.
- **Built to be edited.** A full piano roll sits at the centre of the window. Draw, move, resize and lock notes; everything you place steers the other layers.
- **Control without chaos.** Six focused knobs per layer, a tweak row that writes straight into the notes, and Apply to re-voice a layer on the same rhythm.
- **Made for any DAW.** Each layer has its own MIDI channel, and a Hub + Parts mode lets hosts such as Ableton Live feed four different instruments from one composer.
- **Drag, drop, done.** Drag any layer into a DAW track as a MIDI file, or export the whole loop with one track per layer.

At a glance

Item	Detail
Format	VST3 (Windows and macOS)
Type	MIDI generator — appears as an instrument plug-in so it can send MIDI; no audio
Layers	Chords, Bass, Arp, Melody
Loop length	1, 2, 4, 8 or 16 bars
Default MIDI channels	Chords 1 · Arp 2 · Bass 3 · Melody 4
Roles	Hub (full composer) or Part (Chords / Bass / Arp / Melody)
Project files	.mlproj (save and open); .mid (export, drag and drop, import)
Publisher	Crafted Hertz · www.craftedhertz.com

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02 Quick Start

From an empty project to your first loop in five steps.

1. **Add MasterLoop.** Create a MIDI track (or an instrument track, depending on your DAW) and load **MasterLoop** from your VST3 list. Keep the role on **Hub**.
2. **Send its MIDI to an instrument.** MasterLoop makes no sound by itself. Route its MIDI output to a synth or sampler — see chapter 5, DAW Routing, for step-by-step setups (single instance, or Hub + Parts for Ableton Live).
3. **Press Compose.** The big violet button in the centre of the top bar writes a complete new loop: key, chords, bass, arp and melody.
4. **Press play in your DAW.** MasterLoop follows the host transport. Click the layer tabs on the left to see and edit each layer in the piano roll.
5. **Shape it.** Use **Variation** for small changes, **Dice / Similar / Mutate** for a new rhythm idea, the knobs for character, then drag the result into your arrangement with **Drag & Drop MIDI**.

> **TIP**
> Hover over any control for about half a second and a short help text appears. Chapter 6 lists every control together with its exact hover text.

> **NOTE**
> Press **?** or **F1** inside the plug-in window to show the full list of keyboard shortcuts.

03 Installation and Activation

Installing

MasterLoop is a VST3 plug-in. Install it into your system VST3 folder, then rescan plug-ins in your DAW.

System	Install location
Windows	C:\Program Files\Common Files\VST3
macOS	/Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/VST3 (macOS 11 or later)

> IMPORTANT
> MasterLoop is available as **VST3 only**. Hosts that support only Audio Units (for example Logic Pro) cannot load it.

Trial and licence

The first time you open MasterLoop, a welcome screen offers three choices:

- **Start 7-day free trial** — the full plug-in for seven days. The trial starts only when you press this button; scanning plug-ins in your DAW never starts it.
- **Buy licence** — opens the purchase page in your browser.
- **Licence key** — paste the key you received and press **Activate**.

While the trial or licence is valid, MasterLoop works normally. During the trial a pill in the footer shows the days left; click it to buy a licence or enter your key. When MasterLoop is not activated it sends no MIDI.

State	What you see	MIDI output
First start	Welcome screen — start the trial, buy, or activate	No MIDI until you choose
Trial running	Normal interface, “Trial: n days left” pill	Normal
Trial over / key invalid	“MasterLoop is not activated”	No MIDI
Licence needs a refresh	“Connect to the internet once to refresh your licence.” and Retry	No MIDI until refreshed
Licensed	Normal interface; Settings → Licence shows your masked key	Normal

Two computers per key. One licence key can be active on two computers. To move to a new machine, open **Settings → Licence → Manage** and choose **Deactivate** on the old computer to free the slot. An internet connection is needed to activate, and occasionally (roughly monthly) to refresh the licence; at all other times MasterLoop works offline.

04 Interface Tour

MasterLoop uses one clean window: a header with the global commands, four layer tabs on the left, six knobs and a tweak row for the selected layer, and a large piano roll. The numbers below match the legend.



1 Transport and key bar
Play, key, scale, key/scale lock, BPM, host sync and loop length (Bars).

2 Compose
Writes a completely new loop for all unlocked layers.

3 Variation
Small changes to the current loop.

4 Undo / Redo
Step back or forward through composing and edits.

5 Layer rail
Four layer tabs with M (mute), S (solo), padlock (lock) and a power button (off) for Bass, Arp and Melody.

6 Idea bar
Dice, Similar and Mutate give the selected layer a new rhythm idea.

7 Pin / Lock / Drag
Pin rhythm, Lock notes and the Drag & Drop MIDI handle.

8 Layer knobs
The main knobs of the selected layer (colour follows the layer).

9 Tweak row
Real-time shaping written into the notes: dynamics, gate, nudge, transpose, strum.

10 Apply
Re-voices the layer on the same rhythm after generative knobs moved.

11 Chord ruler
Bar numbers and chord blocks; click, drag or right-click chords.

12 Piano roll
Notes of the selected layer, with ghosts of the other layers.

13 Progression line
Key, scale, progression and length of the loop.

14 Status area
Licence pill and status messages (“Ready”).

15 Global macros
Energy, Swing and Humanize for the whole loop.

16 Footer commands
Reset, Export, Save, Open and Settings.

17 Interface size
Scales the plug-in window.

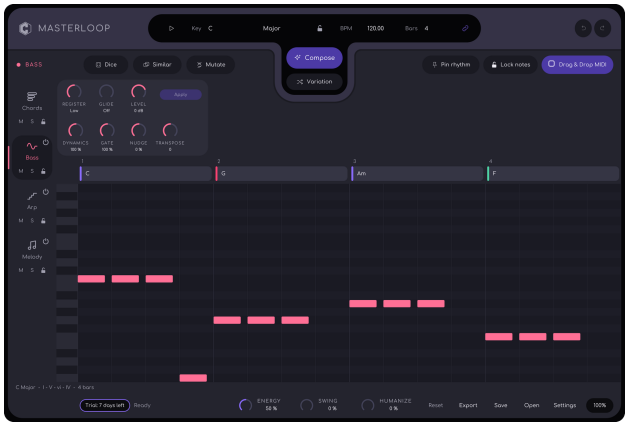
18 Chord palette
Chords tab only: diatonic chord tiles to click and drag onto the chord row, plus variations, 7th, /2 and x2.

The four layers

Each layer has its own colour, used for its tab, knobs, notes and ghost notes.



Chords



Bass



Arp



Melody

Layer	Main knobs	Role in the loop
Chords	Spread, Rich, Octave, Gate, Level	The harmonic base of the loop; its tab adds the chord palette. Has no power button — the chords are the foundation the other layers follow.
Bass	Register, Glide, Level	Plays on the chord roots with its own pocket, approach notes and ghost notes.
Arp	Range, Pattern, Gate, Skip, Level	Arpeggiates the chords and fills the gaps between the other layers.
Melody	Contour, Hook, Counter, Ornament, Level (+ Triplets, Spice)	A hook-based line that can carry a second voice below it. Its tab adds the Melody Form bar (phrase form, shapes, play style).

05 DAW Routing

How to get MasterLoop's four layers out of the plug-in and into four different instruments — and how to set up each supported workflow.

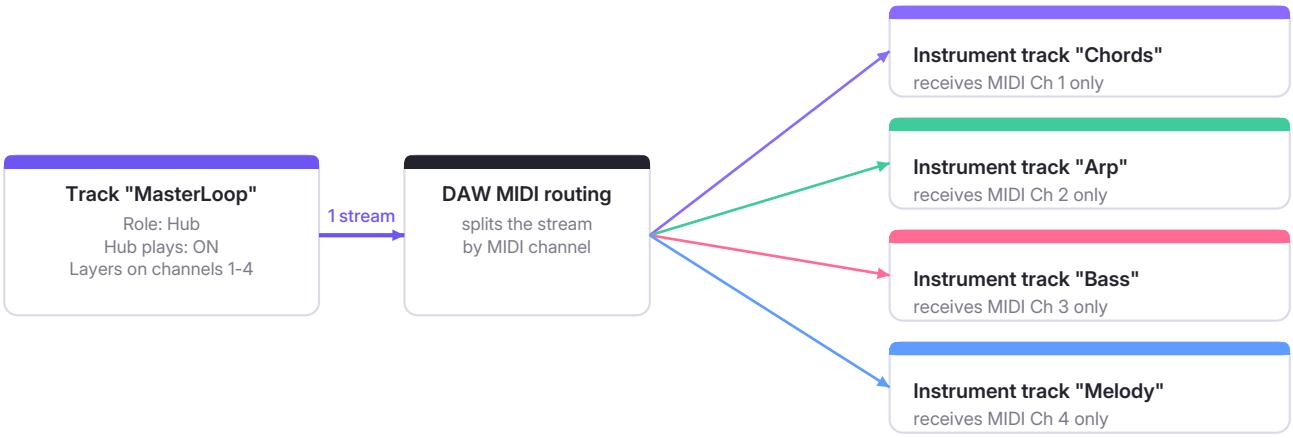
5.1 How MasterLoop talks to your DAW

- MasterLoop is a **MIDI-out** plug-in. It receives the host transport and tempo, and it sends notes. It never produces audio.
- Each layer is sent on its **own MIDI channel**: **Chords 1 · Arp 2 · Bass 3 · Melody 4**. A DAW that can split MIDI by channel can therefore feed four instruments from one plug-in.
- **Playback follows the host transport.** When you press play in the DAW, the loop plays and repeats at its loop length. All instances in one project read the same loop, so they stay in sync.
- Some DAWs — most importantly **Ableton Live** — merge all MIDI channels of one plug-in into a single stream. For those, MasterLoop offers the **Hub + Parts** mode: one instance composes (the Hub), and up to four small instances (the Parts) each output a single layer.

5.2 Choose your routing mode

Mode	Use it when	Result
A — Single instance, four channels	Hosts that can split MIDI by channel (for example Reaper, Bitwig Studio, Studio One)	One MasterLoop instance, Hub plays ON, four instrument tracks each listening to one channel.
B — Hub + Parts	Hosts that merge channels (Ableton Live) and any workflow where you prefer one track per layer	One Hub (silent) and four Parts, one per layer. Every Part is its own MIDI stream. Same group name ties them together.
C — Drag and drop	Any host — no routing at all	Compose in MasterLoop, then drag a layer (or an exported file) onto any track as a MIDI clip.

5.3 Mode A — single instance, four channels



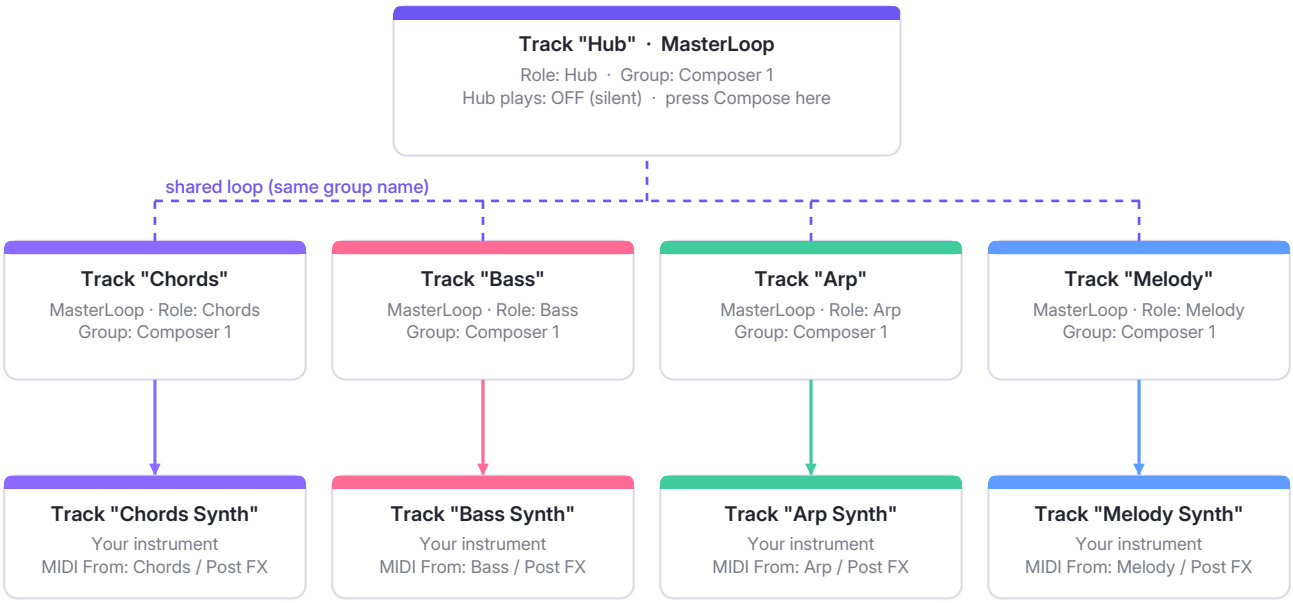
1. Create a MIDI (or instrument) track and load MasterLoop. In **Settings** make sure the role is **Hub** and **Hub plays** is **on**.
2. Create four instrument tracks — one for each layer: Chords, Arp, Bass, Melody.
3. Feed each instrument track with the MasterLoop track's MIDI and restrict it to one channel: Chords **1**, Arp **2**, Bass **3**, Melody **4**. Most hosts offer this as a MIDI-input channel selector on the instrument track, a channel filter device, or the source channel of a MIDI send.
4. Press **Compose** and start the host transport. Each instrument should now play its own layer.
5. No sound? Open **Settings** and press **Test note**: it sends a single C4 on channel 1 to confirm that MIDI reaches the instrument.

> **TIP**
> Prefer different channels? In Settings, pick any channel for a layer. If you choose a channel another layer already uses, the two layers **swap** channels automatically, so no two layers collide.

> **NOTE**
> **All on 1** (Settings) puts every layer on channel 1 — one merged stream, like a conventional MIDI plug-in. Use **Separate** to return to one channel per layer.

5.4 Mode B — Hub + Parts (Ableton Live and others)

Live merges all MIDI channels of a plug-in and does not allow a MIDI plug-in in front of an instrument on the same track. MasterLoop therefore uses one plug-in instance as the **Hub** (the composer) and up to four instances as **Parts**. Every instance with the same **group name** shares one loop.



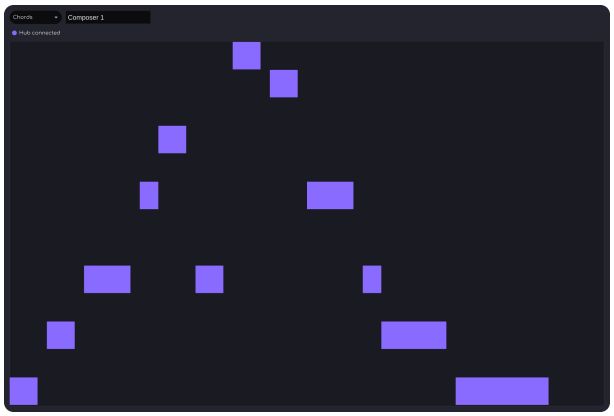
Setup in Ableton Live

1. **Hub track.** Create a MIDI track called “Hub” and load MasterLoop. In **Settings** keep the role **Hub** and the group name (default **Composer 1**). Switch **Hub plays off** so the Hub itself is silent. Press **Compose** here.
2. **Part tracks.** Create four MIDI tracks: Chords, Bass, Arp and Melody. Load MasterLoop on each, set the role to the layer name, and type the **same group name** (Composer 1). Confirm with Enter.
3. **Instrument tracks.** Create four instrument tracks with your synths. On each, set **MIDI From** to the matching Part track, choose **Post FX** in the second selector, and set **Monitor** to **In**.
4. **Press play.** All Parts follow the host transport and the Hub’s loop. Press Compose in the Hub at any time — the Parts update within about a second.

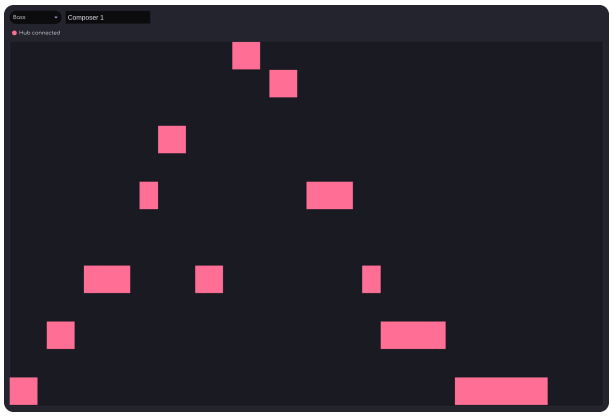
> **TIP**
> Fold each Part track and its instrument into a Live group (Ctrl/Cmd+G) to keep the set tidy: one Hub track plus four groups.

The Part window

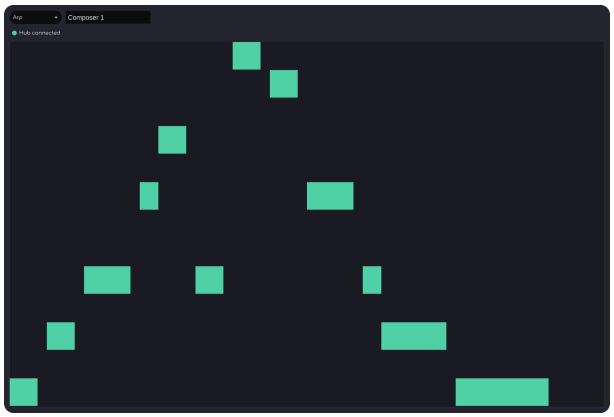
A Part is deliberately minimal. It shows the **role** selector, the **group name**, a **status light** and a **mini piano roll** of its own layer, drawn in the layer's colour. Everything creative — Compose, Variation, knobs, Undo, Save, Export — lives in the Hub.



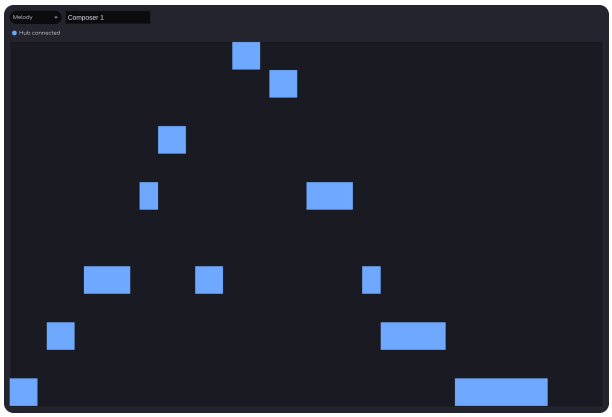
Chords Part



Bass Part



Arp Part



Melody Part

Control	What it does	Hover help (tooltip)
Role	Chooses what this instance is: Hub, Chords, Bass, Arp or Melody.	"Role of this instance: Hub = the full composer; Chords / Bass / Arp / Melody = plays only that layer of the Hub in the same group."
Group name	Must match the Hub's group name. Press Enter to confirm. Names are not case-sensitive.	"Group name: must match the name of the Hub this Part follows. Press Enter to confirm."
Status light	Filled = connected to a Hub. Hollow = no Hub found; the Part keeps playing the last loop it received.	—

Status text	Meaning
Hub connected	Hub found and loop received. Normal operation.
Hub connected, no loop yet: press Compose in the Hub	The Hub is there but has not composed anything yet.
No Hub found in this group, waiting	Check that the group names match and that the Hub is loaded.
Hub not connected: playing the last loop	The Hub was removed or unloaded. The Part keeps the last loop; loading a Hub again reconnects automatically.

Rules and limits of Hub + Parts

- **One Hub per group.** A second Hub in the same group overwrites the first one's loop; the Hub's status line warns "2 Hubs in this group: the last one wins".
- **Several songs, several groups.** Use Composer 1, Composer 2 … for independent loops in one project.
- **Undo / Redo, Save, Export and the whole project belong to the Hub.** Parts store only their role, group name and settings, and show the loop as soon as the Hub loads.
- **Same process.** Hub and Parts must run in the same plug-in process. Hosts that sandbox each plug-in separately (for example Bitwig with plug-in sandboxing switched on) do not share the loop yet — use Mode A there, or set the host to a shared process.
- **Save and reopen.** Roles and group names are restored with your DAW project.

> IMPORTANT
> In Mode B the Hub must have **Hub plays** switched **off**, otherwise the Hub also sends all four layers and you hear every part twice.

5.5 Settings — the routing centre

Open **Settings** (footer) to reach every routing option. The role, group name and Hub plays switch for the Hub are in the bottom band of this popup.



#	Control	Function
1	MIDI channel per layer	Pick a channel (1–16) for each layer. Choosing a channel already used by another layer swaps the two.
2	M / S	Mute and Solo what is sent to the DAW.
3	Separate / All on 1	Separate: Chords 1, Arp 2, Bass 3, Melody 4. All on 1: everything on channel 1.
4	Poly bend (MPE)	One note per member channel (master channel 1, members 2…) so each note can bend on its own. Set the number of member channels (1–15).

#	Control	Function
5	Bend range	Pitch-bend range sent to the instrument: Bass default ±12 st, other layers ±2 st. Match this range in your synth.
6	Loop length	1, 2, 4, 8 or 16 bars — the same for all four layers.
7	Live follow	Off: a Follow button appears after your edits and you decide. On: the other unlocked layers re-fit by themselves.
8	Role	Hub or Part (Chords / Bass / Arp / Melody).
9	Group name	Ties a Hub and its Parts together.
10	Hub plays	Off = the Hub is silent and the Parts play.
11	Layer status	Which layers have notes and are audible in this instance.
12	Licence	Shows trial / licence state; Manage opens activation and deactivation.
13	Send MMC	Play/Stop also send MIDI Machine Control to the MIDI output.
14	Audition to MIDI	Clicking a chord or piano key also sends the note to your instrument.
15	Test note	Sends C4 on channel 1 to check that MIDI arrives.
16	Import MIDI…	Loads a .mid file into the loop.

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5.6 Tempo, transport and sync

- **Sync** (link icon in the top bar) makes MasterLoop follow the host tempo. With Sync off, the BPM box is used. A plug-in cannot change the DAW's tempo.
- **Play** in the top bar runs the plug-in's own clock when the DAW transport is stopped — handy for auditioning. In a DAW session the host transport drives playback.
- **Send MMC** (optional) makes Play/Stop also emit MIDI Machine Control. Only DAWs with MMC input enabled and routed to this output will react.
- **Audition to MIDI** lets you hear chords and piano-roll keys you click, through your DAW instrument. Off keeps clicking silent.

5.7 Pitch bend and MPE

Bass slides, melody ornaments and vibrato are written as pitch bend. MasterLoop sends the bend range to the instrument (as RPN 0) so the slides land on the right pitch: **Bass ±12 semitones, other layers ±2 semitones** by default. With **Poly bend (MPE)** on, every bending note gets its own member channel; the range controls are disabled because the MPE zone sets the range. Use an MPE-capable instrument for this mode.

5.8 Routing troubleshooting

Symptom	What to check
No sound at all	Is the licence or trial active? Is the instrument's input set to the MasterLoop track (or Part)? Press **Test note** in Settings. In Ableton, set the instrument track Monitor to **In**.
Everything plays on one instrument	Channels are merged. Use Hub + Parts (Mode B), or check that **Separate** is selected and the instruments filter one channel each.
Every part plays twice (Mode B)	The Hub has **Hub plays** on. Switch it off.
Part shows "No Hub found"	Group names differ (check spelling — case does not matter), or the Hub is not loaded, or the host runs plug-ins in separate processes.
Parts update slowly or not at all	Press Compose in the Hub; Parts refresh within about a second. Make sure only one Hub uses the group name.
Slides are the wrong size	Set the instrument's pitch-bend range to ±12 for the Bass channel and ±2 for the others, or change the range in Settings.
Loop does not start with play	Playback follows the host transport. Make sure the DAW is playing, and that the track is not muted or the Part muted.

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06 Command Reference

Every control of MasterLoop, grouped by area. Hover over a control for about half a second and a short help text appears — the **Hover help** column shows that text exactly as it appears in the plug-in.

> **TIP**
> Double-click any knob to return it to its default value. Hold **Shift** while dragging a knob for fine control.

6.1 Transport and key bar

Control	What it does	Hover help (tooltip)
Play	Starts and stops the loop on the plug-in's own clock. In a DAW session the host transport drives playback.	"Play / Stop the loop with the plugin's own clock (when the DAW transport is stopped). In a DAW the host transport drives it."
Key	Tonic of the loop. Click to choose; existing notes move into the new key.	"Key (tonic) of the loop: click to change. Existing notes move to the new key."
Scale	Scale of the loop (Major, Minor and more). Existing notes move with it.	"Scale of the loop: click to change. Existing notes move to the new scale."
Key / scale lock (padlock)	Keeps the current key and scale when you press Compose.	"Lock key and scale: Compose keeps this key and scale (only the chords and notes change). Click again to unlock."
BPM	Tempo of the plug-in's own clock. Ignored when Sync is on.	"Tempo: drag up / down (Shift = fine), mouse wheel, or double click to type"
Bars	Length of the loop in bars (same for all layers).	"Loop length in bars"
Sync (link icon)	Follow the DAW tempo instead of the BPM box.	"Sync: follow the tempo of the host"
Undo	Takes back the last Compose or key / scale change.	"Undo the last Compose or key / scale change (notes, chords and key come back). Gone after the next note edit."
Redo	Restores what Undo took back.	"Redo what Undo took back."

6.2 Compose and Variation

Control	What it does	Hover help (tooltip)
Compose	Writes a brand-new loop for all unlocked layers, together. Layers or clips you locked are kept.	"Compose a new loop: all four layers together (key, chords, bass, arp, melody). Locked layers (L) and locked clips stay as they are."
Variation	Changes a few percent of the notes. Hold **Shift** for stronger changes, **Alt** to affect only the selected layer.	"Small changes to the current loop (a few percent of the notes). Shift = stronger. Alt = only the selected layer. Locked layers stay."

6.3 Layer rail

Control	What it does	Hover help (tooltip)
Layer tab	Selects the layer shown in the piano roll and controlled by the knobs. Other layers appear as ghosts.	—
M — Mute	Silences the layer in the MIDI output. The notes stay.	"Mute this layer"
S — Solo	Only soloed layers send MIDI while any layer is soloed.	"Solo this layer"
L — Lock	Protects the layer from Compose and Variation.	"Lock this layer: Compose / Variation never change it"
Power (Bass, Arp, Melody)	Switches a layer completely off. The knob area is greyed out while the selected layer is off.	"Switch this layer off: no notes, no MIDI, ignored by Compose / Variation / Follow / Apply"

6.4 Idea bar

The rhythm of a layer comes from the Idea bar, not from a knob. Each press is one undo step.

Control	What it does	Hover help (tooltip)
Dice	A completely new random rhythm for the selected layer.	"A new random rhythm idea for this layer. One undo step."
Similar	A rhythm close to the current one.	"A rhythm close to the current one. One undo step."
Mutate	The current rhythm with a few small changes.	"The current rhythm with a few small changes. One undo step."
Pin rhythm	Keeps the current rhythm when you press Compose or move knobs.	"Keep this rhythm: Compose and the knobs leave it as it is."
Lock notes	Locks the selected notes so Compose and Variation leave them alone. Shift locks the whole clip. Shortcut: Ctrl+L.	"Lock selected notes: Compose and Variation leave them alone (Shift: whole clip)"
Drag & Drop MIDI	Drag from this handle onto a DAW track to drop the selected layer as a MIDI clip.	"Drag this clip into your DAW as a MIDI file"

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6.5 Layer knobs

Each layer shows up to five main knobs in its colour. Moving a knob stores the new value and, after a short pause, regenerates only that layer; the rhythm is kept. A knob that only changes pitches or voicing waits for **Apply** (see 6.6).

Chords

Control	What it does	Hover help (tooltip)
Spread	How the notes of each chord are arranged: Close, Open, Drop 2, Shell, Rootless, Piano, Quartal, Supersaw, Stab.	"Spread: how the notes of each chord are arranged (voicing): Close, Open, Drop 2, Shell, Rootless, Piano, Quartal, Supersaw, Stab."
Rich	Chord colour from simple triads (0 %) to 7ths, 9ths and colour tones (100 %).	"Rich: how rich the chords are. 0 % = simple triads, 100 % = 7ths, 9ths and colour tones."
Octave	Moves all chords by whole octaves.	"Octave: moves all chords up or down by whole octaves."
Gate	How long each chord is held. 100 % = legato.	"Gate: how long each chord is held (100 % = legato)."
Level	Base velocity (loudness) of the chords.	"Level: base velocity (loudness) of the chords."

Bass

Control	What it does	Hover help (tooltip)
Register	Moves the bass window up or down by octaves.	"Register: moves the bass window up or down by octaves."
Glide	Pitch slides between bass notes: Auto, Off or On.	"Glide: pitch slides between bass notes (Auto = style default, Off, On)."
Level	Base velocity of the bass.	"Level: base velocity (loudness) of the bass."

Arp

Control	What it does	Hover help (tooltip)
Range	How many octaves the arpeggio climbs through.	"Range: how many octaves the arpeggio climbs through."
Pattern	Order in which chord notes are played: Up, Down, Up-Down, Converge, Random …	"Pattern: the order in which the chord notes are played (Up, Down, Up-Down, Converge, Random …)."
Gate	How long each arp note is held, from Short to Legato.	"Gate: how long each arp note is held (Short .. Legato)."
Skip	Chance that a step becomes a rest.	"Skip: chance that a step becomes a rest."
Level	Base velocity of the arp.	"Level: base velocity (loudness) of the arp."

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Melody

Control	What it does	Hover help (tooltip)
Contour	Overall shape of the phrase: Arch, Ascending, Descending, Wave …	"Contour: the overall shape of the phrase (Arch, Ascending, Descending, Wave …)."
Hook	Number of notes in the short hook motif that repeats through the phrase.	"Hook: number of notes in the short hook motif that repeats through the phrase."
Counter	Adds a second voice below the melody (thirds, sixths, mixed, contrary).	"Counter: adds a second voice below the melody (thirds, sixths, mixed, contrary). Off = none."
Ornament	Chance that a note gets a grace note, slide, trill or mordent.	"Ornament: chance that a note gets a grace note, slide, trill or mordent."
Level	Base velocity of the melody.	"Level: base velocity (loudness) of the melody."

> **NOTE**
> The rhythm knobs — Chords Pattern, Bass Feel / Ghost / Approach, Arp Rate and Melody Density — are not shown on the panel. The rhythm of every layer is set with **Dice, Similar, Mutate** and **Pin rhythm** in the Idea bar.

6.6 Apply and followers

Control	What it does	Hover help (tooltip)
Apply	Becomes active when knobs have changed. Re-voices the layer with new pitches on the **same rhythm**. One undo step.	"Applies the changed knobs: new pitches / voicings on the SAME rhythm (one undo step)."
+ followers (Chords only)	When on, a chord change also regenerates Bass, Arp and Melody around the new chords; each keeps its own rhythm.	"Chords only: also regenerate Bass, Arp and Melody around the new chords (each keeps its own rhythm)."
Follow button	Appears after you edit notes. Re-fits the other unlocked layers to your edit. Locked layers and notes stay as they are.	"Re-fit <layers> to your edit. One undo step. Locked layers and notes stay as they are."

6.7 Tweak row

The tweak row shapes the selected layer in real time and writes the result **into the notes** — what you see in the piano roll is exactly what is sent. A drag is one undo step; double-click a knob to reset it.

Control	What it does	Hover help (tooltip)
Dynamics	Widens or flattens velocity differences. Range 20–200 %, default 100 %.	"Dynamics: widens (above 100 %) or flattens (below) the velocity differences around the layer's mean."
Gate	Note length relative to the next note. Range 10–150 %; above 100 % notes overlap.	"Gate: note length as a share of the distance to the next note. Above 100 % the notes overlap (legato)."
Nudge	Moves every note earlier or later by up to half a 1/16 (−50…+50 %), independent of tempo.	"Nudge: moves every note earlier / later by up to half a 1/16 (independent of the tempo)."
Transpose	Shifts the layer by −12…+12 semitones. Chromatic on purpose — it may leave the key.	"Transpose: moves the layer by semitones. It is chromatic on purpose and may leave the key."
Strum (Chords)	Spreads the notes of each chord over 0–200 ms. Baked at the current tempo.	"Strum: spreads the notes of each chord over this time. It is baked at the current tempo; a later BPM change does not re-strum."
Strum direction: Up / Down / Rnd	Order of the strummed notes.	"Strum direction: Up = lowest note first, Down = highest first, Rnd = fixed shuffle per chord."
Triplets (Melody)	Share of beats played as triplets: Off, Mix 25 %, Fill 50 %, Whole 100 %.	"Triplets: share of beats played as triplets in the melody (Off, Mix 25 %, Fill 50 %, Whole 100 %)."
Spice (Melody)	Adds one short, resolved triplet figure (pickup, turn or run) on top of the 16th-note rhythm.	"Spice: how often the melody gets ONE short, resolved triplet figure (a pickup, turn or run) on top of the 16th-note rhythm. Off = never."

6.8 Global macros

Three macros act on the **whole loop** without regenerating anything. Locked layers and notes stay. Double-click to reset (Energy returns to 50 %).

Control	What it does	Hover help (tooltip)
Energy	0–100 %. Shifts velocities of the existing notes; the next Compose starts from this level.	"Energy of the loop (0..100 %). Shifts the velocity of the existing notes (nothing is regenerated). Locked layers / notes stay. The next Compose starts from it."
Swing	50–75 %. Re-times existing notes.	"Swing of the loop (50..75 %). Re-times the existing notes (nothing is regenerated). Locked layers / notes stay. The next Compose starts from it."
Humanize	0–100 %. Small timing, length and velocity variation written into the notes — visible and removable.	"Humanize amount of ALL layers (0..100 %): small timing / length / velocity variation, written into the notes (visible in the roll, removable). The layer tweak row sets it per layer."

6.9 Footer

Control	What it does	Hover help (tooltip)
Reset	Returns to the init state after a confirmation. Tempo and routing are kept.	“Reset to init state: empty loop, default key, scale and layer settings (tempo and routing stay). Asks first.”
Export	Writes one .mid file with one track per layer, each on its routed channel.	“Export the whole loop as one MIDI file: one track per layer, each on its routed channel.”
Save	Saves the whole loop and settings to a .mlproj project file.	“Save the whole loop (all four layers, key, scale and settings) to a project file.”
Open	Opens a saved project and replaces the current loop.	“Open a saved project file. It replaces the current loop.”
Settings	Opens the settings popup (routing, bend, loop length, role and group).	“Global settings: MIDI routing, tempo, interface and bend options.”
100 %	Scales the plug-in window.	“Interface size”

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6.10 Chord ruler and progression

Control	What it does	Hover help (tooltip)
Ruler / chord row	Click moves the playhead; drag sets a loop over whole bars. In the chord row click a chord to select it and drag its right edge to resize.	“Ruler: bar numbers, loop brackets and the chord row. Click = move the playhead, drag = set a loop over whole bars. In the chord row: click a chord to select it, drag its right edge to resize it.”
Progression	Pick another progression; only progressions that fit the scale are listed. Only the chords change.	“Current progression. Click to pick another one (only progressions that fit the scale are listed): only the chords change, lengths and playing style stay.”
Previous / Next	Step through matching progressions.	“Previous progression (of those that fit the scale) / Next progression (of those that fit the scale)”

Chord palette (Chords tab)

Control	What it does	Hover help (tooltip)
Chord tile	Click to hear the chord; drag onto the chord row to replace or insert a chord. Hover shows Roman numeral, symbol and function.	“<numeral> <chord> (<function>): click to hear, drag onto the timeline”
7th	Shows the key’s tiles as seventh chords instead of triads (palette only).	“7th: show the tiles of the key as seventh chords instead of triads (palette only, the timeline does not change)”
… (more variations)	Opens every chord type on the selected root.	“More variations: any chord type on this root”
/2 and x2	Halve or double the length of the selected chords (no selection = all).	“Half the length (selected chords, no selection = all) / Double the length (selected chords, no selection = all)”
Custom +, octave and complexity arrows	Available in the full-size palette: custom chord of any root and type; octave up/down; simpler/more complex chords.	“Custom chord: pick any root and chord type; it is added to the recent tiles and can be dragged like any other”

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Melody form bar (Melody tab)

Control	What it does	Hover help (tooltip)
Phrase form ‹ ›	Chooses which letters (A, B, C) play in which bar of the phrase.	“Phrase form: which letters play where. A letter keeps its own shape and motif; regenerating B never changes A.”
Previous / Next form	Steps through the form presets.	“Previous phrase form / Next phrase form”
Form text field	Type your own form and press Enter.	“Type your own form: letters A B C, ' after a letter = varied repeat, 2..8 letters (e.g. AA'BA). Press Enter.”
Style	Natural, Legato, Staccato, Accented or Slide.	“Play style: how the melody notes are played (velocity, note length, slides). Notes keep their pitch and position.”
Shape menu (per letter)	Preset shape, Auto, or complement of A.	“Shape of this letter: preset, Auto (style contour) or the complement of A”
Shape canvas	Drag to draw a freehand curve; double-click to clear.	—
Direction: Flat / Up / Down	Lets the whole shape drift.	“Flat: No drift: the shape as it is / Up: The whole shape drifts upwards / Down: The whole shape drifts downwards”
Strength	Width of the shape inside the hook window.	“Strength: how wide the shape climbs inside the hook window (0 = stays in the middle)”
Copy A (B, C)	Copies the shape of A to this letter.	“Copy the shape of letter A to this letter”

6.11 Piano roll

Control	What it does	Hover help (tooltip)
Piano keys	Click or drag to hear a note. Tonic marked, out-of-scale notes dimmed.	“Piano keys: click or drag to hear a note. The tonic is marked, notes outside the scale are dimmed.”
Note grid	V pointer, B draw, E erase. Wheel scrolls; Shift+wheel scrolls sideways; Ctrl+wheel zooms time; Alt+wheel zooms pitch; Space+drag or middle button pans.	“Note grid: edit notes with the tool on the left (V pointer, B draw, E erase). Wheel scrolls, Shift + wheel scrolls sideways, Ctrl + wheel zooms time, Alt + wheel zooms pitch, Space + drag or middle button pans.”
Velocity lane	One stem per note; drag to set loudness, drag over empty space to paint.	“Velocity lane: one stem per note. Drag a stem to change its loudness, drag over empty space to paint velocities.”
Bend / controller lane	Draw pitch-bend or CC points. Choose the content with the lane selector.	“Bend / controller lane (choose what it shows on the right): drag to draw points, Shift + drag draws a straight ramp, double-click a point deletes it, right-drag erases.”
Lane selector	Pitch bend, CC 1 (mod wheel), CC 11 (expression), CC 74 (cutoff).	“Lower lane under the grid: Pitch bend, CC 1 (mod wheel), CC 11 (expression) or CC 74 (cutoff)”
Grid	Grid and default note length.	“Grid and default note length”
Fold	Cycles Off / Scale / Used to hide unused keyboard rows.	“Fold the keyboard rows: Off = all notes, Scale = only notes of the key, Used = only notes that appear in the clip. Click to cycle.”
Scale lock	Notes snap to the song’s scale.	“Scale lock: notes snap to the scale of the song (the key is shown to the right)”
Shape bend	Applies slide, scoop, dive, rise or vibrato shapes to selected notes.	“Shape pitch bend on the selected notes (slide, scoop, dive, rise, vibrato…)”
Overview strip	Click or drag to jump around a long clip.	“Overview of the whole clip: click or drag to jump to that part.”

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6.12 Settings popup

Control	What it does	Hover help (tooltip)
Loop length	1, 2, 4, 8 or 16 bars.	"Length of the loop in bars (the same for all four layers)"
Live follow	Automatic re-fit of other layers after your edits.	"Off: after you edit notes a Follow button appears and you decide. On: the other unlocked layers re-fit by themselves about 0.4 s after your last edit (one undo step). Locked layers and notes are never touched."
Send MMC	Optional MIDI Machine Control with Play / Stop.	"Optional: Play / Stop also send MIDI Machine Control to the MIDI output. Off = Play only runs the plugin's own clock."
Audition to MIDI	Clicked chords and keys sound through your DAW instrument.	"On: clicking a chord or a piano key also sends the note to the MIDI output, so your DAW instrument plays it. Off: clicking is silent."
Test note	Sends C4 on channel 1.	"Sends one note (C4, channel 1) to the instrument in your DAW: checks that MIDI arrives and you hear sound"
Import MIDI...	Loads a .mid file; tracks become Bass / Chords / Arp / Melody.	"Load a MIDI file into the loop (or drop a .mid file on the plugin). Tracks become Bass / Chords / Arp / Melody; you choose hand notes or locked anchors."
Role	Hub or Part.	"Role of this plugin instance: Hub = the full composer; Chords / Bass / Arp / Melody = a Part that plays only that layer of the Hub in the same group."
Group name	Ties a Hub and its Parts together.	"Group name: a Hub and its Part instances with the same name belong together. Press Enter to confirm."
Hub plays	Off makes the Hub silent so Parts play.	"Off = this Hub is silent and the Part instances play (use this in Ableton Live)"
Layer status	Which layers have notes and are audible.	"Which layers of the loop have notes and are audible in this instance."

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07 Working with MasterLoop

Practical workflows, from first idea to finished MIDI.

7.1 From idea to loop

- **Compose** to get a complete starting point. MasterLoop plans the whole loop first — key, progression, rhythm family, motif, energy — and then writes all four layers against that plan. If you do not like it, press Compose again; each press is one undo step.
- **Variation** keeps the loop and nudges a few percent of the notes. Use it when you like the loop but want it to breathe. Shift = stronger; Alt = selected layer only.
- **Lock what you love.** Press **L** on a layer, or lock selected notes with **Ctrl+L**, then keep composing — locked material stays and the other layers are written around it.
- Switch **key / scale lock** on to keep the key while exploring new chords and rhythms.

7.2 Shaping a layer

1. Select a layer tab. Its knobs and ghost notes appear in the layer's colour.
2. Use **Dice** for a new rhythm idea, **Similar** for a close relative, **Mutate** for a small change. **Pin rhythm** keeps a rhythm you like while you explore other settings.
3. Turn the layer knobs. The layer regenerates on the same rhythm after a short pause. For Chords, voicing and richness changes wait for **Apply**; switch on **+ followers** to let Bass, Arp and Melody re-fit to the new chords.
4. Fine-tune with the tweak row: **Dynamics, Gate, Nudge, Transpose** (and **Strum** for chords, **Triplets / Spice** for melody). These write into the notes, so what you see is what plays.
5. Finish with **Energy, Swing** and **Humanize** in the footer for the whole loop.

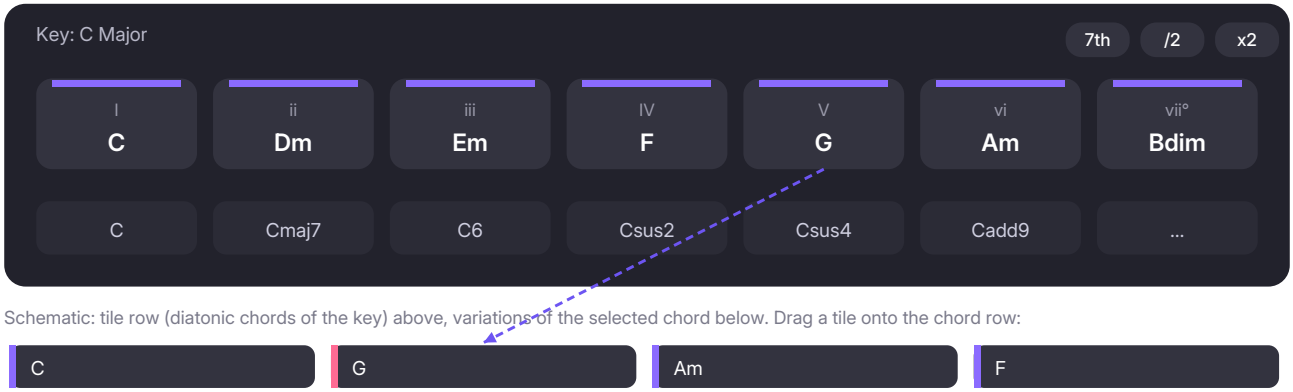
7.3 Editing notes by hand

The piano roll is a full editor: draw (B), select (V), erase (E), slice (K), glue (G) and mute (M) tools; velocity and pitch-bend/CC lanes; fold and scale lock; copy, paste, duplicate, quantize and chop. See chapter 8 for shortcuts.

- Notes you place are **hand notes**. Lock them (**Ctrl+L**) to turn them into anchors that Compose and Variation never touch.
- After you edit one layer, a **Follow** button offers to re-fit the other unlocked layers to your edit. Switch on **Live follow** in Settings to do this automatically about 0.4 s after your last edit.
- Hold **Alt** while moving notes to bypass the grid and place them off-grid.

7.4 Chords: palette, drag and drop, progressions

On the **Chords** tab, the free area to the right of the knobs holds the **chord palette**. It shows the chords of the current key as tiles — Roman numeral above, chord symbol below, a colour stripe for the harmonic function (tonic, subdominant, dominant) — and a second row with variations of the selected chord. Out-of-key chords are dimmed and marked as outside the key.



Schematic: tile row (diatonic chords of the key) above, variations of the selected chord below. Drag a tile onto the chord row:

- **Click a tile** to hear the chord (it also sounds through your instrument when Audition to MIDI is on).
- **Drag a tile onto the chord row** above the piano roll. A marker shows what will happen before you release: dropped **on a chord** it **replaces** that chord; dropped **between chords** or at the end it **inserts** a new chord whose length follows the previous one.
- **Rearrange existing chords** by dragging a chord block: onto another block it swaps them, into a gap it moves; hold **Ctrl / Cmd** to copy instead. Drag the right edge of a block to resize it. Right-click a chord to reharmonize.
- **7th** shows the tiles as seventh chords. The **...** tile opens every chord type for the selected root. **/2** and **x2** halve or double the length of the selected chords (no selection = all chords).
- Every chord edit regenerates the other layers around the new harmony when **+ followers** is on, and is one undo step.

To change the whole progression at once, use the progression selector: only progressions that fit the scale are offered, and only the chords change — lengths and playing style stay.

7.5 Melody: form, shape and play style

On the **Melody** tab the free area to the right of the knobs holds the **Melody Form** bar. It decides where the melody goes, while the knobs decide how much and how rich it is.



- **Phrase form** (AABA, AAAB, ABAB, ABAC … or call and response): which letters play in which bar. Step through the presets with the arrow buttons, or **type your own form** — letters A, B, C, an apostrophe after a letter for a varied repeat, 2 to 8 letters (for example AA'BA) — and press Enter.
- **One tile per letter.** Every letter keeps its own shape and motif; regenerating B never changes A. Each tile has a **shape menu** (Arch, Reverse arch, Wave, Zigzag, Staircase, Sawtooth and more, Auto for the style's contour, or Complement of A for contrast), a **lock**, and a canvas.
- **Draw your own contour.** Drag inside a tile's canvas to draw a freehand curve; double-click to clear it. The melody re-pitches onto your curve.
- **Direction** (Flat, Up, Down) lets the whole shape drift; the **strength** slider sets how wide the shape climbs inside the hook window. On letters B and C, **Copy A** takes over the shape of A.
- **Style** sets how the notes are played — Natural, Legato, Staccato, Accented or Slide. Notes keep their pitch and position; velocity, length and slides change.
- A **locked** letter keeps its curve through Compose and Variation; its notes are regenerated on that curve.

7.6 Importing MIDI

Use **Settings → Import MIDI…** or drop a **.mid** file on the plug-in window. Tracks are assigned to Bass, Chords, Arp or Melody. You choose whether the imported notes become **hand notes** (a starting point) or **locked anchors** (kept as they are while the other layers are composed around them).

7.7 Getting MIDI out

Method	What happens
Drag & Drop MIDI	Drag the handle in the Idea bar onto a DAW track. The **selected layer** is dropped as a one-track MIDI file named after layer, key, tempo and length.
Export	Footer → Export. One **.mid** file for the whole loop: one track per layer, each on its routed channel.
Live MIDI	Route the plug-in to instruments as described in chapter 5 and play the loop with the host.
Save / Open	Footer → Save / Open stores and restores the whole loop as a **.mlproj** project file. Your DAW project also stores the plug-in state.

08 Keyboard Shortcuts

Press **?** or **F1** in the plug-in at any time to show this list. On macOS use **Cmd** in place of **Ctrl**.

General

Shortcut	Action
Space	Play / stop
Tab	Switch between the layer tabs
Ctrl+Z	Undo
Ctrl+Shift+Z / Ctrl+Y	Redo
Ctrl+O	Open project...
Ctrl+S	Save project
Ctrl+Shift+S	Save project as...
? or F1	Show / hide the shortcut list

Clip editor

Shortcut	Action
V	Select tool
B	Draw tool
E	Erase tool
K	Slice tool
G	Glue tool
M	Mute tool
F / Shift+F	Fit view to all / to selection

Notes

Shortcut	Action
Ctrl+A / Ctrl+Shift+A	Select all / invert
Alt+Up / Down	Next / previous note by pitch
Ctrl+X / C / V	Cut / copy / paste
Ctrl+D	Duplicate to the right
Ctrl+drag	Copy while dragging
Delete / Backspace	Delete notes
Left / Right	Move one grid step
Alt+Left / Right	Micro nudge (off grid)
Up / Down	Transpose 1 semitone
Shift+Up / Down	Transpose an octave
Ctrl+E	Chop (Shift: 2 grid steps)
Ctrl+J	Join same-pitch notes
Ctrl+U	Quantize to grid
Ctrl+Up / Down	Velocity +1 / −1
0–127, Enter	Type exact velocity
Ctrl+L / Ctrl+Shift+L	Lock selection / clip
Esc	Cancel the current gesture

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09 Troubleshooting and FAQ

Question	Answer
MasterLoop does not appear in my DAW	Install MasterLoop.vst3 into the system VST3 folder (chapter 3) and rescan plug-ins. MasterLoop is VST3 only; it does not appear in hosts that use only Audio Units.
I hear nothing	Check licence / trial state in the footer, route the plug-in's MIDI to an instrument (chapter 5), press Test note in Settings, and make sure the layer is not muted or switched off.
"MasterLoop is not activated"	Start the trial, enter your licence key, or use Settings → Licence → Manage. An internet connection is needed once to activate or refresh.
Compose changed my key	Switch on the key / scale lock (padlock in the top bar).
Compose overwrote something I liked	Press Undo. In future, lock the layer (L) or the notes (Ctrl+L) first.
The rhythm will not change when I turn a knob	Knobs keep the rhythm. Use Dice, Similar or Mutate for new rhythms, and check that Pin rhythm is off.
A knob seems to do nothing	The layer may be locked ("the knob is stored, the notes stay") or switched off. Unlock it or switch it on.
Chord knobs changed but the notes did not	Press Apply to re-voice the chords on the same rhythm.
Strum sounds wrong after a tempo change	Strum is written at the current tempo. Set the strum again after changing BPM.
Can I use more than one MasterLoop per project?	Yes. Give each song its own group name (Composer 1, Composer 2 …). Each group has one Hub and up to four Parts.
Does it work offline?	Yes, except for activation and the occasional licence refresh.

Technical specifications

Item	Specification
Plug-in format	VST3, 64-bit
Operating systems	Windows, macOS 11 or later
Audio	None (MIDI generator)
MIDI output	16 channels; one channel per layer or MPE
Layers / loop length	4 layers · 1, 2, 4, 8 or 16 bars
File formats	.mlproj project · .mid export, drag-and-drop, import
Licence	Activated per key on up to two computers

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10 Licence, Privacy and Support

Support

Website: **www.craftedhertz.com**
Email: **craftedhertz@gmail.com**
When you write, please include your MasterLoop version, your DAW and operating system, and a short description of what you did.

Privacy

MasterLoop contacts the licence server only to start the trial, activate, renew or deactivate a licence. The data sent is your licence key, a non-reversible machine identifier, the signed licence token and the normal network metadata (such as the IP address). Your music, projects and MIDI never leave your computer.

Credits and notices

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