

RHYTHMIC VOLUME SHAPING

VOLUMEFORCE

Draw the movement. Shape the groove.

USER MANUAL / VERSION 1.0.0



NAVIGATION

FIND YOUR WAY

Start with the quick-start chapter, then use the reference sections as you work. Click a contents entry to jump to it.

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01 / RHYTHMIC VOLUME SHAPING

SHAPE THE LEVEL OF YOUR SOUND



The green gain envelope over the main signal and raw external-sidechain reference.

VolumeForge shapes an incoming mono or stereo signal with a drawable volume envelope. Create repeating tempo-synchronised pumping and rhythm, or trigger a one-shot envelope from audio, an external sidechain or MIDI. Use VST3 in a compatible macOS or Windows DAW, or Audio Unit on macOS. The visual scope follows the envelope while the external-sidechain trace provides an unprocessed timing reference.

QUICK START

In your digital audio workstation (DAW), insert VolumeForge after an instrument or on an audio track. Leave HOST SYNC on, MODE SYNC, RATE 1 BAR, DEPTH 100% and MIX 100%. New instances start with a short rise to full gain and 1 ms smoothing. Play the track, draw a shape and listen. Compare with BYPASS at a comfortable level. No sample library is required.

READ THE GRAPH

Horizontal position is time within one cycle. The green envelope is 0-100% gain: the bottom is silence and the top is full gain before the input/output trims. Waveforms behind it have their own bipolar amplitude scale.

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DRAW AND REFINE THE ENVELOPE

POINTS

Drag points to move them. Double-click empty space or the shaper line to add a point, up to 32 total. Double-click or right-click an interior point to remove it. Endpoints cannot be deleted and stay at the horizontal ends.

CURVES

Drag empty space, Command-drag (macOS) or Ctrl-drag (Windows) or middle-button drag to bend a segment. Vertical trackpad scrolling or the mouse wheel also bends it; Shift-scroll adjusts finely. Very steep curves are supported.

SNAP AND GRID

SNAP locks point movement to the chosen grid and eighth-step gain positions. Hold Shift while moving a point to bypass snapping. The gear opens GRID AMOUNT: Off, 1/4, 1/8, 1/16, 1/32 or 1/64. Click outside settings to close them.

UNDO AND REDO

UNDO and REDO retain the latest 64 meaningful edits in this plugin instance, including curve and parameter changes and loading a preset. Command-Z (macOS) or Ctrl-Z (Windows) undoes; Shift-Command-Z (macOS) or Shift-Ctrl-Z (Windows) redoes when the editor owns keyboard focus. Text entry keeps its own undo.

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UNDO, REDO AND EDIT HISTORY

64 MEANINGFUL EDITS

One knob drag, one continuous wheel gesture, one curve drag, one menu or switch change, and one preset load each form one step. Point insertion, removal and straightening are also reversible. A gesture that returns to its starting value creates no entry.

SOUND AND DISPLAY CONTROLS

History covers controls edited inside VolumeForge: gain, depth, mix, timing, smoothing, trigger mode, length, grid and snap, plus scope view, channel, colour, intensity and Play Line. Preset loads restore all sound parameters and the complete curve together. There is no Randomise control.

WORKING THROUGH HISTORY

Undo returns to the previous state. Redo restores the resulting state. A new edit after Undo clears the Redo branch. Once 64 steps are retained, a new step removes the oldest. Buttons are dimmed when their action is unavailable.

AUTOMATION AND VIEWING

DAW automation and host-originated parameter edits do not fill this history. Undoing one control leaves unrelated automation alone. Hold, window resizing, opening panels, CONTROLS visibility, Save As and Show tooltips are viewing or application choices outside sound history.

MEMORY AND RECALL

History holds parameter values and the envelope points, with no copied audio or sample buffers. All 64 steps are available for the supported 32-point envelope. Closing the editor retains history; loading a DAW project or creating a new instance starts fresh.

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TIMING AND TRIGGER MODES

TEMPO AND LENGTH

HOST SYNC follows tempo and transport. With it off, the host-exposed Internal BPM is used (initially 120). RATE offers beats, bars, triplets and dotted lengths up to 16 bars. Bar lengths follow host time signature. Triggered modes label the menu LENGTH.

SYNC

Repeats the shape at host musical position.

AUDIO

Detected transients on the main input start the envelope.

SIDECHAIN

Only the separately routed external input triggers it. Route the trigger track through your host's external-sidechain controls. An absent sidechain does not fall back to the main input; the detector is not mixed into the output. The display says WAITING FOR SIDECHAIN TRIGGER when no trigger cycle is active.

MIDI

MIDI note-on starts the shape. MIDI routing depends on the host. A new trigger restarts the envelope; after a one-shot ends, its final point gain is held until another trigger. WAITING FOR MIDI NOTE appears when no trigger cycle is active. Changing trigger mode cancels the old source's cycle and waits for the new source.

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LATENCY AND SMOOTH MOVEMENT

ZERO LATENCY

On initially. With it off, the plugin adds 5 ms lookahead and reports that delay to the host. Change this non-automatable option with playback stopped so compensation can settle.

ENVELOPE ADVANCE

The settings panel can advance the shape by up to 5 ms. Clicking the Envelope Advance dial switches Zero Latency off and enables lookahead. A click alone preserves the advance value; drag to adjust it. Change latency mode with playback stopped.

SHAPE OFFSET

Rotates the envelope through its cycle. Use it to shift where the movement falls within the rhythm.

SMOOTH / 0-30 MS

SMOOTH is in Settings (gear), lower left; new instances use 1 ms. In SYNC, a falling cycle boundary fades before the end over twice this time (at most a quarter cycle), preventing carryover into the next start. Updates from earlier versions preserve saved values; falling SYNC boundaries use this pre-fade instead of carrying the end level into the next cycle. Audio, Sidechain and MIDI retain their smoothing. At 0 ms, abrupt boundaries can click.

WAVEFORM GRID TIMING

In Settings, HOST GRID uses input presentation timing when the host provides it. GRID CORRECTION shifts the waveform against the musical grid in SYNC only; positive values move it earlier. Triggered modes use their trigger as the origin. These controls change the display, not the envelope or audio.

DISPLAY TIMING AGAINST SOUND

HOST DISPLAY uses reported output presentation timing. EXTRA DISPLAY DELAY adds visual delay, up to a total of two seconds. This is separate from waveform/grid alignment and is inactive for offline rendering. Support depends on DAW and format: unavailable or zero timing is not proof of compensation. Recheck after changing latency-producing plugins; no separate timing helper is supplied.

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GAIN, BLEND AND WAVEFORM

**INPUT AND OUTPUT GAIN / -24 TO +12 DB**

Input sets level before shaping; Output sets final level. Double-click either gain knob for 0 dB, or type an exact value. Input changes ramp over 5 ms.

DEPTH AND MIX / 0-100%

Depth controls shaping strength. Mix blends shaped and unshaped signal. CONTROLS hides the lower controls/meters and expands the graph without changing sound.

SCOPE VIEWS

Choose Off, Input, Output or In + Out. Input is tapped after input gain/lookahead; Output is the final processed signal. In the combined view Input is grey and Output uses the palette.

EXTERNAL REFERENCE

In SIDECHAIN mode the raw external signal is light blue under the green envelope. It follows Left/Right/Mid/Side and Hold but is not reshaped by envelope or gain edits. OUTPUT gives the clearest comparison with the shaped main signal. Scope Off hides every trace.

COLOUR, CHANNEL AND INTENSITY

Left, Right, Mid or Side selects the display channel. RGB, Heat, Ocean, Green and Grey change appearance only. Intensity is display strength, not signal gain.

HOLD AND TRANSPORT

Hold freezes only the display: audio and envelope editing continue. Timing/channel changes release Hold to avoid a stale view. Stopping in Sync retains the last trace; later cycles continue updating. Play Line shows capture position.

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PRESETS, PROJECTS AND SIZING

USER PRESETS

SAVE AS stores a .vforge file in the VolumeForge user preset folder. LOAD can open a .vforge file from that folder or another location. A preset load is one reversible edit; it retains the current window size and CONTROLS visibility. PRESETS lists your saved user presets and refreshes each time you open it.

DAW PROJECTS

The host stores settings, shape, width and CONTROLS state. Undo history survives closing and reopening the editor while the instance is alive. Restoring a DAW project starts a fresh history; history is not stored in presets or projects.

RESIZE

Drag the bottom-right corner. Fixed-aspect content sizes range from 960 x 632 to 1800 x 1184 logical pixels; normal is 1120 x 737. Screen space further limits the window. Use a desktop area of at least 1280 x 800 at normal host zoom.

OLDER SESSIONS

Sizes below the readable minimum are raised; larger recalled sizes fit the screen. Curves beyond the earlier curvature range need a recent build. Abrupt older Input Gain automation now ramps over 5 ms and can affect Audio trigger detection during that transition.

OUTER WINDOW POSITION

The DAW manages the outer frame. Use its window-recovery commands if a disconnected monitor leaves the editor off-screen.

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YOUR PRESET FOLDER

FIND YOUR PRESETS

Open PRESETS and select Show Presets Folder... to create and open the same folder used by SAVE AS and the user browser. It opens in Finder on macOS or File Explorer on Windows. The plugin creates this folder for the active user; no administrator access is required.

MACOS

~/Library/Audio/Presets/ERB N DUB/VolumeForge/

The ~ symbol means your home folder.

WINDOWS

< your Documents folder > \ERB N DUB\Presets\VolumeForge\

VolumeForge uses the Documents folder configured by Windows, including redirected, OneDrive-managed and non-English locations. Show Presets Folder... opens the resolved location.

SAVE SAFELY

SAVE AS starts in this folder. Choose a .vforge filename inside it; use names that work on both platforms. Spaces, apostrophes and non-ASCII letters are supported. Path separators, reserved Windows names and trailing dots or spaces are refused. Confirm replacement only when you intend to overwrite a preset. If saving fails, the previous file is retained.

FACTORY AND USER CONTENT

The user browser contains your own saved or imported presets. Any factory content supplied with the product remains separate from customer-created presets. Refer to the description accompanying a supplied collection for its contents.

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IMPORT, TRANSFER AND PROTECT PRESETS

IMPORT AN EXISTING SOUND

PRESETS > Import Preset... copies a selected .vforge file into the user folder and loads it if no intervening edit has made the request stale. LOAD opens a file directly without copying it. Original files stay in place. A different preset with the same filename receives a numbered “(imported 1)” suffix; importing identical content again does not create another copy.

EARLIER PRESETS

Earlier versions allowed saving anywhere chosen in the file dialog. VolumeForge does not search Documents or other disks automatically. Use Import Preset... for the files you want in the browser. Existing .vforge files and saved projects retain their parameter values and compatibility defaults; the SYNC smoothing change is described in Latency and smooth movement.

EXPORT, RENAME AND DELETE

Use Show Presets Folder... to copy a .vforge file for export or backup, or rename/delete it in Finder or File Explorer. These file actions are outside plugin Undo/Redo. Keep the .vforge extension. Reopen PRESETS to refresh the list. Removing a file does not remove the sound already saved inside a DAW project.

MAC AND WINDOWS TRANSFER

Copy the .vforge files to the other computer, then import them into VolumeForge. Presets contain parameters and envelope points, not audio samples or external sample references. They require no sample library. Use a compatible VolumeForge version and keep any DAW instruments, MIDI routing and sidechain sources with the project separately.

BACK UP YOUR WORK

Copy the user preset folder and your DAW projects to your normal backup location. Keep the original files until the copies have been opened successfully. Updates and uninstalling the plugin should leave user presets in place. A preset file does not contain your DAW's routing or audio clips.

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INSTALL ON MACOS OR WINDOWS

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Use a compatible 64-bit DAW and a desktop area of at least 1280 x 800 at normal host zoom. The macOS package contains universal Intel x86_64 and Apple Silicon arm64 VST3 and Audio Unit formats with macOS 11 as the minimum target. Audio Unit is available on macOS only. Windows uses 64-bit VST3; supported Windows versions and processor configurations are listed with the Windows download. Check the compatibility information for the download and your DAW before installing.

MACOS INSTALLATION

Save your work and close all DAWs. Run the supplied PKG installer, select VST3 and/or Audio Unit, and follow the instructions. VST3 installs to /Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/VST3/ and Audio Unit to /Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/Components/. The manual and notices install to /Library/Application Support/ERB N DUB/VolumeForge/.

WINDOWS INSTALLATION

When using a Windows download, close all DAWs and run the supplied Windows installer. The standard VST3 destination is C:\Program Files\Common Files\VST3. Follow the instructions supplied with that download; do not copy a macOS bundle to Windows. Audio Unit is not a Windows format.

OPEN IN YOUR DAW

Reopen the DAW, enable VST3 or Audio Unit as appropriate and rescan if required. Insert VolumeForge on an audio track, after an instrument or on a group. Use a mono or stereo track configuration. Select the product name VolumeForge.

ONE COPY PER FORMAT

Keep one active copy per format. Older macOS manual installations may be under ~/Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/. Preserve older copies outside every plugin scan folder before replacing them. The macOS installer stops if a user-folder duplicate would obscure the system copy; it does not move your files.

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INFO, MANUAL AND TOOLTIPS

OPEN INFO

Click **i** for the information panel. It shows VolumeForge 1.0.0 and the running plugin format, with ERB N DUB primary branding and the Prime Harmonics range mark. Close with **X** or **Escape** to return to the editor.

SHOW TOOLTIPS

Descriptive tooltips start **OFF** when no preference has been saved. Open Info and enable Show tooltips for hover help after about one second. Switching off dismisses the hint immediately. Numerical control values, units and essential labels remain available.

REMEMBERED FOR VOLUMEFORGE

VolumeForge remembers your explicit choice across editor reopening, DAW restarts and plugin updates. Existing instances follow changes. This product preference is separate from sound, presets, DAW project state and Undo/Redo.

USER MANUAL

USER MANUAL opens the matching local PDF without an internet connection, using your computer's PDF viewer. Keep the complete plugin bundle intact. On macOS a matching copy is also installed with the product documentation. Reinstall the matching package if the manual is missing.

WEBSITE, SUPPORT AND COPY SUPPORT INFO

Website opens <https://www.erbdub.com> and Support opens <https://erbdub.com/contact/>. COPY SUPPORT INFO copies the product name, version and running format for your support request. These actions run only when selected.

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TROUBLESHOOTING ON EITHER PLATFORM

**THE PLUGIN DOES NOT APPEAR**

Restart or rescan the DAW. Confirm the installed version, selected format and scan location. VST3 is used on macOS and Windows; Audio Unit is macOS-only. Check that the plugin and DAW support the computer's operating system and processor architecture. Keep one copy per format. On macOS, check the DAW's Audio Unit validation result where applicable.

PRESET FOLDER OR PRESET UNAVAILABLE

Choose Show Presets Folder... to create or locate the folder. If opening fails, open the labelled location manually in Finder or File Explorer. Confirm write permission and free disk space. Make redirected or cloud-managed Documents files available locally on Windows. Use a valid .vforge file; a renamed unrelated file is not a preset. Restore a backup if a preset is damaged.

NO TRIGGER OR UNEXPECTED LEVEL

Confirm MODE, the external-sidechain or MIDI routing, DEPTH, MIX, input/output trims and BYPASS. SIDECHAIN waits for the external source rather than using the main input. Check for a second VolumeForge instance in the chain. VolumeForge has no samples to locate; missing audio or instruments belong to the surrounding DAW project.

DROPOUTS, CPU OR TIMING

Try a larger audio buffer, a supported sample rate and a simple mono or stereo project. Compare with BYPASS and Scope Off. Check other plugins and confirm whether the problem occurs in an empty project. For waveform timing, distinguish grid alignment from display timing against what you hear; see Latency and smooth movement.

PROJECT RECALL DIFFERS

Check that the same VolumeForge version and format are loaded. Confirm automation, sidechain/MIDI routing and other plugins. Reopen a copy of the saved project before overwriting it. Host automation can change a restored setting immediately. The DAW manages outer-window position; use its window-recovery command after disconnecting a display.

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UPDATES, REMOVAL AND SUPPORT

UPDATE

Back up your projects and presets, save your work and close all DAWs. Run the matching platform installer and reopen or rescan the DAW. Confirm the version in Info. Compare sound, automation and saved-project reopening before replacing your working project. Keep a rollback copy outside scan folders. Reinstallation should not require deleting user presets or preferences.

UNINSTALL ON MACOS

Close DAWs and remove VolumeForge.vst3 from /Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/VST3/ and VolumeForge.component from /Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/Components/. Also check older manual user-folder installations. Product documentation is in /Library/Application Support/ERB N DUB/VolumeForge/. Leave your user preset folder and saved preferences in place unless you deliberately want to remove them.

UNINSTALL ON WINDOWS

Close DAWs and use the removal method supplied with the Windows installer. For a manual VST3 installation, remove only the VolumeForge bundle from the DAW's VST3 scan location. Keep the Documents user preset folder and saved preferences. Rescan the DAW if it still lists a removed plugin.

SUPPORT DETAILS

Visit <https://erbndub.com/contact/>. Include the product name and version, macOS or Windows and its version, processor architecture, DAW/version, VST3 or Audio Unit, sample rate, buffer size, exact steps and whether the issue occurs in an empty project. Include a relevant preset, screenshot or recording and crash report or DAW log where useful. If the DAW project uses external samples, describe their location without sending unrelated personal files.

PROTECT PRIVATE INFORMATION

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CREATED BY ERB N DUB

Peter Chapman / ERB N DUB. Prime Harmonics product range. Designed from experience in production, drumming, DJing, mixing and mastering.