ERB N DUB
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PRIME HARMONICS

USER GUIDE

CLIPPERFORGEHD

Precision clipping. Mastering control.

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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WELCOME AND QUICK START



Classic single-band view. Original clipping controls remain on the left; HD processing occupies the middle column.

DESIGNED FOR MASTERING

ClipperForgeHD is designed for mastering. Its clipping, multiband and oversampling controls let you shape peaks and compare changes while setting the final level.

START HERE

ClipperForgeHD combines full-band or three-band clipping with global character, high-frequency softening, parallel blending and final true-peak protection. Use this guide to explore the controls and build a practical mastering workflow.

A PRACTICAL FIRST PASS

Insert the plugin on the intended track or bus. Start with Hard, Input Trim and Output at 0 dB, Bypass and Delta off, and a modest Drive increase. Listen to transients as you increase Drive. Reduce Output for a fair comparison. Keep an eye on clipping depth and loudness rather than aiming for a particular graphic shape.

NEUTRAL MASTERING SETTINGS

HD Mastering is on by default. At default values, Density, Smooth and HF Softening add no processing; Parallel uses Wet at 0 dB and Dry at its silent minimum; True Peak is off. Choose a live oversampling rate your session can comfortably run. Use level-matched comparison before deciding that a louder setting is better.

Installing or activating for the first time? See Install and Open, then Activate and Move Your Licence.

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CLIPPING AND GAIN

INPUT TRIM / DRIVE / OUTPUT

Input Trim ranges from -24 to +24 dB before processing. Drive ranges from 0 to +24 dB and pushes the signal into the clipping curve. Output ranges from -24 to 0 dB after clipping; lowering it does not undo distortion. There is no adjustable original clip threshold. The separate TP Ceiling belongs to the final limiter.

FOUR CLIP MODES

Hard clamps at the threshold. Soft rounds the knee. Odd-Rich applies symmetric saturation. Even-Rich adds asymmetry and DC removal. Choose by listening to the balance between transient control, texture and retained detail.

LINKED GAIN GESTURE

Hold Option on macOS (Alt on Windows) while dragging the main Drive, or a multiband Drive, to move master Output by the opposite dB amount. Both controls stop at their limits and form one undo step. This helps comparison but does not guarantee matched perceived loudness.

BASS FOCUS

In single-band mode, Bass Focus adds low-frequency emphasis before clipping. Frequency covers 30-300 Hz and Amount 0-100%. Enable it deliberately: driving more bass into a clipper changes how the rest of the signal is shaped. Bass Focus is not active in multiband mode.

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MULTIBAND AND SIGNAL FLOW



Three independently driven clipping bands feed the shared HD mastering/output controls.

WORKING WITH THE BANDS

Use the two crossover handles or their frequency readouts to divide low, mid and high regions. Low crossover covers 40 Hz-12 kHz and high crossover 80 Hz-16 kHz, subject to valid separation and sample-rate limits. Select Low, Mid or High to edit that band's clip mode. Each band has its own Drive and S solo button. Selecting a band and soloing it are separate actions.

WHERE THE MASTERING TOOLS ACT

Input Trim feeds the clipping path. In multiband, the signal splits into three clipping bands and recombines. Clip Character settings are shared by all three clippers. Parallel Blend and HF Softening act on the combined signal, followed by final True Peak protection. They are not separate per-band mastering chains.

RECOMBINATION AND CURVES

The combined signal can clip even when no individual band shows heavy clipping. Watch the sum indication as well as band clipping. The static clip curve is a guide to the selected clipping stage. It cannot display the full behaviour of frequency-dependent filters, phase, parallel processing or a limiter with memory.

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CROSSOVER PHASE



Crossover Phase sits between the frequency readouts. Cyan indicates Linear in Classic; Retro uses gold.

ONE SWITCH FOR BOTH CROSSOVERS

In multiband mode, click Crossover Phase beneath the graph to switch between Minimum and Linear. Minimum is the default and uses the original Linkwitz-Riley crossover filters. Linear uses complementary symmetric FIR filters. Both crossovers use the selected phase mode together. The button is dark in Minimum and illuminated in Linear. Original band Drive controls stay the same.

CHOOSING A PHASE MODE

Linear keeps the summed phase response aligned when the bands are recombined without clipping or other changes. Individual bands can ring before sharp transients; this is called pre-ringing. Listen to kick drums and bass when choosing. Minimum retains the original crossover sound. The modes have different filter shapes, so soloed bands can sound different near the crossover frequencies.

TIMING AND SWITCHING

The two paths share the same delay and crossfade when switched. Frequency changes are smoothed; Linear filters update gradually and crossfade, so rapid dragging takes a short time to settle. Look-ahead delay is retained in both modes, single-band operation and Bypass. At 48 kHz the plugin reports 2,519 samples, about 52.48 ms. Enable DAW delay compensation. This added delay suits mastering rather than low-latency live monitoring.

INDEPENDENT SETTINGS AND RECALL

Crossover Phase is independent of HF Softening Tone Phase and oversampling filter phase. It remains active with HD Mastering off. The choice saves with presets, DAW sessions and A/B slots, and supports Undo/Redo. Older presets and sessions without this setting restore Minimum.

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CHARACTER AND HF SOFTENING

HD MASTERING POWER

The red HD Mastering On button enables the middle-column processing. Off bypasses Character, Parallel, HF Softening and final peak limiting while retaining their settings. Original clipping remains active. The fixed processing delay is retained for aligned HD on/off comparison. Oversampling quality is independent of this button.

CLIP CHARACTER

Density adds up to 6 dB of drive below the clipping threshold. Smooth softens fast changes near that threshold, from 0 to 2 dB. Clip Voicing offers Original, Rounded and Firm. In multiband these choices are shared by all three clippers; band Drive and clip mode remain independent.

HF SOFTENING

Amount blends in a gentle high-frequency contour, from 0 to 100%. Gentle retains more high-frequency energy; Warm rolls off more. This is a subtle final tonal control, separate from Clip Character. At zero Amount, its tonal effect is absent.

MINIMUM OR LINEAR

Minimum uses a one-pole contour. Linear uses a symmetric FIR filter. Both paths are time-aligned, so changing phase keeps the same plugin latency. Choose the sound you prefer; neither mode is universally better.

CHANGING PROCESSING MODES

Clip Voicing, HF Softening phase and character, True Peak and oversampling use short crossfades between aligned paths. The plugin keeps one fixed processing delay for the current sample rate, including when HD Mastering or True Peak is off. At 48 kHz this is 2,519 samples, approximately 52.48 ms. Enable your DAW's delay compensation for aligned playback. Live changes do not require a new delay setting.

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PARALLEL AND COMPARISON

INDEPENDENT BLEND

With Linked Mix Off, Dry Level and Wet Level independently control the parallel blend, each from a silent -60 dB minimum to +6 dB. Mix is dimmed because it is inactive. The dry branch is aligned to the processing path; in multiband it includes the matching crossover phase response. Input Trim affects the clipping branches, leaving this dry reference unchanged.

LINKED BLEND

With Linked Mix On, the Mix knob uses an equal-power dry/wet blend. Dry and Wet level knobs are dimmed and their values are retained for returning to independent mode. Mixing correlated dry and wet signals can raise level; compare at matched loudness. Parallel blending can restore some transient character but can also raise peaks.

BYPASS AND LEVEL MATCHING

Bypass compares with the original input, aligned to the full plugin delay. It skips all sound processing, including True Peak and Delta. The wide Bypass button is the main comparison control. The smaller Match Level button at the far right is optional and defaults to off in a new instance; saved sessions retain their choice. Enable it, play a few seconds, then use Bypass to compare. Match Level adjusts only the clean comparison volume towards the final processed RMS level, including True Peak. Its stereo-linked gain is held during bypass and limited to +/-12 dB. It remains available with HD Mastering off. With Match Level off, bypass retains the original input level. Changes crossfade smoothly; processed settings stay ready for your return.

DELTA

Delta auditions the difference between processed output and the time-aligned original input. Use it to hear what the processing changes. It is a diagnostic signal, not the normal mastered output. Turn it off before rendering.

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OVERSAMPLING AND FINAL OUTPUT



The Oversampling popup combines live/offline rates and the related quality options.

LIVE AND OFFLINE

Both rates offer 1X, 2X, 4X, 8X, 16X and 32X. Live is used during normal playback. Offline is used when the host explicitly requests non-real-time rendering. A real-time export uses Live. Higher rates can reduce aliasing but use more CPU; compare the actual render when using different live/offline settings.

PHASE AND PROTECTION

Oversampling Phase selects Linear or Minimum filtering for the oversampling engine; it is separate from HF Softening phase. Auto Rate Cap limits the effective oversampling rate to 384 kHz. Downsample Protection adds headroom before downsampling to reduce overshoot; it is separate from final true-peak limiting.

TRUE PEAK

True Peak On enables an oversampled detector and linked lookahead limiter on the final stereo signal. TP Ceiling ranges from -6 to 0 dBTP. It controls reconstructed peaks after the preceding processing. The detector remains available while limiting is off. A reconstruction reserve can keep measured peaks below the chosen ceiling rather than landing exactly on it.

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OSCILLOSCOPE AND ZOOM



A highlighted section becomes a frozen inspection view. Audio and meters continue running.

TIMING AND SCALE

DAW Sync follows tempo, transport and time signature, from quarter-beat to four-bar views. Without usable host timing it runs freely. With sync off, choose 50, 100, 250 or 500 ms, or 1, 2, 5, 10, 20 or 30 seconds. The 1X/2X/4X/8X control changes vertical display scale, not audio gain.

HIGHLIGHT FIRST

Drag across the waveform to highlight a useful section. Only after a valid highlight can you use the mouse wheel, two-finger scrolling or pinch to zoom. These gestures do nothing to zoom while the scope is live. Tiny drags are ignored.

NAVIGATE THE CAPTURE

Zoom is centred around the pointer. Scroll horizontally or drag the overview to pan. You can make another selection for a closer view. Zooming all the way out keeps the captured view active. Reset Zoom or double-click returns to live and disables gesture zoom until you highlight again. Changing the time range or sync setting clears the capture.

COLOURS AND MARKERS

Frequency RGB maps bass to red, mids to green and treble to blue. Forge Green, White, Cyan and Amber offer fixed alternatives. Show Input overlays the original input in grey. Orange markers indicate clipping activity; the waveform colour and all zoom choices are display-only. They do not alter the sound or consume audio-history steps.

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METERS AND READING THE DISPLAY

INPUT AND OUTPUT

The vertical Input and Output meters show level in dBFS. The range selector beneath the meters changes their display to 0/-60, 0/-36 or 0/-18 dBFS. It does not set a ceiling or alter gain.

CLIPPING DEPTH

The Clip dB meter indicates clipping attenuation/activity. Held and maximum indications help identify brief events. Click the clipping meter to clear its held history. In multiband, compare the selected-band and combined-signal indications. A saturation shape can change the signal even when peak attenuation is small.

LOUDNESS

Momentary, Short-Term and Integrated describe loudness over different time spans. Use Integrated over a representative passage or the complete programme. Do not equate a LUFS reading with a required target for every track. True Peak is shown separately in dBTP.

USE YOUR EARS ALONGSIDE THE METERS

Check transient shape, low-end weight, upper-frequency texture and stereo balance at a sensible listening level. The clip curve is static; the waveform and loudness meters describe different aspects of the signal. No single graphic is a complete account of the processing.

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PRESETS, A/B AND UNDO

PRESETS AND FILES

The menu separates 11 embedded Factory presets from your saved User presets. The five original choices set the original clipping controls and retain HD mastering settings. The six mastering presets recall the complete saved sound, including HD settings. All factory presets are built into the plugin; no preset files need to be installed or imported. A sound edit shows CUSTOM. User files use the .clipperforgehd extension. Loading preserves appearance and window size. DAW state recalls processing settings, active A/B state and the preset label; older sessions without a label show CUSTOM.

FACTORY CHOICES

Original: DEFAULT, DRUM PUNCH, SOFT BUS, BASS WEIGHT and WARM SATURATION. Mastering: MASTER LOUD, MASTER TRUE PEAK HD, MASTER TRUE PEAK, MULTIBAND BOTTOM END, MULTIBAND LOUD and MULTIBAND TRUE PEAK HD.

A/B COMPARISON

A and B select two separate settings slots. The A/B button copies the current slot into the other slot, replacing that slot's settings. Copy before experimenting when you want a reference. Slot switching and copying participate in undo/redo.

64-STEP HISTORY

The plugin retains up to 64 meaningful edits. A continuous dial drag is grouped into one step; a linked Option-drag on macOS or Alt-drag on Windows restores both controls together. Preset changes and A/B operations use grouped state edits. A new edit after Undo clears the old Redo branch.

KEYBOARD AND RECALL

Use Command-Z on macOS (Ctrl-Z on Windows) for Undo, and add Shift for Redo, while the plugin has keyboard focus. An active text editor keeps its own text undo. Closing and reopening the editor retains this instance's history. Restoring DAW state clears stale history; plugin history is not a replacement for the DAW's session history.

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YOUR PRESET FOLDER

ONE LOCATION PER USER

Save, Load and the User presets browser start from the same folder. It is created when needed, including the first time you open the preset menu. Factory content stays embedded in the plugin and is not copied into your user folder.

MACOS

~/Library/Audio/Presets/ERB N DUB/ClipperForgeHD/
The ~ means your home folder. Choose Show Presets Folder… in the preset menu to open this location in Finder.

WINDOWS

<your Documents folder>\ERB N DUB\Presets\ClipperForgeHD\
The plugin asks Windows for your Documents location, including redirected, OneDrive-managed and localised folders. Choose Show Presets Folder… to open the resolved location in File Explorer.

SAVE, LOAD AND BROWSE

Save writes a .clipperforgehd file in your user preset folder. Choose a clear filename; confirm before replacing an existing file. Load can open a file you select elsewhere. Reopening the preset menu refreshes User presets; select a listed file to load it. Import and Export are in the same menu. If the list is very large, use Load to browse all files.

NAMES AND ORGANISATION

Spaces, apostrophes and non-ASCII characters are supported. Avoid Windows-reserved names and characters such as slash, backslash, colon, question mark and asterisk. Use Finder or File Explorer to rename or delete your own files; reopen the preset menu afterwards. Keep backups before deletion. Factory entries cannot be renamed or deleted this way.

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IMPORT, TRANSFER AND RECOVERY

IMPORT AN EXISTING PRESET

Choose Import Preset… and select a ClipperForgeHD file you previously saved. Import copies it into your user folder and preserves the original. It does not change the sound until you select the imported preset. Files with the same name and identical contents reuse the existing copy. A different file receives an (Imported 1) suffix, increasing as needed. Repeating an interrupted import safely reuses an already copied file.

EARLIER FILES

Earlier versions let you choose a save location. Locate those files yourself and import the ones you want. The plugin does not search unrelated folders or move files automatically. Keep your original files until you have checked the imported copies. Factory banks remain with their original product resources.

EXPORT AND BACKUP

Export Preset… writes the current settings to a location you choose for sharing or backup. Copy your user preset folder to your backup destination using Finder on macOS or File Explorer on Windows. Restore by importing the desired files, preserving any differently named or conflicting copies.

BETWEEN COMPUTERS AND PLATFORMS

Transfer .clipperforgehd files between the Mac and Windows editions using the same file extension. Import them into the destination user folder. They contain parameters only: no embedded samples, external sample references or sample library is needed. DAW projects may have their own format or other-plugin dependencies; transferring presets does not transfer those dependencies.

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TROUBLESHOOTING

PLUGIN NOT APPEARING

Confirm that your DAW supports the installed format, processor architecture and operating system. Audio Unit is macOS-only; Windows uses VST3. Close and reopen the DAW, then follow its documented rescan procedure. Check for duplicate older copies in other scan locations and confirm the version in About. Reinstalling the correct platform package should not require removing user presets.

PRESET FOLDER OR FILE PROBLEMS

Choose Show Presets Folder… from the preset menu to create and open the correct folder. Check write permissions if saving fails. Load accepts valid ClipperForgeHD files up to 1 MB; a renamed file from another plugin is not a compatible preset. Use Import Preset… for older files you saved elsewhere. Rename a file with a portable name if import rejects it. Keep its .clipperforgehd extension.

CPU, INTERRUPTIONS OR UNEXPECTED SOUND

Reduce Live oversampling and increase your DAW buffer if playback overloads; try Auto Rate Cap at high sample rates. High oversampling transitions briefly run two processing paths. Check Bypass, Delta, band solos and Parallel levels if sound is missing or unusual. Use a matching mono or stereo input/output configuration. Enable DAW delay compensation; low-latency monitoring modes can affect alignment. Scope timing depends on the transport timing supplied by your DAW.

RECALL OR MISSING CONTENT

Reopen a saved project using the same product and plugin format, then confirm the recalled controls. Compare with a separately saved preset if useful. ClipperForgeHD presets contain parameters, not samples or external library references. A missing-sample warning comes from another part of the project; restore that instrument's library through its own location controls.

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APPEARANCE AND WINDOW SIZE

RESIZE AND APPEARANCE

Drag the plugin's resize corner. The interface maintains its proportions and fits the available screen area. Classic and Retro Hardware change appearance without changing audio. Original dials and their arrangement are preserved.

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INFO AND TOOLTIPS



The ClipperForgeHD Info panel before activation.

INFO AND LOCAL MANUAL

Open Info (i) for the product name, version and running format. Choose User Manual to open the included PDF offline.

SHOW TOOLTIPS

Descriptive tooltips start off when no preference is saved. Open Info and use the tooltips control to switch hints on or off. The plugin remembers your choice. Numerical control-value readouts remain available with tooltips off.

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INSTALL AND OPEN

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Use a compatible 64-bit DAW and check the product download page for supported operating-system versions. VST3 is available for macOS and Windows where supplied. Audio Unit is macOS only.

MACOS

Save your work and close your DAW. Open the downloaded .pkg installer and choose VST3, Audio Unit (AU) or both, depending on what your DAW supports. Both formats contain Intel and Apple Silicon code. Keep one active copy per format.

WINDOWS

Save your work and close your DAW. Extract the downloaded ZIP. Copy the entire ClipperForgeHD.vst3 bundle into C:\Program Files\Common Files\VST3. Keep all files inside the bundle together. Windows may ask for administrator permission to copy it.

OPEN IN YOUR DAW

Reopen your DAW and find ClipperForgeHD in its plugin browser. Rescan plugins in your DAW if it does not appear. Load it on an audio track or after an instrument.

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ACTIVATE AND MOVE YOUR LICENCE

YOUR LICENCE

Your ClipperForgeHD perpetual licence lets you activate up to two computers. Once activated, you can use the plugin offline.

FIND YOUR LICENCE CODE

Sign in to My Account at https://erbndub.com/my-account/ using the account you used to get the plugin. Open the licence area and select the product to view or recover your code. If you receive a licence email, you can also use the code it contains.

ONLINE ACTIVATION

With an internet connection, open Info (i), enter your licence code in the Licence section, then select Activate. If your edition opens a separate Activate licence form, enter the code there and select Activate this computer.

48-HOUR DEMO

If offered, select Start 48-hour demo in Info > Licence and confirm when you are ready. The 48 hours run continuously from the time you start, including while your DAW is closed.

OFFLINE ACTIVATION

On the computer you want to authorise, open Info and choose Offline Activation, then Save Computer Request. Transfer the request to a computer with internet access and follow Offline Activation Help to obtain a signed licence file. Transfer the file back and choose Import Licence File in the Offline Activation panel.

MOVE OR RECOVER YOUR LICENCE

On your old computer, choose Info > Manage Licence > Deactivate This Computer and follow the prompts to free a slot. Install and activate on the new computer with the same code. If you lost your code or cannot access the old computer, use My Account / Recovery or contact ERB N DUB support.

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UPDATE, REMOVE AND REINSTALL

UPDATE OR REINSTALL

Back up your projects, presets and any content folders before updating. Close the DAW and follow the installation instructions for your platform. After updating, confirm the version in Info and open a copy of an existing project before saving over it.

REMOVE ON MACOS

Close the DAW and remove only ClipperForgeHD.vst3 and/or ClipperForgeHD.component from /Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/VST3 and /Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/Components respectively. If you installed a user-only copy, check the equivalent folders inside your home Library.

REMOVE ON WINDOWS

Close the DAW and remove only the ClipperForgeHD.vst3 bundle from the folder where you installed it. Keep your projects, presets and any separate sample libraries.

ACTIVATION AND REMOVAL

Removing plugin files does not free an activation slot. Use the deactivation steps in this guide before moving your licence.

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ABOUT AND SUPPORT

SUPPORT

Visit https://erbndub.com/contact/ and include the plugin version, operating system, DAW, plugin format and steps to reproduce the problem. Keep your licence code private.

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THIRD-PARTY NOTICES

See the notices supplied with your download.

DESIGNED AND DEVELOPED BY ERB N DUB (PETER CHAPMAN)

Drawing on over 20 years of experience as an artist, producer, DJ, and drummer, Erb N Dub brings his expertise in sound design, synthesis, and audio processing to the development of innovative audio software.

Combining his creative vision with augmented technology, Peter translates his tried-and-tested production techniques into intuitive tools that help producers create music with greater sonic weight, clarity, and impact.