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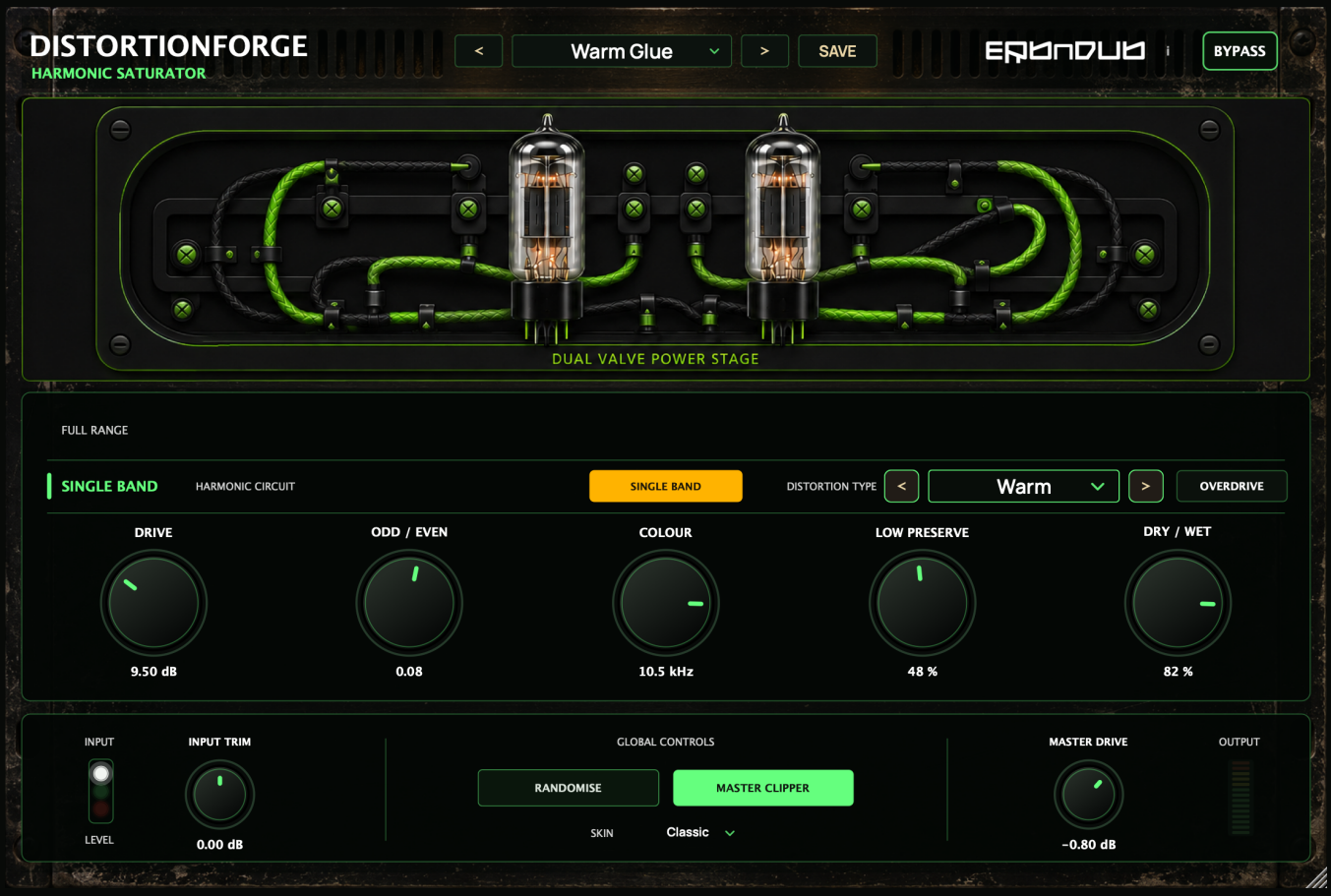
PRIME HARMONICS

SATURATION & SOUND DESIGN

DISTORTIONFORGE

Character, from warmth to transformation.

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 / SATURATION & SOUND DESIGN

OVERVIEW

ONE SOUND, TWO APPROACHES

DistortionForge adds harmonic character to drums, basses, synths and vocals. Shape the whole signal or use four frequency bands with independent drive, tone, blend and gain. Twelve distortion types, Overdrive, Solo and a final clipper support subtle warmth and pronounced sound design.

YOUR AUDIO SETUP

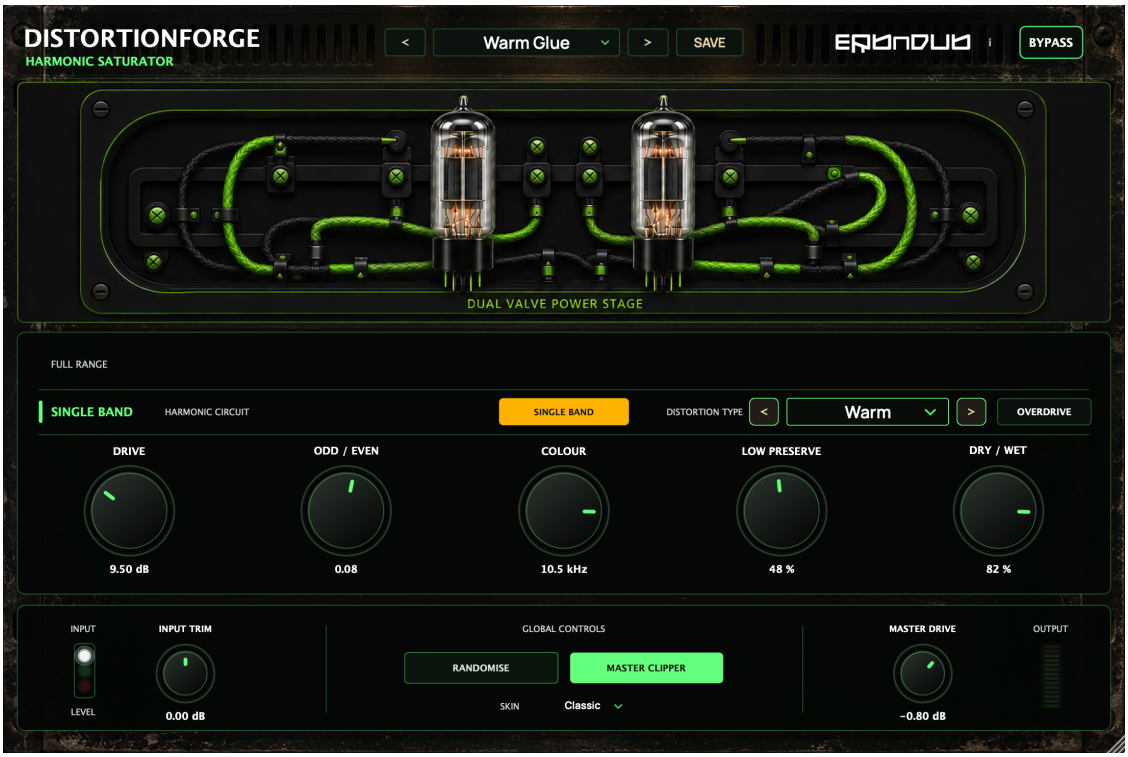
Use a mono or stereo audio effect slot in your DAW. DistortionForge processes audio; it does not generate notes or use sample libraries. The Classic and Retro skins provide the same controls and processing.

READABLE INTERFACE

The default window is 1100 x 733 logical pixels, with a 900 x 600 minimum and a nominal 1800 x 1200 maximum. The available display limits the upper size. Resize from the window corner; your DAW may provide its own resizing control. Use an available desktop area large enough for the minimum window.

02 / SATURATION & SOUND DESIGN

QUICK START



In the full-band view, choose a Distortion Type, then adjust Drive, Dry/Wet and Output.

01

In your digital audio workstation (DAW), insert DistortionForge on an audio track, after an instrument, or on a group. Play a section that represents the sound you want to shape.

02

Select Init. Check that Bypass and Overdrive are off, and begin in single-band mode.

03

Set Input Trim and the final level control to 0 dB. Leave Odd / Even centred and Low Preserve at zero.

04

Choose Warm. Start with Drive at 0 dB, Colour at 20 kHz and Dry / Wet at 100%. New instances filter Colour after distortion.

05

Increase Drive gradually. Listen to the attack, body and texture as the signal is shaped.

06

Lower Colour if the result becomes too bright. Reduce Dry / Wet to blend the character into the original.

07

Use a gain control after DistortionForge to bring the processed sound close to the original's perceived loudness. Compare with Bypass.

08

Explore other characters or switch to multiband when you want different treatment across the frequency range.

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

03 / SATURATION & SOUND DESIGN

CHOOSE YOUR CHARACTER

CLEAN

An open, gently rounded curve. Begin here when you want softer shaping before exploring stronger characters.

WARM

Rounded saturation that becomes denser as Drive rises. A useful first choice for drums, basses, synths and vocals.

HARD

Firm clipping at the shaping threshold. Explore sharper peak shaping and a more pronounced edge.

TUBE

Biased, asymmetric shaping. Try it for a different harmonic balance and driven texture.

TAPE

Rounded shoulders with a denser response as the input rises. Compare it with Warm on sustained sounds.

DIODE

Unequal shaping of the positive and negative waveform. Useful for exploring asymmetric bite.

FUZZ

Strong shaping that becomes pronounced quickly. Use modest Drive or blend it with the original.

FOLD

Folds the waveform back as the input increases. Drive can change the tone dramatically; try it on bass and synths.

SINE FOLD

Smooth, repeating wavefolding. Explore changing tones and more unusual sound design.

RECTIFY

Strongly asymmetric shaping that favours one waveform polarity. Try it as a distinctive texture.

CUBIC

A curved polynomial shape with a different bend from Warm or Tape. Compare its body and edge on the same source.

DIGITAL

Coarse, stepped amplitude shaping. Use it for rough, grainy textures and deliberate digital character.

04 / SATURATION & SOUND DESIGN

SHAPE THE SOUND

INPUT TRIM | -24 TO +24 DB

Adjusts the level entering the processing. It affects every band in multiband mode. A hotter input can produce more distortion even when Drive is unchanged.

DRIVE | 0 TO +30 DB

Pushes the signal into the selected shaping curve. Increase it while listening to the tone and dynamics, then compare at a similar perceived level. In multiband mode, Drive belongs to the selected band.

ODD / EVEN | -1 TO +1

Turning left introduces additional asymmetric shaping; turning right enhances the odd-harmonic shaping path. The centre adds neither of these extra adjustments. The result also depends on the distortion character. This control does not isolate exclusively odd or even harmonics.

OVERDRIVE

Adds an extra push into the chosen distortion character. Use it when you want stronger shaping, then reassess Drive, Colour and the blend.

COLOUR | 500 TO 20,000 HZ

Reduces brightness by filtering the processed path. Lower it to soften harshness or make the distortion darker. New single-band instances use post-distortion Colour; older projects retain their saved placement through host automation. Each multiband Colour control filters its band's distorted path after shaping.

LOW PRESERVE | 0 TO 100%

Adds low-frequency body back into the processed path. Increase it while listening to the weight of the sound. It is a tonal adjustment, not a separate clean-sub bypass. In multiband mode it applies within the selected band.

DRY / WET | 0 TO 100%

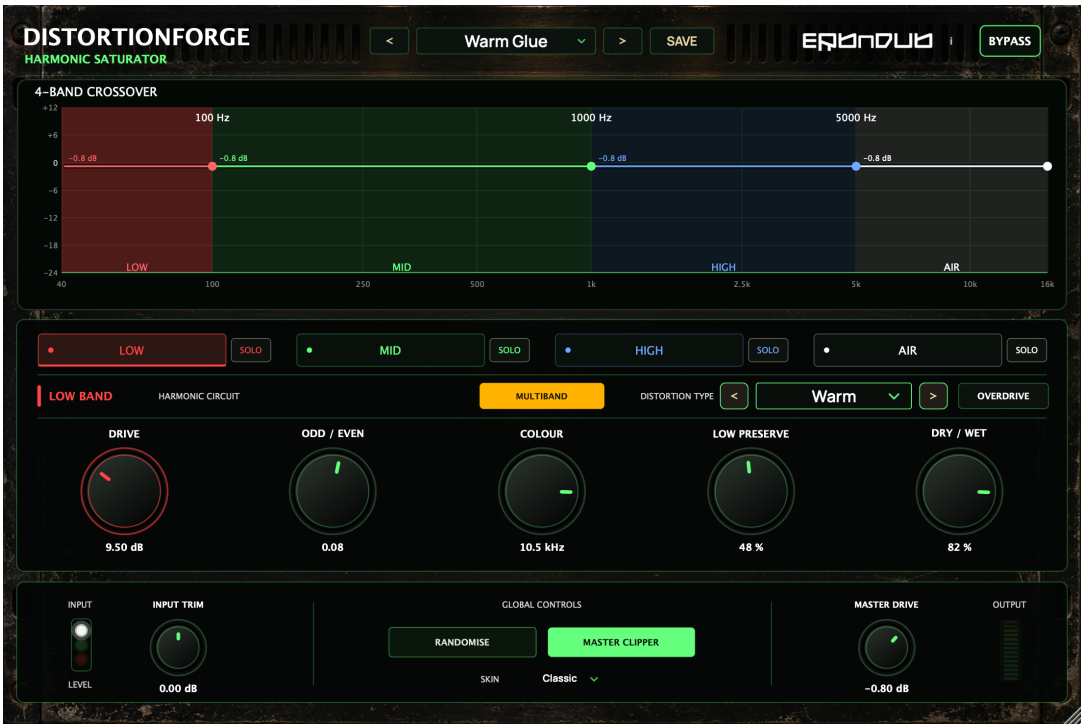
Blends the original and processed paths. In single-band mode it controls the full-band blend; in multiband mode it controls only the selected band. Input Trim, the final level control and Master Clipper can still affect the result at 0% wet.

POST COLOUR | COMPATIBILITY PARAMETER

This switch is hidden in the interface. New instances use post-distortion Colour. Existing projects retain their pre/post setting; the parameter remains available to host automation. Each multiband Colour filter is always after its distortion curve.

05 / SATURATION & SOUND DESIGN

WORK IN FOUR BANDS



Four bands with independent shaping, gain and Solo.

SWITCH PROCESSING MODE

The button above Colour shows the current mode: Single Band or Multiband. Click it to switch. Both modes keep their own settings and share dial positions.

SELECT AND SOLO

Click Low, Mid, High or Air, or its graph region, to edit a band. Drive follows its colour. Solo auditions one or several bands; unheard bands turn grey but remain editable. Turn all solos off to hear the full signal.

PLACE THE CROSSOVERS

Start at 100 Hz, 1 kHz and 5 kHz. Drag a frequency boundary, or double-click its label and type Hz. Press Return to accept or Escape to cancel. Effective cutoffs stay ordered and within the sample-rate limit, including during automation.

BALANCE THE BANDS

Drag a horizontal gain line up/down (-24 to +12 dB). Double-click away from a frequency label to reset that band to 0 dB. Bands overlap through gradual filter transitions.

USE THE GLOBAL STAGE

Input Trim, Master Drive/Main Out, Master Clipper and Bypass affect the recombined signal. Each band has its own Dry / Wet, replacing the single-band blend.

06 / SATURATION & SOUND DESIGN

LEVEL, CLIPPING AND APPEARANCE



The Retro skin uses the same controls and sound.

INPUT AND OUTPUT

Input Trim adjusts the incoming level. The input lamp and output meter show activity. Compare processed and original sound at similar perceived loudness.

MASTER DRIVE / OUTPUT / MAIN OUT

The right-hand dial sets the level into Master Clipper. With clipping off it reads Output (single-band) or Main Out (multiband). Range: -24 to +12 dB.

MASTER CLIPPER

Enables final sample-peak clipping. It is not a true-peak limiter or automatic loudness match. Red activity feedback indicates clipping.

BYPASS

Returns the original untrimmed input through a short transition. Zero Drive and 0% wet are not bypass.

CROSSOVER GRAPH

Shows frequency regions, effective crossover positions, band gains and the output spectrum. The selected band is highlighted.

TWO SKINS, ONE SOUND

Choose Classic or Retro beneath Global Controls. Both skins share controls and sound. Click i beside the logo for Info, help and tooltips.

07 / SATURATION & SOUND DESIGN

PRESETS, RANDOMISE AND RECALL

FACTORY STARTING POINTS

The preset menu separates Factory presets and User presets. Use the menu or arrows to choose a sound, then adjust it for your source. Factory settings are embedded and cannot be overwritten by Save.

CHECK THE COMPLETE SETUP

Factory loads reset the main character controls, crossovers and band character/gain settings, turn off Overdrive and clear solos. They load Single Band mode and retain Bypass, Input Trim and skin. You can switch to Multiband after loading a factory preset. Init is a starting sound, not bypass.

SAVE A USER PRESET

Click Save and enter a .xml filename inside the user preset folder. Use a unique name to preserve an earlier sound. Confirm replacement only when you intend to update that file. Names may include spaces, accents and other languages; avoid path separators, reserved system names and characters such as : * ? < > |. Saved files appear under User presets.

LOAD AND REFRESH

Select a user preset from the preset menu. Use Refresh User Presets at the bottom of the main preset menu after adding, renaming or removing files outside the plugin. Invalid XML is rejected without replacing the current settings.

RANDOMISE

Changes Drive, Odd / Even, Colour, Low Preserve, type and Overdrive in the active mode. In multiband it changes all four bands. Each press is one Undo step; Redo restores that exact result.

PROJECT RECALL

Save your DAW project to retain parameter values, mode, solos, Bypass, skin, preset name and editor width for each instance. Reopening the editor keeps its width; reopening a project restores a display-safe size. Preset names identify a starting point, not whether every control still matches it.

OLDER SETTINGS

Older files with one shared Preserve value restore that value into both the global and low-band controls. Check automation of the formerly shared control before overwriting an older project. User presets and DAW projects retain their saved Overdrive switches.

08 / SATURATION & SOUND DESIGN

PRESET FOLDERS AND TRANSFER

SHOW PRESETS FOLDER…

Open the main preset menu and choose Show Presets Folder to create and open the user preset folder in Finder on macOS or File Explorer on Windows. This is the same location used by Save and the user preset list. If the folder cannot open, check permissions and open the location below manually.

MACOS USER PRESETS

~/Library/Audio/Presets/ERB N DUB/DistortionForge/
The ~ represents your home folder. In Finder, use Go › Go to Folder to enter this path.

WINDOWS USER PRESETS

Your Documents folder › ERB N DUB › Presets › DistortionForge. The plugin uses your current Windows Documents location, including redirected, OneDrive-managed and non-English folders. Show Presets Folder… opens the resolved location.

IMPORT AND EXPORT

Choose Import Presets… from the main preset menu to copy a DistortionForge .xml file into the user folder. Import does not load the sound automatically; choose it under User presets. To export, open the folder and copy the desired .xml file to your destination using Finder or File Explorer. No sample library is needed.

RENAME, REMOVE AND REFRESH

Use Finder or File Explorer to rename or remove your own .xml files, then choose Refresh User Presets. Keep backups before removing files. These file actions do not change the sound already loaded in an instance and are not part of plugin Undo.

EARLIER USER FOLDERS

On first use, valid user .xml presets are copied from the earlier ERB N DUB/DistortionForge/Presets folder inside your macOS Library folder or Windows AppData. Originals stay in place. Different files sharing a name receive an (imported 1), (imported 2) or later suffix. Repeating the migration does not duplicate identical copies. Embedded factory sounds remain separate.

BACKUP AND MOVE BETWEEN COMPUTERS

Copy your .xml files from the user folder to your backup. On another Mac or Windows computer, use Import Presets… or copy them into that computer's user folder and refresh. Presets store parameters, not audio samples or external library paths. Transfer the DAW project and its audio files separately; plugin history is not saved in presets.

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UNDO AND REDO

64 MEANINGFUL EDITS

Use the keyboard shortcuts below for Undo and Redo while the plugin has focus. Each instance remembers up to 64 sound edits. There are no Undo or Redo buttons in the top bar.

WHAT IS INCLUDED

History covers the global and band controls, distortion types, Overdrive, processing mode, Bypass, master clipping, crossover frequencies, band gains and solos. Factory presets, Init, user preset loading and Randomise are each one complete sound-edit transaction. This effect has no samples, pads, sequencer or editable routing structures.

ONE GESTURE, ONE STEP

A knob drag is one step, however long it lasts. Continuous wheel adjustments of the same control are grouped while events remain less than roughly half a second apart. Typed values and switches are individual edits. Returning a gesture to its starting value or cancelling frequency entry adds no step.

SHORTCUTS

With the plugin focused, press Command+Z on macOS (Ctrl+Z on Windows) to undo, and add Shift to redo. Command/Ctrl+Y also performs Redo. Text fields keep their own text-editing undo. Shortcuts belong to your DAW when the plugin does not have focus.

RECALL AND LIMITS

Closing and reopening the editor keeps the history while that instance remains alive. Opening a DAW project or restoring host state starts fresh history; history is not stored in presets or projects. A new meaningful edit after Undo clears the Redo branch. At the 64-step limit, the oldest edit is discarded.

SOUND HISTORY AND PREFERENCES

DAW automation does not fill the history. Undo restores the controls touched by the chosen edit, leaving unrelated later automation values alone. Skin, selected editing band, window size, Info navigation and Show tooltips are outside sound history. Preset files retain their existing appearance behaviour; Undo does not reverse skin changes. Saving a preset file is not a sound edit.

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PRODUCTION WORKFLOWS

DRUMS AND PERCUSSION

Start with Warm or Hard. Raise Drive until the attack and body sit where you want them, then blend with Dry / Wet. Lower Colour if cymbals or ambience become too sharp. For a drum group, try less drive on the lows and more character in the midrange.

BASS

Try Warm, Tube or Diode for added definition. Use Low Preserve when you want more low-frequency body. In multiband mode, drive the midrange more than the low band to develop upper texture while applying less additional drive to the fundamental region. Compare in the full mix.

SYNTHS

Explore Fold or Sine Fold. Sweep Drive slowly to hear how the tone changes, then soften the result with Colour. A reduced wet blend can bring an unusual texture into a sustained synth without making it dominate the part.

VOCALS

Begin with low Drive in Warm or Tube and a modest wet blend. Listen to consonants, breaths and sibilance as you add character. Lower Colour if the added edge becomes harsh. For a deliberate effect, explore Fuzz or Digital on a separate vocal layer and blend it into the arrangement.

GROUPS AND FULL MIXES

Begin with small changes and compare several passages. Listen for shifts in punch, bass weight, vocal clarity and high-frequency texture. Multiband offers more control, but every extra adjustment should serve the mix. Check the finished level with your usual meters.

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COMMON QUESTIONS

WHY DOES 0 DB DRIVE STILL CHANGE THE SOUND?

Zero added drive is not bypass. The shaping curve, Colour, Low Preserve, crossover, final gain and clipper still apply. Use Bypass for the original input.

WHY CAN A DRY BLEND STILL CHANGE THE SOUND?

Input Trim and the final stage still apply. Multiband dry paths pass through the crossover.

DOES SWITCHING TYPE CLICK?

Types blend over 10 ms while filters keep running. The sound and level can still change significantly between curves. Lower Drive or the wet blend for gentler transitions.

WHY ARE BANDS GREY?

A different band is soloed. Clear all Solo buttons to hear every band. Band selection and Solo are independent.

WHY ARE CROSSOVER LABELS DIFFERENT FROM AUTOMATION VALUES?

The graph shows effective cutoffs, constrained for ordering and the current sample rate. Saved automation values remain unchanged.

WHAT SHOULD I CHECK BEFORE PRINTING?

Check mode, solos, Bypass, clipper, band balance and output level. Listen in context, render the audio and check the result.

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TROUBLESHOOTING

PLUGIN NOT APPEARING

Confirm that the download matches Mac or Windows, your processor architecture and your DAW's supported format. Rescan and restart the DAW. On macOS, Audio Unit and VST3 are separate formats. Check the standard installation locations and remove duplicate scan entries.

PRESET CANNOT BE FOUND OR LOADED

Use Show Presets Folder… to create/open the active folder, then Refresh User Presets. Confirm that the file is DistortionForge XML and that the folder is writable. Import a backup if needed. A missing sample warning comes from your DAW or another instrument: DistortionForge does not load samples.

DROPOUTS OR HIGH CPU

Increase your DAW buffer size, reduce the number of active instances and compare in an empty project at the same sample rate. Check the source level, mono/stereo configuration and other processing in the chain. Report repeatable problems with the details in About and support.

PROJECT SOUNDS DIFFERENT

Check Bypass, mode, Solo, Overdrive, Dry / Wet and final gain. Confirm the version and format used by the original project. Keep an unchanged project copy while checking automation and older Preserve settings. Preset files are separate from your DAW project audio.

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INFO AND TOOLTIPS



The DistortionForge 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 DistortionForge.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 DistortionForge 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 DistortionForge 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 DistortionForge.vst3 and/or DistortionForge.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 DistortionForge.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.

ERB N DUB CONTACT

studio@erbndub.com | https://www.erbndub.com

PRIME HARMONICS CONTACT

info@primeharmonics.audio | https://www.primeharmonics.audio/

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.