# DRUM'NSPIRE

## User Manual

MIDI drum sequencer and song-structure editor, built on editable motifs

**Sequence. Arrange. Get inspired.**




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# 1. Overview

Drum'nspire is a MIDI drum sequencer for the whole song: you write your motifs step by step, arrange them into sections, and shape each section's energy, fills and variations. Chance notes and the 40 styles suggest ideas when you want them; they never do the work for you.

The plugin makes **no sound**: it sends MIDI (480 PPQ, channel 10) that your drum instrument plays, UJAM Beatmaker, a General MIDI kit or any other plugin, live in your DAW.

> **Good to know.** This manual names the buttons and menus in colour, as the window shows them. The window is in English by default: the language is chosen in **View › Language**.

## What it does

- a **step sequencer** to write the motif, then edit each section and each fill by hand: velocities, accents, ghost notes, ratchets (2 to 4 hits in one step, each at its own level), up to three motifs per song;
- a **structure editor**: the sections, their order and length, their energy, their fill (build, break, drop…), their crash, time signature and tempo;
- **chance notes**: a note can play with a probability, or every second, fourth or eighth bar, so that a one-bar motif stays alive over a whole section;
- 40 **styles** in 9 families, written from the conventions of each genre, without copying any existing song: when you are looking for an idea, they suggest a motif, a variation or a fill, which you then edit;
- **DAW integration**: playback locked to its transport, drag and drop of the song or of a section, an edited section brought back; plus takes, an undo history, a motif library and note maps (General MIDI, UJAM Beatmaker or your own).

## The basic ideas

| Idea | What it is |
|---|---|
| **Motif** | One bar, written in the grid: the base of the song, which each section plays and which you can edit section by section (three motifs at most: A, B, C). |
| **Section** | A part of the song: name, bars, energy, fill, crash, and if needed time signature and tempo. The sections of the same *role* (verse1, verse2 → verse) share variations and colour. |
| **Energy** | The gauge of each section: at 50 % the section plays the motif as written; above, it adds notes and hits harder; below, it gets lighter. |
| **Style** | For each instrument and each step, a chance to play, velocities, ghost notes and fills: the source of ideas. A step at 0.9 or more (an *anchor*) always plays. |
| **Song seed** | The number the fills and the small variations are drawn from. The same number gives exactly the same song again. |
| **Take** | A snapshot of the whole song (motif, structure, edits, style, seed, settings), kept to come back to and saved with the DAW's project. |

# 2. Installation and first steps

## Installing the plugin

Drum'nspire comes as a zip file: the plugin, a `Drum'nspire.vst3` folder (a VST3 "bundle"), the standalone app `Drum'nspire.exe`, the manuals and the licence in four languages (`LICENCE.en.md`, `LICENCE.fr.md`, `LICENCE.de.md`, `LICENCE.es.md`) and a `README - LISEZ-MOI.txt` file. Close the DAW, unzip the file, then copy the plugin's folder into the common VST3 folder of Windows, which every DAW scans (Windows asks for an administrator's permission):

```
C:\Program Files\Common Files\VST3\Drum'nspire.vst3
```

Open the DAW; if it does not find Drum'nspire, run its plug-in scan again. An update is done the same way, with the DAW closed: while it runs, the plugin is locked.

## Connecting Drum'nspire in Studio One / Studio Pro

Drum'nspire is an instrument that sends MIDI. You need two tracks:

- **Track 1**: an instrument track with **Drum'nspire**;
- **Track 2**: an instrument track with your drums (Beatmaker, a GM kit…). Its **input** (the "All Inputs" line) is set to Drum'nspire, and its **monitor** is on;
- in Drum'nspire, at the bottom, choose the note map of your drums (**Note map**: General MIDI or UJAM Beatmaker, see chapter 9).

Start the DAW's transport: with **With host** on (the default), Drum'nspire plays the song locked to the DAW, bar 1 of the song on bar 1 of the DAW. The plugin's own Play button plays without the DAW, at the song's tempo.

## Connecting Drum'nspire in Ableton Live

In Live too, you need two tracks, here two MIDI tracks:

- **Track 1**: a MIDI track with **Drum'nspire**;
- **Track 2**: a MIDI track with your drums (a Drum Rack or a plugin). In its In/Out section, set "MIDI From" to track 1, then, in the list below it, choose **Drum'nspire** (not "Pre FX" or "Post FX"); set its Monitor to "In";
- in Drum'nspire, choose the note map: General MIDI suits the basic Drum Rack kits (kick on C1, snare on D1).

With **With host** on, Drum'nspire follows Live's transport like any DAW's. Live merges the MIDI channels into one from track to track: no problem, Drum'nspire sends a single drum kit. On a Mac, the AU format cannot send MIDI to another track in Live: use the VST3.

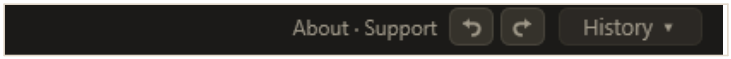
> **After an update.** Reload the plugin in the DAW (remove the instance, then insert it again).

## The standalone app

`Drum'nspire.exe` is the same Drum'nspire, without a DAW: it needs no installing, put it where you like. It sends its MIDI to a MIDI output of the computer: a drum machine plugged in over USB, or a virtual MIDI cable to another program. Choose it in **Options › Audio/MIDI Settings…**. Its Play button plays the song at its tempo.

## Free, and how to support

Drum'nspire is **entirely free**: every feature, no account, no time limit, no licence to activate. It never connects to the internet.

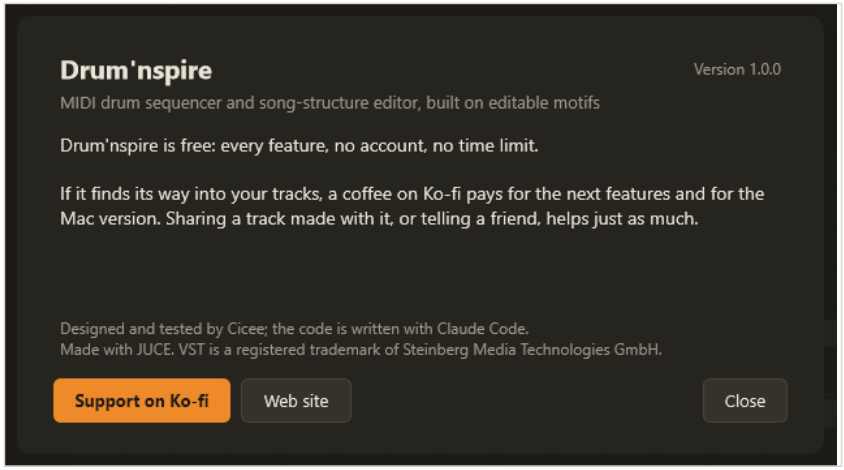



*At the top right of the window: **About · Support**. A click opens the About window.*

A click on **About · Support**, at the top right, opens the **About window**:

- the version of Drum'nspire, and what it is in one line;
- a sentence saying that it is free;
- **Support on Ko-fi**, when this build has a Ko-fi page;
- **Web site**: the updates, the manuals and the demo video;
- **Close**, or the Escape key.

The plugin keeps playing behind it.




*The About window.*

If Drum'nspire finds its way into your tracks, a coffee on Ko-fi pays for the next features and for the Mac version. Sharing a track made with it, or telling a friend, helps just as much.

> **Nothing goes over the internet.** Drum'nspire sends nothing: not your song, nothing about your computer. Only the buttons of the About window open your browser, when you click them.

## A first song in five moves

1. Write or edit the motif in the grid: a click sets or removes a note, a right click makes it an accent or a ghost note, the velocity row, on the right, sets each hit.
2. In the **Structure** tab, build the form: sections, bars, energy, the fill of each section.
3. Click a section of the song: the grid shows its groove, and what you change there only touches that section; its fill is edited the same way.
4. For an idea, **Another variation** or **Another fill** suggests another version of the chosen section; another style, or **New take**, suggests one for the whole song. The padlock of a row protects it, and Ctrl+Z goes back.
5. Drag the **Whole song** area (at the bottom) onto a track of the DAW.

# 3. The window

A console on a single screen: the header and the transport at the top, the settings on the left, the song and the grid in the middle, the MIDI output at the bottom.




*The Drum'nspire window (Rhythm console theme).*

| | Area | Role |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Menus | **File** (projects, motifs, structures, MIDI), **Edit** (undo, motif), **View** (theme, size, language), **Listen** (playing with the DAW). |
| 2 | Display | Style (and its favourite star), song seed, tempo, draw (and its die), the take heard. |
| 3 | Takes | **New take**: another song; **Keep take**: keep this one. |
| 4 | Transport | Previous section, play, stop, next section; **Song** / **Section** / **Fill**, **Loop**, **With host**. |
| 5 | Undo | ↶ ↷ and **History** ▾, the list of actions. |
| 6 | Settings | **Complexity** and the eight sliders, **Style defaults**, the help of the slider under the mouse. |
| 7 | Tabs | **Song** (the song and the grid) and **Structure** (the table of sections). |
| 8 | Song | **Sections** view (blocks) or **Notes** view (all the notes), ‹ › section arrows, and the legend of the names. |
| 9 | Chosen section | Its description and its buttons: ❄ **Freeze**, **Another variation**, **Another fill**, … |
| 10 | Grid | The shared motif, the groove of a section or its fill, edited with the mouse. |
| 11 | Velocity and note | One bar per step for the last row clicked; the strokes, the chance and the cycle of the last note clicked; the mouse help. |
| 12 | MIDI out | **Note map**, **Learn…**, and the areas to drag into the DAW. |

The window is resized by its corner; **View › Window size** sets the zoom from 75 % to 200 % (**Normal size** = Ctrl+0), remembered from one opening to the next. **Fill the screen** (F11) gives the window the whole size of

the screen it is on (the taskbar staying visible) and puts it in its corner; a second time, it gets its size and place back. A plugin cannot put the DAW's window in true full screen: it asks the DAW for that size, and Studio Pro accepts it.

The bigger the window, the more of the song you see: the section blocks take the width, and when the height allows it, a long song goes on two or three rows instead of scrolling (the grid keeps cells at least 30 points high; beyond its largest size, it no longer grows). The 75 % zoom shows even more.




*A song of 29 sections, window enlarged: three rows, no scrolling.*

# 4. The header: style, seed, tempo, draw, takes




## The style menu

A click on the style opens a menu with submenus:

- ★ **Favorites** first: your favourite styles, chosen with one click, then "Add … to the favorites" and **Remove from the favorites**;
- then **one family per submenu** (Synthwave, 80s, Pop, Rock, Funk & Soul, Hip-Hop, Electronic, Latin & Caribbean, Jazz & Blues); the current style and its family are ticked; each style shows its tempo range on the right;
- last, **Motif library**: all the saved motifs (their style on the right), **Save the current motif in the library…**, **Remove from the library** and **Show the library folder**.

Changing the style keeps the motif seeds and the locked rows, and sets the sliders back to the style's values (one undo step). The library is described in chapter 10.

## The favourites star

On the right of the style, the ☆ star is filled when the current style is a favourite. A click makes it a favourite, or removes it: it is a **shortcut**, not a copy, with no name to give. The favourites come first in the style menu and carry a ★ in their family. They are shared by all the instances of the plugin.

## Song seed and tempo

**Song seed**: the number the fills and the variations of the sections that have none of their own are drawn from. Type another number (Enter) for other fills and other small variations; the motif does not depend on it. The same number always gives the same song again, with the same motif, settings and structure. It is written with digits and letters (base 36, 6 characters at most: 42 is written "16"); letters can be typed in lower or upper case.

**Tempo**: type it (Enter) or turn the mouse wheel (1 BPM per notch, Shift for tenths). It is the song's tempo; a section that has its own in the Structure keeps it. With **With host** on, the DAW's tempo is the one that counts, Play button included: the display then shows it, and the song's tempo is only used for the MIDI files.

## The draw and its die

The notes that have a chance (see chapter 7) are drawn, bar by bar, from the song seed: another seed, or a new take, gives another draw. **Edit** › **Another draw (the notes with a chance, whole song)** draws only these notes again, in the whole song, and the section menu does it for one section; Ctrl+Z goes back to the previous draw.

The **die**, in the **Draw** box, chooses how they play:

- **on** (fixed draw, the default): playing in order always gives the same draw, the one the MIDI files dragged into the DAW also hold. For preparing, mixing, or dragging the MIDI. A loop (the plugin's, or the DAW's) plays that draw on its first turn, then draws again at each turn, as if the song went on: a note at 50 % is heard about every other bar, even in a 4-bar section. These turns are the same at every start;
- **off** (live draw): each pass draws again (each Play, each loop, and when the DAW plays, each start or jump). For an audio or MIDI recording made while the plugin plays, never quite the same. The MIDI files

keep the fixed draw.

## Takes

**New take** gives another song that you hear right away: a new motif (the locked rows stay), new fills, and for each section a **character** of its own (what **Another variation** gives to a single one). The sections of the same role share their seed, but each one draws its own character. The frozen sections and the hand edits stay; Ctrl+Z goes back.

**Keep take** (Ctrl+B) keeps the take. The **Take** readout shows the take heard and the number of takes (“2/3”; “-/3” when the song has changed since): the ‹ › arrows and the mouse wheel go to the previous or the next one, a click on the number lists them all and lets you forget them. Going back to a take first keeps the one you were leaving. The kept takes are saved with the DAW's project, with nothing more to do (not in a Drum'nspire project file: to take one elsewhere, recall it, then save a project).

# 5. The settings

The sliders act at once on the whole song, and on the motifs when you release them: your edits and the locked rows stay.




| Setting | Effect |
|---|---|
| **Complexity** | From a bare beat (0 %: kick, backbeat and steady hi-hat only, no ghost notes, no off-beats, no variation) to the style as written (50 %) and on to a busy groove (100 %). Moves Density, Syncopation, Ghost notes, Variation and Movement together, and the motif follows: your edits and the padlocked rows stay. One move = one undo. |
| **Density** | How many optional notes play: each chance of the style goes up or down. The anchors stay, the forbidden steps stay empty. The section's energy is added to it. |
| **Syncopation** | How often notes fall on off-beats (8ths and 16ths) for kick, snare, clap, toms and percussion. 50 % = as written. |
| **Ghost notes** | Soft notes between the main hits, mostly on the snare. 0 % = none, 50 % = as written, 100 % = twice as many. |
| **Swing** | Delays every second 16th note: 0 % = straight, 100 % = triplet feel. |
| **Humanize** | Random spread of velocity and timing, like a drummer. 0 % = machine, 50 % = as written, 100 % = twice as loose. |
| **Intensity** | How hard the whole song plays, motif included: the velocities are multiplied by ×0.7 (0 %) to ×1.3 (100 %). At 50 % the motif plays the velocities written in the grid. The energy is added to it. |
| **Variation** | How far the bars and the sections move away from the motif: small pickups every 2 or 4 bars, a little more on repeated sections. 0 % = each bar plays the groove as it is. |
| **Movement** | How the notes of the motif play from one bar to the next, as the style suggests: some now and then (a chance), a few in 2 to 4 hits (ratchet), a few every 2, 4 or 8 bars (cycle). 0 % = every note in every bar, 50 % = as written, 100 % = more alive. It never changes which notes the other sliders give. |

**Style defaults** sets the sliders back to the style's values. Hovering over a slider shows its explanation in the box at the bottom; otherwise the box recalls what the energy is. A slider turned makes only one undo step per move, motif included.

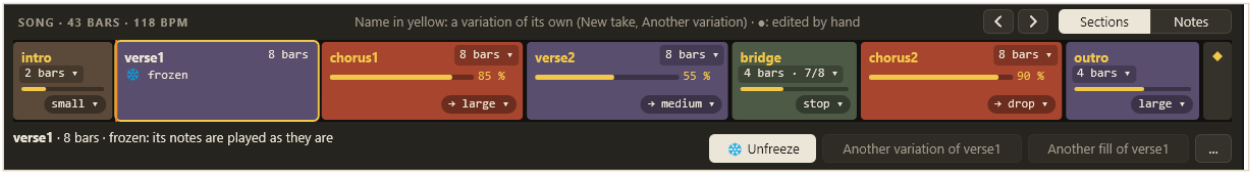
**The sliders and the motif.** While you turn a slider, only the song follows. When you release it (or when the mouse wheel stops), Density, Syncopation, Ghost notes, Humanize and Movement recompute the unlocked rows of all the motifs, with the same seeds, **keeping your edits**: the motif remembers what the sliders had generated, and whatever differs from it (notes added, removed, velocities) is made again on the new one. Swing, Intensity and Variation act on the song only. The status line says how many notes change; the effect stays modest, since the steps the style always (or never) plays do not move. A motif loaded, imported or taken from the library counts as an edit of what the seeds give; a cleared motif stays empty (New motif fills it).

**Musical choice.** At density 0, a note the style almost always plays (for example the kick on 3 in Synthwave Classic, at 0.85) can still play every other time depending on the seed: two bare beats remain possible.

# 6. The Song tab

The song at the top, in two views to choose from (**Sections** or **Notes**, the choice is remembered); the chosen section and its buttons below.

## The Sections view




*After a new take: the names in yellow have a character of their own; verse1 is frozen (❄).*

- **One block per section**, in the colour of its role. Its width is a fixed base plus its length: two sections of the same length have the same width, a longer one is always wider. The time signature shows when it is not the song's ("4 bars · 7/8").
- On the block: the name, the energy gauge and its value, and in a badge the fill that leads on ("→ build"). The number of bars and the fill, marked ▾, open a menu to change them in place (1, 2, 4, 8, 16 bars or **Other length…**).
- **Name in yellow**: the section has a variation of its own (new take, another variation). **Dot** ● before the name: it is edited by hand (groove or fill). The line above the sections and the tooltip of the block say so too.
- The **diamond** at the end is the ending bar Drum'nspire adds when the last section ends with a fill (a crash to land on); it is not a section.
- When the song no longer fits, the strip scrolls and follows the chosen section; during playback it turns the page when the playhead reaches the edge, unless you scrolled it by hand.
- The ‹ › arrows go to the previous or the next section; a **right-click** on a block opens the section menu.

## The Notes view




*One row per instrument, the bar ruler, the playhead (triangle) and the shaded fill.*

All the notes of the song, one row per instrument, in the order of the grid; the rows without notes are greyed out. Each section keeps its colour at the top, with its first bar, its time signature and its energy. In the **bar ruler**: click = start of playback, right-click = end (after the bar clicked); the range played is highlighted.

## The chosen section

Click a block to choose a section: the line below describes it (bars, energy, fill, crash, edited fill, its character) and the grid shows its groove. Its buttons:

| Button | Effect |
|---|---|
| ❄ **Freeze** / ❄ **Unfreeze** | Freezes the section as it plays: the motif, the sliders and New take no longer change it. Unfreezing makes it generate again. |
| **Another variation of …** | Another character for this section only, clearly different from the last 4 heard. The section keeps its version even if the song seed changes. |
| **Another fill of …** | Another fill for this section, clearly different from the previous ones; its fill edits are forgotten (Ctrl+Z brings them back). |
| **…** | The section menu (also with a right-click on the block). |

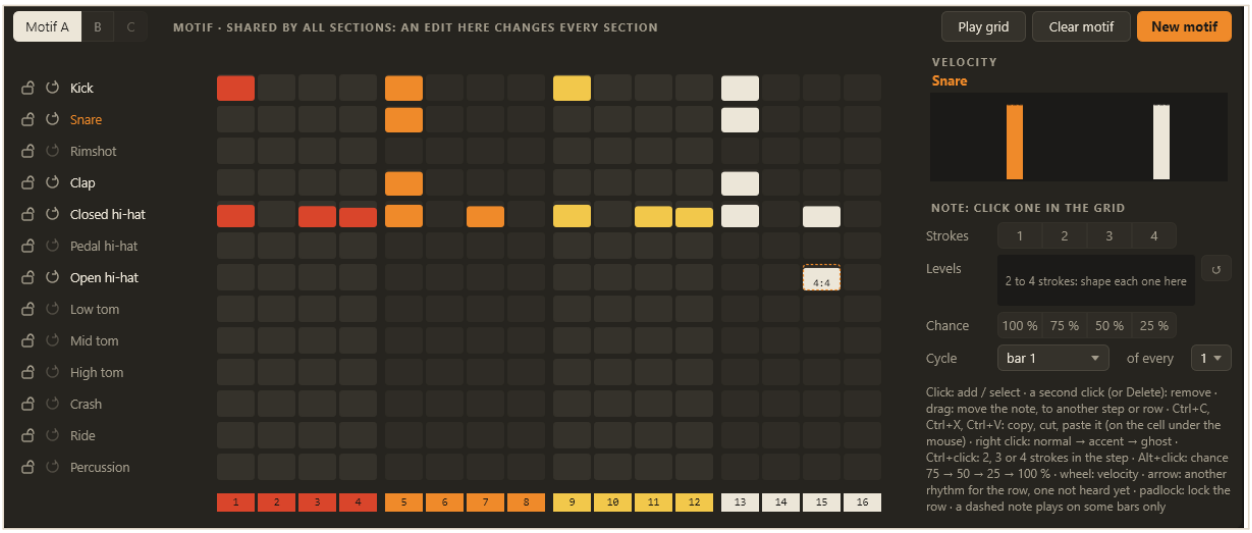
The buttons name the section they act on, and the strip brings it back into view.

### The section menu

- **Freeze the section as it plays now** and **Unfreeze the section (generated again)**;
- **Freeze it with a MIDI file (notes edited in the DAW)…**: see chapter 11;
- **Colour of the "…" sections**: the colour of the role, chosen among the theme's (the menu shows them), or **Automatic (the theme's colours in turn, in the order the roles come)**;
- **Another draw of … (the notes with a chance, this section only)**;
- **Clear my edits of this section (groove and fill)**;
- **Follow the song seeds again (forget "Another variation", "Another fill" and "Another draw")**.

# 7. The grid

The grid shows one bar: the shared motif, the groove of a section or its fill. The buttons above it say what you are editing.




*The shared motif, with the velocity of the last row clicked on the right.*

## Motif, section, fill

| Button | What you edit |
|---|---|
| **Motif A**, B, C | The base of the sections: an edit changes all the ones that use it (all of them, with a single motif). |
| **Section verse1** | This section only, in each of its bars (the fill always replaces the end). A coloured corner marks the edited cells; a dotted cell with a "1" is a note of the first bar only (the crash that opens the section). |
| **Fill** (or **Fill · bar 1 / 2**) | The fill of this section; a build, which lasts two bars, has two buttons. The shaded steps are the fill, the others the end of the groove. |

While the song plays, the grid shows the step playing (purely visual): for the motif, the section shown in its bars, or its fill in its bar.

The motif stays the base: an edit of the motif also reaches an edited section, except on the cells you changed there. Changing the type of fill in the Structure keeps the fill edits, which apply to the new one, cell by cell.

## The mouse

| Gesture | Effect |
|---|---|
| Click | On an empty cell: add a note. On a note: select it (circled, the Note panel shows it) without removing it; a second click on the selected note, a double-click or Delete removes it. |
| Drag a note | It moves to another step or another row with everything it has (velocity, strokes, chance, cycle) and replaces what was there. |
| Ctrl+C, Ctrl+X, Ctrl+V | Copy, cut, paste the selected note; the paste goes to the cell under the mouse, in any motif or section (also in the Edit menu). |

| Gesture | Effect |
|---|---|
| Right-click | Normal (96) → accent (118) → ghost (38). |
| Mouse wheel | Velocity ±4; hovering over a note shows its velocity. |
| Ctrl+click | 2, 3 or 4 hits in the step (ratchet), shown by small marks at the top of the cell. |
| Alt+click | The note's chance: 75 → 50 → 25 → 100 % (on an empty cell, a note at 75 %). |
| Velocity bars | Drag them, on one step or several in a single move (a single undo). An empty step stays empty. |
| Arrow of a row | Another rhythm for this row only, one not heard yet, until you have heard them all. The status line says how many the style allows: raise Density or Syncopation to get more. |
| Lock of a row | Locks the row: New motif, the sliders, New take and the style keep it. |
| MIDI file dropped | Its first bar becomes the motif (notes translated back with the note map, aligned to the grid). |

## Several motifs




*Motifs A, B and C (C not created yet), then the chorus1 section, built on B.*

A song can have up to three motifs: A for the verses, B for the choruses, C for a bridge… Above the grid, one letter per motif (lit: the one the grid shows). A greyed-out letter is not created yet:

- a click creates it: **New motif: a copy of A** (a copy of what the grid shows: the edits of a section shown go into the new motif, the section sounds the same) or **New motif: a new draw from the style**; the sections of the same role as the chosen section use it at once (chorus1 and chorus2);
- the letter at the bottom of each section block (**B** ▾) chooses the motif of this section, puts its whole role on the same one, or clears its edits; the **Motif** column of the Structure does the same;
- choosing a section edits its motif; a click on a letter shows that motif;
- a right-click on a letter: **Remove motif B (its sections go back to A)**.

New motif, the arrow and the lock of a row, the library and the motif files act on the current motif; the style, the sliders and New take on all of them.

## Notes that do not play in every bar

A note can have a **chance** (at 50 %, it plays every other bar on average, drawn bar by bar) and a **cycle** ("bar 4 of every 4": it plays only in the last bar of each group of 4, counted from the start of the section). Enough to let a hi-hat breathe, or to put a pickup at the end of each phrase with a one-bar motif. In the grid, such a note is **dotted**, with its cycle ("4:4") or its chance ("60") at the bottom of the cell. The styles suggest some on their own, depending on Movement (chapter 5); you can also change them note by note.

The **Note** panel, under the velocity, shows the last note clicked (circled in the grid):

| Row | Effect |
|---|---|
| **Strokes** | 1 to 4 hits in the step (the Ctrl+click ratchet). |

| Row | Effect |
|---|---|
| Levels | With 2 to 4 strokes: one bar per stroke, to drag (or the wheel over it, ±4) to set its velocity; the button on the right (round arrow) goes back to the usual strokes, each a little softer than the first. The levels follow the note's velocity: the wheel over its cell, or a softer section, keeps their shape. The velocity lane splits the note's bar too, one per stroke, and its wheel works the same on the stroke under the mouse. |
| Chance | 100, 75, 50 or 25 %; the mouse wheel on the value refines it in steps of 5 %. |
| Cycle | bar 4 of every 4: the bar of the cycle the note plays in, and the length of the cycle (1 = every bar). |



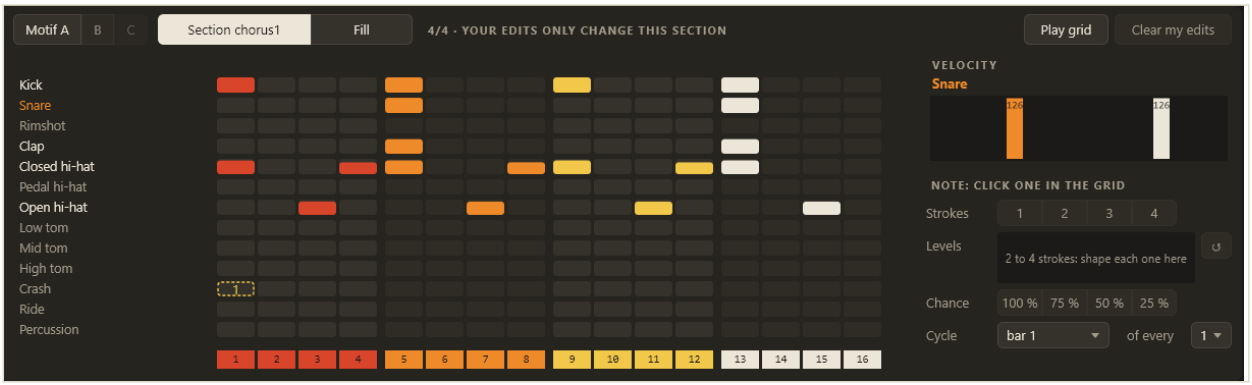

*A snare in 3 strokes (80, 40, 96): its bar split in the velocity lane, and its levels large in the Note panel.*

In the Notes view, a note that could play but that the draw leaves out is drawn as an outline. The draw and its die are described in chapter 4.

## The grid buttons

| Button | Effect |
|---|---|
| Play grid | Plays what the grid shows, in a loop, at the tempo of the song or of the section, with the swing. Edits are heard at once, at the same position, as on a drum machine. The loop lasts as many bars as its cycles need, and the chances are drawn live. |
| New motif | New seeds for all the unlocked rows. |
| Clear motif | An empty grid, to build a motif by hand; the sliders leave it empty (New motif fills it). |
| Clear my edits | For a section or a fill: back to what is computed. |

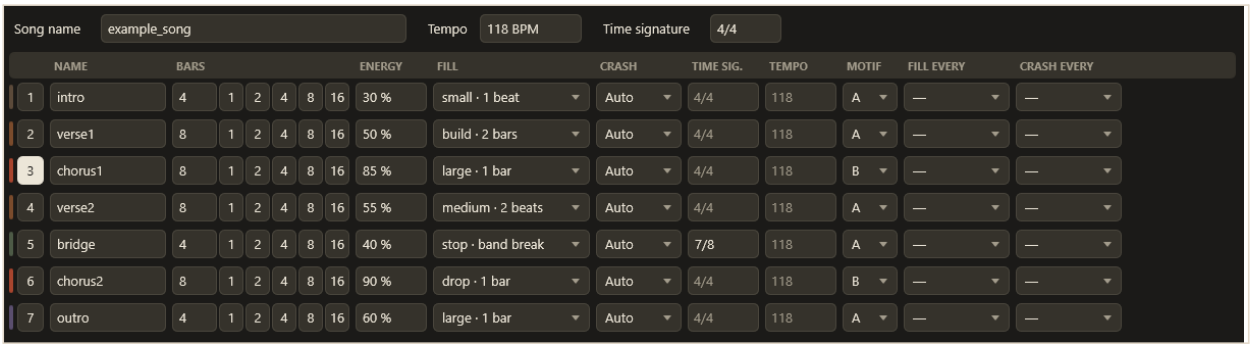
The sliders rewrite the motif when you release them, keeping your edits (chapter 5); the arrow of a row keeps them too, except on the row changed.




*The grid of a section: your edits change this section only.*

# 8. The Structure tab

The sections in a table: to add, duplicate, delete, reorder, and to set one by one.




*The choruses use motif B.*

At the top, the song: **Song name** (it names the MIDI files and the track in the DAW), **Tempo** and **Time signature**. An empty section cell takes the song's value, shown in grey.

| Column | Content |
|---|---|
| **Name** | The name of the section. The trailing digits give the role: verse1 and verse2 are "verse". |
| **Bars** | The length, typed or chosen (1, 2, 4, 8, 16). |
| **Energy** | 0 to 100 %, 50 % = the motif as written (see chapter 14). |
| **Fill** | What leads to the next section: none, small, medium, large, build, stop, drop (see chapter 14). |
| **Crash** | **Auto** (after a fill, or from 50 % energy, 70 % for the first section), **Always** or **Never**. The crash plays on the first bar only. |
| **Time sig.** | The time signature of the section (7/8, 3/4…), empty = the song's. |
| **Tempo** | The tempo of the section, empty = the song's. |
| **Motif** | The motif the section uses: A, B… (see chapter 7). |
| **Fill every** | A small fill (the last beat) at the end of each group of 2, 4 or 8 bars, on top of the section's fill. Each one is drawn from the section's fill seed and differs from the others. |
| **Crash every** | A crash on the first beat every 2, 4 or 8 bars, after the first one (which follows the Crash column), not in the bars of the section's fill. |

Under the table: **Add**, **Duplicate**, **Delete**, **Move up**, **Move down**, then a legend of the energy and of each fill. The colour dot at the start of a row is the one of its role. A typed value applies when you leave the field (or Enter); each change is an undo step.

# 9. MIDI out

At the bottom of the window: the note map, learning a map, and the files to drag into the DAW.




## The note map

**Note map** says on which MIDI note each row goes out. It changes nothing in the rhythm: only which pad of your drums plays each row. It is used for playback, files and import. Two maps are included, **General MIDI** and **UJAM Beatmaker**, plus the ones you save. The Beatmaker one puts 16 pads on white keys from C1 (C3 = 60, as in Studio One); the black keys switch patterns and are never played:

| Pad | Note | Row |
|---|---|---|
| Kck | C1 · 36 | Kick |
| Acc | D1 · 38 | (accent, not used yet) |
| Sn 1 | E1 · 40 | Snare |
| Sn 2 | F1 · 41 | Rimshot |
| Clap | G1 · 43 | Clap |
| HH 1 | A1 · 45 | Closed hi-hat |
| HH 2 | B1 · 47 | Pedal hi-hat |
| HH O | C2 · 48 | Open hi-hat |

| Pad | Note | Row |
|---|---|---|
| Tom L | D2 · 50 | Low tom |
| Tom M | E2 · 52 | Mid tom |
| Tom H | F2 · 53 | High tom |
| Tamb | G2 · 55 | Percussion |
| Perc 1 | A2 · 57 | (not used yet) |
| Perc 2 | B2 · 59 | (not used yet) |
| Cym 1 | C3 · 60 | Crash |
| Cym 2 | D3 · 62 | Ride |

## Learning a map

**Learn...** opens the note map of your plugin, starting from the current one:

- **Learn**, row by row: click Learn, then hit the pad that plays this instrument on a MIDI controller routed to the input of Drum'nspire;
- **Find by ear**, for a plugin you do not play from a controller: **Start**, Drum'nspire plays each note from C0 to C5 and you answer with a click (the instrument heard, **Nothing** or **Skip**); **Again** plays it again;
- ▶ on each row plays its note; **Never send the black keys (some plugins switch patterns with them)**;
- **Save as...** gives it a name; it is written in `%APPDATA%\Drum'nspire\mappings` and becomes the current map.

## Dragging into the DAW

Three areas: **Whole song** (the whole song), **Section ... — place it at bar N** (the chosen section, to put at bar N, in place of the old one) and **All sections (...)** (all the section files at once). The file is written when you drag, in `%TEMP%\Drum'nspire`. A section starts at beat 0 and lasts exactly the section; the song holds the tempo, the time signatures and section markers. **File › Save MIDI as...** saves the song where you want.

# 10. Motif library and favourite styles

The library keeps your motifs with their **style** and their **sliders**. Choosing a motif from the library brings all of that back at once (one undo step). The favourites, on the other hand, are shortcuts to **styles**.

| To… | Do… |
|---|---|
| Make the current style a favourite | Click the ☆ star on the right of the style. |
| Choose a favourite style | Style menu › ★ **Favorites** › its name. |
| Remove a favourite | Click the filled star, or **Favorites** › **Remove from the favorites**. |
| Save the current motif | **File** › **Save motif in the library…**, or **Motif library** › **Save the current motif in the library…**: give it a name. |
| Load a motif from the library | Style menu › **Motif library** › its name. |
| Remove a motif from the library | **Motif library** › **Remove from the library**: its file goes to the recycle bin. |
| See the files | **Motif library** › **Show the library folder** |

The motifs are in `%APPDATA%\Drum'nspire\motifs`, as `.motif.json` files that **File › Load motif…** and the Python prototype also open (without the style or the sliders). A name already taken asks whether to replace it. Several instances of the plugin share the same library.

# 11. Files, import and frozen sections

## Three kinds of files

| File | Holds | Loading it… |
|---|---|---|
| `.drumgen.json` project | Everything: motif, structure with the edits of each section, style, note map, sliders, seeds, locked rows. | replaces everything |
| `.motif.json` motif | The grid of one bar. | replaces the motif; keeps structure, style, sliders |
| `.structure.json` structure | Sections, song name, tempo, time signature, without the section edits. | replaces the sections; keeps motif, style, seed, sliders |

Everything is in the **File** menu: **New song** (empty, basic form or example form, with a new motif and a new seed), **Open project…** / **Save project…**, **Load motif…** / **Save motif…**, **Import motif from MIDI…**, **Load structure…** / **Save structure…**, **Save MIDI as…**. Loading a file of the wrong kind is refused with a message that says which command opens it; before loading a structure, the window warns you if the sections have edits.

> **The project travels with the DAW's song.** The plugin's state, saved in the DAW's song, is the project plus the chosen section, the range, the loop, following the DAW, and the kept takes.

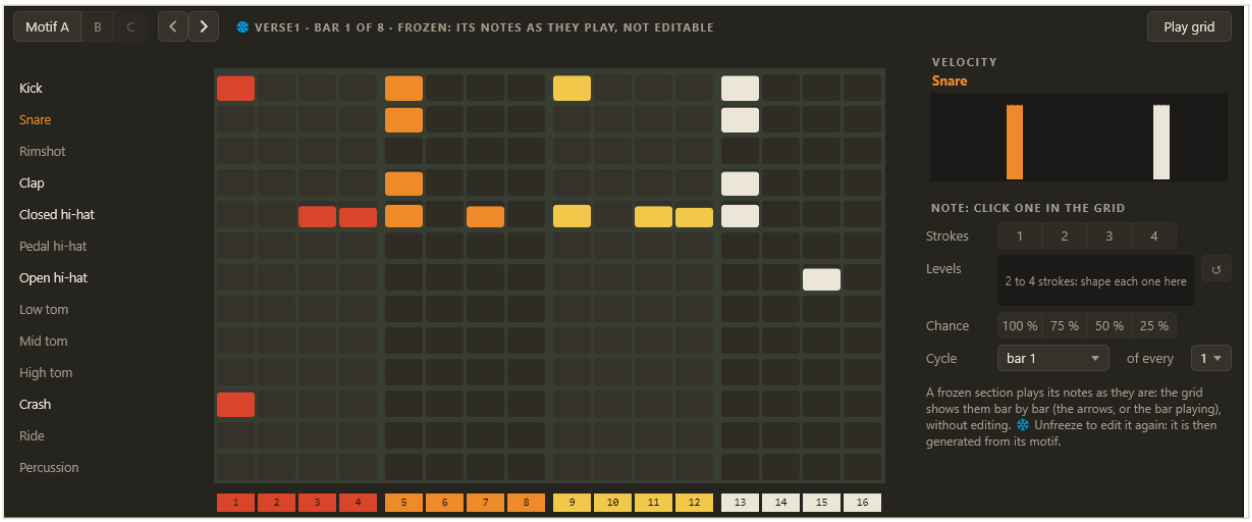
## Bringing back a change made in the DAW

- Export the clip as a MIDI file, then **drop it on the grid**: its first bar becomes the motif, with its velocities and its small timing offsets;
- or **drop it on a section** (or section menu › **Freeze it with a MIDI file (notes edited in the DAW)…**): the section becomes **frozen** (❄) and plays exactly these notes, without generation, variation, crash or fill;
- the notes the map does not know are ignored and reported;
- the files Drum'nspire writes itself for a drag cannot be dropped back on its window.

## Freezing a section

❄ **Freeze** keeps the notes of the section as they play (fill and crash included): no seed, slider or motif edit changes it any more. The following sections do not move either: a frozen section still counts for their variations and their fills. ❄ **Unfreeze** makes it generate again.

A frozen section that is chosen stays **visible in the grid**, bar by bar and read-only (its colour between the cells): the ‹ › arrows next to the motif letters change the bar, and during playback the grid follows the bar playing. To edit it, ❄ **Unfreeze** it first.




*verse1 frozen: the grid shows its bar 1 of 8, with no edit possible.*

# 12. Playback and sync with the DAW

## The plugin's transport

| Command | Effect |
|---|---|
| ◄ ► ■ ► | Previous section (first the start of the current section, like a CD player), play, stop, next section. Space: play / stop. |
| **Song** | The whole song, from the playhead. |
| **Section** | The section playing (when stopped, the one under the playhead). |
| **Fill** | Only the fill of the chosen section, in a loop: one bar before, the fill, then the landing. Each Another fill is heard at once. |
| Range by hand | In the ruler of the Notes view: click = start, right-click = end. Clicking a section or a button leaves it. |
| **Loop** | Starts again at the beginning of the range; the range played is highlighted. |

The playhead (orange triangle) starts from the beginning of the section clicked. A section clicked during playback jumps there. Everything applies during playback, without stopping: an edit is heard at the same position.

## With the DAW

With **With host** on (or **Listen › Play with the host transport**), when the DAW's transport plays, Drum'nspire plays the song with it: bar 1 of the song on bar 1 of the DAW, at its tempo; its loops and jumps are followed (the notes sounding are released).

| While the DAW plays... | Result |
|---|---|
| Play, Stop, Space | No effect: **Host has control** shows under the transport buttons, and Play, Stop and **Play grid** are greyed out. Start and stop the music from the DAW. |
| You click a section | The section is chosen for editing, but the music stays on the DAW's playhead. To hear it, move the DAW's playhead. |
| The DAW plays past the end of the song | The plugin is silent, Play stays off, and the status line says which bar the DAW is playing. |
| The DAW starts while the plugin was playing alone | The DAW takes over. |

> **The rule.** While the DAW plays, it leads, and the plugin follows its playhead. A VST3 plugin can neither move the DAW's playhead nor start or stop its transport: playing elsewhere on its own clock would play out of step. Space in the plugin's window only starts the plugin, while the DAW is stopped. No MIDI port to choose: everything goes out through the plugin's MIDI output.

The plugin can be used without dragging any MIDI: it plays live while you record. Record the output of the drums on an audio track, or record on a MIDI track the notes coming out of Drum'nspire to keep exactly what you heard. With the die off (chapter 4), each pass is a new performance.

> **Space and the keyboard.** The plugin's window takes the keyboard when it opens and at each click. If another window has it, Space goes to the DAW, which starts its own transport (often far from the song): click in the Drum'nspire window before pressing Space.

If the DAW does not run the plugin's audio after Play (track frozen or disabled), the status line says so. The file `%TEMP%\Drum'nspire\playback.log` records each playback (range, playhead, notes) and what the audio thread did a second later: useful to understand a silence.

# 13. Undo and the history

Each action is a named step: motif, grid, sliders, style, seed, tempo, locks, sections, song name and time signature, takes, library… A slider turned, the tempo's mouse wheel or velocity bars dragged make only one step per move.

- The ↶ ↷ buttons at the top right, or Ctrl+Z and Ctrl+Y (or Ctrl+Shift+Z), undo and redo; their tooltip names the action;
- **History** ▾ lists the actions to redo above **Now**, then the last 40 to undo: a click goes back to just before the action chosen;
- the **Edit** menu also names the action to undo or redo;
- in a field where nothing has been typed, Ctrl+Z undoes the window's last action;
- the status line says what was undone (“Undone: …”) or redone.

# 14. How the song is built

This chapter describes the musical choices of the engine, to understand what you hear and know what to set.

## Energy

- It shifts the density and the intensity around the sliders (50 % = neutral).
- Below the style's "low" threshold, the hi-hats go to 8ths (the open ones become closed), then to quarter notes; above the "high" threshold, the style opens the hi-hats on the off-beats or moves to the ride.
- All the sections draw the same numbers: a denser chorus is a superset of the verse, not another rhythm. This is what keeps the identity of the song.
- A section with more energy **adds** the notes the generator would play on top, **never removing yours**; only the fills, the drops and the move to the ride replace your notes.

## The crash

One per section, on the first beat (with the kick), when a fill or a drop leads to it or when the energy reaches 50 % (70 % for the first section). It replaces the hi-hat of that beat. A crash at the start of the verse belongs to the verse, even if it follows the fill of the section before.

## Variations

In a section, the 4th bar of each 4-bar phrase often gets a pickup (kick moved or doubled, open hi-hat on the last off-beat…), the even bars smaller variations; the Variation slider sets all of that.

## The movement of the styles

- The notes a style plays at least 75 % of the time are the backbone: they always play. The chances go to the optional notes (hi-hats between the beats, kick pushes, percussion) and to the ghost notes.
- A chance of the style gets stronger or weaker with Movement (0.8 at 50 % becomes 0.64 at 100 % and 1 at 0 %); the ratchets and the cycle notes are more or less frequent. Never below 5 %.
- By family: little movement in synthwave, italo, rock and punk (a pickup at the end of the phrase, a kick push every other bar); a lively left hand in funk and neo soul; the hi-hat rolls of trap; the ride skipping notes and the random comping of jazz; the ratcheted clap at the end of the phrase in house.
- An open hi-hat that plays only in some bars leaves the closed hi-hat of its step in the grid: the song removes it only in those bars.

The **character** of a section (Another variation, New take) combines 2 or 3 figures, at most one per family:

| Family | Figures |
|---|---|
| Hi-hat | 16th hi-hats, 8th hi-hats, off-beat hi-hats (closed or open), or ride instead of hi-hats. |
| Foot, kick, snare | pedal hi-hat; syncopated kick just before a beat; ghost notes; clap added or removed on the backbeat. |
| Percussion | tambourine on the off-beats, in 16ths or on the backbeat. |
| End of the bar | tom accent at the end of the bar, snare pickup or open hi-hat at the end of the bar. |

The strong beats never move. The character is drawn with the style's variation, not the sliders': moving the sliders (or Complexity) keeps the section's character. The notes it adds follow the slider of what it adds (Density for the hi-hats, the tambourine, the clap, the toms and the pickup; Syncopation for the kick; Ghost notes for the ghost notes): all of them from 50 %, fewer below, none at 0. So Complexity at 0 stays a bare beat, even after a new take.

## Fills

| Fill | What happens |
|---|---|
| **none** | No fill: the next section comes in directly. |
| small · 1 beat | A fill on the last beat. |
| medium · 2 beats | A fill on the last two beats. |
| large · 1 bar | A fill on the whole last bar. |
| build · 2 bars | A build-up: the snare speeds up (quarters, 8ths, 16ths then 32nds) and rises from about 50 to 120, sometimes doubled by the clap or the kick, with a possible breath just before the next section. |
| stop · band break | Everything stops on the last 8th, the last quarter or the last half bar, then everybody lands together on the next section. |
| drop · 1 bar | The last bar is stripped down (backbeat alone, no kick, hi-hats alone, or half-time), then a pickup leads on. |

Small, medium and large are drawn as **one complete idea** among 10 figures: snare roll, tom descent, unison, kick / snare, 32nds, triplets, alternation, groups of 3, accents, pickup. The energy guides the choice: a quiet section more often draws discreet fills, a strong section dense fills. Two identical fills in the same song are not allowed. The fill always stops before the next downbeat. If the last section ends with a fill, a final crash + kick bar resolves it.

## Other time signatures and swing

A 4/4 style folds onto another time signature: the last quarter note always takes the style's “beat 4” (backbeat and pickups), the rest the start of the style (1-2-4 in 3/4, 1-2-3-4-4 in 5/4, 1-2-half of 3-4 in 7/8). The triplet styles (Rock Shuffle, Blues Shuffle, Jazz Swing, Jazz Waltz) have a grid of 6 steps per quarter note. The swing delays the second 16th of each pair. The ratchets (2 to 4 hits in a step) are slightly softer after the first hit.

# 15. The styles

40 styles in 9 families, all written from the conventions of the genre, without copying any song. Each one has its markers: where the snare falls, which instrument keeps time (closed hi-hat, open, ride, pedal, shaker, tambourine), its placement (ahead, behind), its swing, its ghost notes and its variations. **The tempo makes the style**: the range given (also in the style menu) is the genre's; far from it, a style loses its character (a Drum & Bass at 100 BPM becomes a slow break), and the status bar says so. All of them are there to be heard and corrected: the styles are JSON files (`data/styles`), and you can add your own in `%APPDATA%\Drum'nspire\styles`.

| Family | Style | BPM | Character |
|---|---|---|---|
| Synthwave | **Chillwave** | 75–95 | Hazy and lazy: sparse kick, soft snare well behind the beat, no hi-hat on the beat but an open hat breathing on the "and" of 2 and 4, swung shaker. |
| Synthwave | **Darksynth** | 110–140 | Heavy and relentless: four on the floor with 16th-note pickups, huge snare + clap, accented 8th-note ride on the off-beats, low tom answering. |
| Synthwave | **Dreamwave** | 80–105 | Laid back: kick on 1 and the "and" of 3, soft snare doubled by a rimshot slightly behind, light 8ths, shaker slightly ahead, a little swing. |
| Synthwave | **Outrun Four** | 110–135 | The most mechanical: four on the floor, clap on 2 and 4, pedal hi-hat on the beats and closed on the off-beats. |
| Synthwave | **Synthwave Basic** | 95–125 | The simplest: kick on 1 and 3, snare + clap on 2 and 4, 8ths. A good base for a hand-made motif. |
| Synthwave | **Synthwave Classic** | 90–120 | LinnDrum-style: 16ths strongly accented on the 8ths, light swing, kick pushes, big backbeat, an open hat that lifts the bar. |
| Synthwave | **Synthwave Drive** | 110–140 | Galloping outrun: four on the floor with 16th-note pickups (the "a" of 2 and 4), snare + clap, 8ths leaning on the beat. |
| Synthwave | **Synthwave Gated** | 80–105 | Slow and huge: gated snare slightly behind, quarter-note hi-hat only, gated toms at the end of every other bar. |
| Synthwave | **Synthwave Half-time** | 90–140 | Half-time: snare + clap on 3, rare kick, soft 16ths and off-beat open hats, tom answering. |
| 80s | **80s Electro** | 105–130 | Electro / freestyle: syncopated kick, clap on 2 and 4, 16ths accented on the off-beats, cowbell, a tom figure at the end of the bar. |
| 80s | **Italo Disco** | 110–130 | Machine disco: four on the floor, snare (sometimes clap), mechanical 16ths accented on the off-beats, tambourine on 2 and 4, Simmons toms. |
| 80s | **New Wave** | 130–165 | Fast and nervy: strong 8ths pulling forward, floor tom in 8ths in half of the motifs (the tribal pulse). |
| 80s | **Power Ballad** | 65–95 | 80s ballad: huge snare, behind the beat, kick on 1 and 3 and the "and" of 3, big tom hits at the end of the bar, big fills. |
| Pop | **Dance Pop** | 115–128 | Club pop: four on the floor, clap + snare, 8ths, open hat on the "and" of 4, shaker, snare pickups every 4 bars. |

| Family | Style | BPM | Character |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pop | **Pop Ballad** | 60–85 | Intimate: cross-stick instead of the snare (the snare in some motifs), everything slightly behind, soft 8ths. |
| Pop | **Pop Straight** | 95–125 | Radio pop: kick on 1 and 3 with a push, snare doubled by a clap, soft 16ths, shaker. |
| Rock | **Hard Rock** | 110–145 | Loud and heavy: 8th-note kick, big backbeat behind the beat, strong 8ths opening on the off-beats in half of the motifs. |
| Rock | **Metal Double Kick** | 100–160 | 16th-note double kick (8ths in the quiet parts), snare on 2 and 4. |
| Rock | **Punk** | 160–200 | Fast and raw: kick on every beat, snare on every off-beat, short fills. |
| Rock | **Rock Half-time** | 120–160 | Heavy and wide: pounding kick, snare on 3 behind the beat, 8ths that sometimes open, floor tom answering. |
| Rock | **Rock Shuffle** | 95–130 | Triplet shuffle: hi-hat on the first and last triplet of each beat. |
| Rock | **Rock Straight** | 100–140 | The basic rock beat, played: kick pushes, snare a hair behind, 8ths, open hat at the end of the phrase, ride in the chorus. |
| Funk & Soul | **Disco** | 110–130 | Played disco: open hat on every off-beat over two-handed 16ths, snare with ghost notes and pickups, 16th-note tambourine, tom fills. |
| Funk & Soul | **Funk 16ths** | 90–115 | Tight funk: syncopated kick, many ghost notes, snare moved to the “a” of 2 every other bar, hi-hat on the beat. |
| Funk & Soul | **Neo Soul** | 70–95 | Dilla-style: late kick, early snare, hi-hat swung at 55 % behind the beat and full of gaps, very soft ghost notes. |
| Funk & Soul | **Sixties Soul** | 95–125 | 60s soul: snare on every beat, louder on 2 and 4, tambourine on 2 and 4 and in 8ths. |
| Hip-Hop | **Boom Bap** | 85–98 | The head nod: hard snare right on the beat, kick on the “a” of 2, swung MPC-style 16ths. |
| Hip-Hop | **Lo-fi Hip-Hop** | 70–90 | Dusty and drunk: snare + rimshot dragging far behind, shuffled hi-hat (beat, “and”, “a”). |
| Hip-Hop | **Trap** | 130–160 | Half-time: snare + clap on 3, deep off-beat kick, 16ths breaking into rolls of 2 to 4 hits. |
| Electronic | **Breakbeat** | 125–140 | A played break: kick on 1 and its “and”, snare with ghost notes, open hat on the “and” of 2. |
| Electronic | **Drum & Bass** | 165–178 | Two-step at 170+: kick on 1 and the “and” of 3, loud rushing snare, Amen-style ghost notes and rolls, 8th-note ride, shaker. Played slowly, it sounds like a break. |
| Electronic | **House** | 118–128 | Four on the floor, clap, open hat on every off-beat slightly late, swung shaker, rimshot. Nothing else. |
| Electronic | **Techno** | 125–140 | Relentless four on the floor, closed hat on every off-beat, 3-3-2 rimshots, ride or clap depending on the motif, no backbeat. |
| Electronic | **UK Garage 2-step** | 128–136 | Two-step: kick skipping around beat 3, snare + rimshot, shuffled off-beats and 16ths, 60 % swing. |

| Family | Style | BPM | Character |
|---|---|---|---|
| Latin & Caribbean | **Bossa Nova** | 120–140 | Soft surdo-like kick, two-bar cross-stick clave, soft 8ths, pedal hi-hat on 2 and 4. |
| Latin & Caribbean | **Reggae One Drop** | 70–85 | Nothing on 1: kick and cross-stick together on 3, hi-hat shuffled on the triplets. |
| Latin & Caribbean | **Reggaeton** | 88–100 | Dembow: kick on all four beats, snare in 3+3+2 twice (the “a” of 1, the “and” of 2…). |
| Jazz & Blues | **Blues Shuffle** | 80–120 | Triplet shuffle: hi-hat or ride on the first and last triplet of each beat. |
| Jazz & Blues | **Jazz Swing** | 120–220 | Triplet swing: “spang-a-lang” ride, pedal hi-hat on 2 and 4, feathered kick. |
| Jazz & Blues | **Jazz Waltz** | 110–180 | 3/4 waltz: ride on the beats and the last triplet, pedal hi-hat on 2 and 3. |

# 16. Reference

## Keyboard shortcuts

| Key | Effect |
|---|---|
| Space | Play / stop (the plugin's window must have the keyboard: click in it) |
| Ctrl+Z | Undo |
| Ctrl+Y, Ctrl+Shift+Z | Redo |
| Ctrl+B | Keep take |
| Ctrl+0 | Normal size |
| F11 | Fill the screen, then the previous size |
| Shift + mouse wheel on the tempo | Tenths of a BPM |
| Delete, Backspace | Removes the selected note in the grid |
| Ctrl+C, Ctrl+X, Ctrl+V | Copies, cuts, pastes the selected note (pasted under the mouse) |
| Ctrl+click in the grid | Ratchet: 2, 3 or 4 hits in the step |
| Alt+click in the grid | Chance: 75 → 50 → 25 → 100 % |

## Themes

| Theme | Look |
|---|---|
| **Rhythm console** | The default: a dark, warm console, amber display, rotary knobs, steps coloured by beat. |
| **Hardware panel** | A light panel, rotary knobs, LED keys, green display. |
| **Synthwave night** | Indigo, magenta for the accents, cyan for the notes. |
| **Dark studio** | Neutral graphite and one accent colour. |

**View › Theme**; the choice is remembered from one session to the next, it is not saved in the project.

## Where the files are

| Folder | Content |
|---|---|
| `C:\Program Files\Common Files\VST3` | The plugin, the Drum'nspire.vst3 folder. |
| `%APPDATA%\Drum'nspire` | The preferences (Drum'nspire.settings: theme, language, size, song view). |
| `%APPDATA%\Drum'nspire\motifs` | The motif library. |
| `%APPDATA%\Drum'nspire\mappings` | The saved note maps. |
| `%APPDATA%\Drum'nspire\styles` | Your own styles (added to the menu). |
| `%TEMP%\Drum'nspire` | The MIDI files written for a drag, and playback.log. |

## Trademarks

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# 17. Troubleshooting

**Nothing sounds.**
Check that the track of your drums takes Drum'nspire as its input and that its monitor is on, and that the note map matches your drums. Look at the status line: it says if the DAW does not run the plugin's audio. The log `%TEMP%\Drum'nspire\playback.log` says how many notes were sent after each Play.

**Play is lit but nothing plays.**
The DAW's transport is running, and its playhead is past the end of the song: the status line says so. Stop the DAW or bring it back into the song. Often, Space started it, the DAW's window having the keyboard.

**Clicking a section does not play it.**
If the DAW is playing, the plugin follows it and cannot move its playhead: put the DAW at the bar of the section (the status line gives it), or stop it.

**Play starts in the middle of a section.**
The playhead starts again where it was left, saved with the song. Click the section you want, or the ruler of the Notes view.

**The plugin does not follow the DAW.**
Check that **With host** is on. If you pressed Play, Stop or clicked a section while the DAW was playing, the plugin took over until the DAW stops: stop it, then start it again.

**A slider does not change the motif.**
Swing, Intensity and Variation act on the song only; the others only touch the steps the style leaves uncertain (the status line says how many notes change). A locked row, your edits and a cleared motif do not change.

**Complexity at 0 is not quite bare.**
The energy of a strong section still adds a little density; a note the style almost always plays can stay. Lower the section's energy.

**Notes are missing after a MIDI import.**
The notes the map does not know are ignored (the status line lists them): choose the map of the instrument that played the file.