DOTMATRIX / LIGHTWEIGHT AUDIO PLUGINS

STROBE

A rhythmic gate that chops any sound into a pattern locked to your session's tempo.



Strobe by Dotmatrix

USER GUIDE | VERSION 2.2.0 | AU | VST3 | CLAP | STANDALONE | macOS 10.14+ | INTEL + APPLE SILICON

Step wheel from 4 to 64 steps. ADSR on every step. Resonant filter, EQ, 30 Hz cut. 100 factory patterns.

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— ABOUT STROBE

Strobe is a rhythmic gate from Dotmatrix that chops any sound into a pattern locked to your session's tempo. Paint steps on or off around the step wheel, from 4 to 64 per bar, and the wheel plays clockwise from the downbeat whenever the input rises above the threshold, so a held pad, chord or synth note turns into a pulsing, stuttering part that starts exactly on the bar. Every open step is shaped by its own attack, decay, sustain and release, from hard, clicky chops to soft pumps, and a resonant low-pass filter, a dry/wet mix, a three-band EQ and a 30 Hz cut finish the sound. A hundred factory patterns across ten styles, from classic trance gates and techno to hardstyle, dub, breaks, glitch and a dedicated stutter-lead set, get you started, and one click randomises a fresh pattern. Strobe runs as an AU, VST3 and CLAP plug-in and as a stand-alone app, universal for Apple Silicon and Intel Macs on macOS 10.14 or later.

— QUICK FACTS

Type	Tempo-synced rhythmic gate (trance gate). An audio effect: put it on any track or bus.
Formats	Audio Unit, VST3 and CLAP effects, plus the Strobe app (Standalone). Universal: Apple Silicon and Intel, macOS 10.14 Mojave or later on Intel, macOS 11 or later on Apple Silicon.
Pattern	A wheel of 4, 8, 16, 32 or 64 steps that makes one turn per bar, each step on or off.
Shaping	Attack, decay, sustain and release on every open step; a resonant low-pass filter; dry/wet mix; three-band EQ; 30 Hz low cut.
Presets	100 factory patterns in ten styles, plus one-click random patterns.
Identity	Manufacturer Dotmatrix (Dtmx). AU code: Strb.

SECTION 01

Getting started

Put Strobe on a sustained sound, paint a pattern, play.

— NEW IN VERSION 2.2

Light mode	The new LIGHT key switches to a light panel with light grey dials and keys, and back. Every window of the plug-in remembers your choice.
Darker panel	A deeper charcoal chassis with crisper outlines, and stronger, more saturated yellow on the step wheel, LEDs and dials.
Same sound	Only the look has changed: Strobe sounds exactly as before, and your sessions and patterns load unchanged.
Since 2.1	The Dotmatrix hardware panel and CLAP.

— INSTALLING

Copy each plug-in from the download's **Plug-Ins** folder into its folder: **~/Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/Components** (Audio Unit), **~/Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/VST3** and **~/Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/CLAP**. Copy **Strobe.app** into Applications to use it on its own. The release is not yet signed through Apple's developer program, so macOS needs one Terminal line before it will load it; **READ ME FIRST.txt** in the download has the exact steps. Logic Pro checks new Audio Units the first time it starts; Strobe appears under **AU Effects › Dotmatrix**.

— FIRST STEPS

1	**Insert it**	Put Strobe on a pad, chord, synth or vocal track (in Logic: Audio FX › Dotmatrix › Strobe).
2	**Pick a pattern**	Click the preset name for 100 patterns grouped by style, or step through them with the arrows.
3	**Play**	Start the transport. While the input is above THRESHOLD the wheel turns, one bar per turn, and the step lights show where it is.
4	**Paint**	Click a block on the wheel to switch a step on or off; drag across blocks to paint several at once.
5	**Shape**	Short ATTACK and RELEASE give hard chops; longer ones give soft pumps. Close CUTOFF for a darker gate, and use MIX for a parallel blend.

— BASIC HANDLING

Dials	Drag up or down. Double-click to reset to the default. Click the value to type a number.
Keys	Lit keys are on. EQ and 30 Hz CUT switch their stages on and off.
Step wheel	Click a block to flip it. Dragging paints every block you cross with the same state as the first one.
Help line	Hover over any control and the strip at the bottom of the panel says what it does.

SECTION 02

The panel

Everything on one panel: the pattern on the left, the sound on the right.



Header	The preset name with previous and next arrows, the RANDOMISE key and the STEP NOW display, which shows the step playing now and the length of the pattern (WAITING while the gate is closed).
Output scope	A scrolling picture of what Strobe plays; height is level.
Step wheel	The pattern. Blocks run clockwise from the top; the lit ring follows the playing step. STEPS, CLEAR and FILL sit below it.
Trigger	THRESHOLD and the input meter with its HELD light.
Filter	CUTOFF and RESONANCE.
Envelope / Shape	ATTACK, DECAY, SUSTAIN and RELEASE, with a picture of the envelope.
Output	MIX, VOLUME, the EQ and 30 Hz CUT keys and the LOW, MID and HIGH EQ dials.

SECTION 03

The step wheel

One turn of the wheel is one bar of your session.

— PATTERN

The wheel starts at the top on the downbeat and plays clockwise, in sync with the host's tempo and bar position. An open step lets the sound through, shaped by the envelope; a closed step silences it.

CONTROL	RANGE	DEFAULT	WHAT IT DOES
Steps	4, 8, 16, 32, 64	16	How many steps the wheel is divided into. One turn is always one bar, so 16 steps are sixteenth notes in 4/4.
Step blocks	on / off	preset	Click to flip a step. Drag to paint several the same way.
CLEAR	key	-	Switches every step off.
FILL	key	-	Switches every step on.
RANDOMISE	key	-	Fills the wheel with a new random pattern. It leans towards open steps (about 60 %) so the result still passes plenty of sound.

TIP Changing STEPS never erases anything. The wheel plays the first steps of one 64-step pattern, so going down to 8 and back to 16 brings steps 9 to 16 back.

— TRIGGER

Strobe only runs while something is playing. When the input rises above THRESHOLD the gate counts a note as held and the wheel plays; when it falls clearly below again (there is a little hysteresis, so it does not chatter) the sound passes through dry.

CONTROL	RANGE	DEFAULT	WHAT IT DOES
Threshold	-60 to 0 dB	-24 dB	Level the input must rise above for the wheel to run. Lower it for quiet sources; raise it so reverb tails do not keep the gate going.
Input meter	-	-	The input level, with a white tick at the threshold. HELD lights while the wheel is running.

SECTION 04

Shaping the sound

Every open step is shaped by its own envelope, then filtered and mixed.

— ENVELOPE

CONTROL	RANGE	DEFAULT	WHAT IT DOES
Attack	0.1 to 2000 ms	1 ms	How quickly each open step fades in. Below 1 ms the chops click; 5 to 20 ms rounds them off.
Decay	0.1 to 2000 ms	100 ms	How quickly the level falls from the peak to the sustain level.
Sustain	0 to 100 %	100 %	Level held for the rest of an open step. Low sustain with a short decay gives plucky, percussive steps.
Release	0.1 to 2000 ms	100 ms	How quickly the sound fades out when a step closes. Long releases blur the steps into a pump.

— FILTER

CONTROL	RANGE	DEFAULT	WHAT IT DOES
Cutoff	20 Hz to 20 kHz	20 kHz	Low-pass filter on the gated sound. Fully right is open.
Resonance	0.1 to 18 Q	0.71	Boosts the sound around the cutoff for a squelchy edge.

— OUTPUT

CONTROL	RANGE	DEFAULT	WHAT IT DOES
Mix	0 to 100 %	100 %	Blend of the dry input (left) and the gated sound (right).
Volume	-36 to +12 dB	0 dB	Output level.
EQ	on / off	on	Switches the three-band EQ.
Low	-12 to +12 dB	0 dB	Low shelf at 200 Hz.
Mid	-12 to +12 dB	0 dB	Bell at 1 kHz.
High	-12 to +12 dB	0 dB	High shelf at 5 kHz.
30 Hz Cut	on / off	off	High-pass at 30 Hz: removes sub-bass rumble you cannot hear but that eats headroom.

PARALLEL GATE Set MIX to about 50 % for a sound that keeps its body and still pulses, a favourite on pads under a busy mix.

SECTION 05

Presets

One hundred patterns, ten in each style. A preset sets the pattern, its length, the mix, the envelope and the filter; THRESHOLD, VOLUME and the EQ stay as they are.

CATEGORY	100 PRESETS
Trance	Trance Gate 8th Pulse, Trance Riff (Gouryella Style), Trance Wall (Anthem), Trance Pump (Smooth), Trance Offbeat Skip, Trance Long Breath, Trance Double Riff, Trance Quarter Chop, Trance Rising Sync, Trance Held Note Gate
Psytrance	Psy Rolling 16ths, Psy Hypno Skip, Psy Forest Chug, Psy Night Runner, Psy Full-On Drive, Psy Dark Pulse, Psy Twitch, Psy Acid Trail, Psy Cross Rhythm, Psy Sub Chatter
Techno	Techno 4-Floor Chop, Techno Hard Stab, Techno Warehouse Loop, Techno Industrial Chug, Techno Off-Kilter, Techno Rolling Toms, Techno Peak Time, Techno Groove Skip, Techno Basement Pulse, Techno Kick Sync Gate
Tech House / Minimal	Tech House Groove, Tech House Shuffle, Minimal Click Gate, Minimal Sparse Pulse, Tech House Bounce, Minimal Deep Skip, Tech House Roller, Minimal Late Night, Tech House Loop Snap, Minimal Air Pocket
Hardstyle / Hard Dance	Hardstyle Reverse Kick Gate, Hardstyle Screech Chop, Hard Dance Stomp, Hardstyle Distort Gate, Hard Trance Anthem Stab, Hardstyle Rumble Chop, Hard Dance Kick-Lock, Hardstyle Screamer, Hard Dance Euro Bounce, Hardstyle Wall Slam
Dub Techno / Ambient	Dub Techno Slow Swell, Ambient Breath Gate, Dub Chord Wash, Ambient Slow Pulse, Dub Techno Sparse Hit, Ambient Fade Cycle, Dub Techno Warm Chug, Ambient Distant Gate, Dub Techno Chord Stab, Ambient Horizon Swell
Drum & Bass / Breaks	DnB Amen Chop, DnB Snap Roll, Breaks Skip Stab, DnB Halftime Drop, DnB Reese Chop, Breaks Shuffle Gate, DnB Roller Fill, Breaks Syncopated Kick, DnB Sub Growl Gate, Breaks Jump-Up Stab
Glitch / IDM	Glitch Morse Burst, Glitch Random Static, Glitch Dense Chatter, Glitch Sparse Blips, Glitch Broken Loop, IDM Fractured Pulse, Glitch Data Stream, IDM Skip Error, Glitch Circuit Bend, IDM Ghost Signal
Stutter Lead	Full Stutter Lead, Stutter Lead Machine Gun, Stutter Lead Builder, Stutter Lead Trance Fill, Stutter Lead Rapid Roll, Stutter Lead Half Hold, Stutter Lead Broken Sustain, Stutter Lead Filtered Bite, Stutter Lead Long Gate Fill, Stutter Lead Chaos Fill
Classic Gates	Classic 4-on-Floor Gate, Classic Offbeat Pulse, Classic Sidechain Duck, Classic Half-Time Chop, Classic Arpeggiator Illusion, Classic Filtered Stab, Classic Machine Gun 64, Classic Random Glitch, Classic Groove Gate, Classic Wall Gate

— RECIPES

01	**Classic trance gate**	A held supersaw chord, **Trance Gate 8th Pulse**, MIX 100 %. Shorten RELEASE for a tighter gate.
02	**Sidechain-style pump**	**Trance Pump (Smooth)**, then raise ATTACK to 20 ms and RELEASE to 200 ms.
03	**Dub chord echo**	A dub techno stab into a reverb, Strobe after it with a **Dub Techno** preset and CUTOFF around 2 kHz.
04	**Stutter vocal**	A vocal phrase, a **Stutter Lead** preset at 32 steps, ATTACK 0.5 ms.

SECTION 06

Reference and troubleshooting

— TECHNICAL NOTES

Timing	The wheel follows the host's tempo and bar position. With the transport stopped it keeps its own clock at the host's tempo, so you can audition patterns.
Gate detection	An envelope follower on the input; the gate opens above THRESHOLD and closes below about 60 % of it.
Latency	None. Strobe reports zero latency to the host.
Sessions	A project stores every parameter, the 64-step pattern and the last preset.
Compatibility	Universal (Apple Silicon and Intel). VST2 is not available: Steinberg no longer licenses it. CLAP is built with the open-source clap-juce-extensions.

— TROUBLESHOOTING

No gating, the sound passes dry	The input is below THRESHOLD. Lower THRESHOLD until HELD lights.
The gate keeps running after the sound stops	A reverb or delay tail is above THRESHOLD. Raise THRESHOLD, or put Strobe before the reverb.
Clicks on every step	Raise ATTACK and RELEASE to a few milliseconds.
It does not appear in Logic	Run the Terminal lines in READ ME FIRST.txt, then restart Logic. In Logic > Settings > Plug-in Manager, select it and click Reset & Rescan Selection.
The pattern is out of time	Strobe follows the host's bar position: check the project's time signature and that the region starts on a bar.



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Lightweight audio plugins. Documentation for version 2.2.0.