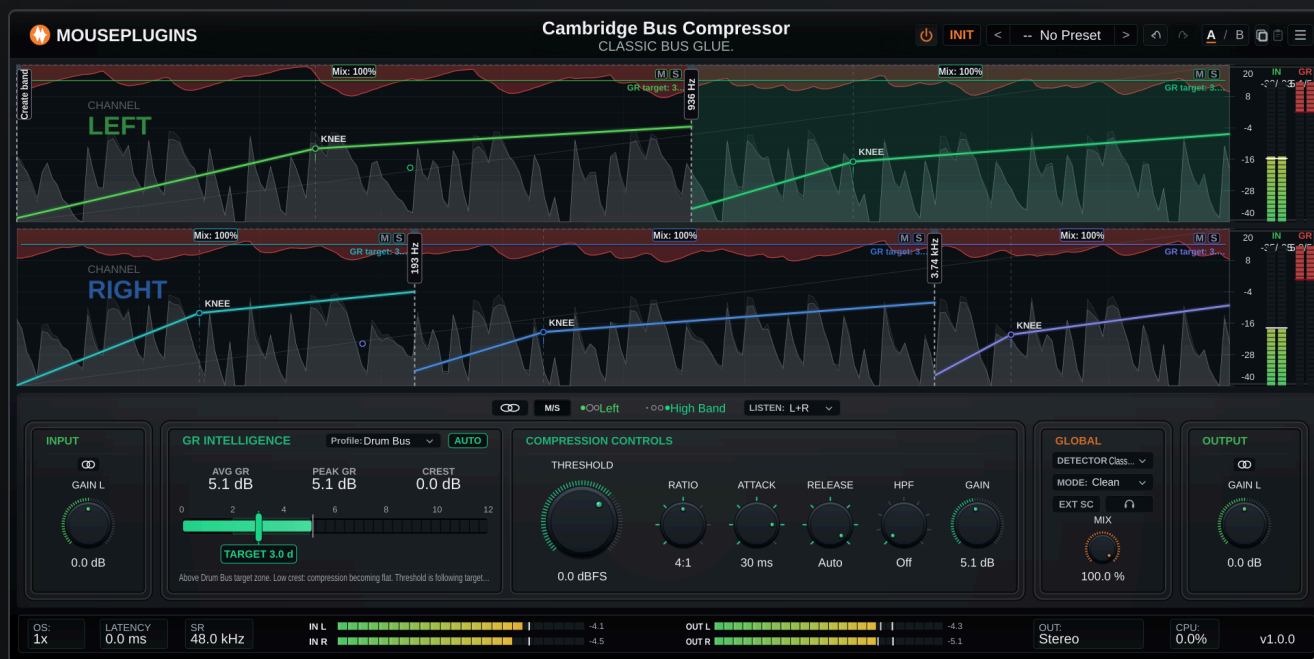




Classic bus glue.

A bus compressor with three bands and two independent lanes when you need them. Run it like a straightforward single-band glue compressor, or split the spectrum so the lows stay steady while the top breathes — then split the stereo field too, with **Left/Right** or **Mid/Side**. **GR Intelligence** reads out what the compressor is actually doing, and **Auto GR** can find the threshold for you.



THREE BANDS PER LANE

STEREO / L-R / M-S

AUTO GR TARGETING

EXTERNAL SIDECHAIN

20 FACTORY PRESETS

FREE — NO LICENCE

VST3 / CLAP

IN 60 SECONDS

1 LOAD A PRESET

Insert on a bus and step through the **20 factory presets** with the arrows. Each one recalls a complete authored setup — its own compression, routing and character settings, on the standard three-band layout — a real starting point, not just a label.

2 SET THE THRESHOLD

Lower **THRESHOLD** until **AVG GR** shows a couple of dB. Pick a **RATIO**, then shape with **ATTACK** and **RELEASE**.

3 MATCH AND COMPARE

Match the overall level with **OUTPUT**, then click the power button to bypass and compare. Louder is not the same as better.

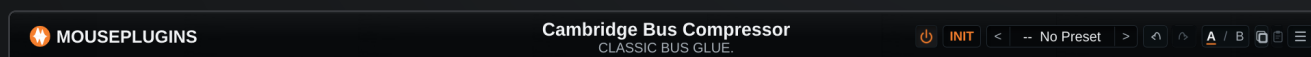
From Init, only the Mid band is active. Low and High start switched off, so the plugin behaves as a single full-range compressor until you enable them by dragging a crossover handle inward. Load a factory preset to start in three bands immediately.

1 INSERT IT, AND KNOW THE SHAPE OF THE INTERFACE FIRST

Insert Cambridge Bus Compressor on a bus — a drum bus, an instrument group, or the mix bus. It is free and needs no licence key, so there is nothing to activate and nothing to expire.

Before touching a knob, understand one thing: from Init the plugin has **one band** (Mid, full-range) and **one visible set** of Threshold / Ratio / Attack / Release / Gain knobs. Dragging a chart edge inward brings in a Low or High band; selecting a different band, or a different lane once you unlink Stereo, re-points those same five knobs to a different cell. Nothing duplicates on screen — the row under the chart tells you which cell you are currently editing.

The preset field sits in the header. Use < and > to step through the bank, or click the name to browse. **INIT** returns everything to defaults, and the power button next to it bypasses the plugin.



HEADER — POWER/BYPASS, INIT, PRESET NAVIGATION, UNDO/REDO, A/B, COPY/PASTE AND MENU.

STARTING POINT	TRY
Mix bus	Mix Bus Glue — moderate control, 4:1
Drums	Drum Bus Punch , or Parallel Drum Smash for heavy compression blended back
Mastering	Gentle Master Control — low ratio, small gain reduction
Vocals	Vocal Bus Control
Nothing in mind	No Nonsense Default

Remember the default. From Init you are working on one full-range band. Factory presets load the standard three-band layout along with their own authored compression, routing and character settings, so starting from a preset puts you in multiband immediately.

2 SET YOUR COMPRESSION

The **COMPRESSION CONTROLS** panel always edits the band and lane currently selected in the row above it. With linked stereo and the Mid band selected — the default — that is simply "the compressor."

THRESHOLD

Where compression starts, **-40 to +20 dBFS**. Lower it until the GR read-outs move. This is the control you will use most.

RATIO

How hard it clamps once past the threshold: **1.5:1** through **20:1**. For glue, stay low — 2:1 to 4:1.

ATTACK

0.1–30 ms, or **Auto**. Slower lets transients through; faster catches them.

RELEASE

0.1–1.2 s, or **Auto** (the default). Faster pumps and moves; slower is steadier.

GAIN adds back what compression took away, **-12 to +24 dB**, for this band and lane. **HPF** is the sixth knob in the same panel — unlike the other five, it does not re-point per band or lane. It high-passes the compressor's *detector* only, not the audio you hear, and applies globally to everything at once.

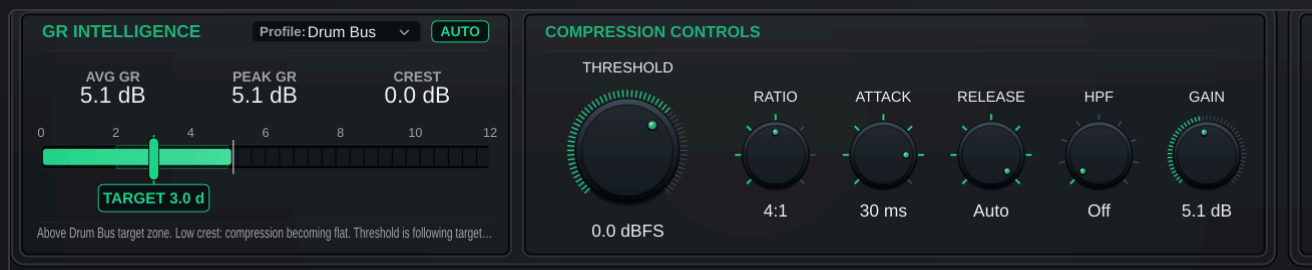


COMPRESSION CONTROLS: THRESHOLD, RATIO, ATTACK, RELEASE, HPF, GAIN. THE FIRST FOUR AND GAIN RE-POINT PER BAND/LANE CELL; HPF IS THE ONE GLOBAL EXCEPTION.

Set HPF to 45–90 Hz and the kick and bass drive the detector less on every hit — one of the fastest ways to reduce low-end pumping on a bus compressor.

3 READ THE GR DISPLAY, USE AUTO GR

The **GR INTELLIGENCE** panel is the fastest way to know what the compressor is doing: **AVG GR** (the steady weight), **PEAK GR** (the most it reduced recently) and **CREST** (the gap between them). Once gain reduction is actually happening, a large CREST means the compressor is catching transients and releasing between them; a small CREST means the reduction is staying relatively steady.



THE WHOLE LOOP IN ONE VIEW — THRESHOLD SETS THE COMPRESSION, AVG GR / PEAK GR / CREST REPORT IT, TARGET AND AUTO CLOSE THE LOOP.

A rough guide for glue: 1–3 dB of AVG GR with the crest still showing movement. If AVG GR is already substantial and CREST collapses toward zero, raise the threshold or lower the ratio.

With **AUTO** off, the **TARGET** marker is guidance only. Drag it to the gain reduction you want, engage **AUTO**, and the threshold moves on its own until the measured GR meets the target — **GAIN** follows to hold the level. Switch **AUTO** off and the threshold it found becomes yours to edit by hand. It applies per band and per lane, so each one can chase its own target — and it keeps working even if you close the plugin window, since it runs on the audio engine itself, not the visible interface.

4 ADD BANDS, OR SPLIT THE STEREO FIELD

This is where the plugin stops being an ordinary bus compressor. Both are optional — ignore them and it works as a straightforward single-band glue compressor.

THREE BANDS

Drag the **Create band** handle at either edge of the chart inward to bring in the Low or High band. A vertical divider appears showing the crossover frequency; drag it to move the split (Low/Mid moves between 40–600 Hz, Mid/High between 800 Hz–8 kHz). Drag a divider back to the edge to switch that band off again — disabling a band genuinely hands its full frequency range back to its remaining neighbour, it does not just mute it. Each band then has its own Threshold, Ratio, Attack, Release, Gain and Target — select a band in the row under the chart to edit it. The small **M** and **S** buttons on each band mute and solo it.

TWO LANES

Use the link button to leave Stereo, and **M/S** to switch between Left/Right and Mid/Side. Each lane keeps its own band layout, so the left channel can run a different number of bands than the right — below, the left lane runs two bands and the right runs three.



LEFT/RIGHT MODE. THE LEFT LANE RUNS MID AND HIGH ONLY, SPLIT AT 936 HZ; THE RIGHT LANE RUNS ALL THREE, SPLIT AT 193 HZ AND 3.74 KHZ.

The Link button remembers where you left off. Linking always goes back to Stereo. Unlinking returns you to whichever of Left/Right or Mid/Side you were last using — on a fresh instance, with no history yet, that default is Left/Right.

Worth trying: switch to **M/S**, select the Mid lane, and compress it a little harder than you would in stereo. The centre tightens up while the sides stay open.

MIX, SIDECCHAIN, BYPASS AND WHERE TO SAVE



GLOBAL – DETECTOR, MODE (COLOUR), EXT SC, SIDECCHAIN LISTEN (HEADPHONE ICON), AND MIX.

MIX blends the compressed signal against dry. Pull it back to 30–50 % with heavy compression for parallel compression: peaks controlled, detail still there. **EXT SC** switches the compressor's detector from listening to the plugin's own input to listening to whatever you route to its sidechain input in your host — its tooltip warns you if External is selected but no host sidechain bus is active. The headphone icon next to it, **Sidechain Listen**, lets you hear exactly what the detector hears. **DETECTOR** changes how the envelope is tracked, and **MODE** adds optional post-compression colour (Clean/VCA/Console/Drive).

The power button in the header bypasses the plugin: Input Trim still applies to what you hear while bypassed, but Output Trim does not, so use **OUTPUT** to match the bypassed level and compare fairly. The plugin's own preset field browses the 20 factory presets and Init; it does not save your own presets from inside the plugin — use your host's project/session save. **Copy / Paste** and **A / B** both work within the current open editor window, to stash a snapshot and recall it later in the same session.

IF SOMETHING SEEMS WRONG

WHAT YOU SEE	WHAT IT USUALLY IS
No compression at all	Threshold is above the signal. Lower it until AVG GR moves. From Init you are on one band — check which band is selected.
Plugin sounds unchanged	MIX is at 0 %, or the plugin is bypassed — both pass the dry signal.
A band went silent	Another band is soloed. Solo overrides mute, and it applies per lane.
Your edits do nothing	You're editing a different band or lane than you think. Check the active row under the chart before you turn a knob.
Compression follows the bass too much	Raise HPF (in Compression Controls) to 45–90 Hz so the detector hears less of the low end.
External sidechain seems to do nothing	Check the EXT SC tooltip — it will say directly if no host sidechain bus is active. Route a source to the sidechain input in your host.
Output clipping	Lower GAIN or the OUTPUT trim.

The **User Manual** covers everything this guide skipped: the full signal path, crossover ranges, the chart and its meters in detail, automation, host notes and the full parameter reference. Open it from the plugin menu, or from mouseplugins.com.

Cambridge Bus Compressor is free. No licence key, no trial period, no interruptions — the whole plugin, on every bus you like.