



Harshmallow

Adaptive spectral resonance control. A multiband de-harsher that pulls down harsh upper-mid and treble energy *only while it flares*, then lets go - tuned by ear with four SHAPE controls and two TIME controls per band, across Stereo or Mid/Side. It tames harshness without flattening the source.



MULTIBAND - 3 BANDS / LANE

STEREO / MID-SIDE

ENGINE: LIVE · QUALITY/STUDIO · DEEP

ATTENUATION-ONLY

VST3 / CLAP / STANDALONE

This manual is practical: what each control does, why you would reach for it, and how to compare changes without being fooled by loudness. Pages are organised by panel - header, lane chart, multiband, SHAPE, TIME, GLOBAL, INPUT/OUTPUT, footer - and every control is described in its own coloured heading matching the on-screen accent.

What makes Harshmallow different. It is **adaptive, not static**: instead of a fixed EQ cut, it watches each band and reduces a resonance only while it is harsh, then steps back. It is **attenuation-only** - it can pull a harsh peak down, but it never boosts - so it cannot add brightness or harshness of its own.

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

REQUIREMENT	SPECIFICATION
Operating system	Windows 10+ or Linux (glibc 2.35+)
Plugin formats	VST3, CLAP, Standalone
Sample rates	44.1 kHz to 192 kHz
Reported latency	Fixed per ENGINE mode (Live, Quality/Studio, Deep), reported to the host
Channel layout	Stereo in / stereo out (mono sources are handled automatically)
MIDI	Not used

INSTALL LOCATIONS

PLATFORM	FORMAT	DEFAULT LOCATION
Windows	VST3	C:\Program Files\Common Files\VST3\
Windows	CLAP	C:\Program Files\Common Files\CLAP\
Linux	VST3	~/.vst3/ or /usr/local/lib/vst3/
Linux	CLAP	~/.clap/ or /usr/local/lib/clap/

PACKAGE FILES

FORMAT	FILE NAME
VST3	Harshmallow.vst3
CLAP	Harshmallow.clap
Standalone	Harshmallow (executable)

SAVING YOUR SETTINGS

Harshmallow stores its full state with your project: when you save the host session, every control on every band and lane is saved and recalled with it. The header's **A / B** slots and **Copy / Paste** let you carry a setting between instances or sessions. See **Presets & State** later in this manual.

ANATOMY OF THE WINDOW



FIG. 1 - HARSHMALLOW IN LINKED STEREO (LINK L/R ON), SHOWN WITH THE LOW/MID CROSSOVER DRAGGED IN TO 543 HZ (LO + MID BANDS). ON FIRST LOAD BOTH CROSSOVERS SIT AT THE CHART EDGES FOR A SINGLE FULL-RANGE BAND.

AREA	PURPOSE
Header	Brand, plugin title and <i>Adaptive spectral resonance control</i> subtitle, preset selector, undo/redo, A/B compare, copy/paste, hamburger menu, and a TRIAL chip until activated.
Lane chart	Live correction trace on top, output spectrum behind it, two crossover handles, and a per-band Mix marker per band. Lane title STEREO when linked, LEFT/RIGHT when independent, MID/SIDE in Mid/Side.
SHAPE group	SENS - DEPTH - GUARD - FOCUS. When the band reacts, how far it can pull a peak down, how much character to protect, and how narrowly to target the peak. Writes to the active band.
TIME group	ATT - REL. How fast a band engages and how fast it releases once the resonance passes. Writes to the active band.
GLOBAL panel (top-right)	Master Bypass, Link L/R, M/S Mode, and the ENGINE control. No global dry/wet knob - per-band Mix instead.
INPUT panel (right, upper)	Pre-DSP gain with Link, plus an INPUT AUTO GAIN toggle.
OUTPUT panel (right, lower)	Post-DSP output gain with Link, plus an OUTPUT AUTO GAIN toggle.
Footer	Sample rate, reported latency, input/output meters, the active ENGINE indicator, output channel format, and CPU.

BAND & LANE COLOUR CODE

Colour does two jobs on screen. The **lane** carries a base accent so you always know which lane you are looking at. The **active band** (the band you last clicked in the chart) tints the six SHAPE/TIME knobs under that chart, so you always know which band the knobs are writing to. The two are independent: clicking a different band repaints the knob row, not the lane chrome.

BAND ACCENT (KNOB COLOUR)

The active band's accent paints the six knobs (SENS / DEPTH / GUARD / FOCUS / ATT / REL) and the chart's band tint. Each band keeps its own values; switching bands does not copy or reset anything. Within a lane the accent steps one notch cooler for **LO** and one notch warmer for **HI**, around the lane's base colour for **MID**:

LINKED STEREO / M/S LINKED

BAND	ACCENT	HEX
LO	Orange-red	#fb783e
MID	Orange (primary)	#f67f2d
HI	Golden	#e8b51b

INDEPENDENT L/R

BAND	LEFT	RIGHT
LO	Lime #b8e620	Cyan #20c7d8
MID	Green #4cd964	Blue #3e87f5
HI	Spring #22d68a	Indigo #7d82ff

INDEPENDENT M/S

BAND	MID	SIDE
LO	Violet #b26dff	Coral #ff858c
MID	Magenta #e674ff	Red #ff7668
HI	Pink #ff78c9	Red-orange #ff704f

LANE BASE ACCENT

The lane's title strip and the chart accent take the lane's base colour. This is what tells you "this is the LEFT lane" or "this is the SIDE lane" at a glance - regardless of which band you currently have selected.

ROUTING	TOP LANE	BOTTOM LANE
L/R Linked · M/S Linked	Orange (single STEREO lane)	- (hidden)
L/R Independent	Green (LEFT) #4cd964	Blue (RIGHT) #3e87f5
M/S Independent	Magenta (MID) #e674ff	Red (SIDE) #ff7668

How band & lane colours combine. The knob colour is always the active band's accent (the per-band tables on the previous page). The lane base accent paints the chart's title and frame. They are independent: clicking a different band repaints only the knob row and that band's tint, not the lane title. In both *Linked* modes the editor shows a single orange STEREO lane regardless of whether routing is L/R or M/S.

HEADER TOOLBAR



FIG. 2 - HEADER TOOLBAR (RIGHT OF THE CENTRED PLUGIN TITLE). NUMBERS MAP TO THE KEY BELOW.

- 1 TRIAL chip** - shown while unlicensed; click to open the licence panel. Hidden once activated.
- 2 INIT** - reset every control to its default in one undoable step.
- 3 Preset selector** - current preset name with prev/next arrows.
- 4 Undo / Redo** - every parameter change is undoable.
- 5 A / B compare** - two snapshot slots; click the inactive slot to flip.
- 6 Copy / Paste** - full plugin state to/from the clipboard.
- 7 Menu** - Support, documentation, and About.

PRESET SELECTOR + INIT

The selector shows the current preset name with prev/next arrows. **INIT** resets every control - every band, both lanes, routing and engine - back to defaults in a single undoable step, so one Undo restores your previous state. Harshmallow ships with a **Default** factory preset; see **Presets & State** for how settings travel.

UNDO / REDO

Standard arrows. Every parameter change is undoable. Buttons grey out when the stack is empty.

A / B COMPARE

Two snapshot slots. Both start as the state at plugin instantiation. Clicking the inactive slot saves the live state into the previously-active slot, then loads the inactive slot's snapshot. Use it to compare two settings without committing.

COPY / PASTE

Serialises the full plugin state to the system clipboard, and reads it back. Use it to transport settings between two open instances.

HAMBURGER MENU

Opens *Support* (the diagnostics + self-rescue panel), the hosted *Quick Start* and *User Manual*, and *About*. While in trial, the menu also offers *License* at the top. Documentation links open in your browser - the plugin itself makes no automatic network requests.

THE LANE CHART



FIG. 3 - THE LANE CHART. FREQUENCY RUNS LEFT TO RIGHT (20 HZ TO 20 KHZ); THE VERTICAL AXIS SHOWS REDUCTION IN DB (0 AT THE TOP, DOWN TO -12).

The big plot in the centre of each lane shows three things at once:

- A live **correction trace** - the orange (or lane-accent) curve along the top, showing exactly how much each frequency is being pulled down *right now*. The lower the curve dips, the more reduction is being applied at that frequency. A **LIVE MAX** readout reports the deepest current reduction in dB.
- A faded **spectrum** of the output signal behind the trace, so you can see the energy the correction is responding to.
- The **multiband split** - two draggable crossover handles and a per-band Mix marker - covered on the next pages.

Until audio is playing the chart reads **WAITING FOR AUDIO**. Use the chart as a visual confirmation that your move is doing what you expect; make the final decision with your ears.

POWER + LANE BYPASS

Each lane has a power button at its top-left that bypasses just that lane (the other one keeps processing). In linked Stereo there is one button; with LINK off there are two, one per lane. Use lane bypass to A/B a single lane; use the GLOBAL **MASTER BYPASS** to compare the whole plugin against dry.

The correction trace can only ever dip *downward* from the 0 dB line. Harshmallow is attenuation-only: it pulls harsh peaks down and never boosts, so the trace never rises above 0.

MULTIBAND - THREE BANDS PER LANE

Each lane is split into three bands - **LO**, **MID**, and **HI** - and each band gets its own SHAPE and TIME settings. De-harsh only the top end while leaving the body alone, treat sibilance separately from cymbal glare, or protect the low band entirely. You choose which band the knobs write to by clicking it in the chart.

CROSSOVER HANDLES - WHERE THE BANDS SPLIT

Two vertical handles on each lane's chart set the **LO/MID** and **MID/HI** split frequencies. Drag a handle sideways to move that split; the bands recombine with a smooth, soft blend across the split so there is no hard spectral edge. The two handles keep at least a half-octave between them, so band ordering always stays $LO < MID < HI$ - you cannot cross them over.

FREQUENCY PILLS - NUMERIC READOUT

Above each crossover handle a slim vertical pill shows the current split frequency (in Hz, or kHz above 1000). The pill is itself a drag handle - useful when a crossover is parked at **20 Hz** or **20 kHz** and the line is tucked against the chart edge. When a handle sits at the extreme the pill reads "**Create band**": drag it inward to bring that band into play.

MIX MARKERS - PER-BAND AMOUNT

Each band carries a horizontal **Mix marker**. Drag it up or down to set how much of that band's correction is applied: **100%** (top) applies the band's full correction; **0%** (bottom) makes the band completely transparent and skips its processing entirely. The Mix marker can also be dragged sideways to act as a band-position handle - the LO marker moves the LO/MID split, the HI marker moves the MID/HI split - so you can reposition a band without hunting for the thin crossover line.

MULTIBAND - ACTIVE BAND & DEFAULTS

THE ACTIVE BAND

The chart tints whichever band you last clicked - the **active band** - and the six knobs under the chart (SENS / DEPTH / GUARD / FOCUS / ATT / REL) read and write that band's settings. Click LO and the knobs become the LO band's set; click MID and they become MID's; click HI and they become HI's. Each band keeps its own values; switching bands does not copy or reset anything.

STARTS AS ONE FULL-RANGE BAND

Out of the box both crossovers sit at the chart edges (20 Hz and 20 kHz), so the lane is a single full-range **MID** band and Harshmallow behaves like a straightforward de-harsher. The LO and HI bands carry no signal until you drag a crossover inward - at which point their pills change from "**Create band**" to a frequency, and their SHAPE/TIME settings come into play.

CPU note: a band whose Mix marker is at 0%, or a band with zero width because its crossover is parked at the chart edge, skips its processing path. A single full-range MID band therefore costs less than three active bands.

Workflow tip: for clean tonal sculpting, drag the crossovers to where you want the splits first, then click each band in turn and dial its SENS / DEPTH and timing. If a band is doing too much as soon as you create it, lower its SENS or Mix, then build the setting back up by ear.

SHAPE

The four controls that decide *whether* and *how* a band reacts. They write to the active band; each band keeps its own SHAPE values.

SENS · SENSITIVITY

RANGE 0 % · 100 % DEFAULT 50 % DOUBLE-CLICK reset

When the band reacts. At low values only the sharpest, most obvious resonances trigger a reduction; raising SENS makes the band respond to more resonances, including gentler ones. This is the first control to reach for: bring it up until the harsh edge tucks in, watching the correction trace engage. Set too high it will start acting on energy that was never harsh, so raise it only as far as the problem needs.

DEPTH

RANGE 0 % · 100 % DEFAULT 50 % DOUBLE-CLICK reset

How far a detected peak can be pulled down - the maximum reduction the band is allowed to apply. SENS decides *when* it acts; DEPTH decides *how hard*. Raise DEPTH only if the reduction is too light once SENS is catching the resonance. On most sources a little goes a long way; large DEPTH values are for genuinely aggressive harshness.

GUARD · CHARACTER GUARD

RANGE 0 % · 100 % DEFAULT 60 % DOUBLE-CLICK reset

Protects the source's natural tone from over-processing. Higher GUARD holds back the correction where it would start to dull or flatten the character of the sound, so the reduction stays musical. Raise it if the source begins to lose its life; lower it if you need the de-harshing to bite harder and you are willing to trade a little character. The default 60 % errs toward keeping the source intact.

FOCUS · SHARPNESS FOCUS

RANGE 0 % · 100 % DEFAULT 50 % DOUBLE-CLICK reset

How narrowly the band targets the offending peak. High FOCUS concentrates the reduction tightly on the sharp resonance, leaving the surrounding frequencies alone - best for a single piercing tone. Low FOCUS spreads the action wider for broad, general glare. Use high FOCUS for a specific squeal, low FOCUS for an overall "too bright" band.

Order of operations: SENS to catch it, DEPTH if it needs more, GUARD if the source is losing character, FOCUS to tighten or widen the target. Then move to TIME.

TIME

The two controls that decide how fast the band engages and how fast it lets go. Like SHAPE, they write to the active band and each band keeps its own values.

ATT · ATTACK

RANGE 1 ms · 250 ms **DEFAULT** 15 ms **DOUBLE-CLICK** reset

How quickly the reduction engages once a resonance appears. Short attack (a few ms) catches fast, transient harshness - sibilance, cymbal spikes - the instant it happens. Longer attack lets brief transients through and only reacts to sustained harshness, which keeps percussive material from sounding dulled. Start short for sibilance, longer for a generally bright but not spiky source.

REL · RELEASE

RANGE 10 ms · 2000 ms **DEFAULT** 150 ms **DOUBLE-CLICK** reset

How quickly the band lets go after the resonance passes. Short release recovers fast and is the most transparent on dense, busy material. Longer release holds the reduction across a phrase for a smoother, steadier result, at the cost of some liveliness in the gaps. If you hear the correction "pumping" in and out, lengthen the release; if it feels like it is holding the sound down too long, shorten it.

TIME by source: short ATT + short REL for sibilance and transient spikes; medium ATT + longer REL for broad, sustained glare on a bus. The defaults (15 ms / 150 ms) are a sensible neutral starting point for most material.

STEREO, L/R, AND MID/SIDE

Harshmallow has two processing lanes and four routing modes, chosen in the GLOBAL panel with **LINK L/R** and **M/S**:

MODE	LANES SHOWN	ACTS ON
L/R Linked (default)	One STEREO lane	Left and right together
L/R Independent	LEFT + RIGHT	Each channel separately
M/S Linked	One STEREO lane	Mid and side together
M/S Independent	MID + SIDE	Centre and stereo edges separately

In the two **Linked** modes the two lanes collapse into a single full-height STEREO lane in orange, with one chart and one knob row. In the two **Independent** modes the lanes stack vertically, each with its own chart, crossovers, Mix markers and knob row, colour-coded as above.

WHAT IS INDEPENDENT PER LANE

When you split into Independent L/R or M/S, each lane controls its own:

- **Crossover positions** - the two lanes can split at different frequencies.
- **Per-band Mix** - how much correction each band applies, set independently per lane.
- **Input / Output gain** - when the INPUT/OUTPUT Link is off.

SHAPE & TIME are matched across the stereo field. Each band's SENS / DEPTH / GUARD / FOCUS / ATT / REL are stored *per band* and shared by both lanes - so the tonal treatment of, say, the HI band stays consistent on left and right (or mid and side). What you vary per lane is *where* the bands split and *how much* each one acts. This keeps the two sides tonally matched while letting you treat one harder or in a different range than the other.

THE GLOBAL PANEL

The GLOBAL panel sits in the top-right of the editor and holds the whole-plugin controls: master bypass, the two routing toggles, and the ENGINE control. There is deliberately **no global dry/wet knob** - Harshmallow uses per-band Mix markers instead, so you control how much correction each band applies without blurring the whole plugin into a single wet/dry compromise.

MASTER BYPASS

Bypasses the entire plugin for an honest A/B against the dry signal. Because de-harshing lowers level, always level-match first (raise OUTPUT GAIN, or use OUTPUT AUTO GAIN) so you are comparing tone, not loudness.

LINK L/R

When on (default), the two lanes collapse into a single **STEREO** lane with one chart and one knob row, and the INPUT/OUTPUT panels show a single gain control each. Turn it off to reveal both lanes for independent editing.

M/S MODE

Switches the lanes between Left/Right and Mid/Side. With LINK off, the upper lane becomes **MID** (magenta) and the lower becomes **SIDE** (red), and the INPUT/OUTPUT gain titles follow. With LINK on you stay in the single STEREO view; the routing is still Mid/Side under the hood.

ENGINE

Sets the processing mode - **Live**, **Quality/Studio** (default), or **Deep**. This is the quality-versus-latency trade, covered in full on the next page.

Three visible states. *Linked* (L/R or M/S) = one orange STEREO lane · *Independent L/R* = LEFT + RIGHT · *Independent M/S* = MID + SIDE.

ENGINE MODES

The **ENGINE** control sets how finely Harshmallow resolves and corrects resonances. Higher modes resolve more detail and apply smoother correction, at the cost of more latency and CPU.

MODE	USE IT FOR	TRADEOFF
Live	Tracking, rehearsal, low-latency cue mixes.	Lowest latency and CPU. Use Quality/Studio or Deep for final mix decisions.
Quality/Studio	Default. Normal mixing on tracks, groups and buses.	Main mixing mode. Adds latency that is reported to the host.
Deep	Bus, stem, and mastering-context passes.	Highest-resolution resonance control. Highest latency and CPU.

All three modes report a fixed latency to the host, which the host compensates for automatically; the reported figure is shown in the footer and increases from Live to Quality/Studio to Deep. There is no zero-latency mode - even Live reports a small fixed latency.

Switching modes mid-playback changes the reported latency, so the host re-syncs its transport. This is normal; some hosts briefly stutter at the moment of change. Pick the mode before a critical pass rather than automating it during playback.

SIGNAL FLOW

L/R (or linked Stereo): input → *INPUT AUTO GAIN if enabled, otherwise INPUT GAIN* → multiband split → per-band de-harsh (SHAPE / TIME) → per-band Mix → band recombine → *OUTPUT AUTO GAIN if enabled, otherwise OUTPUT GAIN* → output

M/S: input → *INPUT AUTO GAIN if enabled, otherwise INPUT GAIN* → M/S encode → MID + SIDE lanes (split → de-harsh → Mix → recombine) → M/S decode → *OUTPUT AUTO GAIN if enabled, otherwise OUTPUT GAIN* → output

There is no global dry/wet stage: the processed signal is the output. Each band's contribution is set by its own Mix marker (attenuation-only), and the whole plugin is always 100% wet. With MASTER BYPASS on, the dry input passes through and both auto-gain stages are skipped, so bypass stays a strict A/B path.

STAGE ORDER AT A GLANCE

STAGE	WHERE	SKIPPED WHEN...
INPUT AUTO GAIN	Plugin input, before any split	Off, or MASTER BYPASS on
INPUT GAIN	Before the lanes; used when INPUT AUTO GAIN is off	Hidden when INPUT AUTO GAIN is on
Per-band de-harsh	LO/MID/HI within each lane	Band Mix at 0 %, band has zero width, lane power off, or MASTER BYPASS on
Per-band Mix	Scales each band's correction	At 100 % the band's full correction applies; at 0 % the band is transparent
OUTPUT GAIN	After recombine; used when OUTPUT AUTO GAIN is off	Hidden when OUTPUT AUTO GAIN is on
OUTPUT AUTO GAIN	Final output	Off, or MASTER BYPASS on

PRE-DSP INPUT STAGE

The **INPUT** panel sits in the right column under GLOBAL, before the lanes. It has a **LINK** toggle, one or two **GAIN** controls, and an **AUTO GAIN** toggle. In linked Stereo there is one GAIN control; with LINK off there are two, one per lane.

INPUT - LINK

When on, the two input gain controls move together. Turn it off to correct a level imbalance at the input. Hidden in linked Stereo, where a single control is shown.

INPUT - GAIN

RANGE -24 dB · +24 dB **DEFAULT** 0.0 dB **DOUBLE-CLICK** reset

Pre-DSP level. Use it to bring a quiet source up to a comfortable working level before the de-harsher, or to pull a hot input down. In Mid/Side the per-lane titles follow the routing (M and S); in linked Stereo a single GAIN is shown. Hidden when INPUT AUTO GAIN is on.

INPUT - AUTO GAIN

DEFAULT Off **AUTOMATABLE** yes

When on, Harshmallow aims for a consistent working level at the input before the lanes, and the manual INPUT GAIN control is hidden so the section has one clear gain mode. The same correction is applied to both channels so stereo balance is preserved. Available in every routing mode.

POST-DSP OUTPUT STAGE

The OUTPUT panel mirrors INPUT but acts on the processed signal, after the bands are recombined.

OUTPUT - LINK

Same behaviour as INPUT LINK, applied to OUTPUT GAIN. Hidden in linked Stereo.

OUTPUT - GAIN

RANGE -24 dB · +12 dB DEFAULT 0.0 dB DOUBLE-CLICK reset

Post-DSP makeup level (the output trim). Because de-harshing only ever removes energy, the processed signal is usually a touch quieter than the dry; nudge OUTPUT GAIN up to bring active and bypassed to the same loudness so you judge tone, not level. Linked Stereo shows one control; per-channel controls are hidden when OUTPUT AUTO GAIN is on.

OUTPUT - AUTO GAIN

DEFAULT Off AUTOMATABLE yes

When on, the final output is brought toward a consistent level automatically and the manual GAIN control is hidden. MASTER BYPASS is honoured - when bypass is on, no auto-gain runs, so bypass stays a strict A/B path.

Habit to internalise: set SENS / DEPTH on each band → flip **OUTPUT AUTO GAIN** on (or raise OUTPUT GAIN) so active and bypassed sit at the same loudness → then decide on tone.

FOOTER STRIP

The footer runs across the bottom of the editor and combines static telemetry with the input/output meters. Left to right:

OS

The oversampling factor the engine is running at.

LATENCY

Reported plugin latency in milliseconds, which depends on the active ENGINE mode. The host compensates automatically; switching ENGINE during playback changes this figure and triggers a re-sync.

SAMPLE RATE

Host sample rate, refreshed when the host changes it.

INPUT / OUTPUT METERS

Two pairs of peak meters - **IN L / IN R** reading the signal before processing, and **OUT L / OUT R** after. Comparing them shows the level change your de-harshing caused, which is what OUTPUT GAIN or OUTPUT AUTO GAIN is there to even out.

OUTPUT FORMAT

Shows whether the output is running mono or stereo, detected from the host's bus. A mono source is handled cleanly - the single channel is carried to both outputs.

CPU

Live CPU usage of this plugin instance. Drop the ENGINE a step (Deep → Quality/Studio → Live), park unused bands at 0 % Mix, or collapse to a single MID band to reduce it.

VERSION

The plugin version, shown at the far right of the footer.

PRESETS & STATE

Harshmallow keeps your settings with your work, the way a mix engineer expects: the plugin's full state is saved inside your host project and recalled with it. There is nothing to manage on disk for normal use.

FACTORY DEFAULT

The preset selector offers a **Default** factory starting point. Loading it - or pressing **INIT** in the header - returns every control to its declared default in a single undoable step: SENS 50, DEPTH 50, GUARD 60, FOCUS 50 on each band, ATT 15 ms, REL 150 ms, crossovers parked at the chart edges (single MID band), every band Mix at 100 %, routing L/R Linked, ENGINE Quality/Studio.

PROJECT RECALL

When you save your host session, the complete state - every band on both lanes, routing, engine, gains - is written into the project and restored exactly when you reopen it. No separate preset file is required.

CARRYING SETTINGS AROUND

TOOL	WHAT IT DOES
A / B slots	Hold two complete settings and flip between them to compare, without committing to either.
Copy / Paste	Put the full state on the clipboard and paste it into another Harshmallow instance, in this or another session.
INIT	Reset everything to the factory Default in one undoable step.

STARTER SETTINGS

First moves, not finished presets. Set them on the worst moment, then judge in the full mix and adjust by ear.

SOURCE	MOVE	NOTE
Vocal bite / broad sibilance	SENS 48 · DEPTH 20 · GUARD 72 · FOCUS 55	ATT 5 ms, REL 90 ms. Place after a de-esser when it only catches part of the problem.
Drum overheads / cymbal glare	SENS 42 · DEPTH 16 · GUARD 78 · FOCUS 45	ATT 12 ms, REL 160 ms. Listen to crash decay and snare image while you set it.
Full-mix glare	SENS 35 · DEPTH 8 · GUARD 85 · FOCUS 35	M/S Linked. ATT 18 ms, REL 220 ms. One small step is usually enough.
Sharp electric guitar	SENS 55 · DEPTH 25 · GUARD 65 · FOCUS 60	Move the upper crossover so the HI band starts above the body, and let only that band work.
Harsh stereo edges only	SENS 50 · DEPTH 22	M/S Independent. Bypass the MID lane (or set its band Mix to 0 %) so only the stereo edges are treated.

WORKFLOW RECIPES

Quick de-harsh: Leave LINK L/R on. Loop the harshest phrase. Raise **SENS** until the edge tucks in; add **DEPTH** only if needed; raise **GUARD** if the source loses character. Level-match with OUTPUT and bypass to confirm.

Targeted HI band: Drag the upper crossover so the HI band starts above the source's body. Set the LO and MID Mix to 0 % so only the HI band acts. Raise SENS and FOCUS on HI.

Side-only de-glare: Turn LINK L/R off and engage M/S. Dial SENS 50, DEPTH 22 on the band you want, then **bypass the MID lane** (its power button) or set its band Mix to 0 % so only the SIDE lane applies the correction. Because SHAPE/TIME are shared per band across lanes, the MID gate is what keeps the centre clean. Check on speakers and headphones to confirm the centre stays put.

Mix-bus polish: M/S Linked, ENGINE Quality/Studio or Deep. SENS 35, DEPTH 8, GUARD 85. On a full mix, one gentle step is the goal - flip OUTPUT AUTO GAIN on so louder does not fool you.

TROUBLESHOOTING

If something feels off, the first move is usually a simple one. Walk through the cards below in order; the most common cause is at the top.

NO EFFECT AT ALL?

Check MASTER BYPASS and the lane power button. Confirm the band you expect to work has SENS above 0 and its Mix above 0 %. If you are working on the LO or HI band, make sure its crossover has been dragged inward so the band has width.

SOUNDS DULL / OVER-PROCESSED?

Lower SENS or DEPTH, or raise GUARD to protect more of the source's character. Narrow FOCUS so the reduction targets only the harsh peak.

CORRECTION PUMPING?

Lengthen REL so the band recovers more smoothly, or lower SENS so it triggers less often. Shorten ATT if it is missing fast spikes.

SOUNDS QUIETER, NOT BETTER?

De-harshing removes energy. Raise OUTPUT GAIN or flip OUTPUT AUTO GAIN on so active and bypassed match in level, then decide on tone.

IMAGE SHIFTED?

Check LINK L/R, M/S, and the INPUT/OUTPUT gain controls - one lane may be set harder or louder than the other. Re-link before saving if you want them matched.

STUTTER AFTER AN ENGINE CHANGE?

Expected for a transport block - the host re-syncs reported latency. Stop and restart playback if your host does not handle the latency change in place.

If a problem persists, open **Menu → Support** and use **Copy Diagnostics**. Paste the result into an email to support@mouseplugins.com with a short description of what you heard or saw.

SUPPORT PANEL

Open from the **Menu > Support** item. The panel slides in over the editor and shows the diagnostics most often needed when contacting support (plugin / system / licence info) plus a set of self-rescue actions. Press **Esc**, click the scrim, or use **Close** to dismiss.

ACTION	WHAT IT DOES
Copy Diagnostics	Copies the displayed plugin/system/licence info to the clipboard. Paste it into an email when reporting an issue.
Save Diagnostics	Writes the same text as a timestamped .txt file at a chosen location.
Contact Support	Opens the product support page in your default browser.
Copy Email	Puts support@mouseplugins.com on the clipboard.
Reset DSP	Returns every control to its declared default in a single undo step. Equivalent to the header's INIT.
Open Config Folder	Reveals the MousePlugins configuration folder in your file manager.
User Manual / Quick Start	Opens the latest hosted documentation.
Close	Dismisses the panel. Esc or a scrim click also closes it.

Diagnostics are built locally on demand. The plugin makes no automatic network requests, and the report never includes your full licence key or email address.

TRIAL MODE + ACTIVATION

Harshmallow runs in **trial mode** until activated with a valid licence key. In trial, the plugin processes audio normally but inserts **2 seconds of silence every 60 seconds** as a reminder. Activating with a valid key removes the interruptions permanently and unlocks the full version across all formats (VST3, CLAP, Standalone) with a single activation.

TRIAL CHIP IN THE HEADER

While the plugin is unlicensed, a small **TRIAL** chip appears in the header, to the right of the plugin title. Click it to open the licence panel.

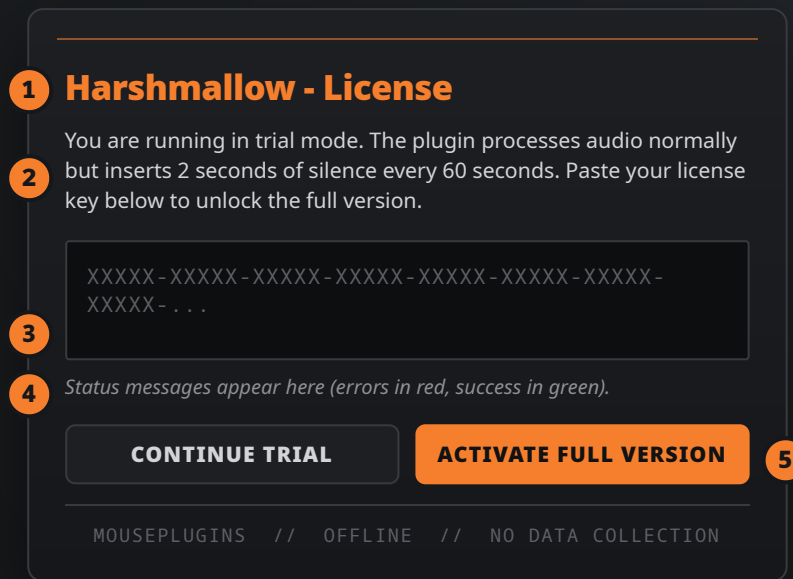
When the trial interruption is actively running, the chip turns red: **TRIAL**. That is your live tell - if the audio drops out and the chip is red, the plugin is reminding you it is unlicensed. Activate to clear it.

DEMO INTERRUPTION BEHAVIOUR

PROPERTY	VALUE
Interruption interval	60 seconds
Interruption duration	2.0 seconds
Interruption output	Exact digital silence
On activation	Stops immediately, from the first audio block after a valid key is accepted

Open the licence panel from the **Menu → License** item (shown while in trial) or from the **TRIAL** chip. The layout is on the next page.

LICENCE PANEL LAYOUT



- 1 **Title** - plugin name + "License" reminder.
 - 2 **Trial message** - explains the silence-interruption behaviour.
 - 3 **Key field** - paste your licence key here; auto-formats into 5-char groups.
 - 4 **Status** - validation feedback. Red on failure, green on success.
 - 5 **Actions** - Continue Trial dismisses the panel; Activate validates and persists the key.

Pressing **Enter** in the key field also triggers Activate. Pasting a key is auto-detected and formatted into the standard 5-char groups.

WHERE YOUR LICENCE LIVES

Activation is offline only. Harshmallow never phones home - the licence key is verified locally on your machine. Once accepted, it is saved so the plugin opens activated every time, across VST3, CLAP, and Standalone on that machine.

REINSTALLS + MULTI-MACHINE

If you reinstall your system or move to a new machine, paste the same licence key into the panel again. Activation is permission to use, not a hardware lock.

PRIVACY

WHAT WE DO	WHAT WE DON'T DO
Verify your key locally on your machine	Phone home, ever
Store the activation on your machine so it persists	Send the key, your email, or any identifier to a server
Persist the activation across host sessions	Track usage, plugin loads, or session length
Process all audio locally on your computer	Use any cloud audio processing

Opening support or documentation links from the menu is user-initiated and handled by your browser; the plugin itself makes no automatic network requests.

IF A KEY IS REJECTED

- The key is for Harshmallow specifically (each MousePlugins product has its own key).
- You pasted the whole key - the panel auto-formats it into 5-char groups.
- The key was not truncated by the source you copied it from.

If problems persist, contact support@mouseplugins.com with your purchase reference.

SUPPORT

For installation help, updates, and bug reports, visit:

mouseplugins.com/en/products/harshmallow

Harshmallow processes audio locally on your computer. No cloud audio processing is used. No internet connection is required for activation or normal use.

ABOUT

FIELD	VALUE
Name	Harshmallow
Version	1.0.0
Vendor	MousePlugins (MouseDSP)
Plugin formats	VST3, CLAP, Standalone
Reported latency	Fixed per ENGINE mode, reported to the host
MIDI	Not used
Bus layout	Stereo in / stereo out (mono handled automatically)

DESIGN PHILOSOPHY

Harshmallow is an adaptive de-harsher: it reduces harsh resonances only while they are harsh, then steps back, so the source keeps its life. Each control covers one clear idea - when to react (SENS), how far (DEPTH), how much character to protect (GUARD), how narrowly to target (FOCUS), and how fast to engage and release (ATT / REL) - per band, across Stereo or Mid/Side. Because it is attenuation-only, it can calm harshness but never add it.

Thank you for using Harshmallow. If you have suggestions for factory starting points or workflow improvements, please get in touch via the support page.

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WEBSITE

mouseplugins.com

SUPPORT

support@mouseplugins.com

PRODUCT PAGE

mouseplugins.com/en/products/harshmallow

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Harshmallow processes audio locally. No internet connection is required for activation or normal offline use.

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