

AETHER DRIFT X

eXtended Cinematic Pad Synth



User Guide

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This guide explains the main performance controls, deep editing pages, modulation system and preset workflow for Aether Drift X.

Overview

Aether Drift X is an extended cinematic pad synthesizer built around a single focused Aether engine. It combines macro-level performance control with deep oscillator, layer, aura, drift, envelope, filter, motion, FX, matrix and preset editing pages.

Quick Start

Load a factory preset from the Presets page or the preset selector on the Main page.

Use the two large AETHER and DRIFT orbs to change the broad character and internal movement of the sound.

Shape the sound quickly with Tone, Motion, Depth, Width, Space, Air, Warmth, Reverb, Sparkle and the ADSR controls on the Main page.

Use the Engine, Layers, Aura and Drift pages for deep sound design.

Use Motion, Motion Env and Matrix for controlled movement and modulation routing.

Use Performance mode if CPU use needs to be reduced in large sessions.

Page Map

Control / Area	Use
Main	Immediate performance controls, main orbs, macros, ADSR, output, preset selector and global FX buttons.
Engine	Oscillator wave, pitch, levels, PWM, unison, glide and output drive.
Layers	Noise, wind, sub, shimmer and texture layers.
Aura	Aura wavetable, harmonic glow, air texture and sparkle character.
Drift	Internal movement, oscillator drift, voice spread and spectral drift.
Env	Master amp envelope and additional shaping envelopes.
Filter	Two filters, filter envelope and spectral character shaping.
Motion	LFOs and random modulation sources.
Motion Env	Four additional motion envelopes.
Fx	Chorus, ensemble, dimension, delay, reverb and glass/glow processing.
Matrix	12 modulation routes with source, target and depth controls.
Presets	Factory/user preset browser, favourites, save/load and curated variations.

Main Page

The Main page is the performance centre. It is designed for fast musical work without leaving the primary interface.



Main Page screenshot

Control / Area	Use
AETHER / DRIFT orbs	AETHER shapes the broad atmospheric character; DRIFT controls internal movement, stereo life and evolving behaviour.
Tone / Motion / Depth	Tone changes brightness and harmonic edge, Motion adds internal movement, and Depth controls body and density.
Width / Space	Width controls stereo spread; Space controls spatial size and reverb influence.
Air / Warmth	Air opens the upper texture; Warmth rounds the body and low-mid character.
Attack / Decay / Sustain / Release	Main amplitude envelope controls for the playable pad response.
Reverb / Sparkle	Reverb sets spatial contribution when enabled; Sparkle adds luminous high-frequency detail.
Global FX buttons	Chorus, Ensemble, Dimension and Reverb can be enabled directly from the Main page.
Performance / Output / Presets	Performance modes manage CPU use, Output controls final level, and the preset row recalls factory or user sounds.

Engine Page

The Engine page contains the core oscillator and voice controls. Use it to define the base tone before adding layers, aura and motion.



Engine Page screenshot

Control / Area	Use
Oscillator 1 / 2	Select waveforms and tune each oscillator with Coarse and Fine controls.
Level / Shape / Drift	Set oscillator contribution, waveform shaping and oscillator instability.
Mix & PWM	Blend the oscillators and control pulse-width behaviour where pulse waves are used.
Unison	Set voice count, spread and phase behaviour for thicker pads.
Random Phase	Changes note start phase behaviour. Disable it for more consistent attacks.
Glide	Adds portamento movement between notes when enabled.
Gain / Soft Clip	Controls output drive and optional soft clipping for more saturated tone.

Layers Page

Layers add body, air, sub energy and additional animated texture around the oscillator core.



Layers Page screenshot

Control / Area	Use
Noise Core	Balances white and pink noise, noise colour and filter cutoff.
Wind Noise	Adds slow airy movement and stereo width.
Sub Layer	Adds lower support with shape, focus and pitch-follow behaviour.
Shimmer Layer	Adds higher harmonic shimmer, colour and motion.
Texture Layer	Adds soft spectral movement and stereo texture.

Aura Page

The Aura page is for spectral glow, air character, sparkle and the wavetable-like atmosphere layer.



Aura Page screenshot

Control / Area	Use
Aura Type	Selects the aura character family.
Aura / Morph / Rate	Set aura level, blend and movement rate.
Aura Env / Rise	Controls how the aura responds over time.
Harmonic Glow	Adds controlled harmonic colour and bloom.
Air Texture	Adds upper-air grain, colour and stereo width.
Sparkle	Adds bright transient-like detail and luminous high-frequency activity.

Drift Page

Drift is the internal movement page. It controls slow evolution, oscillator instability, voice spread and spectral terrain.



Drift Page screenshot

Control / Area	Use
Drift Core	Controls slow global movement and the internal Aether drift field.
Osc Drift	Adds oscillator-level instability and oscillator shape motion.
Voice Drift	Controls voice variation, spread, phase life and glide behaviour.
Spectral Drift	Controls filter motion, harmonic tracking, air damping and low focus movement.
Displays	The moving displays show the intended movement field for each section and help visualize internal motion depth.

Env Page

The Env page contains the main amp envelope and additional shaping envelopes that can affect gesture, body and spectral response.



Env Page screenshot

Control / Area	Use
Master Amp	Main voice envelope for note level and velocity response.
Gesture Excitation	Shapes transient energy and articulation-like movement.
Ensemble Body	Shapes body resonance and ensemble response over time.
Spectral Shape	Shapes brightness, air and spectral partials over time.
Curve / Velocity	Curve changes the envelope contour; Velocity controls performance response.

Filter Page

The Filter page provides two filters, an independent filter envelope and additional spectral shaping.



Filter Page screenshot

Control / Area	Use
Filter One / Two	Each filter has model, mode, slope, cutoff, resonance, drive and tracking controls.
Filter Envelope	Independent spectral ADSR for filter movement. Enable it with the ENV button.
Env Depth / Velocity	Controls envelope amount and performance response.
Spectral Character	Controls formant, air damping, low focus, harmonic behaviour, stereo and spectral motion.
Displays	Filter displays show base filter response plus envelope and modulation movement.

Motion Page

The Motion page contains LFO and random modulation sources used directly and through the Matrix.



Motion Page screenshot

Control / Area	Use
LFO 1 / 2 / 3	Each LFO has shape, rate, depth, phase, smooth, bend and bias controls.
Smooth	Softens sharp LFO movement, especially useful with saw, stepped or aggressive modulation shapes.
Bend / Bias	Bend changes curve response; Bias offsets the LFO centre.
Random 1 / 2	Smoothed random sources with rate, depth, smooth and bias controls.
Displays	LFO and random displays show the effective source shape used for modulation.

Motion Env Page

Motion envelopes provide four additional time-based modulation shapes for more structured movement.



Motion Env Page screenshot

Control / Area	Use
Motion Env 1-4	Each envelope can be enabled separately and used as a modulation source.
Attack / Decay / Sustain / Release	Set the time and level shape of each motion envelope.
Curve	Changes the curvature of the envelope movement.
Velocity	Adds performance sensitivity where the destination supports it.
Use case	Use these for evolving filter, motion, space, aura or layer movement without relying on continuous LFOs.

FX Page

The FX page provides the final spatial and modulation effects. Each major processor has its own on/off button.

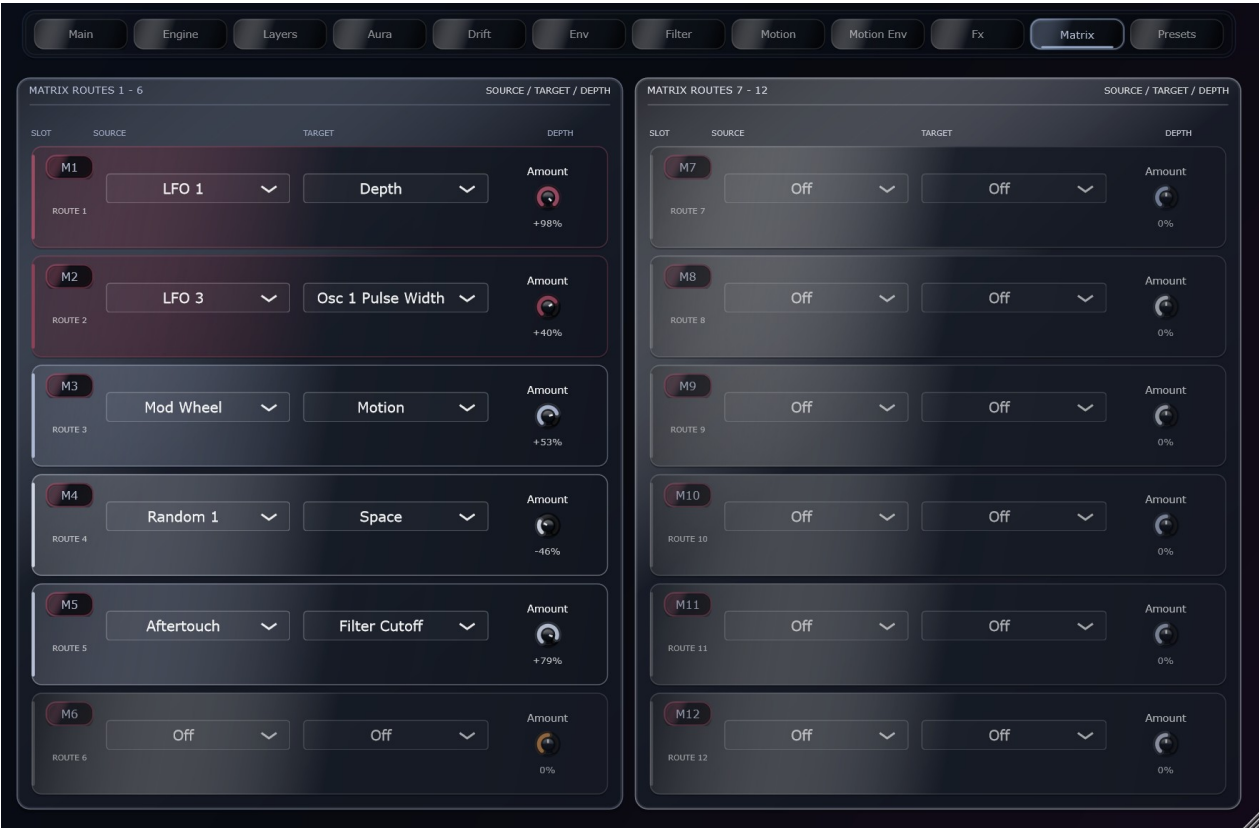


FX Page screenshot

Control / Area	Use
Chorus	Classic modulation for widening and soft animated movement.
Ensemble	Richer multi-voice width and motion.
Dimension	Micro-delay width engine for wide cinematic space.
Delay	Tempo-free delay space with type, time, feedback and mix controls.
Reverb	Hall-style space with amount, size, damping and mix controls.
Glass & Glow	Additional brightness, spectral glow and shimmer-like finishing controls.

Matrix Page

The Matrix page provides 12 modulation routes. Each route has a source, target and amount.



Matrix Page screenshot

Control / Area	Use
Source	Selects a modulation source such as LFO, random, mod wheel, aftertouch or motion envelope.
Target	Selects the destination parameter.
Amount	Controls modulation depth. Positive and negative values move the destination in opposite directions.
Best practice	Start with low amounts. Many destinations are highly sensitive in a deep cinematic pad engine.
Performance sources	Mod Wheel and Aftertouch are useful for playable expression without changing the preset permanently.

Presets Page

The Presets page manages factory presets, user presets, favourites and preset actions.



Presets Page screenshot

Control / Area	Use
Factory banks	Warm Pads, Deep Pads, Cinematic, Air Pads, Wide Pads and Motion Pads. Each bank contains 20 curated factory presets.
All Pads	Shows the complete factory preset set in one list.
Search	Find presets by name or category.
Favourite	Mark useful sounds for faster recall.
Save User Preset	Stores your current sound as a user preset.
Inspire / Evolve / Curated Variation	Generate or evolve musical preset variations from the current sound design context.

Sound Design Workflow

1. Start with a musical base

Choose a preset from a bank that is close to the required role: warm, deep, cinematic, airy, wide or motion-focused. Use the Main page first before changing deeper pages.

2. Shape the core

Use the Engine page to set oscillator balance, waveform shape, unison and glide. Keep oscillator levels balanced before adding heavy layers or FX.

3. Add body and atmosphere

Use Layers and Aura for density, air, shimmer and glow. Small amounts can be more musical than extreme settings, especially in dense mixes.

4. Add movement carefully

Use Drift and Motion for evolving movement. For smooth pads, avoid very high stepped modulation amounts unless a rhythmic or experimental sound is intended.

5. Finish with filters and FX

Use filters to place the pad in the mix, then add chorus, ensemble, dimension, delay or reverb as needed. Use the output control to avoid clipping after heavy FX.

Performance and CPU Tips

Use FULL mode for final sound design and rendering when maximum detail is required.

Use CPU saving modes when running many instances in a large project.

Reduce unison voices, shimmer, sparkle and dense FX if the session becomes CPU-heavy.

Freeze or bounce long cinematic pads once the sound design is finished.

Use the output meter and output knob to keep levels controlled when using wide layers and reverb.

Troubleshooting

Control / Area	Use
No sound	Check output level, amp sustain/release, oscillator levels, layer amounts and whether the host track is receiving MIDI.
Too much movement	Lower Motion, Drift, LFO depth, Random depth or Matrix route amounts.
Sound too wide	Reduce Width, unison spread, Dimension, Ensemble and stereo controls on Drift/Layers/Aura pages.
Sound too bright	Lower Tone, Air, Sparkle, Shimmer, Glass/Glow or filter cutoff.
Preset too CPU-heavy	Use a CPU saving performance mode, reduce unison voices, shimmer/sparkle amount and heavy FX.
Modulation not obvious	Check that the Matrix route source is enabled, source depth is not zero, target amount is not zero and the destination is in an audible range.

Additional Notes

MIDI and expression

Aether Drift X can use performance sources such as Mod Wheel, Aftertouch and Velocity through the Matrix and dedicated velocity controls. These are useful for playable expression, especially when controlling filter cutoff, motion depth, space, width or aura amount.

Factory preset philosophy

The factory bank is designed as hand-tailored musical starting points, not random parameter dumps. Use them as finished sounds, or as structured bases for deeper editing and curated variations.

Safe modulation practice

For cinematic pads, small modulation depths often sound more professional than extreme movement. When using multiple sources, build the movement gradually and check the result in context with the track.

Version scope

This guide describes the Aether Drift X extended version with the single focused Aether engine, deep editing pages, 12-slot Matrix modulation and 120 curated factory presets.