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Harmonic Multiband Compressor

USER MANUAL | VERSION 2.1.17 | UPDATED NOVEMBER 18, 2026 | MUSEHUB EDITION

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Harmonic Multiband Compressor is a six-band compressor with saturation built into the signal path. The Harmonics Engine can drive the compressor's detectors, saturate each band before it is compressed, or add harmonics to the finished mix, so the saturator-into-compressor chain lives in one plugin. It is for anyone who mixes or masters and wants to control each part of the spectrum on its own and add density without a second plugin.

This manual covers Harmonic Multiband Compressor 2.1.17 on macOS and Windows, in VST3, AU and AAX.

01 Quick start

1. Insert **Harmonic Multiband Compressor** on a bus or a full mix.
2. Open the preset menu and choose **Mastering Gentle**: six bands at 2:1 with smooth detection.
3. Press play. Each band shows its gain reduction at the top of the display.
4. Click a band in the display to select it, then adjust its **THRESHOLD** in the panel below (or drag the band's threshold line in the display).
5. Drag the vertical crossover lines to move where one band ends and the next begins.
6. Raise **IN DRIVE** in the Harmonics Engine to make the compression smoother and denser. It makes every band compress harder, so raise the thresholds a little to compensate.
7. Compare with your DAW's plugin bypass (Harmonic has no bypass button of its own). Match the level with **OUTPUT** first.

TIP

Use the **S** and **M** badges at the top of each band to solo or mute it, so you hear exactly what that band is doing.

02

What's new in 2.1.17

On macOS 27, the Audio Unit and AAX versions now load. No change to the sound or features. On Windows this is a maintenance update.

03

What's new in 2.1.16

Fixed a rare crash when you undo, switch A/B or change presets while the host saves or reloads the session.

Changing the lookahead or oversampling during playback no longer risks a dropout: the plugin tells the host its new latency without making the audio thread wait.

On Windows, the plugin window now draws and updates on computers whose display gives it no refresh signal, such as virtual machines and some remote desktops. Closing the window there no longer freezes the host.

04

What's new in 2.1.15

Fixed a rare crash when the host saves and restores settings at the same time.

The Vocal De-Ess preset now works only the top two bands, where the ess lives.

A reopened session shows its preset's name.

05

What's new in 2.1.12

What changed since 2.1.0:

Your own presets. Save, recall, rename and delete presets from the preset menu.

Smoother Harmonics Engine (new sessions). IN DRIVE now fades in instead of jumping. AUDIBLE removes DC offset the same way at every sample rate. With OS on, IN DRIVE at 0 % no longer shifts the timing. Sessions saved with 2.1.8 or earlier keep their original sound.

Clearer tooltips. COMP, OUT EXCITER and ATTACK describe exactly what they do.

Sessions always reopen as saved, after every update.

Fixes: knob drags no longer hide or jump the pointer. A window could open blank on some Windows displays. Also fixed: a crash on macOS 10.15 and 11, and Windows user names with accented characters.

06 The window

The window has a top bar, the display (spectrum, bands and crossovers), the selected band's panel, the Harmonics Engine, and the OUTPUT STAGE along the bottom. Drag the corner to resize it, from 924 × 660 up to 1680 × 1200 pixels; it opens at 1120 × 800.

The top bar

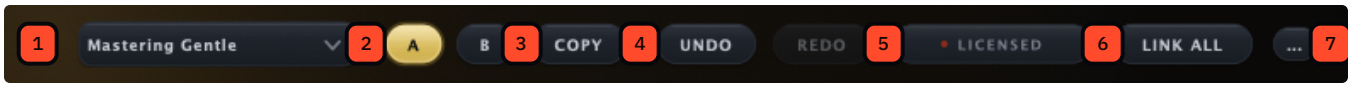


FIG. 1 The top bar, from the preset menu to LINK ALL.

1. **Preset menu.** Factory presets and your own.
2. **A and B.** Two complete setups to compare.
3. **COPY.** Copies the active slot into the other.
4. **UNDO and REDO.** Step through your changes.
5. **License chip.** Reads MUSEHUB. This edition opens unlocked, so the chip is a label and takes no clicks.
6. **LINK ALL.** Edits reach all six bands.
7. **... (Options).** Low Latency, tooltips and the shortcut sheet. Harmonic never checks for updates itself in this edition.

CONTROL	WHAT IT DOES	RANGE	DEFAULT
PRESET MENU	Factory presets and your own. Loading one replaces the current settings.	6 factory presets plus yours	Default
A · B	Two full setups. Edits land in the slot that is lit. Press A to switch.	A or B	A
COPY	Copies the active slot into the other one.		
UNDO · REDO	Step back and forward through your changes.		
LICENSE CHIP	Reads MUSEHUB. This edition opens unlocked, so the chip is a label and takes no clicks. Updates come through MuseHub.		
LINK ALL	Your edits reach all six bands at once. Thresholds move by the same amount, keeping their differences; ON, SOLO and MUTE stay per band.	On or off	Off

CONTROL	WHAT IT DOES	RANGE	DEFAULT
... (OPTIONS)	Opens a menu: **Low Latency** turns off oversampling so OS adds no delay; also Show tooltips, Check for updates and the keyboard shortcut sheet. In this edition Harmonic never checks for updates itself, whatever **Check for updates** is set to.		

The display

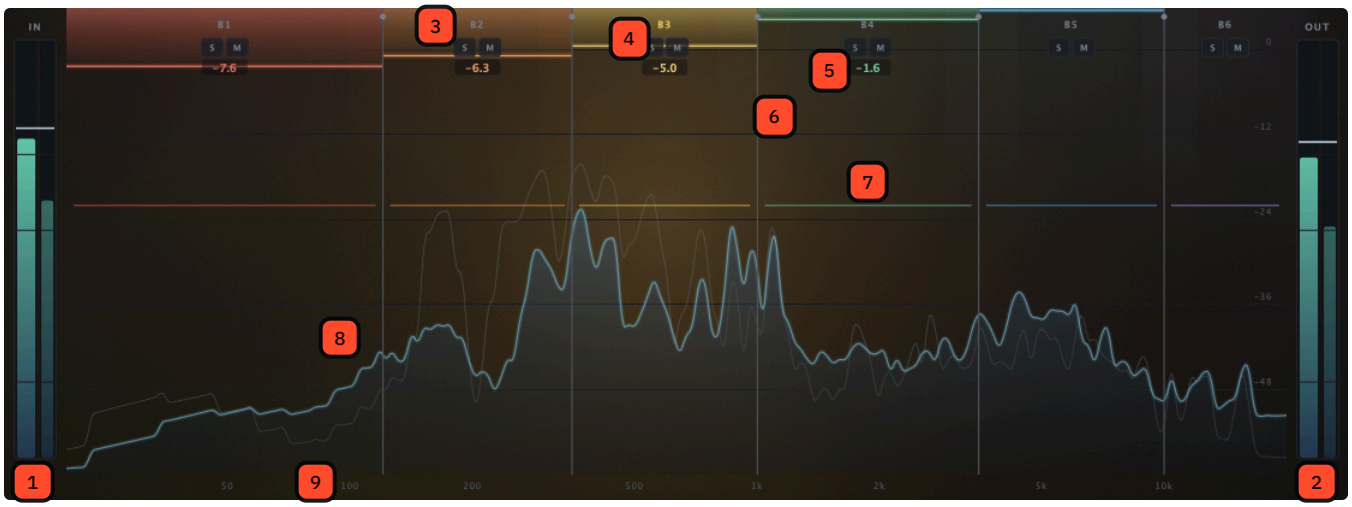


FIG. 2 The display: six bands with their gain reduction, crossovers and thresholds over the live spectrum.

1. **IN meter.** Input level.
2. **OUT meter.** Output level.
3. **Band tab (B1 to B6).** Click to select the band.
4. **S and M.** Solo and mute that band.
5. **Gain reduction.** How hard the band works, in dB; LIFT marks upward gain. Shows above about 0.5 dB.
6. **Crossover.** Drag the line to move the split between two bands.
7. **Threshold line.** Drag it to set that band's threshold.
8. **Spectrum.** The output spectrum, lit, with the input drawn faintly behind it.
9. **Frequency scale.** 20 Hz to 20 kHz.

Each band draws a curtain of light from the top in its own color, so you can see where the compressor works and by how much. The spectrum is tilted 4.5 dB per octave, so a balanced mix looks roughly flat.

The display is the main way to work:

Click a band to select it; the panel below shows its controls. Keys `1` to `6` do the same. Band 1 is selected when the window opens.

Drag a crossover to move the split between two bands (20 Hz to 20 kHz). Crossovers stay in order, at least 5 % apart. Hold `Shift` for fine moves; the mouse wheel steps a semitone (`Shift`: 10 cents). Crossovers start at 120 Hz, 350 Hz, 1 kHz, 3.5 kHz and 10 kHz.

Double-click a crossover to type an exact frequency (`250`, `2.5k`), limited by its neighbors.

Drag a threshold line to set that band's threshold, snapping to whole dB. Hold `Shift` for fine moves; the wheel steps 1 dB (`Shift`: 0.1 dB). Double-click to reset it to -18 dB.

S and M solo or mute the band. Soloing several bands plays them together.

07 The band panel

The panel shows the selected band. Its header gives the band number, its frequency span and what it is doing: DOWNWARD, UPWARD LIFT, COMP OFF, MUTED or SOLO EXCLUDED. Click the value under a knob to type an exact value; `Return` applies and `Esc` cancels.

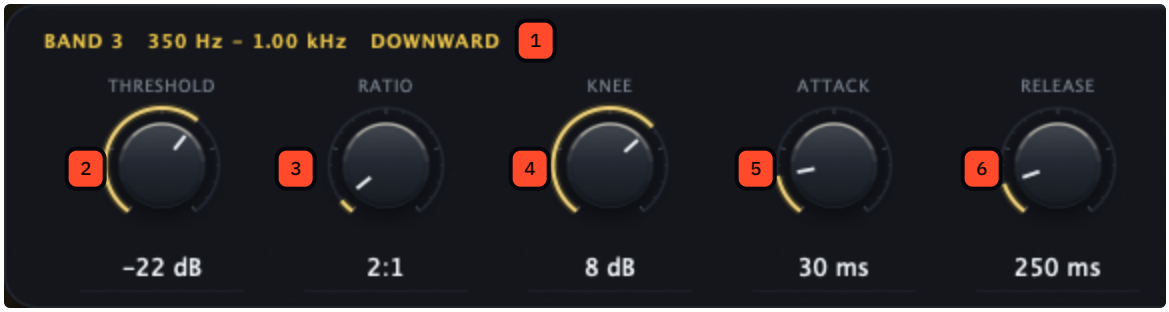


FIG. 3 Band 3's header, threshold, ratio, knee, attack and release.

1. **Band header.** Number, span and state.
2. **THRESHOLD.** Where the band starts to work.
3. **RATIO.** How strong the gain change is.
4. **KNEE.** How gradually it starts.
5. **ATTACK.** How fast it responds.
6. **RELEASE.** How fast it recovers.



FIG. 4 Makeup, range, detector filter, detector type, mode and the band switches.

1. **ON, SOLO and MUTE.** The band's switches.
2. **MAKEUP.** Band gain after compression.
3. **RANGE.** The most the gain can change.
4. **DET HPF.** A low cut on the detector.
5. **DETECT.** RMS or PEAK.
6. **MODE.** DOWN or UP.

BAND

CONTROL	WHAT IT DOES	RANGE	DEFAULT
ON	Turns this band's compressor on. With it off, the band still passes through the Harmonics Engine, its controls dim, MAKEUP no longer applies and its threshold line is locked. Key `B`.	On or off	On

CONTROL	WHAT IT DOES	RANGE	DEFAULT
SOLO	Hear this band alone. Key `S`.	On or off	Off
MUTE	Silence this band. Key `M`.	On or off	Off
THRESHOLD	In DOWN, the level above which the band compresses; in UP, the level below which it lifts.	-60 to 0 dB	-18 dB
RATIO	How strong the gain change is around the threshold.	1:1 to 20:1	4:1
KNEE	Soft-knee width around the threshold.	0 to 12 dB	0 dB
ATTACK	How fast the band's gain responds. Below about 20 ms the response is softened by fixed smoothing; to catch fast peaks, add LOOKAHEAD.	0.1 to 200 ms	10 ms
RELEASE	How fast the gain recovers.	10 to 2000 ms	120 ms
MAKEUP	Band gain after compression.	-36 to +36 dB	0 dB
RANGE	The most this band's gain can change. MAX is 60 dB. In UP mode the lift is capped at RANGE or 30 dB, whichever is smaller.	0 to 60 dB	MAX
DET HPF	A high-pass filter on this band's detector only, so very low content does not trigger it.	OFF to 400 Hz	OFF
DETECT	RMS follows the average level (smooth); PEAK follows transients.	RMS, PEAK	PEAK
MODE	DOWN compresses above the threshold. UP lifts quiet signal below it.	DOWN, UP	DOWN

08 The Harmonics Engine and output stage

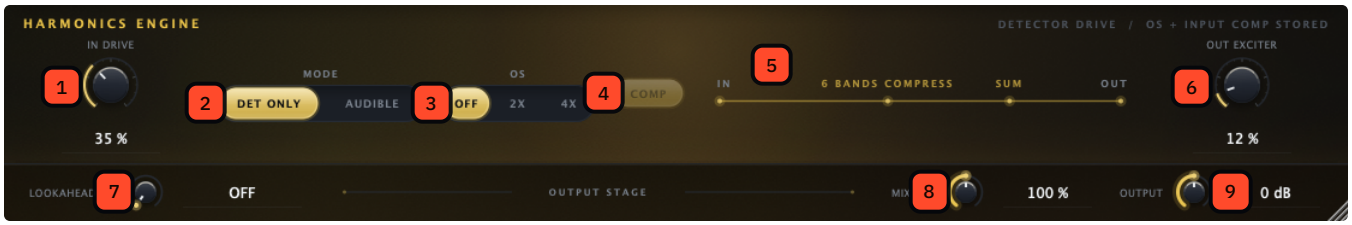


FIG. 5 IN DRIVE, mode, oversampling, COMP, the signal flow, OUT EXCITER, and the OUTPUT STAGE.

1. **IN DRIVE.** Saturation into every band.
2. **MODE.** DET ONLY or AUDIBLE.
3. **OS.** Oversampling for AUDIBLE.
4. **COMP.** A level trim for AUDIBLE, not a compressor.
5. **Signal flow.** Where each stage sits.
6. **OUT EXCITER.** Color on the summed mix.
7. **LOOKAHEAD.** Lets the detectors hear ahead.
8. **MIX.** Processed and dry blend.
9. **OUTPUT.** The final level.

The engine has two stages. **IN** works on every band after the crossover split and before compression. **OUT** works on the summed mix. The line in the middle shows the order (IN, 6 BANDS COMPRESS, SUM, OUT), and the text above OUT EXCITER says what the current settings do.

IN DRIVE has two modes. In **DET ONLY**, only the signal feeding each band's detector is saturated. The detectors read the bands hotter (about +9 dB at 35 %) with loud peaks rounded, so every band compresses more and more evenly, while the audio you hear stays clean. In **AUDIBLE**, each band's audio is saturated before it is compressed: you hear the saturation, the bands get louder, and the compressor reacts to it.

HARMONICS ENGINE

CONTROL	WHAT IT DOES	RANGE	DEFAULT
IN DRIVE	Saturation going into every band (one amount for all six).	0 to 100 %	0 %
MODE	**DET ONLY**: the detectors hear the saturation, you don't. **AUDIBLE**: you hear it, and the bands get louder.	DET ONLY, AUDIBLE	DET ONLY
OS	Oversampling for AUDIBLE saturation: less aliasing, some added latency. Stored but inactive in DET ONLY or with Low Latency on.	OFF, 2X, 4X	OFF

CONTROL	WHAT IT DOES	RANGE	DEFAULT
COMP	A level trim, not a compressor: turns the AUDIBLE saturation down by up to 6 dB as IN DRIVE rises. It is not a loudness match. AUDIBLE only.	On or off	On
OUT EXCITER	Adds saturated color to the summed mix. Low settings add subtle, bright density; high settings add darker, thicker color. It is level-matched, but settings above about 45 % play louder.	0 to 100 %	0 %

OUTPUT STAGE

CONTROL	WHAT IT DOES	RANGE	DEFAULT
LOOKAHEAD	Lets the detectors hear the audio up to 10 ms early, so the compressors can catch fast peaks. Adds that much latency, which your DAW compensates.	OFF to 10 ms	OFF
MIX	Blends the processed and dry signal for parallel compression. Above 100 % it adds extra wet gain.	0 to 200 %	100 %
OUTPUT	Final output level.	-24 to +24 dB	0 dB

Latency and CPU

With OS off and LOOKAHEAD off, Harmonic adds no latency.

LOOKAHEAD and AUDIBLE oversampling add latency, which Harmonic reports to your DAW so everything stays aligned. The dry signal is delayed to match.

Low Latency (in Options) turns the input oversampling off; LOOKAHEAD still adds its delay if it is on.

Oversampling costs CPU: 4X costs the most.

09 Keyboard and mouse

Keys work when the Harmonic window has keyboard focus: click an empty part of the window once. While you type in a value box, the box keeps the keys.

ACTION	MAC	WINDOWS
Select band 1 to 6	`1` to `6`	`1` to `6`
Solo or mute the shown band	`S` or `M`	`S` or `M`
Turn the shown band's compressor on or off (**ON**)	`B`	`B`
Switch A and B	`A`	`A`
Undo	`Cmd` + `Z`	`Ctrl` + `Z`
Redo	`Cmd` + `Shift` + `Z` or `Cmd` + `Y`	`Ctrl` + `Shift` + `Z` or `Ctrl` + `Y`
Show the shortcut sheet	`?`	`?`
Fine drag (knobs, crossovers, thresholds)	`Shift` + drag	`Shift` + drag
Step a knob (`Shift` for fine)	Mouse wheel over it	Mouse wheel over it
Move the last-clicked crossover a semitone (`Shift`: 10 cents)	← or →	← or →
Type the last-clicked crossover's frequency	`Return`	`Enter`
Reset a knob	Double-click, or `Cmd` + click	Double-click, or `Ctrl` + click
Type an exact value	Click the value under a knob	Click the value under a knob

In Pro Tools, fine drag on knobs is `Cmd` + drag (`Ctrl` on Windows) and reset is `Option` + click (`Alt` on Windows).

10 Recipes

These are starting points. Every voice, mix and room is different, so adjust by ear and compare at matched levels.

Control a master gently

START FROM	Mastering Gentle
GOAL	1 to 2 dB of gain reduction per band on the loud parts
IN DRIVE	20 to 35 % in DET ONLY for a smoother response, then raise the thresholds to get back to 1 to 2 dB
OUT EXCITER	5 to 15 % for a little density

To compare two versions, put your start in A, click **COPY**, change B, and press A to switch. Match levels with OUTPUT first: the louder version always sounds better at first.

Tighten a bass

START FROM	Bass Tightener
CROSSOVERS 1 AND 2	100 Hz and 300 Hz
BAND 1	-26 dB, 5:1, 15 ms attack, 180 ms release, +2 dB makeup, DET HPF 30 Hz
BAND 2	-22 dB, 3.5:1, 150 ms release

These are the values the preset sets; every other control stays at its default. The lowest notes stop jumping out while the rest of the bass stays natural.

De-ess a vocal

START FROM	Vocal De-Ess
CROSSOVERS 4 AND 5	5 kHz and 9 kHz
BAND 5	-30 dB, 6:1, 0.5 ms attack, 60 ms release, DET HPF 200 Hz
BAND 6	-28 dB, 8:1, 0.3 ms attack, 50 ms release, DET HPF 200 Hz
LOOKAHEAD	2 to 5 ms

Bands 1 to 4 stay at the default settings (-18 dB, 4:1). For de-essing only, turn their **ON** off. Solo band 5 to find the "s" sounds, then lower its threshold until they sit back. LOOKAHEAD lets the bands catch the start of each "s".

Thicken a drum bus

START FROM	Default
MODE (HARMONICS ENGINE)	DET ONLY, then AUDIBLE for more grit
IN DRIVE	30 to 60 %
BANDS 1, 2, 5 AND 6	Lower the thresholds one at a time: with the default crossovers these hold the kick, the snare body and the top
MIX	60 to 80 % for parallel punch

In AUDIBLE, IN DRIVE also makes each band louder (COMP takes back at most 6 dB), so match the level with OUTPUT before you compare.

Add color without compression

ON	Off in every band (select each band with `1` to `6` and press `B`)
OUT EXCITER	5 to 20 %
IN DRIVE	Optional: AUDIBLE, 10 to 30 %

With ON off, the bands still pass through the Harmonics Engine, so you keep the color and lose the compression. Low OUT EXCITER settings add bright density across the whole mix; higher settings sound darker and thicker.

11 Presets

PRESET	WHAT IT SETS UP
Default	Six bands at -18 dB, 4:1, peak detection
Vocal De-Ess	Fast, high-ratio compression on bands 5 and 6 (5 to 9 kHz and above)
Bass Tightener	Firm control of bands 1 and 2 below 300 Hz
Mastering Gentle	All six bands at -22 dB, 2:1, with soft knees and RMS detection
Presence Control	Bands 4 and 5 (roughly 1 to 10 kHz) at 3:1
Pumpy Multi	Heavy low-end compression with a touch of the output exciter

Every preset first sets all controls to their defaults, then applies its own values.

Your own presets

1. Open the preset menu and choose **Save preset...**, then type a name.
2. Your presets appear under **User** in the same menu.
3. **Rename preset** and **Delete preset** manage the list; **Show preset folder** opens the folder on disk.

A saved preset holds every band and global control. The A and B slots and LINK ALL stay with the session. The files are in `~/Library/Application Support/Vitric Audio/Presets/Harmonic Multiband Compressor` on macOS and `%APPDATA%\Vitric Audio\Presets\Harmonic Multiband Compressor` on Windows.

12 Specifications

Bands: 6, split by Linkwitz-Riley crossovers, recombining flat within 0.5 dB.

Per band: threshold, ratio, knee, attack, release, makeup, range (0 to 60 dB; upward lift capped at 30 dB), DOWN/UP mode, RMS/PEAK detection, detector high-pass, solo, mute.

Harmonics Engine: IN DRIVE (DET ONLY or AUDIBLE, OFF/2X/4X oversampling), OUT EXCITER with level matching.

Lookahead: 0 to 10 ms. **Mix:** 0 to 200 %. **Output:** -24 to +24 dB.

Analyzer: 4096-point FFT, 4.5 dB/oct tilt.

Channels: mono, stereo, or mono in and stereo out.

Window: 924 × 660 to 1680 × 1200.

Formats: VST3 and AAX on macOS and Windows; AU on macOS.

Not included

There is no external sidechain input and no bypass button on the face; use your DAW's plugin bypass.

There are always six bands. To use fewer, turn **ON** off on the bands you don't need.

It is not a linear-phase design.

Harmonic works on mono and stereo tracks. It does not support surround or Atmos formats.

13 Installation and updates

Install

1. Save your work and quit your DAW.
2. Install **Harmonic Multiband Compressor** from the MuseHub app. MuseHub downloads it and puts the plugins in place.
3. Open your DAW. If Harmonic Multiband Compressor is not listed, run your DAW's plugin rescan.

Use AU in Logic Pro, AAX in Pro Tools and VST3 in other DAWs. On a Mac the plugins go in the standard folders:

AU: `/Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/Components`

VST3: `/Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/VST3`

AAX: `/Library/Application Support/Avid/Audio/Plug-Ins`

On Windows, MuseHub installs the VST3 and AAX versions.

Nothing to enter

This edition opens and runs as soon as it is installed. Your MuseHub purchase is your license: there is no key, code or account to enter, and nothing to unlock. The chip in the top bar reads MUSEHUB. It is a label, not a button, so clicking it does nothing.

MuseHub handles the purchase, any trial and any payment question under its own terms. Vitric sets no limit of its own on the number of computers: install Harmonic on the computers you personally use, within MuseHub's terms.

Updates

Updates to this edition are free and come through MuseHub. When a new version is out, save your work, quit your DAW and update Harmonic in the MuseHub app. Your sessions reopen exactly as saved after every update.

Harmonic never checks for updates itself in this edition and shows no update notice, whatever the **Check for updates** option is set to.

Sessions and presets are the same as in the vitricaudio.com edition of Harmonic Multiband Compressor, so your projects open in either edition.

14 Troubleshooting

Harmonic does not appear in my DAW

Rescan plugins and restart the DAW. In Logic Pro, use Logic Pro > Settings > Plug-in Manager and **Reset & Rescan Selection**. On Windows, make sure your DAW scans `C:\Program Files\Common Files\VST3`.

It went silent, or a band is missing

A band is muted, or another band is soloed: check the S and M badges. The band header says MUTED or SOLO EXCLUDED.

It compresses too hard after I raised IN DRIVE

IN DRIVE makes every band compress harder. Raise the thresholds to compensate; turn on **LINK ALL** to move all six together.

OS or COMP is grayed out

They work on AUDIBLE saturation. Switch MODE to AUDIBLE, and turn off **Low Latency** in Options for OS.

It got louder

OUT EXCITER above about 45 % plays louder, IN DRIVE in AUDIBLE makes each band louder (COMP takes back at most 6 dB), and MIX above 100 % adds wet gain. Match levels with OUTPUT before you compare.

Shortcuts do nothing

Click an empty part of the Harmonic window once so it has keyboard focus. Some DAWs keep certain keys for themselves; use the mouse for those.

15

Support

MuseHub provides first-line support for this edition and passes anything it cannot solve, such as a plugin fault, on to Vitric. You can also write to support@vitricaudio.com with your Harmonic version, operating system, DAW and version, plugin format and the exact error if there is one.

Harmonic Multiband Compressor user manual, MuseHub edition, version 2.1.17, updated November 18, 2026.

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