DRIFT SLICE

VERSION 4

SAMPLER / SLICE SEQUENCER / SOUND DESIGN

An illustrated guide to slicing, arranging, reshaping and performing your own sounds.



WINDOWS + macOS | VST3

DRIFTSIGNAL.TV

START HERE

Find your way around

Six views of the same instrument. Each image is referenced throughout this guide.



01 Samples



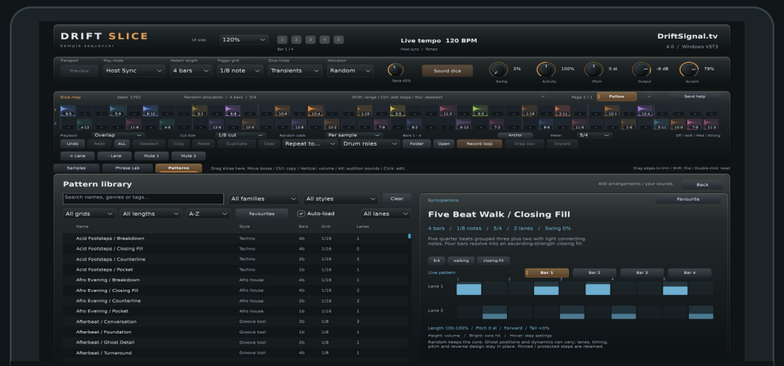
02 Phrase Lab



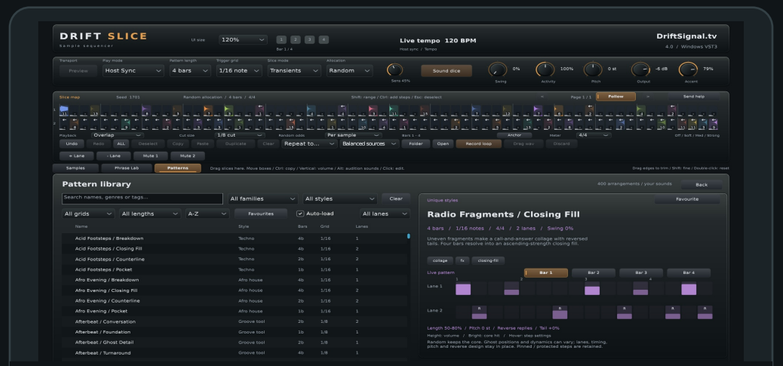
03 Envelope & tone



04 MIDI & tuning



05 Pattern Library



06 Experimental patterns

The interface screenshots are shown at 120% UI size. Controls and layouts may change with window size or your current mode.

Install, load, make a sound

The plugin needs your own audio files; it does not ship with a sample library.



Figure 01 / Twelve independent sample slots in the Samples view.

Windows

Close your DAW. Extract the ZIP. Copy the complete **DriftSlice_PC.vst3** folder into **C:\Program Files\Common Files\VST3**. Keep its contents together; administrator permission may be required.

macOS

Close your DAW. Copy the complete **DriftSlice_Mac.vst3** bundle to **~/Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/VST3/**. Finder: Go > Go to Folder. Create the VST3 folder if needed. Keep the bundle intact.

Ableton Live

In **Settings > Plug-Ins**, enable VST3 system folders, then rescan. Find Drift Slice and place it on a **MIDI track**. No serial, installer or activation is required.

Updates & compatibility

Keep one installed copy; remove an old scanned bundle before updating. Back up important Live sets. The plugin is designed around Ableton Live; other VST3 DAWs are untested. Use the bundle for your OS.

Know the interface

The same top-level transport and Slice Map remain in view while switching workspaces.



1 Transport + timing | **2** Slice Map | **3** Workspace tabs | **4** Sample slots | **5** Rhythm + hold tools

Timing, transport & modes

Trigger positions are separate from the source slice boundaries.



Figure 02 / Playback, grid, slice mode and meter are all located above the sample bank.

Host Sync

Follows the Live transport and tempo. MIDI key hits can sound alongside the sequence. **PREVIEW** auditions the map independently when available.

Manual / Keys

MIDI keys play Slice Map positions instead of running the sequencer automatically. **PREVIEW** can play the sequence separately.

MIDI / Musical

Incoming MIDI determines pitch, velocity and note length. This mode ignores the Slice Map sequence; its source selection and LOCK behavior differ from Manual Keys.

Bars, grid & meter

Choose 1, 2, 4, 8, 16 or 32 bars and trigger subdivisions from **1/4** to **1/32**. Meters: 4/4, 3/4, 6/8, 5/4, 7/8. Swing offsets alternating positions. Number of loaded samples does not set the meter.

Load, trim & create slices

Your audio remains on disk at its original location.



Figure 03 / Each sample has its own waveform, slice count, sends, mix and effect controls.

Get audio into a slot

Drop a **WAV or MP3** onto a slot, or press **LOAD**. In Phrase Lab, dropping audio replaces the source named in its header. Scroll the source selector to move one slot at a time.

Trim precisely

Drag the waveform start/end handles to define the usable region. Hold **Shift** for fine adjustment; double-click a handle to reset it.

Transients vs Beats

Transients locates attacks. Higher Sensitivity yields finer slices; lower produces fewer, larger ones. **Beats** uses source BPM and its beat division to cut the audio.

Two independent grids

The **Trigger Grid** controls when events fire, not the source cuts. On first launch the setup is 1 lane, 2 bars, 1/8 triggers, Transients and Audition on Click. Saved projects retain their settings.

Understand a sample strip

The controls repeat for all twelve source slots.



Figure 04 / Enlarged source controls; the four A-D knobs are external output sends.

Audition, source & locks

HEAR previews; **LOAD** replaces audio. Arrows choose the current slice. **LOCK** makes that source play the selected slice whenever chosen, including Musical MIDI.

Mix & tuning

Level, Pan and Pitch belong to the source. Main source **IN** and **OUT** share the Attack / Release values in Envelope & Tone.

Effects

Granular blends grains; Grain Size governs their duration. **Stutter** creates tempo-related repeats. **REV** reverses, and **Reverb** blends the built-in effect. Raise an effect amount before expecting its controls to be audible.

Send A / B / C / D

The four dials feed **separate stereo plugin outputs**, not Ableton return track knobs. Routing is described in the recording section.

Roles, chokes & eligibility

Automatic selection decides which source to use; choke groups decide what may keep ringing.

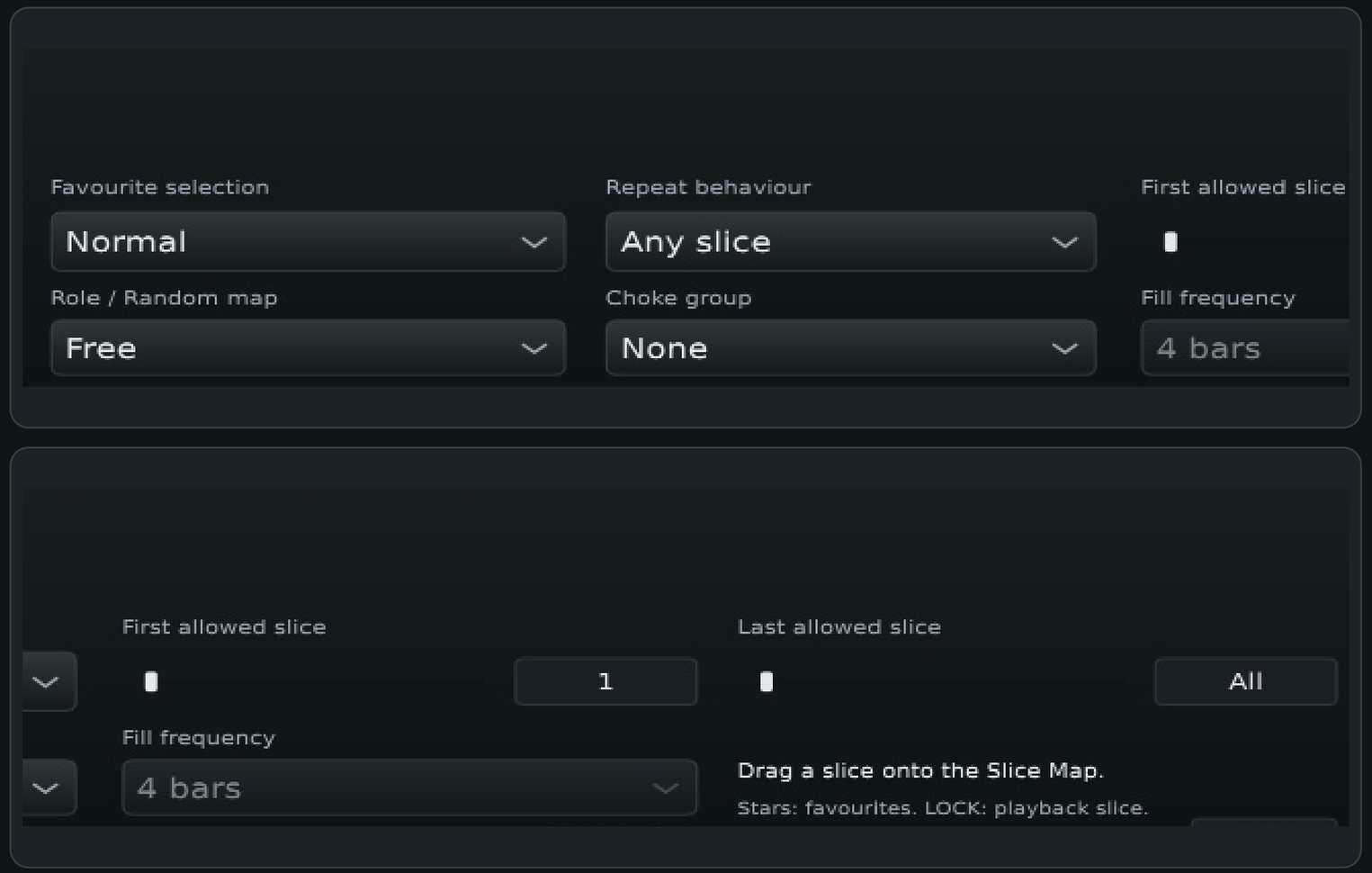


Figure 04A / Source Role, Choke Group, Fill Frequency and allowed-slice filters in Phrase Lab.

Source role

The source Role affects its eligibility in automatic arrangements and role-aware selection. **Fill Frequency** is per source and only matters for its **Fill** role.

Choke groups

Separate from role selection: sources assigned the same non-Off Choke Group may cut each other when triggered. For uninterrupted overlapping tails, turn choke groups Off and allow enough source voices.

Odds, range, favourites

Source Odds influence Random allocation. First/Last Allowed Slice and EXCLUDE narrow automatic candidates. Exact map pins and Source LOCK can bypass automatic slice filters.

Voice and note endings

Voice Limit can cap overlap from a single source. A recording, its envelope, trim boundaries, note-off and choke behavior can all shorten the heard note or tail.

Assign sounds to map steps

The colored symbols connect map events to source waveforms.

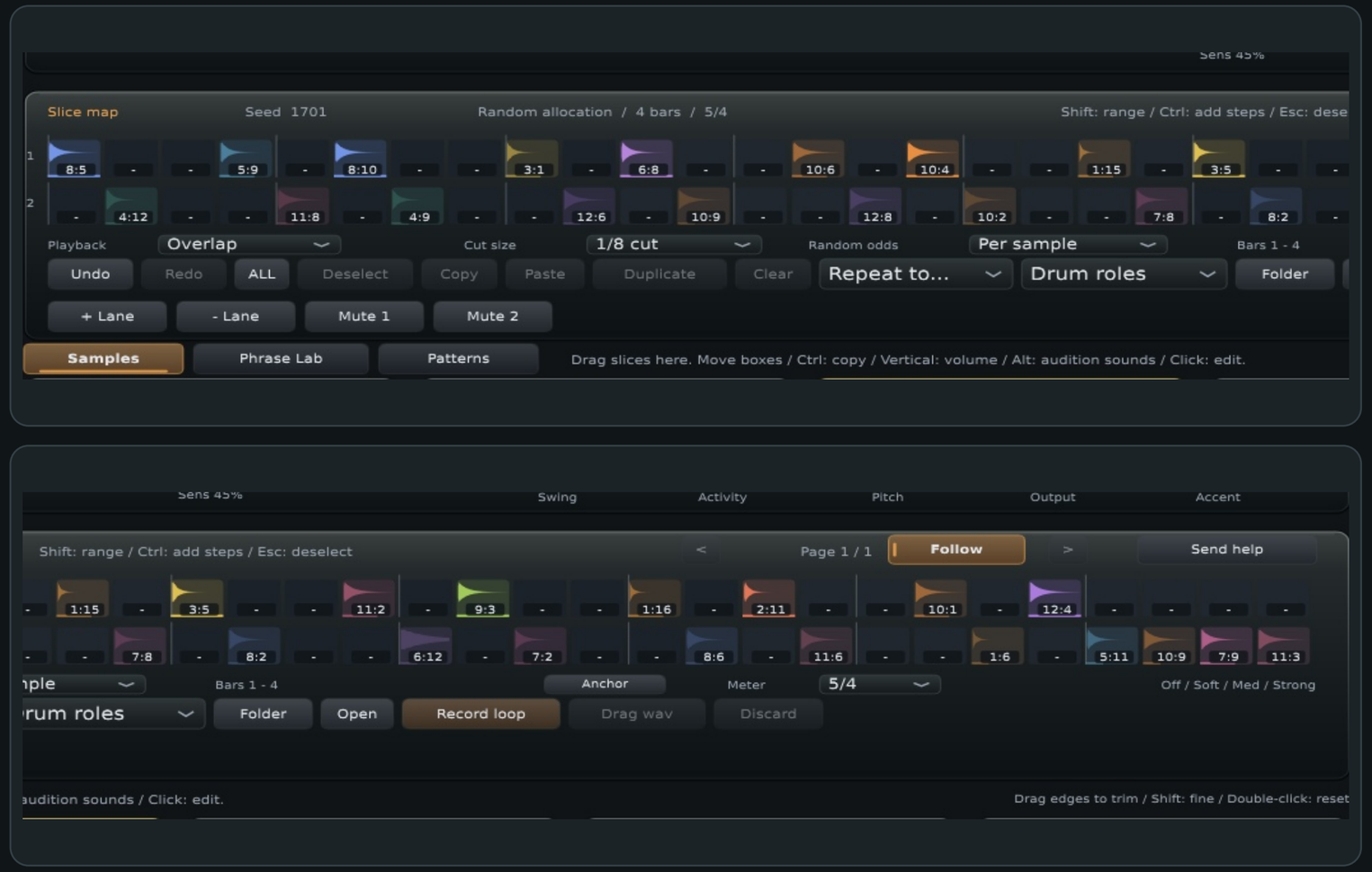


Figure 05 / Each box can be automatic, source-assigned or pinned to a specific slice.

Assign a source

Drag a **sample-panel grip** onto a map box. Drag a **numbered slice** or waveform region from Phrase Lab to **pin an exact slice**.

Off steps and replacements

Dropping onto an Off / 0%-volume box makes it **25%** and changes Off to Soft. Replacing an already audible step preserves its volume.

Return to automatic choice

Click the small **x** on a map box to clear its explicit source and pin. **FOLLOW** tracks playback; page arrows browse longer patterns.

Audition the map

Click a box to select it and open Phrase Lab. **AUDITION ON CLICK** plays its sound; turn it off for silent selection. HEAR plays the selected source slice.

Shape, copy & rearrange

Map positions retain detailed edits even when a coarser grid temporarily hides them.

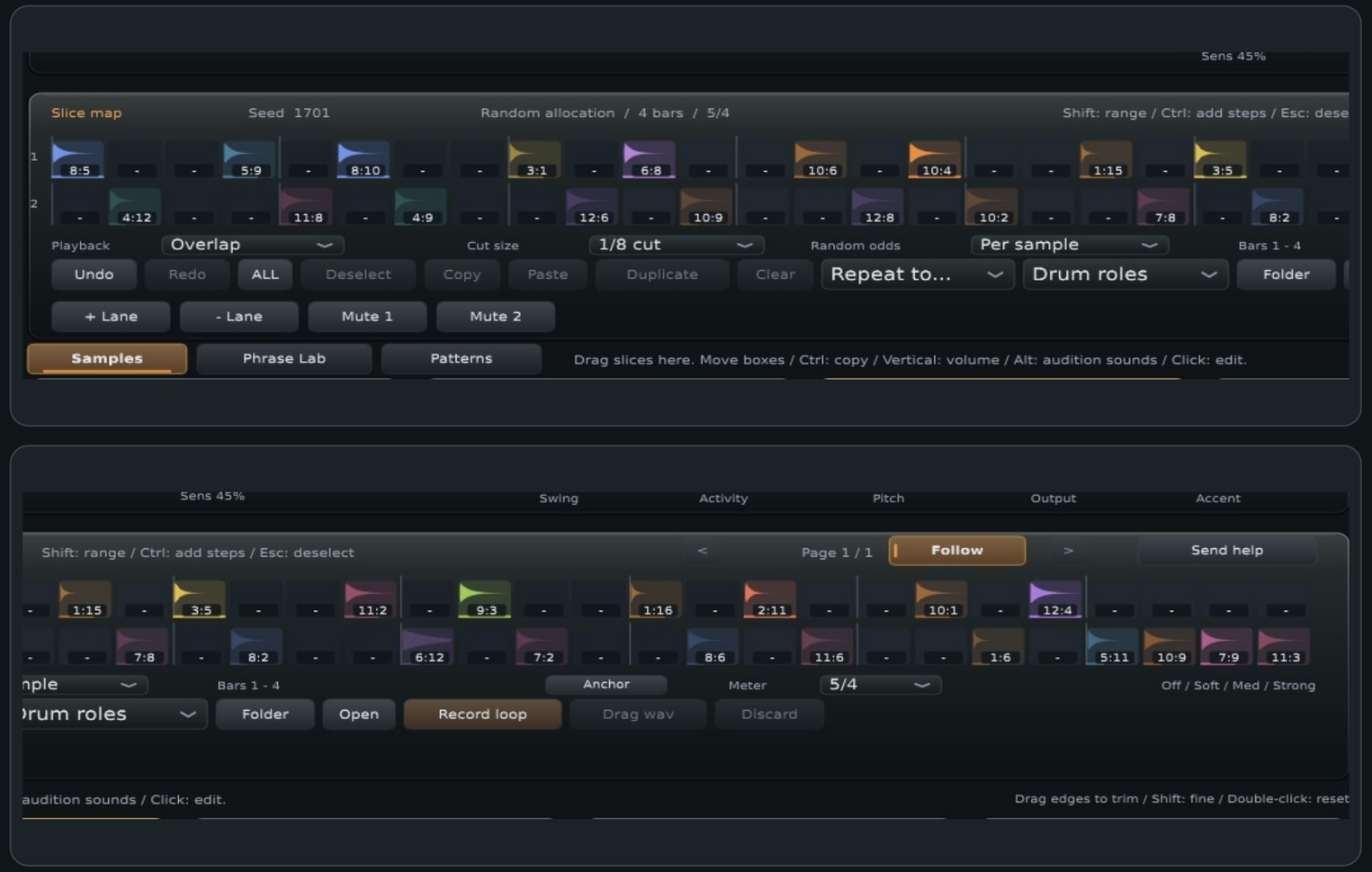


Figure 06 / Map selection and edit tools sit immediately beneath the colored step boxes.

Vertical gestures

Drag vertically to set step volume (**0-200%**). Guides: 25 / 50 / 75 / 100%. Dragging an Off box up creates a Soft hit. **CLEAR** turns it Off.

Alt + vertical drag

Browses eligible slices from body-heavy sounds toward lighter detail. **Up** moves lighter; **down** heavier. Each auditioned choice is pinned. Exclusions and ranges affect candidates.

Selections & movement

Shift-click makes a rectangular multi-lane selection; Ctrl-click adds scattered boxes (Command on Mac). **COPY / PASTE** places it elsewhere; **DUPLICATE** places a copy after it. Sideways drag moves; Ctrl/Command drag copies. Moved originals become blank.

Repeat, lanes, history

REPEAT TO copies shorter phrases up to 4 / 8 / 16 / 32 bars. +LANE adds up to four; -LANE hides the last, retaining contents; MUTE silences a lane. UNDO/REDO hold up to five edits, subject to sample memory.

Choose the exact source fragment

The waveform represents the trimmed part of the selected recording.



Figure 07 / Numbered slice buttons, favourites, restrictions and per-source cut controls.

Select and hear

Use the header to choose a source. Click a waveform region or numbered slice to audition and select. Arrows move through **32 numbered slices per page**. Stars mark favourites; starring is not the same as LOCK.

Choose what Random can use

Normal / Prefer Favourites / Only Favourites define eligibility. First/Last Allowed Slice set a range. **EXCLUDE** removes a slice from automatic use. If none qualify, the automatic result may be silent.

Slice behavior

Any Slice / Hold Last / Avoid Last can change the actual played fragment after map allocation. **LAST PLAYED** reports what triggered.

Slice boundaries & reset

SENS can override main sensitivity; **FOLLOW MAIN** restores it. **LOCK CUTS** freezes cut points against changes. Replacing the source generates new cuts; stored slice numbers may then refer to different audio.

Edit the selected step

These are MAP-STEP properties, not source-wide effects.

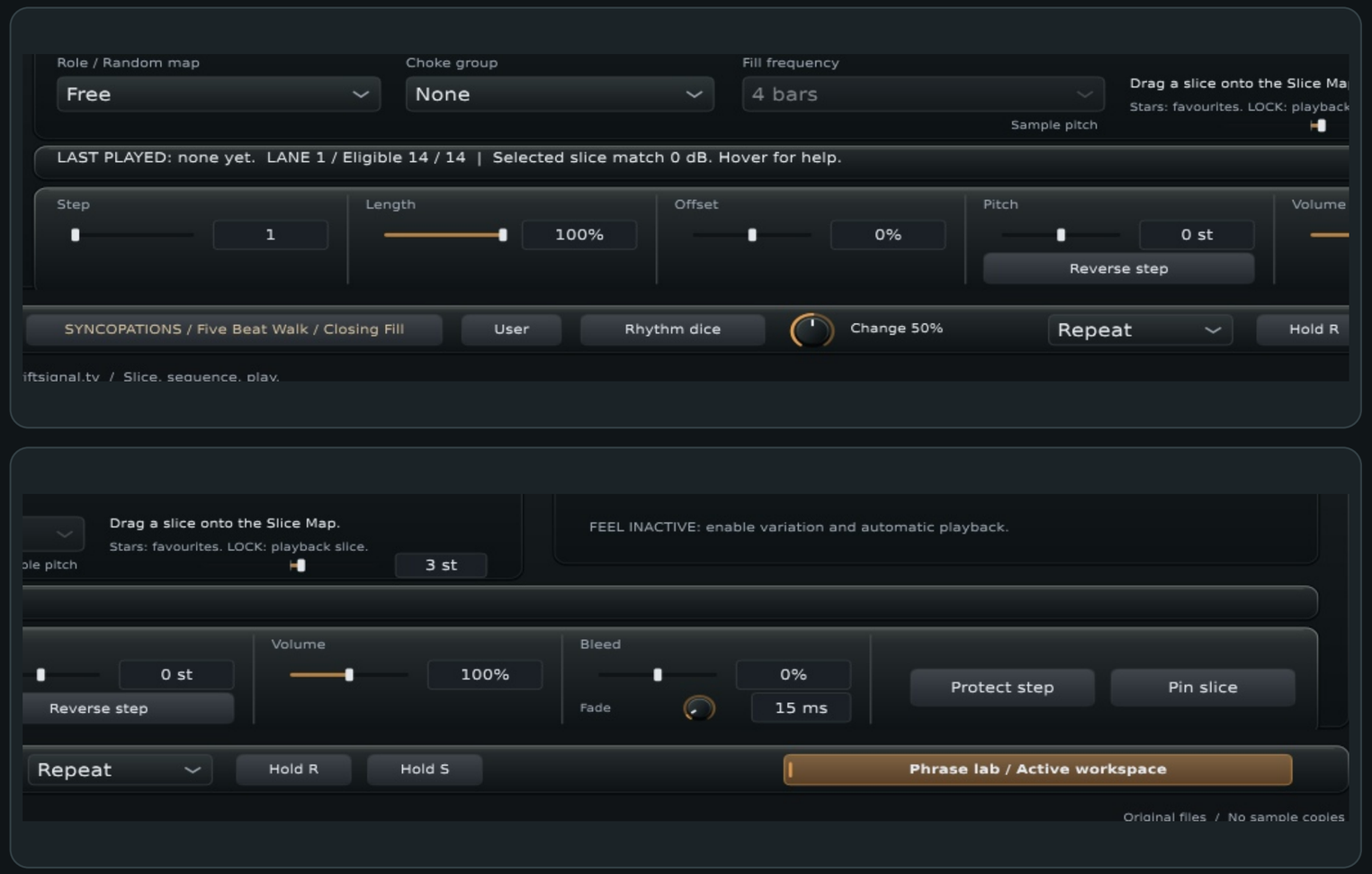


Figure 08 / Step editor across the bottom: Step, Length, Offset, Pitch, Volume, Bleed, Fade, Protect and Pin.

One step vs many

With one selection, Phrase Lab shows the source and slice. Multi-selections show a notice. **Length / Pitch / Volume** apply to all chosen steps; Step / Offset / Bleed / Fade require a single selection.

Length, offset, pitch, volume

Length: percentage of slice heard (100% = full; 10% = a tenth); double-click resets. **Offset** shifts timing. **Pitch**: -24 to +24 whole semitones. **Volume**: 0-200% after strength/velocity. Pitch or Volume edits audition once, up to 2 seconds.

Bleed is audio, not map steps

Negative Bleed starts early with audio from the prior **source slice** (-50% = its last half). **Positive Bleed** extends into the next source slice (+20% = its first fifth). Transport-start lead-in may be clipped; trim bounds apply. **Map playback only**.

Fade, reverse, pin & protect

Fade smooths the ending, 0-250 ms (default 15 ms); source Release may apply. **Reverse Step** plays backward, even if source Reverse is on. **Pin Slice** fixes an exact step sound; **Protect Step** blocks dice/Activity/Evolve, not manual edits.

Three locks, three different jobs

The most important distinction when a sound seems stuck or a slice changes unexpectedly.





SOURCE LOCK

One source, one chosen slice

In the Samples strip, LOCK makes that source use its selected slice whenever the source is chosen, including Musical MIDI. It does not freeze slice boundaries.

PIN SLICE

One Slice Map step, one precise fragment

In the step editor, Pin Slice locks the selected active step to its exact sample and slice. Unpinning leaves its explicit source assignment intact.

LOCK CUTS

Keep the source slice divisions

In Phrase Lab, LOCK CUTS prevents changes to the source cut points caused by sensitivity and beat-grid adjustments. It does not select a sound for a map position.

Also note: a star is a favourite, and Protect Step is protection from automatic changes. Neither is one of the three locks above.

Envelope, filtering & tone

These settings apply to the chosen source wherever it plays.



Figure 09 / Phrase Lab > Envelope & tone. The right-hand Feel panel is shared globally.

Attack, Decay, Sustain, Release

Attack fades in; **Decay** falls toward Sustain; **Sustain** controls retained level, not duration; **Release** fades out. Source IN / OUT share Attack / Release.

Limits and filters

Voice Limit caps simultaneous source voices. **Low Cut / High Cut** filter its spectrum. **Tail Limit** can shorten MIDI notes, but is ignored by map steps and tuning auditions.

Duration is physical

An envelope cannot sustain beyond recorded audio. Auto Duration governs source duration behavior; it cannot add missing audio. Source Level, Pan and Pitch apply in any mode.

Reset intentionally

RESET SOURCE asks first, resets selection, envelope and MIDI-related controls, but retains loaded audio and core mixing / effects setup. Undo can recover recent edits.

Tune a source for musical playing

Pitch matching is based on the reference note you specify, not automatic note detection.



Figure 10 / Source Note, Coarse Tune, Fine Tune, pitch algorithm and musical MIDI setup.

Reference note

Set **Source Note / MIDI number** to the recording's actual pitch. Here **C3 = MIDI 60**. For an E3 sample (MIDI 64), incoming G3 (MIDI 67) produces +3 semitones.

Coarse and fine

Coarse Tune and **Fine Tune** correct recorded pitch. Coarse adjustment auditions up to two seconds. Source Note behaves inversely to its reference readout: turning left lowers audible pitch; right raises it. Different pitches within one recording need preparation or a locked slice.

Repitch vs Preserve Speed

Repitch changes playback speed with pitch. **Preserve Speed** retains nominal duration, at higher CPU cost and possible transient softening. **Musical MIDI only**; neither extends source duration.

Performance controls

Velocity Response sets velocity-to-loudness influence; MIDI Octave Offset shifts -3 to +3 octaves; Retrigger can overlap or replace voices. Sustain CC64 works. Channel pitch bend has a +/-2 semitone range.

Two ways to play from a keyboard

Manual Keys triggers map positions. Musical MIDI plays pitched sources.

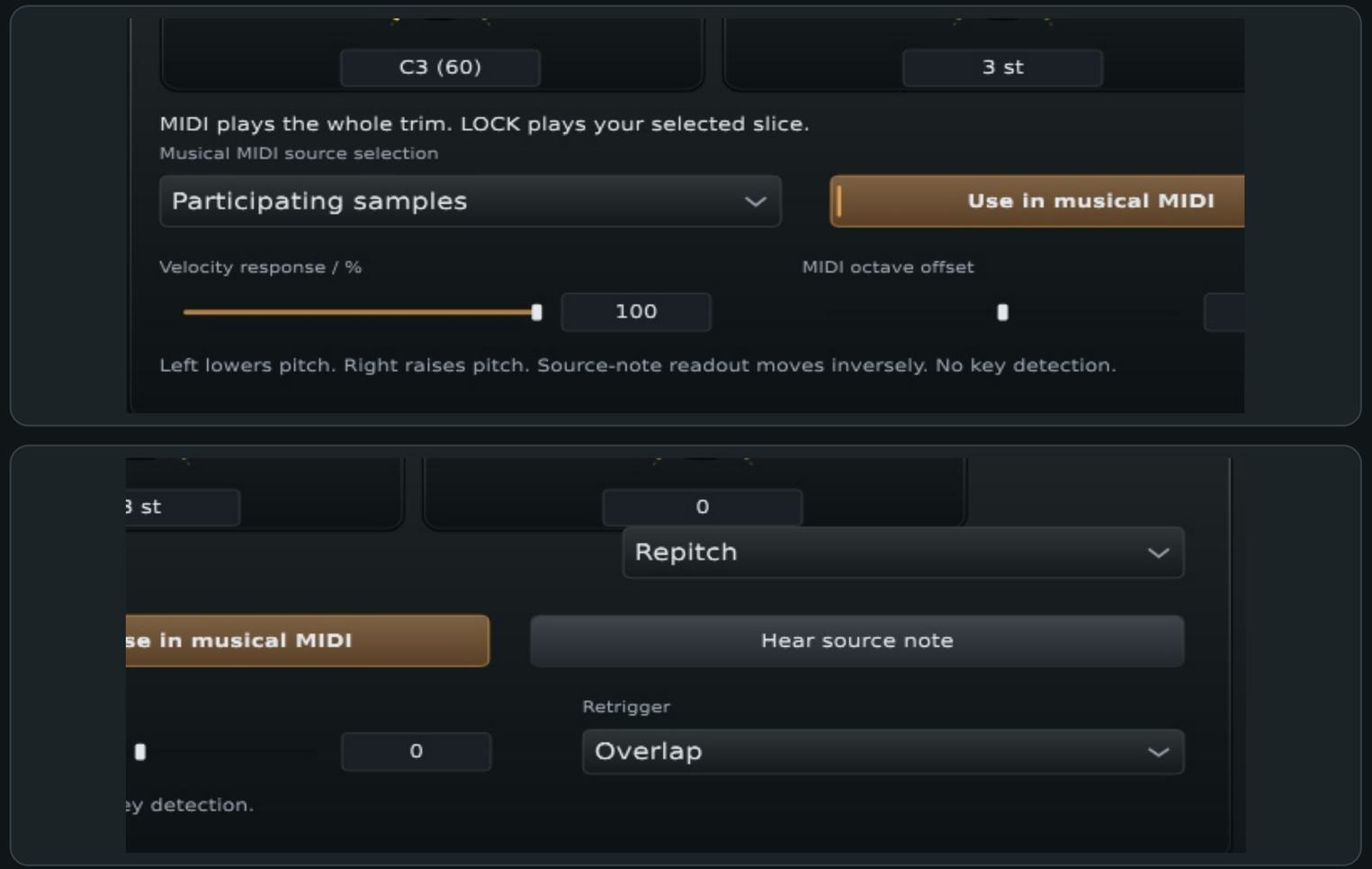


Figure 11 / Musical MIDI participation, velocity and note articulation settings.

Manual / Keys

Map positions 1-64 map from **C1 to D#6** (MIDI 36-99 in Ableton). A 16-position map gives 16 playable notes; positions beyond 64 remain sequencer-only. Notes trigger that position on every enabled, unmuted lane.

Map behavior under keys

A position retains its step Pitch, Volume, Length and Reverse. Off remains silent. Pinned notes are predictable; unpinned ones follow automatic allocation. Note-off releases voices. PREVIEW runs the map independently.

MIDI / Musical

Incoming notes determine pitch, velocity and duration; map sequence is bypassed. **Participating Samples** selects enabled sources, or **Selected Sample** limits it. Random uses Odds; Linear cycles. Use MIDI clips or route another track with Live MIDI From and monitoring.

Whole source or locked slice

Unlocked Musical MIDI starts at **trim-start** and plays the source. Source LOCK plays only its selected slice. Audio does not auto-loop; duration, envelope, voices and choke groups still limit it.

Browse the 400 arrangements

One hundred musical starting points, each offered as editable pattern arrangements.

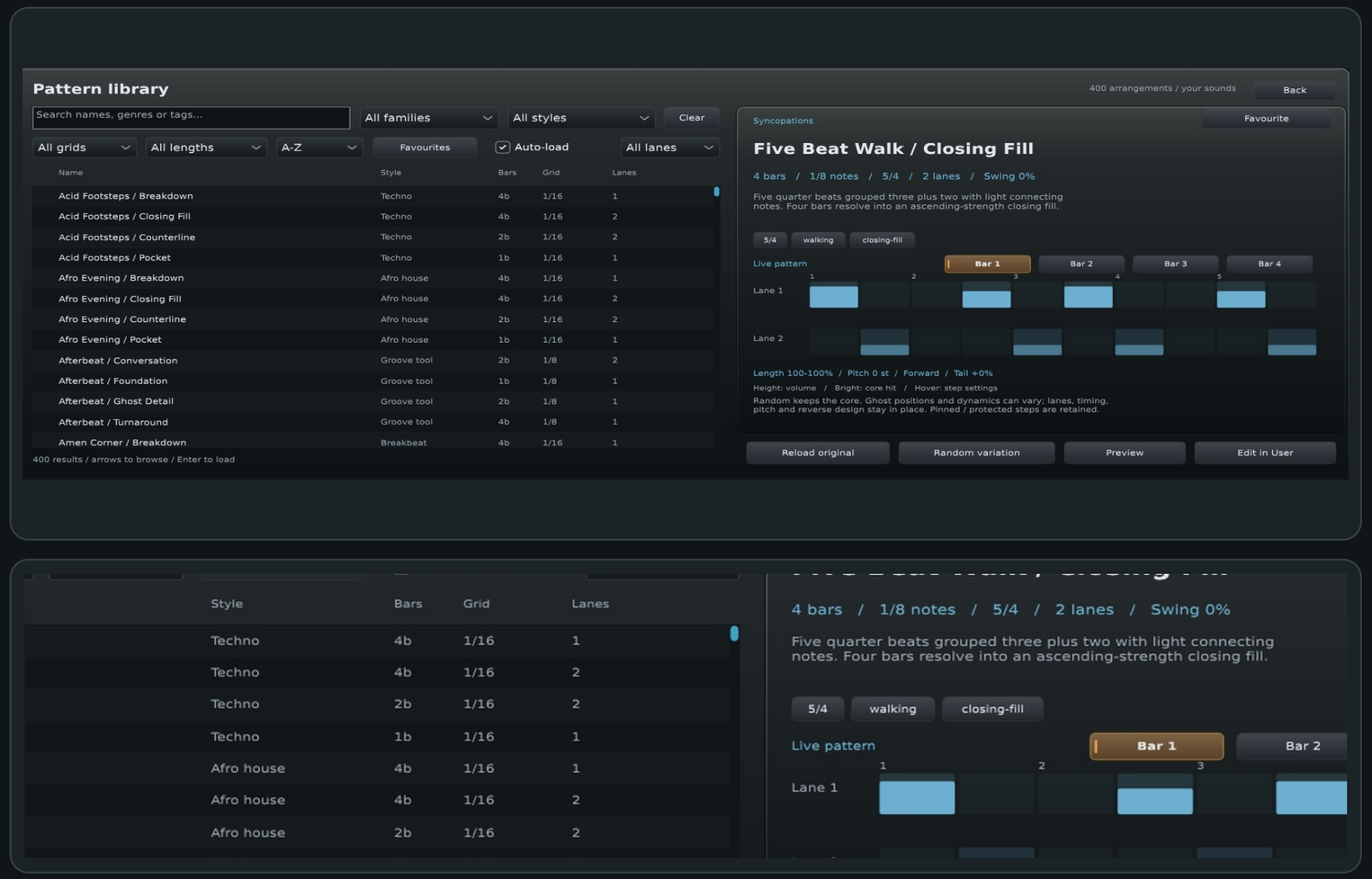


Figure 12 / Pattern browser on the left; pattern intent, meters, lanes and live diagram on the right.

Search & filter

Search name, genre and tags. Filter by **family, style, grid, length and lane count**. Sort A-Z / Z-A, length, grid or lanes. Favourites persist locally on this computer.

Auto-load vs inspect

Auto-load loads a selected row on click or arrow-key browse. Turn it off to inspect first, then choose Load Pattern or Enter. Loading replaces the map, edits, lanes, timing and rhythm controls.

What stays / how to undo

Loaded **samples, source tuning and sends** remain. Undo restores the previous setup. **Edit in User** keeps the loaded arrangement for direct editing.

Hear it with your sounds

Preview uses an internal transport at Live tempo. Load source samples first. Stop Preview or leave the browser to return to the original play mode.

Read a preset before editing

The right-side card explains both the rhythmic goal and the step structure.

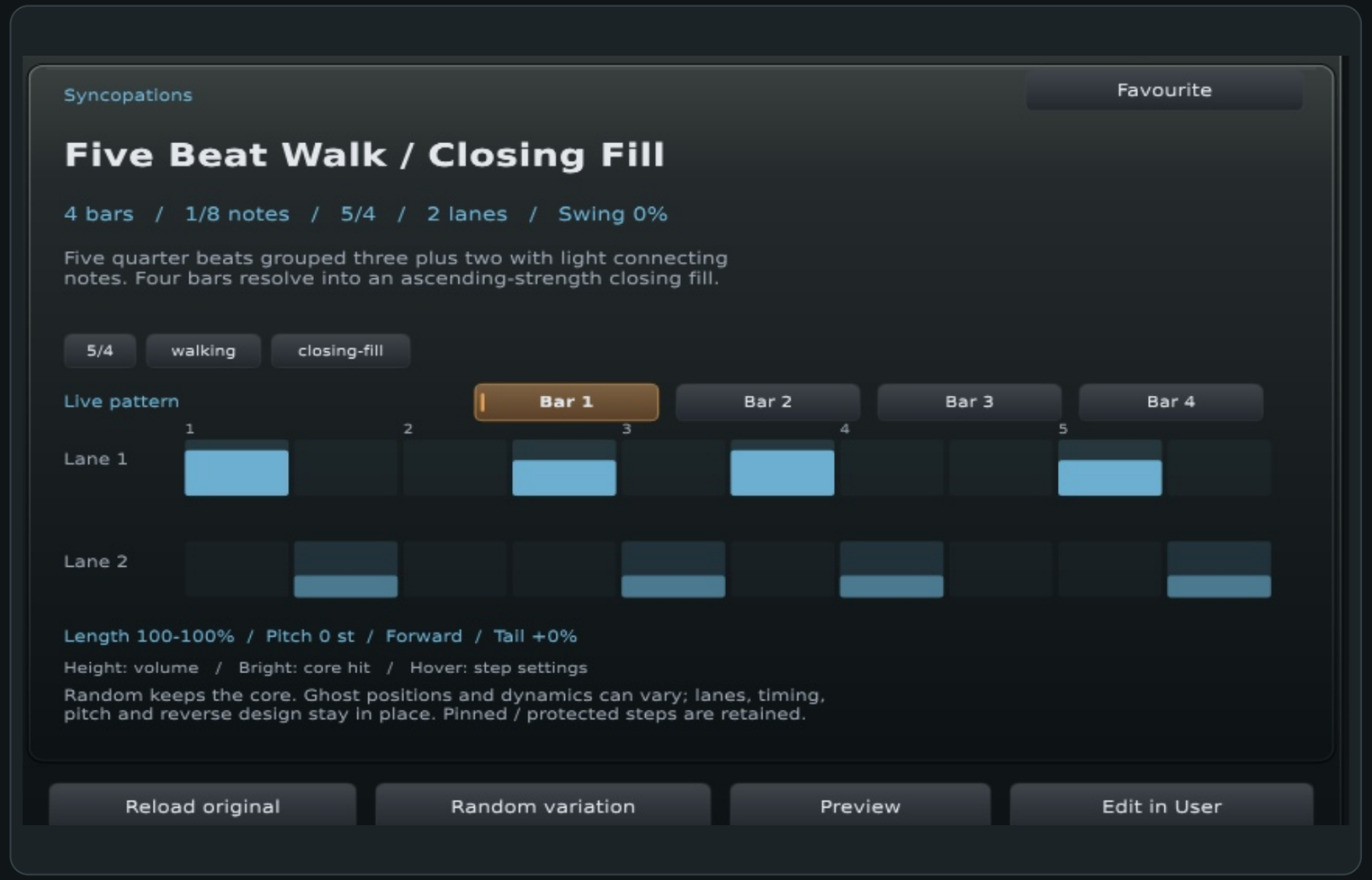


Figure 13 / Read the arrangement description and live block view before applying Random Variation.

Arrangements have a purpose

Foundation / Pocket build compact grooves. **Ghost Detail** adds quieter passing hits. **Conversation / Counterline** use replies between lanes. **Turnaround / Closing Fill** end phrases. **Breakdown** thins activity.

The preview diagram

The card states **bars, grid, meter and lane count**. Each row is a lane. Bright blocks indicate core hits; block height reflects volume. Switch bars to inspect phrase evolution. Hover to see length, pitch, reverse and tails.

Musical scope

The library includes house, garage, hip hop, breaks, DnB, Latin, jazz, odd meter, ambient, mechanical, sparse filler, build, drop-off and bass concepts. Grids run from 1/4 to 1/32.

These are arrangements, not audio

Every pattern plays **your loaded samples**. There are no bundled instrument sounds, and the preview summary reflects your current step changes.

Experimental & unique patterns

The preset can keep its rhythmic identity while giving sound fragments room to move.

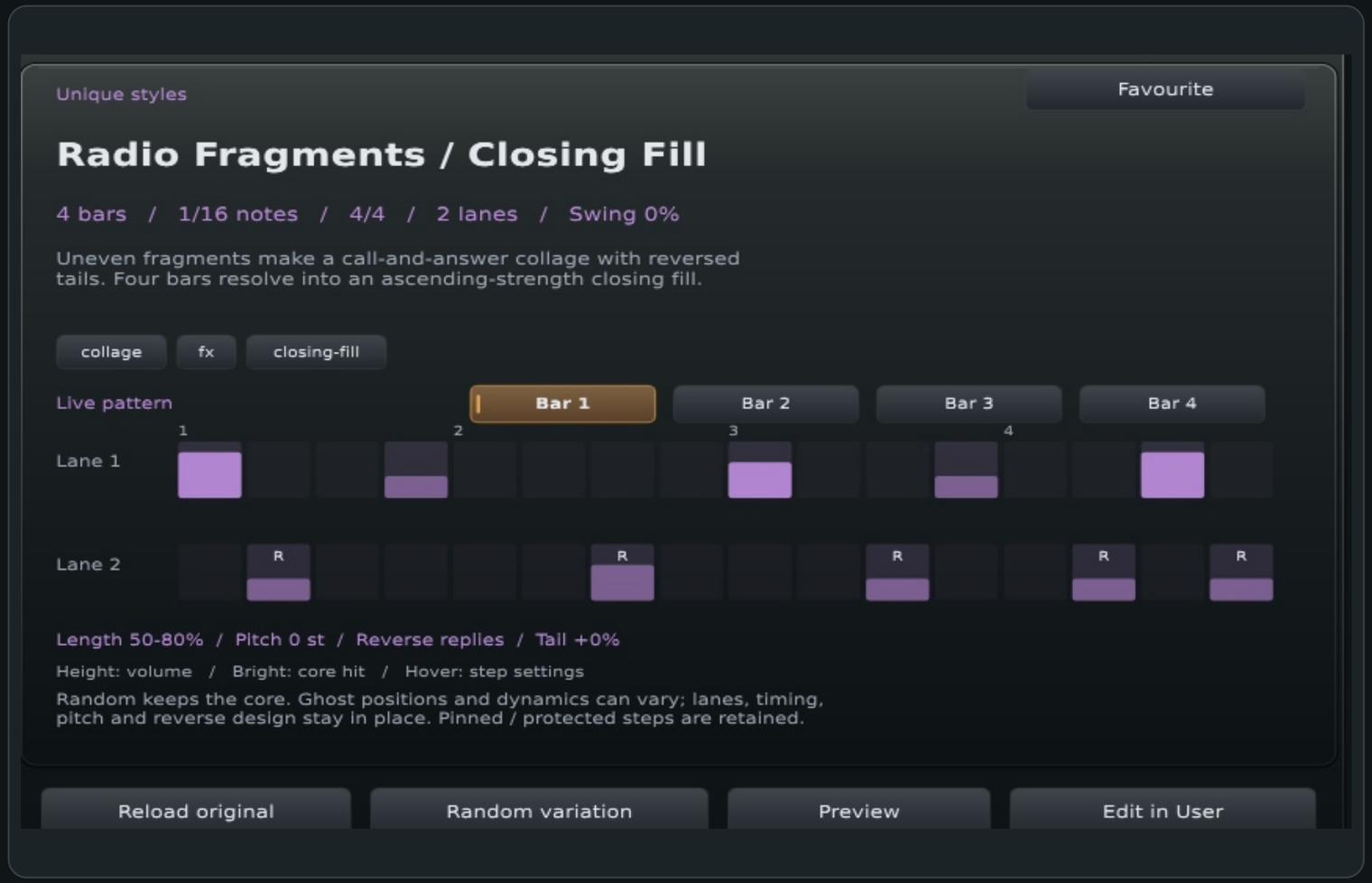


Figure 14 / Experimental patterns show variation intent and reverse markers in the live pattern preview.

What makes these different

Experimental presets may use reverse ripples, collage-like gaps and irregular detail. The example shows **Radio Fragments / Closing Fill**, four bars, 1/16, 4/4 and two lanes.

Slice lengths are deliberate

Rhythm/syncopation presets use **100%** Length. Unique/experimental presets start at **40-80%**. Random Variation stays within those bounds; you may always adjust Length manually.

Bounded Random Variation

Variation retains core hits, fixed rests, lanes, meter and grid. Designated ghost-note regions may gain or lose hits, with small volume changes. Preset pitch and reverse choices persist. Protected and pinned steps remain unchanged.

Reload when required

Reload Original resets a preset. After changing grid, bars or lanes, or switching to User, reload the preset to regain its preset-bounded Random Variation. Saved edited patterns remain edited until replaced.

Random is not always random

Sound choice follows modes, weights, roles and source restrictions.

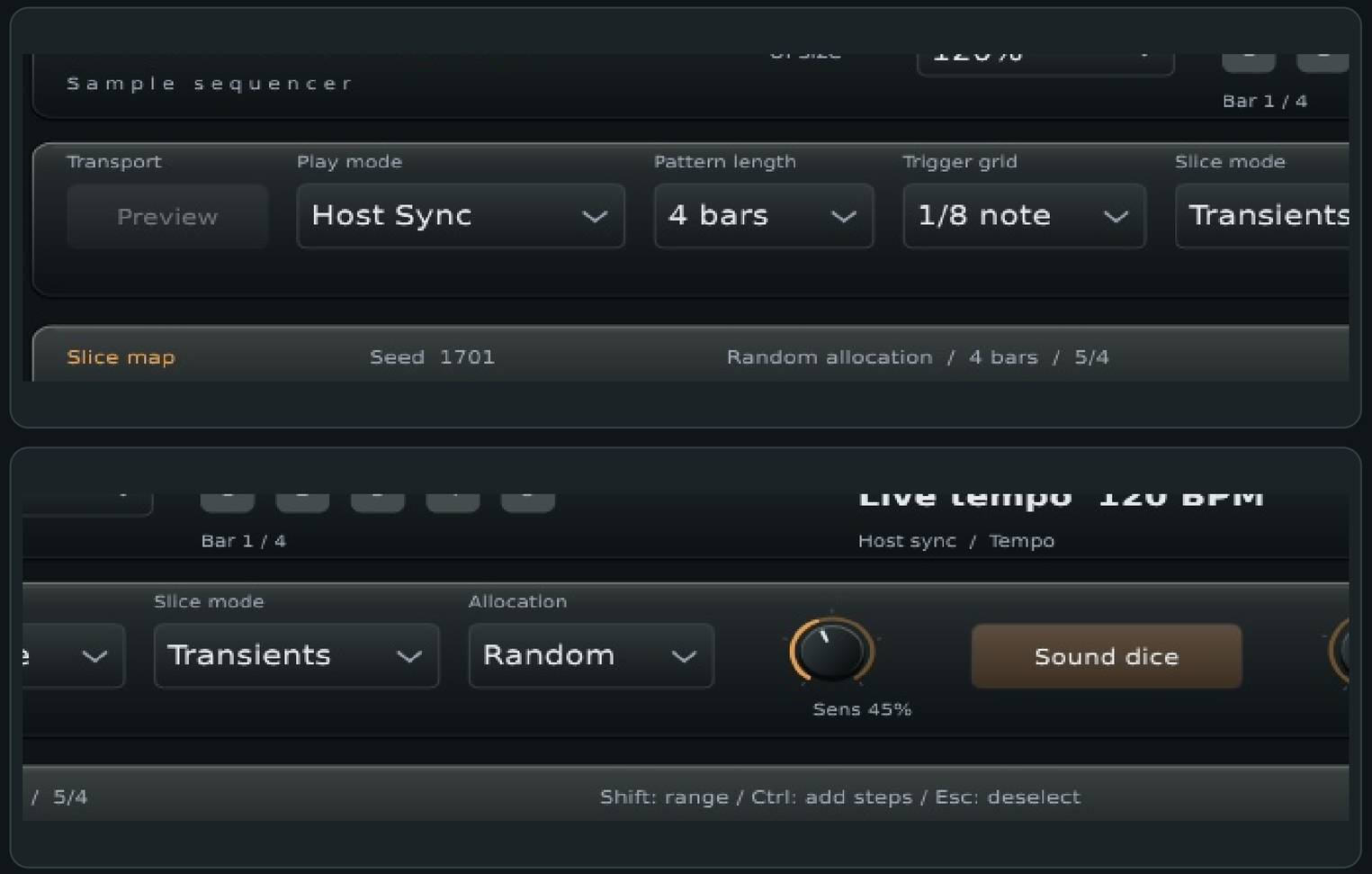


Figure 15 / Slice Map allocation menu, Sound Dice and per-source selection settings.

Linear vs Random

Linear walks through sources. **Random** consults the sound-choice dropdown, eligibility rules and per-source Odds. Exact pins and explicit source assignments override these systems.

Drum roles

Analyzes approximate tonal body and tails to favor lower-body foundations, middle-body backbeats and lighter details between accents. It is **not instrument classification or key detection**. Rhythm/syncopation presets choose this automatically.

Balanced sources

Cycles through a shuffled eligible pool before repeats when eligibility/seeds are stable. Odds influence order; exclusions and per-step seeds can alter the pool. Experimental presets choose Balanced Sources.

Other choices

Weighted favors substantial accents and softer/sustained detail; **Free random** picks independently; **Phrase choices** reuse sources with changing slices; **Repeat choices** reuse exact fragments.

Three dice, three different jobs

Sound choice, rhythm placement and articulation are controlled separately.



Figure 16 / Global Feel controls. Switch from Subtle to Wide and raise variation to hear Feel Dice.

Sound Dice

Reallocates eligible sounds in **Random** mode. Global **Sound Change** controls what fraction is considered; 25% means approximately a quarter. A random result may select the same sound again.

Rhythm Dice

Rearranges active positions and strengths using the **Change** amount. **Hold R** blocks it. Hold S blocks Sound Dice; neither prevents direct edits or loading a new preset.

Feel Dice

Varies articulation, but requires active Feel variation settings to be audible. **Useful Hits** filters weak/short candidates; **Level Match** evens slice loudness. Offbeat Bias favors gaps in Wide response.

Scope and boundaries

Selections restrict Sound and Rhythm Dice to selected positions; DESELECT / Escape targets the whole map. Timing and Strength Variation are controllable. **Repeat** stops Evolve. **COMPARE: FEEL OFF** bypasses without resetting. Length Variation is inactive.

Send, record & export a loop

Output routes are separate from the built-in reverb and main track output.

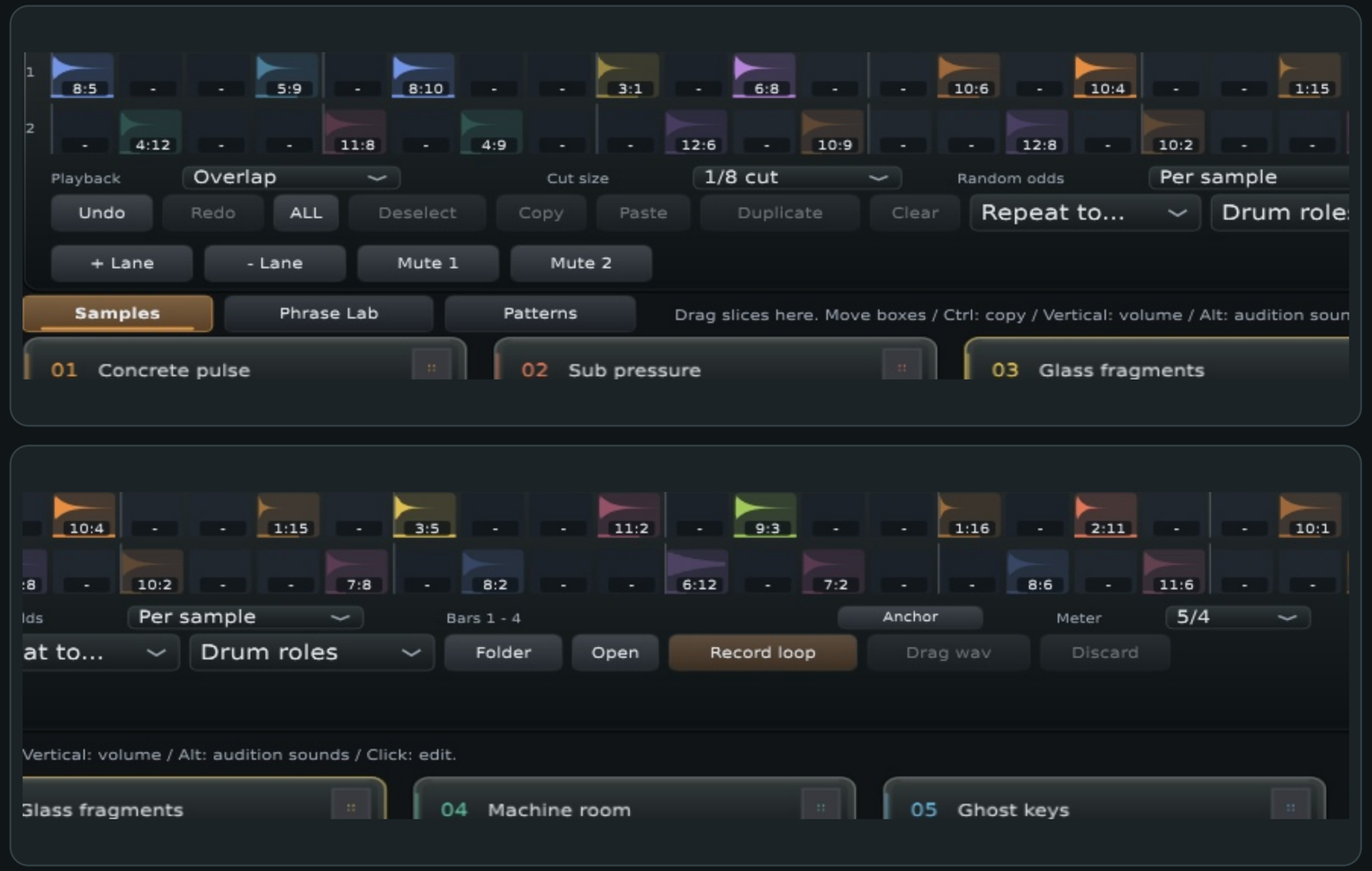


Figure 17 / FOLDER, OPEN, RECORD LOOP and DRAG WAV are in the central Slice Map toolbar.

Route the four stereo sends

In Ableton, create an audio track and choose the Drift Slice track under **Audio From**. Select the **Send A / B / C / D** output and set **Monitor: In**. Put effects on the receiving track; they are not the Live Return knobs.

Set the destination

Press **FOLDER** to choose a writable parent location. The plugin creates a named session folder. **OPEN** reveals it.

Capture a complete phrase

Press **RECORD LOOP**, then start playback. Capture begins at the next plugin loop boundary, runs one complete pattern, and displays progress. Press again to cancel.

Drag WAV into the project

Use **DRAG WAV** to drop stereo 24-bit WAV into an audio track at the current sample rate. It contains plugin main output and internal FX, not external return FX or downstream devices. Tails past the loop end are omitted.

Keep your sessions and audio portable

Exported WAV files and source paths are different things.



Recording folder

The output destination and session identity are stored in plugin state. The last destination can be reused by later instances if it is still writable.

Unexported takes

Unexported recordings are removed after discard, replacement or normal plugin close. An exported take remains available.

External dragging

Starting a drag marks the take as exported even if the drag is cancelled, because the DAW may still refer to its original path. A crash may leave a partial take.

Keep referenced files

Use OPEN to manage takes. Do not remove files that your Live set still references.

Source sample files

Drift Slice does not copy your imported WAV / MP3 files into a library. Keep their original paths accessible when moving or reopening projects.

Safety

Keep one plugin version installed and back up important DAW projects before replacing the plugin. Recording and plugin presets are not self-contained sample archives.

Shortcuts & silence checklist

Use the on-screen controls if your DAW intercepts keyboard shortcuts.

MAP SHORTCUTS

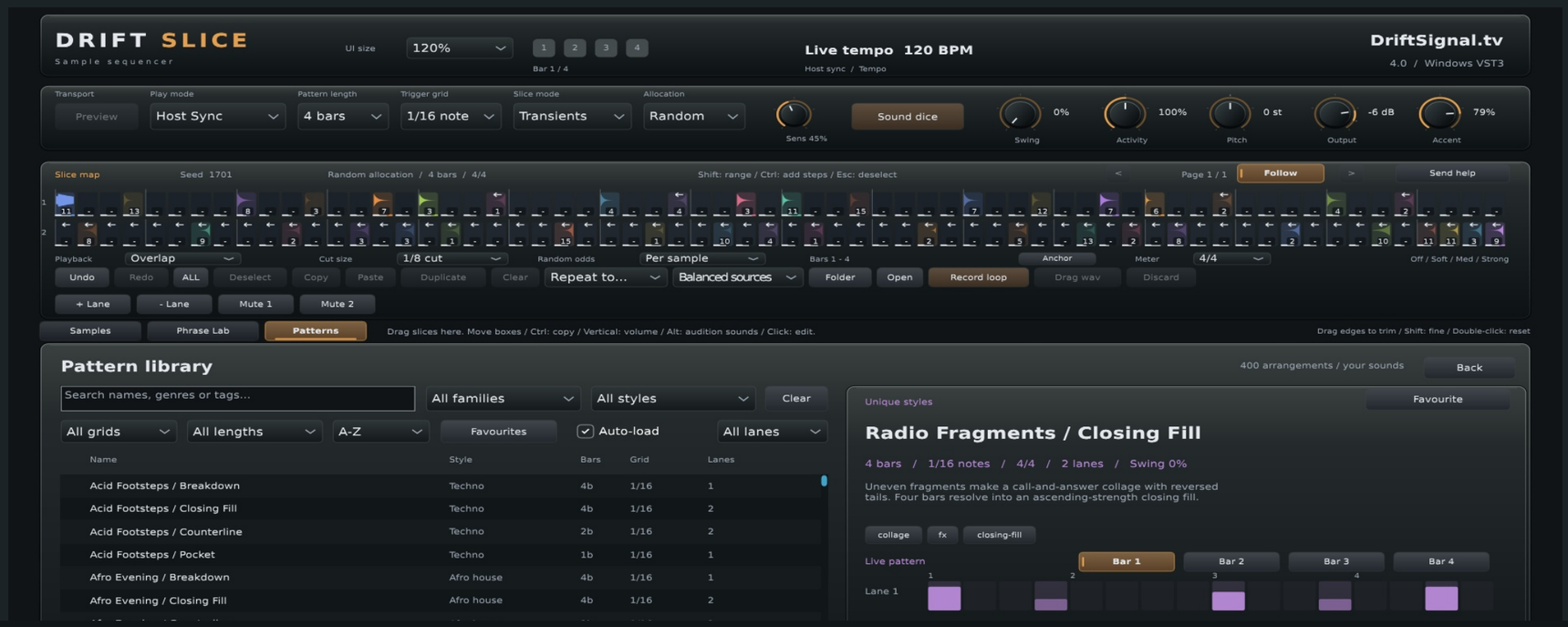
Ctrl + C / V	Copy / paste
Ctrl + D	Duplicate
Ctrl + A	Select all
Ctrl + Z	Undo
Ctrl + Y or Ctrl + Shift + Z	Redo
Delete / Backspace	Silence selected boxes
Escape	Deselect
Shift + click	Rectangle selection
Ctrl + click	Add / remove boxes
Ctrl + drag	Copy selected steps

Click the map to give it focus. On macOS, Command works in place of Ctrl for supported operations.

IF SOMETHING IS SILENT

1. Is the **source muted** or the **lane muted**?
2. Is the map hit Off, weak, or set to **0% volume**?
3. Does the **trimmed region** contain usable audio?
4. Are **Only Favourites**, allowed ranges or exclusions blocking it?
5. Does the chosen **play mode** match the transport / keyboard you are using?
6. In Musical MIDI, is the source allowed under **Participating Samples**?
7. Did a pinned slice number become invalid after **re-slicing**?
8. For sends, is the **receiving audio track** set to the correct output and Monitor In?

Hover controls and inspect LAST PLAYED to check which sound was actually triggered.



ONE SOUND.
ENDLESS DIRECTIONS.

Slice. Sequence. Play. | Drift Slice 4 | Windows + macOS VST3

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