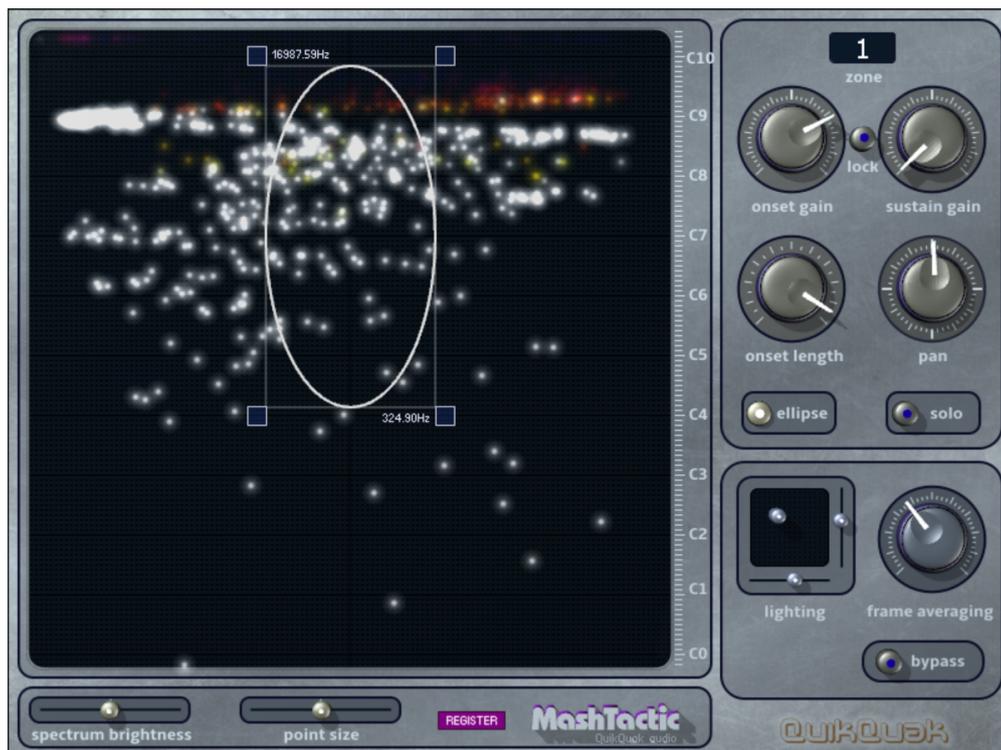


MashTactic

User guide

MashTactic was initially designed as a mash-up tool. It can separate different parts of a full mix, manipulating different frequencies and stereo location. Up to eight zones can be created that can then be panned, emphasised or cut out completely. It can be viewed as an eight band filter that exists in stereo ranges as well as frequency.

Transients of varying length can be separated from constant sounds, which allows the user to manipulate the initial punch of percussion, either by emphasising or softening the attack, this can be done separately in any of the eight zones.



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Installation

MashTactic is a stereo effects plug-in, for Audio Unit and VST compatible hosts. As there are many different hosts, please consult your hosts' manual for FX usage and routing.

PC: The file you download is in a simple plug-in format. Once you have 'unzipped' it you will have a folder with all the plug-in resources in it. Simply copy the entire folder directly into your plug-in folder. This location is host specific but often found somewhere like "C:\Program Files\Vstplugins." Please consult your host's manual for plug-in locations if not.

Mac: The zipped file contains a basic package installer, this will place the VST and Audio Units (AU) versions in a standard place. Which is "HD/Library/Audio/Plug-ins/" the "Component" sub folder from there is for AU, and the other is "VST." You are free to move these to any location.

Note: Some hosts do not recognise new plug-ins, and a complete rescan is needed to pick up on their existence.

Registering:

Clicking on the REGISTER button on the user interface brings up the registration window. You must buy a key to unlock the evaluation copy. Use the 'SHOP' button to bring up the on-line shop, or simply go to: quikquak.com/shop_go.html

Once you have received your key through email, enter the requested details into the Registration window. Use your computer's copy/paste mechanism to prevent possible errors.

Getting started

MashTactic is an effect so it must be plugged into an available effect channel on your host software. When first loaded that are no zones and all the setting are passing audio straight through. Find an length of stereo audio like a mix of a song, and play it through MashTactic.

Left click and hold on the main panel and start to drag the mouse in any direction. You've now created a zone which will play anything that's contained within it. Up to eight of these can be created. The currently selected zone number is marked at the top, and every dial in that surrounding area is specific for that zone. Right click (PC) or ctrl-click (Mac) a zone to delete it.

By right clicking (ctrl-click on Mac) on a dial or slider you can reset them to default positions)

Holding shift while turning a dial or moving a slider alters the parameter slowly for more accurate adjustments.

Plug-in latency is **4096** samples at all sample rates. Which in milliseconds is:
(1000 * 4096 / sample rate)

Controls

Main panel:

The large panel on the left of the plug-in is the main audio viewing area.

It displays stereo pan for the X axis, with centre pan in the middle, and frequency in linear chromatic scale on the Y axis. Octaves are marked on the right which each 'C' on the scale. When the mouse pointer is hovered over the panel, current frequency at that location is displayed next to the pointer.

Left click dragging the mouse starts to draw a zone, which can be pulled and dragged anywhere on the panel. Once created you can click-drag inside the zone to move it, and also drag one of the corner boxes to resize it. Up to eight of these zones can be created, and the later numbered zones take precedence over zones they overlap. It's probably best not to overlap the zones for the sake of clarity.

*Right clicking (CTRL clicking on Mac) will delete the zone under the mouse pointer. This will make all later numbered zones to move down in value. So if you delete zone 1 then zone 2 will be renamed 1.

Zone control panel

Selection:

The area shown on the right controls the effect of each zone. When a zone is clicked on, or it is chosen on the drop down zone selecting, it is high-lighted and all the current controls are displayed here.

Onset gain:

An onset is when a new burst of energy is detected in the frequency domain. The start of instruments or percussive sounds will be seen as an onset. The gain of the initial onset can be altered allowed the user to reduce or exaggerate the initial hit of a sound.

Sustain gain:

When an onset carries forward it turns into a sustain, and the sustain's volume can be adjusted here.

* Note when both values are at equal top the onset and sustain are equal and at original volumes.

Lock button:

This simply joins the two dials together for conveniently adjusting onset and sustain in equal amounts.

Onset length:

Onset length is the amount of time the onset turns into the sustain. It is adjusted in milliseconds and acts as a cross-fade time from onset to sustain. It can be very useful to remove obtrusive percussion or initial instrument hits from a vocal for example, as vocals tend to have more sustain sounds in them.

Pan:

Pan has a dial that allows 180 degree movement of stereo positioning. For example, if a sound is on the far right of the stereo mix, then a 180 degree shift will put it on the far left, and vice-versa. The dial can spin all the way around to give the effect of left and right channels rotating around the listener, although the sound is always just in stereo space.

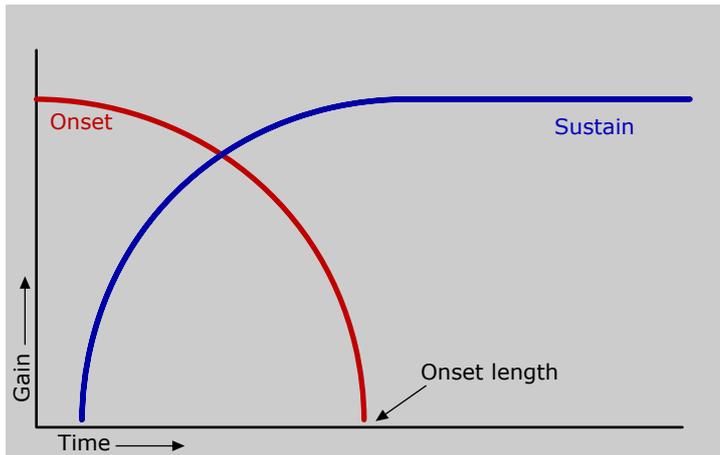
Ellipse:

This button toggles between a square or elliptical shape for the current zone.

Solo:

This switch enable solo mode for the current zone. This allows you to test which zone is doing what. The selected zone will flash yellow to remind you that solo is selected.





The onset process, calculated on each of the spectral frequencies. Volumes can be set for both onset and sustain sections.

Note that at equal volume both transitions add up to a level volume.

Global controls

Frame averaging:

This global parameter sets the amount of averaging the onset transient detectors receive. Think of it as the amount of feeding being brought back into the system. This feature was included because of the surprising effect it had on some material, and is always best to experiment with it. One situation is to grab a vocals reverb or echo into itself, enabling isolation.

Spectrum brightness:

This adjusts the intensity of the main display panel. If the screen is all white dots, and reducing the brightness will show up more features of the sound.

Point size:

Each spectral point is rendered with about 4000 points, the size of which can be adjusted with this slider control.

Bypass:

This passes the audio straight through the plug-in, but keeps the plug-in's latency. This is for comparing your results from the original audio.

Lighting

Light panel:

The peg on the lighting square can alter the light source position, this affects everything on the plug-in. At a distance the light is dimmed, and can be useful to show the main display better.

Horizontal Hue slider:

This will adjust the colour of the light through a varying mix of suitable colours.

* If the saturation level is high the colours won't show as everything will be white.



Usage tips.

Vocal location:

Vocals are usually in the top quarter of the display, somewhere in the middle.

There are two ways a vocal can be isolated, one with the sustain gain turned off and the onset length increased a little. This is because there is generally quite a lot of rapid movement in the words of vocal tracks, and they can be distinguished from surrounding strings etc. The problem with using transients is that percussion and other hits will also come through, although briefly.

The other way is to turn up sustain, and drop onset gain completely. You'll then have to experiment with onset length and frame averaging until you get the desired results.

High values of frame averaging can sometimes highlight a vocal's reverb.

Transient shaping:

Because onset detection can pick up on percussive attacks, MashTactic can also be used to emphasise or dampen those attacks or sustains. Useful for punchy drums and shortening the boom period of kick drums.

Using as a general filter:

There are no harmonic analysers in MashTactic. It's all achieved through stereo balance analysis and very sharp filtering. Some mixes won't be pulled apart that easily, but the 8 filter patches turn out to be very useful at cutting unwanted parts of a mix. Used on 'mash-ups' it can be very useful just to cut away a bassline cleanly, or have two tracks mixed with one half from one track and the other half from another track's frequencies.

Other notes:

By right-clicking (ctrl-click on Mac) on a dial or slider you can reset them to default positions)

Holding **shift** while turning a dial or moving a slider alters the parameter slowly for more accurate adjustments.

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