SLATE + ASH LANDFORMS USER GUIDE

1
PATCH
ARCHITECTURE

Layers

A Landforms patch is made from 2 layers — Layer A and Layer B. Each layer has an Articulation and three general control categories — Envelope, Perspective, and Expression.

A layer's Articulation is its core sound. The Envelope and Perspective controls adjust the shape of this sound. Expression controls the way you interact with the sound.

Each layer can have a unique setup (e.g. Layer A can have a different Envelope to Layer B, or a different Perspective to Layer B). However, patches don't need to include both layers at once; many factory patches only user Layer A, while Layer B is turned off.

Sound Sources

Each Layer consists of multiple Sound Sources. For a traditional orchestral patch, these are the different microphone positions within a mix (e.g. spot mics, close room mics, far room mics, etc) and they combine together to create a realistic balance.

However, the sound sources are more flexible than this and aren't only used to create realistic sounds. They can be adjusted, modulated, or swapped out for different samples altogether.

So, for example, say Layer A has 6 sound sources. By default these are the microphone perspectives that were recorded within the room (Player 1, Player 2, Player 3, Close Room, etc). But, if you wanted, you could make each of the 6 sound sources come from a different instrument, or you could drag and drop 6 seperate user samples and use these instead.

Effects

Next in signal flow of Landforms, the sound passes through three DSP effects. These effects are placed in sequence — Effect 1 → Effect 2 → Effect 3 — but don't all need to be used at once.

Layer A and and Layer B are mixed togther before this stage, so effects are applied to both layers as a whole.

Effects can be chosen from a range split into six categories — Filter, Time, Spatial, Signal, Shift and Phase.
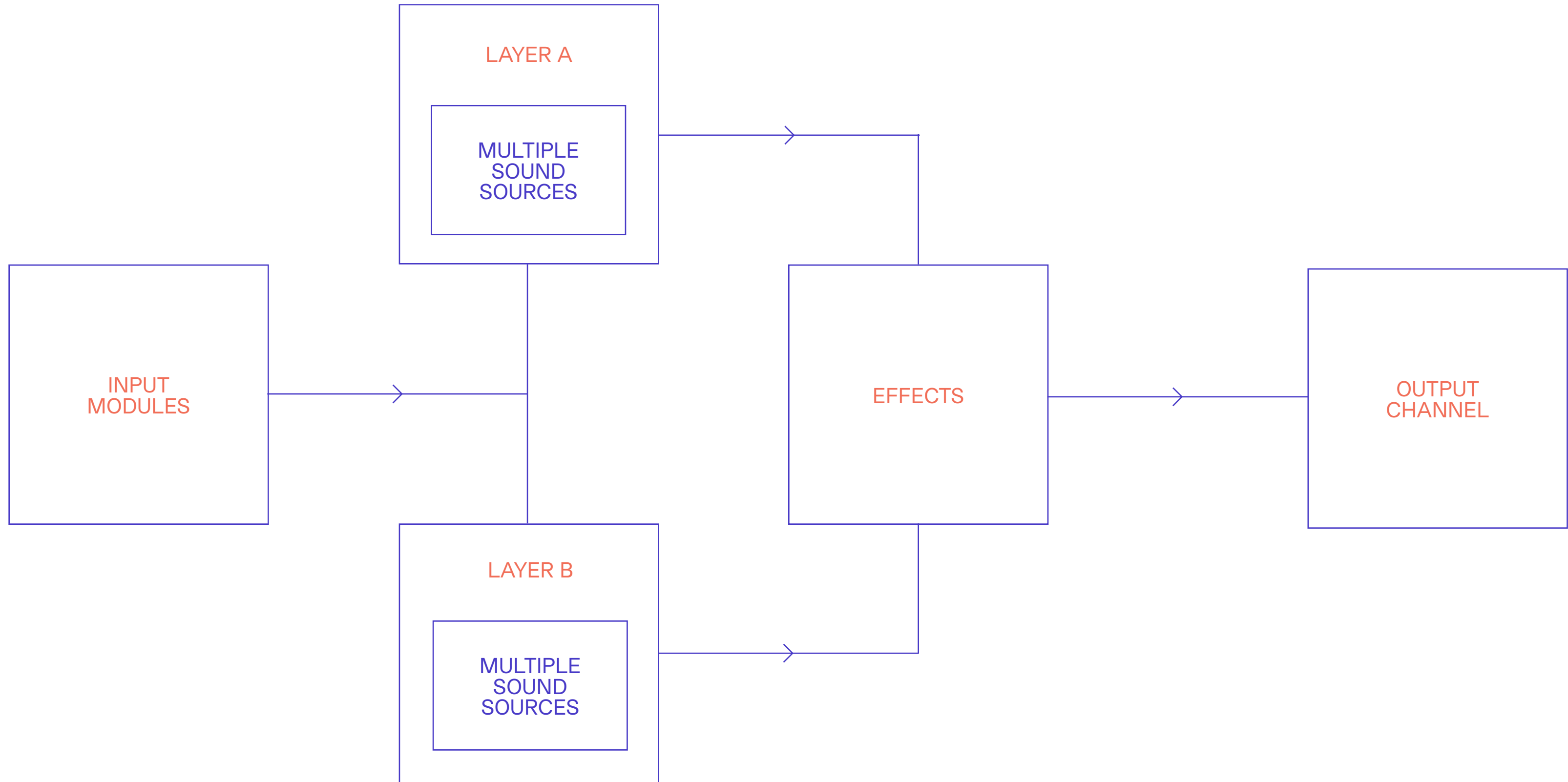
Input Modules

The lefthand (blue) sidebar contains four creative modules — Harmony, Tape, Arp, and Random.

These can be thought of as the input stage of Landforms — something your MIDI data runs through before it reaches the main patch. They allow you to alter the way you interact with a patch in creative ways.

Output Channel

The final stage in the signal path is the Output Channel. This is housed in the the righthand (red) sidebar, and includes a four band master EQ and a range of effects — Lofi, Compress, Delay, Reverb — that can be applied directly before the output of a patch to polish it off.

LAYER A

MULTIPLE
SOUND
SOURCES

INPUT
MODULES

EFFECTS

OUTPUT
CHANNEL

LAYER B

MULTIPLE
SOUND
SOURCES

2

PERFORMANCE
VIEW

Slate + Ash
Triptych

P E

● A → Bow Cycles   B → Etches ●

A + B   Reset   A + B   Reset   A + B   Reset

Envelope   Perspective   Expression

Designed by Slate + Ash
Bristol, UK
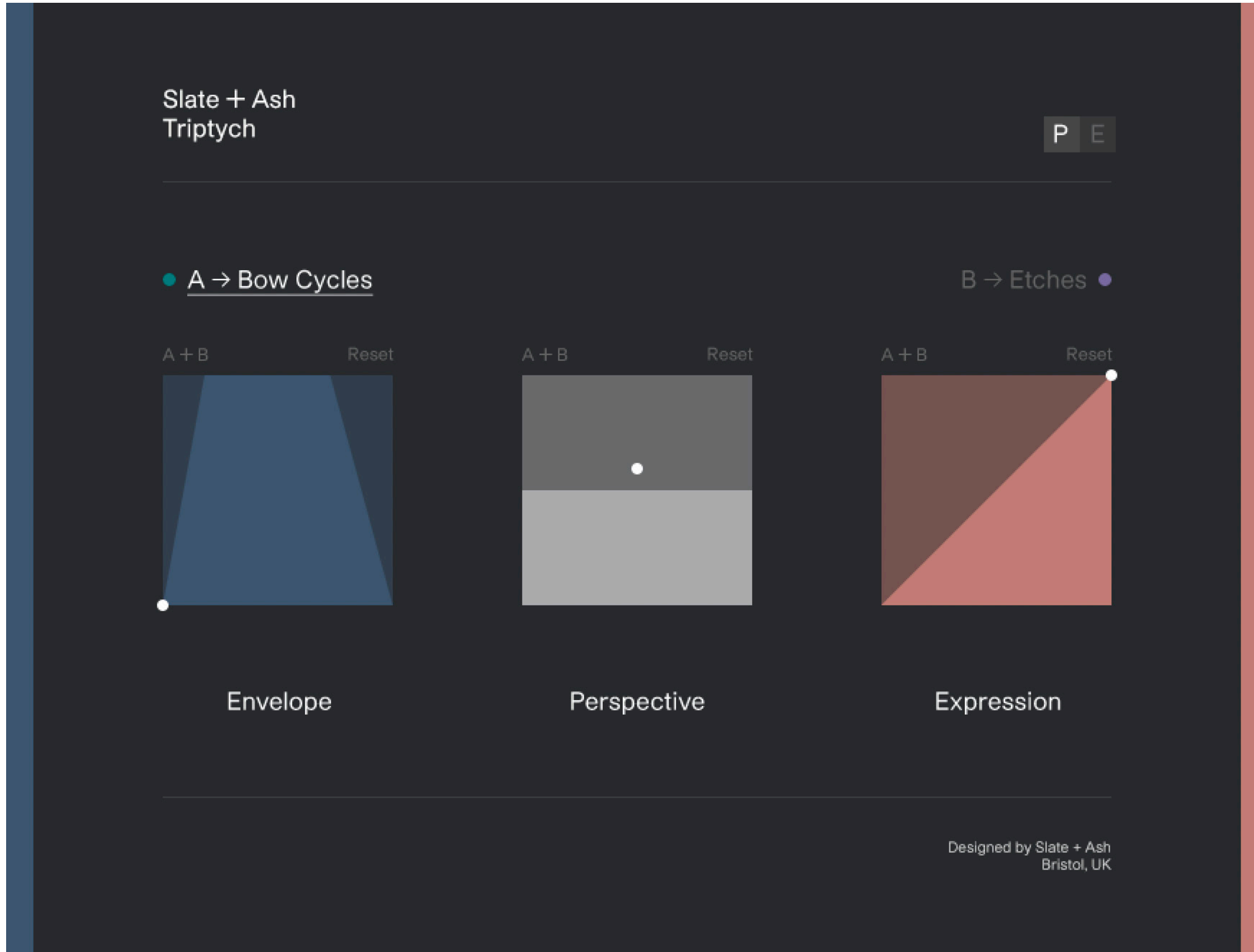
The Performance View is like the homescreen of Land-forms. Here, you can find controls to adjust a layer's most basic settings.

Envelope

Click and drag on the left side of the shape to adjust the attack of a layer's amp envelope; click on the right hand side to adjust the release.

Perspective

Move the cursor on this XY pad to change your perspective within the space: left to right, close to distant.

Expression

Click and drag to adjust the shape of the expression. The coloured shape acts as a graph, with the x axis representing input (by default linked to the mod wheel) and the y axis representing output (by default linked to volume).

→ Click the name of any section (e.g. Envelope, Perspective, Expression) to take you to its edit window, where you can find deeper controls
→ Click the name of the current layer (e.g. Bow Cycles) to take you to its Layer Edit window
→ Click the name of the other layer (e.g. Etches) to take you to its controls
→ Click and drag the dot next to a layer name to change its volume
→ Click the A+B button for any section to toggle whether or not its controls affect both layers
→ Click the Reset button to reset a section (and all controls within) to its default state

3
LAYER
EDIT

Here, you can make changes to the articulation that a layer is using. Click the family name (e.g. Solo Violin) to select a family, then click the name of an articulation (e.g. Arpeggio Sweeps) to load it up. Use the controls on the right of the window to adjust the articulation's properties.

Source

As well as turning on or off a layer using the Source button, you can use these basic controls to adjust an articulation's properties.

Key Range

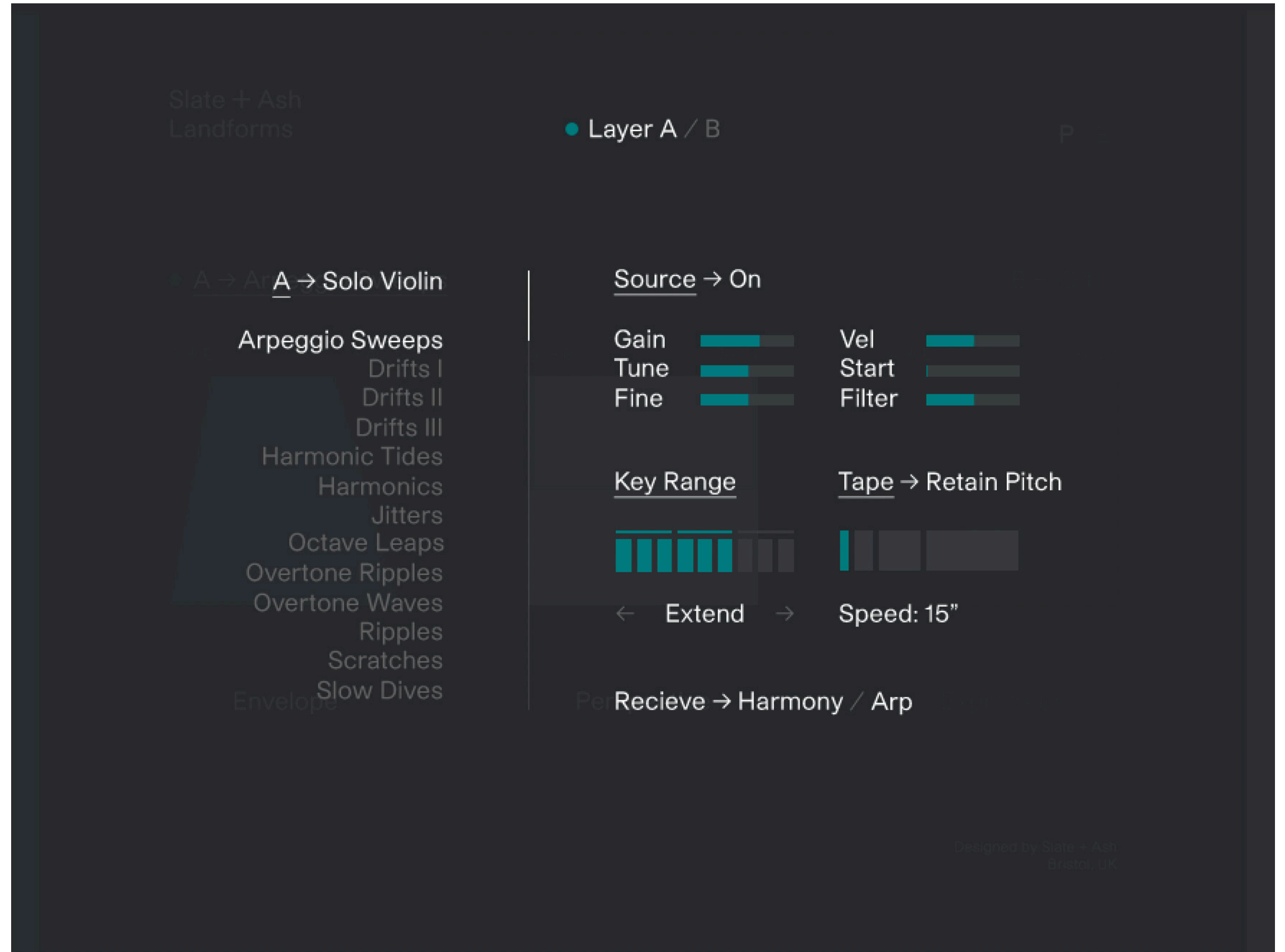Use this control to extend the key range for an articulation up or down from its native range on the keyboard.

Tape

Stretch and pitch samples as if they have been run through a tape machine and then played back at a different tape speed.

Receive

Use these controls to engage or disengage the Harmony or Arp modules for this layer.

→ Turn on Retain Pitch to keep the pitch correct on your keyboard while retaining the tape-stretched sound

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Landforms

● Layer A / B

A → A A → Solo Violin

Source → On

Arpeggio Sweeps
Drifts I
Drifts II
Drifts III
Harmonic Tides
Harmonics
Jitters
Octave Leaps
Overtone Ripples
Overtone Waves
Ripples
Scratches
Slow Dives
Envelope

Gain   Vel
Tune   Start
Fine   Filter

Key Range   Tape → Retain Pitch

←   Extend   →   Speed: 15"

Recieve → Harmony / Arp

4
ENVELOPE
EDIT

Slate + Ash
Triptych

Envelope → A / B → Amp / Filter / Pitch   P

A →

A + B   A + B

Envelope   Random

Att   �   Att   ▭
Dec   ▭   Rel   ▭
Sus   ▭   Depth ▭
Rel   ▭

Parameters

Cutoff ▭
Res   ▭
Depth   ▭

spective   Expression

Designed by Slate + Ash
Bristol, UK

Use this window to adjust a layer's envelope. Each layer has three envelopes: Amp, Filter, and Pitch. Use the controls at the top of the window to move between these.

Envelope

These basic ADSR controls can be used to change the shape of each envelope.

Random

Use these controls to introduce random variation to the envelope Attack, Release, and modulation Depth.

Parameters

Both the Filter and Pitch envelopes have further parameters to adjust how their modulation interacts with the sound.

→ The Amp envelope doesn't have a sustain value, but rather an on/off switch for its sustain section

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PERSPECTIVE EDIT

This window contains an in-depth editor to adjust the mix between consitutuent sound sources of a layer. The square on the left represents a space, with characters (e.g. 1, 2, 3, C, M, F, S) signifying different sound sources within it. The white dot represents a microphone, listening in to the sound sources. Moving these elements around the space — closer together; further apart; left to right — can drastically alter the sound.
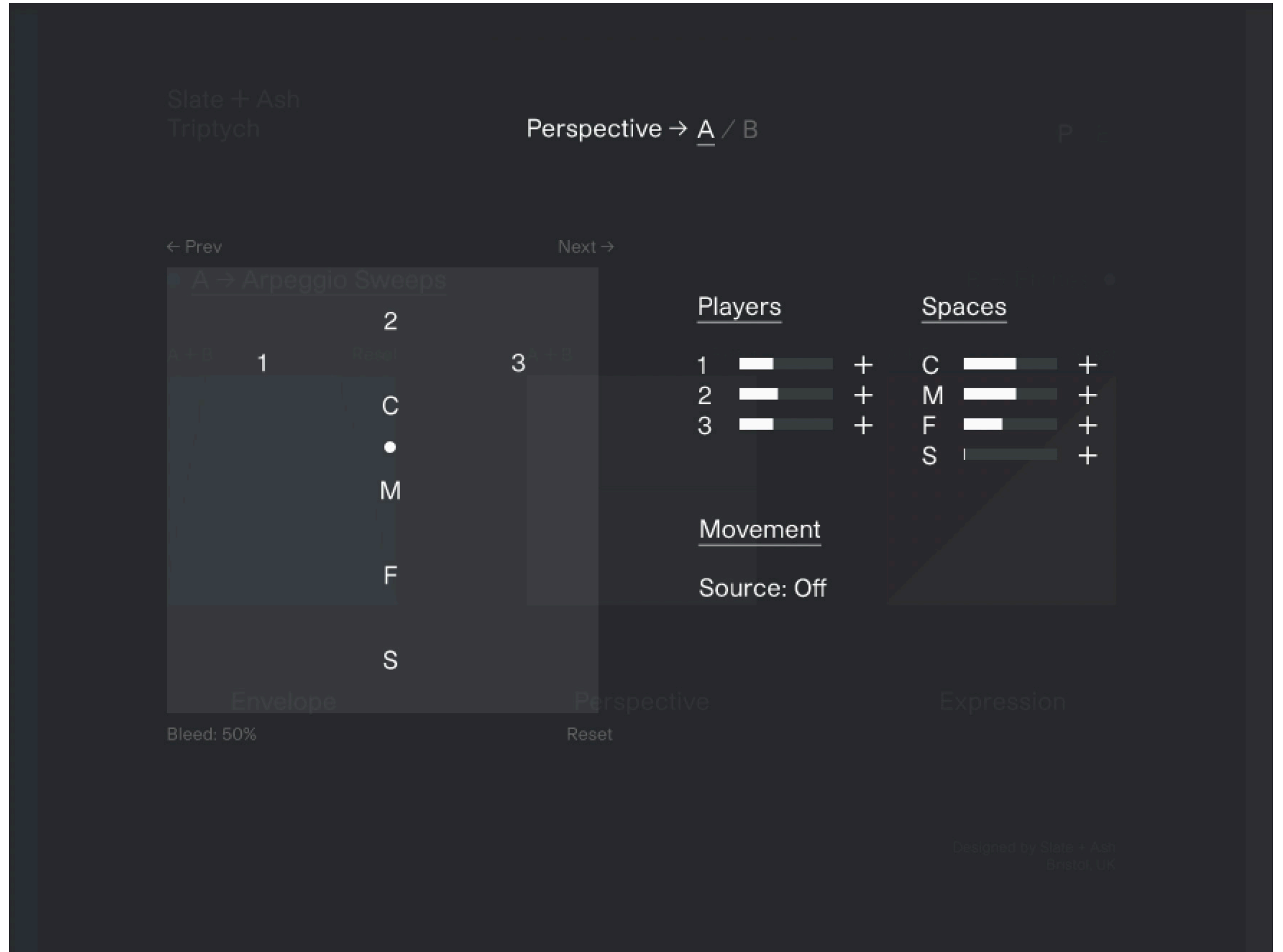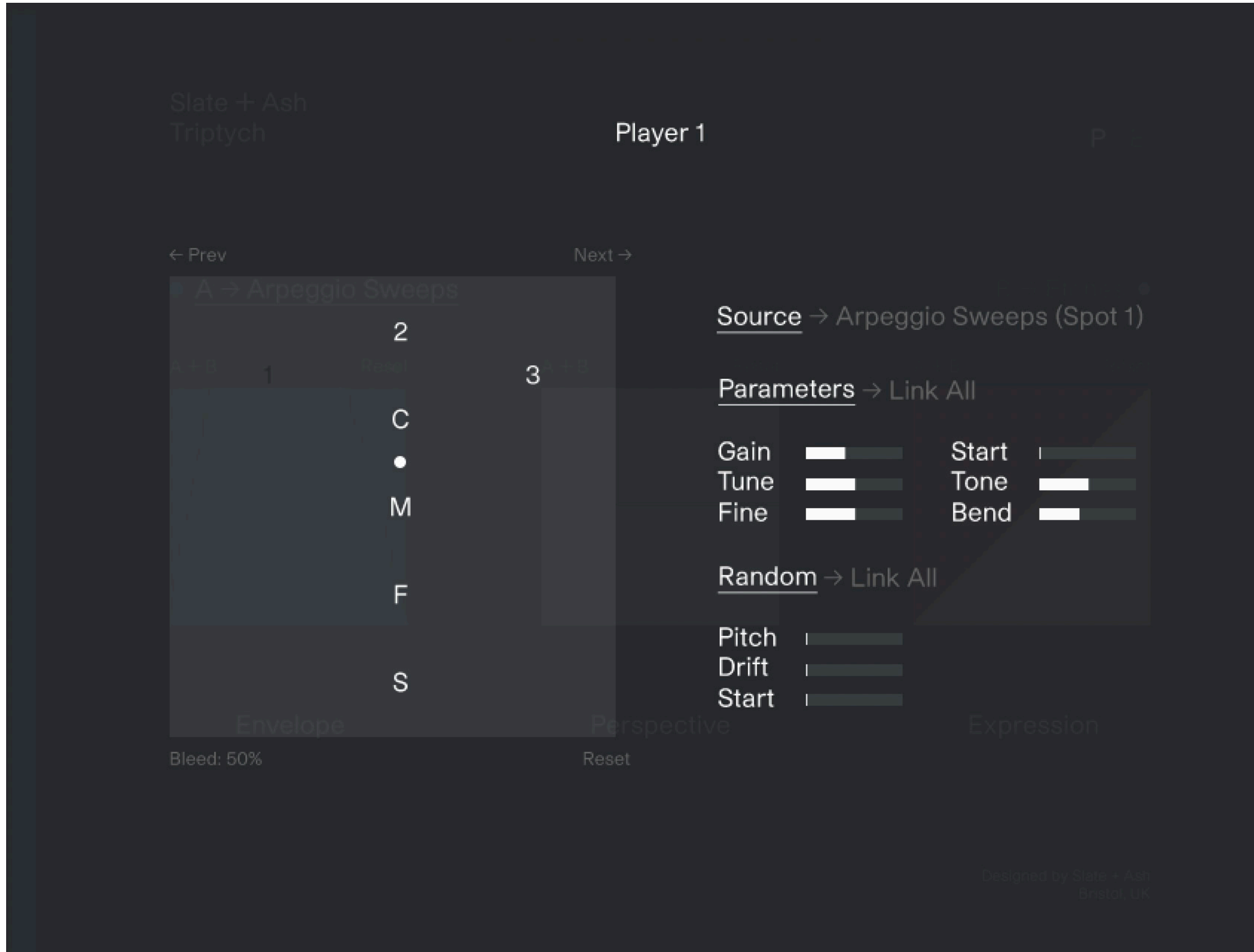
XY Pad

The digits 1, 2, and 3 each represent a player within the space. C and M are the Close and Mid perspectives. S is Smear, a spectrally blurred version of the sound. The F position, or Far position, is slightly different from the others: it is a live reverb that reacts to a combination between its proximity to the other sound sources and the microphone cursor.

Other Controls

If you don't want to use the XY pad, layers can be mixed manually using the sliders on the right of the window. The Movement section allows you to introduce modulation around the XY pad (see section 1 MODULATION).

→ Click the character of a sound source (e.g. 1, 2, 3, etc) to mute it
→ Use the Bleed control in the bottom left to adjust the amount of bleed between sound sources; lowering this can help hone in on specific sound sources
→ When using an articulaition from the Processed family, characters represent different effect chains rather than perspectives within a room

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Triptych

P

Player 1

← Prev

Next →

A → Arpeggio Sweeps

2

3

1   Reset

C

•

M

F

S

Envelope   Perspective   Expression

Bleed: 50%   Reset

Source → Arpeggio Sweeps (Spot 1)

Parameters → Link All

Gain   Start
Tune   Tone
Fine   Bend

Random → Link All

Pitch
Drift
Start

Designed by Slate + Ash
Bristol, UK

Clicking the + for any sound source in the Perspective Edit window brings up the Source Edit window, where you can adjust settings for a specific sound source. These parameters are unique to each sound source within a layer.

Source

Click here to change the source audio sample for this sound source (see section 1 SOURCE SELECT).

Parameters

Use these sliders to adjust parameters for a sound source. Bend is its pitch bend range; Start is the start point within its sample.

Random

These controls can introduce random variation to a sound. The Drift control introduces a slow, sloppy pitch modulation that increases in intensity over time.

→ Click the letter for a sound source (e.g. 1, 2, 3, etc) to switch to its controls
→ The controls for the Far sound source are different to the rest, instead showing reverb parameters
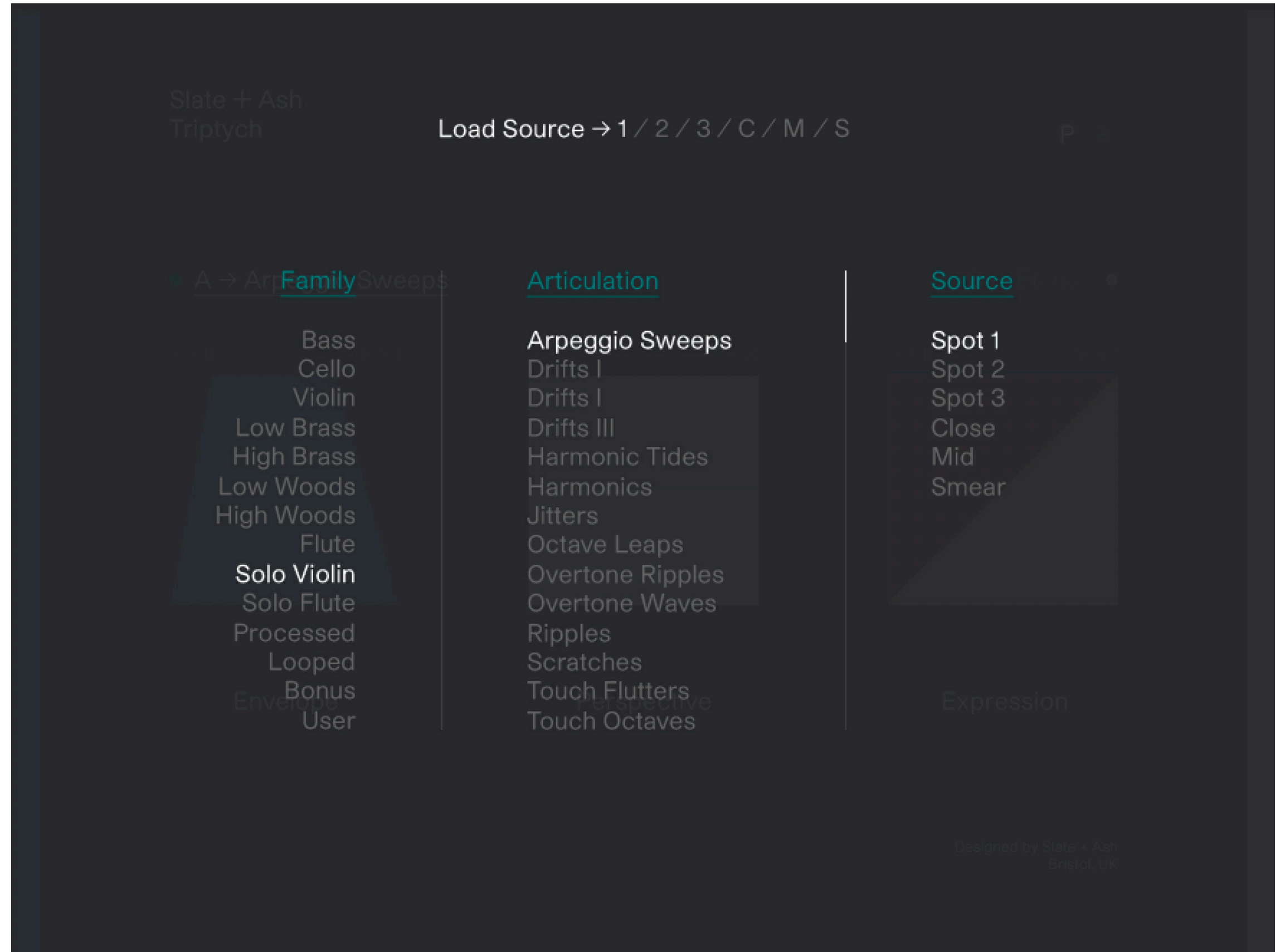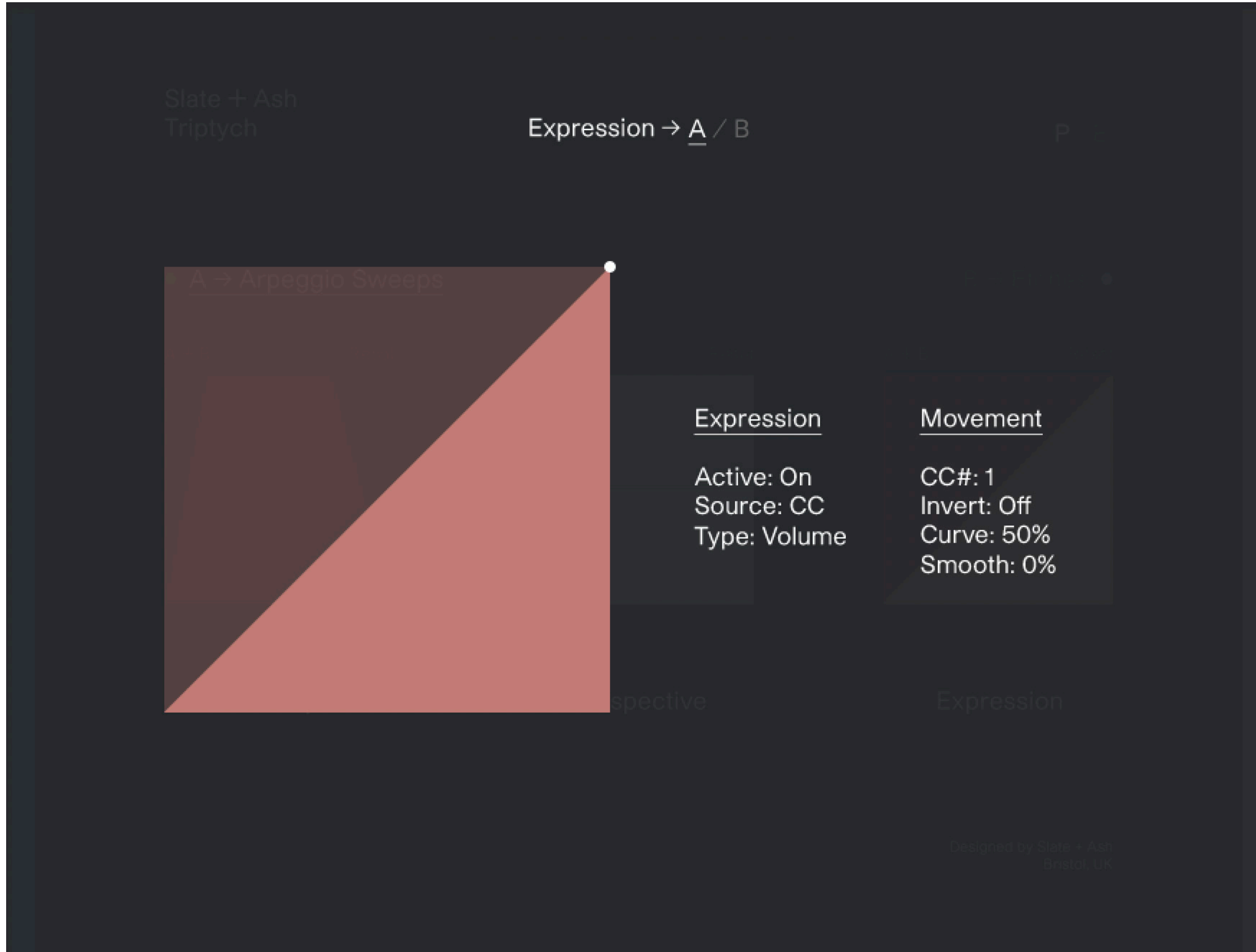
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SOURCE
SELECT

In the Source Select window, it's possible to swap out the sample for any sound source from the one that's loaded in by default. To do this, enter the Perspective Edit window (see 1 PERSPECTIVE EDIT), click the + for a sound source, then click the Source button.

Once you're here, you can swap out a sound source for any sample — or set of samples — within the entire library, or alternatively drag and drop in a sample of your own.

→ Use the buttons at the top of the window (e.g. 1, 2, 3, etc) to switch between sound source slots
→ You will be alerted if the sample(s) you are trying to load are already being used elsewhere in your patch

Load Source → 1 / 2 / 3 / C / M / S

Family

Bass
Cello
Violin
Low Brass
High Brass
Low Woods
High Woods
Flute
Solo Violin
Solo Flute
Processed
Looped
Bonus
User

Articulation

Arpeggio Sweeps
Drifts I
Drifts I
Drifts III
Harmonic Tides
Harmonics
Jitters
Octave Leaps
Overtone Ripples
Overtone Waves
Ripples
Scratches
Touch Flutters
Touch Octaves

Source

Spot 1
Spot 2
Spot 3
Close
Mid
Smear

7
EXPRESSION EDIT

Expression → A / B

P

Expression

Active: On
Source: CC
Type: Volume

Movement

CC#: 1
Invert: Off
Curve: 50%
Smooth: 0%

Within a patch, Expression can be used to dynamically interact with the sound of a layer. By default, it's linked to the mod wheel (CC#1) and has its type set as Volume. This means that the mod wheel controls the volume of the layer. However, the controls within this window can be altered to adjust the setup of this interaction.
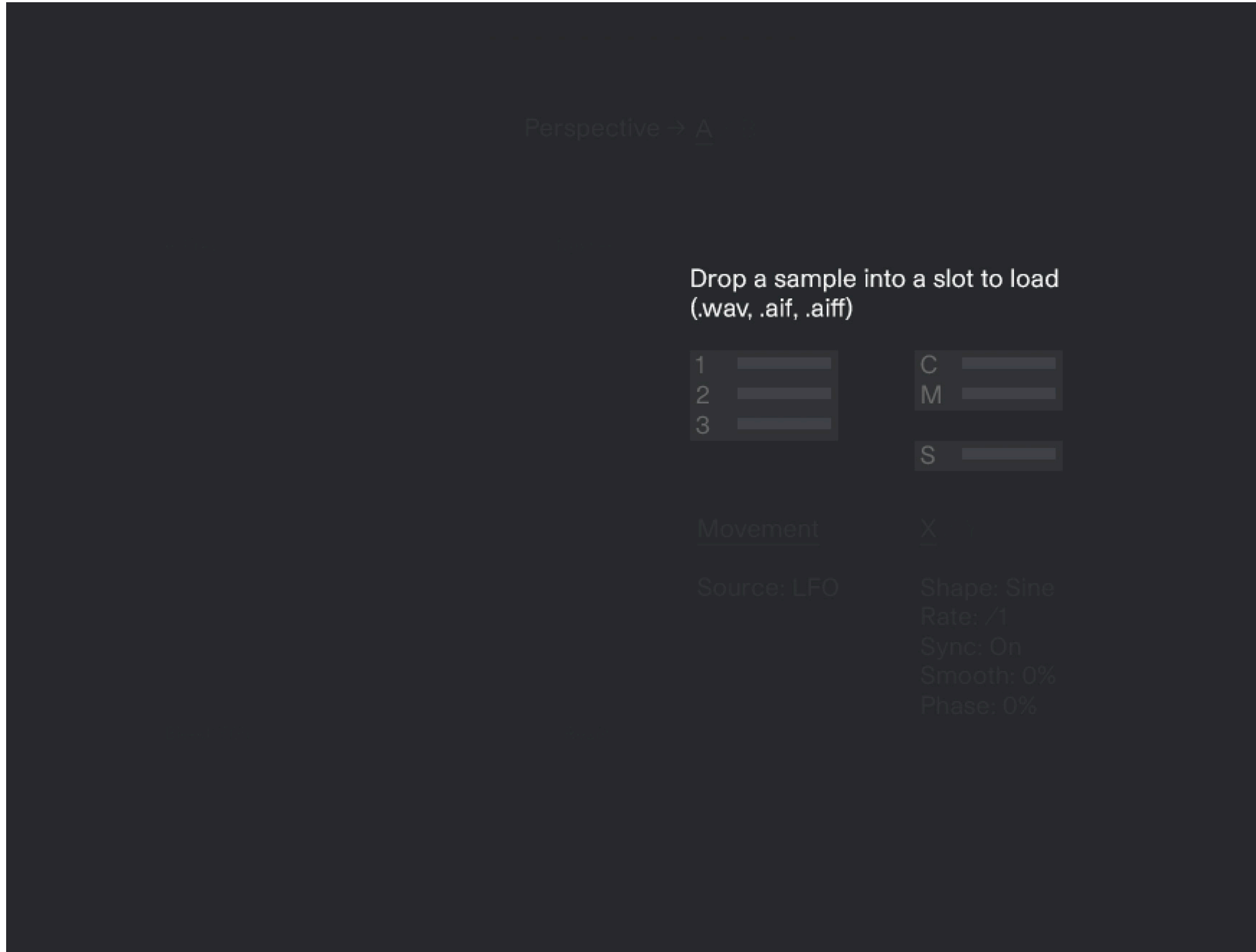
Expression

Use these controls to turn Expression on or off, change its source (CC or LFO), and change its type (Volume, Low Pass Filter, or Both).

Movement

These settings adjust parameters for modulation of the expression (see section 1 MODULATION for more detail).

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USER SAMPLES

Perspective → A

Drop a sample into a slot to load
(.wav, .aif, .aiff)

1
2
3

C
M

S

Movement

X

Source: LFO
Rate: ⁄1
Sync: On
Smooth: 0%
Phase: 0%

Shape: Sine

User samples can be loaded into a sound source slot from two different windows — the Perspective Edit window and the Source Select window.

Perspective Edit Window

When in this window, dragging a sample over the interface will highlight the sound source sliders, each representing a different slot that a sample can be loaded into. Drop your sample onto one of these slots to load it in.

Source Select Window

The Source Select window already corresponds to a specific sound source slot, so drop a sample anywhere onto this window to load it in.
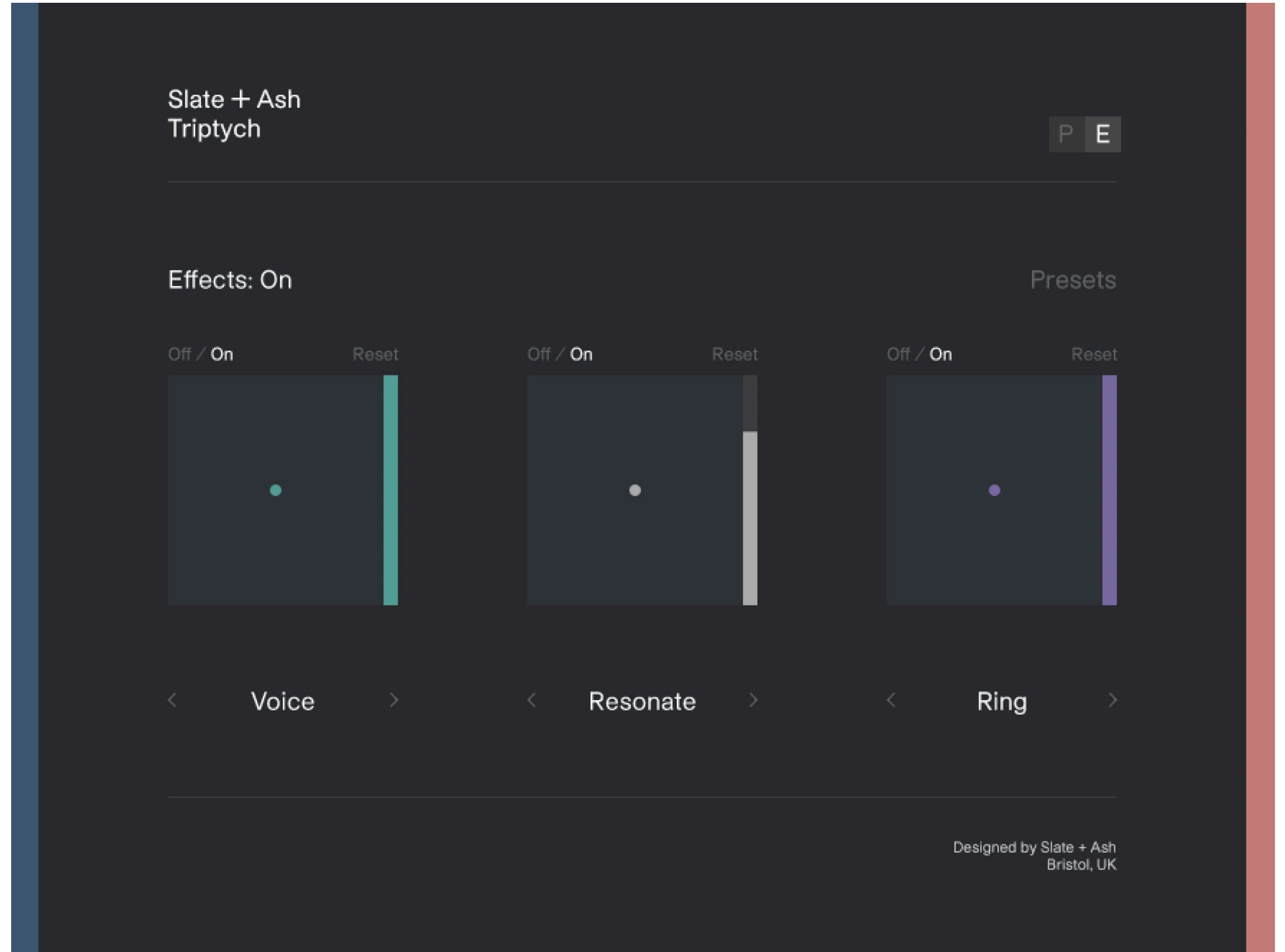
→   Landforms accepts .wav, .aif, or .aiff files
→   If you want to hear your sample on its own, you'll need to mute all the other slots by clicking their corresponding letters in the Perspective Edit window
→   If you don't want a patch to use your user sample anymore, go into the Source Select window and select a sound source from an articulation native to Landforms

9
EFFECT
VIEW

The Effect View contains a chain of three DSP effects that can be combined to alter the texture of a sound. Use the Effects button in the top left to turn these on or off.
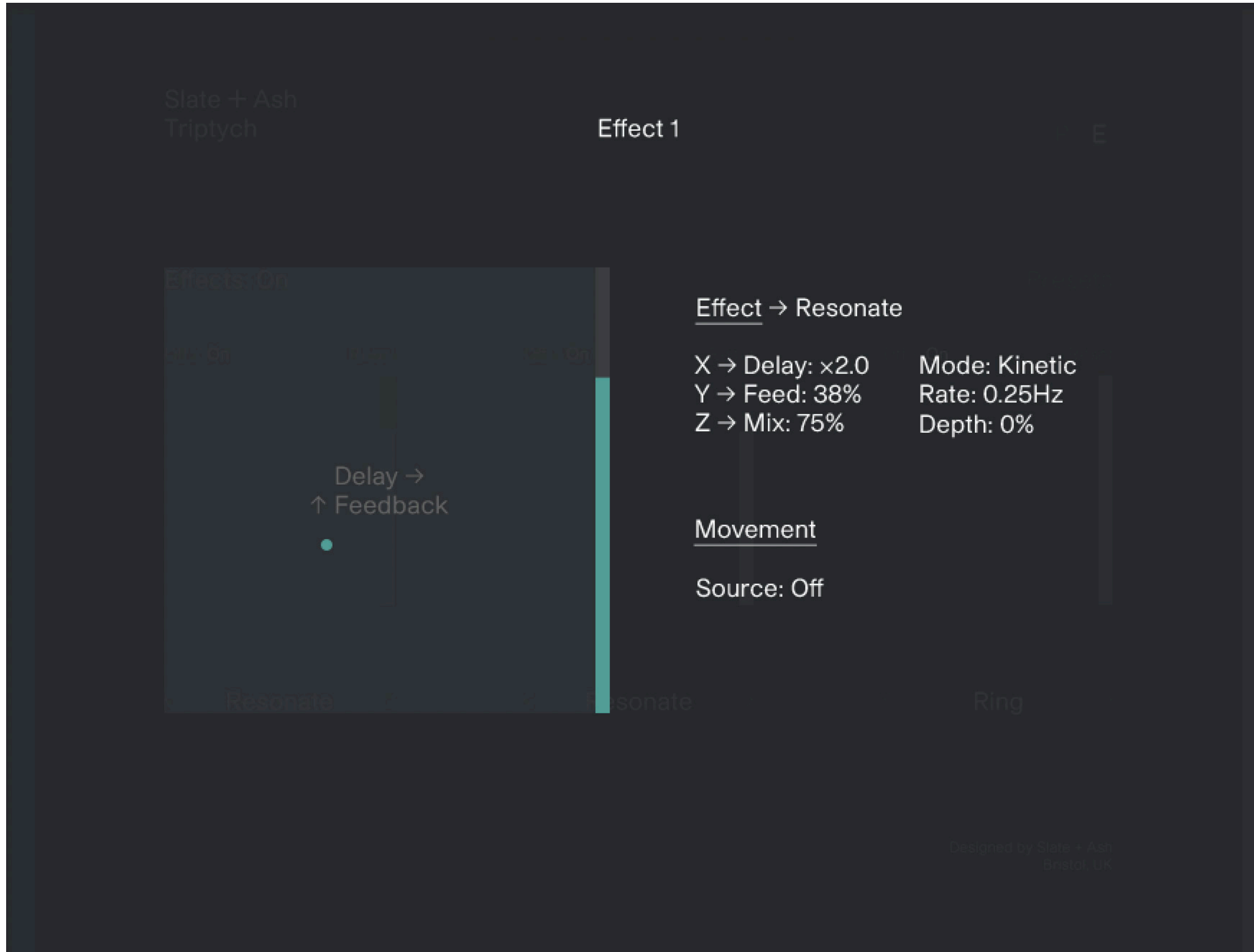
Dragging the cursor of an XY pad will adjust macro parameters for an effect. The vertical slider to the right of each XY pad generally controls the dry/wet mix for an effect, although for some effect types it controls a different parameter.

→ If an effect is off, click anywhere on its XY pad to turn it on
→ Click the left and right arrows next to the effect name to scroll through different effect types
→ Click the name of an effect to enter the Effect Edit window (see section 1 EFFECT EDIT), where it can be edited in more depth
→ Click the Presets button in the top right to show a list of effect presets to choose from

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Triptych

P E

Effects: On

Presets

Off / **On**   Reset

Off / **On**   Reset

Off / **On**   Reset

‹   Voice   ›

‹   Resonate   ›

‹   Ring   ›

Designed by Slate + Ash
Bristol, UK

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EFFECT
EDIT

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Effect 1

E

Effects: On

Effect → Resonate

X → Delay: ×2.0   Mode: Kinetic
Y → Feed: 38%   Rate: 0.25Hz
Z → Mix: 75%   Depth: 0%

Delay →
↑ Feedback

Movement

Source: Off

Resonate   Resonate   Ring

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Bristol, UK

In the Effect Edit window, parameters for an effect can be more deeply and precisely controlled, as well as modulated.

Click the Effect button to choose an effect type from a list, then use the parameter sliders and buttons to customise the effect.

Modulation of the XY pad can be added using the Movement section (see section 1 MODULATION).
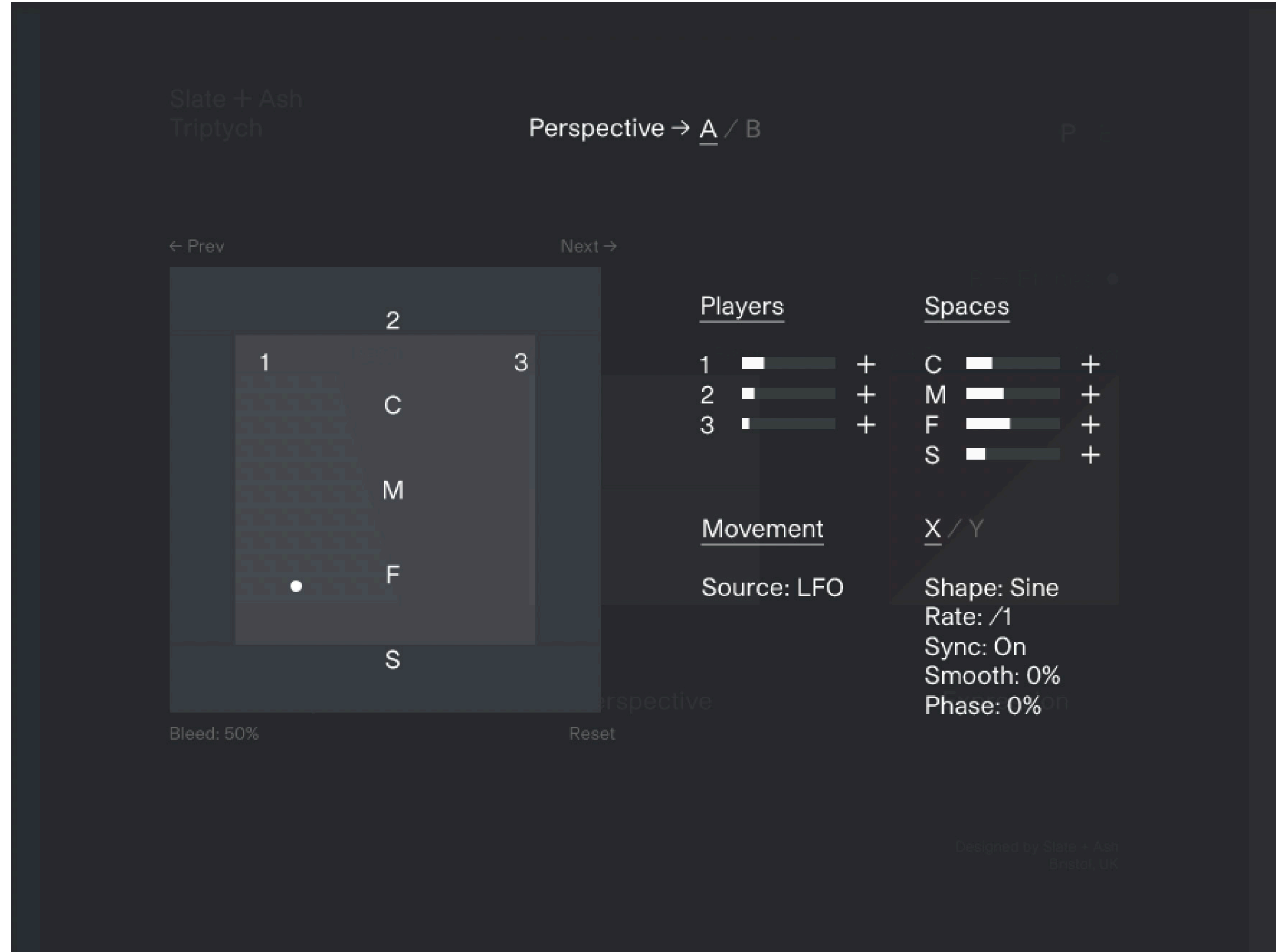
11
MODULATION

Any XY pad in Landforms can be modulated using one of four methods — LFO, CC, Record or Motion. Use the Movement Source button to select a source and activate the modulation.
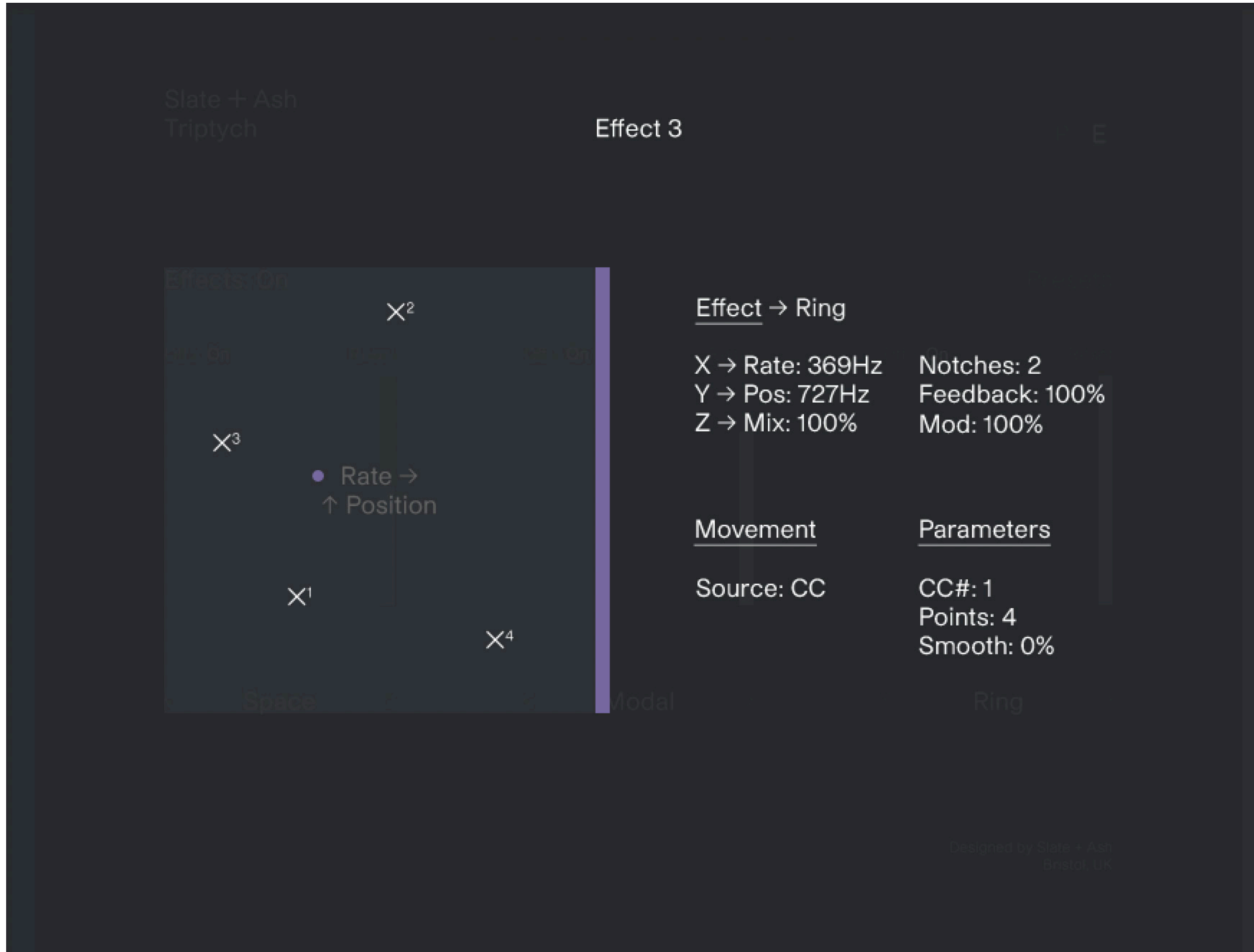
LFO

LFOs for the X and Y axes are controlled seperately — clicking the X or Y button will show the corresponding controls.

Click and drag the corners or sides of the highlighted rectangle on top of the XY pad to constrict the movement to within a certain range.

→ Use the Smooth control to round off sharp jumps in LFO shape, for example to change the angular Random waveform into a shape that smoothly drifts between random values

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Perspective → A / B

← Prev   Next →

2
1   3
C

M

F
•

S

Bleed: 50%   Reset

Players   Spaces

1 ▭   +   C ▭   +
2 ▫   +   M ▭   +
3 ▫   +   F ▭   +
             S ▫   +

Movement   X / Y

Source: LFO   Shape: Sine
                Rate: /1
                Sync: On
                Smooth: 0%
                Phase: 0%

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Effect 3

E

Effects On

X²

Dry On   Wet On

X³

● Rate →
↑ Position

X¹

X⁴

Effect → Ring

X → Rate: 369Hz   Notches: 2
Y → Pos: 727Hz   Feedback: 100%
Z → Mix: 100%   Mod: 100%

Movement   Parameters

Source: CC   CC#: 1
                       Points: 4
                       Smooth: 0%

Space   Modal   Ring

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CC

CC modulation is done using destination coordinates that can be placed anywhere on the XY pad. The main cursor travels between these points as you move your CC sliders or knobs.

You can have up to four coordinates, allowing intricate paths to be plotted over the space of the XY pad.

Record

Custom modulation paths can be recorded by clicking and dragging the cursor in Record mode. Click anywhere on the XY pad to start a recording, drag the cursor to record a path, and then release your mouse to end the recording. The cursor will repeatedly follow the path that you have plotted.

→ Use the Smooth control for CC modulation to smooth over any roughness in CC movement and create a softer, more musical path

Motion

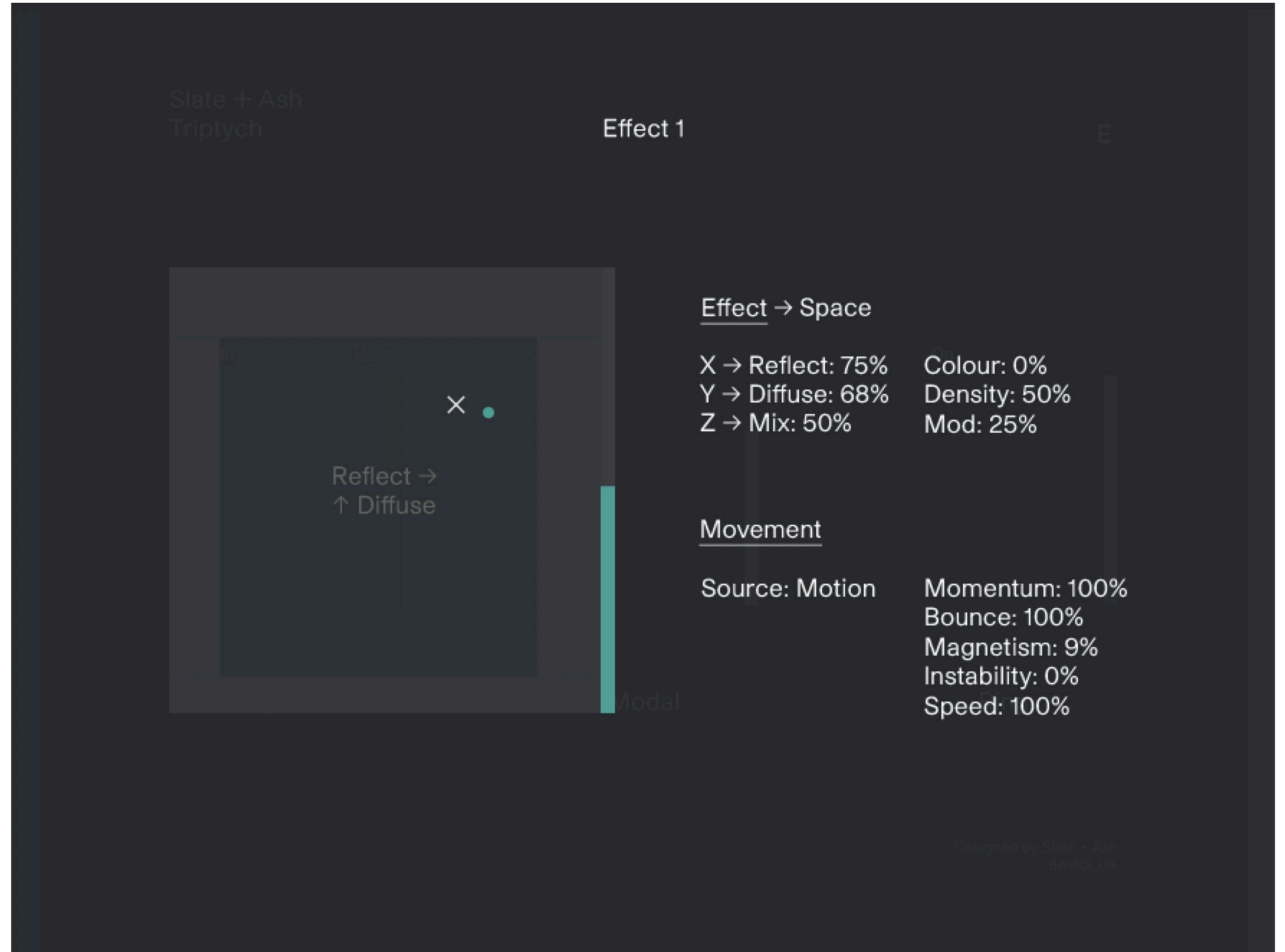When Motion modulation is selected, the XY pad becomes a physical environment thoughout which the cursor travels.

Grabbing and throwing the cursor sends it on a journey, with the Momentum and Bounce settings altering the manner in which the cursor moves.

By increasing the Magnetism setting, an additional cursor — the magnetic centre — appears on the XY pad, towards which the main cursor is attracted.
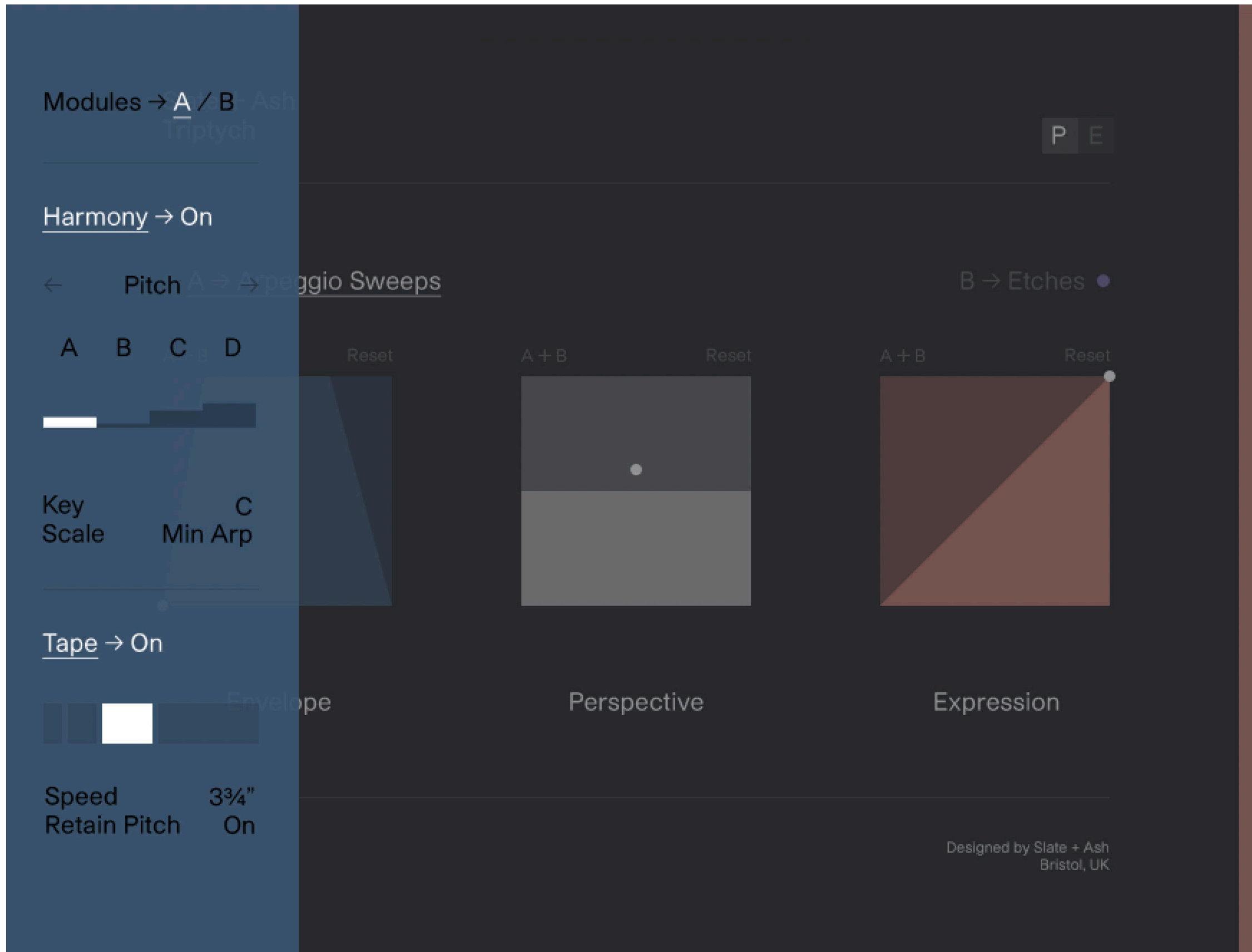
The Instability control introduces random disturbances, and the Speed control can change the rate of movement of the whole system.

As with LFO modulation, the range of movement can be constricted by dragging inwards the corners or sides of the highlighted rectangle on the XY pad.

→ Set a medium Magnetism and full Momentum to create infinite rhythmic orbits around the magnetic centre
→ Set Momentum to zero, put the cursor somewhere stationary on the XY pad, then turn up Instability to create random fluctuations around a central point

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Effect 1

Reflect →
↑ Diffuse

Modal

Effect → Space

X → Reflect: 75%   Colour: 0%
Y → Diffuse: 68%   Density: 50%
Z → Mix: 50%   Mod: 25%

Movement

Source: Motion   Momentum: 100%
                      Bounce: 100%
                      Magnetism: 9%
                      Instability: 0%
                      Speed: 100%

12
INPUT
MODULES

Modules → A / B

Harmony → On

← Pitch A → Arpeggio Sweeps   B → Etches ●

A B C D

Reset   A + B   Reset   A + B   Reset

Key   C
Scale   Min Arp

Tape → On

Speed   3¾"
Retain Pitch   On

Envelope   Perspective   Expression

Designed by Slate + Ash
Bristol, UK

Click the blue sidebar on the far left edge of the interface to expand it. Inside are four Input Modules — Harmony, Tape, Arp, and Random. MIDI note data runs through these modules and is creatively altered before it reaches the rest of the patch.

Harmony

The Harmony module adds scale-quantised notes to the ones you play manually on the keyboard. There are four note lanes, meaning chords of up to five notes can be triggered by pressing a single key. Activate or deactivate note lanes by pressing their letter (A, B, C, or D).

The module has three pages, navigated by clicking the ← or → buttons. Page 1 (Pitch) is where you set the pitch of each note, as well as the scale and key within which it should fall. Page 2 (Volume) contains controls for note volumes, and allows you to link the overall volume of all harmonised notes to a CC control. Parameters on Page 3 (Delay) can introduce delay times before notes are triggered — allowing strums or rhythmic harmonies to be created.

→ Drag a Harmoniser pitch value to its top or bottom to set it to Random Plus or Random Minus, where a new, random, scale-quantised pitch will be introduced for each key press (within the range of two octaves above or below the native note)

→ Use the Humanise control to create subtly varying delay times within the Harmoniser

→ Turn the Harmoniser on but switch off all harmony notes to scale-quantise your MIDI input without introducing extra notes

Tape

Available also per layer in the Layer Edit window (see section 1 LAYER EDIT), the Tape module allows you to stretch and pitch samples as if they have been run through a tape machine and then played back at a different tape speed. The four buttons represent different tape speeds, getting slower and lower from left to right.
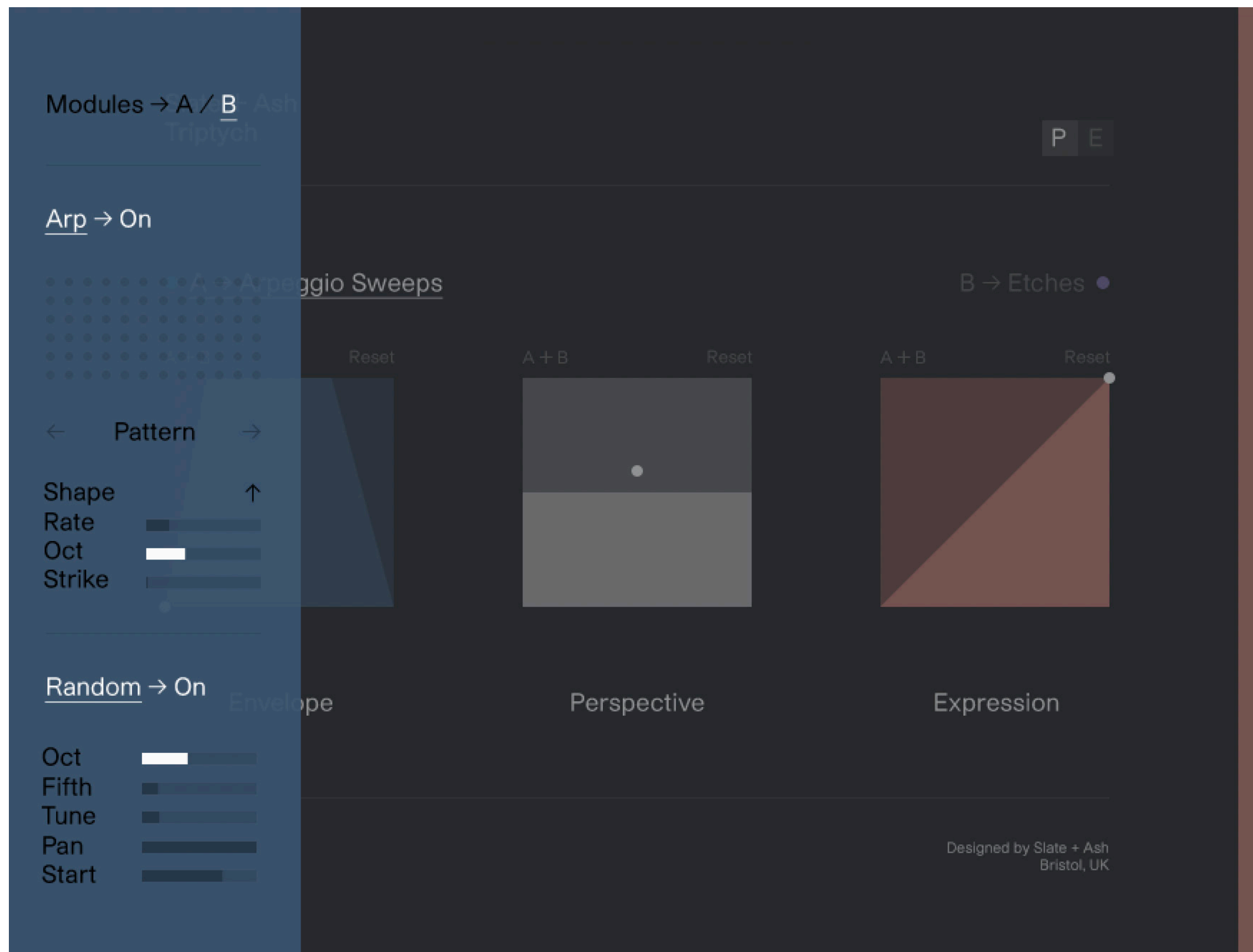
Arp

This is a simple arpeggiator to get your sounds moving. Click through on the Arp button for Latch mode. This module has two pages — the Pattern page sets the basic shape of the sequence, while the Options page can make things more complex, introducing random note lengths with Stutter and random note volumes with Jump.
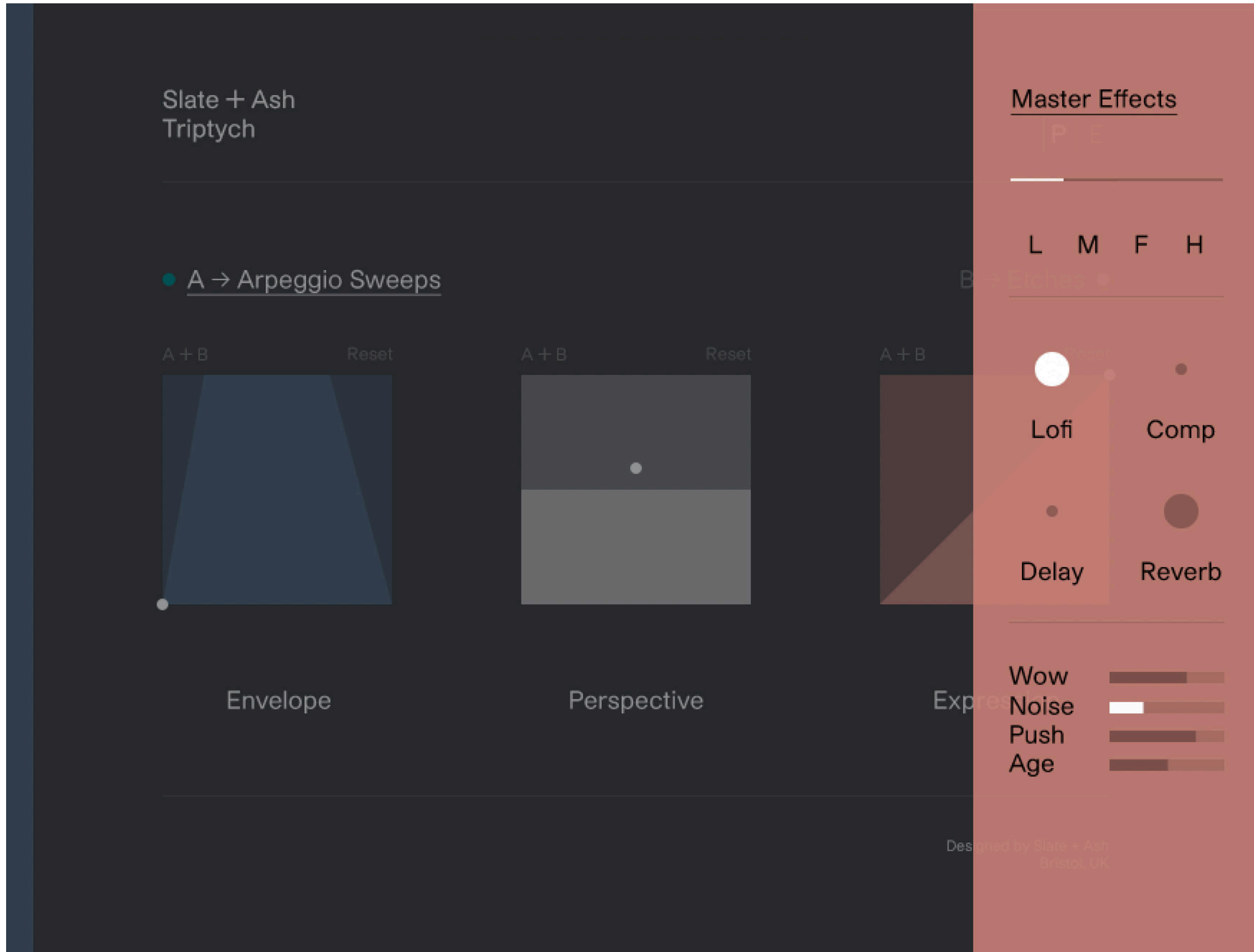
Random

The Random module can introduce randomisation for certain parameters each time a note is triggered. The random parameters are per note, per layer, per sound source, so complex and interesting textures can be created by sublty disturbing the cohesion of sound sources within an articulation.

→ Turn on Retain Pitch in the Tape module keep the pitch correct on your keyboard while retaining the tape-stretched sound

→ Combine the Arp module with the Octave and Fifth controls in the Random module to creative constantly varying angular sequences

→ Set the Arp Swing all the way to 0% or 100% to make two sequential triggers occur almost simultaneously

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OUTPUT CHANNEL

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● A → Arpeggio Sweeps   B → Etches ●

A + B   Reset   A + B   Reset   A + B

Envelope   Perspective   Expression

Designed by Slate + Ash
Bristol, UK

Master Effects

|P E

L   M   F   H

Lofi   Comp

Delay   Reverb

Wow
Noise
Push
Age

The right sidebar houses controls for the Output Channel — the final stage of the Landforms signal path.

Included is a 4 band EQ as well as four effects — Lofi, Compress, Delay, and Reverb.

For the four effects, a larger circle represents a more effected sound. A full circle for the Delay and Reverb effects signifies a fully wet sound.

Additional controls for the most recently touched effect can be adjusted at the bottom of the window.