TIMBRE

User Manual

Version 1.0 / September 2026

zplane

Contents

Introduction

TIMBRE is a powerful real-time plugin for reshaping the texture and character of any audio material: Change a vocal's timbre without affecting its pitch, add extra punch to a kick drum, or transform an overdriven guitar's character into a "fuzz"-like sound by shifting its formants. All with the turn of a knob, literally!

The Carrier Section opens up further creative possibilities: Use the internal noise wave to replace the signal's natural carrier, or feed any external signal into TIMBRE via your DAW's sidechain routing. For example, you can "imprint" the envelope of a vocal onto a full mix - or vice versa. And you haven't even started shifting formants yet... hours of creative fun!

TIMBRE provides a fast and intuitive way to create bold, original sounds.

Key Features

- Reshape the timbre of voices, instruments and mixes in real-time
- Two independent bands with solo and mute and adjustable frequency split
- Timbre Shift range of -/+36 Semitones for subtle to extreme transformations
- Internal and external carrier modes for vocoder-style FX
- Built-in white noise generator as an internal carrier source
- VST3/AU/AAX formats for OS X and Windows

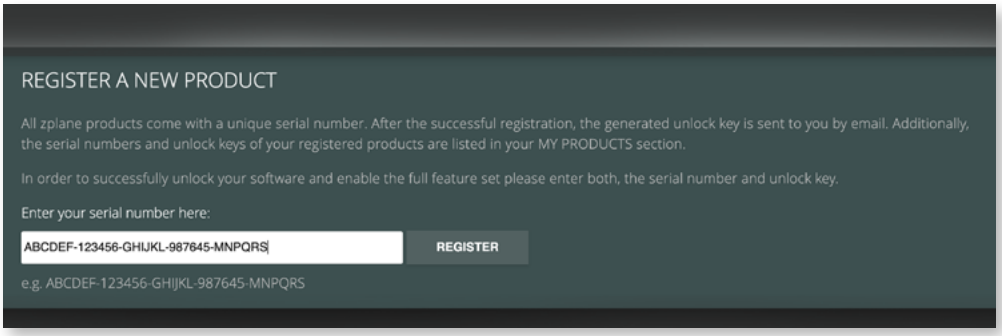
Naming Conventions

In this documentation, the names of interface elements are formatted consistently:

- On-screen controls (buttons, sliders, indicators) appear in bold within square brackets e.g. **[⚙]** or **[Low Shift]**.
- Menu options are shown in bold within quotation marks , e.g. **"Sidechain"** or **"Noise"**.
- Numbered callouts in images are written in bold within parantheses, e.g. **(1)** and **(2)**.

Installation & Activation

To download TIMBRE, you must first register the serial number you've received with your purchase. Log in to your account on the zplane website, or create one if you do not already have one. Open the **[REGISTER]** tab, enter your serial number as shown below, and click **[REGISTER]**. TIMBRE uses both a **serial number** and an **unlock key** for activation.



After successful registration, your unlock key is displayed immediately.

The installer, serial number, and unlock key remain available in the **[MY PRODUCTS]** section of your account.

Follow these steps to install and activate TIMBRE:

Windows

- Download the TIMBRE Windows Installer (.exe).
- Run the Installer and click **[Next]** .
- Accept the End User License Agreement and click **[Next]**.
- Follow the on-screen instructions to complete the installation.

macOS

- Download the TIMBRE macOS Installer (.pkg) .
- Run the Installer and click **[Continue]** in the installer window.
- Read the End User License Agreement and click **[Continue]**.
- Click **[Agree]** to accept, or **[Disagree]** to cancel the installation.
- Follow the on-screen instructions to complete the installation.

Activation

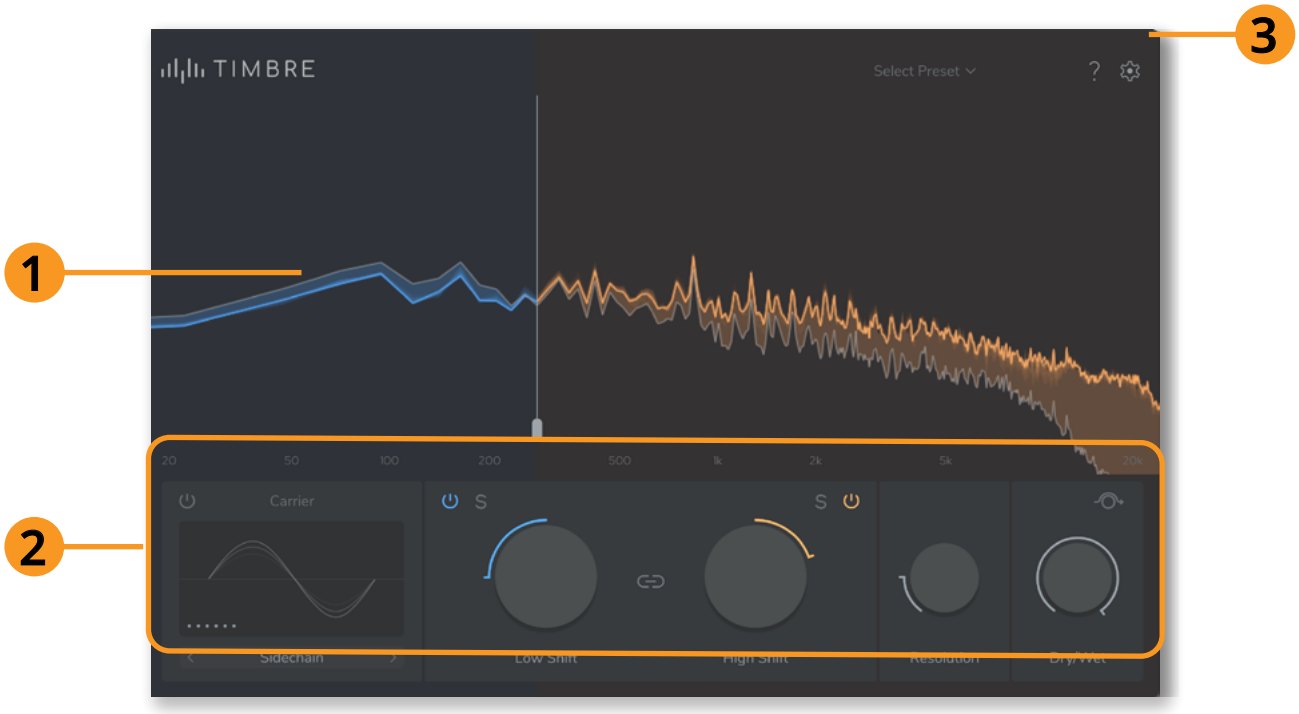
- Launch your DAW (make sure it has scanned the newly installed plugin).
- Create an audio track, load TIMBRE and open its user interface. The activation dialog appears.
- Enter your **serial number (1)** and **unlock key (2)**. then click **[Activate] (3)**.

TIMBRE is now ready to use.

NOTE: *This activation process is only required for a new installation, not when updating TIMBRE.*

The TIMBRE Interface

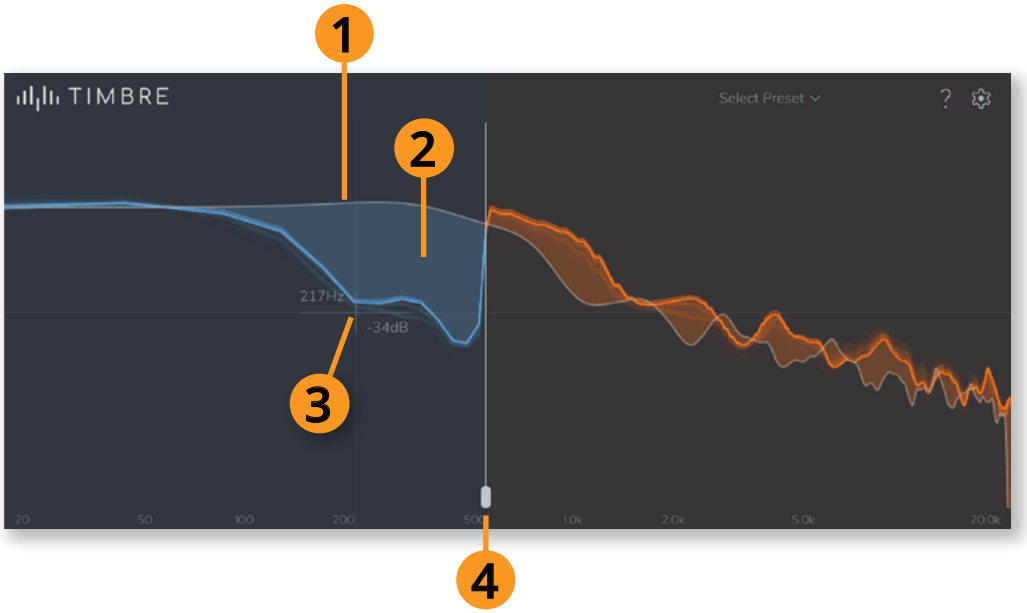
The TIMBRE interface is divided into two main sections: A **Spectrum Display** at the top **(1)** and a **Controls Panel** at the bottom **(2)**. In the header **(3)** you'll also find a **[Select Preset]** menu with factory presets, icons for Help **[?]** and plugin Settings **[⚙]**.



Spectrum Display

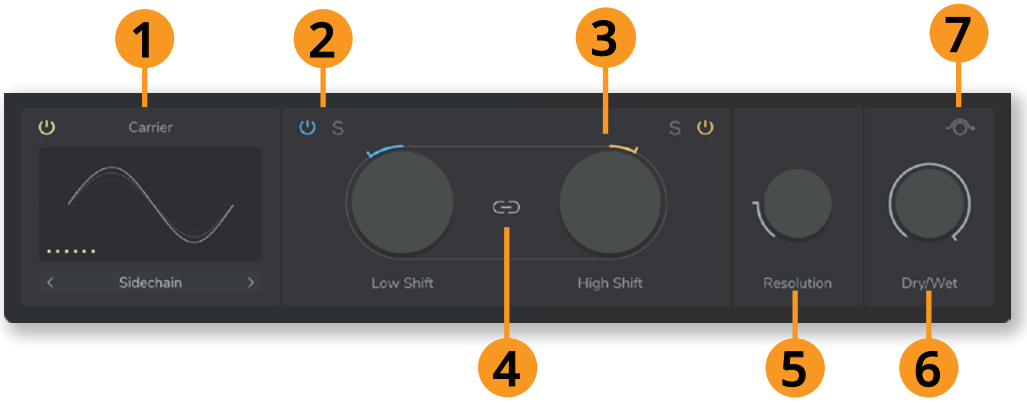
The **Spectrum Display** visualizes processing in real-time: The **[Low Band]** is shown in blue and the **[Hi Band]** in orange. When a band is shifted, a **grey line (1)** represents the input signal, while a **transparent fill (2)** in the corresponding band colour, shows the difference between input and output.

Hold **[Shift]** while clicking inside the display area to activate a **crosshair cursor (3)**. This shows the frequency and level at the selected point. The **[Split Frequency]** slider **(4)** sets the crossover point between the two bands. We'll have a closer look at this in the next section.



Controls Panel

All of TIMBRE's sound shaping parameters are located in the **Controls Panel**:



(1) Carrier The **[Carrier]** section selects the carrier signal modulated by the envelope of the input audio. This produces vocoder-style effects with additional formant shifting capabilities.
(Default: Off)

(2) Band [On] / [Solo] Each band has separate **[On]** and **[Solo]** switches:

[On] = Enables formant shifting for the selected band.
At **[Dry/Wet]** = 100%, only the processed signal is heard.

[Off] = Formant shifting is bypassed. The unprocessed signal remains audible regardless of the **[Dry/Wet]** setting.

[Solo] = Solos the selected band in its current state and mutes the other band.
(Default: Band On / Solo Off)

(3) [Low/High Shift] Adjusts the Timbre **[Shift]** of the selected band within a range of ± 36 semi-tones. Double-Click the parameter value to enter a numerical value. ***(Default: 0)***

(4) [Link] Links the **[Low Shift]** and **[High Shift]** band controls. When enabled, a frame appears around both controls and they move together while maintaining their relative offset.
(Default: Off)

(5) [Resolution] Controls processing definition: Higher values deliver finer, more detailed results. The effect sounds too subtle or too harsh, try adjusting this setting. Typical range: 0-40 for most material.
(Default: 20)

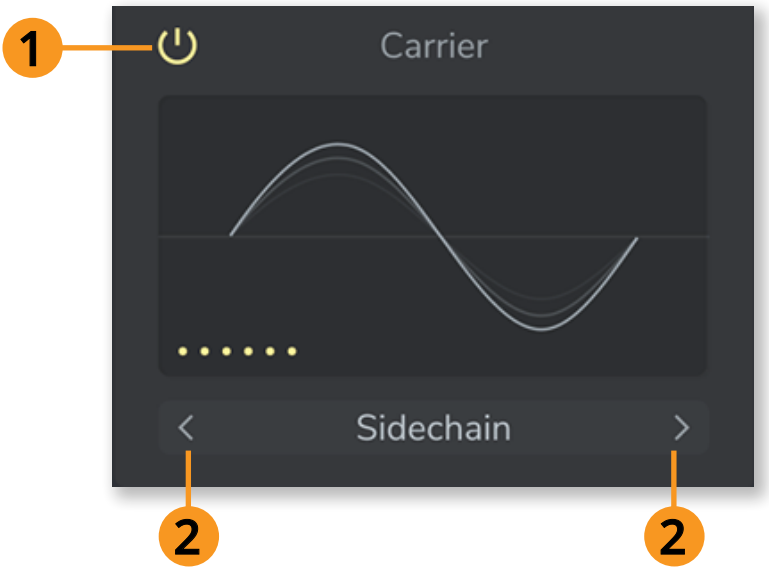
(6) [Dry/Wet] Sets the balance between unprocessed **Dry** (0) and processed **Wet** (100) signal. ***(Default: 100)***

(7) [Bypass] Soft-bypasses all plugin processing. If both bands have been disabled using their **[On]** switches, toggling **[Bypass]** reactivates them. ***(Default: Off)***

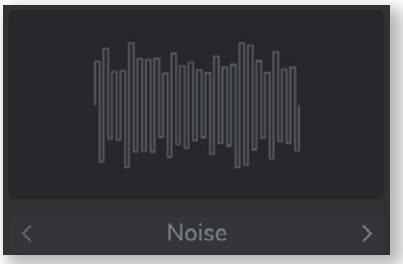
NOTE: *Double-clicking any parameter resets it to its default value.*

Carrier Section

When enabled **(1)**, the **[Carrier]** replaces the input signal's carrier with one of the available sources. The envelope of the input signal then modulates the selected **[Carrier]** - similar to a vocoder. Switch **[Carrier]** modes by clicking on the chevrons **(2)** next to the label**,** or by right-clicking the label to open a pop-up menu.

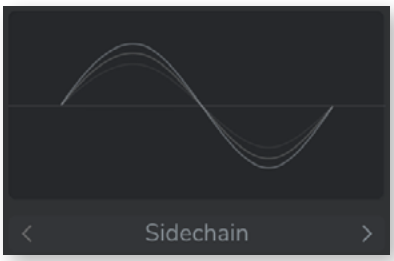


Noise (Default)



Replaces the input signal's carrier with white noise, instantly transforming vocals into a whisper-like sound. To add just a touch of breathiness, reduce the **[Dry/Wet]** mix to 50% or less.

External Sidechain



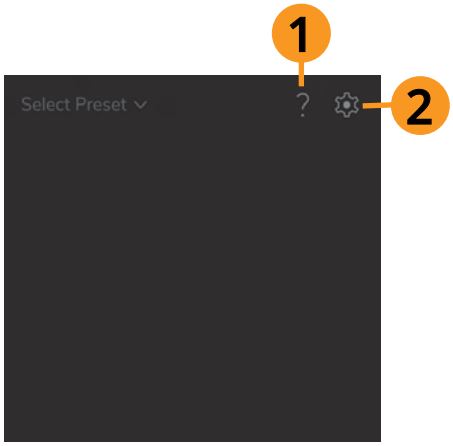
Selects TIMBRE's sidechain input, allowing audio from another DAW track to be used as the carrier signal. This requires sidechain routing in your DAW ***(see page 10 for setup)***.

For continuous output, use an uninterrupted carrier signal. Gaps in the carrier will also create gaps in TIMBRE's output.

NOTE: *If no audio is routed to TIMBRE's sidechain input,* ***no output is produced****. This mode always requires an external carrier signal.*

Settings & Help

The **[?] Help button (1)** in the header providing access to TIMBRE's version information, this user guide, and the zplane website. Clicking the **[⚙] button (2)** opens the **Settings Dialog**.



Help (1)

About: Displays version information and activation status.

Open User Guide: Direct link to this user manual.

Visit zplane online: Opens the zplane webpage.

Settings (2)

"Sidechain Input Gate Threshold": Prevents unwanted noise in some DAWs (e.g. Cubase, Pro Tools) when no sidechain signal is present. ***(Default: On)***

"**Show Tooltips":** Displays brief descriptions when hovering controls in the TIMBRE interface. Disable if you prefer not to see tooltips. ***(Default: On)***

"Use Current UI size as default for new instances": Set the plugin window to your preferred size and click **"Save"**. The button label will change to **"Clear"**. All new instances of TIMBRE will open with this default size. Click **"Clear"** to reset to factory default size.

Using TIMBRE

Unlike a traditional EQ, which boosts or cuts specific frequencies, TIMBRE shifts the frequency bands that shape a sound's character. This unique approach opens up a wide range of creative possibilities:

• **Transform voices –** Alter a vocal's timbre, from adding more "Barry W." depth to creating a brighter more youthful "Britney"-like character.

• **Tame sibilance creatively –** Instead of simply reducing harsh sibilants, shift them up or down to achieve a smoother, more natural-sounding result.

• **Fit instruments into a mix –** When instruments compete in the same frequency range, shift one instrument's formants to help it stand out. You can also add weight and "oomph" to a kick drum or warmth to a brittle electric bass.

• **Replace the carrier signal:** The **[Carrier] section** lets you replace the underlying carrier beneath your audio's modulation envelope. Create classic vocoder-style textures or transform sounds into entirely new sonic characters.

These are just a few examples. With TIMBRE, even subtle adjustments can produce surprising and unexpected sounds.

Input and Output Routing

TIMBRE is designed to be used as an insert audio effect in your DAW. Simply load it on a mono or stereo audio track and you are ready to go. If you want to use the **"Sidechain" Carrier** mode, you must also configure an **external audio sidechain input**. The setup process varies between DAWs. The following example shows how this works in Ableton LIVE 12:

External Sidechain Setup

When the Sidechain Carrier is enabled **(1)**, TIMBRE replaces the input signal's carrier with audio from an external track. The input signal provides the modulation envelope, while the external track acts as the carrier. To set this up, route the external audio track **(2)** into the TIMBRE-track's sidechain input **(3)**.

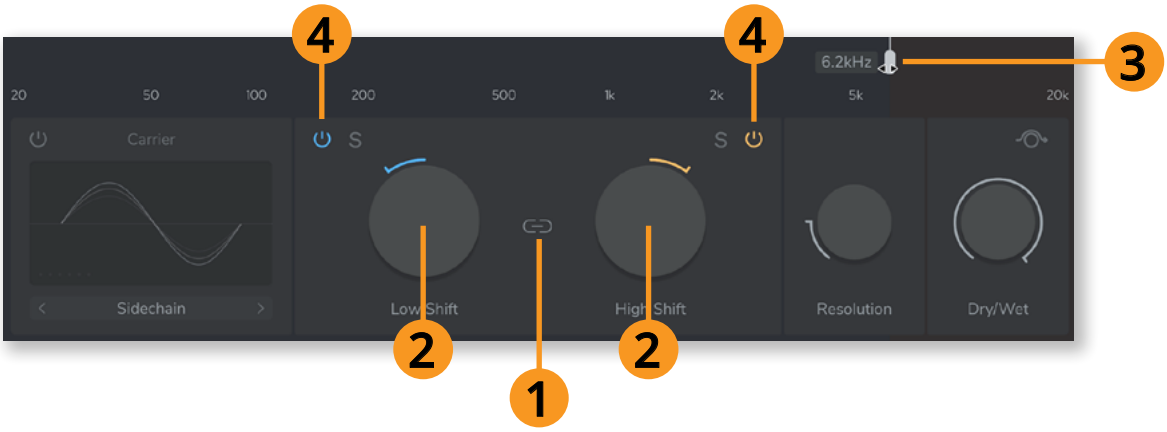
NOTE:
*In Live, start by inserting TIMBRE on the audio track you want to process, then select and activate the Carrier **Sidechain (1)**. In this example, the upper track provides a heavy guitar carrier signal for the vocal track below. On the sending track, open the **Output Type (2)** chooser and select the receiving track as target. Once selected, the **Output Channel (3)** chooser becomes active, and you can select "Sidechain - TIMBRE". Now, whenever there is singing on the second track, you'll hear the guitar as carrier signal on the vocal track.*

First Steps with TIMBRE

To get familiar with TIMBRE, try the following. You can also find additional tutorial videos and creative applications on the product page.

1. Basic Setup: Load TIMBRE as an insert effect on an audio track. Make sure both **[Low Shift]** and **[High Shift]** are set to 0, then link them by clicking the **[Lock] button (1)** between the controls. They now move together as a single band and the **[Split Frequency]** control has no effect.

2. Exploring Shifts: Starting from 0 in the screenshot above, move either **[Shift]** control **(2)** up or down. Turning it to the left produces deeper, "Darth Vader"-like tones, while turning it to the right creates brighter, more "Smurf-like" sounds. **[Resolution] (3)** is set to 20 by default, which works well for most material. Lower values produce a grainier sound, while higher values result in a brighter, more defined character. Use **[Dry/Wet] (4)** to adjust the balance between the original and processed signal.



3. Independent Band Control: Disable **[Link] (1)**, set **[Low Shift] (2)** to -9 and **[High Shift]** to +9. Now adjust **[Split Frequency] (3)** to hear how the processing is divided at the crossover point. To limit processing to a specific frequency range, use the **[On] switch (4)** to bypass one of the bands. Only the active band is processed, while the other remains unprocessed. Adjust **[Split Frequency]** to define the processed range, for example to add "air" at the top end or reinforce the bass frequencies without affecting the rest of the signal.

4. [Carrier Section]: Activate the **[Carrier] section (1)** to replace the incoming audio's carrier signal. By default, this uses the internal **"Noise"** wave. To use "**Sidechain"** mode, additional routing is required before you can hear anything (see "Input and Output Routing", page 10).

Select **"Noise" (2)** for this example (default). Click the chevrons below the display to switch Carriers. You will now hear your audio's envelope modulating White Noise. This can turn any vocal sample into a whisper, or add presence and "air" to drums when mixed subtly. Additionally, you can use **[Low]** and **[High Shift] (3)** to sculpt the audio's formants: Transform an angelic lullaby into a raspy whisper from hell by selecting the Noise carrier, shifting **[Low Shift]** to -24 and moving the **[Frequency Split]** up to 4 - 10 kHz.

Technical Specifications

Operating Systems	• macOS 13+ • Windows 10 & 11+
CPU Architecture	• macOS: Intel & Apple Silicon 64-bit • Windows: 64-bit
Audio Formats	• 1-2 channels (I/O) • 44.1kHz - 192kHz sample rate
Plugin Formats	• VST3 • AU (macOS only) • AAX
Audio Latency	• 23,2 ms @44.1kHz

Feedback & Support

Our website products.zplane.de always provides the latest information and news about our products. For the latest tips and tricks on using TIMBRE, follow us Instagram and YouTube. Any issues you encounter may either be addressed in the FAQ section of the appropriate product or reported directly to us via post or email.

Before contacting us directly, please ensure you are using the latest version of the product.

Please also make sure that your issue is not covered in the manual, the forum, the FAQ or elsewhere on our website.

If you cannot find answers using the methods described above, and need to contact us directly, please provide the following details to enable us to help you as fast as possible:

- **Your registration information** (such as the name of your User Account or your login e-mail)

- **Your system specifications** (hardware, operating system, host software)

- **The exact version number of the plugin**
  (displayed on the **Help [?]** & **Settings [⚙]** pages located at the upper-right interface)

Include a detailed description of your problem with a step-by-step description of what led up to it so we can try to reproduce the issue.

Please use the following contact methods:

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Germany

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@ support@zplane.de