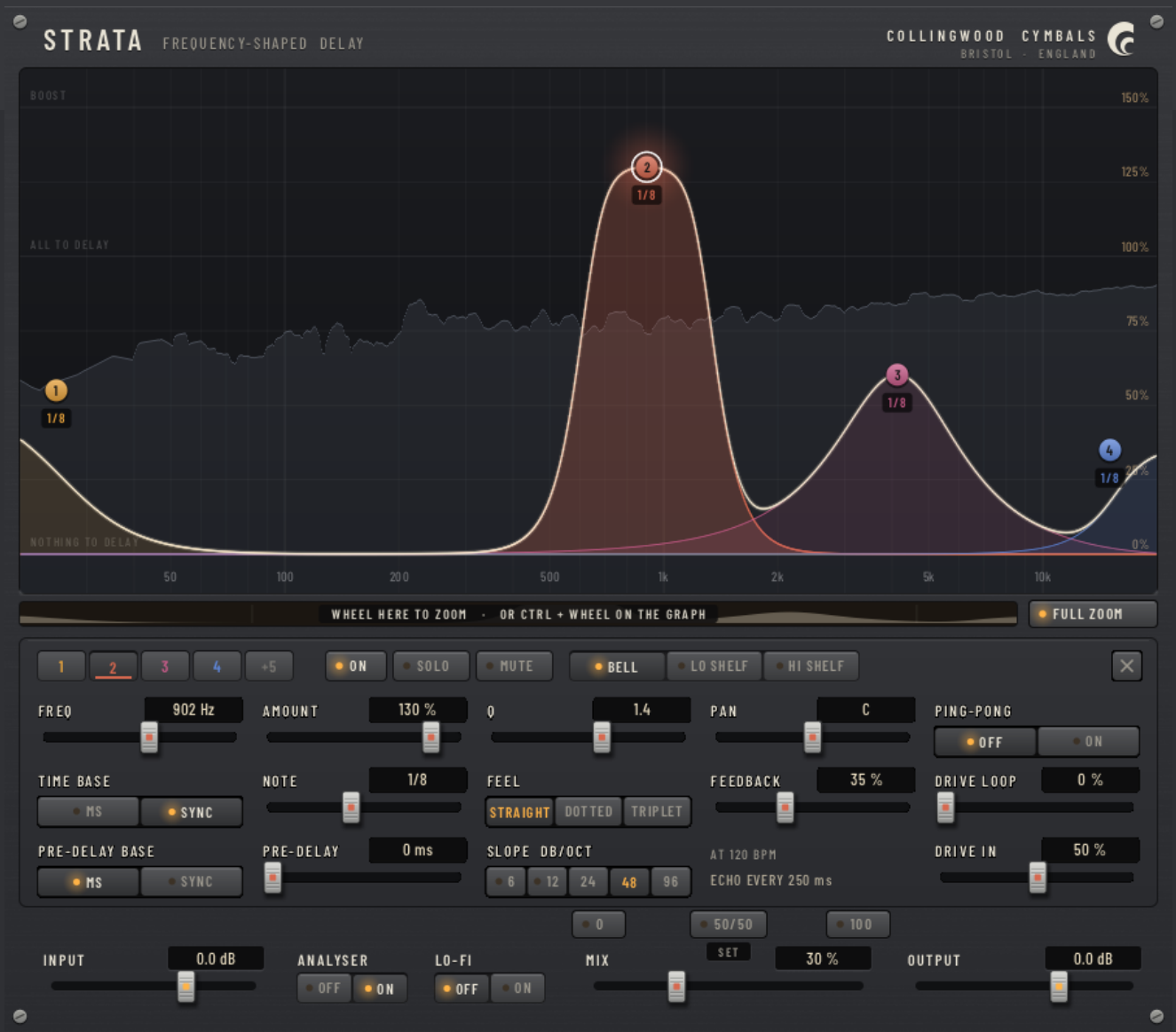
COLLINGWOOD CYMBALS

BRISTOL · ENGLAND

STRATA

FREQUENCY-SHAPED DELAY

VERSION 1.1 · USER MANUAL



VST3 FOR WINDOWS · AUDIO UNIT + VST3 FOR MAC · CYMBALSAMPLES.COM

Welcome to Strata

Strata is a delay shaped like an EQ. Instead of boosting or cutting frequencies, each band you draw decides how much of that part of the sound goes into its own echo. Everything else stays dry and clear.

Up to five bands each have their own echo time (in milliseconds or synced to your song), feedback, pan, ping-pong, pre-delay and two kinds of drive. A Lo-Fi switch wears the repeats down like an old tape or bucket-brigade delay. The analyser shows the dry signal.

Installing

WINDOWS	Copy the Strata.vst3 folder from the download into C:\Program Files\Common Files\VST3 (click Continue when Windows asks for permission; replace any older Strata.vst3). Rescan plug-ins in your DAW if it doesn't find Strata on its own. It is listed under Collingwood Cymbals. 64-bit Windows 10 or 11, any VST3 host.
MAC	In Finder choose Go > Go to Folder and paste ~/Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/Components, then drag Strata.component in. For VST3 hosts also drag Strata.vst3 into ~/Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/VST3. Logic: Audio FX > Audio Units > Collingwood > Strata. If it isn't listed, use Logic Pro > Settings > Plug-in Manager, select Strata and click Reset & Rescan Selection. Apple silicon and Intel, macOS 10.15 or later.

Strata works on stereo and mono tracks.

Quick start

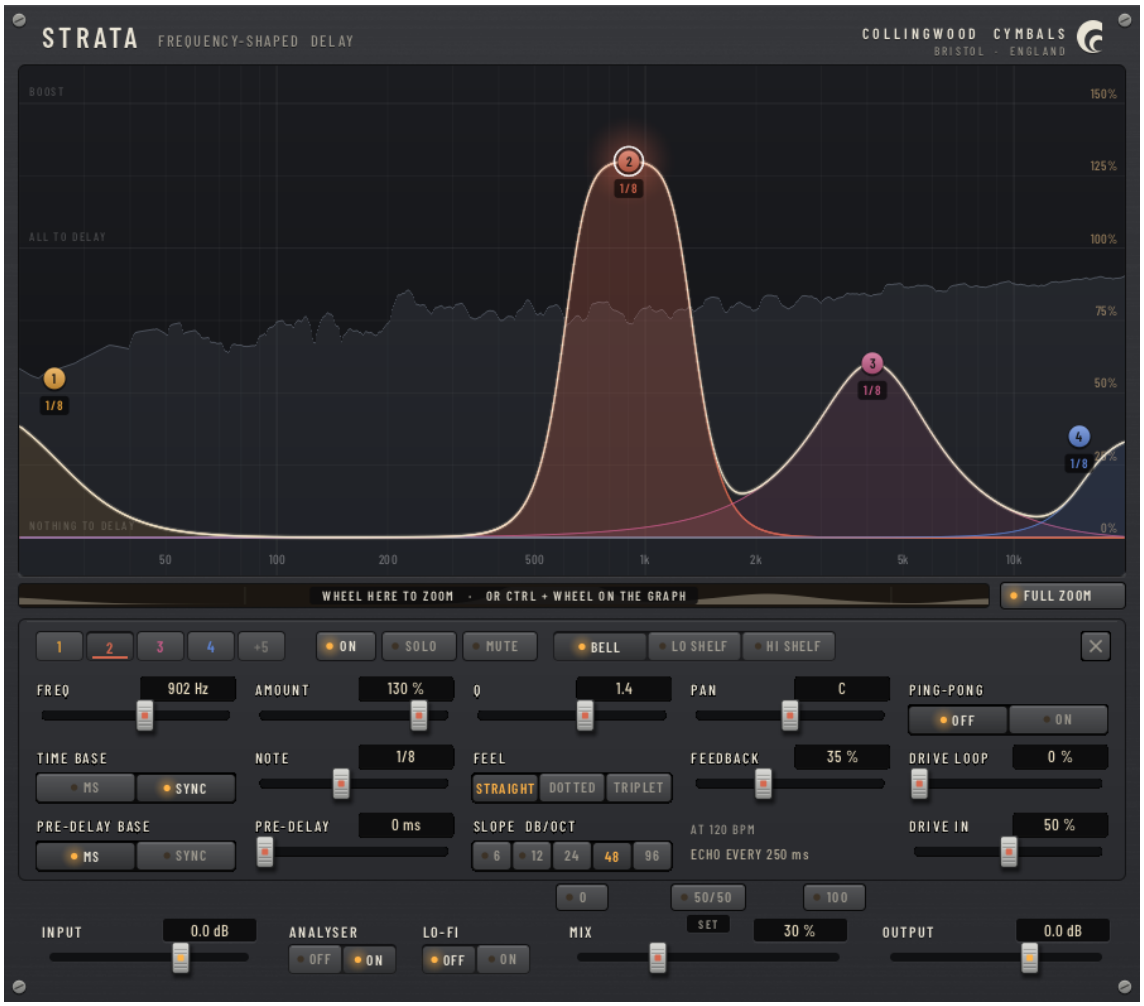
1. Put Strata on your chosen track.

2. Double-click in the display to add a band. It appears where you click: the left-right position sets its frequency and the height sets how much of that region goes into the delay.

3. Drag the dot left and right to move it, up and down to send more or less. Use the mouse wheel over the dot to make the band narrower or wider (Q). Hold Shift for fine moves.

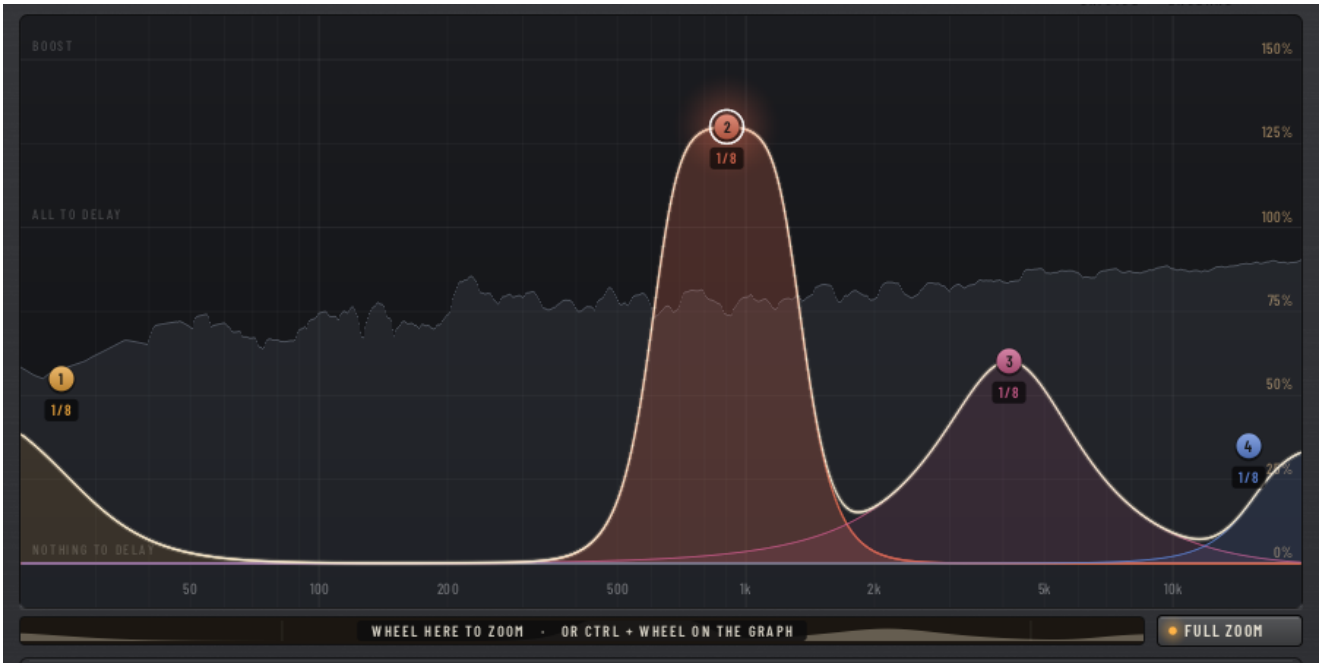
4. Click the dot to show its controls in the strip underneath: note value, feedback, pan, ping-pong, drive.

5. Add more bands, up to five in total, with different settings.



The Strata window. Band 2 is selected, so its controls fill the strip in the middle.

The display



Frequency runs left to right (20 Hz to 20 kHz). Height is how much of each frequency is sent to the delay. The bottom line, NOTHING TO DELAY, sends nothing. The ALL TO DELAY line at 100 % sends everything in that region. Above it, up to the BOOST line at 150 %, the band's echoes get louder than the original. The coloured curve under each dot shows exactly what that band sends; the light line is all bands together.

ADD A BAND	Double-click anywhere in the display that isn't a dot, or click an unused number tab in the strip (or +N). Up to five bands.
MOVE	Drag the dot. Left/right = frequency, up/down = AMOUNT. Shift = fine.
WIDTH (Q)	Mouse wheel over a dot (or over the graph while a band is selected).
SELECT	Click a dot or its number tab. Click empty space or press Esc to deselect.
REMOVE	Alt-click a dot (Option-click on a Mac), press Delete with it selected, use the X in the strip, or the right-click menu.
BAND MENU	Right-click a dot (Ctrl-click on a Mac): Bell / Low Shelf / High Shelf, Sync to tempo, Ping-pong, Solo band, Mute band, Bypass band, Delete band.
LABELS	Each dot shows its echo time underneath (a note value like 1/8, or milliseconds). Hover over a dot to see its frequency and amount.

Zooming in



The thin strip under the display is an overview of the whole range. Use the mouse wheel over this strip to zoom in and out. You can also hold Ctrl (Cmd on a Mac) and use the mouse wheel over the graph itself, which zooms around the mouse pointer. While zoomed, the strip highlights the part you are looking at: drag it to move along, or click outside it to jump there. FULL ZOOM (or a double-click on the strip) shows 20 Hz to 20 kHz again. You can zoom in as far as one octave, which makes it easy to place very narrow bands.

The band strip



The controls of the selected band. Its colour matches its dot and tab. Double-click any fader to put it back to its default.

1 2 3 4 5 / +N	Pick a band, or add one at a sensible starting frequency.
ON	Switch the band on or off (bypass) without losing its settings. It switches with a short fade, so it never clicks.
SOLO	Hear only this band's echoes. Several bands can be soloed at once. The tab and the top of the display show which bands are soloed.
MUTE	Silence this band's echoes. A muted band stays silent when soloed and does not cut the others. Muted and soloed-out bands keep running, so their echoes are still there when you bring them back.
BELL / LO SHELF / HI SHELF	The band's shape. Bell picks out a region around FREQ; Lo Shelf sends everything below FREQ; Hi Shelf everything above. The shapes are steep (4th order), so bands stay distinct.
FREQ	20 Hz to 20 kHz. The centre (Bell) or the edge (shelves).
AMOUNT	0 to 150 % (default 60 %). How much of the region goes into this band's delay. 100 % sends all of it; 150 % sends 1.5 times as much, for narrow bands that would otherwise be quiet.
Q	0.1 to 10. Width of a Bell (higher = narrower) or the corner of a shelf.
SLOPE	Bells only: 6, 12, 24, 48 or 96 dB/oct. 12 is the default and the classic bell. From 24 up the bell has a flat top and steep sides, and Q still sets the width. Shelves are fixed at 24 dB/oct.
PAN	Moves this band's echoes left or right (a balance control on the echoes; the dry sound is not panned).
PING-PONG	Echoes bounce left, right, left... starting on the left.
TIME BASE	MS: a free time in milliseconds. SYNC: a note value locked to your song's tempo.
TIME / NOTE	TIME 1 ms to 4 s. NOTE 1/64 to 2 bars. Changing the time crossfades smoothly, with no pitch bend or clicks. The strip shows the actual echo time at the current tempo.
FEEL	Straight, Dotted or Triplet (synced times only).
FEEDBACK	0 to 100 % (default 35 %). How much of each echo comes round again. At 100 % it repeats for ever; a gentle limiter keeps it from running away.
DRIVE LOOP	Saturation inside the feedback loop: each repeat gets a little grittier than the last.

PRE-DELAY BASE / PRE-DELAY	A gap before the first echo: 0 to 500 ms, or synced 1/64 to 1/4 (straight, dotted, triplet). Lets a band's echoes sit behind the beat.
DRIVE IN	Saturation on the way into the delay (once). Quiet parts pass cleanly; loud parts are rounded off and gain grit.

The bottom bar



INPUT	-24 to +12 dB, before everything. Turning it up also drives DRIVE IN harder.
ANALYSER	Shows the input spectrum behind the curve. Switch it off if you prefer a clean display (it then uses no processing).
LO-FI	Makes the repeats darker and rougher, like a vintage delay. It sits inside the feedback loop, so each repeat wears down further. Affects all bands.
MIX	0 to 100 % (default 50 %). Up to 50 % the dry stays at full level and the echoes come up; at 50 % you hear the full dry sound plus the full echoes; above 50 % the dry fades out, until 100 % is echoes only.
0 / 50/50 / 100	Hold to hear Mix at 0 %, 50 % or 100 %. Let go and Mix goes back to where it was. Handy for quick comparisons.
SET	The small flat button under 50/50 sets Mix to 50 % and leaves it there.
OUTPUT	-24 to +12 dB, after everything.

The header



Once a day, when you open the window, Strata checks whether a newer version is out. If one is, UPDATE x.y AVAILABLE lights up at the top of the window; click it to open the download page in your browser. Nothing is downloaded or installed automatically and nothing about you or your computer is sent. Without an internet connection nothing shows and Strata works exactly the same.

Questions and answers

THE ECHOES ARE QUIET	A narrow band sends only a narrow slice, so its echo is naturally quieter than the whole track. Turn AMOUNT up (to 150 %), widen the band (lower Q), or raise MIX above 50 %.
WHERE IS THE DRY EQ?	There isn't one, on purpose: the dry signal is never touched. Bands only decide what gets echoed.
IT KEEPS RINGING	FEEDBACK near 100 % repeats for ever. Turn it down, or switch the band off with ON.
LATENCY / CPU	Strata adds no latency. Five busy bands use around 2 to 3 % of one CPU core.

Thank you for using Strata. Updates, more plug-ins and cymbal samples are at cymbalsamples.com.

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