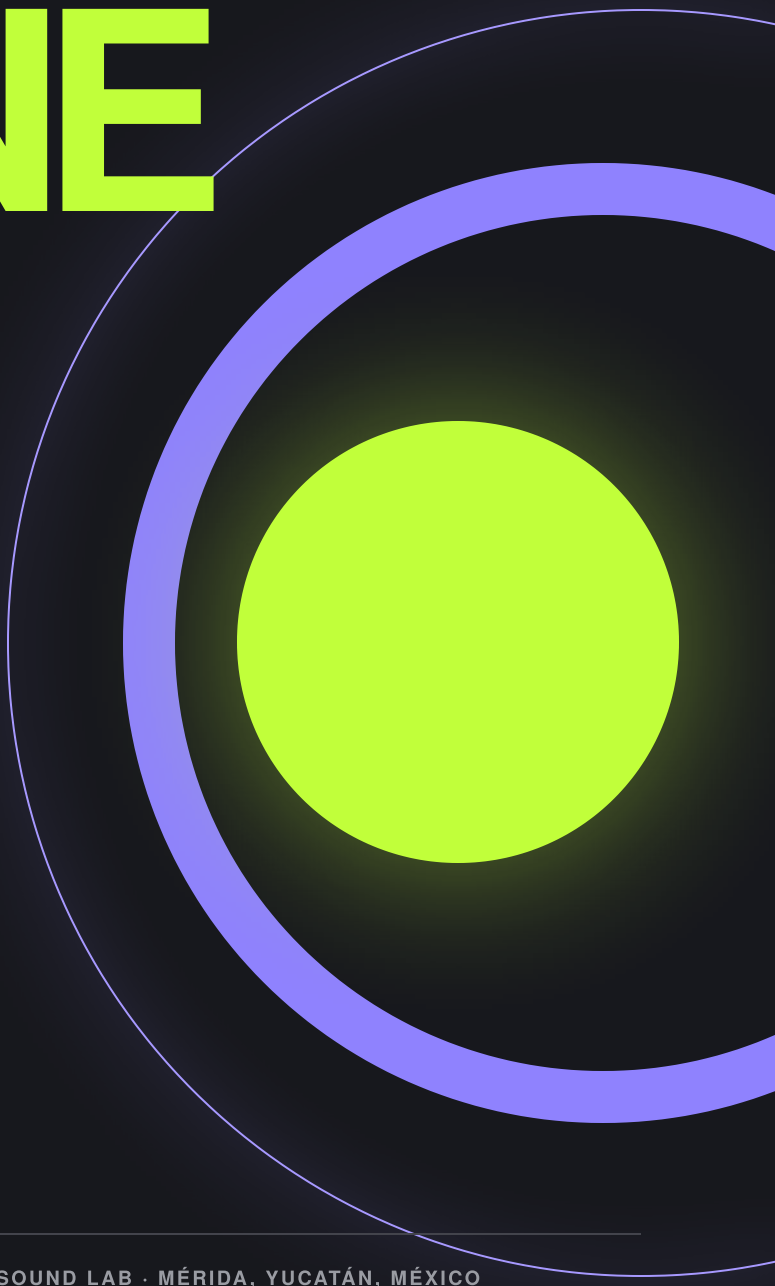
DFD

USER MANUAL · VST3 · AU · APP · v1.1 BETA

ACID ENGINE

SEQUENCER / SYNTHESIZER / PATTERN LAB /
HARDWARE TWIN



ENGLISH EDITION

DARK FUNK DURCAL DESIGN · DESARROLLADO EN POLARIS SOUND LAB · MÉRIDA, YUCATÁN, MÉXICO

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00 WELCOME

THE WEB MACHINE, INSIDE YOUR DAW.

The plug-in is the same ACID ENGINE as the web version: the same engine, the same screen, the same generator and DIRTY LAB, with the DAW driving the tempo, MIDI in and out, automation of every parameter and the whole state saved with your set.

SAFETY BETA: built and validated automatically (pluginval at strictness 8 on Mac and Windows, auval on Mac). It has not yet been tested by hand in every DAW. Report problems on GitHub.

MAC

macOS 11 or newer, Apple Silicon or Intel. VST3, AU and a standalone app.

WINDOWS

Windows 10 / 11, 64-bit. VST3 and a standalone app. Needs the Microsoft Edge WebView2 Runtime (built into Windows 11).

DOWNLOAD

github.com/drophlex/DFD-ACID-ENGINE/releases
the newest “plug-in” release

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Everything on the screen (generator, step matrix, sound, FX, DIRTY LAB, perform) works as in the web version: see the web manual for each panel.

01 MAC

INSTALL ON A MAC.

01 Download **DFD-ACID-ENGINE-Mac.zip** from the releases page and double-click it to unzip.

02 Right-click **Install DFD ACID ENGINE.command** → **Open** → **Open**. (A double-click is refused the first time because the app is not from the App Store.)

03 A Terminal window copies the VST3 and the AU into your plug-in folders, the app into ~/Applications, and clears the download quarantine. Press any key to close it.

04 Open your DAW and rescan plug-ins. In Ableton Live: Settings → Plug-ins → turn on **Use Audio Units** and / or **Use VST3 Plug-in System Folders** → Rescan.

WHAT	WHERE
VST3	~/Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/VST3/DFD ACID ENGINE.vst3
AU	~/Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/Components/DFD ACID ENGINE.component
App	~/Applications/DFD ACID ENGINE.app

> **TIP** The standalone app plays with your computer's audio and any MIDI keyboard: Options → Audio / MIDI Settings.

02 WINDOWS

INSTALL ON WINDOWS.

01 Download **DFD-ACID-ENGINE-Windows.zip** from the releases page. Right-click it → **Extract All**.

02 Double-click **Install.bat** → **Yes** (it asks for administrator rights to write the system VST3 folder). If SmartScreen appears: More info → Run anyway.

03 Rescan plug-ins in your DAW. In Ableton Live: Options → Preferences → Plug-ins → Use VST3 Plug-in System Folders → Rescan.

WHAT	WHERE
VST3	C:\\Program Files\\Common Files\\VST3\\DFD ACID ENGINE.vst3
App	DFD ACID ENGINE.exe, in the unzipped folder

> **TIP** A white or empty plug-in window means the WebView2 Runtime is missing: install it from microsoft.com (search “WebView2 Runtime”), then open the plug-in again.

NINETY SECONDS TO ACID.

01 Make a MIDI track and load **Instruments → Polaris Sound Lab → DFD ACID ENGINE** on it.

02 Press play in the DAW. The pattern starts on the DAW's bar, at the DAW's tempo, and follows loops and jumps.

03 Pick a **STYLE** and press **↗ GENERATE**, or press **☠ DIRTY LAB → ☠ DIRTY GENERATE** for filthy electro house.

04 Shape it with CUTOFF, RESONANCE, ENV MOD; save the DAW set: the plug-in remembers everything.



fig. 1 · the plug-in's window: the web version's screen, without the hero and the TB-3 panel.

04 THE WINDOW

SAME SCREEN, A DAW AROUND IT.

ON THE SCREEN	IN THE PLUG-IN
▶ PLAY · ■ STOP	its own transport, like XO: it plays with the DAW stopped. The DAW's play lines it up on the DAW's bar; the DAW's stop stops it only if the DAW started it.
TEMPO	always the DAW's tempo (the page's own tempo is for the web edition)
↓ MIDI · ↓ WAV · ↓ STEMS	open a save window (it starts in Music → DFD ACID ENGINE) and show the file when it is saved
⇲ DRAG MIDI · ⇲ DRAG WAV	press and drag onto a track: the pattern becomes a MIDI clip (one channel), or a loop of audio (rendered twice, the second pass kept, so its tails loop)
Drop a .mid	drag a MIDI clip from the DAW or the Finder onto the plug-in: it becomes the pattern you edit (one note per sixteenth, accent from velocity, slide on legato, tie on held notes)
↑ IMPORT PROJECT	opens a file window: projects from the web version open here too, and the reverse
EN / ES · EASY / EXPERT	as on the web; the language is remembered on this computer
the TB-3 panel	not in the plug-in: the DAW owns the MIDI ports. Route the plug-in's MIDI out instead (page 10)
links, ♥ DONATE	open in your web browser

TIP Resize the window from its lower-right corner; the page reflows. Keyboard: Space plays and stops, Z…M play notes, Ctrl/⌘+Z undoes, when the window has the focus.

TEMPO, MIDI IN, MIDI OUT.

WHAT	HOW IT WORKS
Host sync	while the DAW plays, the sequencer runs at the DAW's tempo and position (PPQ), sample-accurate, re-anchored every block: loops, jumps and tempo changes land on the step.
MIDI in	notes from a clip or a keyboard play the voice (legato notes slide). Play over the pattern, or stop the pattern and use the plug-in as a mono acid synth.
MIDI out	the sequence goes out as notes, with legato for slides, CC 102 = 127 on slid steps and CC 103 = 127 on accents (the TB-3's own CCs), velocity 127 on accents.
Channel	MIDI out uses channel 1 (the TB-3's default).

RECORD THE SEQUENCE AS MIDI IN ABLETON LIVE

01 Make a second MIDI track: MIDI From → the track with DFD ACID ENGINE → "Post FX" / "DFD ACID ENGINE".

02 Arm it and record: every generated variation becomes an editable clip.

06 AUTOMATION

EVERY KNOB, ON THE TIMELINE.

Every one of the engine's 67 parameters is a DAW parameter, with the same name and the same id as in the engine: voice, cutoff, resonance, env mod, decay, accent, drive, filth, pitch drop, detune, every effect, the pump, A ⇄ B morph, swing, fill, mute… Draw them, or arm automation and move the screen's sliders: the moves are recorded. Automation from the DAW moves the screen's sliders too.

SAVED WITH THE SET	
every parameter	by id: a future version keeps your automation
patterns A and B	every step: note, accent, slide, tie, gate, velocity, ratchet, probability, condition, micro
the page	pattern name, style, key, scale, seed, DNA lock, which pattern you edit

> **TIP** Ride **A/B Morph** in the arrangement: write a calm A, a wild B, and draw the morph from 0 to 1 over 16 bars.

07 EXPORTS

WHAT YOU HEAR IS WHAT YOU GET.

The plug-in renders exports with the same engine, faster than real time: probability, conditions, ratchets and the morph come out exactly as they play.

BUTTON	YOU GET
⇲ **DRAG MIDI**	press, hold and drop onto a MIDI track or the desktop: a .mid (480 PPQ) of about four bars
↓ **MIDI**	the same .mid, through a save window
↓ **WAV**	about 8 bars plus the effect tail, 48 kHz / 24-bit
↓ **STEMS**	SYNTH DRY, FX and FULL, one save window after another

> **TIP** In Ableton, the dragged clip plays DFD ACID ENGINE itself if you drop it on its own track: the DAW then drives the notes, and the plug-in's own pattern can be cleared.

DRIVE A TB-3 FROM THE PLUG-IN.

01 Connect the TB-3 by USB and enable it as a MIDI output in the DAW (Ableton: Settings → Link, Tempo & MIDI → Track for “TB-3”).

02 Make a MIDI track: MIDI From → the DFD ACID ENGINE track; MIDI To → TB-3, channel 1; Monitor → In.

03 Play: the TB-3 plays the pattern, slides and accents included (CC 102 / 103). Turn the plug-in’s VOLUME down to hear only the TB-3, or keep both: TWIN.

04 Record the TB-3’s audio through your interface. Backups and restores of the TB-3’s patch are in the web version’s TB-3 panel (Chrome or Edge).

> **SAFETY** Only one sender per channel: if the web version also plays the TB-3, notes double.

09 TROUBLESHOOTING

IF SOMETHING GOES QUIET.

PROBLEM	TRY THIS
Not in the plug-in list	rescan; on a Mac turn on Audio Units / VST3 system folders; check the paths on pages 03 / 04.
Mac: “cannot be opened”	run the installer again with right-click → Open; it clears the quarantine.
Windows: white window	install the Microsoft Edge WebView2 Runtime, reopen the plug-in.
No sound	the track’s monitor and volume; MUTE pad off; VOLUME up; press play in the DAW or the plug-in’s PLAY.
Out of time	the plug-in follows the DAW only while the DAW plays; check the DAW’s tempo and that its plug-in delay compensation is on.
Drag MIDI does nothing	press and keep the button down, then move: the drag starts after the file is written (a moment).

10 CREDITS

FREE, OPEN, MADE IN MÉRIDA.

DFD ACID ENGINE is free software under the GNU GPL-3.0: use it, study it, change it and share it. The engine, the generator, the factory patterns, the sounds and this manual are original work.

PART	DETAIL
Source code	github.com/drophlex/DFD-ACID-ENGINE
Website, web version, every manual	drophlex.github.io/DFD-ACID-ENGINE
Built with	JUCE 8 (the plug-in, AGPL / GPL-compatible use), Felucca 1.8.2 by Hügelton Instruments (the FM-1 drivers, GPL-3.0)

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