

TRACES / three ways to leave a trace

Afterimage / fading memories • Tideline / rolling swells • Lantern / patterned echoes



One page. Three characters.

A creative delay for instruments, voices, percussion and found sounds. Choose a character, set the timing, then shape how its echoes behave.

Actual user screenshot: v0.1.1 in Ableton. Version 0.1.2 reveals more of the scene and corrects tooltip contrast; control positions are unchanged.

Your first five minutes

Start with a simple phrase and leave space to hear the repeats.

1 / Install

Close your DAW. Double-click Build-and-Install.command in the complete project folder. For an existing project, use Update-AftergardenDelays.command and choose that project folder.

2 / Insert

Reopen Live or Logic. Add AftergardenDelays after an instrument or on an audio track. Start with Afterimage, Forward direction, Bypass off and Catch released.

3 / Set a pulse

Turn Sync on and set Time to 1/4. The plugin uses host tempo when available. Otherwise it uses the manual clock. Start with Repeats 40%, Memory 50%, Drift 10% and Mix 25%.

4 / Hear the character

Play two or three notes, then pause. Raise Memory to hear later repeats soften. Try Tideline for level swells, then Lantern for rhythmic gaps. Character buttons keep your current settings.

5 / Save a discovery

Click Save to write a .agdelay preset. Factory presets replace the current sound settings, so save a sound before browsing away from it.

Insert or return?

On an insert, try Mix at 20-40%. On a return track, use 100% Mix and enable Mix lock; balance the effect with your DAW send. Put Stillroom after the delay for echoes flowing into reverb.

The control surface

The same layout serves all three characters.

Time + Sync

Sync on: musical divisions, including dotted and triplet notes.
Sync off: 40-2000 ms. Synced times are capped at four seconds.
Manual tempo applies only when valid host tempo is absent.

Repeats

Feedback from 0 to 90%. Raise it for longer trails; lower it when old notes blur a new chord.

Memory / Tide / Light

Memory softens successive repeats. Tide sets the depth of the rolling wet-level wave. Light blends in Lantern's rhythmic accent and omission pattern.

Drift

Slow pitch motion. Use low settings for subtle movement; higher settings create a less stable, wavering sound.

Spread + Mix

Spread at zero makes the wet signal mono; higher values add stereo width and cross-feedback. Mix balances the original signal and echoes.

Direction + Age

Forward is conventional delay. Reverse uses overlapping backward windows. Alternating switches between forward and reverse. Age adds soft saturation, quantisation and flutter in the feedback path.

Catch + Clear

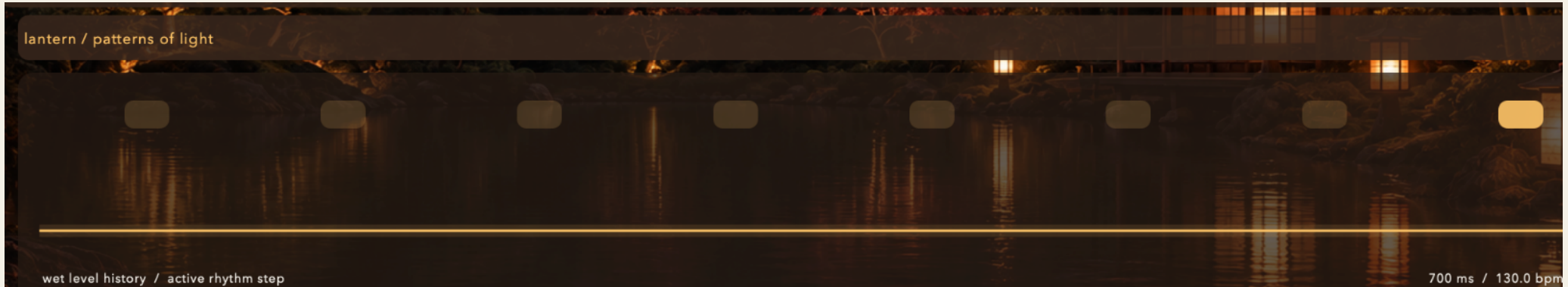
Hold to Catch while echoes are sounding: new audio stops entering and repeats circulate longer. Release to resume input. It gradually colours and decays, rather than freezing perfectly. Clear echoes cuts the buffer; use during silence.

Output + fine adjustment

Output trim ranges from -24 to +6 dB. Hold Shift before dragging for fine control; double-click to reset or type in a value. Bypass returns unity dry audio while the delay keeps running.

Read the display

A visual guide to motion, rather than a literal picture of every echo.



Actual v0.1.1 Lantern display. The newer version lightens the large overlay.

Afterimage

Shows recent measured wet-level history. The echoes progressively soften as Memory increases.

Tideline

Shows the wet-level modulation shape. Tide cycle spans one beat to four 4/4 bars. At full Tide depth, wet level moves from about 12% to 100%.

Lantern

Eight lights identify the current grid step. Each step lasts one delay interval. Light controls how strongly the pattern accents or omits output; Spread enables its stereo movement.

Timing to understand

Lantern and Tide follow tempo but do not align their phase to the DAW bar position. The graph is not a spectrum or sample waveform. The lower-right readout shows effective delay time and clock source.

Presets, comparisons and recall

60 factory starting points: 20 for each character.

Browse within a character

Choose Afterimage, Tideline or Lantern, then use the preset menu or its arrows. Factory recall loads the active bank's sound settings, including Sync, direction and Bypass. Shared Output trim and manual tempo stay as they are.

Compare A and B

A/B keeps two setups, including their characters. Copy overwrites the other bank with the active one. Both banks use one running delay buffer: allow echoes to settle when comparing.

Keep your wet balance

Mix lock preserves Mix while loading factory or user presets. You can still adjust or automate Mix. A/B recalls the Mix saved in each bank.

Save and Open

Save creates a .agdelay file, initially offered in Documents/Aftergarden Delay Presets. It stores the active bank plus shared Output trim and manual tempo. Open recalls those settings; the other bank remains retained.

What the DAW remembers

Your session stores both banks, the active bank and global controls. Audio already in the buffer, Catch and rhythm phase are not saved. A reopened project starts with an empty delay buffer.

One engine, three characters

These are alternative characters of a shared stereo engine. They do not run as three separate simultaneous effects. Switching characters keeps the running echoes, which then take on the new processing.

Recipes / memories and tides

Use these as starting moves, then adjust Mix to suit the source.

Piano postcard

Afterimage > Paper Piano. Play a short phrase with pauses. Set Memory to 70%, Age on and Mix to 20%. If the harmony smears, lower Repeats.

Fading synth phrase

Afterimage > Faded Polaroid. Try dotted eighth timing, Repeats 65% and Drift 30%. Add a little Stillroom afterwards for a soft halo.

Backward memory

Afterimage > Yesterday in Reverse. Play short chords and give the windows time to fill. Reduce Repeats before the next chord if the response becomes crowded.

Breathing arpeggio

Tideline > Tidal Arpeggio. Choose a one-bar Tide cycle, Tide 90% and Mix 25%. Keep the dry arpeggio clear while the echoes swell around it.

Slow ocean

Tideline > Open Ocean. Use sparse sustained notes, a four-bar Tide cycle and Mix around 40%. Lower Repeats if previous chords linger too strongly.

Coastal percussion

Tideline > Foam and Footsteps. Feed quiet taps or foley. Try a two-beat cycle, Forward direction and Mix 30%; lower Drift for clearer attacks.

Recipes / lanterns and captured moments

Simple source material makes the rhythmic changes easiest to hear.

Lantern rhythm

Lantern > Paper Lanterns. Send a simple dry pulse. Raise Light to 100% and audition all four patterns. Listen for gaps in the output grid, rather than one light per played note.

Stereo conversation

Lantern > Two Conversations. Set Spread to 100%, Light about 75% and Repeats 45%. Use a sparse plucked phrase so the stereo replies remain distinct.

Worn night bus

Lantern > Night Tram. Enable Age and try Mix 20%. Lower Drift for steady rhythm or raise it for loose, wavering replies.

Catch a fragment

Afterimage > Last Summer. Play a phrase, then hold Catch while its echoes sound. Release when you want a new phrase to enter. Clear the remaining tail only during silence.

Sea-glass reverse

Tideline > Backwash. Alternate short plucks and pauses, then choose Alternating direction for defined attacks mixed with backward answers.

A shared atmosphere

On a return track, choose a character, set Mix to 100% and enable Mix lock. Send small amounts from several tracks. Use Output trim to manage level.

When something sounds wrong

Small adjustments usually bring the musical detail back.

No echoes

Check input or return-track send, Bypass off, Mix above zero and Catch released. Long and reverse delays need time to fill. Catching an empty buffer gives silence.

Too busy or unstable

Lower Repeats or Mix first. Reduce Drift and use Forward for a more defined response. For Lantern, lower Light to soften the omitted steps.

Pattern feels displaced

The grid is free-running rather than transport-aligned. Choose a simpler pattern or lower Light if exact arrangement alignment matters.

Too loud

Reduce input or Output trim. There is no final output limiter. Bypass ignores Output trim, so it may differ in level from a trimmed effect.

Plugin missing on Mac

Close your hosts and run Refresh-AU.command. If AU registration still needs refreshing, restart the Mac and reopen the host. The VST3 version is also included.

Build or registration trouble

Send Build-log.txt for build failures or AU-Check-log.txt for Audio Unit issues. Keep the complete project folder together.

Screenshots for support

The Mac build checks export AftergardenDelays-Preview.png, AftergardenDelays-Timeline.png and AftergardenDelays-Lantern.png. Send the relevant image if controls appear misplaced.

About this guide

Covers TRACES v0.1.3. The DAW entry remains AftergardenDelays for compatibility. Screenshots are your actual v0.1.1 interface, with the appearance difference labelled. This is a locally signed development build. The dry path adds no latency; reverse playback changes the echo's attack and timing feel.