

ChowMatrix User Manual

ChowMatrix is an infinitely growable delay matrixing effect. The fundamental idea of the effect is to create a “tree” of delay lines, each with it’s own properties, such as delay-time, feedback, panning, etc. This flexibility allows musicians and producers to create a wide array of delay-based effects, from simple multi-tap echoes, to lush reverberant spaces. The plugin is currently available as a VST/VST3/AU/LV2 for Windows, Linux, and Mac.

Installation

To install ChowMatrix for Mac or Windows, download the [latest release](#), unzip the downloaded file, and copy the plugin files to your [plugin folder](#). Note that Macintosh users may need to [allow applications from unidentified developers](#). Linux users may [compile from source](#).

Processing

The way in which ChowMatrix processes audio may not be immediately obvious, especially compared with more traditionally designed audio plugins. ChowMatrix is made up a “tree” of delay nodes, where each node has a “parent” node and potentially one or more “child” nodes. The tree has two “root” nodes, representing the left and right input channels to the plugin. Each node accepts a mono input from its parent node, passes a mono signal on to its children, and outputs a stereo signal to the main plugin output.

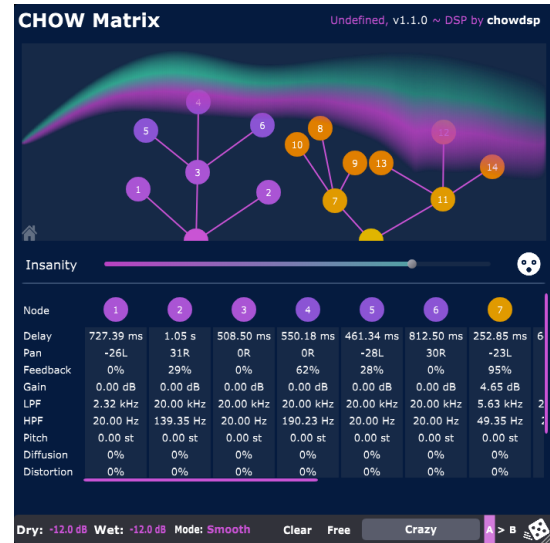


Figure 1: ChowMatrix User Interface

Delay Nodes

The signal processing in each delay node consists of a delay line, as well as a gain, highpass filter, lowpass filter, diffusion filter, distortion, pitch-shifter, a global feedback path, and panner. The full processing architecture for a single delay node is shown in fig. 2.

The input **Gain** applies a simple gain to the signal before being processed by the delay node. Adjusting the gain can be useful for making certain delay nodes louder/quieter in the mix.

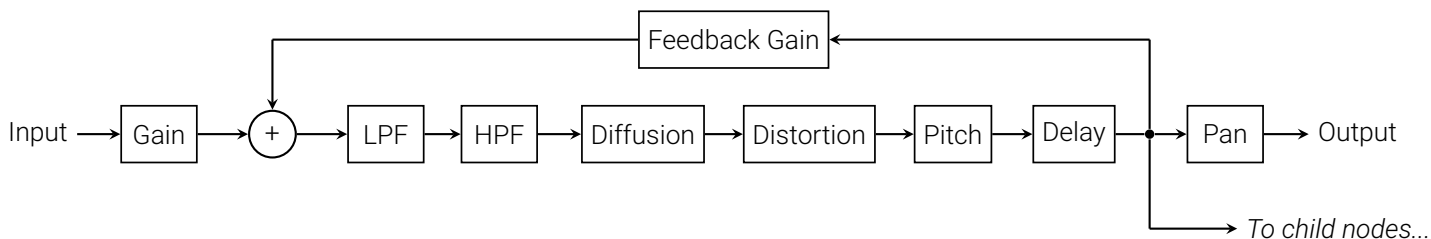


Figure 2: Signal flow for a single delay node.

The **Lowpass/Highpass** filters are simple first-order filters with adjustable cutoff frequencies. Note that since the filters are in the feedback loop, the filtering process will be applied recursively to every “echo” of the signal through the feedback loop.

The **Diffusion** filter is a multi-stage allpass filter, that “smears” out the signal across the delay line. Using diffusion in combination with feedback for rhythmic and percussive sounds, can create an interesting effect.

The **Distortion** applies an anti-aliased waveshaping distortion¹ to the signal. As with the filters, note that this distortion will be applied recursively to the echos created by the feedback path.

The **Pitch** processor re-pitches the signal up or down by a given number of semitones. This effect can be useful for obtaining interesting and creative soundscapes.

¹Anti-aliasing is done without oversampling using anti-derivative anti-aliasing. For more information, see: [Parker et. al., 2016](#).

The **Delay** line has a length that can be controlled either as a “free” parameter, with units of milliseconds, or synced to the tempo of the song.

The **Feedback** gain controls how much of the delayed signal is fed back to the input. Setting the feedback to control to its maximum value enables **Freeze** mode, which freezes the current signal in the delay line, and mutes any incoming input signal.

The **Pan** processor applies a constant-power panner to the mono signal processed by the delay node, turning it into a stereo signal that is then fed to the plugin output.

Modulation

Each delay node also contains modulations controls for the delay time and panning. The modulation section has three controls:

Mod Freq determines the modulation frequency. Similar to the delay length, the modulation frequency can be controlled as either a free parameter (0 - 5 Hz), or synced to the tempo of the song.

Delay Mod controls the amount the delay length is modulated for this node. Note that changing the [delay interpolation mode](#) will change how this modulation sounds.

Pan Mod controls the modulation amount for the node pan control. Note that this control can be set to negative values to reverse the modulation.

Controls

The ChowMatrix interface is made up of four main sections: the “Graph View”, “Details View”, “Bottom Bar” and “Insanity Control”.

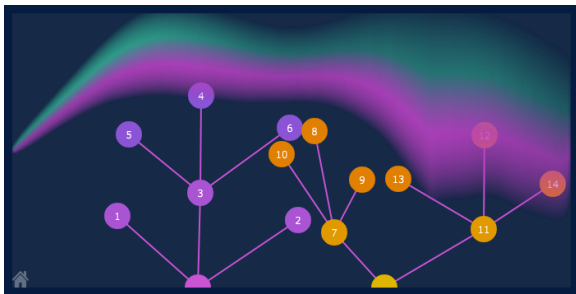


Figure 3: ChowMatrix Graph View

Graph View

The **Graph View** is the main interface for interacting with the delay nodes and managing the connections between nodes, as well as providing an informative and inspiring visualization of the delay processing being performed by the plugin.

At the bottom of the graph view are two **Input Nodes**, represented by half-circles. The Input Node on the left represents the left input channel, and the right Input Node represents the right input channel.

To **create** a new node, **SHIFT+Click** on the background of the Graph View. If a node is selected, the new node will be created as a “child” of the selected node. If no node is selected, the new node will be created as a child of the nearest Input Node.

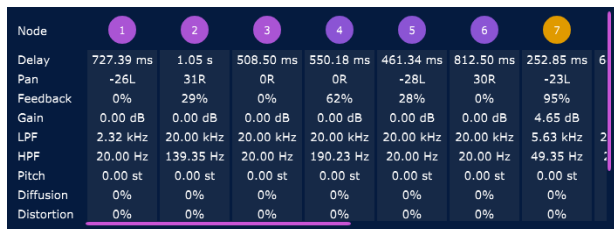
To **select** a node, simply click on the node. A menu will appear showing the parameter controls for the selected node. To un-select, click the background of the Graph View.

When you **Click+Drag** to **move** a node, the panning and delay time of that node will change accordingly. The panning is controlled by the node’s angle relative to its “parent” node, and the delay line is controlled by the distance from the node to its parent.

To **delete** a node, **CMD+Click** on the node, or press the **Delete** key when the node is selected.

To **solo** the audio from a specific node, **ALT+Click** on the node. To un-solo the node, click on the background of the Graph View.

The mouse can be used to explore the far reaches of the Graph View by scrolling, or clicking and dragging. Click the **Home** icon in the bottom left corner, to return to the default view position.



Node	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Delay	727.39 ms	1.05 s	508.50 ms	550.18 ms	461.34 ms	812.50 ms	252.85 ms
Pan	-26L	31R	0R	0R	-28L	30R	-23L
Feedback	0%	29%	0%	62%	28%	0%	95%
Gain	0.00 dB	0.00 dB	0.00 dB	0.00 dB	0.00 dB	0.00 dB	4.65 dB
LPF	2.32 kHz	20.00 kHz	20.00 kHz	20.00 kHz	20.00 kHz	20.00 kHz	5.63 kHz
HPF	20.00 Hz	139.35 Hz	20.00 Hz	190.23 Hz	20.00 Hz	20.00 Hz	49.35 Hz
Pitch	0.00 st	0.00 st	0.00 st	0.00 st	0.00 st	0.00 st	0.00 st
Diffusion	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Distortion	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Figure 4: ChowMatrix Details View

Details View

The **Details View** is below the Insanity Slider on the interface, and allows the user to view and edit the parameters for each node without having to select the node in the Graph View. To select a node in the Details View, click the corresponding node circle. Note that selecting a node in the Details View will select the same node in the Graph View.

To edit a parameter, **Click+Drag** on the parameter value. Alternatively, single-clicking on the value allows you to type in a value for the parameter. Double-clicking will reset the parameter to its default value.

Using **SHIFT+Click+Drag** will change the same parameter for all the delay nodes in unison. **CMD+Click** on the delay or pan value to “lock” the parameter so that it will not be affected by the “Insanity” control. **CMD+Click** on the mod freq. parameter to toggle between a free and tempo-synced LFO.

Insanity Control

ChowMatrix also features an **Insanity** parameter. By turning up the Insanity, the plugin will allow the delay nodes to “wander” randomly, with a speed and intensity determined by the parameter value. Insanity is useful for finding new delay node configurations, or for adding a source of chaotic modulation.



Figure 5: ChowMatrix Bottom Bar

Bottom Bar

The “Bottom Bar” section includes several auxiliary controls, as well as a presets menu.

The **Dry/Wet** sliders control the level of the dry and wet signals coming out of the plugin. To use ChowMatrix as a “send”, turn the Dry level all the way down to **-inf**.

Mode controls the delay interpolation mode² used by the delay nodes. Using higher-order interpolation modes will make

²For more information on delay-line interpolation, see [Smith III, 2010](#).

the delay nodes sound more “smooth” when the delay length is changed, at the cost of slightly higher CPU usage. First-order interpolation will make the delay nodes sound “rough” when the delay length is changed, as well as attenuating high frequencies passing through the delay. Zero-order interpolation will make the delay nodes sound “glitchy” when the delay length is changed. The differences between the delay modes are most noticeable when moving or modulating the delay nodes quickly, particularly in “Insane” mode, and are further accentuated when lots of feedback is used.

Clear will flush all signal from the delay nodes. This can be useful if you have delay nodes with lots of feedback, and wish to clear the delay lines without having to wait for the feedback to echo until silence.

Sync/Free toggles whether the delay times are synced to the tempo of the song, or “free” to be any length. For plugin hosts that do not supply tempo information to plugins, ChowMatrix will default to 120 BPM.

The **A/B** control allows the user to toggle between two plugin states. This can be useful for using insanity mode without losing your current settings. Use the “A” or “B” buttons to load one of the saved states as the current active state. Use the “arrow” button to save the current state as either the A or B state.

The **Randomise** button will randomise the parameters for all the delay nodes. This can be useful for quickly discovering new delay node configurations.

Presets

Presets provide a quick way to achieve a specific sound with the plugin. ChowMatrix comes with a set of built-in factory presets. To contribute your presets to be added to the factory presets list for future releases, please email me.

User Presets

To save the current plugin state as a user preset, open the presets menu, and select “Save”. The first time a preset is saved, you will be asked to choose a preset folder. All future presets will be saved to this folder, and when the plugin opens, it will search this folder, as well as any subfolders, to load new user presets. Presets located in subfolders will be placed in their own groups in the preset menu.

Open Source

ChowMatrix is open-source software that is free (as in “free beer”), and free (as in “free speech”), under the 3-clause BSD license.

As an open-source project, ChowMatrix is open to outside contributors. If you would like to contribute to the development of ChowMatrix, please visit the [issues page](#) for a list of outstanding tasks. If you would like to implement a new feature, please create an issue ticket first, so the feature can be discussed by the community.

Feedback

If you notice any bugs, or have any questions, feel free to [email me directly](#), or [create an issue ticket](#) on GitHub. GitHub issues are preferred, since they are publicly visible.

Enjoy!

Jatin Chowdhury

<https://github.com/Chowdhury-DSP/ChowMatrix>

Shortcuts

Action	Shortcut	Item
Add Node	SHIFT+Click	Graph View
Delete Node	CMD+Click	Graph View
Solo Node	ALT+Click	Graph View
Unison Change	SHIFT+Drag	Param Slider
Insanity Lock	CMD+Click	Param Slider
Set to default	Double-Click	Param Slider
Freeze Mode	> 95%	Feedback Slider
Tempo-sync LFO	CMD+Click	Mod. Freq. Slider