

moon.hands.core

User Manual - Version 1.0

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1.1 Device Overview

moon.hands.core is a Max for Live (M4L) device designed to streamline the execution of automated event sequences within Ableton Live. Leveraging a Gantt-like interface, it allows users to construct Events (blocks) and conceptualise complex musical forms.

1.2 Applications

Looper

- Simplified Looping: Schedule events to start/stop recordings or playback for easy loops.
- Automated Loop Sequences: Script complex loop changes by adding/removing or altering clips over time.

Elastic Scenes

- Trigger any group of clips without creating new Ableton scenes.
- Combine clips from different scenes for more creative playback options.

Compositional Tool

- Recall presets and generate fresh musical ideas from clip sets.
- Experiment with different structures and arrangements using the Gantt-like interface.

Performance Enhancement

- Automate backing tracks.
- Focus more on live instruments or vocals while moon.hands.core manages playback.

Integration with Ableton Live

By integrating directly into Ableton Live, moon.hands.core provides unparalleled control, automating intricate tasks like arming tracks, initiating or terminating recordings, and dynamically controlling playback. With its intuitive yet powerful interface, moon.hands.core is ideal for musicians, composers, and live performers seeking enhanced creative workflows.

1.3 System Requirements

- Ableton Live 11 (or newer).
- Max for Live (included with the Live Suite).

1.4 Installation

Method 1

1. Open Ableton Live.
2. Drag the .amxd file directly into a MIDI track.
3. (Optional) Right-click the device and save it to User Library for future use.

Method 2

4. Place moon.hands.core.amxd in Ableton's User Library for easy access.
5. Open Ableton Live and find the device in the User Library.
6. Drag it onto a MIDI track to load it.

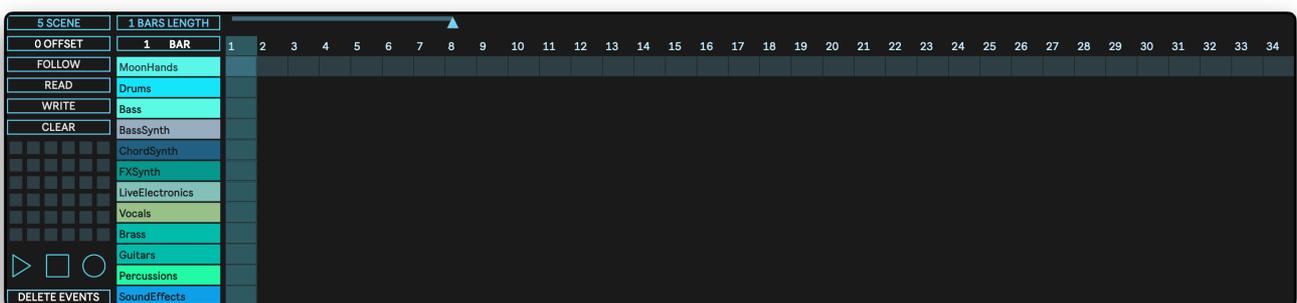
1.5 How to start

Starting a New Project

1. Add moon.hands.core to a MIDI track.
2. Click the moon.hands.core logo to open the pop-up window.
3. Create events by clicking and dragging. (Edit by deleting and recreating.)
4. Sync track details by hovering over the Event Display.
5. Save presets with SHIFT + click.
6. Use Additional Transport to start playback.

2.1 Interface Layout

The interface is structured around a timeline-based Gantt-like framework. Tracks are displayed as horizontal lanes, stacked on the vertical axis, while time is represented along the horizontal axis in Bars. Events are blocks placed within these lanes, facilitating both micro-level adjustments and macro-level planning.



3.1 Core Functionality by Section

- Tip

In the moon.hands.core' interface the controls that are coloured white can be adjusted by the user. The light-blue coloured are displaying information from the Live Set (and can be adjusted from the Live Set's main interface).

3.1.1 Top Section



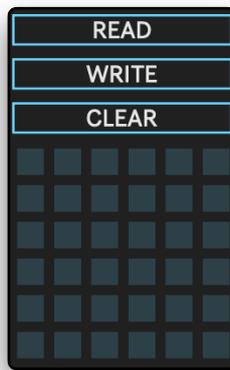
- **SCENE:** The Scene display monitors the Scene and/or Slot selection in the Live Set. Every time the user makes a new selection it will update showing the current selected Scene.
- **OFFSET:** The OFFSET adjusts the vertical tracking line by a number of Bars to monitor events before and after playback.
- **FOLLOW:** The FOLLOW button when enabled will link the moon.hands.core' transport with the Live Set's main transport syncing the Event Display's view to display the corresponding Events.
- **BARS LENGTH:** The BARS LENGTH display shows the length of the current or last created Event.
- **BAR:** The user can input the Bar number to be displayed and selected in the Event Display.
- **Horizontal Zoom:** The Horizontal Zoom line lets the user zoom in and out horizontally changing the visible number of Bars in the Event Display, by dragging the triangle horizontally.
- **Bar Timeline:** The Bar Timeline shows the corresponding Bars and is linked to the Horizontal Zoom line.

- Tip

By clicking on a Bar number, the user can select the Bar on the moon.hands.core device. This will NOT update the Live Set's main transport.

3.1.2 Preset Management

moon.hands.core offers an advanced preset system that enhances workflow efficiency and project organisation. Presets can store Event configurations, and zoom settings, making it easy to switch between different project states. This makes it very intuitive for the user to experiment with various musical forms with just a few clicks of the mouse. By having a set of clips, the composer can create various forms or use existing ones to create new ideas effortlessly.



- READ: Load a JSON file with presets to recall configurations.
- WRITE: Export as JSON file for unlimited preset storage across multiple projects.
- CLEAR: Deletes all presets from the pallet for a fresh start.
- Creating a Preset: Shift + Click on empty Preset to retain current settings while creating new presets.
- Presets are automatically saved with the Live Set, ensuring that all configurations remain intact across sessions.

3.1.3 Additional Transport Controls



- **Tip**

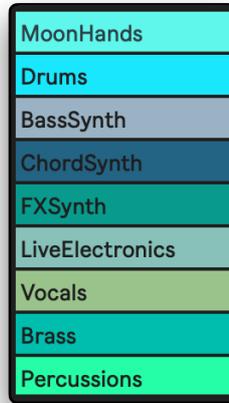
The user should always use the custom transport to initiate the playback

- **Play:** Initiates playback.
- **Stop:** Halts playback and stops all clips.
- **Record:** Begins recording, integrating seamlessly with event triggers. Using these controls ensures precise timing and synchronisation, essential for live performances and complex arrangements.
- **DELETE EVENTS:** The DELETE EVENTS button erases permanently the Events currently shown in the Event Display

- **Tip**

This action is irreversible—make sure to save your configuration as a preset beforehand.

3.1.4 Tracks Section

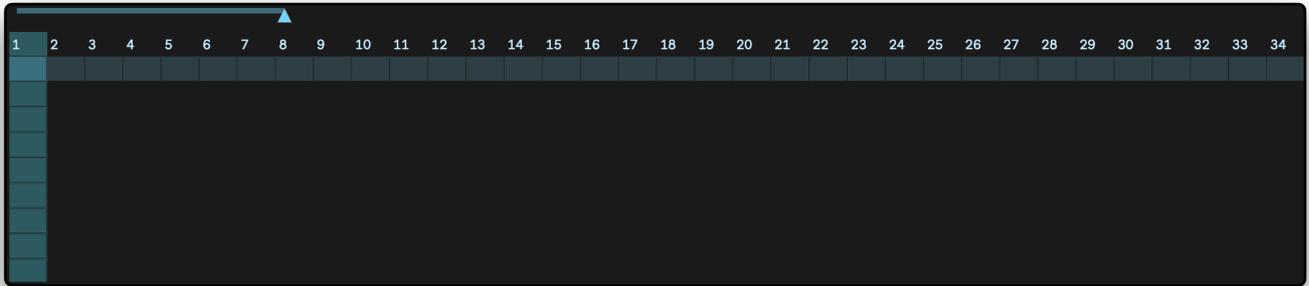


The moon.hands.core device integrates seamlessly with Ableton Live by dynamically synchronising track information, such as names, colours, order, and the addition or removal of tracks. This synchronisation ensures that any updates made within the Live set are reflected accurately within the moon.hands.core interface.

- Tip

To finalise these updates and ensure proper alignment, the user must hover over the Event Display part of the interface. This action triggers a re-initialisation process.

3.1.5 Event Display



The Event Display is a Gantt-like interface that shows the Events represented visually as blocks. The horizontal axis represents the Bar timeline whereas the vertical axis represents the Tracks in the current Live Set. Each event contains critical markers that provide users with essential information.

Creating Events

Click and drag the mouse to define event length.

Deleting Events

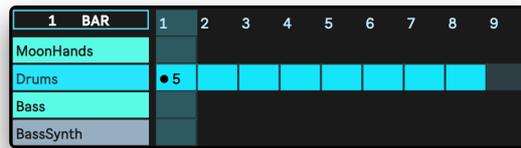
Select the event and hit delete on the keyboard

- Tip

Since the Events are not linked to the Tracks
if the user changes the colour or the order of the tracks
these changes will not appear on the Event Display.
To synchronise new track colours or order,
save your Event configuration as a preset,
rearrange tracks in Live,
then reload that preset to restore the correct colours and alignment.

Event Information

- Dots: Indicate the event's starting point.
- Numbers: Correspond to the associated clip slot or scene.
- Colour: The Event colour is linked to the Track's colour and cannot be changed directly.



ex. Presenting an 8 Bar length Event on the Drums track in the fifth Slot, starting at Bar 1 and finishing at the end of Bar 8.

Zoom and Scroll Features

- Horizontal Zoom: Scales the timeline; up to 1000 Bars visible at maximum zoom.
- Horizontal Scroll: Holding down SHIFT while scrolling will scroll horizontally.
- Vertical Scroll: Navigates projects with more than 12 tracks.

4.1 Integration with Ableton Live

Syncing Clips and Tracks

Selections in Ableton Live sync immediately with moon.hands.core For changes such as track name, colour or order, hover over the Event Display to reinitialise.

Designed to Complement Live

moon.hands.core adds a timeline (Bar) dimension to Session View, aligning it with Arrangement View. The M4L logo opens the interface, ensuring visibility regardless of track selection.

5.1 Tips for Efficient Use

Optimising Presets

- Save frequently to capture progress.
- Use JSON export for tailored project libraries.

Navigating Complex Projects

- Toggle zoom levels for detail or structural views.
- Scroll vertically for large projects.

6.1 Troubleshooting

Common Issues and Solutions

- Events starting at Bar 1 are not triggered: Use moon.hands.core additional Transport.
- Tracks not syncing: Hover over the Event Display

7.1 FAQs

Q: How do I store a preset in moon.hands.core for later use?

A: To store a preset, ensure you've configured your events and interface as desired. Then, in the Preset Palette, SHIFT + Click on an empty slot to save the current settings as a preset. This preset will automatically be saved with your Ableton Live set, ready for future sessions.

Q: Can I store multiple presets within one Ableton Live project using moon.hands.core

A: Yes, moon.hands.core allows you to store multiple presets within a single project. Simply repeat the SHIFT + Click action on different empty slots in the Preset Palette for each configuration you want to save. This makes it easy to switch between different setups or musical ideas within the same project without losing any configurations.

Q: Why is exporting presets as JSON in moon.hands.core beneficial, and how does it affect the number of presets I can store?

A: Exporting presets as JSON files in moon.hands.core is highly beneficial because it provides an unlimited capacity for storing presets. To export, use the WRITE function in the preset management section to save your current configuration as a JSON file, which you can then import back into moon.hands.core or any other compatible system, making your workflow incredibly flexible and scalable.

Q: How do I sync track changes from Ableton Live to moon.hands.core

A: To sync track changes such as names, colours, or order, simply hover your cursor over the Event Display in moon.hands.core. This action triggers a re-initialisation, ensuring your device reflects the latest changes from your Live Set.

Q: Can I use moon.hands.core without affecting my existing Ableton Live workflow?

A: Yes, moon.hands.core is designed to complement your existing workflow. It integrates seamlessly with Ableton Live, providing additional functionality without disrupting your current setup. However, for optimal use, utilise the Additional Transport Controls within moon.hands.core for playback and recording.

Q: What happens if I delete all events without saving a preset?

A: Deleting all events with the DELETE EVENTS button is a permanent action unless you have previously saved your configuration as a preset. If you haven't saved a preset, all your events will be lost, and you will need to recreate them.

Q: How can I manage multiple project setups with moon.hands.core.

A: moon.hands.core supports a comprehensive preset system where you can save, load, and export configurations. Use the WRITE function to export presets as JSON files, which can then be shared or used across different projects for consistent setups.

Q: Why don't the colours of my events change when I change track colours in Ableton Live?

A: Events in moon.hands.core do not automatically update their colour when you change track colours in Live because they are independent of track colour changes for consistency. To reflect new track colours, save your current setup as a preset, then reload the preset after making changes in Live.

Q: Can I use moon.hands.core in a live performance scenario?

A: Absolutely! moon.hands.core is well-suited for live performances due to its preset palette, which allows for quick switching between different configurations, enabling seamless transitions during your set.

Q: Is there a way to preview events before they happen in the timeline?

A: Yes, use the Tracking Offset feature to adjust the vertical playback line by a number of Bars. This allows you to monitor events before and after the current play position, giving you a preview of what's coming up or what just passed.

Q: Can I recover an event if I accidentally delete it?

A: No, once an event is deleted in moon.hands.core, it cannot be recovered unless you have saved it in a preset beforehand. Always save your work frequently, especially before making significant changes or deletions.

8.1 Appendix

Glossary

- **Event Block:** A visual representation of automated actions or events on the timeline within moon.hands.core. Each block can trigger specific functions like starting/stopping recordings, arming tracks, or playing clips at designated times.
- **Preset Palette:** A collection of saved configurations within moon.hands.core. This allows users to quickly switch between different setups or musical arrangements by recalling previously saved states of the interface and events.
- **Event Display:** The main workspace in moon.hands.core where users create, edit, and visualise events. It uses a Gantt-like interface where the horizontal axis represents time (Bars) and the vertical axis represents tracks from Ableton Live.
- **SCENE:** An element in moon.hands.core that displays the current Scene or Slot selection from the Ableton Live interface. It updates in real-time as you change scenes or slots, providing a reference point for your current context within your project.
- **OFFSET:** A feature that allows users to adjust the timing of the vertical playback line by a number of Bars. Useful for previewing events before or after the current playback position.
- **FOLLOW Button:** When activated, this button synchronises the moon.hands.core timeline with Ableton Live's transport, ensuring that the view in the Event Display follows the playback position in Live.
- **BARS LENGTH:** A display that shows the length of the currently selected or last created event in terms of Bars, helping users to manage the duration of their events.
- **BAR:** An input where users can manually select a specific Bar on the timeline to focus on or start playback from within moon.hands.core.
- **Horizontal Zoom:** A control that allows users to zoom in or out on the timeline, adjusting how many Bars are visible at once to facilitate both micro-level editing and macro-level overview of events.

- **Bar Timeline:** Represents the Bars along the horizontal axis of the Event Display, visually indicating the progression of time relative to events.
- **Additional Transport Controls:** These include Play, Stop, and Record buttons within moon.hands.core, designed for precise control over playback and recording, ensuring synchronisation with the events laid out in the Event Display.
- **DELETE EVENTS:** A button that permanently removes all events from the Event Display unless they were saved in a preset beforehand.

9.1 Credits

moon.hands.core v 1.0

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Compatible with Ableton Live 12+ Max for Live

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