LIL GROOVER

BY LESSONS IN LIVE · USER MANUAL

LIL Groover is a drum machine for house and techno: eleven warm, slightly drifting 909-style voices (with the 808's congas, bongos, clave, cowbell, shaker and tambourine), 25 sample kits made from Lessons in Live's own samples, and a step sequencer where every sound has its own length, so polyrhythms come for free. A groove generator writes real house and techno patterns, the lessons build famous grooves one sound at a time, and everything you make drags straight into Live as MIDI or audio.



INSTALLING

- **Mac** (Apple Silicon and Intel, macOS 11 or later): quit Ableton Live (or Logic, and any other music software), unzip the download, open `LilGroover-1.0.0-Installer.pkg` and follow the steps. It installs the VST3 into /Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/VST3, the sample kits into /Library/Application Support/Lessons In Live/LIL Groover/Kits, and the Audio Unit (for Logic Pro and GarageBand) into /Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/Components; if you only use Live you can untick the Audio Unit under Customize. The stand-alone app (for playing without a DAW) is optional, also under Customize.
- **Windows** (64-bit): quit Live, unzip the download and run `LilGroover-1.0.0-Windows-Installer.exe`. It installs the VST3 into C:\Program Files\Common Files\VST3, the sample kits and, if you like, the stand-alone app. Windows may ask whether to run an app from an unknown publisher: choose More info › Run anyway.
- **In Live**, open Settings › Plug-Ins, make sure **Use VST3 Plug-In System Folders** is on and click **Rescan**. LIL Groover appears under Plug-Ins › Lessons in Live Instruments. If Live lists it twice (the VST3 and the Audio Unit), use the VST3: your sets then also open on Windows.
- **In Logic Pro**, make a Software Instrument track, click its Instrument slot and choose AU Instruments › Lessons in Live Instruments › LIL Groover › Stereo (or Multi-Output, for an output per sound). If it isn't there, open Logic Pro › Settings › Plug-in Manager, select LIL Groover and click **Reset & Rescan Selection**.
- **In GarageBand**, make a Software Instrument track, press B for Smart Controls, click the Inspector button (i), then the instrument slot under Plug-ins, and choose AU Instruments › Lessons in Live Instruments › LIL Groover. If Audio Units aren't listed, turn on **Enable Audio Units** in GarageBand › Settings › Audio/MIDI and restart GarageBand.

QUICK START

1. Put LIL Groover on a MIDI track in Live and press play. It follows Live's tempo and transport.
2. Press **GENERATE** for a new groove. Each press picks a style (classic house, deep house, garage, minimal, Detroit, Berlin, acid, Afro house, electro) with its own swing. **MUTATE** changes a few parts and keeps the rest.
3. Click the steps to change the groove, and the arrows in the preset bar (or **BROWSE**) to try another kit.
4. Drag a lane's **MIDI** or **WAV** chip (or **THE KIT** in the top bar) into Live: you get the pattern as a MIDI clip or as audio.

Not in Live, or Live is stopped? The stand-alone app has a ▶ key in the top bar.

THE SCREEN

- **Top bar: FLIP** (turns the machine round to its back, see The sounds), the kit preset (◀ ▶ to step, ★ for a favourite), **BROWSE** (every kit at a glance), **LESSONS**, UNDO and REDO (the arrows), **LENGTH** (how long the dragged MIDI and audio is: 1, 2, 4 or 8 bars), **THE KIT** (drag the whole kit as MIDI or audio) and **EXPORT** (every sound as its own MIDI or audio file).
- **The strips** along the top: one per sound, with its name (click it to select the sound and hear it), TUNE, DECAY, LEVEL and its own fourth knob (ATTACK, SNAPPY, TONE, METAL, …).
- **The sequencer** (the black plate): a lane per sound, 32 steps, with M (mute), S (solo), the die (a new part for that sound), the lock (GENERATE and MUTATE leave a locked lane alone), STEPS (the lane's length) and the MIDI | WAV drag chips.

- **Under the sequencer:** the 16 pattern keys, COPY and PASTE, CHAIN and WRITE with the chain's 32 boxes, and FILL and BREAK.
- **The bottom:** VOICE (the selected sound's filter, drive, pan, LFOs and sends), GROOVE (SWING, DYNAMICS, HUMAN velocity and timing), GENERATE, EFFECTS and OUTPUT (the level, the meter and the cog for MIDI OUT and the outputs).
- **The footer:** the version, the trial (until you activate), MENU and lessonsinlive.com.

Drag the bottom-right corner to resize the window. Hover a knob to see its value; most keys explain themselves when you hover them.

THE SOUNDS

Every sound is a synthesised voice (BD, SD, three toms, RS, CP, CH, OH, CY, RD), modelled on the 909 and kept warm: each hit drifts a little in pitch, decay and level, and every voice has a slow pitch and filter LFO, so nothing sounds frozen. The closed hat cuts the open one short, as on the machine.

- **The 808 switch:** the toms can be TOM, CONGA or BONGO, the rim shot RIM, CLAVE or COWBELL, the crash CRASH, SHAKER or TAMBOURINE. Click the small slide switch at the left of a strip's name (right-click it for the list).
- **SYNTH / SAMPLE** (VOICE panel): every sound can play a sample instead of the circuit. Drop a sample on a strip or a lane, or a folder of samples anywhere on LIL Groover to make a kit of it: files are matched to the sounds by name (Kick, Snare, Clap, Closed Hat, Open Hat, Ride, Crash, Low Tom, Conga, Cowbell, Shaker, …). A sample gets its sound's knobs, filter and effects like the circuit.
- **Names:** a sample names its sound (a chord stab becomes CHORD STAB); right-click a sound's name for Rename… and Reset name.
- **The back (FLIP):** a card per sound with its waveform (drag START and DECAY on it), LOAD, SYNTH / SAMPLE, the TYPE arrows, PITCH ENV and ENV TIME (a pitch sweep), ATTACK, REV (the sample backwards) and **LAYER** (the circuit under a sample, for a sample kick with a 909 body).

THE SEQUENCER

- **Click** a step to switch it on or off (drag to paint). **Right-click** steps through accent, ghost and normal; **Shift-drag** a step up or down for any velocity in between.
- **Option-click** (Alt-click) a step: the lane ends there. Every lane loops on its own length (1 to 32 steps, also with STEPS – +), so a 5-step rim against 16-step hats keeps shifting: a polyrhythm.
- **Cmd-click** (Ctrl-click) a step for its card: OFF / GHOST / NORMAL / ACCENT, **CHANCE** (how often it plays), **CONDITION** (1:2, 3:4, FILL, NOT FILL, 1ST, …: which times round it plays), **NUDGE** (a little early or late) and the step's own **TUNE** and **DECAY**. The step shows what it does: a chance bar, the condition, a notch for the nudge.
- **SWING** delays every second 1/16 (50 % is straight, house sits around 54–62 %). **HUMAN** velocity and timing add a drummer's looseness, **DYNAMICS** how much accents and ghosts differ.

PATTERNS, THE CHAIN, FILL AND BREAK

- **16 patterns** on the keys under the sequencer. A key pressed while Live plays switches when the playing pattern comes round. Right-click a key to copy, paste, paste as a variation or clear it. MIDI notes **C3 to D#4** pick patterns 1 to 16 on the next bar line, so a clip in Live can play your song.
- **CHAIN** plays the patterns in the boxes from left to right, each once round. With **WRITE** lit, every pattern key you press goes onto the end of the chain. Scroll or drag a box to change it, right-click it to duplicate or remove it. With CHAIN on, the MIDI drags and EXPORT write the whole song.
- **FILL** (hold it, or MIDI E4): a fill plays over the groove, quiet at the start of the bar and busy at the end. Hold it a whole bar for a build-up, tap it on beat 4 for a pickup.
- **BREAK** (hold it, or MIDI F4): the kick drops out and the room opens up; let go and the kick comes back on the next 1.

GENERATE

GENERATE writes a groove from a library of real one-bar phrases per style, with the style's swing. **DENSITY** says how busy, **VARIATION** how much the parts move (and what bar 2 does with **2 BARS**), **POLY** gives some lanes odd lengths. **MUTATE** swaps one to three parts for others of the same style; the clap and the kick's beats stay. **CLEAR** empties the pattern. Each lane's die writes just that part. Locked lanes are never touched.

EFFECTS

- **DRIVE**: a tape stage over the whole kit (AMOUNT, TONE).
- **CRUSH**: a sample-rate and bit crusher (BITS, RATE, MIX).
- **PUMP**: the kick ducks the rest of the kit, the sidechain sound of house (AMOUNT, TIME in note values).
- **ECHO** and **SPACE**: a tempo-synced tape echo and a plate-style reverb. They're sends: every sound has its own ECHO and SPACE knob in the VOICE panel.

KITS AND PRESETS

A kit preset is the sound only (every knob, sample and effect); your patterns stay when you change kits.

- **SYNTH KITS:** ten kits of the circuits, from Warehouse 909 to Afro Machine and Cowbell Carnival.
- **SAMPLE KITS:** the 25 kits that come with LIL Groover, in the packs Chicago (house), Berlin (techno), Valencia and LIL Groover. Six of them have a chord on a sound (CHORD Cm7): play it in the hi-tom lane for stabs.
- **MY PRESETS:** SAVE in the preset menu or BROWSE keeps your own (in Music/LIL Groover/Presets).
- **Your own kits:** a folder per kit in Music/LIL Groover/Kits (a file per sound, named for its sound) shows up under SAMPLE KITS at once, as MY KITS.
- **BROWSE:** every kit and preset with a search, filters (FAVORITES, SYNTH KITS, SAMPLE KITS, MY PRESETS) and the packs, what's in each kit, and the stars. Click to load (also while Live plays), double-click or Return to close.

LESSONS

LESSONS in the top bar: seven famous grooves (Chicago jack, deep house, UK garage 2-step, Detroit techno, Berlin techno, minimal, Afro house), built up one sound at a time. Pick one and press play: it loads its kit and starts with one sound. **NEXT** adds the next part and says why it's there; you see the groove grow in the steps below. At the end, **KEEP THE GROOVE** to play on with it, or **BACK TO MY SET** to get your own patterns, kit and knobs back as they were.

INTO LIVE: MIDI, AUDIO AND OUTPUTS

- **MIDI | WAV chips:** drag a lane's MIDI chip into Live for that sound's pattern as a MIDI clip, its WAV chip for the sound as audio, with its effects. **THE KIT** does the same for the whole kit (MIDI on General MIDI drum notes, so it plays a Drum Rack). LENGTH sets how long they are; polyrhythms keep running over it.
- **EXPORT:** every sound that plays plus the whole kit as MIDI files or as audio files, in Music/LIL Groover/MIDI or Audio.
- **An output per sound:** right-click a sound's name, or use the cog in OUTPUT, to send it to its own output. In Live, make an audio track, set Audio From to the LIL Groover track and pick the sound (Bass Drum, Snare, …). A yellow arrow on the lane shows it.
- **MIDI OUT:** the cog in OUTPUT turns it on: the pattern plays on MIDI too (General MIDI drum notes on channel 10), so a Drum Rack on another track can play along (its MIDI From set to the LIL Groover track). MIDI ONLY silences LIL Groover itself.

TRIAL AND SERIAL

LIL Groover starts as a free **30-day trial** with everything working; the bar at the bottom shows how many days are left. After the trial it keeps working in demo mode, with about two seconds of silence every minute; your sets always load and play.

To keep it, buy a serial on lessonsinlive.com and click **ENTER SERIAL** (or MENU › Enter serial number). Activating needs an internet connection once; after that it works offline. **One serial works on two computers**, Mac and Windows; on a Mac the VST3, the Audio Unit and the stand-alone app share it. To move it to another computer, choose MENU › Deactivate this computer first.

UPDATES

When a newer version of LIL Groover is out, the bar at the bottom of the window says so, with WHAT'S NEW, DOWNLOAD (the installer for your computer) and X to skip that version. Updates are free: install the new version over the old one; your serial stays activated, your own kits and presets stay, and your sets sound the same. LIL Groover asks lessonsinlive.com at most once a day, only while its window is open, and sends nothing about you. MENU › Check for updates now asks right away; MENU › Check for updates automatically turns the daily check off or on.

IF LIVE WON'T START ON WINDOWS

If Live suddenly won't open, or says **libusb-1.0.dll was not found**, Microsoft Defender has most likely taken that file out of Live's Program folder. libusb-1.0.dll belongs to Ableton Live (Live uses it for USB controllers such as Push), and Defender sometimes mistakes it for a threat; LIL Groover only installs its own files. To get Live back:

1. Open **Windows Security › Virus & threat protection › Protection history** and click the entry for libusb-1.0.dll.
2. If it says Quarantined, choose **Actions › Restore**. If it says Removed, choose **Allow** and reinstall Live from your Ableton account (your sets, Packs and User Library stay where they are).
3. Start Live again.

Don't download libusb-1.0.dll from a "DLL download" website: the file from Live's own installer is the right one.