

UNA Field Guide

The whole instrument, ten pages

Concepts · Gestures · Modes - with the full manual one pointer away

2026 · Applies to firmware v1.0 and later
Full manual: manuals.midicake.com/una

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UNA Field Guide

The whole instrument, ten pages. More depth than the Quick Start card, far less reading than the full manual - every concept, gesture and mode, one glance each.

Use it two ways:

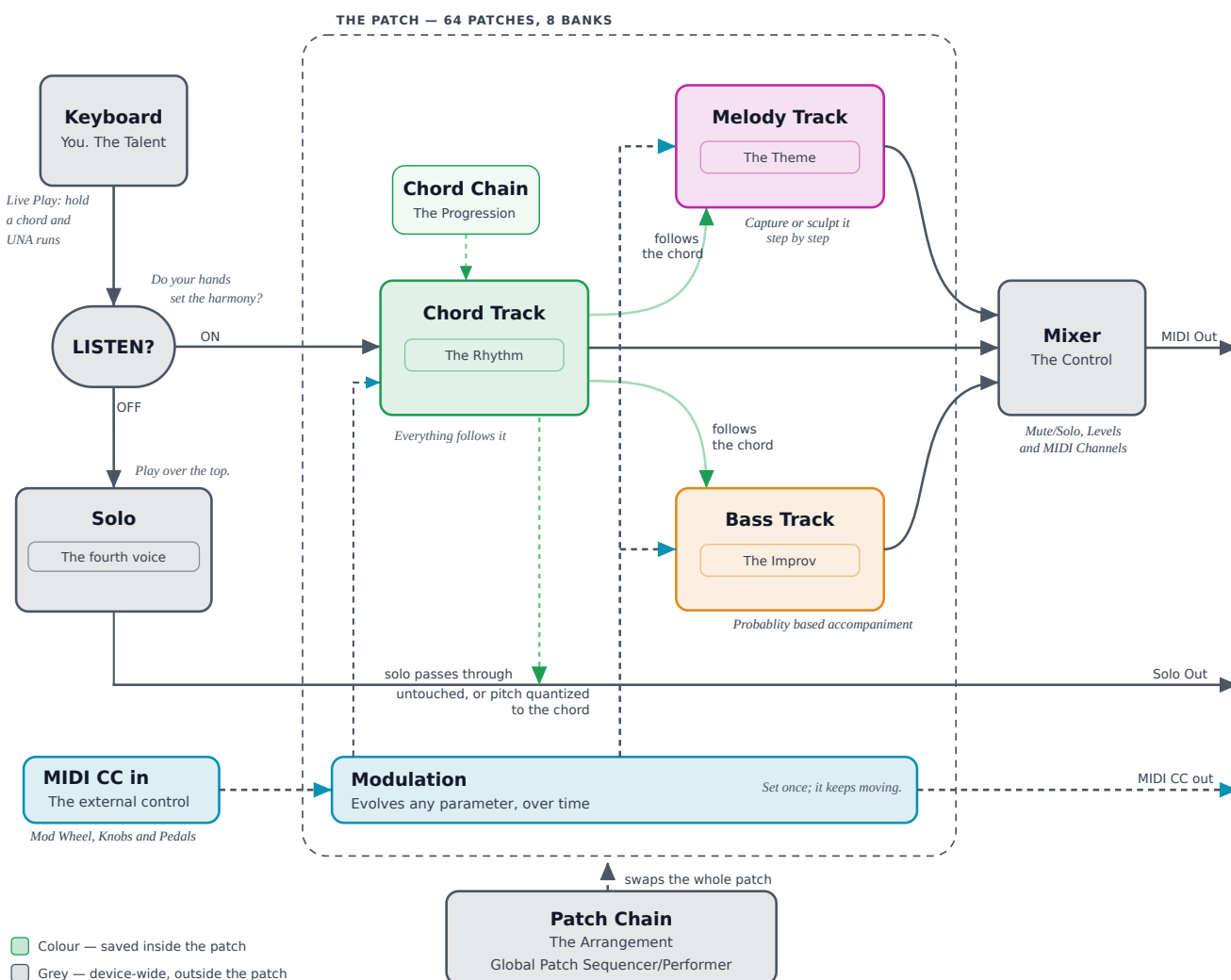
- **Learning** - read it once, front to back. It's the map; the manual is the territory.
- **Reference** - keep the printed PDF by the device. Every section points at the manual chapter that goes deeper.

Throughout, → **Manual Ch N** links jump into the UNA User Manual for the full story.

Page	Covers	Manual chapters
The big picture	Three tracks, the patch, Listen	1, 5
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The Big Picture

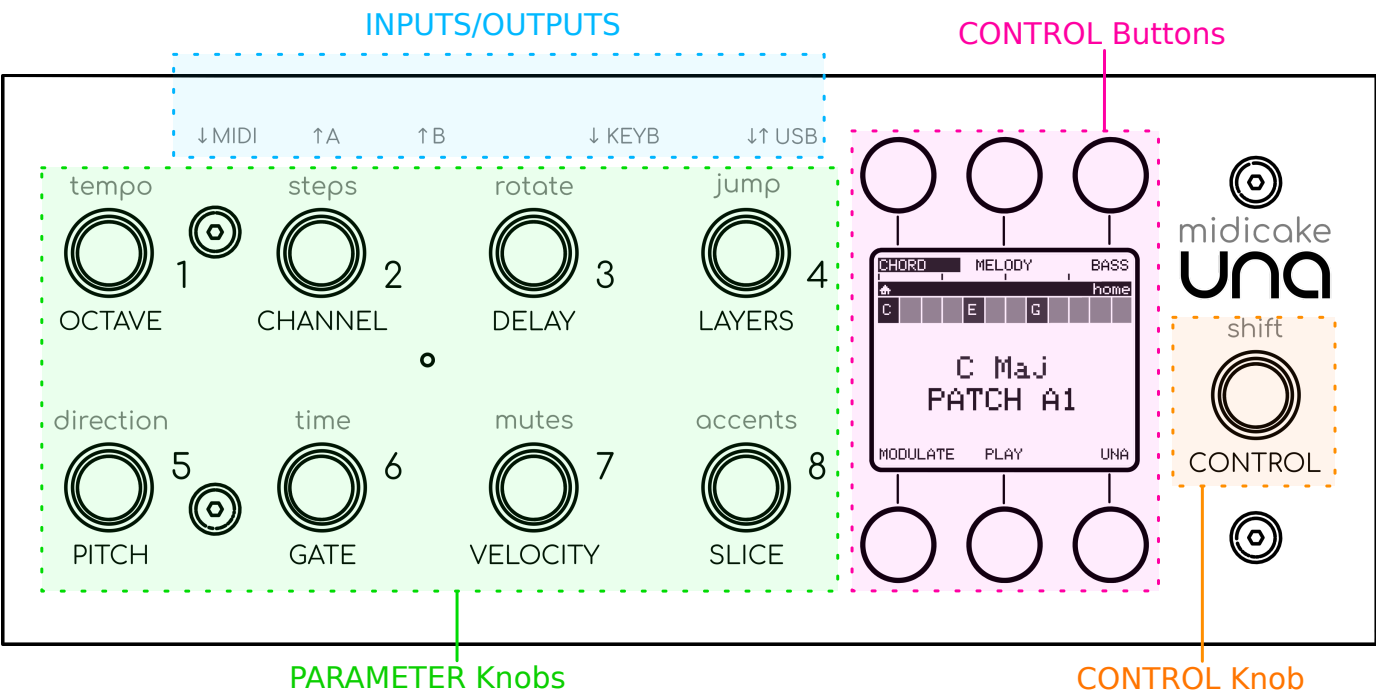
UNA plays **three tracks at once**. The Chord Track holds a captured chord progression that drives the others - when the chord changes, the Melody and Bass shift to stay in harmony too. Your own playing passes through as a fourth voice, **Solo**.



Concept	One line	Deeper
Chord Track	The progression itself, played out audibly as a rhythm or drone. Everything follows it.	Manual Ch 8
Melody Track	A sequence of single notes that follows the underlying chord progression.	Manual Ch 9
Bass Track	An independent bass line that follows the same progression.	Manual Ch 11
LISTEN	<i>On</i> : your playing sets the harmony. <i>Off</i> : UNA locks to the last progression and you solo over the top.	Manual Ch 5
Live Play	Even when stopped, holding a chord sets UNA running for as long as you hold it. A sustain pedal (CC64) can latch it.	Manual Ch 5
The patch	Everything coloured in the diagram saves with the patch. Grey lives on the device, outside any patch.	Manual Ch 14
Deterministic	Same patch, same chords, same result - variation comes from Improv and Modulators, which are seeded and repeatable.	Manual Ch 5

Modes are for editing; the music never stops for them. You don't switch between tracks - they all play together. What you switch between are modes, and modes are how you interact with each track. → Manual Ch 5 - Core Concepts

The Surface



8 PARAMETER Knobs - endless encoders, two layers each: **rotate** = primary parameter, **press-and-rotate** = secondary. That's how 8 knobs reach 16 parameters per track. **1 CONTROL Knob** - navigation; quick press from a track's home opens the **Control space**. **6 CONTROL buttons** - context-sensitive; the label on screen is always right. → Manual Ch 4 - Anatomy

The six gestures

Gesture	What it generally means
Press a button	Do the thing named on screen.
Hold a button	A second, related action - e.g. hold PLAY / STOP for a Panic Stop.
Rotate a knob	Change a value; on the CONTROL Knob, move a selection.
Press and rotate a knob	The knob's <i>secondary</i> parameter. On CONTROL: a mode-specific alternate.
Hold CONTROL + rotate a PARAMETER Knob	A temporary edit - moves while held, snaps back on release. Shown in yellow .
Hold a PARAMETER Knob + rotate CONTROL	A staged edit - dialled in, shown in purple , commits when you release the knob.

Also: **hold CONTROL + press a PARAMETER Knob** in the Control space = solo that track. **Hold the CONTROL Knob 3 seconds** = BIOS. Tempo is the exception to the temporary-edit rule - it always sticks. → Manual Ch 22 - Appendix G

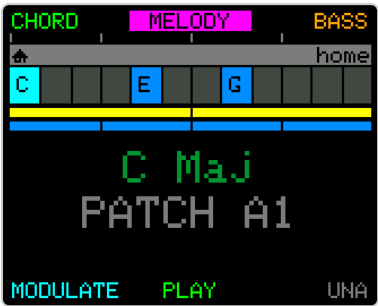
The colour language

 **Chord** ·  **Melody** ·  **Bass** ·  **Modulation** ·  **Record / Stop** ·  **Play** ·  **Temporary edit** ·  **Staged edit**

A colour can do more than one job - take it as a hint alongside the label on screen, not as a rule. → Manual Ch 4 - The Colour Language

Performing

Performance mode is home. The display shows the three tracks, the current chord, and the bar position; rotate CONTROL to cycle the view (Notes → Notes+Info → Notes+Info Extra).



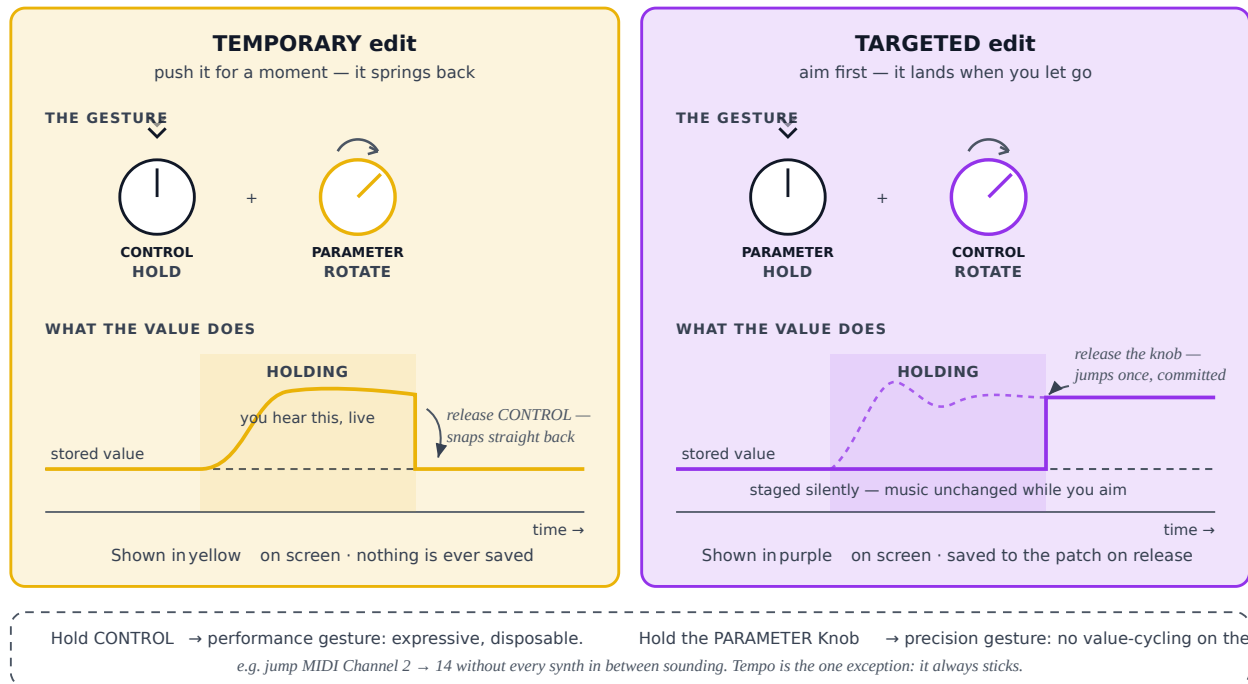
Button	Press	Hold
CHORD / MELODY / BASS	Two-step. Not the active track → select it (you stay here). Already the active track → enter its mode.	-
MODULATE	Enter Modulate	
PLAY / STOP	The transport	Panic stop

One press to switch tracks, two to go in. Tap CHORD and the knobs are on Chord; tap it again and you're in Chord Mode. Once a track is selected, it's a single tap to open it. Holding a track button does nothing extra - only the press counts.

Quick press CONTROL → the **Control space** (the mixer): LISTEN, METRO, C CHAIN, MENU, PATCHES, BACK.
PARAMETER Knobs 1/2/3 = Chord/Melody/Bass: **press** mute · **rotate** velocity · **press-and-rotate** MIDI channel · **hold CONTROL + press** solo. → Manual Ch 6

Two knobs, two mirrored gestures

Hold one knob, turn the other. Which one you hold decides everything: yellow springs back, purple lands.



- **Temporary** (hold **CONTROL**, rotate a knob) - yellow; push a parameter for a phrase, release, it snaps back. Nothing saved.
- **Targeted / staged** (hold a knob, rotate **CONTROL**) - purple; dial the value in, commit on release. No cycling through every value on the way.

Locks are the override layer: a locked parameter ignores live knob edits - set them in **PARAMS**. All three lock types reset to OFF when you capture fresh material, so new recordings play back uncoloured. → Manual Ch 6 · Ch 7 - Track Parameters

Every parameter, one menu

PARAMS (from any track mode) lists every parameter in categories: rotate **CONTROL** to select, press-and-rotate to change. Press a **PARAMETER** Knob to jump straight to its parameter. **RESET** (param or whole track, with confirm), **LOCK**, **CATEGORY** jump, **PLAY/STOP** and **BACK** live on the buttons. → Manual Ch 7 - Track Parameters

The Chord Track

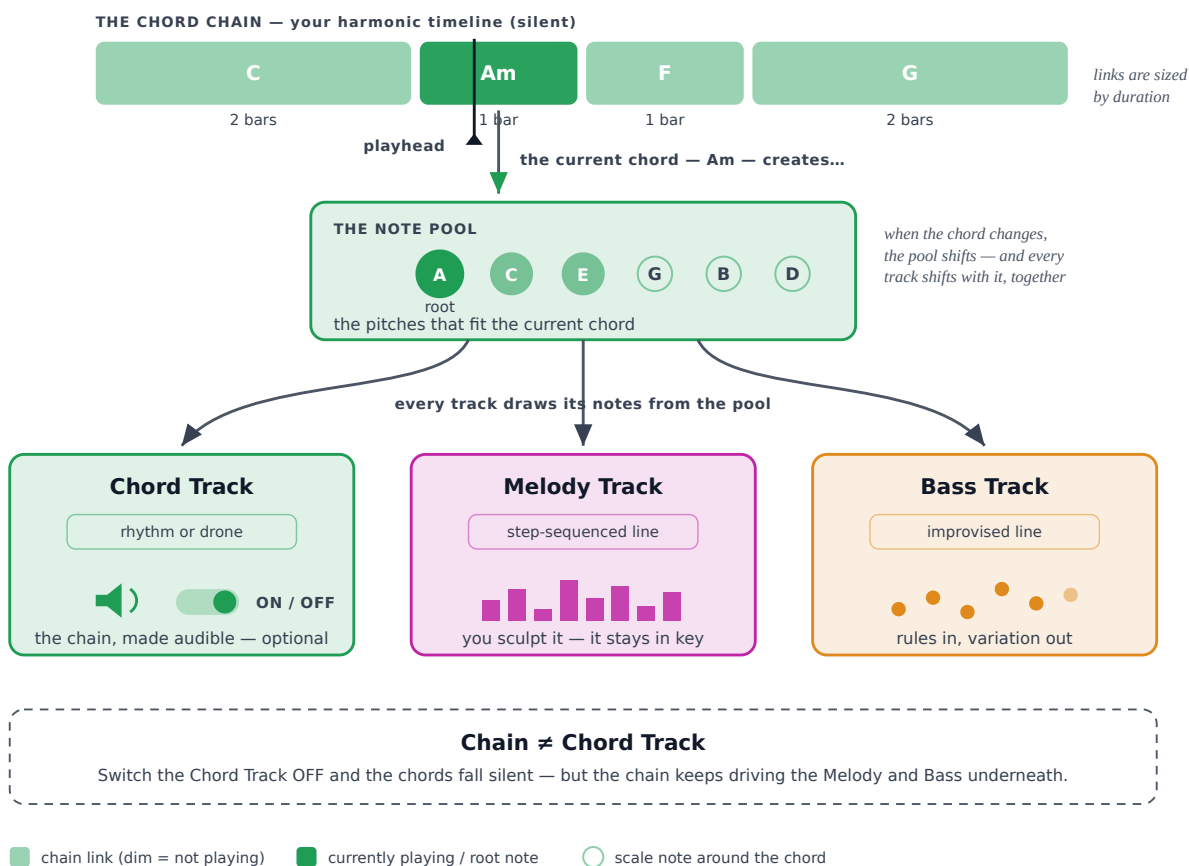
Everything follows the chords. Chord Mode is where you set them.



Button	Opens	One line
CHAIN	Chord Chain	The progression: a sequence of links, each a chord with a duration. Record it live or step by step, edit link by link (TIME, MULTI block select, OCTAVE - quick press to latch, hold to edit momentarily). LOAD/SAVE slots for whole chains.
RHYTHM	Chord Rhythm	How the chord track plays in time - from a fast regular beat to a syncopated clave. LOAD factory/user patterns or GENERATE; capture your own by playing it; SAVE to 16 user slots. Greyed out in Drone Mode.
PARAMS	Track Parameters	The chord track's full parameter list.
SUGGEST	Chord Suggest	Eight harmonically-related next chords on the eight PARAMETER Knobs. METHOD toggles Smart ⇄ Degrees.

The chord chain drives everything

The chain is silent. It creates the note pool — and every track picks its notes from that pool.



The chain vs the track: the chain is the *stored progression*; the track is what's *playing now*. With the chain engaged, links advance on their durations. Playing a chord by hand always wins - LISTEN decides whether your playing rewrites the harmony or solos over it.

Chord Select builds a chord from scratch - root, quality, extensions - when nothing you can reach on the keyboard is the chord you mean.

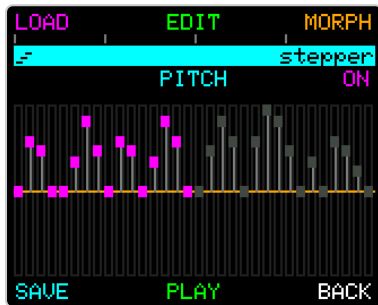
→ Manual Ch 8 - Chord Mode for record options, replace, drone mode, and the worked recipes.

Melody & the Stepper

The Melody Track turns the current chord into a line. Shape it two ways: **parameters** (broad strokes - octave, steps, gate, velocity, direction, time) and the **Stepper** (per-step control of eight lanes).

CAPTURE records a melody from your keyboard - realtime with optional count-in, or step by step at your own pace. The record flow is the same everywhere on UNA. → Manual Ch 9 - Melody Mode

The Stepper - eight lanes, 32 steps



Each lane is an independent step sequence over the melody: **Pitch, Gate, Velocity, Slice, Octave, Channel, Delay, Layers**. Lanes have their own *lengths* - and that's the point:

Independent pattern lengths — two simple patterns, one complex sequence

A pitch stepper (length 6) and a pitch modulator (length 4), applied over a base sequence of STEPS = 8.



STEPS doesn't limit the true sequence length. Patterns of different lengths drift out of phase and only realign much later - two simple patterns make one long, complex sequence. This is the joy of parametric sequencing. → Manual Ch 10

Stepper action	What it does
EDIT	Step-by-step lane editing: rotate CONTROL to move, press-and-rotate to change a value. MULTI selects blocks; special values: TIE/SLIDE on Gate, ACCENT/MUTE on Velocity.
LOAD	Factory patterns, your saved patterns, or random generation as a starting point.
MORPH	Transform the whole lane - shape, filter, morph amount - instead of editing step by step.
SAVE	Build your own pattern library, 16 user slots.

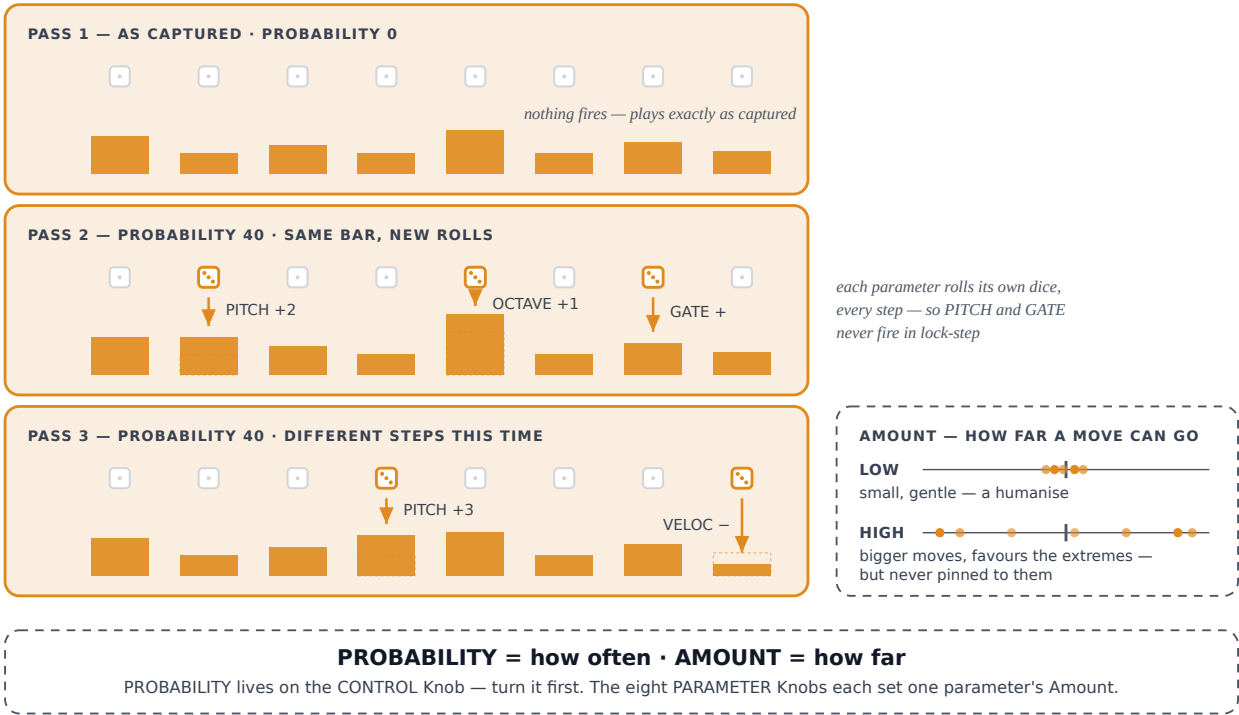
→ Manual Ch 10 - The Stepper for lane-by-lane detail and the worked recipes.

The Bass Track

An independent bass line following the progression. No stepper here - the bass evolves through **Improv**, a probability system: you set how often it strays and how far, and the result is seeded, so the same settings replay the same way. Variation without randomness-for-its-own-sake.

Improv plays the odds

PROBABILITY sets how often a step deviates. Each parameter's Amount sets how far. You set the rules; UNA improvises inside them.



Button	One line
LOAD	Seed a bass line from 50 presets across 5 style categories - a starting point, not a cage.
IMPROV	The probability controls: how often the line strays, and how far.
PARAMS	The bass track's full parameter list, including the IMPROV category.
CAPTURE	Record your own line from the keyboard - same record flow as melody.

Lock-param edits land immediately - the change happens on the next tick, not the next chord change, so you can tweak Lock settings while the bass is playing and hear the result in real time.

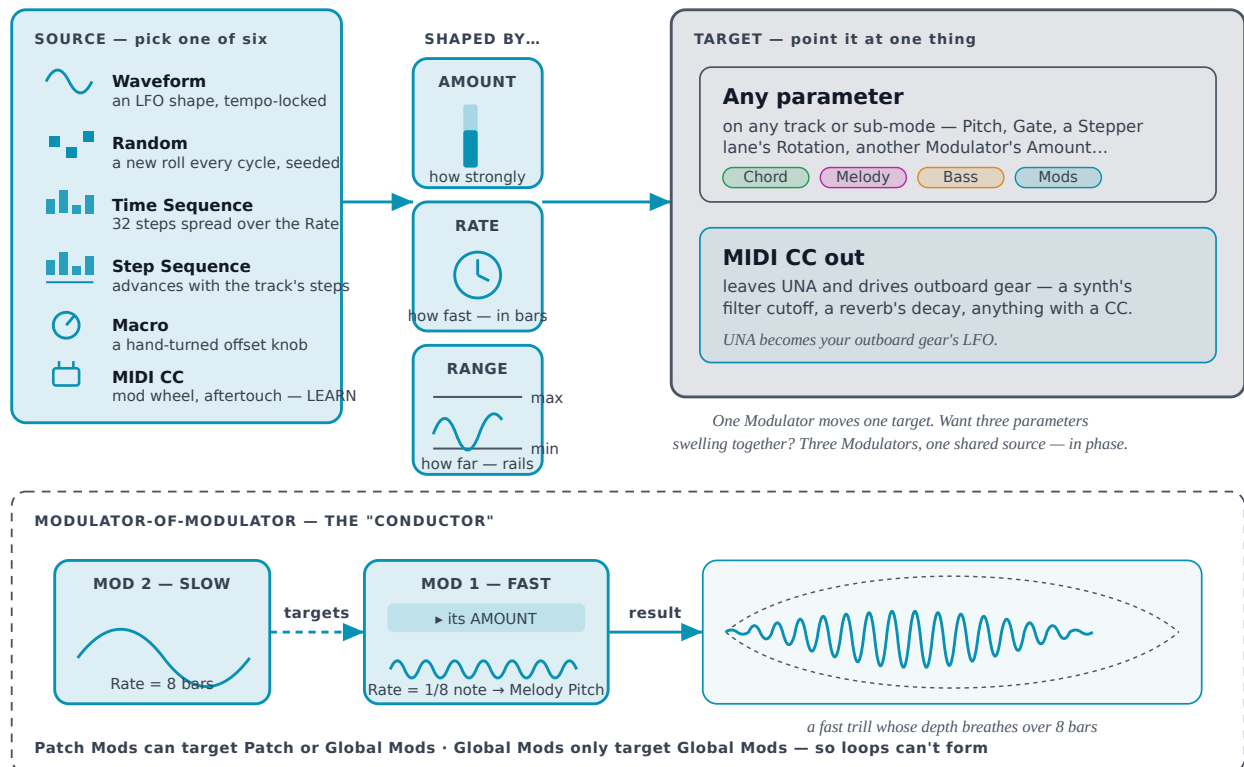
→ Manual Ch 11 - Bass Mode for the preset categories, the Improv parameters in detail, and the worked recipes.

Modulate

A **Modulator** takes a **source** and points it at a **target**. That's the whole model - everything else is choosing the source, choosing the target, and shaping how strongly and how often.

A Modulator: one source → one target

That's the whole model. Amount, Rate and Range shape how strongly, how fast, and how far.



Sources (six): Waveform (LFO, tempo-locked) · Random (seeded) · Time Sequence (32 steps over the Rate) · Step Sequence (locked to the track's steps) · Macro (a hand-turned offset) · MIDI CC (mod wheel, aftertouch - LEARN).

Targets: any parameter on any track, another Modulator's Amount, or a **MIDI CC out** that leaves UNA and drives outboard gear - UNA becomes your outboard gear's LFO.

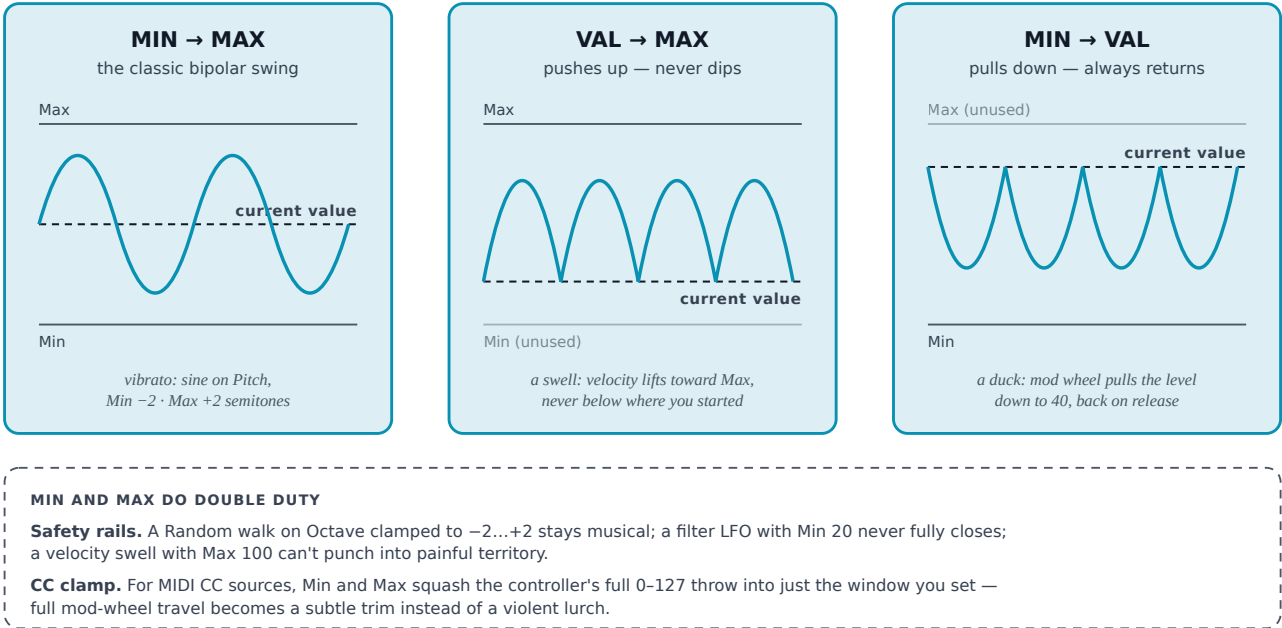
Two scopes

- **8 patch Modulators** (cyan) - song tools, saved with the patch.
- **16 global Modulators** (green) - studio tools; they keep running when you switch patches.

Patch mods can target global mods; globals only target globals - so loops can't form.

Range Span: which way does it push?

Span picks the direction relative to the current value. Min and Max decide how far it's allowed to go.



Range Span decides direction from the current value: **MIN → MAX** swings bipolar around it · **VAL → MAX** pushes only up · **MIN → VAL** pulls only down. **Min/Max** clamp how far - safety rails for wild sources (a Random on Octave stays musical), or a mapping clamp for incoming CC (full mod-wheel travel becomes a subtle trim).

The live gestures

On the Modulation page, without entering any editor:

Gesture	Does
Quick press a PARAMETER Knob	Fire that one-shot for one Rate period
Hold a PARAMETER Knob	Loop it until release, then land at the period boundary
CONTROL + press	Toggle Continuous ⇄ One-shot in place, phase preserved
CONTROL + rotate	Temporary Amount push - snaps back on release

→ Manual Ch 12 - Modulate for the edit pages, the wave diagram, and the worked recipes.

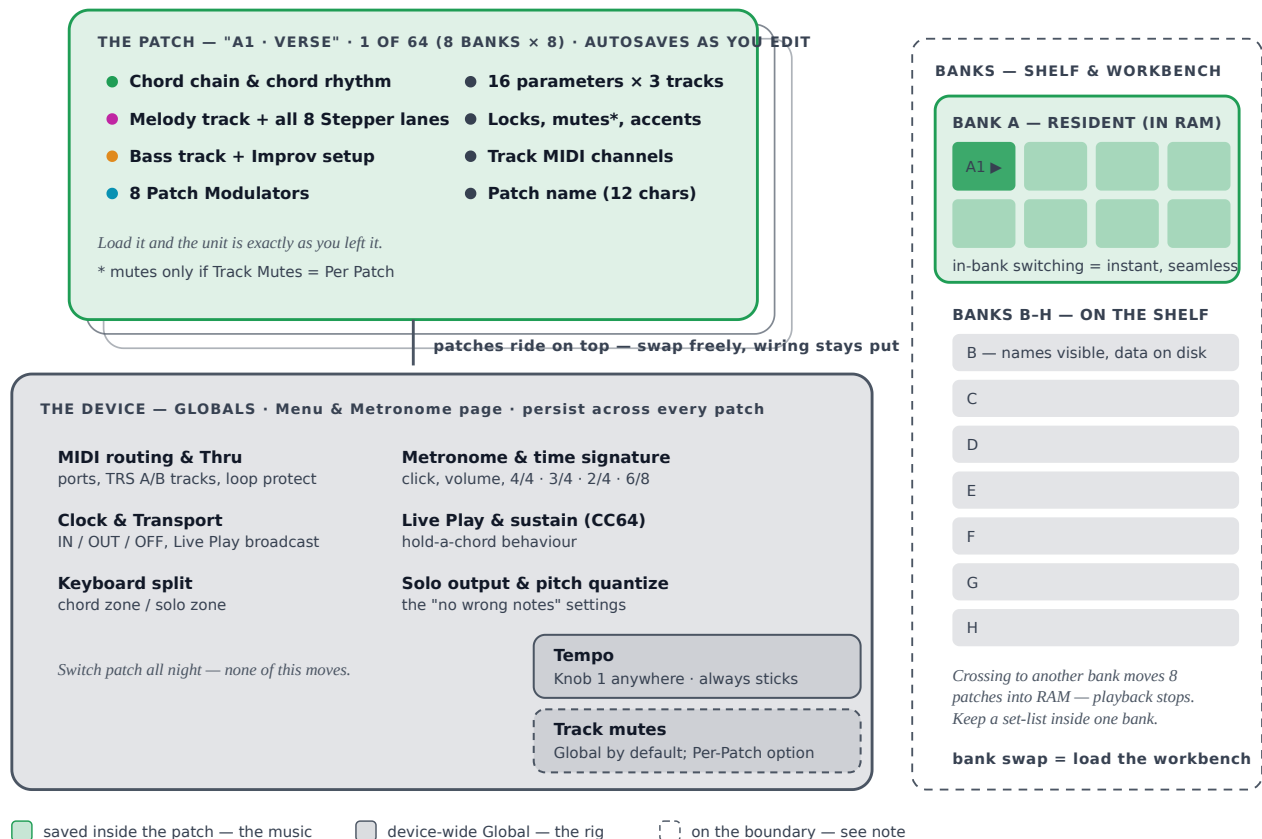
Patches & Recording

Patches and banks

A **patch** is a complete musical setup: all three tracks, the chord chain, the stepper lanes, the patch Modulators. What a patch *doesn't* include: device-wide settings (MIDI routing, clock, globals) - those persist as you switch.

Patches carry the music. The device carries the rig.

A patch change should change the song — never the wiring. That's why the split exists.



- **Autosave** - you never have to think about saving. Edits write to the current patch as you make them.
- **Patch Load** is a grid browser - press-and-rotate CONTROL from Performance to reach it; the bank letter sits on button 3. Loading is instant and seamless.
- **Patch Edit** covers rename, reset, copy. **Patch Chains** sequence whole patches - your arrangement, played link by link; a manual load always wins and disengages the chain.
- Back up everything to Midicake CONNECT over USB.

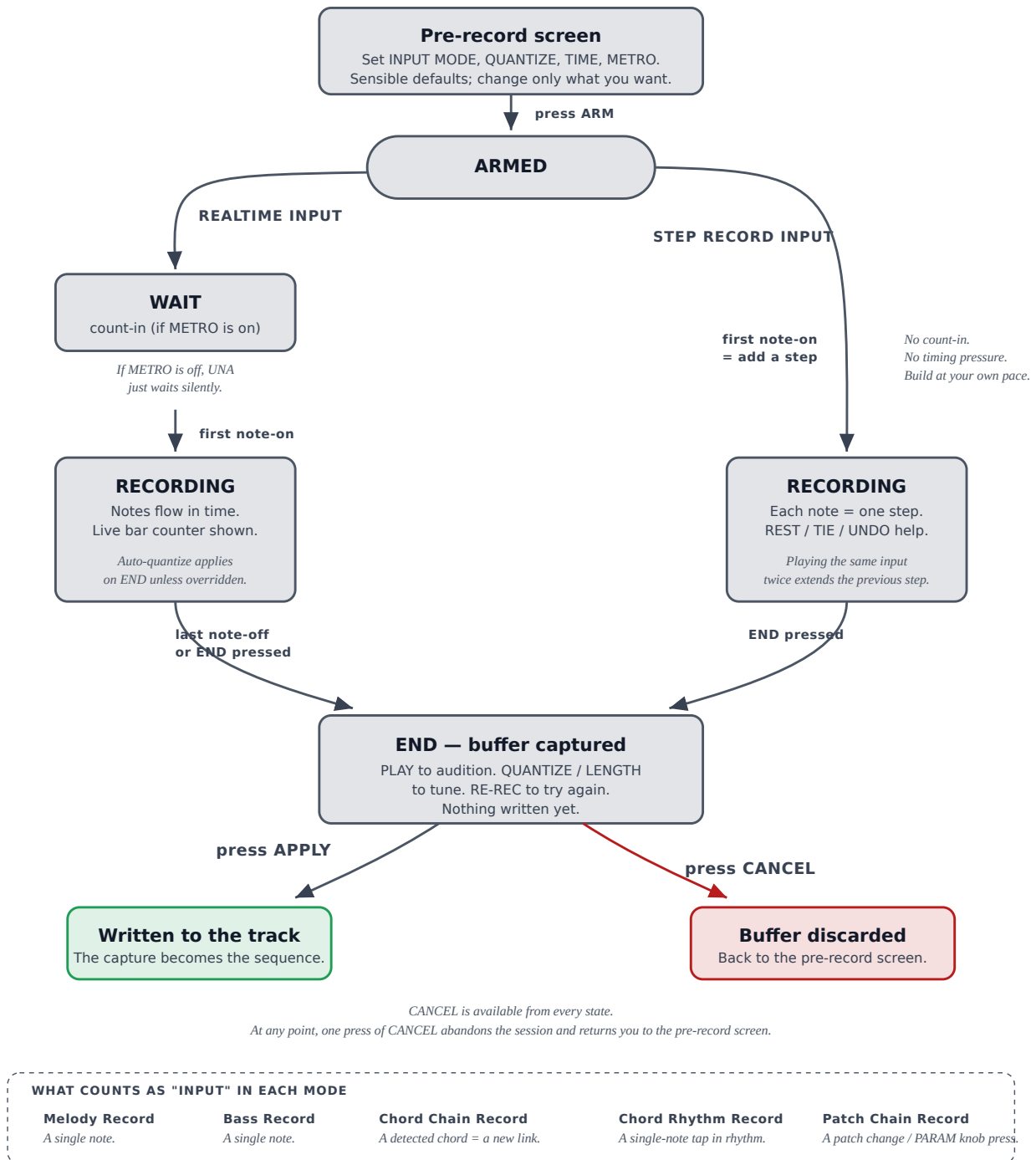
→ Manual Ch 14 - Patches & Banks

One record flow, everywhere

Melody, Bass, Chord Chain, Chord Rhythm and Patch Chain all capture through the same state machine:

Recording flow — ARM, WAIT, START, END

The state machine behind every UNA capture — Melody, Bass, Chord Chain, Chord Rhythm, and Patch Chain.



ARM → (WAIT if count-in) → RECORDING → END - buffer captured → APPLY or CANCEL. Realtime input starts on your first note; Step Record adds one step per note with no timing pressure. Nothing is written until APPLY - audition with PLAY, tune QUANTIZE/LENGTH, RE-REC to try again. CANCEL is available from every state. → Manual Ch 9 · the capture sections of each track's chapter

Reference

MIDI at a glance

3 inputs: TRS In · USB-C · USB Host — merged into one stream. **4 outputs:** TRS Out A · TRS Out B · USB-C · USB Host — independently routable per track. TRS jacks are **Type-A**; two TRS-to-DIN cables ship in the box. → Manual Ch 15 - MIDI

Clock: UNA follows the first external source that speaks (USB-C, USB Host, or TRS In) and ignores the others until it goes quiet; with no external clock it is the master. The **Ext** indicator confirms lock. → Manual Ch 16 - Sync & Clock

TIME values

Two sort orders, switchable in **Menu > Config > Time Sort Order**:

Order	Sequence
By Speed (<i>slowest → fastest, default</i>)	1 · 2D · 2 · 4D · 2T · 4 · 8D · 4T · 8 · 16D · 8T · 16 · 32D · 16T · 32
By Type (<i>triplet / dotted / straight</i>)	16T · 32D · 8T · 16D · 4T · 8D · 2T · 4D · 2D · 1 · 2 · 4 · 8 · 16 · 32

Remote-control CCs

Sent on the **CC Input Channel** (Menu > MIDI; OFF by default). Toggles fire on the rising edge (value ≥ 64).

CC	Action	CC	Action
85	Patch Prev	108	Solo Chord
86	Patch Next	109	Solo Melody
87	Bank Prev	110	Solo Bass
88	Bank Next	111	Toggle Listen
89	Mod Select	112	Toggle Live Play
90	Mod Toggle	113	Toggle Metronome
102	Select Chord Track	114	Toggle Chord Chain
103	Select Melody Track	115	Toggle Patch Chain
104	Select Bass Track	116	Cycle MIDI Thru
105	Mute Chord	117	Tempo Down
106	Mute Melody	118	Tempo Up
107	Mute Bass	123	Panic (All Notes Off + Stop)

Play/Stop ride native MIDI transport; patch select rides Program Change; continuous values go via a Modulator's MIDI CC source. → Manual Ch 15 - Controller CCs

Where everything else lives

Need	Go to
Every parameter, range and default	Manual Ch 7 - Track Parameters
Every menu setting, item by item	Manual Ch 17 - Settings
Per-mode button maps	Manual Ch 22 - Appendix F
Firmware updates & patch survival	Manual Ch 18
Something's wrong	Manual Ch 19 - Troubleshooting
Patch backup, screen mirror, diagnostics	CONNECT manual