Controlling Ableton Live 11 and 12 Native Devices with Ableton MPH

To control Ableton Live 11 and 12 native devices we have developed a separate application called Ableton MPH. It exists as a standalone application and as VST3 and AU plugins.

You can download the Ableton MPH from your account on the user portal.

The description of the latest updates of Ableton MPH can be found here

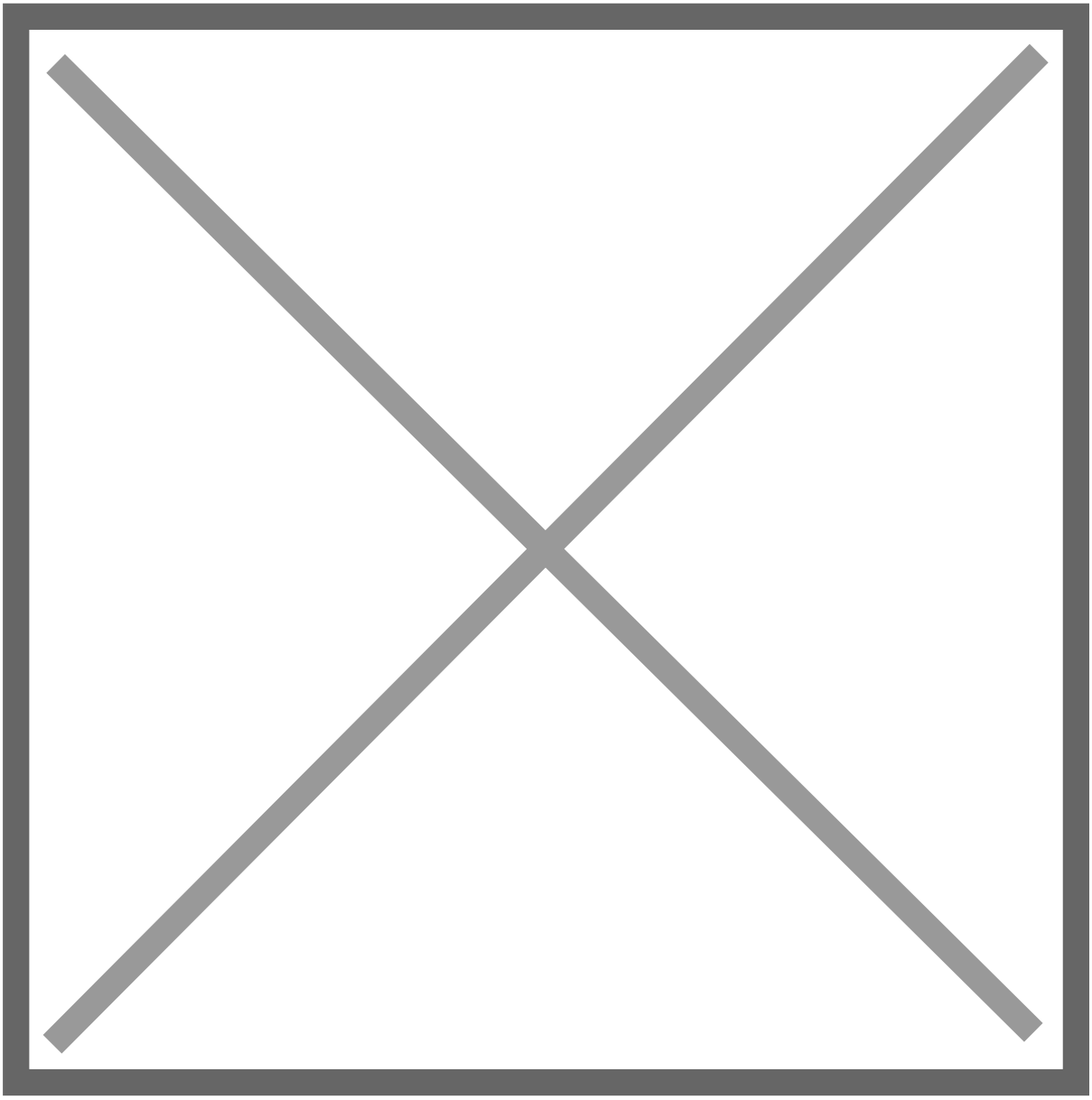
Prerequisites

The Ableton MPH application requires Ableton Live 11.3.4 or later version.

Additionally, it requires that you have the MP Controller connected and the MPH hardware.id and mph.license files in place as described in the MP Host setup guide.

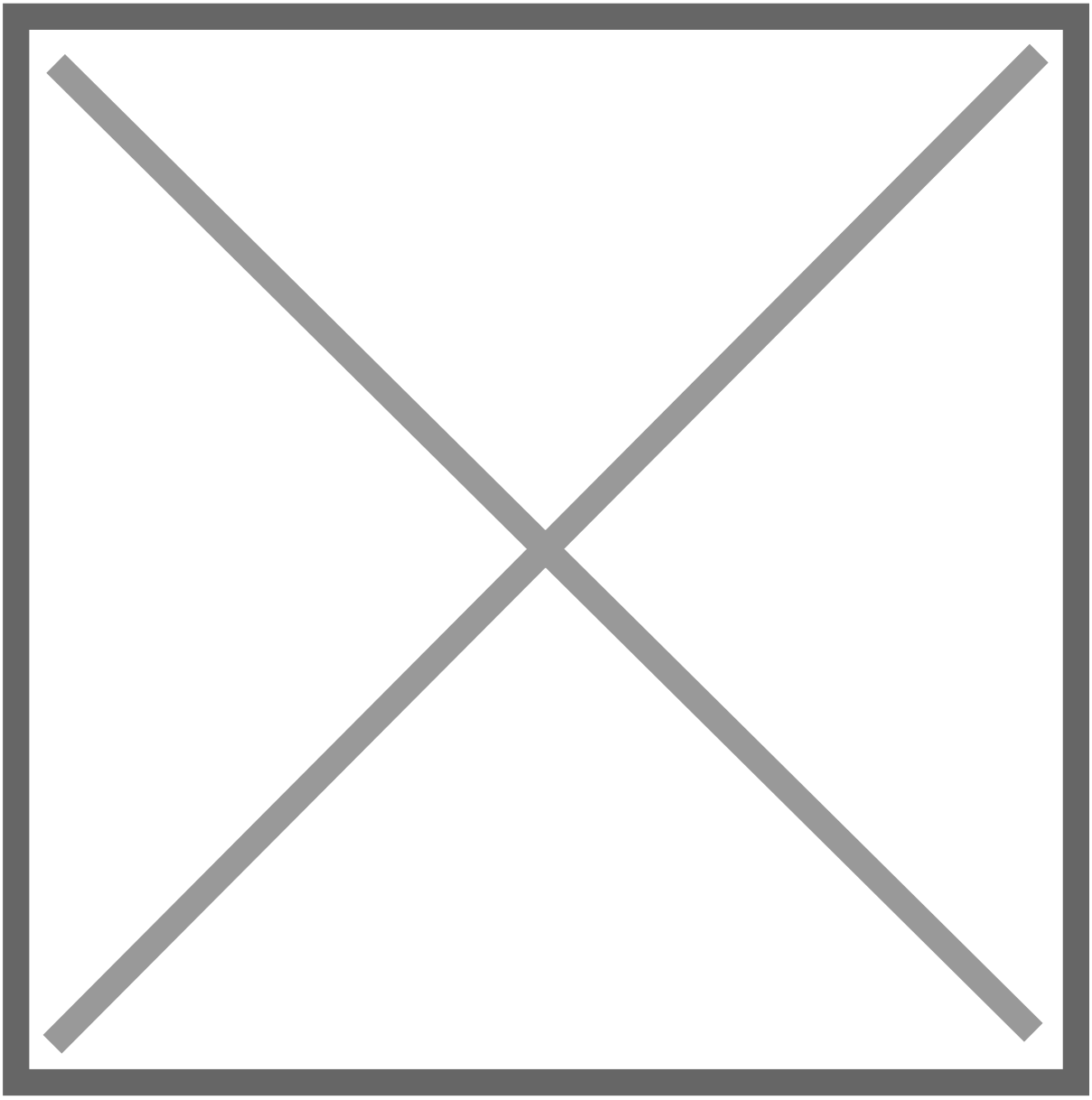
You don't need to download or create another mph license.

Please note that the Ableton MPH will not work if either file is missing or the controller is not connected.



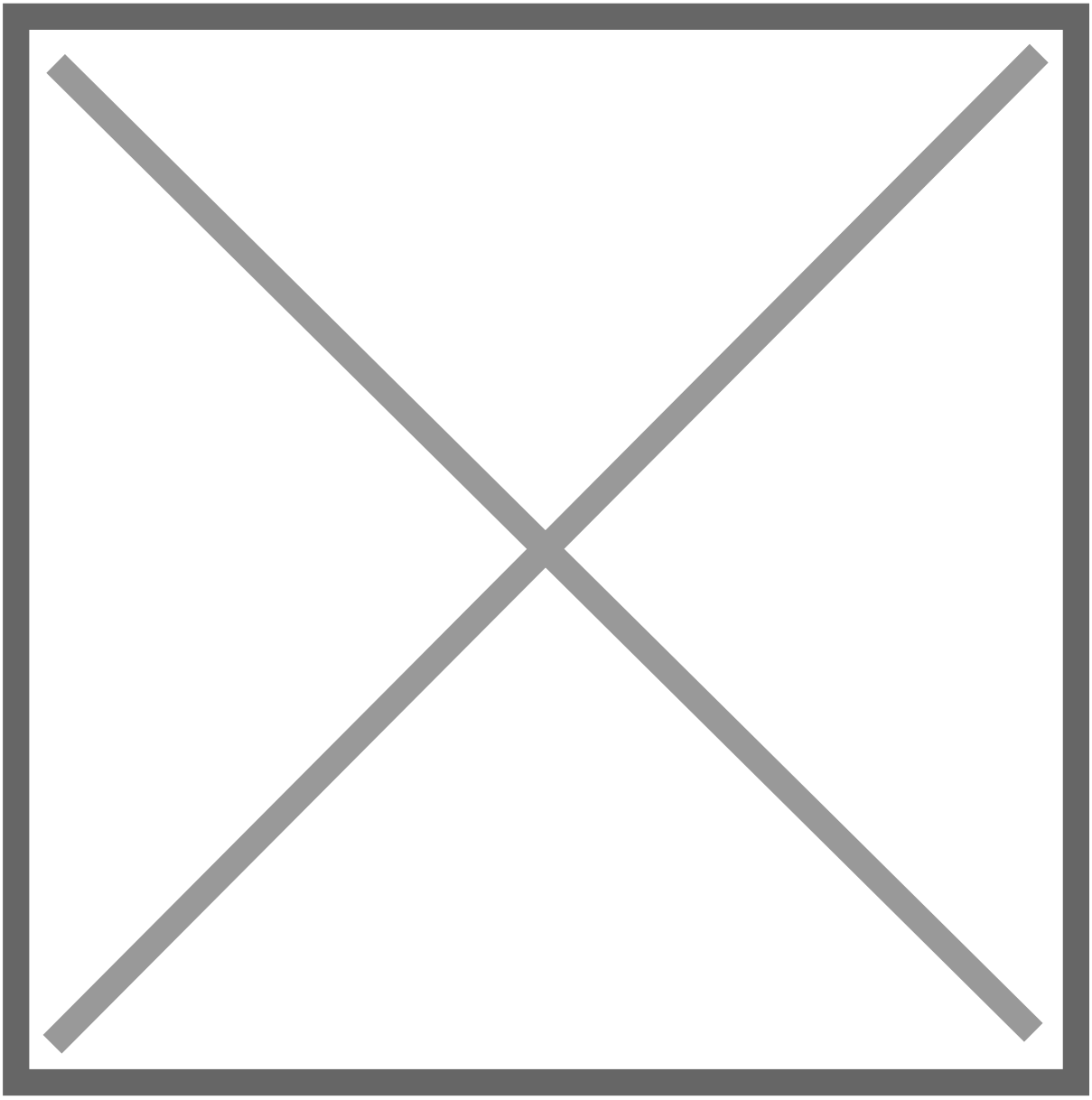
Tutorial Videos

> The tutorial videos cover the basic functionality and knowhow, however this article is more comprehensive and up to date.
>
> Part 1
>
> Part 2
>
> Part 3



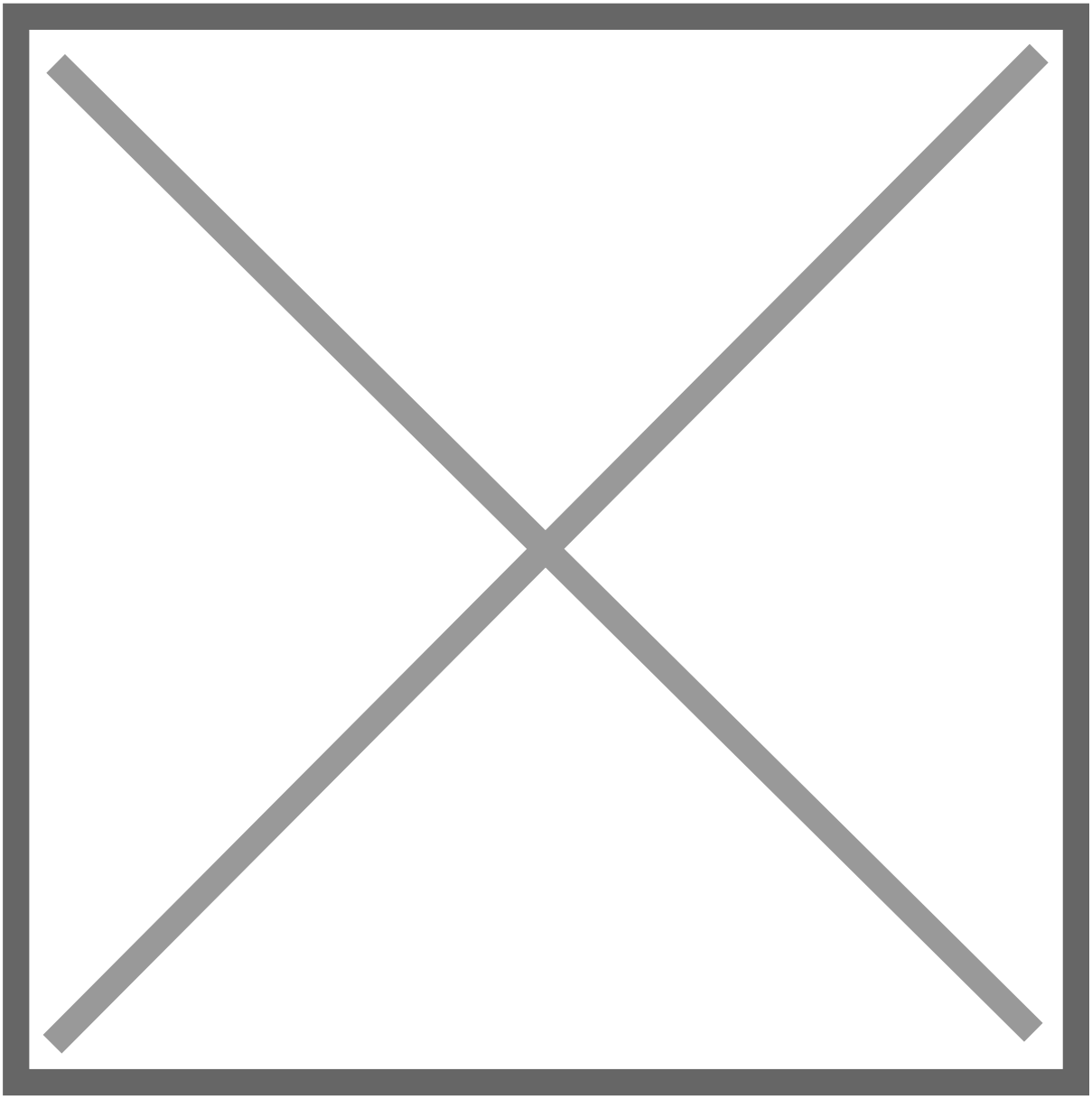
Standalone App vs Plugin

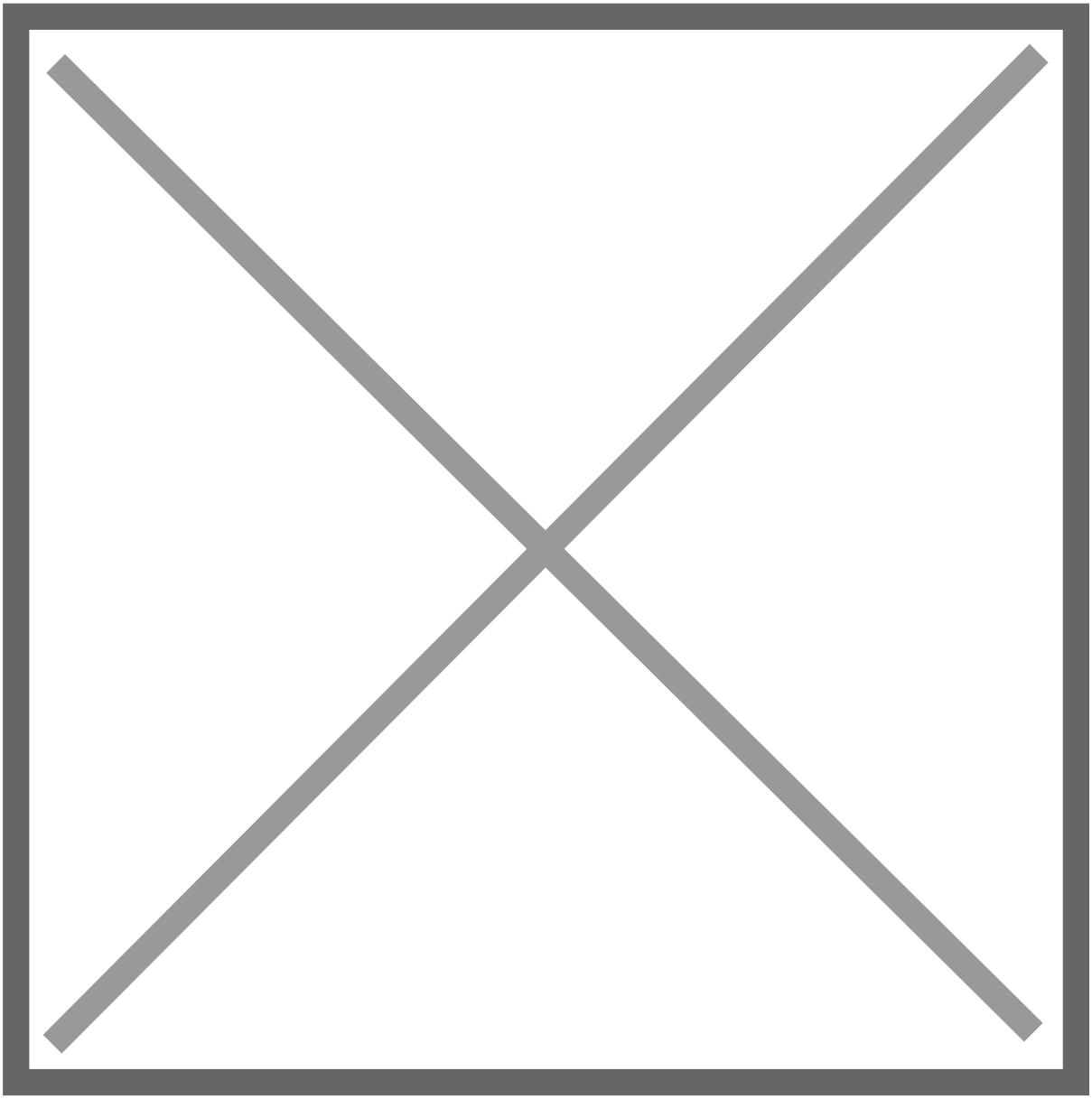
You can run the Ableton MPH as a plugin in Ableton Live or the standalone application but not both.
The advantage of running the plugin instead of the standalone is that when you click outside Ableton Live, it will not hide the already opened plugin windows.
When using the plugin and save your A.L. project, it will load when you open your project, without the need of running the standalone application.
Also, with the plugin version, the transfer of keyboard focus to the DAW is automatic



Plugin Panel

Since the July 2024 update, he Ableton MPH plugin version has the Plugin Panel feature, which allows you to switch from the touch screen to the MP MIDI app and/or MP Host. This feature is not available in the standalone version of the Ableton MPH.





Installation

On Windows, Close Ableton Live if it is running and run the AbletonMPH installer.

It installs the Control Surface script in:

C:\Users\[username]\Documents\Ableton\User Library\Remote Scripts

Ensure your Documents folder is not on OneDrive and accessible via the original path.

Note that, OneDrive can interfere with application access to the Documents folder, depending on a few settings. If OneDrive is set to back up your Documents folder, it redirects it to something like:

C:\Users\[username]\OneDrive\Documents

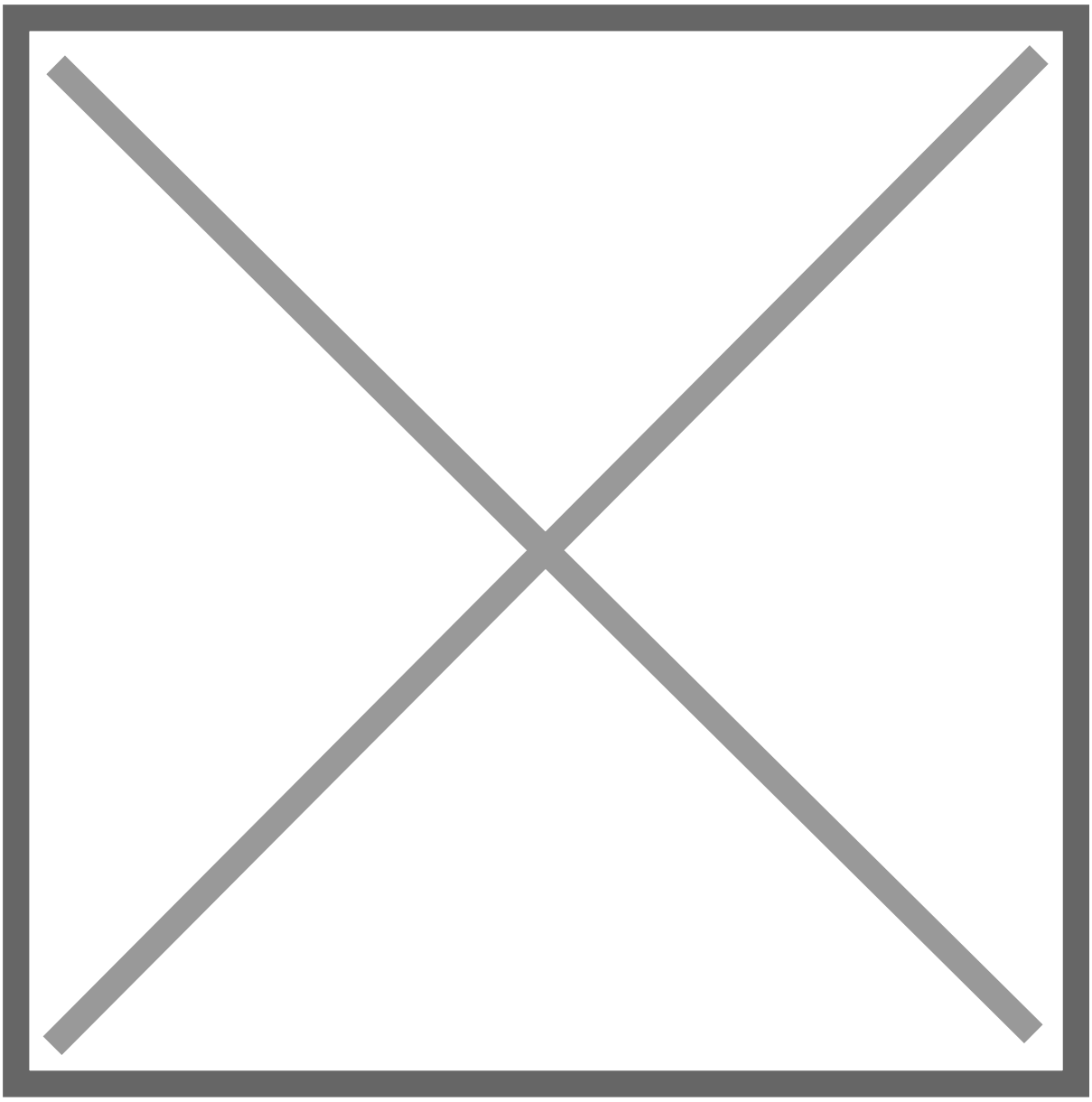
> On the Mac you will download the zip file which has 3 files:
> AbletonMPH_MAC_INSTALLER-version.pkg
> AbletonMPH_MAC_PRESETS_INSTALLER.pkg
> AbletonMPH_Remote_MIDI_Script.zip

Run the 2 pkg installers and then extract the zip file AbletonMPH_Remote_MIDI_Script.zip to the following location:

(If folder Remote Scripts does not exist, you can create it)

Macintosh HD/Users/[username]/Music/Ableton/User Library/Remote Scripts

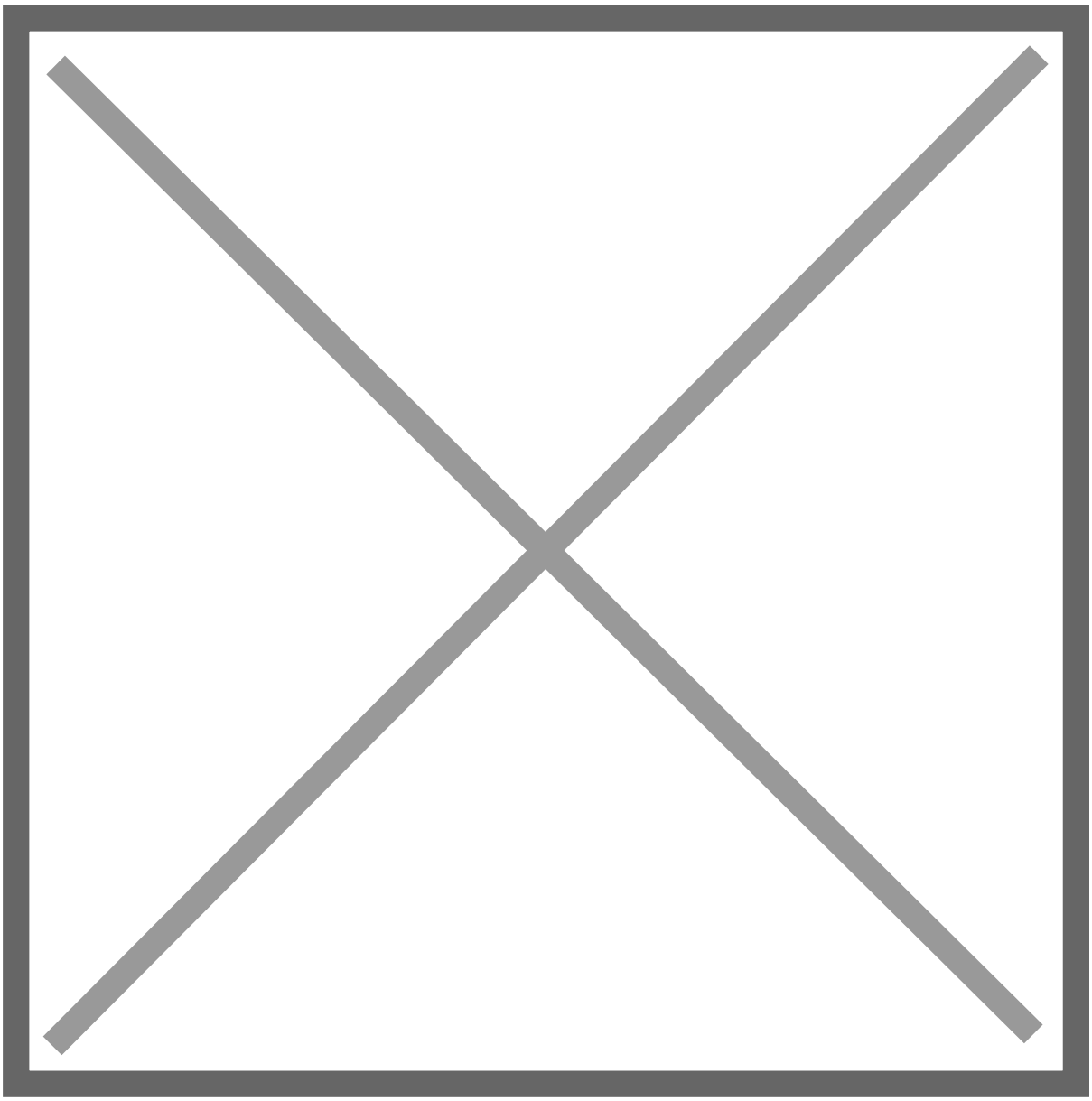
So that the folder AbletonMPH is under Remote Scripts.



The AbletonMPH_MAC_PRESETS_INSTALLER installs the necessary presets for Ableton native devices in:

/Users/USER/Library/Application Support/MP/Host/AbletonLivePresets

After you have finished extracting/installing the folder, open Ableton Live and it should list "AbletonMPH" under Control Surface.



Select from the Ableton preferences Link/Tempo/MIDI section, the AbletonMPH as a Control Surface, close and re-open Ableton.

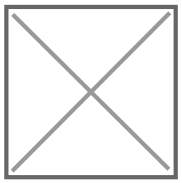
Then, open the Ableton MPH standalone application:

Mac: From the Applications folder.

Windows: From the shortcut on the Desktop.

Always open Ableton Live first and then the Ableton MPH standalone app so that it can connect onto Ableton Live.

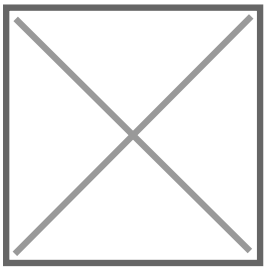
Click on the small icon (appears on the top bar of MacOS and in the Taskbar of Windows)



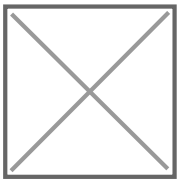
to open the main application window.

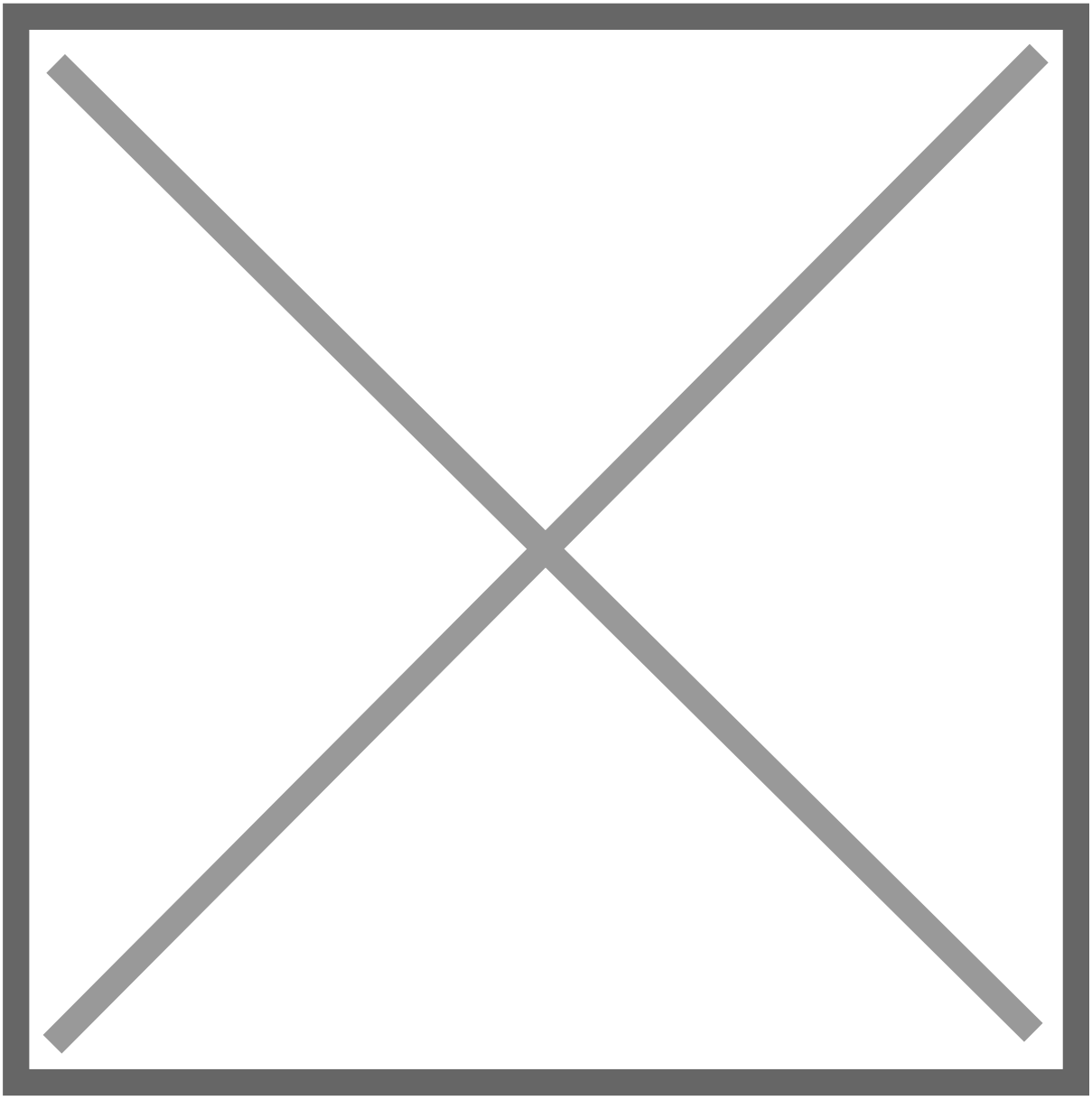
By clicking again it will close the main window.

Select the MP Controller's monitor by right clicking on the background area and select the last monitor in the list:



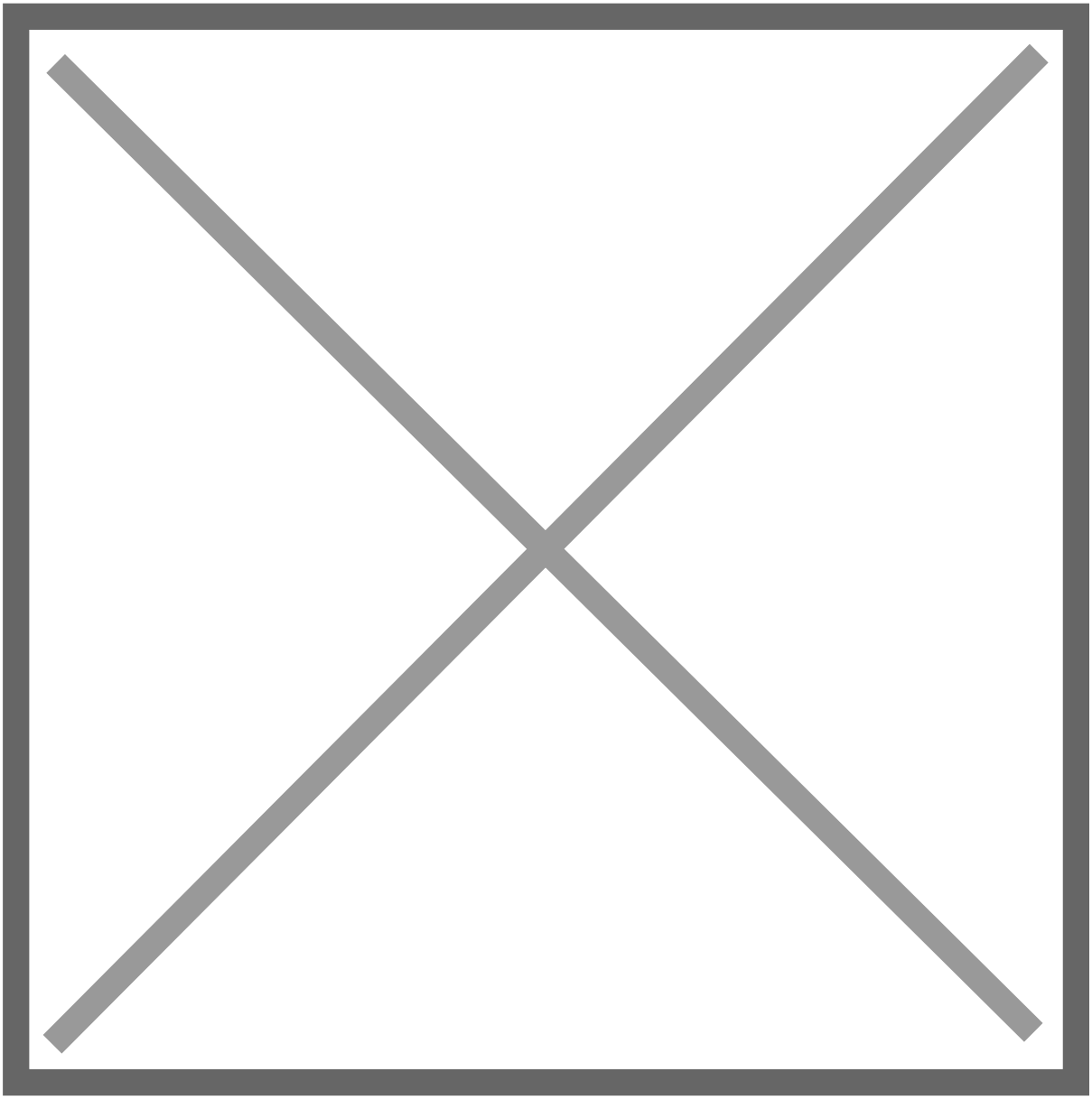
(Note that on the Mac there is a separate installer for the Ableton Live devices presets)

Right click on the icon  to display the main menu.



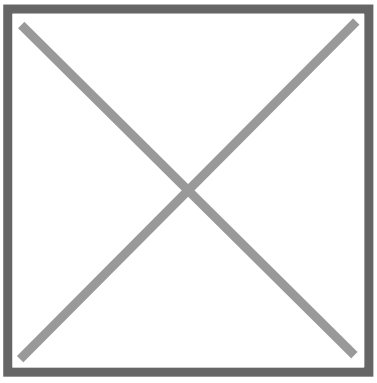
After the initial configuration you can use the AbletonMPH plugin instead of the standalone application, which will open automatically when you open an Ableton project.

You must have only one instance of the AbletonMPH plugin loaded in a project.



Track names

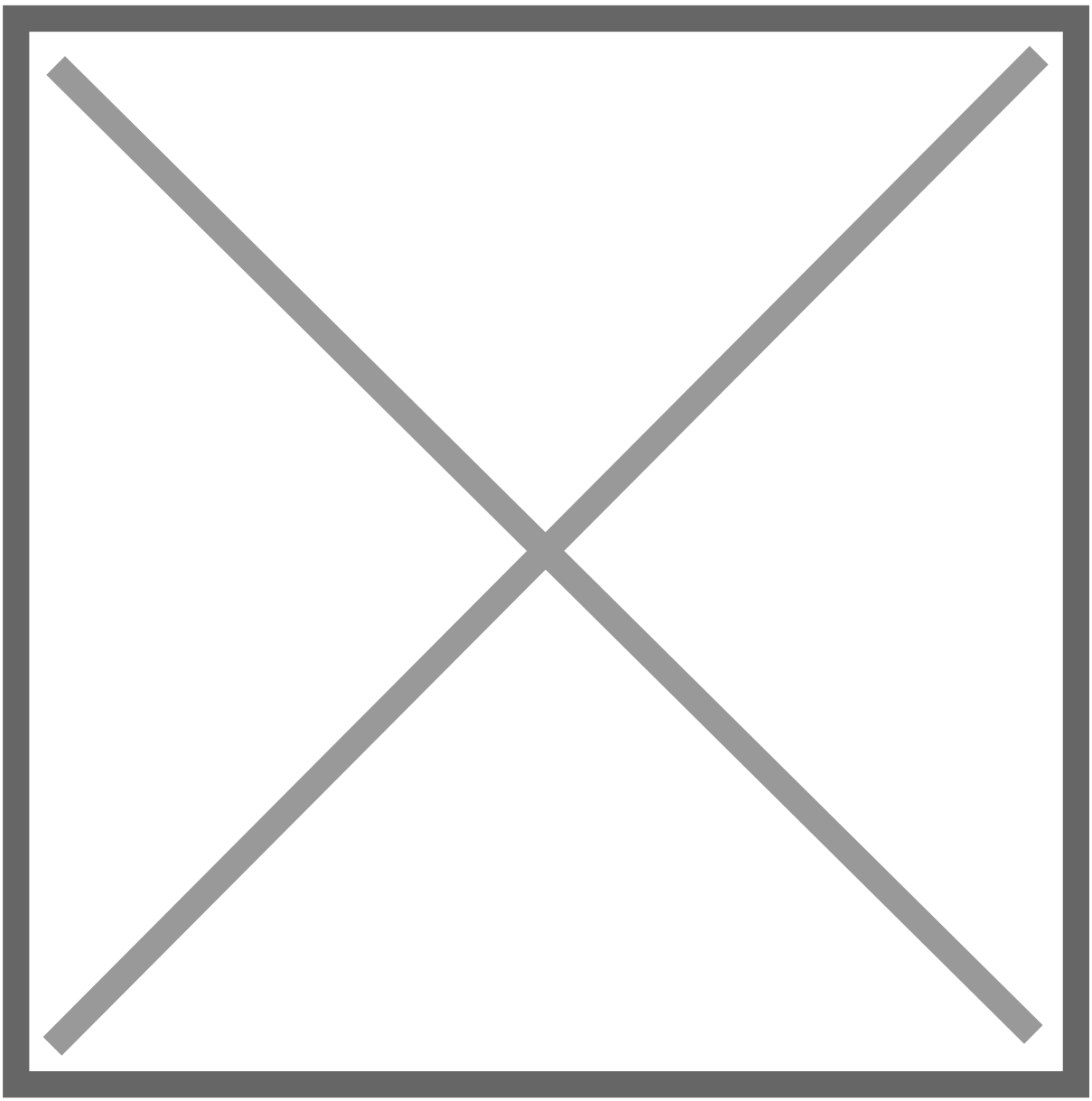
As you probably noticed, Ableton Live automatically places a # at the beginning of each track name.



This # instructs Ableton Live to assign a track number. You must not remove the # because this is used to identify the track index and display it on the Ableton MPH. If you remove the # or write the

number manually, your track may not be included in the Ableton MPH and it will not be able to identify and control the devices.

All tracks must being with # for the application to work properly.



Default Presets

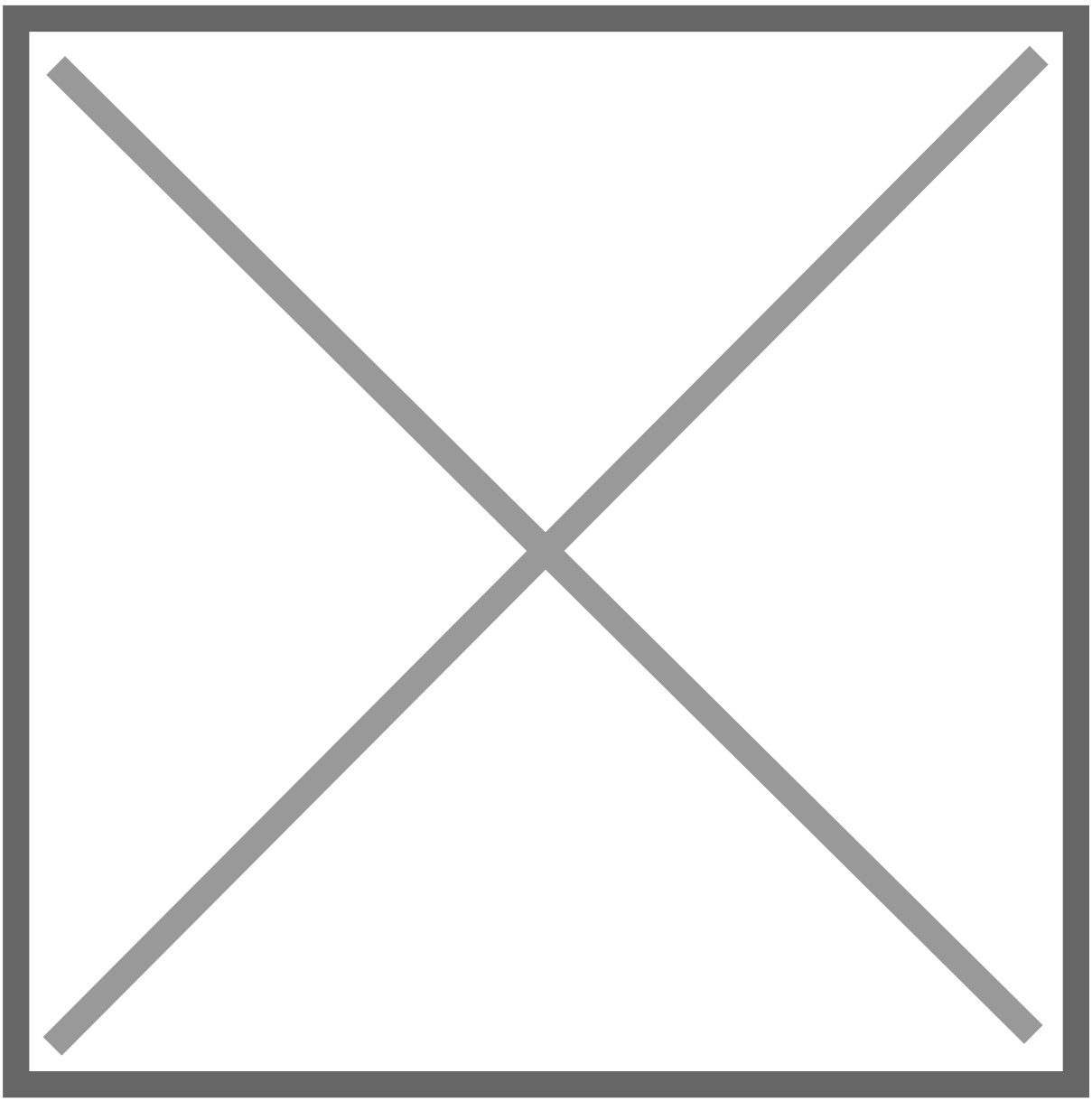
The application comes with presets for each Ableton native device.

These presets are installed in the MP Host folder under AbletonLivePresets/Default and are loaded automatically every time you select a device in Ableton Live or by selecting a device in Ableton MPH.

The Ableton MPH will load the preset.xml based on its name by matching it to the device type selected. For example if you have selected the Delay, then it will automatically load the Delay.xml preset.

The presets do not store parameter values. They only store references to controlling the parameters. Thus the values will be taken instantly from the selected device in Ableton Live.

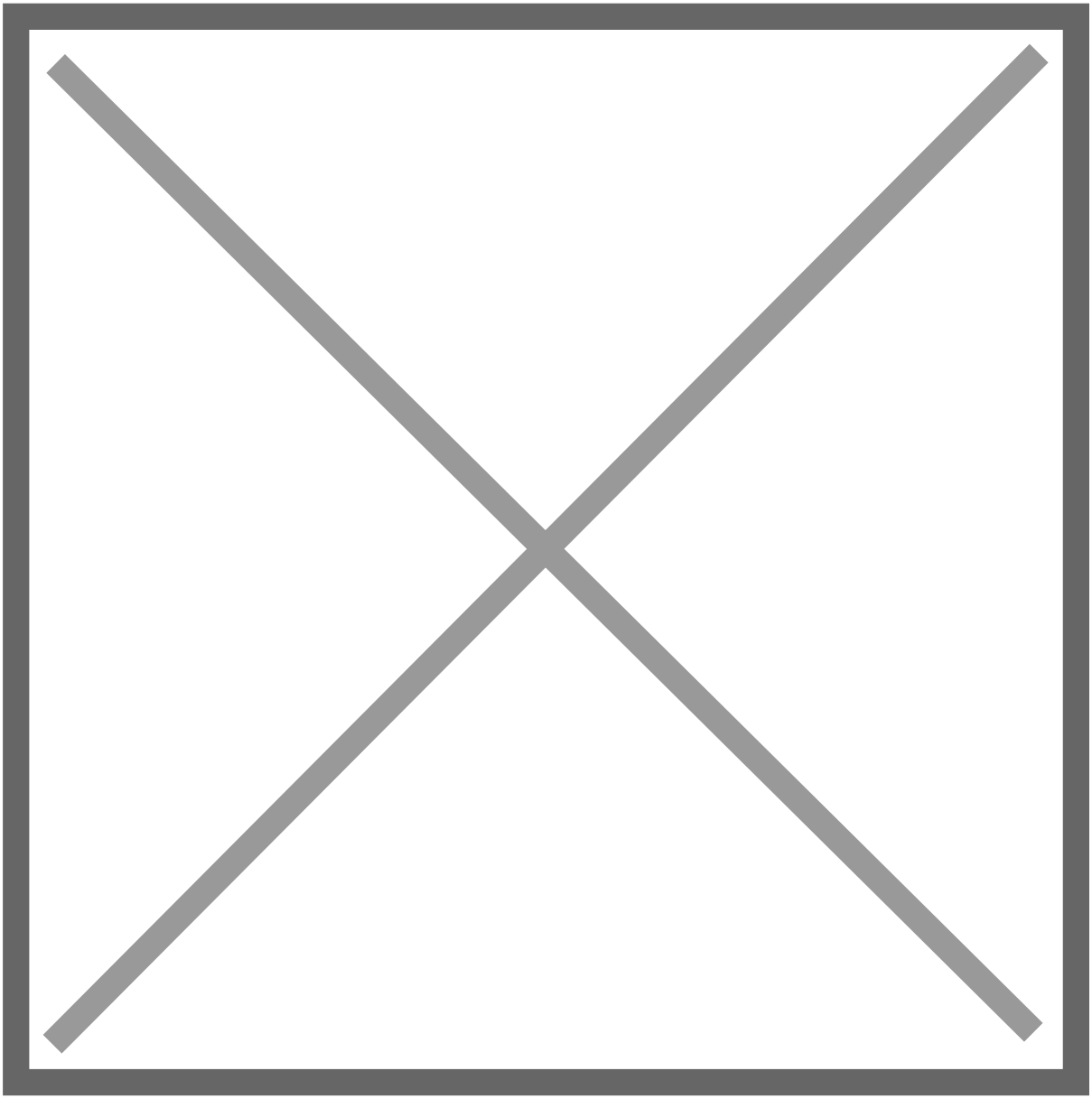
Below, you will find the section on how to link and save your own presets.

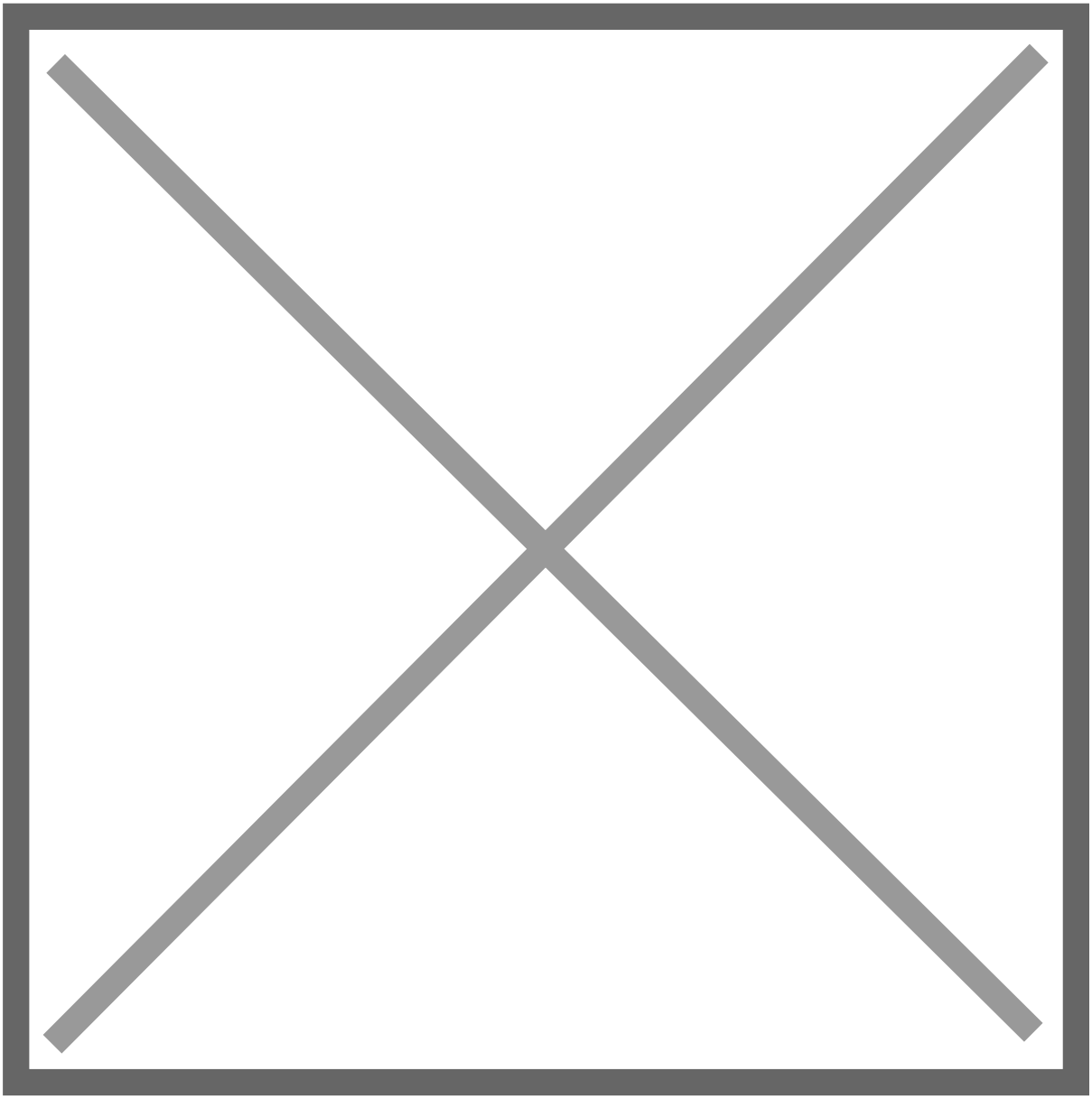


Working with the MP Host and the Ableton MPH

The Ableton MPH will be closed (not quit) when clicking on Control and Display of the MP Single Host or when clicking on the slot display area of the MP Multi Host. This makes it easy to work with both systems in the same DAW project.

If using the MP Multi Host, you can switch between them using the Plugin Panel if using the MP Multihost and the AbletonMPH plugin.



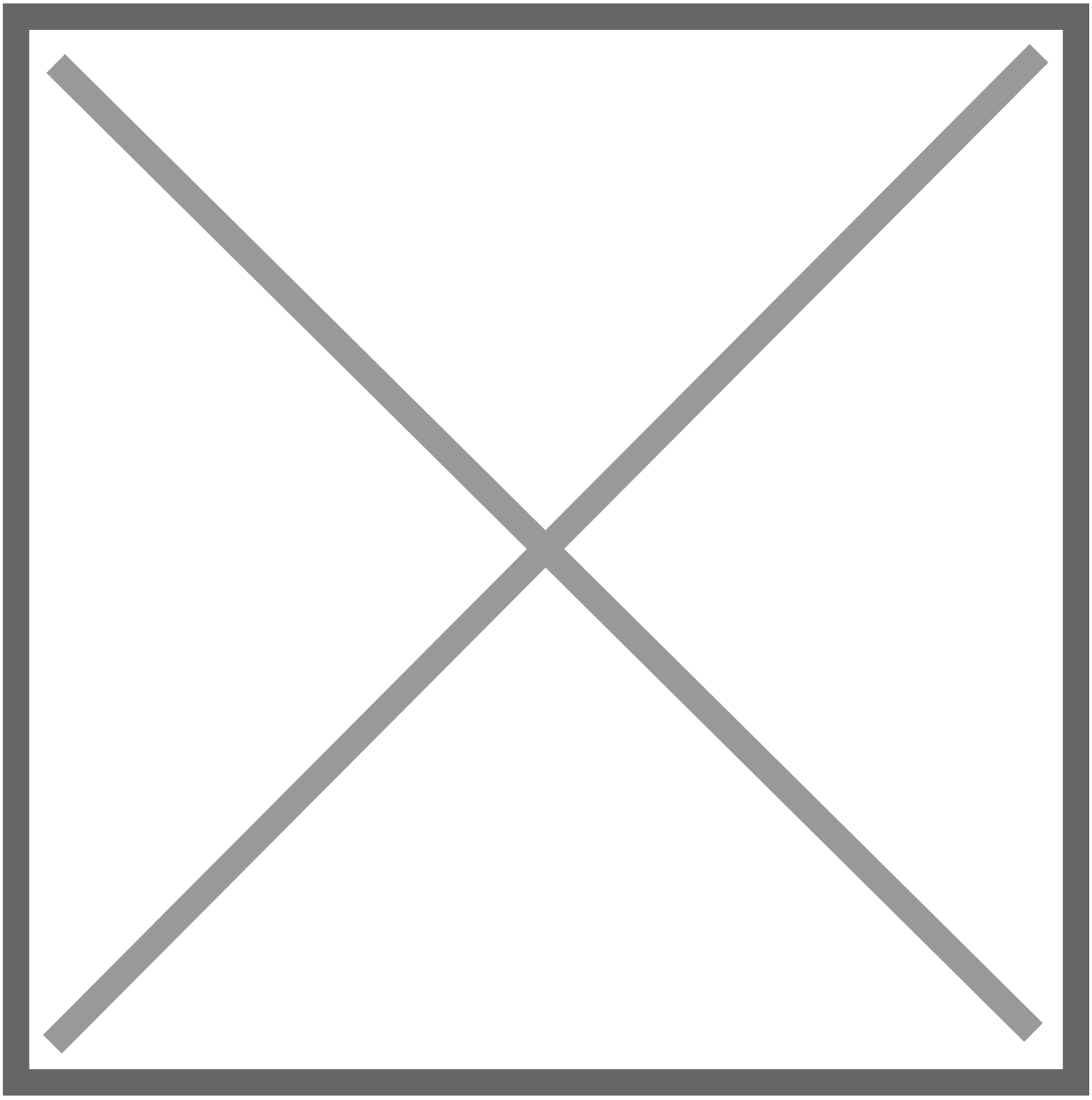


Screens and Selecting a device to control

There are 2 screens in the Ableton MPH:

1. Select Device, which lists the devices in a track and also allow you to navigate to the next and previous track.

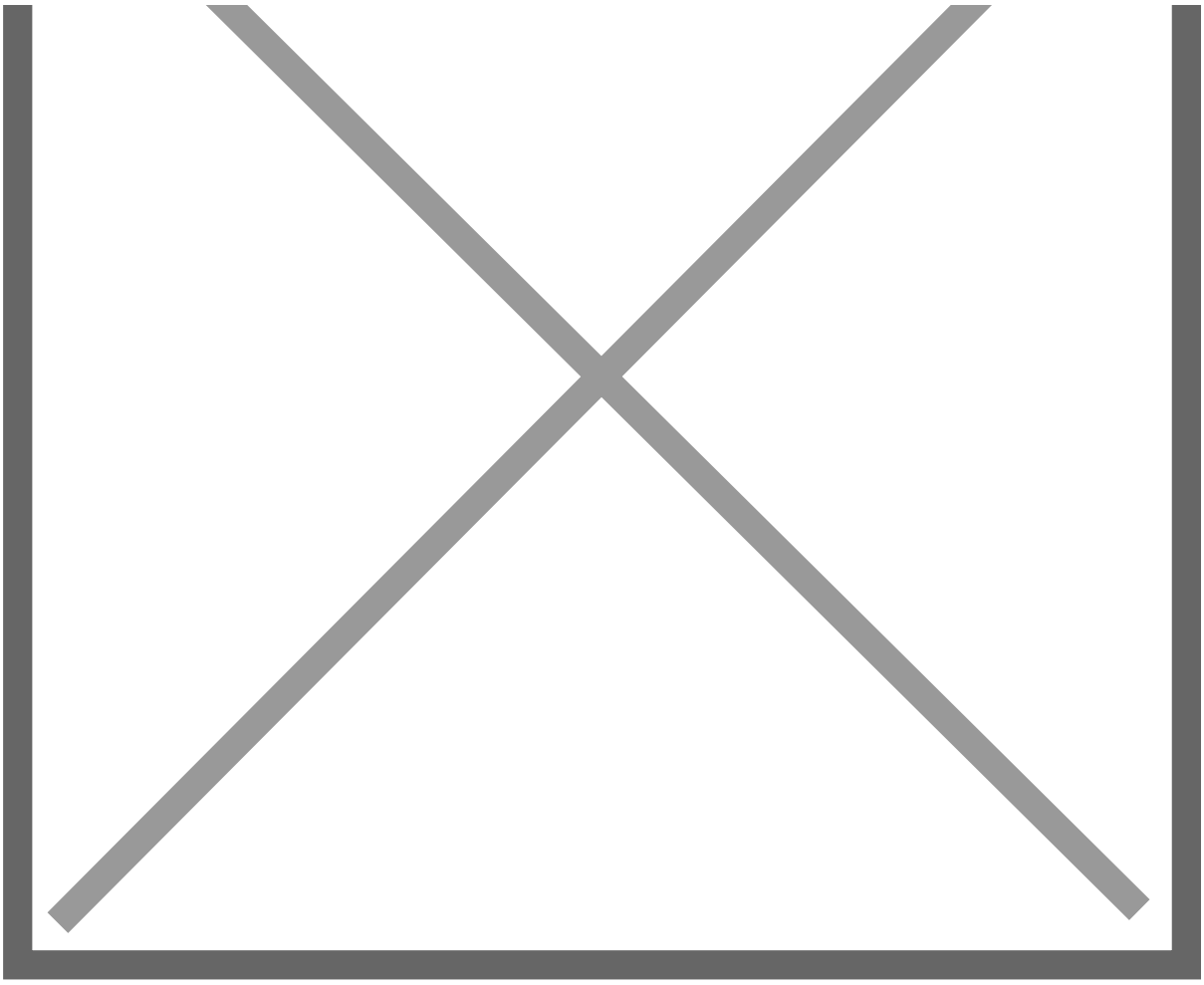
If a device is a group (Rack) it will list it on a new line, along with the devices inside the group.



2. The device control screen, which carries 32 encoders and 32 buttons. There are 4 pages, thus there are 128 encoders and 128 buttons available to control a device.

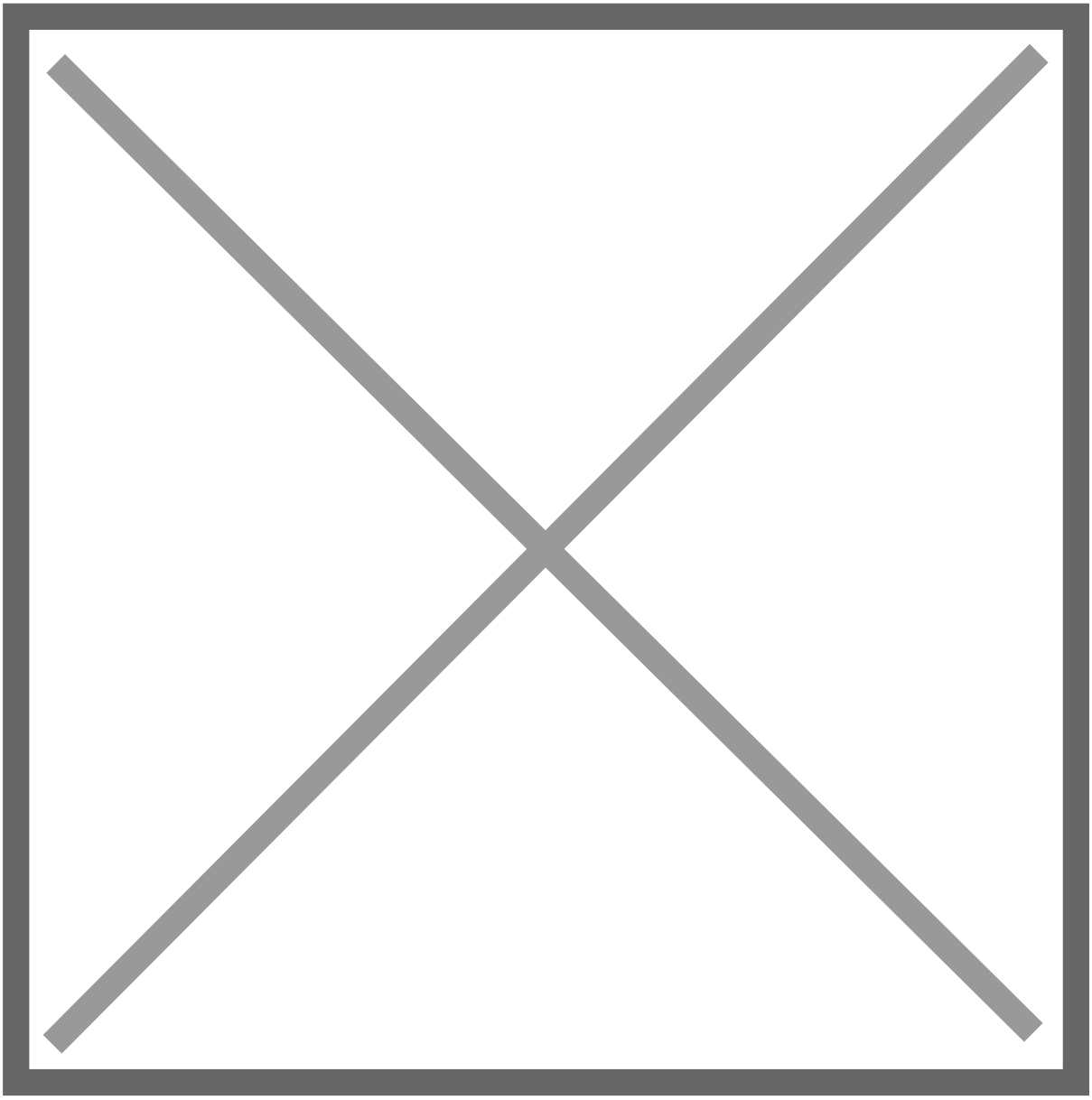
On the controller screen you will see 4 different names:

The first name is the name of the device type, the second name after || is the name of the preset loaded, the third is the name of the track and last after > is the name of the Ableton device preset.



Changing

the Ableton device preset will change on the Ableton MPH as well:



There are 2 ways of selecting a device.

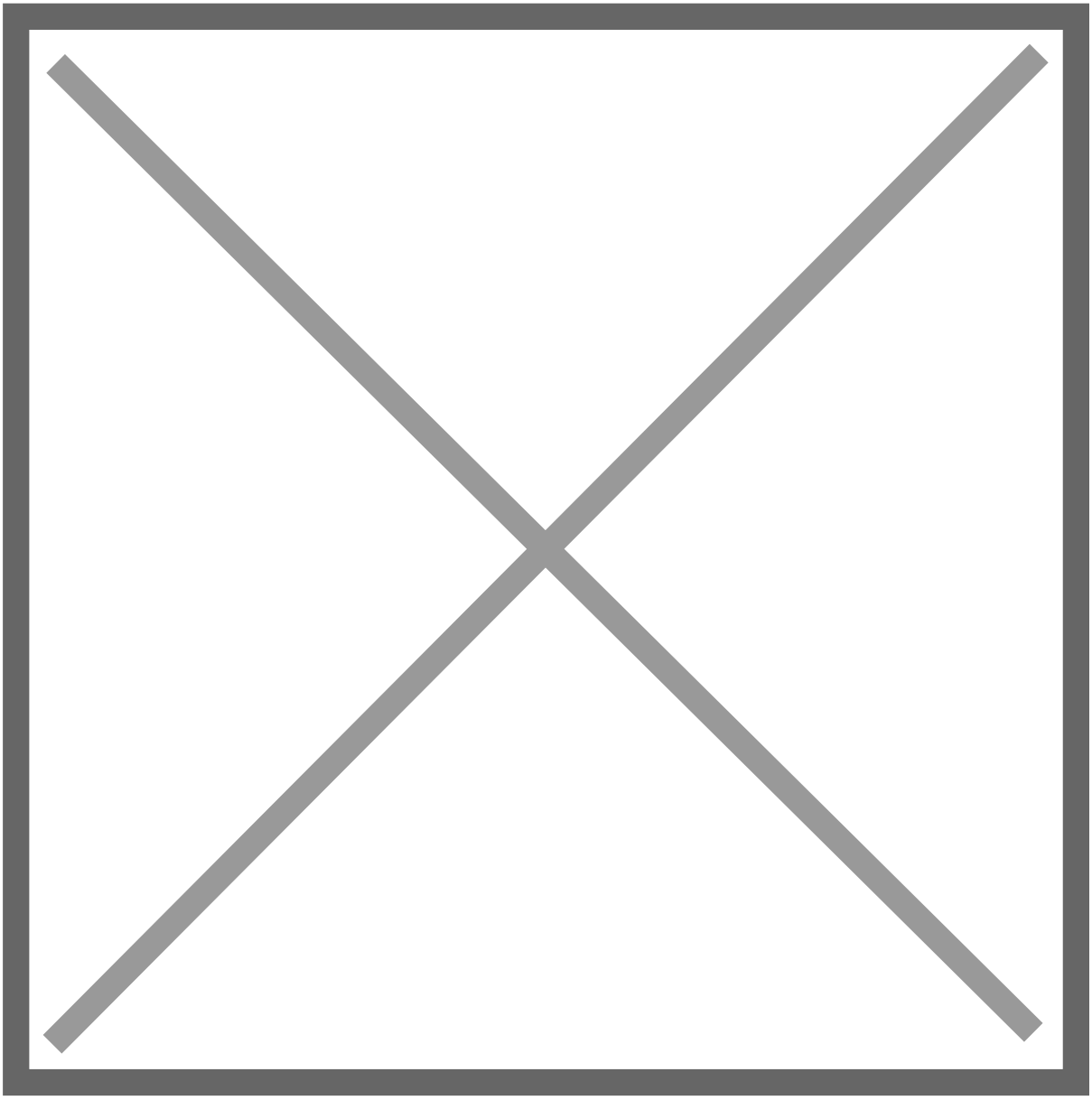
By default the Auto/Manual button is set to Auto.

This option will automatically control the selected device in Ableton Live. Any device you select in Ableton Live will cause the Ableton MPH to display the screen that controls that selected device.

The second option is by setting it Manual and manually selecting the device in Ableton MPH. Click on Select Device and the devices of the track selected will be listed as buttons. Then selected the device you want to control.

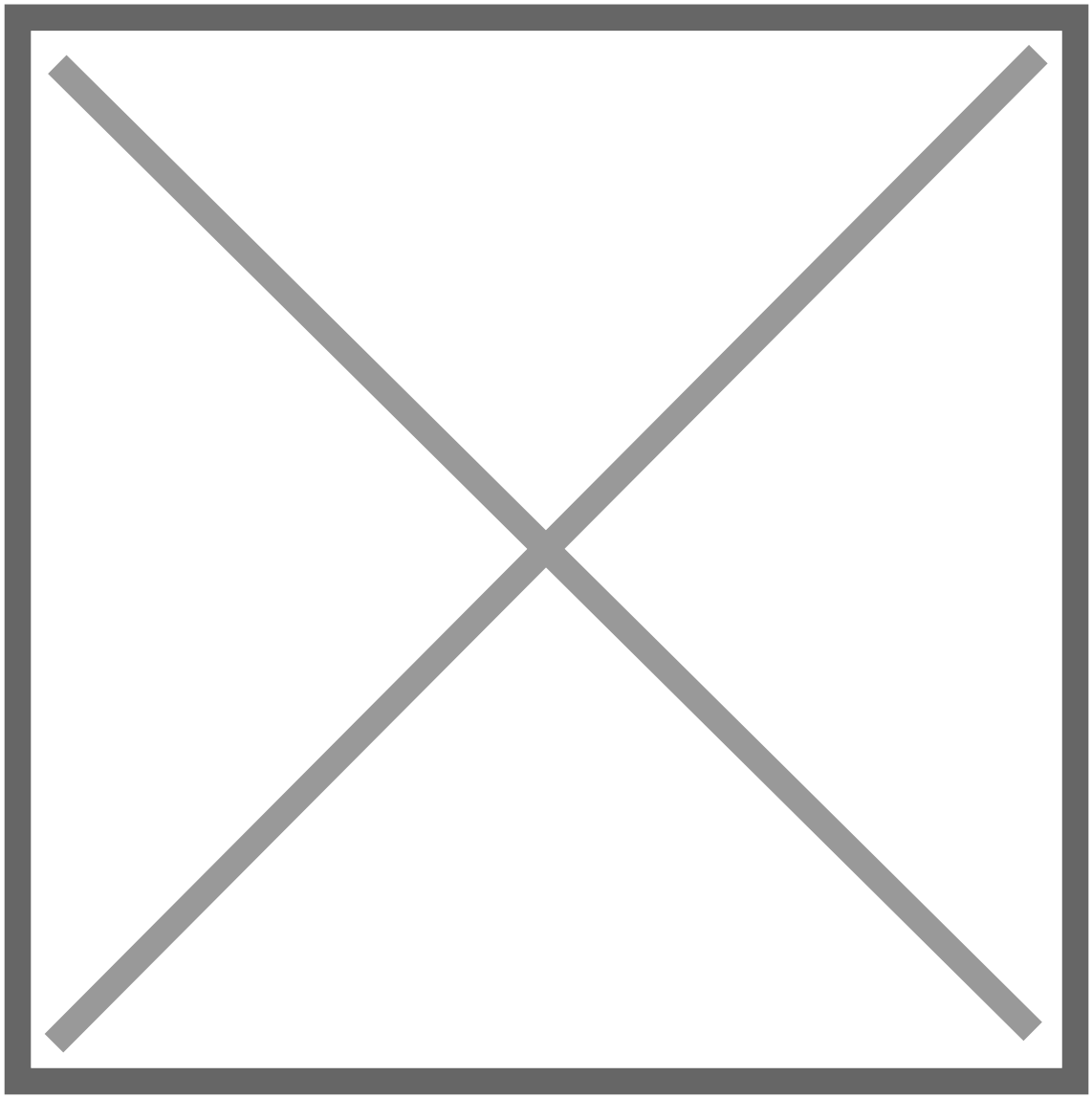
You can still navigate to Select Device even if the Auto/Manual button is set to Auto.

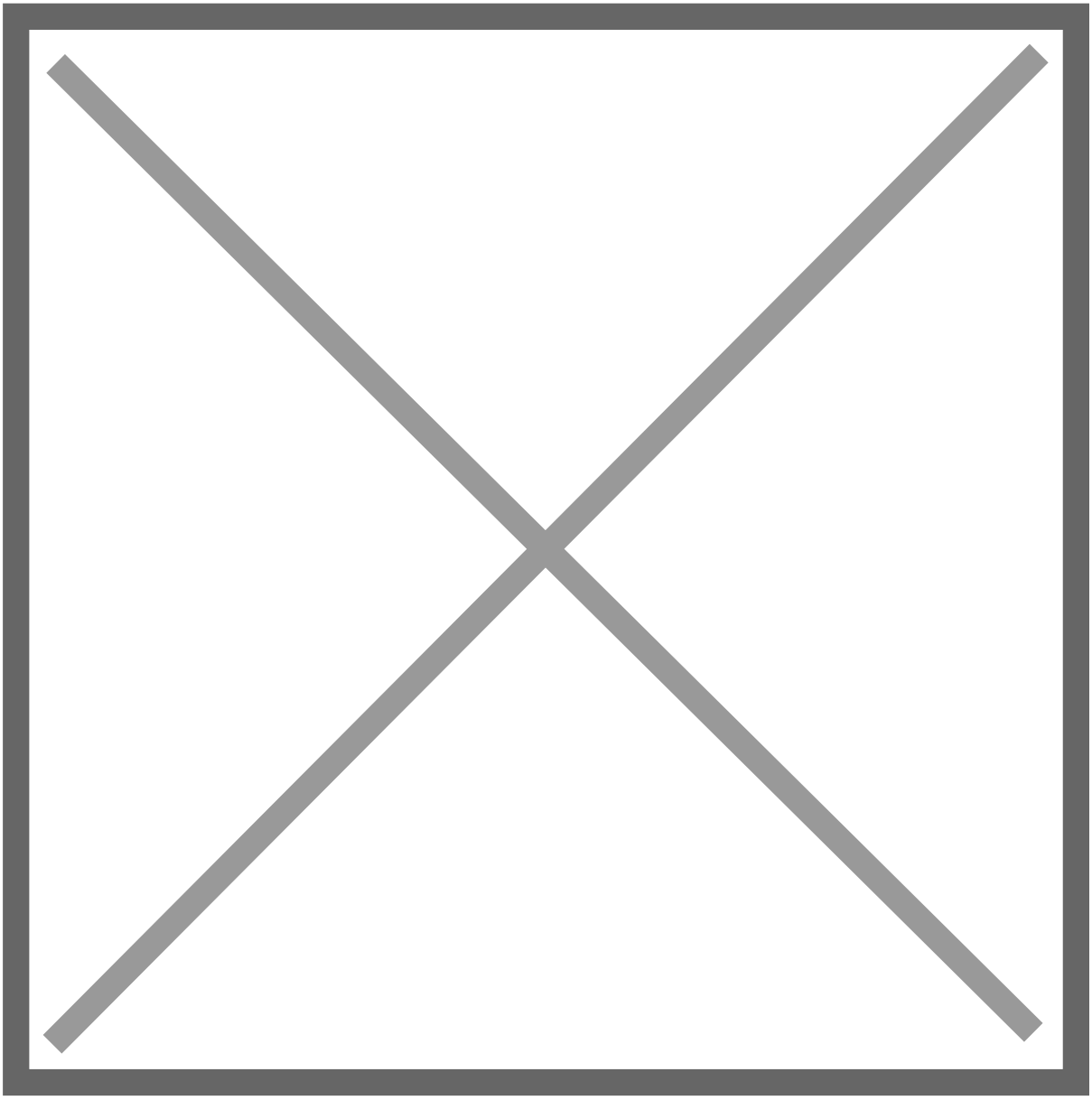
Note that by selecting a track in the Ableton MPH, will also select the track in Ableton Live.



Navigating tracks from the Device Selection screen

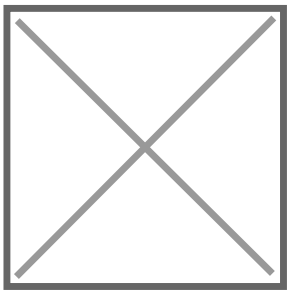
The previous/next track buttons will display the devices of the track and switch track on Ableton Live. To go to the selected device in the track, click on "Go to selected device".





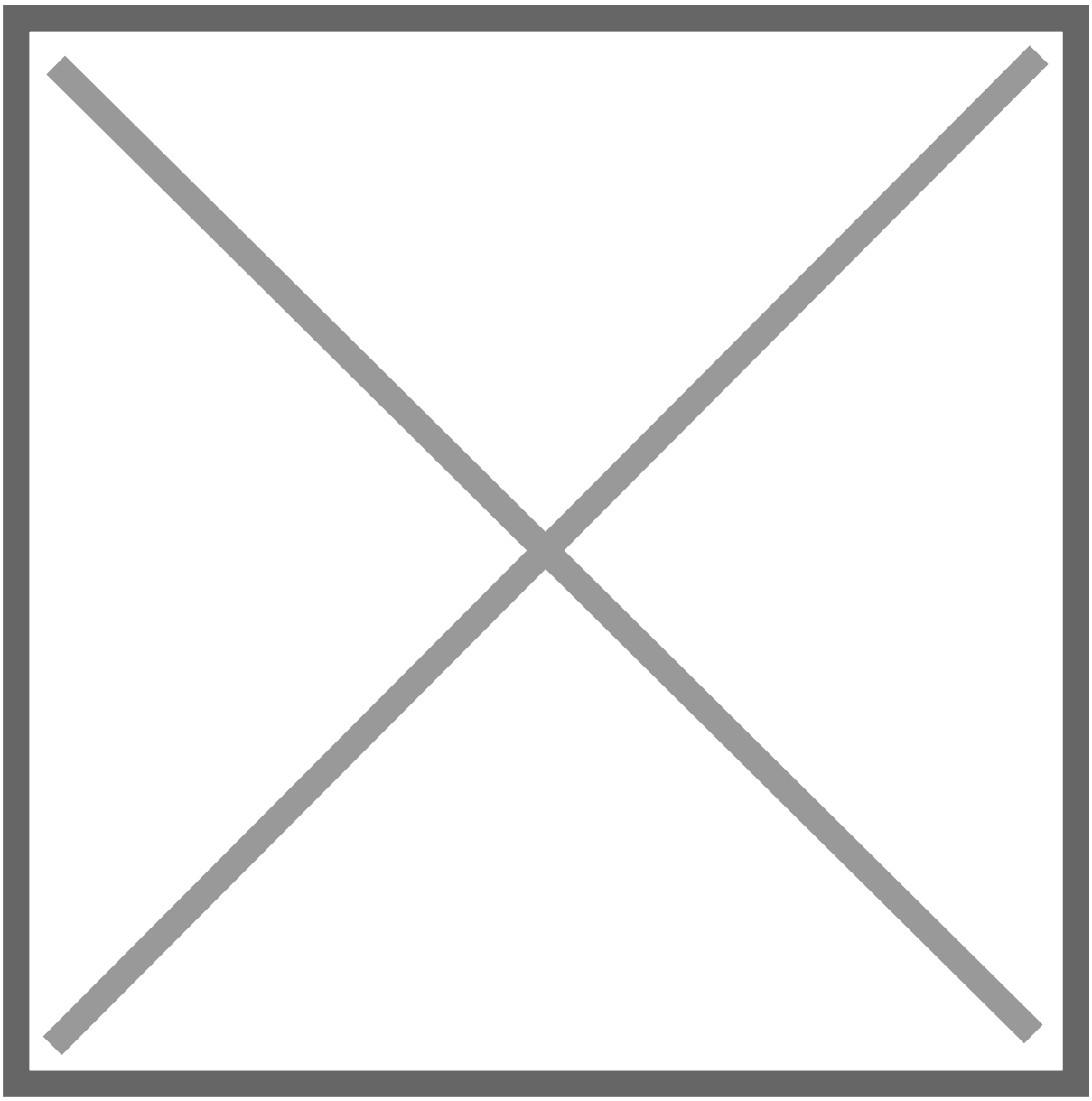
Controlling the selected device in Ableton, from the Device Control screen

This button will only show up when in Manual Mode. The "Go to selected device" button will take you to the selected device in Ableton Live.



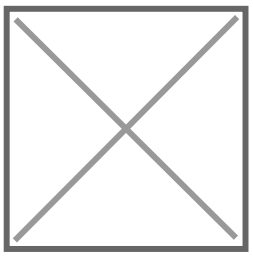
The button for setting Manual/Auto shows up in the Device Control screen only.

If you are controlling another device than the selected one in Ableton Live, you can also click on the "Go to selected device" button in Ableton MPH to control the currently selected device in Ableton Live.



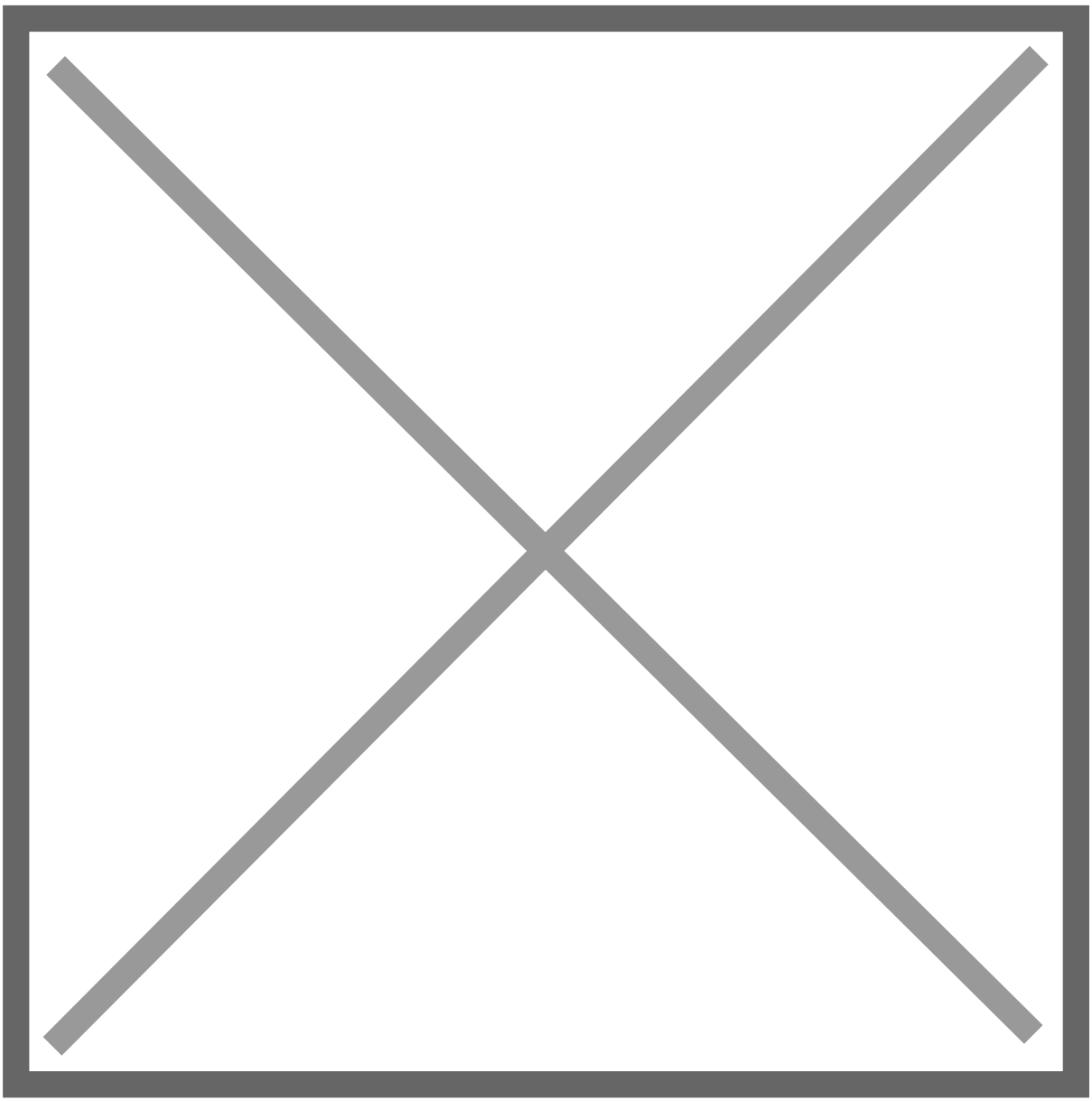
Navigating tracks from the Device Control screen

These buttons allow you to navigate to the previous or next track.

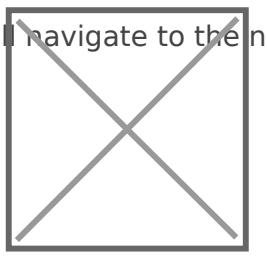


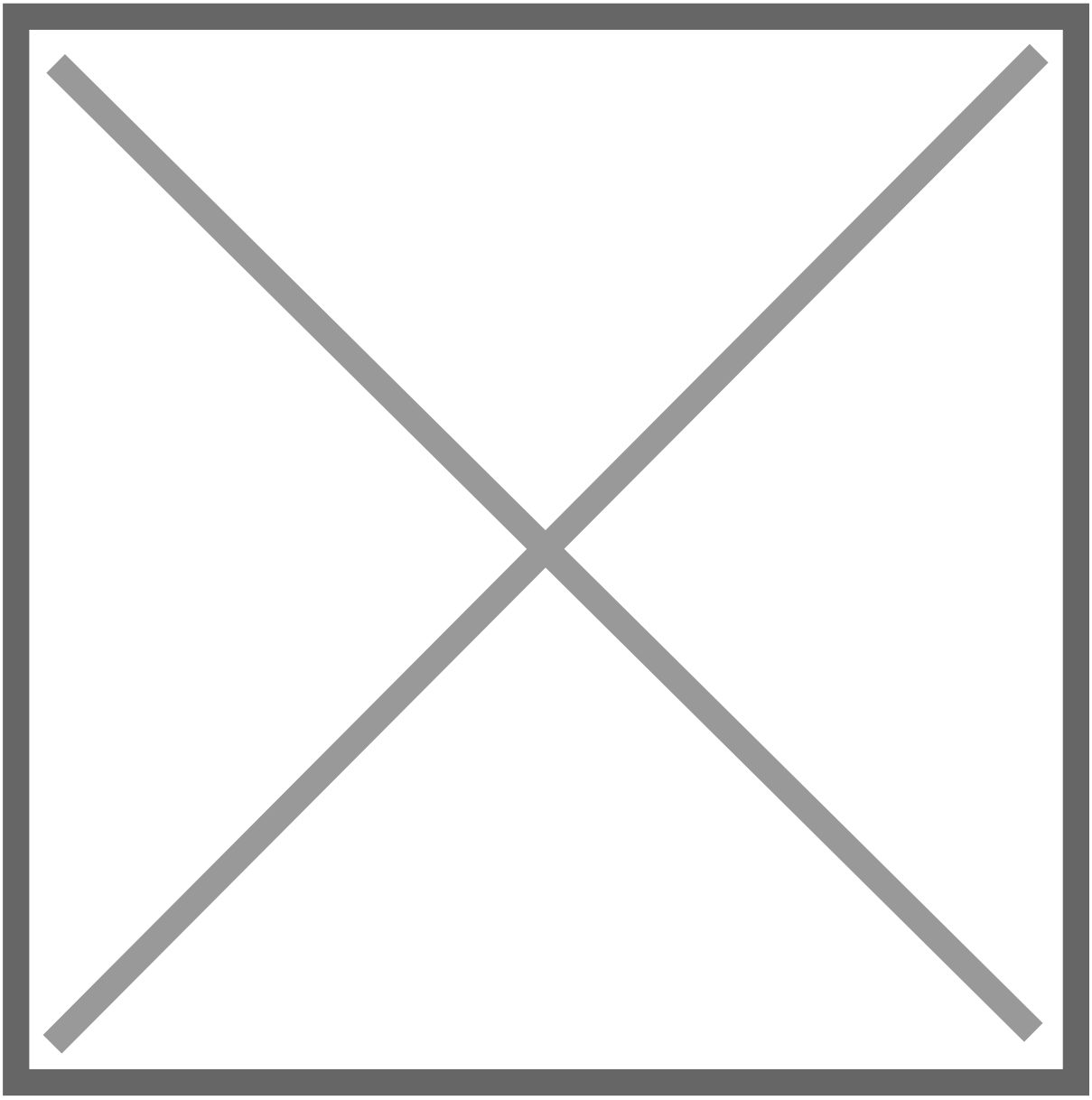
Whether you are in Auto or Manual mode it will still take you to the selected device when switching tracks from the Device Control screen. The buttons work in Round Robin mode by default.

If a track does not have any devices and you press next or previous button, it will be skipped.



Navigating devices from the Device Control screen

These buttons will navigate to the next and previous device in a track. They work in Round Robin mode by default. 



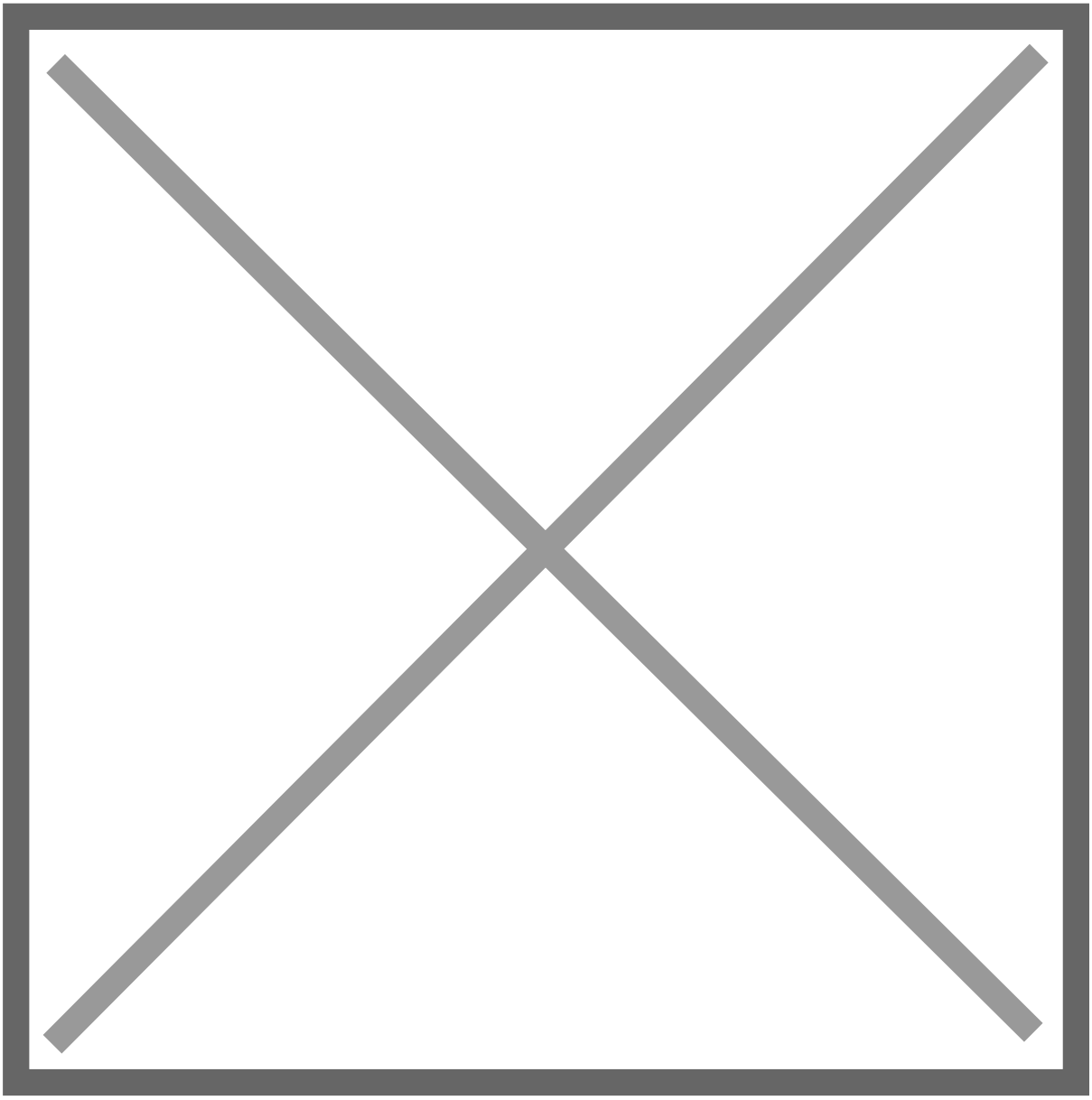
Navigating Tracks from Ableton Live via mouse or keyboard

When switching tracks in Ableton Live (with mouse or keyboard) the Ableton MPH will follow the track switches.

If you are in the Device Control screen, going to a new track (with mouse or keyboard in Ableton Live) will automatically take you to the selected device of the track, if there is a device on that selected track.

If there is no device on the selected track, then Ableton MPH will stay at the previously selected device.

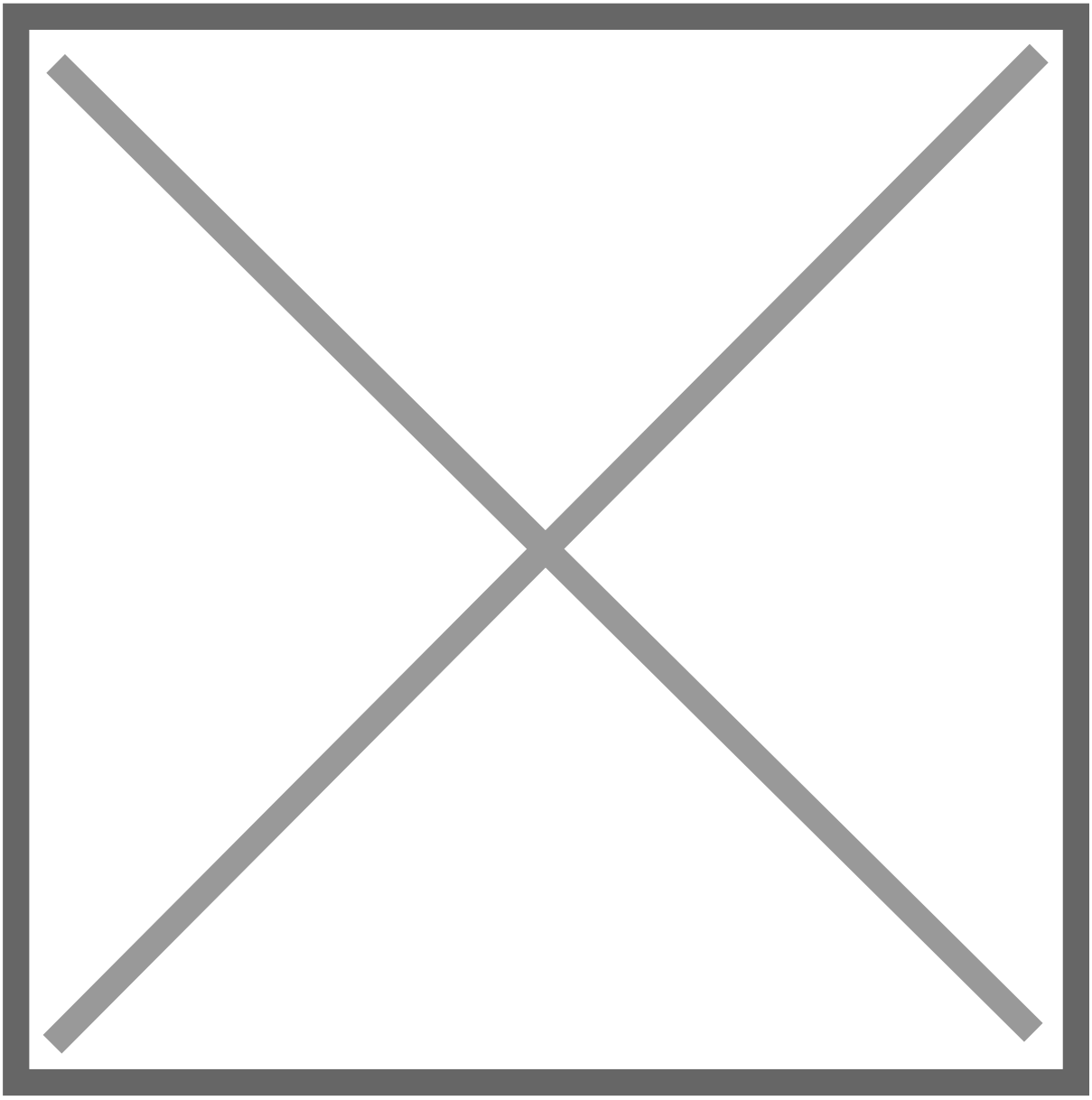
If you are in the Device Selection screen and you are changing tracks (with mouse and keyboard in Ableton Live) it will follow Ableton Live and stay in the Device Selection screen. If the selected track has no device, it will show no device buttons to select.



Device Parameter Range

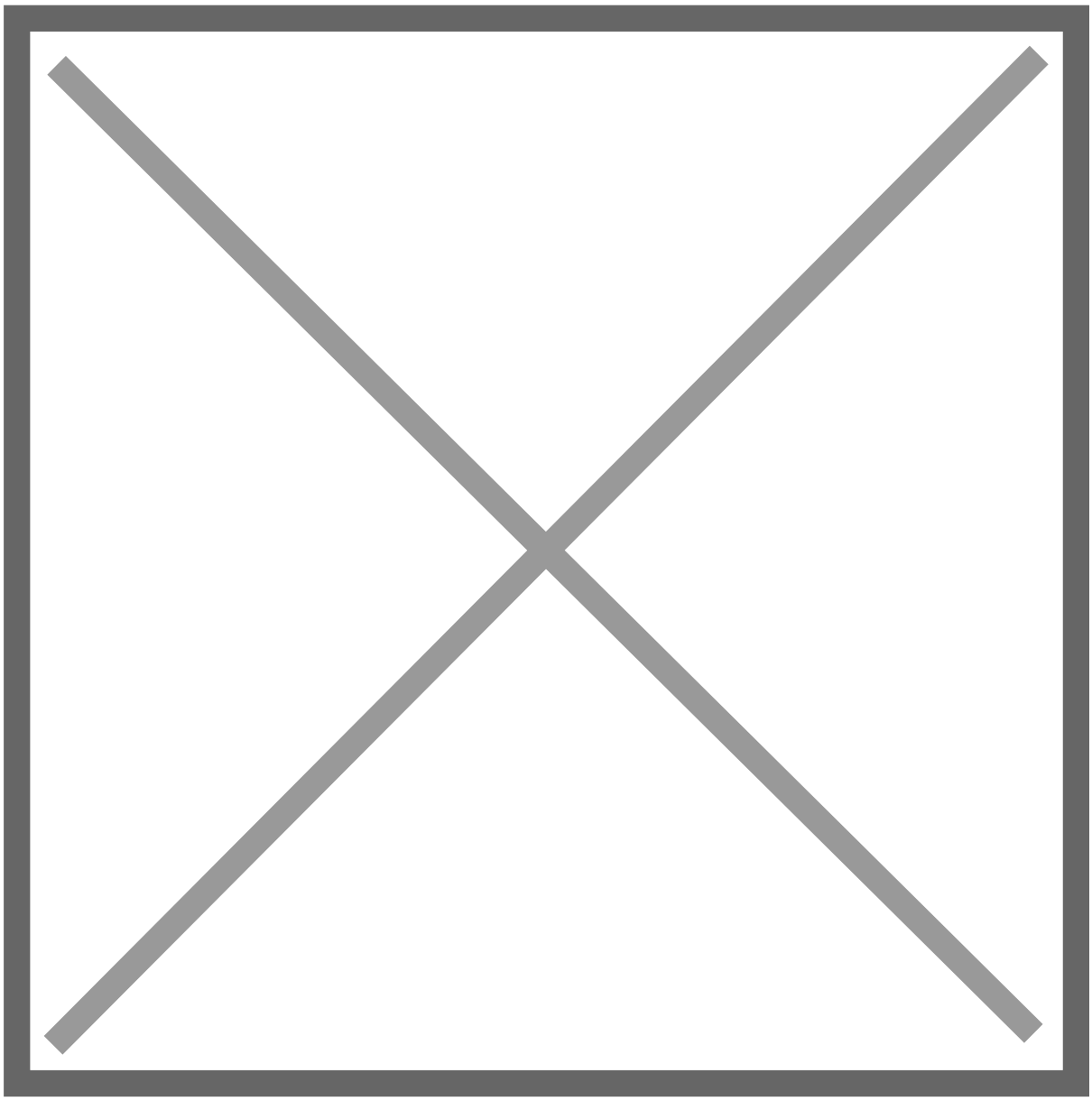
Each device parameter from Ableton Live returns/accepts a value from 0 to 100, regardless on what is being displayed on the Ableton Live device. Therefore, the buttons and encoders operate within this range.

This is important to keep in mind as you will see in the next section Button Options.



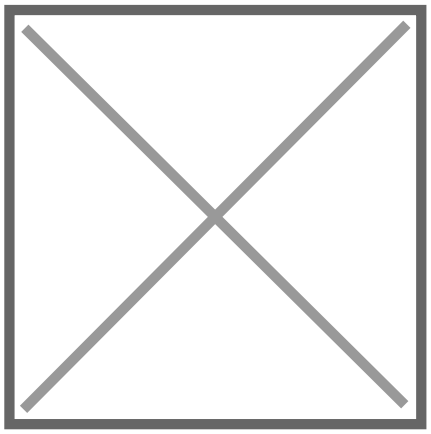
Encoder Options

The encoder options offer the same options as in the MPH. For all the options see here



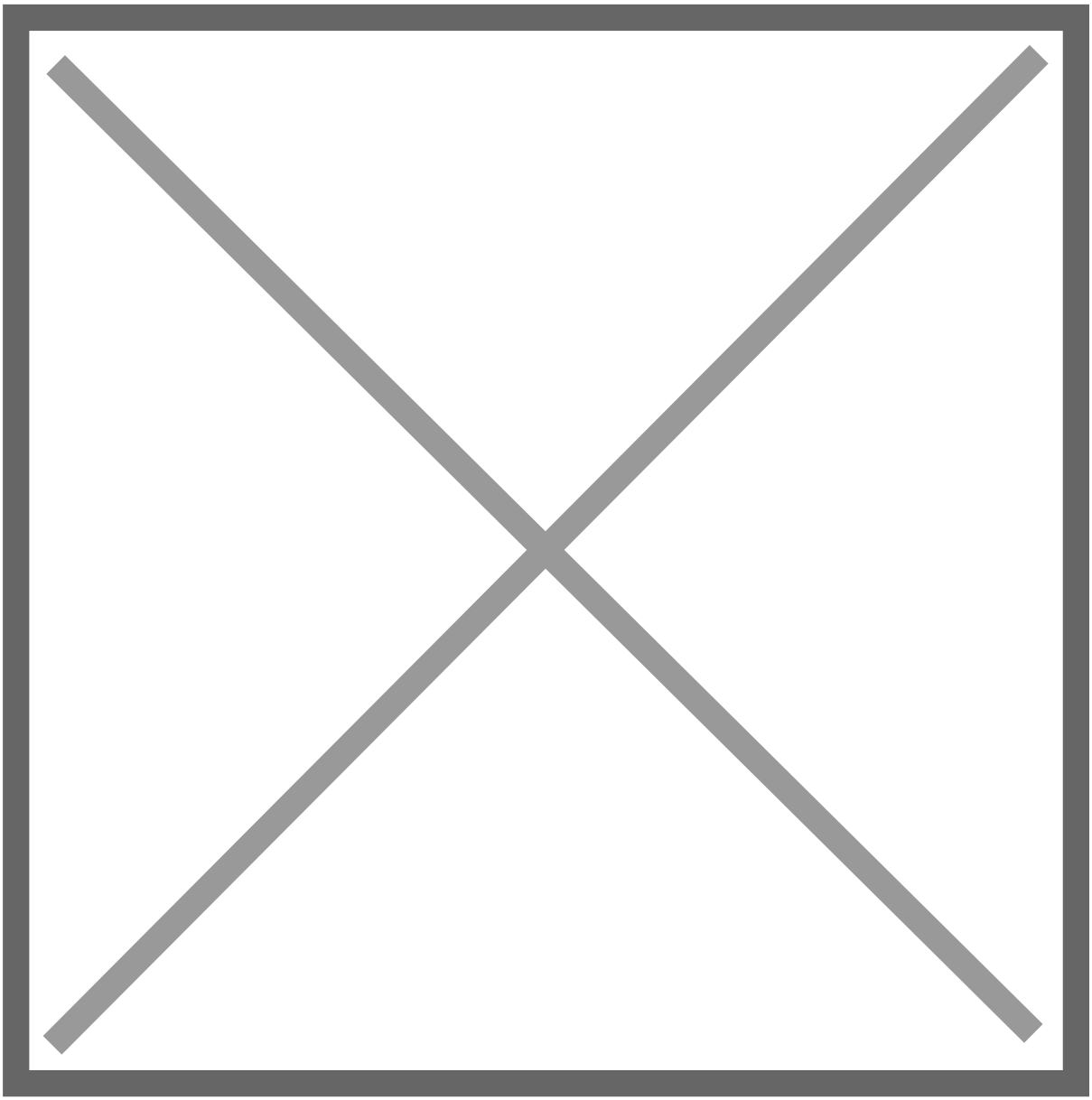
Button Options

Each button displays the current value (0 to 100) on the upper right corner and it also displays the name of the parameter it's controlling.



Double right click on the bottom area of the button to rename the parameter.

Right click on a button and you will see the following menu appear.



- Show/Hide: shows and hides the selected button.
- Options: displays the 3 options to select the button type.
- Push Options: displays the options when the selected button type is Push.
- Select Color: displays 2 color palettes to select button colors for the pressed and non pressed state.
- Select Image: Select an image for the button.
- Close: closes the menu.

While you have the button options menu open, you may right click on another button and it will show the options of that button.

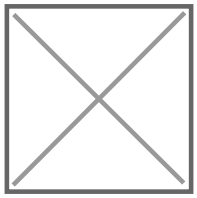
Button Types

Push (default) - This is a momentary button type that when released will return to the non-pressed state.

Toggle - This is a permanent type button that when pressed again will go to the non-pressed state.

Permanent - This is a permanent type that can only be pressed once. You can set multiple Permanent type buttons on the same parameter to set a specific target value on the controlled parameter. When other Permanent type buttons are pressed will cause the rest of the Permanent values to change state to not pressed.

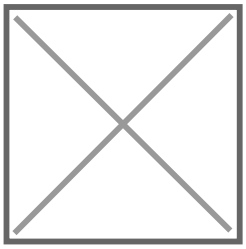
This is particularly useful when you want to mimic the behavior of buttons for example in the Delay 16ths parameter. Choosing one button, causes the others to reset to a non-pressed state.



Toggle and Permanent Button Range

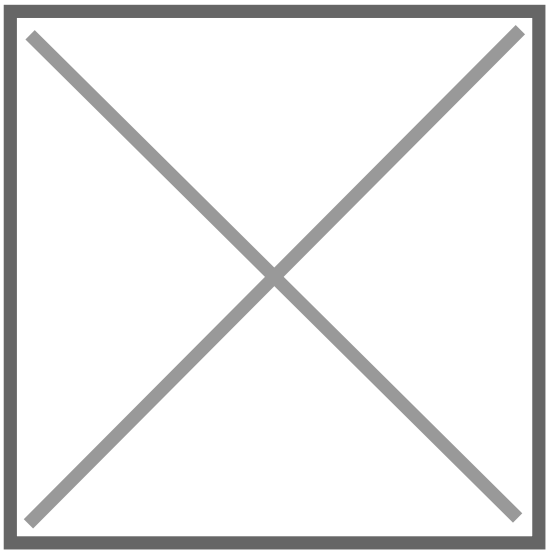
The default Toggle button type range is 0 for minimum and 100 for maximum. However, when linking a parameter the Toggle max value will be set automatically to the value received from Ableton Live.

For example, linking the Delay mode from the Delay device:

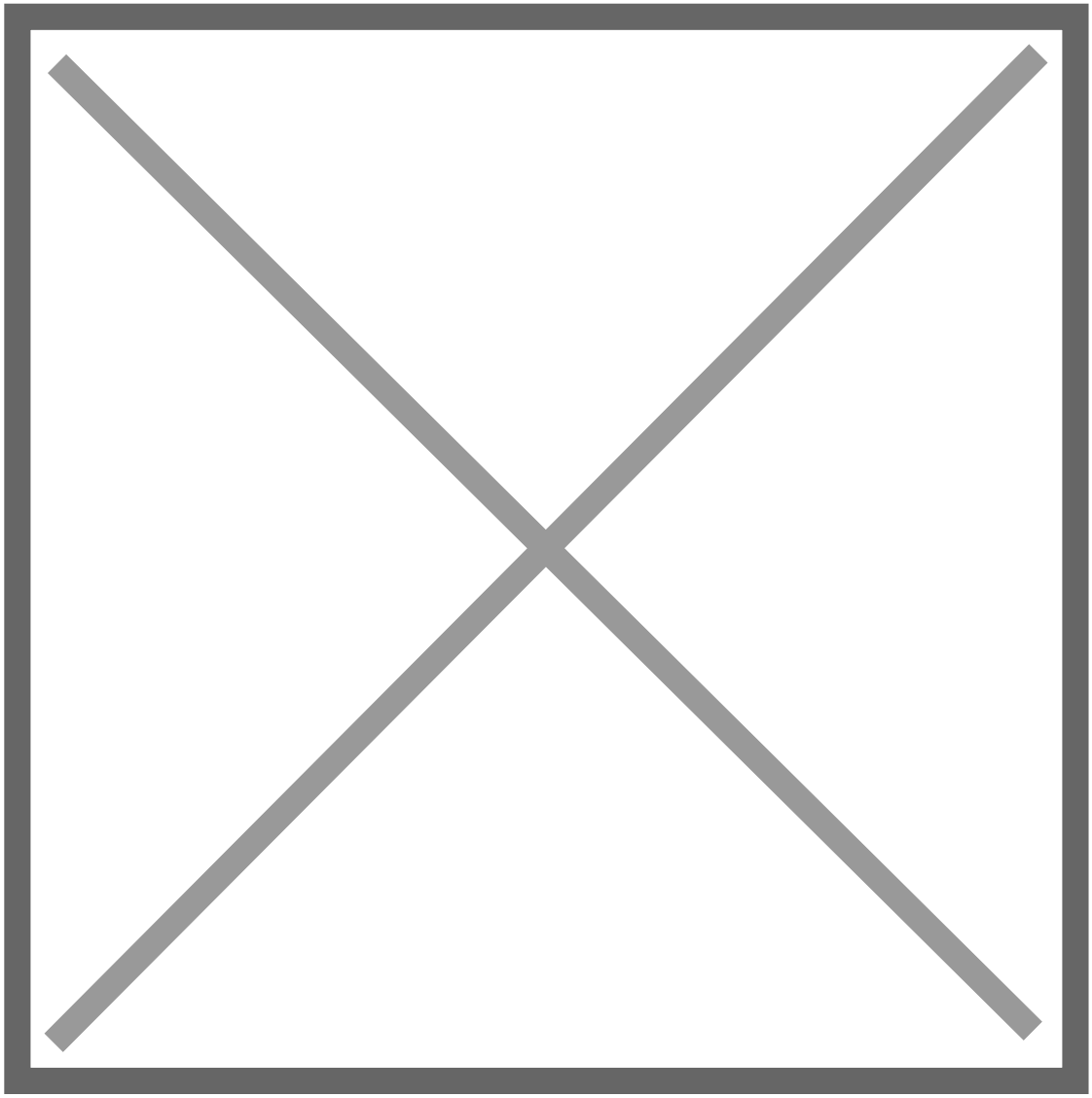


Clicking on the first option, Repitch will transmit the value 0. Clicking on Fade, will transmit the value 50. Clicking on Jump, will transmit the value 100.

Therefore, setting the button Type to Toggle, sets the value to 50 which is the value transmitted when clicked on Fade.



Push Options



Go to specific value on release - This option will set the parameter to a specific value when the button is released. This option is not available when selecting either of the following 2 options,

however it is available to be selected along with the last 2 options.

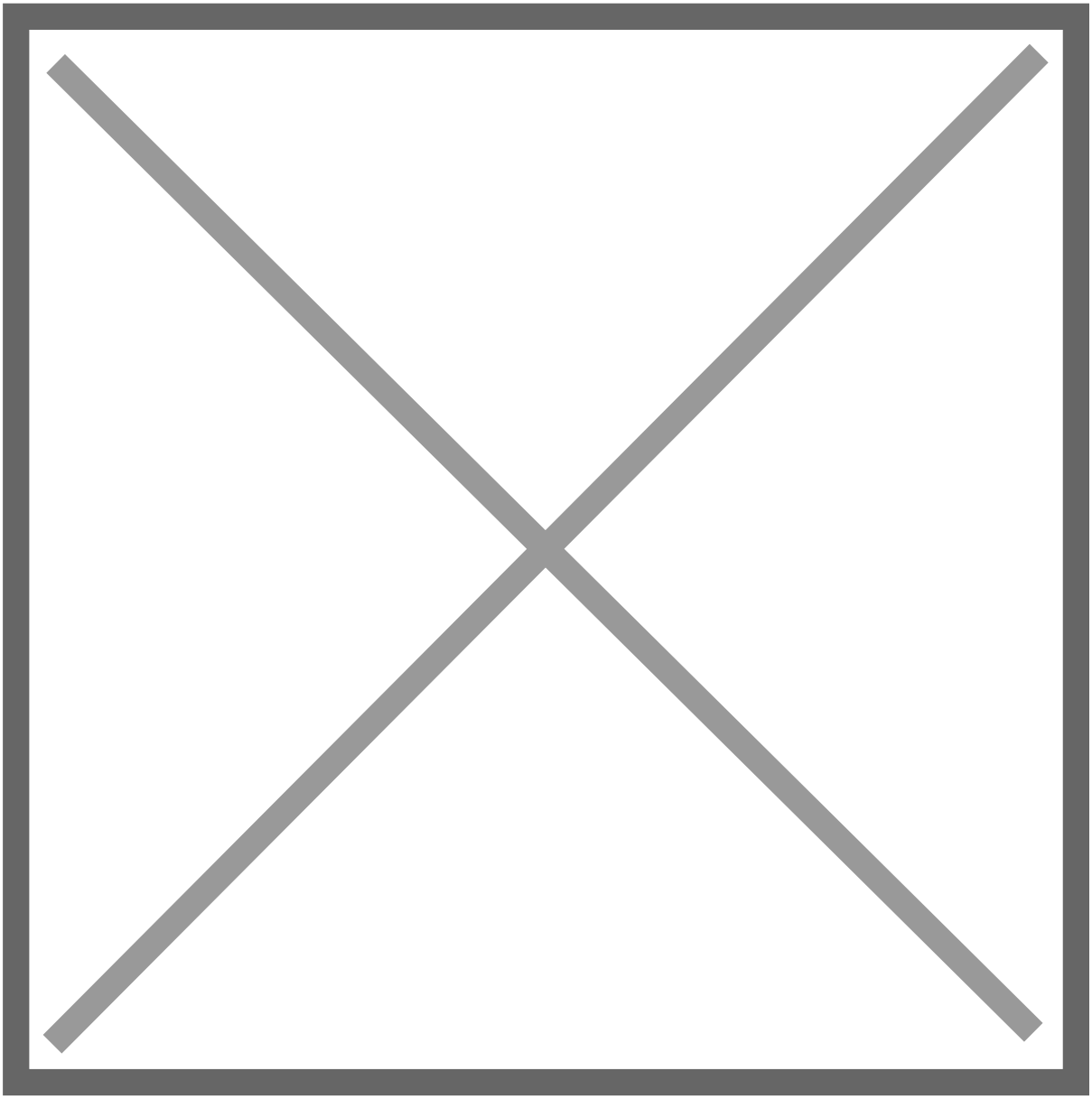
On every press increment - This option on every press of the button will increase the value by the value set in the box.

On every press decrement - This option on every press of the button will decrese the value by the value set in the box.

Increment every (ms) - This option increase the value of the parameter when the button is kept pressed every miliseconds set. The value of increment is taken from the box set on the option "On every press increment".

Decrement every (ms) - This option decreases the value of the parameter when the button is kept pressed every miliseconds set. The value of increment is taken from the box set on the option "On every press decrement".

Round Robin - This option affects all push options. It will cause the buttons to loop through when reaching 0 or 100.



Images on Buttons

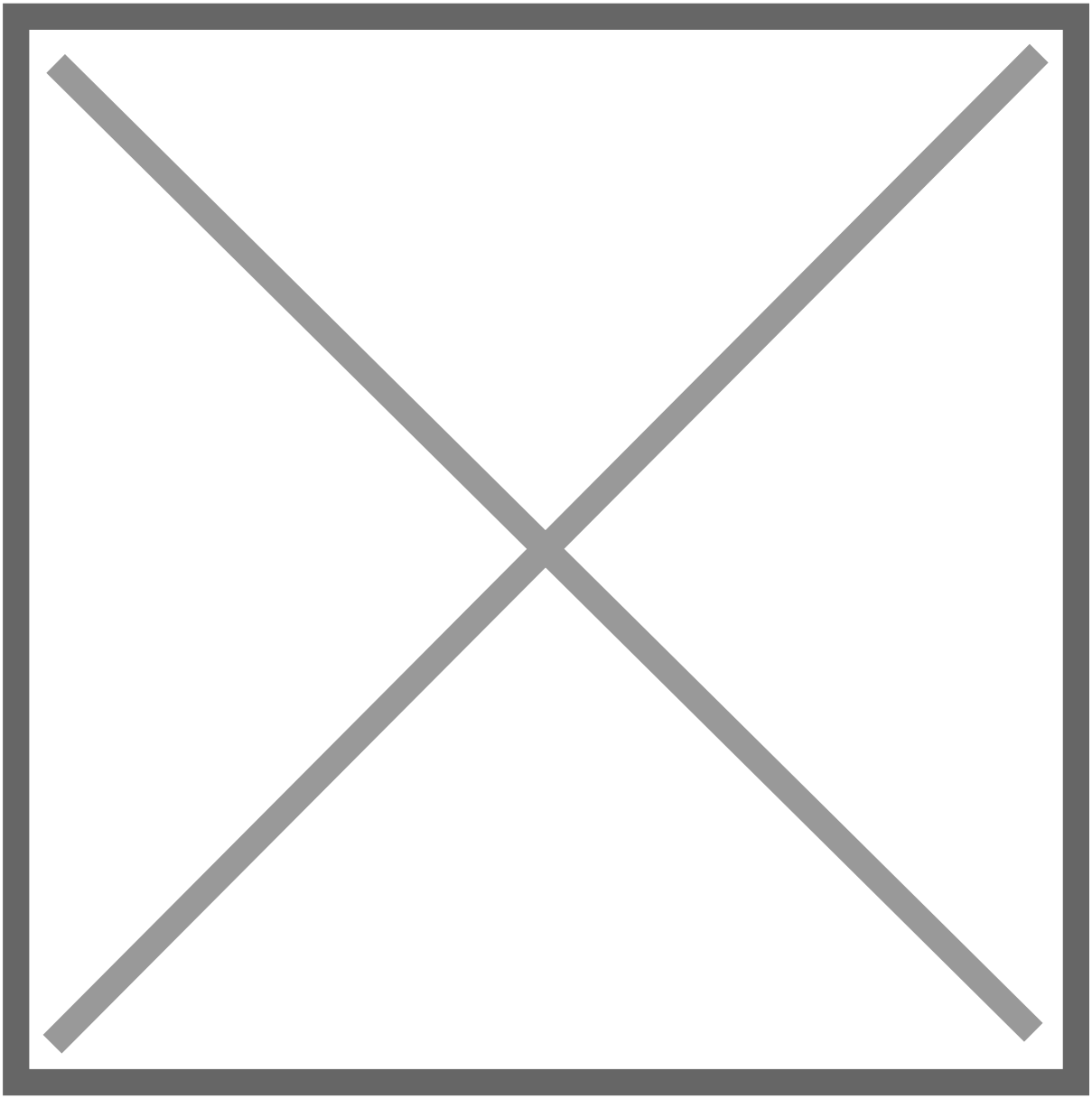
You can select an image to be displayed on each button via the "Select Image" option on the menu.

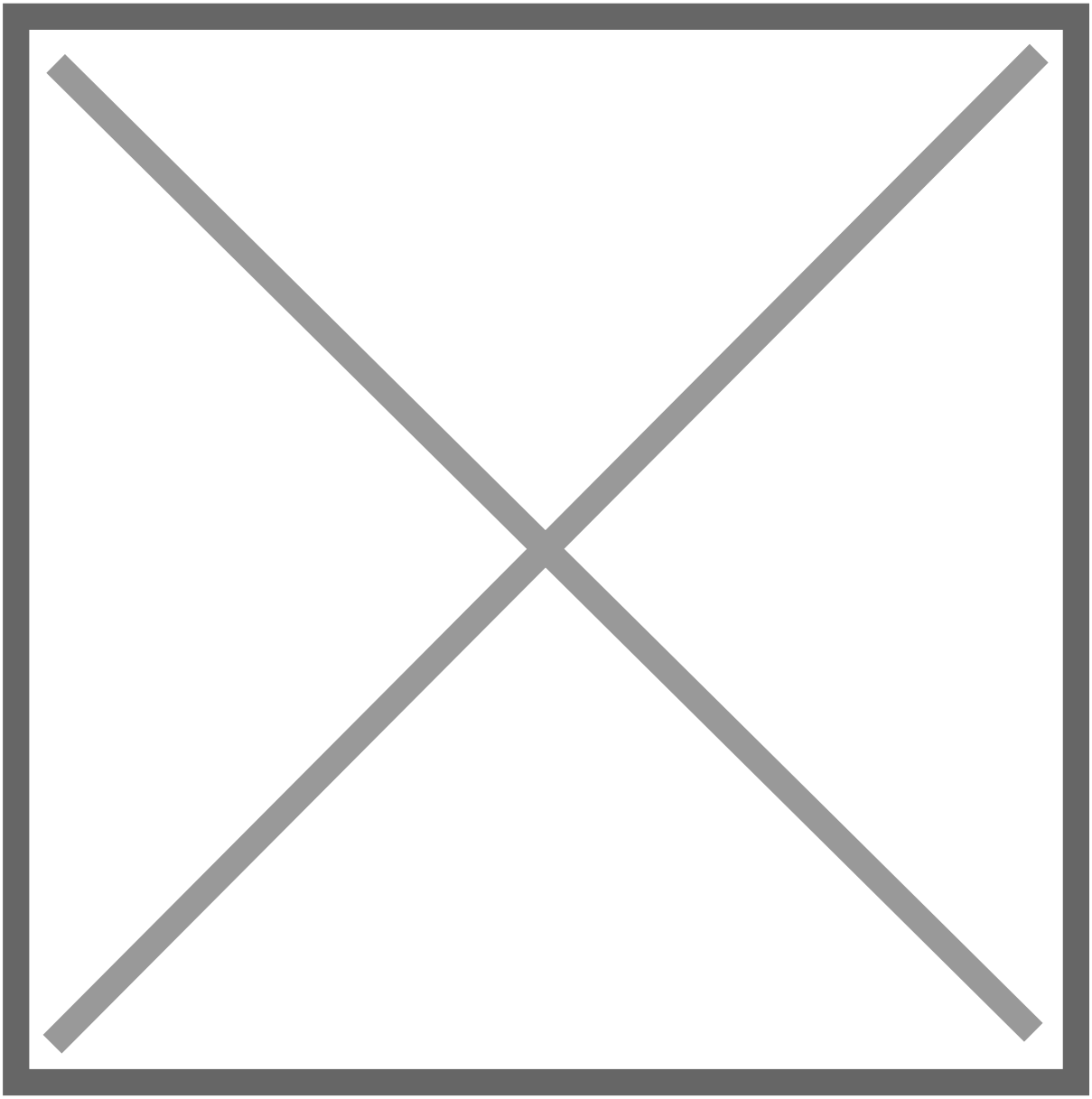
These can be png or jpg image files. The size does not matter but to preserve the ratio of the original image choose an image that is square. The image is converted automatically to a smaller image and copied in the AbletonLivePresets folder.

You can have a color and an image set on a button. If you use a png image with transparency then the colors you have set for pressed/unpressed states will be visible. The images are set with partial opacity so the colors set on the button are still visible.

You can get png icon images for free from many sites.

You can use the "Select Image" option and then Remove Image to remove an image from a button.





Linking Parameters

There are 2 methods to link parameters:

1. The LINK button

To link one parameter, click on the LINK Button. Then, click or move a parameter on a device in Ableton.

If the parameter you are trying to link on the Ableton device consists of multiple buttons then click on one button that is not selected.

If the parameter you are trying to link on the Ableton device is a variable (circle) parameter then move it a bit.

The change in value will transmit the signal to the Ableton MPH.

Then click on a button or encoder on the Ableton MPH. The parameter is now linked.

(Note that there are certain parameters on a few devices in Ableton Live that cannot be linked because Ableton has not implemented these in their API. Thus, we haven't been able to link those parameters.)

2. The LINK MULTIPLE button

To link multiple parameters, click on the LINK MULTIPLE button. It will open an empty list column on Ableton MPH.

Then, click or move a parameter on a device in Ableton.

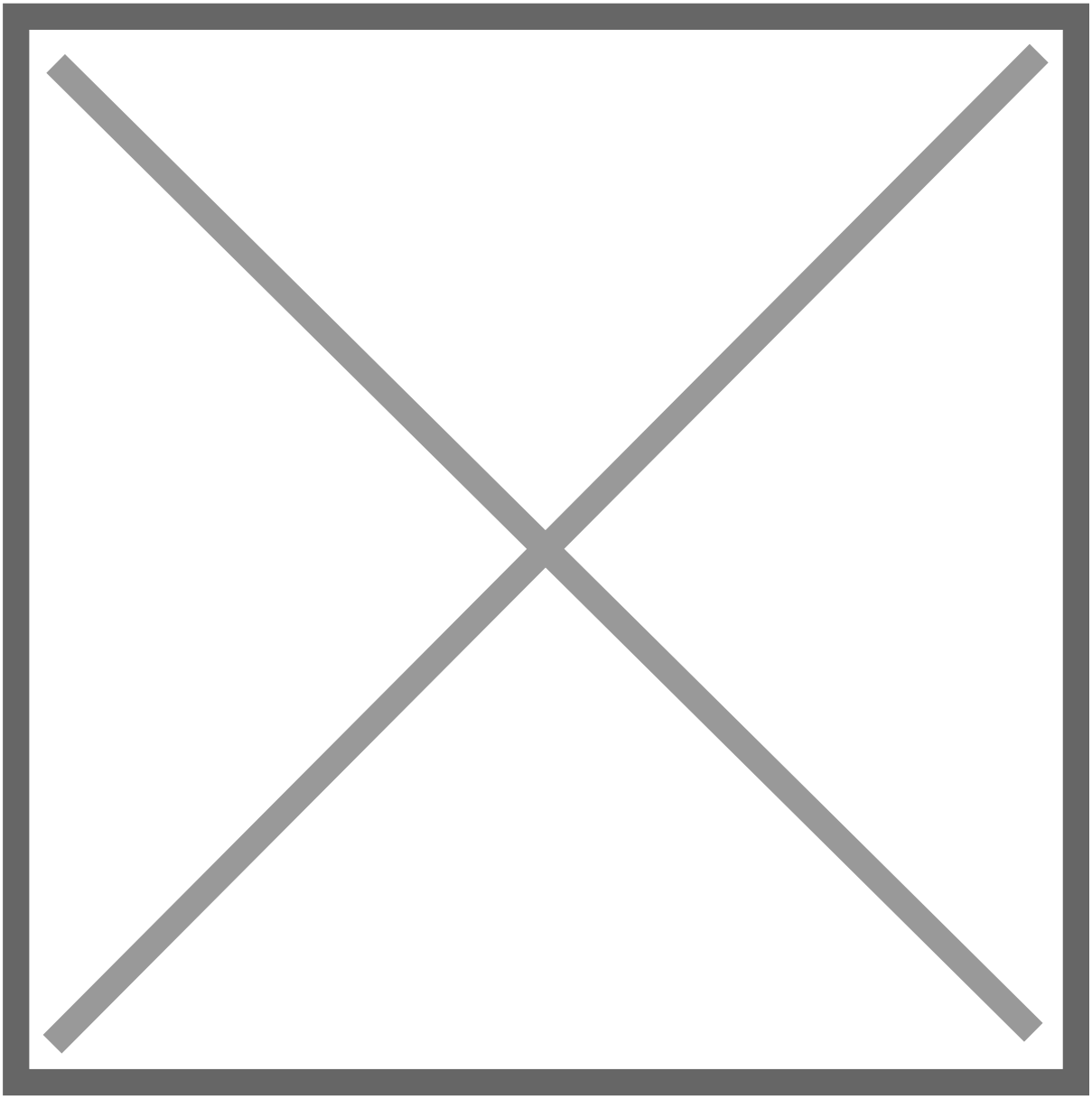
The change in value will transmit the signal to the Ableton MPH and list the parameter name in the column list.

Keep on moving or clicking on Ableton device parameters and these will be added to the list.

Note that when linking Encoders you can assign colors, however when linking buttons you can assign pressed/non-pressed state colors later after you finish linking the parameters, by right clicking on the buttons via the button options menu.

You can link multiple buttons for the same parameter on the same page or a different page. Linking a second button on the same parameter will cause the button type to become the same type as the first button you have linked.

To unlink a parameter, click on the UNLINK button and then click on the encoder or button that is currently linked.



Opening and Saving your own presets

You can link and create your own presets. If you place these presets in the default folder and are named using the same name as the presets provided then these will be loaded automatically every time you select a device.

Alternatively, you can load these presets using the Open button.

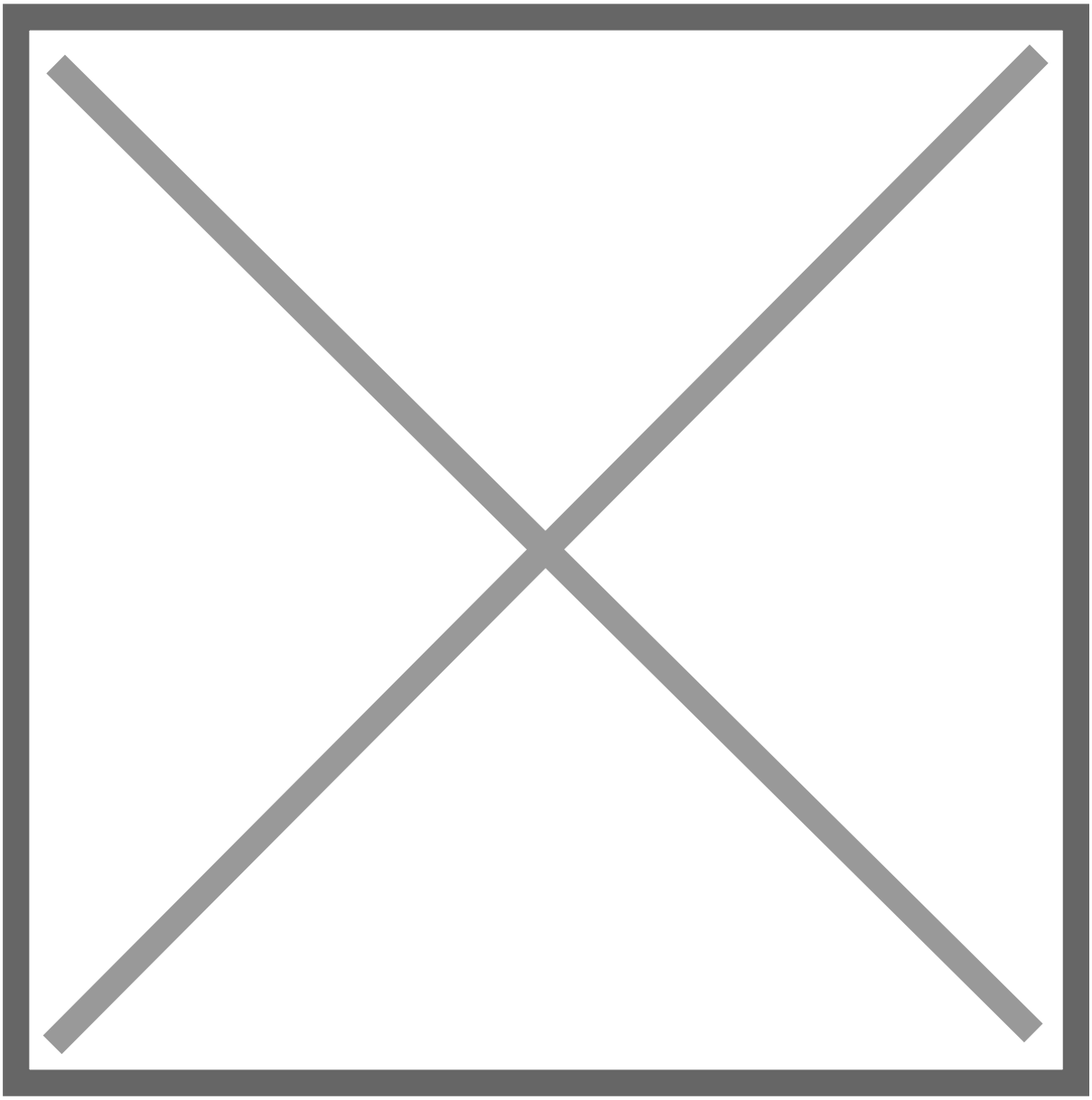
To start linking on an empty device control page move the default preset of the device you want to link outside the default folder.

Then, select the device and you will see that no parameter is linked. The Save button is red.

Begin linking parameters to your linking and hit Save when done.

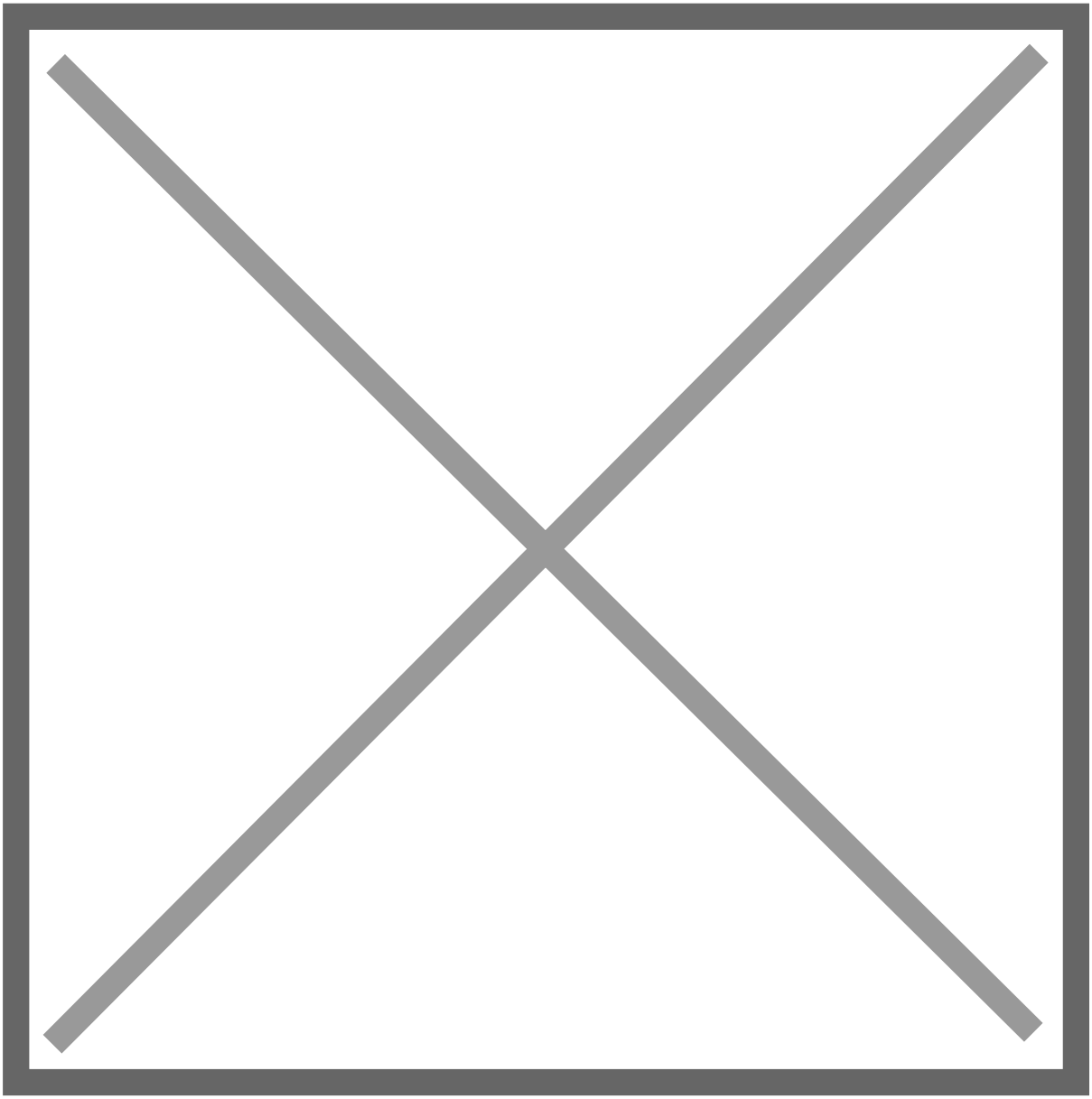
This will save it as a default preset for that device.

If you don't want this to be the default preset, then move it outside the default folder and move the original preset in the default folder.



Autosaved presets in the Temp folder

The Ableton MPH saves temporarily presets while you are working in the temp folder. If for some reason the application is abruptly closed prior saving or you switch a screen without saving, then you can move that preset from the temp folder in the default folder and reopen Ableton MPH. Your linked parameters will be there where you left off.



Controlling third party (AU/VST2/VST3) plugins

Besides Ableton native devices, Ableton MPH can control the configured parameters of third party plugins (AU/VST2/VST3). The parameters must be configured first in Ableton Live in the same way you configure them for automation.

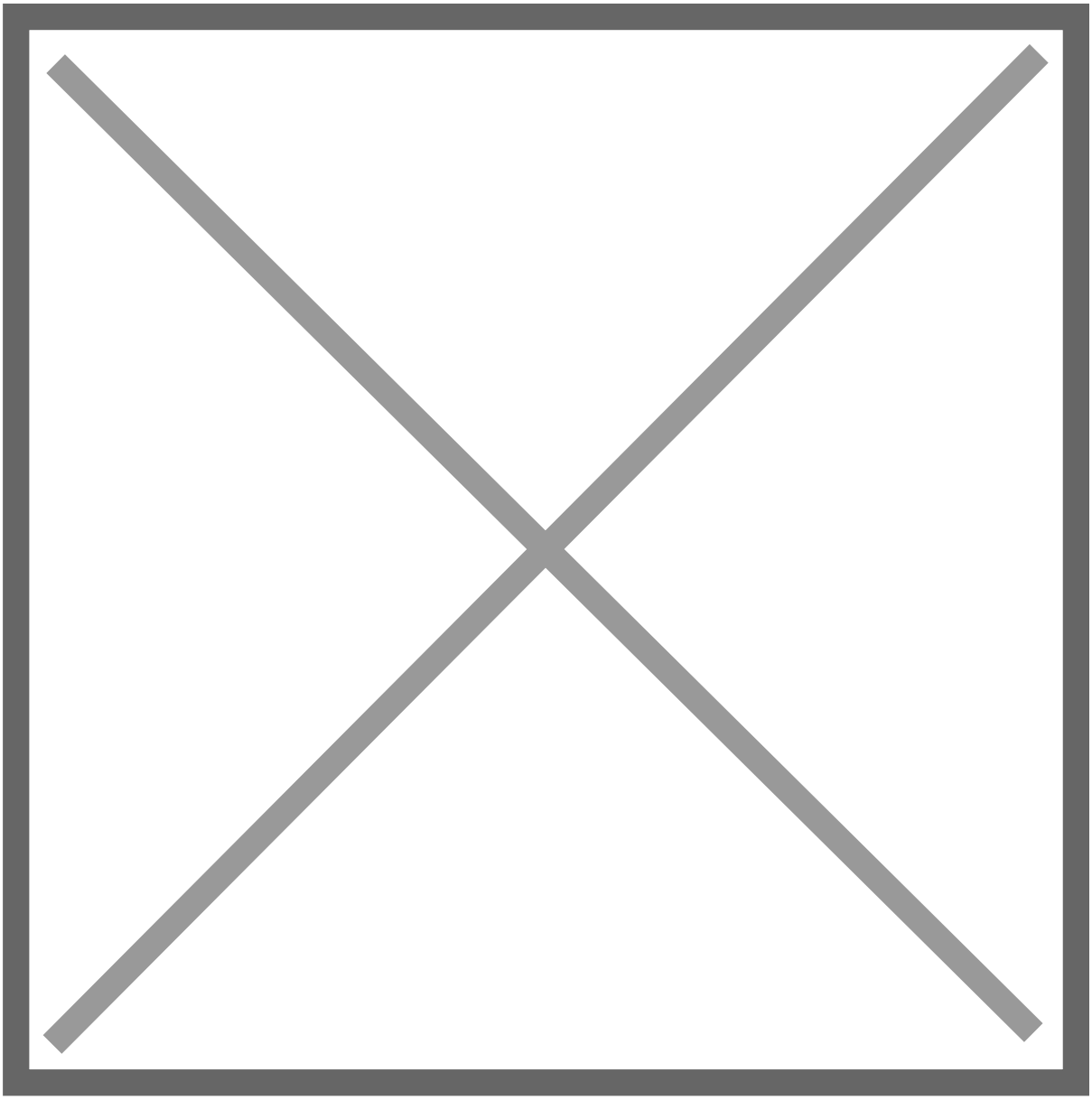
Unlike the MP Host, the third party plugin will not be automatically displayed on the MP Controller's screen but it will retain its original position.

Note that when pushing/clicking buttons on the Ableton MPH will cause the plugins window to be hidden and this is because Ableton hides plugin windows when clicking outside Ableton.

If you are trying to control plugins that do not automatically report all of their parameters to Ableton when first loaded, then you will not be able to control those plugins. It's preferable that you use the MP Host to control these devices.

Most plugins do report their parameters but there some that still do not report them.

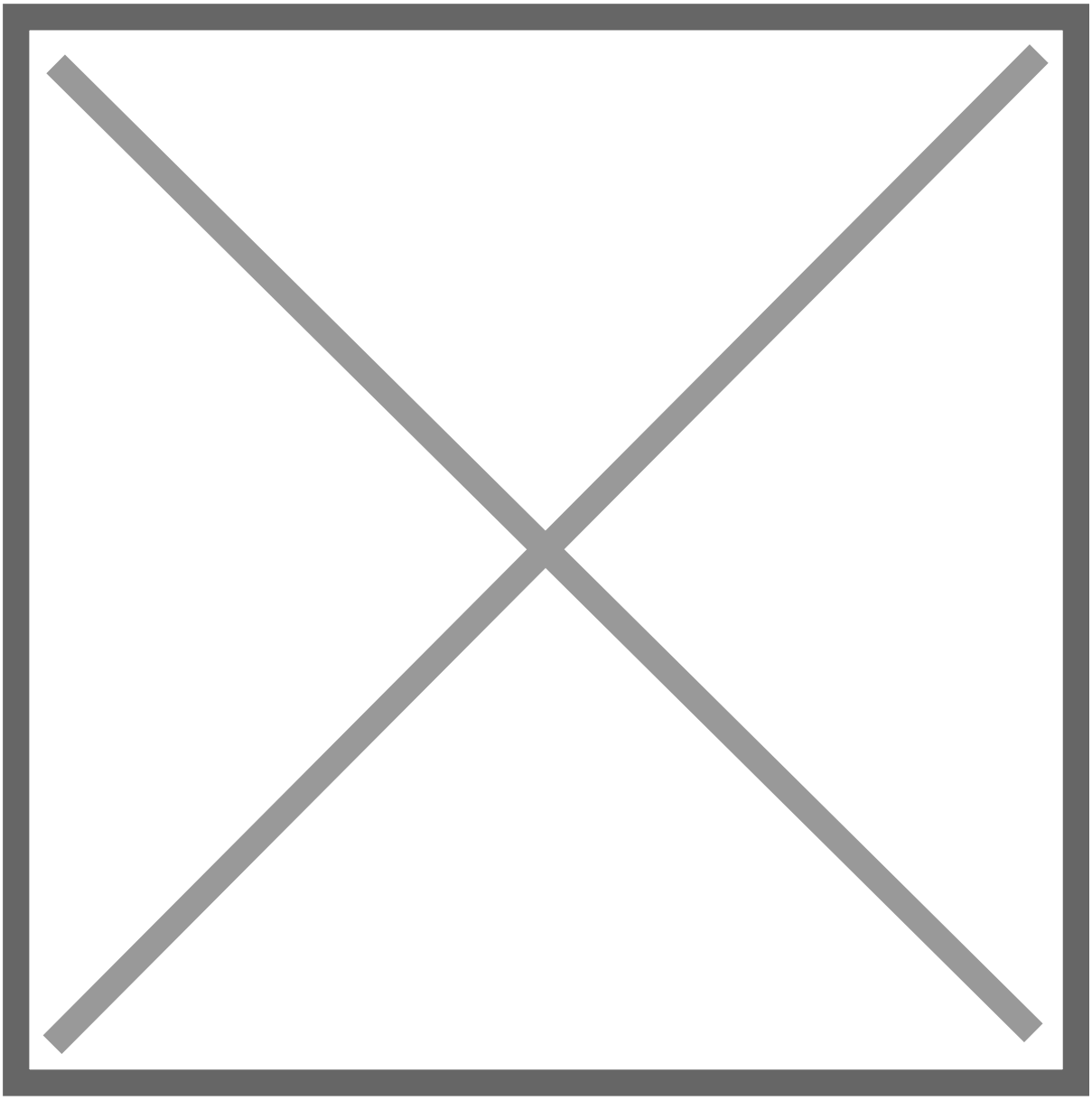
The reason that will not be able to control these devices is because the next time you load that plugin the parameters will be missing (and you will have to click the Configure button in Ableton to reconfigure all the parameters. The parameters will need to have the added one by one in the same order as when saved in the AbletonMPH preset.



Learn from Encoder to control multiple encoders from a single hardware encoder

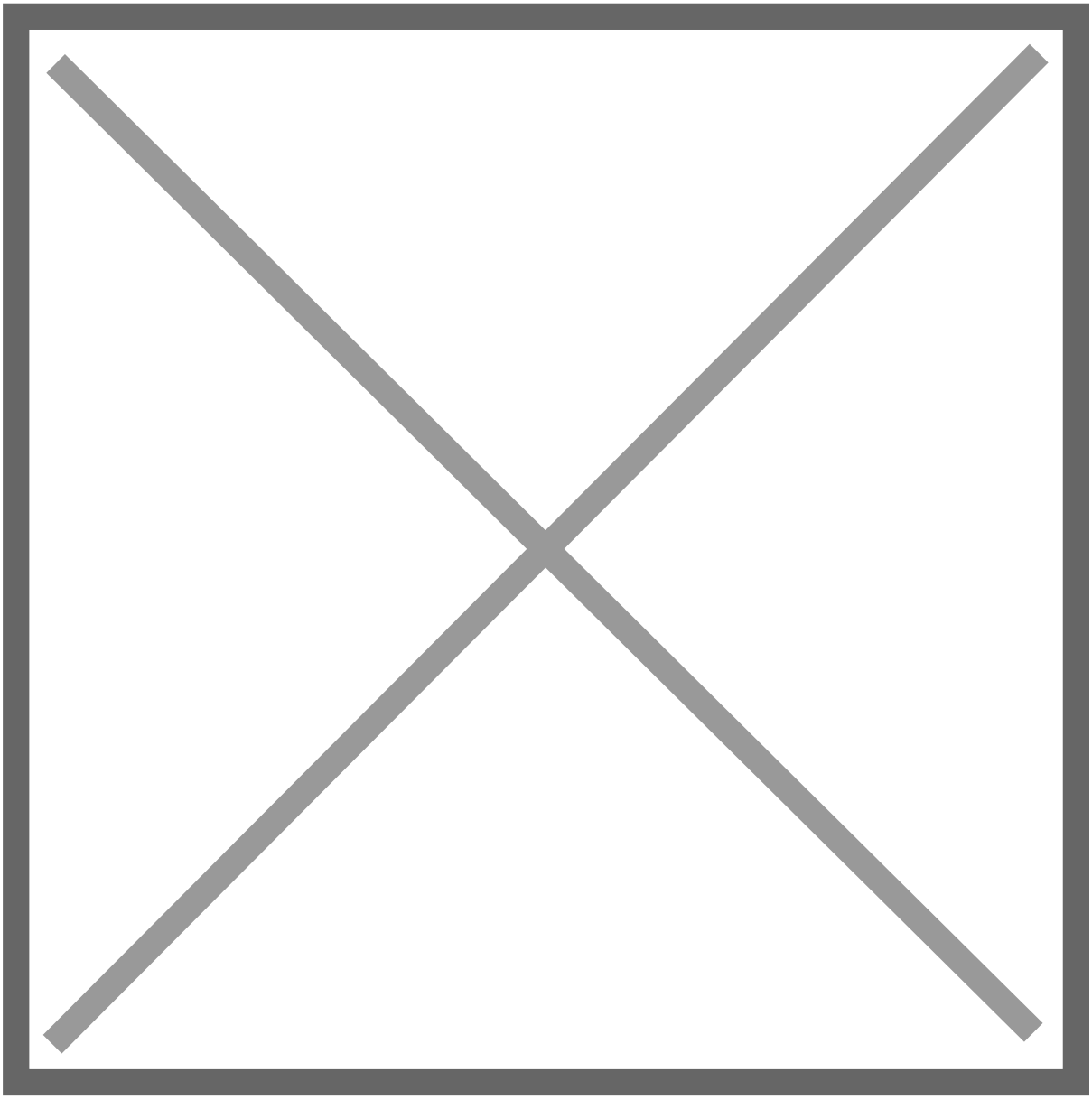
This option allows you to link one hardware encoder to other software encoders and control multiple encoders with one hardware encoder. This is the same functionality as on the MP Host plugin.

Click on the LEARN FROM ENCODER button and then click on an encoder, other than the one you want to use for control. Then move the hardware encoder. The hardware encoder now controls both software encoders. In the same way you can link more encoders.



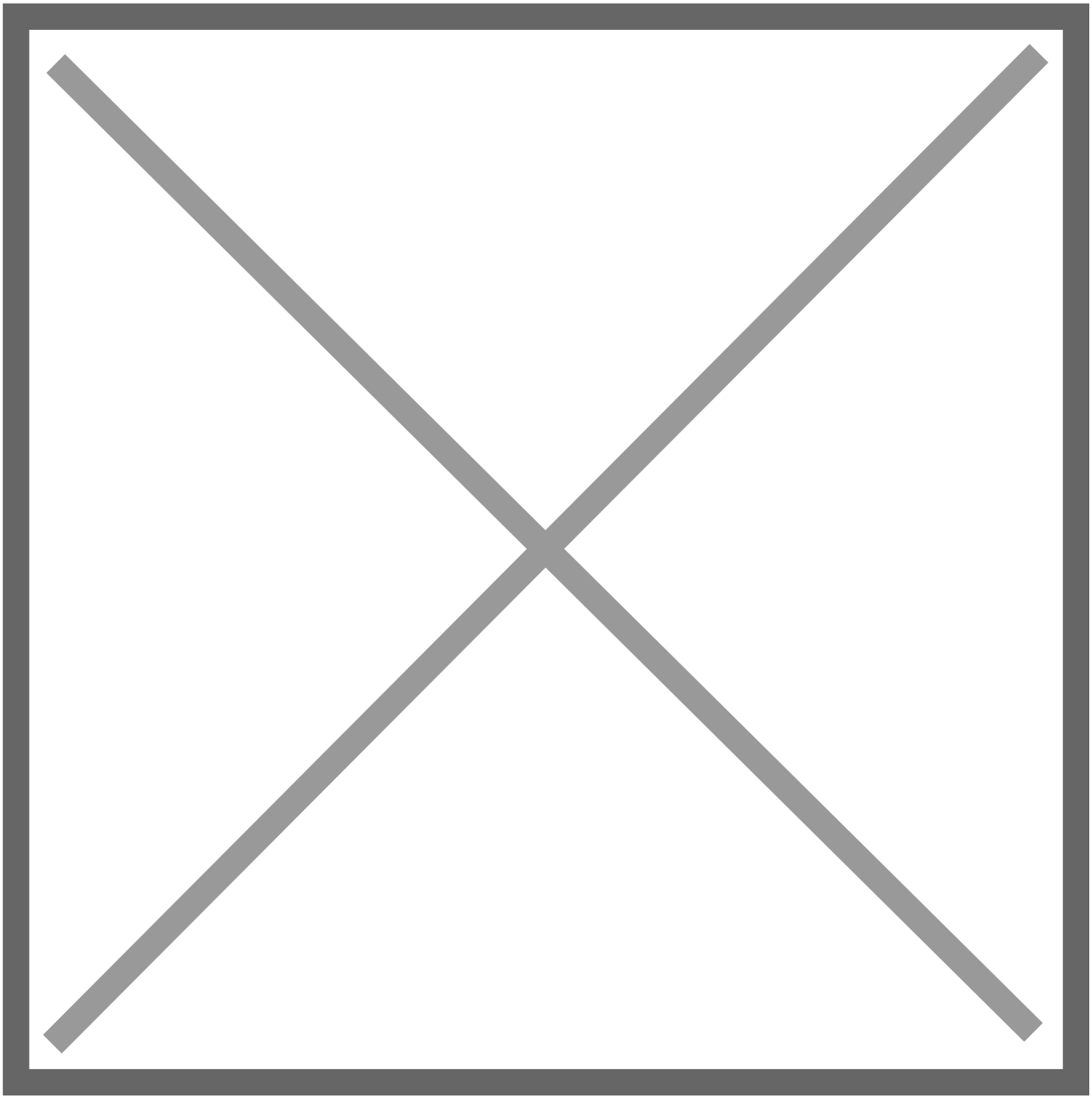
High Resolution Button

The Hi Res button located on the bottom right of the big window allows you to temporarily select a higher resolution factor for the encoders. The right button allows the selection of the factor from 2 to 10 and the left button enables/disables the function. This setting is saved in the MPH xml presets.



Chains in racks

Note that Ableton Live does not report Chains in racks as devices, so these cannot be controlled with the controller. However, the devices inside Chains can be detected and controlled.



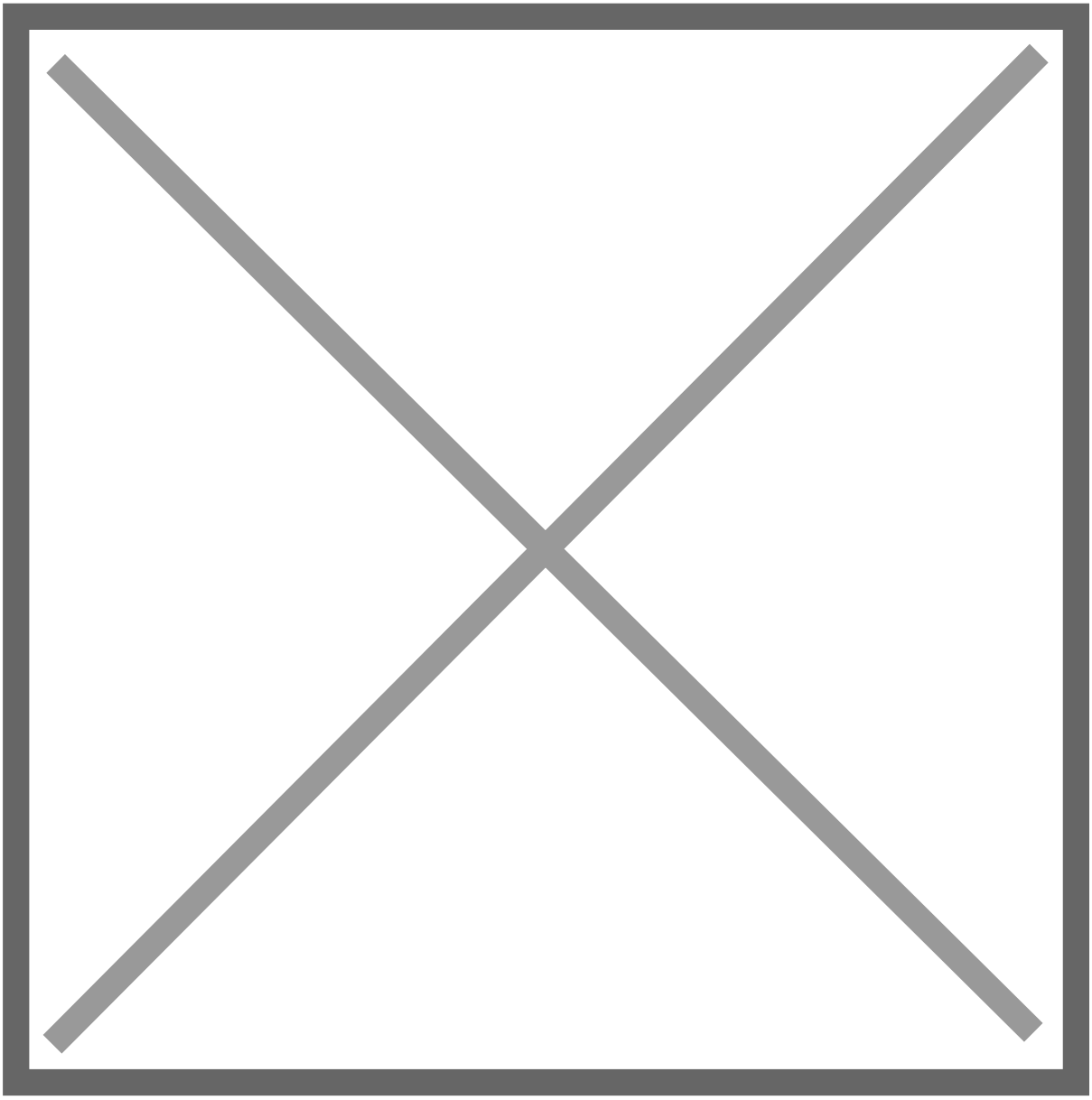
Moving Devices on a track

The Ableton MPH controls the devices by their index. This index is the order of devices in Ableton Live on a track.

Therefore, when you are in Manual mode (for selecting a device) and you move a device (chan and at the same time you are controlling that device (you have it open on the MP Controller), you will notice that the device will be replaced by the device that is now at the position (index) of the previous device.

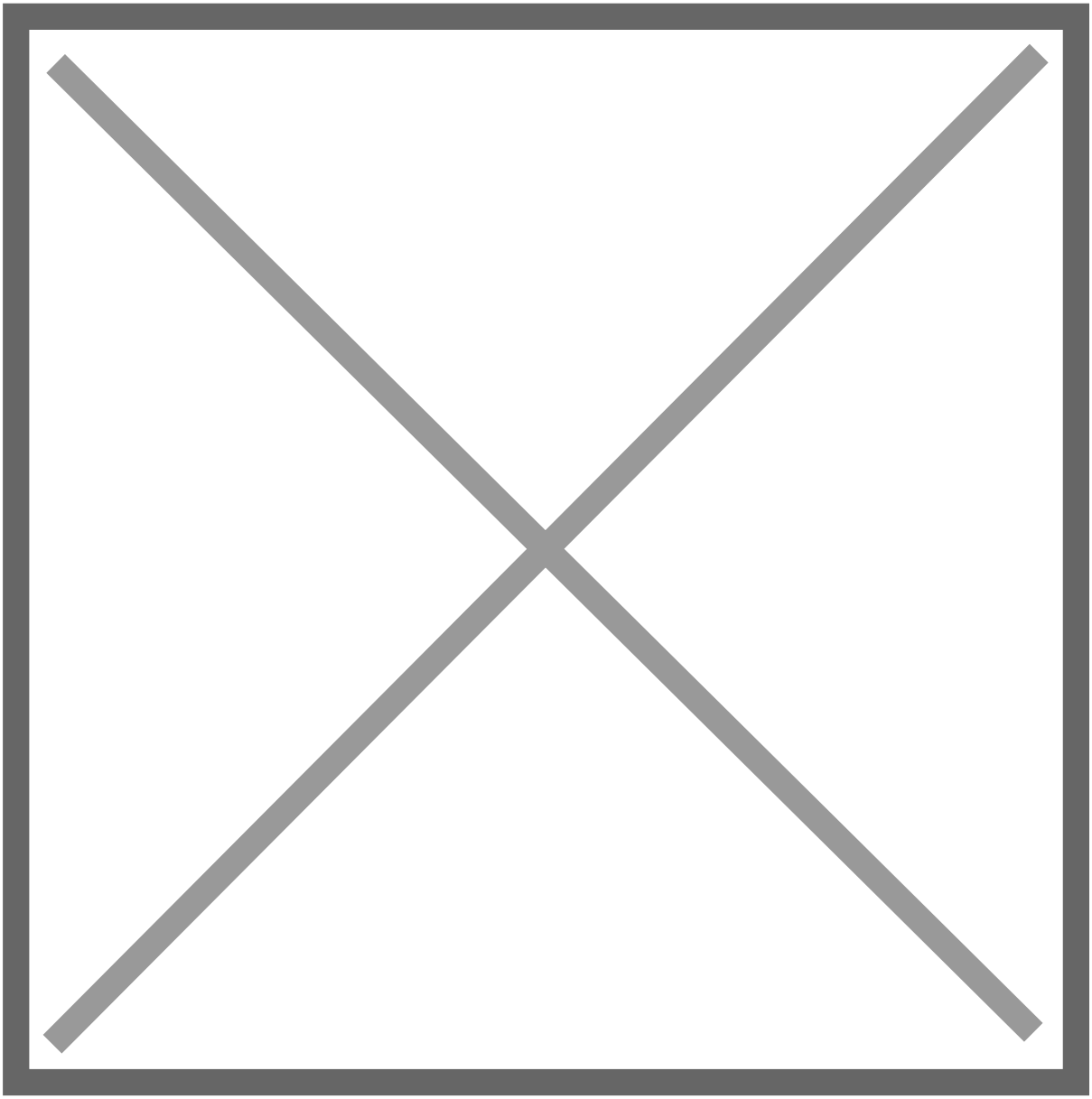
For example, you have the Delay and then EQ8 devices on a track. You are controlling the Delay device. You drag the EQ8 before the Delay. Now the MP Controller displays the EQ8 instead of the Delay.

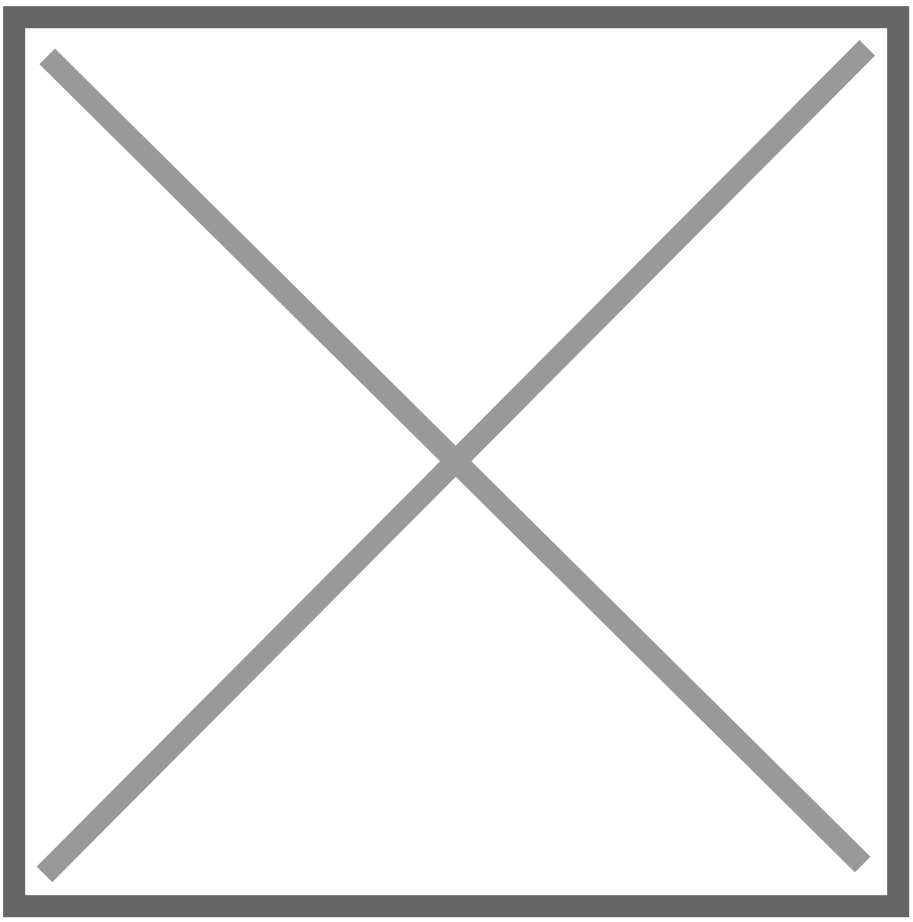
However, if you have the Auto option selected, then it will automatically go to the selected Device, which is Delay.



UPDD Configuration for holding down buttons

This configuration enables buttons that are held down for some time to increment/decrement values.





Revision #1
Created 26 April 2025 07:01:14 by Admin
Updated 26 April 2025 10:38:46 by Admin