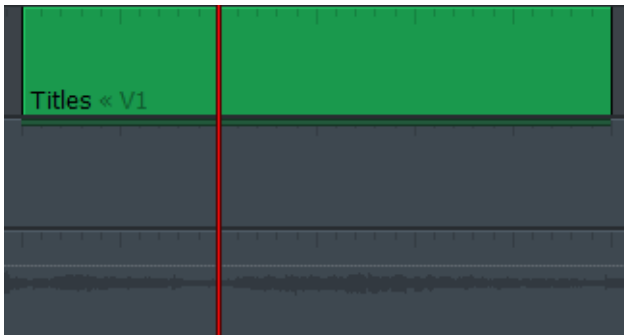## SETTING UP ALPHA TRANSITIONS

With a Lightworks title effect you can set up up the text, font style and size and apply a limited range of decorative effects. The title will cut on or cut off, type on, or fade on or off. But that's it. This tutorial will help you expand on that somewhat limited range of transitions.

The alpha transition effects are a special class of effect designed to circumvent the inability of a transition to be applied to titles in Lightworks without affecting the background. Using them is just a little more complex than using a standard transition. This will guide you through the process, assuming no previous knowledge. For the purposes of this demonstration we will use Ax_Sine.fx – an alpha sine mix effect. The screen grab on the left shows a title effect with the cursor parked where we want the sine mix to end.

Press the "c" key to force a cut in the effect at that point. Note that all other layers are disabled, and that only the effect track that we wish to apply the effect to is active. You don't have to be terribly precise at this stage, because you can always trim the position later. Once you have made your cut, if everything has been done correctly, the screen grab (right) shows what you should have. If yours doesn't look like this, undo and try again – it's easy to skip a step or miss something when working through things the first time round.
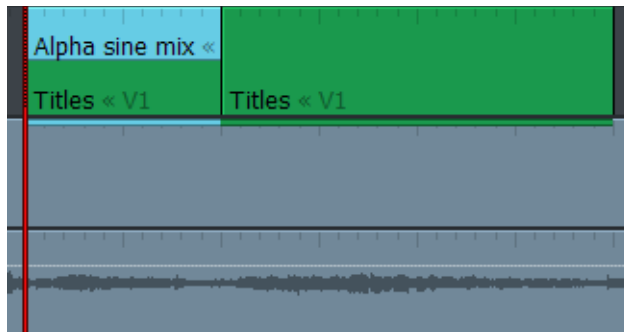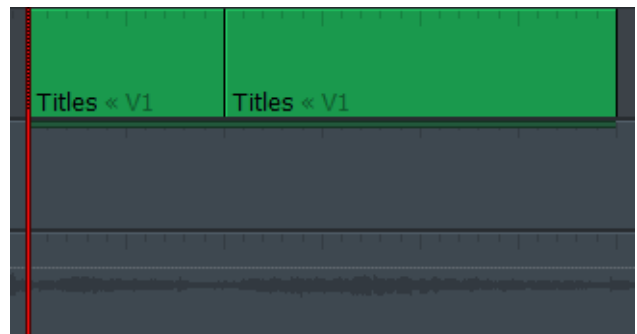
Add the effect that you wish to use to the section of the timeline where you want the transition to be – in this case the start of the title. At this point the timeline should look exactly like the screen grab on the left. If instead it looks like a dissolve transition, undo it and move your cursor away from the very start of the title – even a single frame away will do. Then add the effect again. While it's possible to set this up if Lightworks believes that it's a transition, it can make the routing messy to deal with.

You will notice that at the moment the alpha transition does not work as you would have expected it to. It's also changing the background along with the title. This is because Lightworks always feeds the title effect with the background to which it is to be applied and performs a compositing operation to combine the title with the background. Fortunately there is an extremely simple routing change that can be made to fix this. Open the routing panel. All of these examples show the routing laid out horizontally, but yours may be vertical. It doesn't matter – the principles remain the same. You should now see something like the screen grab.
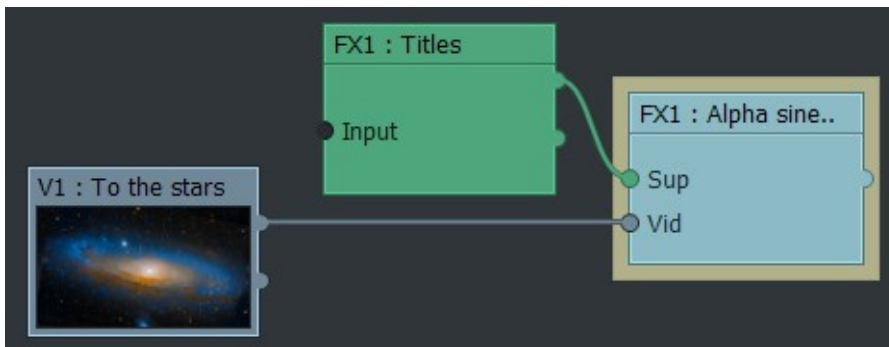
As you can see from that screen grab the effect can clearly only operate on the combined title and background. You need it to operate on the title alone, so you will need to first remove the input from the title effect before going any further. You should end up with the routing shown in this screen grab.

In the settings panel there are a few adjustments unique to this class of effect. The first and most important is always right at the top of any Lightworks alpha transition, and corrects for the fact that we are no longer using Lightworks internal compositor to blend the title with the background. This normally won't need adjustment when used with a Lightworks title, roll or crawl because it defaults to the correct setting but it always pays to check. Only if you are using a graphic, image effect or video with transparency would you need to select "Video/External image" instead.
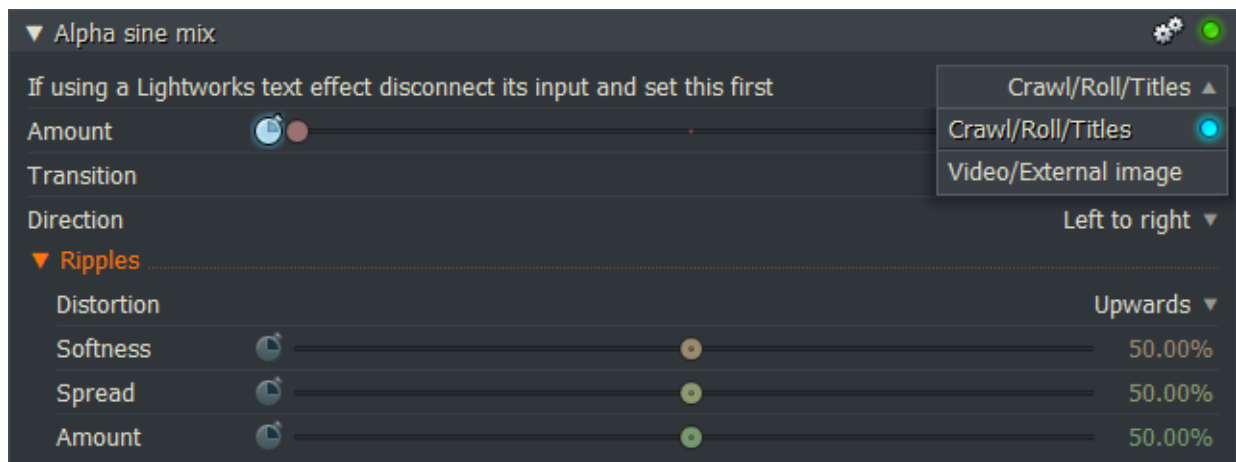

The other important setting is labelled "Transition" and selects the transition mode. This defaults to fade or wipe in. In this example that's exactly what we want, but if you were doing a fade or wipe out you would need to set it to fade out (or in this case, wipe out).
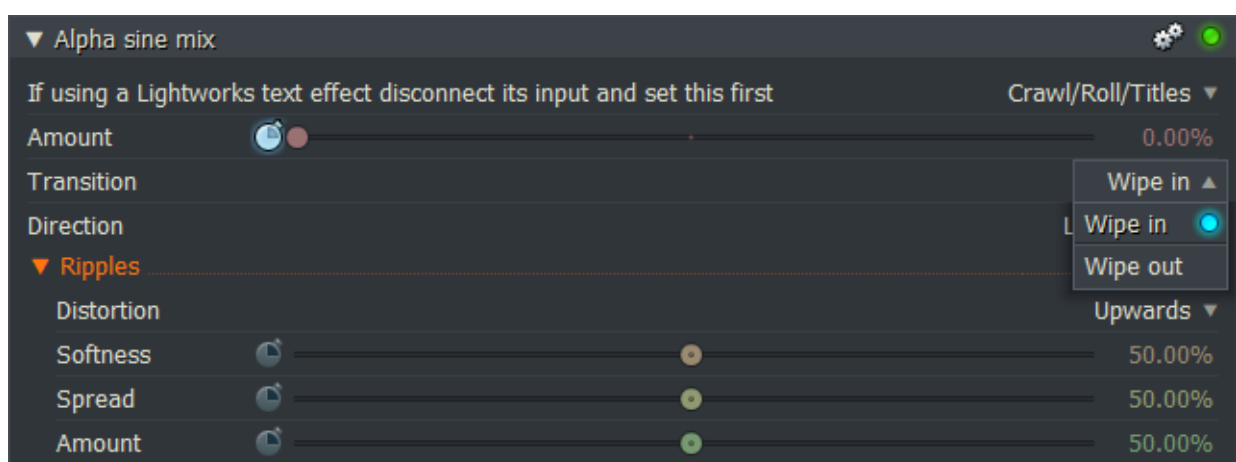
Make any adjustments that you need to your effect. The settings available will vary from transition to transition, so you will need to play a little to find out what they can do for you. The one setting that you shouldn't touch unless you really have to vary the linearity of the transition is the "Amount" setting. That corresponds to the same setting in Lightworks' dissolve effect. You normally wouldn't touch that either.
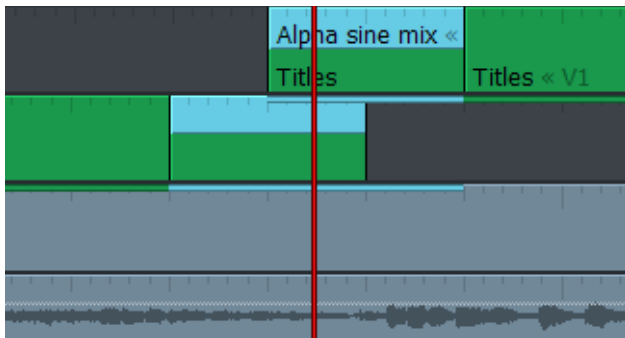
Previous versions of the alpha effects also supported dissolving between titles. That function has been removed. It was felt that it added complexity both operationally and from the programming perspective, and really didn't contribute much to the effect. That means that you now need two of them when creating an alpha dissolve. Set up the titles, add the effects, and adjust the routing. The screen grab below shows the routing needed. The process is simpler and much more flexible than with the earlier effects.
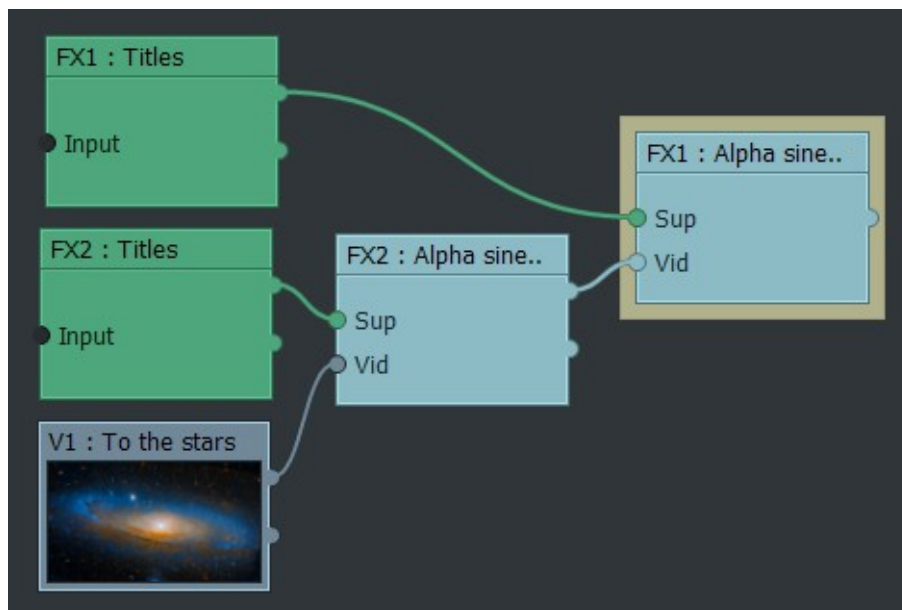
Finally, if you're using an image effect, an image key effect or any form of video or graphic super, the process is identical with two important exceptions. You must remove any blend effects used with the transition, and as explained earlier, select "Video/External image".