

Manic Compressor

User's Manual



Intro

Thank you for installing Manic Compressor. We have found that ever since being able to fully control our parallel compression, it has opened up a new world of possibilities with what compression can do. We created this plugin because we wanted everyone to have the chance to use compression in this same way, without having to completely change their workflow. We hope that you enjoy this plugin as much as we do.

System Requirements

This plugin was crafted to be as light as possible on your CPU, enabling you to put this on many tracks without eating up your processing power. For Mac, you must be running OSX 10.5 or greater. For windows, you need Windows XP or greater.

Available Formats

This plugin is available in both 32 and 64 bit versions of each format (except RTAS, which is 32 bit only). It is available in the following formats:

Mac	VST2, VST3, AU, RTAS, AAX Native
Windows	VST2, VST3, RTAS, AAX Native

Background

Thank you for purchasing Manic Compressor. Manic Compressor is designed to give you a new perspective on what can be accomplished through compression. It uses the same controls that are standard on compressors, but lays it out in a format that makes it possible to take full advantage of the power of parallel compression, and allows you to really get character out of the compressor without killing your dynamics.

The Controls

For quick reference, Manic Compressor provides a short description of each control when you hover your mouse over any knob or button. This manual will give you a more in depth understanding of what these controls do.

Header Bar



Presets

Manic Compressor comes equipped with it's own preset menu. To save a preset, just hit the save icon next to the preset menu, type the name of the preset and hit *enter*. If you enter a name of an existing preset, the old preset will be overwritten.

Presets can be organized into sub menus by sorting them into folders in your finder/explorer window. Note that the preset menu only supports one layer of sub folders, so if you put presets inside a folder that is inside a folder, the preset scanner will not find them.

Presets are sharable across formats, computers and operating systems. This means that if you save a preset in your DAW in OSX, you can send that preset file to a friend who uses a different DAW on Windows and it will work exactly the same.

Next to each preset control is a "Reset" button, which resets the controls to their default settings.

For convenience, you can scroll through the presets by hitting the next/previous buttons.

A/B Bank: This lets you quickly compare different settings in the plugin without losing your knob settings. As you make changes to the knobs on the plugin, those changes are saved into whichever bank is selected. Switch banks to change all the values to what is stored in the other

bank. Note that when you first open the plugin, all changes are stored to both banks until you switch banks for the first time.

Sidechain Source - Selects whether the sidechain comes from the internal audio track, or an external sidechain source. Note - External sidechain is currently not available in AAX format. We will update the plugin when we have this working.

Sidechain Listen - This button lets you listen to the sidechain instead of the compressed signal. This includes any EQ effects applied in the Sidechain EQ section.

M/S - This is a quick Mid/Side panner that can be used as a simple stereo widener. This is designed to be used to fix any mid/side level discrepancies that can occur when the compressor is in Mid or Side mode.

Stereo Mode - This gives you the option to control how the compressor reacts to the stereo input channels.

- **Dual Mono** - The left and the right channels are treated as separate audio streams being run into separate compressors. For example, if you have a loud signal on the left but a quiet signal on the right channel, only the left channel signal will be compressed. This can result in a more transparent compression, but may cause slight panning modulation if the left and right channels are significantly different from each other.
- **Stereo** - Links the gain reduction to take place the same on both the left and the right channels, even if only one channel is loud enough to cause compression. This results in a more cohesive compression.
- **Mid** - The compressor will only compress the mid channel of the stereo signal, and leave the side channel unaffected. This can be useful as a bus compressor to target the sounds in the center channel (typically kick, snare, bass and vocals, etc).
- **Side** - Like Mid mode, but the compressor only affects the side channel, leaving the mid channel unaffected. This can be useful as a drum bus compressor to prevent the wide sound from becoming too loud.

Note: Both Mid and Side modes can have a tendency to change the width of the stereo field. If the change is too drastic, you can use the M/S knob to correct that.

Compressor Section



Drive - This knob controls the input gain to the plugin. It also provides analog saturation as you increase the gain. No saturation will be applied when the drive is on 0dB.

Attack - Controls how fast the compressor will clamp down on the signal after it rises above the threshold. Lower attack times mean faster and harder compression.

Release - Controls how fast the the compressor goes back to normal volume after it drops below the threshold.

Note: Manic Compressor lets you adjust the attack and release times all the way down to 0ms. When both knobs are at 0ms, the compressor essentially becomes a distortion unit. Play with the attack and release times at values very close to 0 and you can get some very interesting distortion effects. Holding shift while adjusting the knobs will let you make smaller adjustments.

Threshold - Controls the level at which the compressor will begin to kick in. When the incoming level rises above this value, the signal will start to compress.

Ratio - Controls how hard the compressor will kick in after the incoming signal crosses the threshold. 1:1 means no compression, 100:1 means maximum compression.

Loud Relief - This knob allows the compressor to loosen its grip on some of the louder signals coming in. This works really well for allowing some dynamics to come through naturally while still applying heavy amounts of compression.

Tip: I personally like to use this knob as kind of a ratio control. Instead of using the ratio knob to set how hard the compressor will work, I like to set the ratio at 100:1, and then use the Loud Relief knob to lighten the compression a bit. This lets the character of the compressor really dig into your sound, but maintains the soft compression that you get

from low ratios.

Knee - Controls how smooth the gain reduction curve is around the threshold. Use this to add some subtle compression before the signal actually hits the threshold.

Beef - This changes the way the compressor reacts to the incoming signal. Thick applies a more hefty compression on higher frequencies, which works well for reducing sibilance in vocals. Thin lets the compressor crack a little harder.

Compressor Mode - Manic Compressor comes with 6 different compression modes. Each mode uses a different method of detecting the input signal level and deciding how to respond to it. You can think of them as 6 completely different compressors that all have a very different character from each other. Being able to switch through the compressors quickly should help you to quickly find the best compressor mode for your audio. On some sources, the difference between compressor modes will be subtle. On other sources, it will be drastic.

Clean - This provides quick transparent compression. This mode works well when you need to control the dynamics, but don't want too much of the compressor's character affecting your sound.

Sheer - Sheer is more sluggish to react to transients, similar to an opto style compressor. This sluggishness allows transients to peak through a bit more before it has a chance to clamp down.

Gritty - This one doesn't joke around. It has a fast but punchy attack, and a fast release that gets back to its steady state in the most direct way it can. This one sounds great for adding punchy compression to drums.

Digital - This one is an interesting beast. Use this one if you want a compressor that really pumps. It also works extremely well as a parallel compressor for adding punch to drums.

Vintage - This compressor emulates a vintage hardware. It works especially well when you want to have a slow attack without letting too much transient sound through. It tends to work harder on the transients than it does on steady state sounds, which gives it a great natural attack for vocals and drums alike.

Smooth - Similar to Vintage mode, Smooth mode treats transients quite a bit differently. This lets you have slower attack times and heavier compression without the huge change in dynamics. Where this compressor really shines is in its smooth release curve. It works incredibly well for smashing drum rooms without getting a distorted release, even at fast release times.

EQ Sections

Manic Compressor comes with separate control over the sidechain and “wet” eq. These eq controls can be accessed by clicking on the S-Chain and Tone buttons in the bottom left corner of the graph section.

Both the Sidechain and the Tone section come with their own preset manager. You can use these presets to save and load presets that only affect the Sidechain and Tone controls. This allows you to save and share your favorite Tone and Sidechain EQ settings without having to reset all your compressor settings.



Sidechain EQ - This EQ effects the sidechain of the compressor. What this means is that as you adjust the sidechain EQ, you won't hear the EQ directly affecting your audio. Instead, it will affect only what the compressor level detector hears. You can think of it as adjusting how sensitive the compressor is to certain frequencies. As you boost a frequency, the compressor will clamp down harder when those frequencies are present. If you cut a frequency, the compressor will be less sensitive to that frequency.

Tone EQ - This 3 band EQ affects the audio that you hear. This EQ is especially useful for use in parallel compression.

Tip: When using the Tone EQ in a parallel compression setup, you can pretty much throw out all the rules you have learned about how to properly use EQ. Try extreme settings and blending it in with the dry signal for some truly unique sounding compression.



Post/Pre - This control sets whether the Tone EQ is applied before or after the compressor. This can drastically alter the sound of your compressor.

Tone Signal Application - This selects which part of your signal chain the Tone EQ effects.

When set to wet, it only affects the wet signal, leaving the dry signal unaltered. When set to Dry, it only affects the Dry signal, leaving the wet tone unaffected. When set to Wet+Dry, it affects both the Wet and the Dry signal paths.

Fader Section

Rather than just give you a mix knob, Manic Compressor gives you a full on set of faders for maximum control over your parallel compression. This allows for a more detailed and intuitive control over your parallel compression.

Wet - Controls the level of the Wet signal.

Wet On - Enables/Disables the wet signal.

Dry - Controls the level of the Dry signal.

Dry On - Enables/Disables the Dry signal.

Master - Controls the master output level.

Wet/Dry Mix - When this button is enabled, the Wet and Dry faders act as mix knobs instead of separate faders. As you change the level of one fader (Wet or Dry), it automatically adjusts the level of the other fader so that the output remains a consistent level.



Credits

Plugin concept and design: Boz Millar
Graphic design: Marcus Valsecchi

Thank you

A quick thank you is in order for everybody who helped out making this plugin. Thank you to all of our beta testers who had to put up with all the changes we made since the first demo. A huge thanks to the CockOS team (<http://www.cockos.com/>) and Oliver Larkin (<http://www.olilarkin.co.uk/>) and Tale (<http://www.martinic.com/combov/>) (I don't even know his real name) for putting together a great set of tools for creating plugins, and putting up with all our stupid questions.

Contact

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