Introduction

This manual describes the features and operation of the Pulsar Smasher effect processor. To be sure you understand how to use your plug-in and understand all the subtleties, please read it in its entirety.

The information contained in this manual is believed to be correct at the time of publication. However, if an error has unfortunately crept into its contents, please let us know.

IMPORTANT: The prolonged use of amplified instruments, speakers or headphones may cause permanent hearing loss. Ensure you monitor your exposure level, and take regular breaks. In case of tinnitus or suspected hearing loss, please consult an ENT specialist.
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Welcome

Our experience

Thank you for choosing Pulsar quality!

With more than 15 years’ experience in plug-in development for the biggest names in the industry, we decided to create Pulsar to push the quality requirements of our products even further.

For each product, our quest for excellence requires us never to rest on our technical achievements, and to expand our knowledge ever further.

Sound and science

With solid expertise in audio signal processing, but also in electronics, sound techniques and music practice, we take great care in modeling all the small details and imperfections of analogue equipment that make the difference between a « mathematical » sound result and rich, living and musical processing, and we produce this famous « 3rd dimension » sound that is in such demand.

In addition, our close collaboration with music production professionals requires us to be rigorous in order to produce professional quality tools.

Our user interfaces

The user interface of a plug-in is the link between the creative drive and the technical implementation; it must therefore be clear, intuitive, and as pleasant as possible to use. We take great care to create the most beautiful and fluid interfaces possible, with an emphasis on intuitiveness.

The search for the right equipment

We carefully modeled this processor on a real analog compressor unit in excellent condition.

The Pulsar Team
The « British Mode »

The 1176 is a vintage FET (field effect transistor) compressor. Based on an internal feedback configuration, these designs are known to be fast and colorful, capable from soft limiting to heavily saturated tones.

The original 1176 compressor has 4 selectable ratios. But it just so happens that all 4 buttons can be pressed at the same time, this is called “all buttons mode” or “British Mode”. Although probably an unanticipated feature, this mode has become very popular because of its distorted, explosive and highly compressed sound.

While prototyping FET compressor algorithms, we found a digital modification that could be made to the algorithm that models the British Mode, that adds definition to the low-frequency transients and makes the sound more aggressive.

Based on this idea, we developed the Pulsar Smasher, a very easy to use plug-in, consisting of an extreme and aggressive compressor, ideal for raising the level of ambiances in a drum bus, but also for adding presence to vocals, or warming up guitars or basses.
Quick start

Installation

The Pulsar Smasher is available as a plug-in in VST2, VST3, AU and AAX formats for use with all major DAW software such as Live, Cubase, Logic, Pro Tools, etc.

Installation from the supplied installer is automatic. The installer takes care of copying the different plug-ins as well as presets, manual, etc. into the appropriate locations.

Note: If you are using the VST2 format in Windows, you will be asked by the installer to specify the installation folders for the 32-bit and 64-bit VST2 plug-ins respectively. The paths that seem most appropriate for your computer will be recommended by default, but we advise you to check them before completing the installation. If the plug-in is not installed in the same folder as your other possible plug-ins, your DAW software may not detect it.

Activation

All our plug-ins are protected by PACE's iLok system. For correct operation, we recommend you ensure that you have the latest version of the « iLok License Manager » software, available for free download at www.ilok.com.

They require:

- either an iLok 2 / iLok 3 hardware USB Key (which you can order online or buy from your music dealer)
- or a permanent internet connection on your workstation (iLok Cloud system)

Important: If you choose the iLok Cloud system, it is necessary first of all to open a Cloud session on your computer by going to the « File > Open Cloud Session » menu of your iLok License Manager. If you choose an iLok 2 or 3 key, it is necessary to connect it to your computer before any operation.

When you purchase your software, you will receive:

- either a license deposited directly onto your iLok account. Just go to the « Available » tab and drag it to the destination of your choice (here CLOUD for a cloud license, or iLok_Pulsar for an iLok 2 or 3 key)
• or an activation code. Simply paste it into the « Licenses > Redeem Activation Code » menu to receive the license on your account, and drop it off at the destination of your choice (CLOUD or iLok 2 or 3 key).
The user interface

The user interface consists of 2 separate panels:

- The toolbar, common to all Pulsar plug-ins (top)
- The control panel, specific to the Pulsar Smasher plug-in.

Use of parameter controls

The parameter control knobs have several modes of use:

- The normal editing mode (use a classic mouse drag, or the mouse wheel)
- The fine editing mode (hold the Ctrl or Cmd key while dragging or while using the mouse wheel, or drag with the right mouse button)
- The « return to default value » mode (double-click)

The Toolbar

Located at the top of the plug-in interface, it contains all the functions relating to parameters, presets, communication with Pulsar, etc.
Undo / Redo

The 2 arrow buttons on the left of the toolbar have the function Undo and Redo, i.e. respectively the cancellation and restoration of the last action. All parameter changes and more generally the state of the plug-in are stored in a history. You can click on « Undo » at any time to return to the previous state (or to the nth previous state) and on « Redo » to return to the current state.

Note: a right-click on one of these buttons gives access to the list of stored operations.

The undo / redo buttons
Preset Selection

The preset selection area, located in the center of the bar, allows you to:

- Read the name of the current preset. If an asterisk appears after the preset name, it means that the state of the plug-in no longer corresponds to the saved preset.
- Select a preset from the list of available presets, arranged in sub-banks.
- Delete the current preset («Delete Preset» option).
- Rename or move a preset to another sub-bank («Move / Rename Preset» option).
- Set the current preset as the one that will be loaded by default when creating a new instance of the plugin («Set This Preset As Default» option).
- Quickly navigate between the presets to find inspiration, using the left and right arrows.

Save / Save As

The Save button saves the current preset.

The Save As button saves the current state of the plug-in under a new preset name.
A / B

This section allows you to compare 2 different states of the plug-in, or 2 different presets. Slots A and B, accessible through these 2 buttons, represent 2 completely independent states.

For example, when state A is active, you can load a preset and/or make settings from the interface, then click on button B; then load another preset and/or make other settings; buttons A and B now allow you to quickly switch between the two states and easily compare the 2 presets or sets of settings.

It is also possible to copy the state A to B or vice versa using the > or < buttons located between A and B.

... Button

The button located on the far right of the bar encompasses various options:

- Setting the oversampling. Oversampling allows sound to be processed at a higher sampling rate within the plug-in, in return for higher latency and CPU consumption. Oversampling is disabled by default, as all Pulsar products use advanced technologies that allow in most cases to do without oversampling, with no compromise on quality.

- Enabling / disabling the help balloons

- Access to the website

- Access to social media

- Access to communication with technical support

- Link to this user manual
The control panel

The Smasher's control panel is inspired by the «blue stripe» version of a famous hardware machine, but with a reduced number of controls.

Bypass

The Bypass switch toggles between the sound processed by the plug-in (Active mode) and the unprocessed input sound (Bypass mode).

Input

The Input knob adjusts the gain that is applied to the input signal from -24 dB to +24 dB. This parameter must be chosen according to the sound level of the track you are processing, and according to the desired effect. The higher this gain, the greater the effects of compression and saturation (or even distortion) will be.
The Input knob

Output

The Output knob adjusts the gain applied after the compression stage. This is not a digital gain applied at the output of the plug-in, but a model of the compressor output stage: above a certain level, increasing this potentiometer will induce saturation.

The Output knob

Mix

The Mix knob is used to dose the amount of compressed signal (100%) and unprocessed original signal (0%). It will be very useful given the aggressive nature of the Smasher: indeed on many sources where using 100% would be too extreme, it is still possible to use the Smasher using a small percentage of Mix.

The Mix knob
Minimum Configuration

This plug-in is compatible with all major sequencers on the market (Cubase, Nuendo, Pro Tools, Logic Pro, FL Studio, Ableton Live, Bitwig, Digital Performer, Studio One, Reaper, Adobe Audition...)

Available formats:

- VST 2.4 (Windows: 32/64-bit, Mac: 64-bit only)
- VST 3 (Windows: 32/64-bit, Mac: 64-bit only)
- AAX (Windows: 32/64-bit, Mac: 64-bit only)
- Audio Unit (64-bit).

Windows

CPU: Intel Core i3 / i5 / i7 / Xeon / AMD Quad-Core

Memory: 4 GB RAM / 1 GB free disk space

Operating system: Windows 7 and higher

GPU: OpenGL 2.0 compatible GPU

Screen resolution: minimum 1024×768 / recommended 1280×1024 or 1600×1024

Mac OS X

CPU: Intel Core i3 / i5 / i7 / Xeon

Memory: 4 GB RAM / 1 GB free disk space

Operating system: 10.10 – 10.15

GPU: OpenGL 2.0 compatible GPU

Screen resolution: Minimum: 1024×768 / recommended: 1280×1024 / 1600×1024
License agreement

This license agreement concerns and describes your rights and the conditions under which you may use your Pulsar software. We recommend that you read the entire agreement. By accepting the present agreement or by using Pulsar software, you accept all these conditions.

This license agreement applies to all Pulsar software, plug-ins and programs that you may use during the evaluation period and/or thereafter subject to the acquisition of a license, for any version, update, or supplement.

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Updates

This license gives you the right to all minor updates (e. g. 1.1 to 1.2), but excludes major versions (e. g. 1.x to 2.x).

License transfer

You may transfer all your rights to use the Software to another person provided that you transfer this Agreement and the Software to that other person; and that the recipient accepts the terms and conditions of this Agreement and any other provisions pursuant to which you have acquired a valid license to use this Software.

Activation

Pulsar will not be held responsible for any failure to activate PACE’s iLok protection system / license.
Evaluation

Pulsar offers a 30-day trial license, starting at the time of transfer of the license to an iLok key. After expiration, the plug-in can no longer be used, and in the event that no permanent license is acquired, it must be deleted.

Third Party Software

VST is a registered trademark of Steinberg Media Technologies GmbH. AAX is a registered trademark of Avid Technology, Inc. Audio Units is a registered trademark of Apple Computer, Inc.

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