

Alchemist

FLUX:: Immersive

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1 Alchemist - The Alchemist concept

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At first, the wideband signal is split into frequency bands by a slope adjustable cross-over.

Each band is individually processed for dynamic. For every frequency band, every dynamic processing section, the compressor, the de-compressor, the expander and the de-expander features its own envelop generator including Dynamic Ratio, Peak amount parameters, L.I.D. (Level independent Detector) and its threshold adjustment. For every frequency band, a transient manager can be inserted pre or post dynamic processing. To achieve a total control on the audio signal, a MS management is available on every frequency band.

Then all the frequency bands are summed to rebuild a wideband processed signal. A soft clipper featuring a threshold for soft knee, and a dry mix control are available.

Alchemist gathers in a single plug-in all the Flux science about filtering and dynamic processing.

Part I

General Settings and Display

This section manages the wide band behavior of the Alchemist plug-in. It also controls the number of band of the processing (27) and the selection of the band setting panel (22).



2 General Settings

2.1 Input Gain (1)

Unit: dB

Value Range: -48 / +48

Step: 0.

Default Value: 0 dB

Sets the gain applied to the dynamic processing input.

2.2 Dry Mix (2)

Default Value: -144 dB

This slider controls the amount of the original signal that can be added to the processed audio. This feature is dedicated to mastering works requiring both heavy processing and subtle control.

The mix is done before the output gain.

2.3 Output Gain (3)

Unit: dB

Value Range: -48 / +48

Step: 0.

Default Value: 0 dB

Sets the global gain applied to the dynamic processing output before the soft clipper.

2.4 Invert Phase (4)

Default Value: Off

When this button is engaged, the phase of the processed signal is inverted.

2.5 Enable Clipper (5)

The Clipper is the very last stage of the processing chain.

2.6 Clipper Knee (6)

Unit: dB

Value Range: 0 / +3

Step: 0.

Default Value: 1 dB

Sets the smoothness of the transmission curve.

2.7 Clipper Ceiling (7)

2.8 Bypass (8)

It's a global bypass.

2.9 Channel Processing Selector (9)

When operating on a multi-channel (surround) bus, all channels are processed by default, but it can be useful to remove some channels from the processing for some reasons. This selector allows to keep the unchecked channels untouched. This feature may be used if different settings are required. Several instances of a plug-in can be used in series, each one processing a particular channel with its own settings.

2.10 Channel Side Chain Routing (10)

When operating on a multi-channel bus, all channels are feeding the side chain by default, but it can be useful to prevent some channels feeding the side chain for some reasons.

2.11 Band Selector (11)

The frequency band selection is done here.

It can also be done from the main display area.

2.12 Number of Band Control (12)

The Minus and Plus buttons allow to specify the number of frequency bands of the Alchemist from 1 to 5.

2.13 Reset Solo (13)

This button disables all engaged band solo.

3 General Display

Windows :

Right-Click on the selected band accesses a specific contextual menu allowing to reset band(s) or copy the band parameters to another band. An Auto Solo feature can be accessed when pressing the Ctrl key + Click on the desired band.

MacOS :

Right-Click or Ctrl + Click on the selected band accesses a specific contextual menu allowing to reset band(s) or copy the band parameters to another band. An Auto Solo feature can be accessed when pressing the Command (Apple) Key + Click on the desired band.

3.1 Input Peak Meter (14)

3.2 Output Peak Meter (15)

3.3 Link display (16)

The bands can have their parameters linked. Right-Click on the main display allows access to a contextual menu. Modifying a setting of a linked band also modifies this setting for all linked bands.

3.4 Band Gain Handle (17)

The band display reflects both input and out gains.

The handle trims the output gain.

Shift + Click trims the input gain.

Double-Click reset the output gain to the default value.

3.5 Band Frequency Handle (18)

Shift + Click enables fine trimming

Right-Click changes the filter slope

Double-Click resets the frequencies to the default values.

3.6 Global Band Handle (19)

Double-Click resets the frequencies to the default values.

Ctrl + Click auto-solos the selected band.

3.7 Band Activity (20)

It reflects the applied gain but also take account of the gain modification introduced by the Bitter Sweet section.

3.8 Low Pass Filter Frequency (21)

The value can be entered using the keyboard or the slider control.

Dragging the band handles is also possible from the main display.

3.9 Low Pass Filter Slope (22)

The value can be entered using the keyboard or the slider control.

Shift + Dragging the band handles is also possible from the main display.

3.10 Hi Pass Filter Slope (23)

The value can be entered using the keyboard or the slider control.

Shift + Dragging the band handles is also possible from the main display.

3.11 Hi Pass Filter Frequency (24)

The value can be entered using the keyboard or the slider control. Dragging the band handles is also possible from the main display.

3.12 Preset Manager Access (25)

Access to the preset manager's window.

3.13 Loaded Preset Display (26)

A star signals a modified preset.

3.14 Save (27)

Save replaces the selected preset by a new one under the same name featuring the current settings. If you want to keep an existing preset without your new modifications, just select an empty place into the preset list, enter a new name for this modified preset featuring the current settings and press Save.

3.15 Recall (28)

Once a preset is selected from the preset list it must be explicitly loaded into section A or the section B by using the recall button. A preset is effective only after it has been recalled.

3.16 Copy A / Copy B (29)

The current parameters of a section are copied to the other one. The section A or B is re-initialized with the current values and the morphing slider is parked at 100% of the corresponding section.

3.17 Morphing Slider (30)

This horizontal slider has no unity nor specific value display. It allows to morph current settings between two loaded presets. Double-click on one side of the slider area toggles between full A and full B settings.

The results of an in-between setting can be saved as a new preset.

A global preset including the two loaded presets and the morphing slider position can also be saved from preset management window.

3.18 Automation Control of the Morphing Slider (31)

Default Value: Off

When this button is disabled, all the plug-in parameters values are recorded when writing automation. The morphing slider is ignored.

When reading automation, if this button is disabled, all the plug-in parameters are controlled by the host automation except the morphing slider.

When this button is engaged, all parameters are recorded when writing automation uncluding the morphing slider.

When this button is engaged, ONLY the morphing slider value is applied when reading automation.

The Automation button must be engaged if the morphing slider has to be mapped on a control surface.

Part II

Bands Settings and Display

The main parameters of the band are gathered on this panel. Alt + Click temporarily unlink the control when the band is linked.



4 Band Settings

4.1 Band Solo (32)

Solo the selected band(s)

4.2 Selected Band Reminder (33)

4.3 Band Bypass (34)

Bypass the selected band.

4.4 Link (35)

Default: Enabled

By default the maximum value issued from all channels feeding the side chain is retained as source for processing. This manner, the space information is kept for the processed multi-channel signals.

When disabled, every channel uses its own value for individual processing. This configuration may be used in conjunction with the MS width section which encode the signal in MS before processing, and decode at the output. This manner, the M signal can be processed while keeping the S channel untouched.

4.5 Input Gain (36)

Unit: dB

Value Range: -12 / +12

Step: 0.01

Default Value: 0 dB

Sets the gain applied to the dynamic processing input of the selected band.

4.6 Output Gain (37)

Unit: dB

Value Range: -12 / +12

Step: 0.01

Default Value: 0 dB

Sets the global gain applied to the dynamic processing output of the selected band.

4.7 Bitter Sweet On/Off (38)

When engaged, the Bitter Sweet processing is active.

4.8 Transient Amount (39)

Unit: %

Value Range: -100 to +100

Default Value: 0

On the Sweet side (left), transients are reduced. It usually decreases percussive instruments in the mix.

On the Bitter side (right), transients are magnified. It usually increases the percussive instruments in the mix.

4.9 Post Band Processing (40)

When engaged, the Bitter Sweet processing is done after the dynamic processing. Otherwise, it's done before the other processing sections which are working in parallel.

4.10 Auto Gain Compensation (41)

When engaged, the output gain is compensated depending of the transient amount to produce an almost unity gain.

4.11 Bitter Sweet Sustain Release (42)

This control sets the release time for the transient envelop.

4.12 Operation Mode Selector (43)

Main processes using regular stereo signal scheme and it is the only available mode for multi-channels operations. Center engages internal MS encoder and processes only the Mid channel. After processing the sound is decoded back to stereo. Since the M channel usually features more enregy than the S channel, this mode allows to easily control the impact of the sound.

Stereo engages internal MS encoder and processes only the Side channel. After processing the sound is decoded back to stereo. Since the S channel contains the spatial information, this mode allows to easily control the stereo imaging.

4.13 Bitter Sweet Period (44)

Unit: ms

Value Range: 3 to 450 ms

Default Value: 42 ms

This control sets the range of the time window used to detect transients that will be processed.

4.14 MS Width Control (45)

Unit: dB

Value Range: -6 / +6

Step: 0.01

Default Value: 0

Sets the stereo width of the processed signal. A -6 dB value deceases the stereo width. A +6 dB value increases the wideness of the stereo mix but can produce phase issue.

4.15 MS Mode On/Off (46)

Default Value: Off

Enables one MS encoding matrix at the input and one MS decoding matrix at the output of the dynamic processing in order to control the stereo width of the mix. When engaged, the side chain is fed by a MS encoded signal that is reflected in the display section. The M channel corresponds to the normal left channel. And the S channel corresponds to the normal right channel. This feature is only available when two channels (no more, no less) are processed.

5 Time Related Settings

5.1 Delay (47)

Unit: ms

Value Range: 0 to 50.0 ms

Default Value: 0 ms

A delay reflecting the attack time can be introduced into the signal path in order to produce a zero attack time for the dynamic processing. Shifting the delay value from the attack time allows to control transients. A delay value inferior to the attack value lets peaks untouched by the processing.

Note that the different delay values of every band are automatically compensated.
Solera can't be used to produce delay based special effects.

!> Warning: Morphing between presets with different delay values produces sound artefacts.
Of course this delay introduces latency in the processing.

5.2 Auto Delay (48)

Default Value: Off

When enabled, the delay value is linked to the attack value. Be aware that the latency introduced by this function is now equal to your attack time dived by 2.

5.3 Mode (49)

Default Value: Solera

8 different detection modes are available: - Solera: The Attack setting also controls the integration time for RMS detection. When "Auto" is engaged for the delay value, the produced attack time is zero. - Solera Feed Backward: The Attack setting also controls the integration time for RMS detection which is done on the output of the processor. This mode disables the Delay feature. Note also that the Solera Feed Backward prevents to use the external side chain

because it's the processed signal which feed the side chain. - Classic Fast: The integration time for RMS detection is 10 ms with no direct relation with the Attack setting. But when "Auto" is engaged for the delay value, the produced attack time is zero. - Classic Medium: The integration time for RMS detection is 40 ms with no direct relation with the Attack setting. But when "Auto" is engaged for the delay value, the produced attack time is zero. - Classic Slow: The integration time for RMS detection is 80 ms with no direct relation with the Attack setting. But when "Auto" is engaged for the delay value, the produced attack time is zero. - Classic Feed Backward Fast: The integration time is 10 ms for RMS detection which is done on the output of the processor. This mode disables the Delay feature. Note also that the Feed Backward mode prevents to use the external side chain because it's the processed signal which feed the side chain. - Classic Feed Backward Medium: The integration time is 40 ms for RMS detection which is done on the output of the processor. Note also that the Feed Backward mode prevents to use the external side chain because it's the processed signal which feed the side chain. - Classic Feed Backward Slow: The integration time is 80 ms for RMS detection which is done on the output of the processor. Note also that the Feed Backward mode prevents to use the external side chain because it's the processed signal which feed the side chain.

These Feed Backward modes have been inspired by vintage hardware architectures. they create a sort of auto regulation of the processing which produces a naturally beefy sound.

5.4 Attack (50)

Unit: ms

Value Range: 0 ms to 100 ms

Default Value: 0.0 ms

Sets the attack time of the processing envelop. It also controls the manner the RMS value is computed from the incoming signal.

!> Warning : The Attack setting also controls the integration time for RMS detection.

5.5 Hold (51)

Unit: ms

Value Range: 0 ms / 500 ms.

Default Value: 0 ms

This parameter is the only one in the time related settings, that is independent per dynamic processor. The compressor and the expander may have different hold time.

Used in the Expander section, this setting allows very precise gating of drum tracks. It can also be used for creative purpose on the other dynamic sections.

5.6 Release Mode (52)

Default Value: Auto

Three release modes are available for the envelop of the dynamic processing. - Manual corresponds to the value you have set. - Auto enables our specific algorithm to generate a signal dependent value to avoid typical pumping effects. - Advanced gives access to two different values for release and to the control of the velocity of the variations between the maximum and the minimum release values.

5.7 Release (53)

Unit: ms

Value Range: 0.67 ms / 10000.00 ms

Default Value: 500.00 ms

Sets the manual release value and the maximum release value when in Advanced Mode.

5.8 Release Minimum (54)

Unit: ms

Value Range: 0.67ms / 5000.00

Step: 0.01

Default Value: 1.30 ms

Sets the minimum release value when in Advanced Mode.

5.9 Dynamic Factor (55)

Unit: x

Value Range: 0 / 3.0

Step: variable.

Default Value: 1

Amplify or dim the extracted real time dynamic informations.

5.10 Dynamic Velocity (56)

Unit: %

Value Range: 10 / 1000

Step: 1

Default Value: 50%

Sets the speed of variation on the dynamic informations.

6 Band Display

6.1 Input Level Meter (57)

Vu-meter not peak-meter, referenced to -16 dB Fs by default, with auto scale depending of the threshold values. When the MS Width section is engaged, the M (Mid) level is displayed on the left meter. S (Side) is displayed on the right meter.

The green index reflects the threshold value.

6.2 Output Level Meter (58)

Vu-meter not peak-meter, referenced to -16 dB Fs by default, with auto scale depending of the threshold values. When the MS Width section is engaged, the M (Mid) level is displayed on the left meter. S (Side) is displayed on the right meter.

6.3 Resultant Envelop (59)

Vu-meter not peak-meter, referenced to -16 dB Fs by default.

The scale is +/- 12 dB.

This is the compression, decompression, expander and de-expander summing envelop.

This display doesn't directly reflect the gain changes introduced by the Bitter Sweet section which can be placed pre or post parallel dynamic processors.

6.4 Dynamic difference between in and out (60)

Vu-meter not peak-meter, referenced to -16 dB Fs by default.

The scale is +/- 12 dB.

This display doesn't directly reflect the gain changes introduced by the Bitter Sweet section which can be placed pre or post parallel dynamic processors.

6.5 Level difference between in and out (61)

Vu-meter not peak-meter, referenced to -16 dB Fs by default.
The scale is +/- 12 dB.

This is the compression, decompression, expander and de-expander summing envelop which also takes account of the input and output gains of the band.

This display doesn't reflect the gain changes introduced by the Bitter Sweet section.

The Bitter Sweet action can be observed on the main display.

6.6 Dynamic Activity Display (62)

No scale

The current L.I.D. Threshold value is reflected by two green lines on the Dynamic Activity display.

For Compressor and DCompressor sections, the L.I.D. action is effective only when the orange Dynamic Activity exceeds the area between the two green lines.

For Expander and DExpander sections, the L.I.D. action is effective only when the orange Dynamic Activity stays inside the area between the two green lines.

6.7 Instant Release Value (63)

Auto Scale depending of the release value(s)

6.8 Resulting Transfer Curve (64)

Auto Scale depending of the threshold value(s)

Part III

Dynamic Sections Settings and Display

Every band features four dynamic sections working in parallel.

Alt + Click temporarily unlink the control when the band is linked.



7 Dynamic Sections Settings

7.1 Peak Detection Amount (62)

Unit: %

Value Range: 0 / 100

Step: 1

Default Value: 0 %

Percentage of the instant peak value used to feed the detector section, making the dynamic processing more sensitive to audio transients.

0 % means 100 % RMS signal feeding the detector section; 100 % means only peak signal is feeding the detector section. 50 % = fifty - fifty

7.2 Dynamic Ratio (63)

Unit: %

Value Range: 0 / 100

Step: 1

Default Value: 0 %

This setting relaxes the ratio applied to the processor section when the detected signal dynamic raises.

This setting literally opens the sound, increases the dynamic impression and keeps some crest by adjusting in real time the ratio of every dynamic processing section regarding both their current settings about ratio and the signal content (mainly dynamic range). To start understanding this setting and easily hear it, take a full mixed drum kit or a complete mix with punchy drums, set the compression threshold, ratio to get something near pumping or an aggressive compression.

Then increase the output gain to compensate the gain lost and then toggle between 0 and 100% of Dynamic Ratio. At 100 % you should hear more air in the sound, more transient and less compression impression; especially in terms of attack.

7.3 Dynamic Ratio Inverter (63)

When engaged, the behavior of the Dynamic Ratio is inverted. The ratio value is increased depending of the detected signal dynamic.

7.4 L.I.D.. (Level Independent Detector) (64)

Unit: %

Value Range: 0 / 100

Step: 1

Default Value: 0 %

Allows process the audio signal independently of the sound level but regarding the signal dynamic range. It is mixed with the standard compression scheme.

Take a piece of full mixed music, set the ratio to 3-4 and the compression will start working. Now set the threshold of the compressor to the maximum value, the compressor will stop working because the sound level will never reach the threshold. Then increase the L.I.D.. and you will see (and hear) the compression working again!!! Now decrease or increase the input gain (in Solera or before, as you want) and you will see that the compression will continue to work equally; it's totally, completely independent of the sound level and depends only on Ratio, Knee and sound content. How can this be used? When you have too much dynamic in the sound, going for e.g. from -3, -6 dB Vu (or less) to +12 dB; If you want to compress the low levels you will hear the sound "pumping" when the sound reaches the High levels and the only thing to do with standard compressor will be to increase the threshold to rescue some airiness in the sound. But when doing that the compressor will not work any more on the low levels and you will hear some sound differences (in term density, live space, grain etc...) especially when the compressor starts working. With Solera L.I.D.., adjust the threshold and ratio on the High levels to what you think OK, then increase the L.I.D.. (from 20 to 50 %) and listen now the low levels and especially the transition between Low and High levels. You can also start increasing the ratio to increase the effect. You'll then notice that the compression will always be active but can still take care of High, loud levels (unless you set 100% L.I.D..) and make the compression very smooth and no more pumping... In addition with the Dynamic Ratio function, you'll be able to set a constant and very natural envelop that allows to increase low levels, low frequency and to keep important transients.

7.5 L.I.D.. Threshold (65)

Sets the gain range of the L.I.D. parameter. - Up: Increasing of the L.I.D. action - Down: Decreasing of the L.I.D. action

The current L.I.D. Threshold value is reflected by two green lines on the Dynamic Activity display. > For Compressor and DCompressor sections, the L.I.D. action is effective only when the orange Dynamic Activity (18) exceeds the area between the two green lines. For Expander and DExpander sections, the L.I.D. action is effective only when the orange Dynamic Activity (18) stays inside the area between the two green lines.

7.6 L.I.D. Maximum (66)

When engaged, the threshold for the processing is determined by the maximum values from RMS/peak detection OR from the signal dynamic detection. The L.I.D. Threshold is still active, but the L.I.D. mix button is disabled. This feature allows the whole process to be more reactive to the signal content. It worth to be tried on drum tracks.

7.7 Threshold (67)

Unit: dB

Value Range: -32 to +16 (Compressor/DCompressor) -80 to +16 (Expander/DExpander)

Default Value: 0

Sets the threshold of the specific dynamic processing section. This dB scale refers to an RMS value.

The threshold effective value is modified by the L.I.D., the L.I.D. Threshold and, the L.I.D. Maximum settings.

7.8 Ratio (68)

Unit: dB

Value Range: 1 to 10

Step: 0.01

Default Value: 1

Sets the ratio of the specific dynamic processing section.

The ratio effective value is modified by the Dynamic Ratio amount.

7.9 Infinite (69)

Sets the ratio to its maximum possible value.

7.10 Range (70)

Unit: dB

Value Range: 0 to 48/140/24/16 (Compressor/Expander/DCompressor/DExpander)

Default Value: 24/96/12/

Sets the maximum allowed gain variation for a specific dynamic processing section.

7.11 Knee (71)

Unit: dB

Value Range: 0 / +24

Default Value: 0

Sets the smoothness of the transmission curve for the specific dynamic processing section. The curve is smoothed around the threshold value of the dB amount set with the knee value.

7.12 Dynamic Section On/Off (72)

Activates the specific section.

7.13 Compressor Section Selector (73)

7.14 DCompressor Section Selector (74)

7.15 Expander Section Selector (75)

7.16 DExpander Section Selector (76)

8 Dynamic Sections Display

8.1 Dynamic Section Activity (77)

12 dB scale

The gain is displayed from left to right for gain increase, the gain is displayed from right to left for gain decrease.

Part IV

Specifications

Processing Specifications - Alchemist

- Up to 16 channels Input/Output for Essential version.
- 64-bits internal floating point processing.
- Sampling rate up to 384 kHz DXD (Pyramix and Ovation MassCore/Native).
- Sampling rate up to 192 kHz for Native (AU/VST/VST3/AAX/AAX AudioSuite).

Processing Specifications - Alchemist Session

- Mono/Stereo Input/Output.
- 64-bits internal floating-point processing.
- Sampling rate up to 96 kHz.

Compatibility

BitterSweet Pro

- **Windows - 10 64 bits.**
 - VST (2.4) in 64 bit
 - VST (3.1) in 64 bit
 - AAX Native/DSP* in 64 bit
 - AAX AudioSuite* in 64 bit
 - Waves WPAPI Native/Soundgrid in 64 bit
 - VS3** Pyramix 10 and more in 64 bit and Ovation 6 and more
 - Avid Venue Systems
- **macOS (Intel and ARM) - 10.12 and more, 11 and 12.**
 - VST (2.4) in 64 bit
 - VST3 (3.1) in 64 bit
 - AU in 64 bit
 - AAX Native/DSP* in 64 bit
 - AAX AudioSuite* in 64 bit
 - Waves WPAPI Native/Soundgrid in 64 bit
 - Avid Venue Systems

** VS3 for Pyramix & Ovation Native/MassCore sold only through Merging Technologies and authorized dealers.

Licence Requirements

In order to use Alchemist or Alchemist Session, an iLok.com user account is required (the iLok USB Smart Key is not required).