
attention gear whores - COMPRESSORS

Posted by - 2006/07/25 12:33

I must say I feel at home here, when it comes to gear whoring especially everyone has good taste

so with that I was wondering what the whore-collective have to say on the topic of compressors ? without knowing too much about the topic, I'm thinking to either go for a focusrite model or an aphex.com model...when I got the cash.

any recommendations?

Re: attention gear whores - COMPRESSORS

Posted by uct - 2006/07/25 15:31

The experiense I have had with compressors is that to get extra punch on drums and perc etc. the best result is by using OPTO Compressors. (used SC2.2, Cwejman S2, TLAudio FATMAN, softs in Fireworx, MD and Nord Modular) I sure like the Joemeek SC series. Talked to "Automatic panic" about what compressor he used: a Focusrite ISA220 and it sounded pretty damn good. Don?t know if it?s an OPTO though.

Re: attention gear whores - COMPRESSORS

Posted by zart - 2006/07/25 15:36

Compression is like a black hole - the more you got into it the deeper it gets. I reckon it completely depends on what kind of signal you want to put through it. Having worked for a big rentals company, I got to play with untold quantities of top end compressors and can tell you this. Very few compressors are good all-rounders and the sonic character they may impart onto a lead vocal may do nothing at all for your synth line.

Empirical's Distressor is a beautiful fx style compressor, but you may find that a drum machine through a cheap Alesis 3630 is exactly what you need. Like I said, its weird! :-o

Re: attention gear whores - COMPRESSORS

Posted by - 2006/07/25 15:59

i see what you mean..
well I have no intention of compressing vocals.....all synths....

i got
a dave smith evolver
machinedrum
nord lead 3
moog voyager
future retro revolution
jomox mbase01
micro modular
(sherman filterbank)

so something to work well with those puppies would be swell...

Re: attention gear whores - COMPRESSORS

Posted by milkmansnd - 2006/07/25 17:08

my advice is that you probably do not need to do much compression on synths, since they are pretty much compressed already. Digital synths seem to not have a very wide dynamic range - not like a human voice or bass guitar or something

that begs for compression. Drum machines are fun to compress, but once again I think that is more of a sound designing choice - you certainly do not need to compress them.

that said, when it does come to compressing a stereo signal on a budget, I really like what the Art Pro VLA does. Sure, its a cheap optical style compressor with tubes in it that basically run of no voltage - however, its got this magical kind of sound to it, and you can also use it as a main limiter. Plus, you can find them new for under \$250

Also, I have had really good results with a pair of Dbx 163's coupled together. Those are really great sounding compressors for electronic music, and they are also quite cheap. I bet you can find them for \$40 per channel.

The EL Fatso is going to be another choice - basically its similar to the distressor but stereo for the same price. The distressor is based off of the 1176 design, just not discrete. I am not sure how different the Fatso is, but I hear that its even better than the distressor for some applications. Have not used one myself... but its on my wish list.

3630's are a little too pumpy for my taste. They do strange shit with the low end - some people like that as a flavor, I do not.

Avoid the behringer comps because they do not really do much compressing - just runing of the source signal.

A pair of Dbx 160's coupled together is pretty much the shit... so if you want to spend about \$600 I recommend that. Those will do just about anything, and they are awesome when you crank the ratio to like 10:1 and just slam things into it.

Aphex and focusrite both make pretty good gear, I have not used any of the aphex compressors - however, I used to have their limiter and that thing was amazing. At the mercury lounge in NYC I got to use a pretty nice focusrite stereo comp. That thing sounded awesome, but never worked in stereo link mode for whatever reason. Also, it got really really hot in the rack. We have to leave an empty space above it. Sounded extremely smooth though - esp on a stereo vocal bus.

ok, enough out of me... :-D

Re: attention gear whores - COMPRESSORS

Posted by uct - 2006/07/25 18:20

I found this article on the emusicians web. http://emusician.com/mag/emusic_big_squeeze/index.html
Enjoy!

Re: attention gear whores - COMPRESSORS

Posted by Toni - 2006/07/25 19:03

I've found that compressing a drummachine (I always do bus-compression) is pretty much useless if it doesn't have reverb or something other low-end signal. Individual hits just loose dynamics. If you have good spatial space (reverb) on the beat, you can get much better compression-effect. Like pumping background and stuff like that. In my case, it's more about 'designing' good signal for compressor rather than just some specific compressor. But I'm no expert on this on and don't care much of it; I usually rather limit using high ratios.

Re: attention gear whores - COMPRESSORS

Posted by divi - 2006/07/25 20:12

good topic! i'm interested in a stereo compressor that will work well on drums and an entire mix and i like tube/opto/analog/... coloring. recommendations?

Re: attention gear whores - COMPRESSORS

Posted by uct - 2006/07/25 20:37

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Joemeek SC3

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Re: attention gear whores - COMPRESSORS

Posted by env - 2006/07/25 21:37

Focusrite COMPOUNDER;really serious stuff with that 'Bass Expand' circuit

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Re: attention gear whores - COMPRESSORS

Posted by ThinkTanx - 2006/07/26 04:03

milkmansnd wrote:

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ok, enough out of me... :-D

Good post, mate. I would absolutely agree on the DBX 160's and Distressors, they are both very versatile compressors and they sound great. A new stereo pair of 160's being much cheaper. As far as the Fatso goes, it is a soft-knee compressor meant to emulate the added harmonics of analog tape, not really a full-on compressor. It sounds beautiful, but has limited controls in comparison to the 160 or Distressor. It is about \$300 cheaper than stereo Distressors, but if I had no compressor at all I would spend the extra \$300 and get the Distressors. There is a reason they are in every high-end (even mid-level) studio in the world today! They are flexible, they can be pretty transparent, or they can crunch. Get

the EL-8X with the British Mode and you can emulate the all-buttons-in-setting on the 1176 for maximum crunch.

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Re: attention gear whores - COMPRESSORS

Posted by - 2006/07/26 13:29

milkmansnd wrote:

Drum machines are fun to compress, but once again I think that is more of a sound designing choice - you certainly do not need to compress them.

hey milkman, cheers for the informative post I will do some research on your recommendations.

the 1176 has been recommended to me before, apparently its very musical and beyond compare for compressing bass...

anyone else tried it?

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Re: attention gear whores - COMPRESSORS

Posted by milkmansnd - 2006/07/26 16:55

don't forget - you can build your own 1176!

http://www.gyraf.dk/gy_pd/1176/1176.htm

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Re: attention gear whores - COMPRESSORS

Posted by zart - 2006/07/27 01:25

I do like compressors but...if your tunes are heading for any soundsystems, radios or vinyl there's a good case for pretty much no compression at all. As mentioned, synths and drum machines are dynamically very stable and here's the bit to remember - PA rigs, especially in clubs will probably be limiting +-12db multiband on anything that hits the mixer. The temptation to fatten up stuff in the studio is hard to resist but the gamble is that you remove most of the attack required to properly thump a system.

I've been quite lucky in working with a few soundsystem companies and had the chance to hear the difference between the studio monitors and 40k of Turbosound or Funktion One. All of the tunes that sounded big in the studio turned into a mush on the big systems whilst anything with a clean 808 or minimal production was just beautiful, the space really came alive.

I can live with -2db of cheap compression. Sweet.

:-D

p.s. some of the free software compressors are really rather good.

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Re: attention gear whores - COMPRESSORS

Posted by orangebud - 2006/07/27 11:50

zart wrote:

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temptation to fatten up stuff in the studio is hard to resist but the gamble is that you remove most of the attack required to properly thump a system.

Thanks for the info zart. I did not realize that, but have been of the same opinion about not using compression. As I understand it, compression is best saved for the mastering stage. Mastering is somewhat of a lost art these days. I've been told that this is the one area of production where it is worth spending the money to get done right. Compressors plural in the \$1500 range and above are needed.

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Re: attention gear whores - COMPRESSORS

Posted by Khazul - 2006/07/28 13:38

Anyone compared original hardware with the UAD-1 plugins?

Just curious as I have the UAD-1 dsp card and most of the UAD-1 plugins.

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Re: attention gear whores - COMPRESSORS

Posted by milkmansnd - 2006/07/28 16:10

orangebud wrote:

Thanks for the info zart. I did not realize that, but have been of the same opinion about not using compression. As I understand it, compression is best saved for the mastering stage. Mastering is somewhat of a lost art these days. I've been told that this is the one area of production where it is worth spending the money to get done right. Compressors plural in the \$1500 range and above are needed.

it really really depends on the source material. For example - many rock recordings will be compressed to tape, and then compressed again when mastered.

When I record live musicians, I compress just about everything. Its how I get things to sound full and rich.

However, classical recordings will have no compression on them at all traditionally - in order to preserve the subtle dynamics.

As for electronic music, I usually compress just the elements that are not from a synth or drum machine - like guitar and vocals I add.

the only rule about compression is this: experiment! You will find something you like eventually, and take it from there.

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Re: attention gear whores - COMPRESSORS

Posted by orangebud - 2006/07/30 09:46

Milkmansnd thanks for the tips. I've been doing a lot of reading, but not too much experimenting yet.

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