

# MANIAC AUDIO

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## USER MANUAL

Professional VST3 & AU plugins for producers and mix engineers  
Authentic analog modeling.

20 Plugins · VST3 / AU · Windows & macOS

[maniacaudiovst.com](http://maniacaudiovst.com)

2026 Edition

# Welcome

## GETTING STARTED

Thank you for choosing Maniac Audio. Every plugin in this manual has been built from the ground up using JUCE and C++ with one goal: to deliver authentic analog character in a modern, CPU-efficient package. No bloat, no gimmicks — just tools that sound right and get out of your way.

This manual covers every plugin in the catalog. Each entry includes a description of the plugin's character, a breakdown of its key parameters, and a practical tip for using it in real mixes.

## At a glance

<b>20</b>	Plugins in the catalog
<b>10,000+</b>	Producers using Maniac Audio
<b>Up to 8x</b>	Kaiser FIR oversampling
<b>VST3 / AU</b>	Windows 64-bit, macOS Universal Binary
<b>3</b>	Computer installs per license
<b>No</b>	iLok, dongle, or online activation required

# Installation

## WINDOWS & MACOS

### Windows

After purchase, you'll receive an email with download links for both Windows and macOS. The Windows installer is a standard .exe that places the VST3 file in the default system VST3 folder:

`C:\Program Files\Common Files\VST3\`

Restart your DAW and rescan plugins. The new plugin will appear under the **Maniac Audio** manufacturer category.

### macOS

macOS installers are signed PKG files that place VST3 and AU components in the standard system locations:

`/Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/VST3/`

`/Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/Components/`

All macOS builds are Universal Binaries — native on both Intel and Apple Silicon. No Rosetta required.

### Supported DAWs

Ableton Live, Logic Pro, FL Studio, Reaper, Studio One, Cubase, GarageBand, and any other DAW supporting VST3 (Windows) or AU/VST3 (macOS). AAX / Pro Tools is not currently supported — use Blue Cat Patchwork as a VST3 host inside Pro Tools if you need access there.

### Licensing

Each license permits installation on up to three (3) computers that you own or control. Licenses are tied to your Maniac Audio account and can be re-downloaded at any time from [maniacaudiovst.com/my-account](https://maniacaudiovst.com/my-account). No dongles, no iLok, no online check-ins. Your plugins work offline.

# Common Controls

## SHARED ACROSS THE SUITE

Most Maniac Audio plugins share a common set of controls and conventions. Learning them once means you'll feel at home in every plugin.

### Oversampling

Cycle button (1x/2x/4x or 1x/2x/4x/8x) reduces aliasing when saturation or nonlinear stages are driven hard. Adds latency — reported correctly to the DAW.

### Mix

Dry/wet blend for parallel processing. 100% is fully processed; 0% is bypass.

### Input / Output

Input drives the internal stage (and colors the sound when saturation is present). Output is clean makeup gain.

### Resizable UI

Drag the corner of any plugin window to resize. Aspect ratio is locked so the interface stays readable.

### A/B Compare

Where available, A/B lets you store two parameter states and flip between them instantly to compare settings.

### Presets

Right-click the preset name, or use the arrows, to browse factory presets. Save your own with Save As.

### DAW Automation

Every parameter is automatable and exposed to your DAW through the standard plugin parameter interface.

### State Recall

All parameter state is saved and recalled with your project through the standard JUCE APVTS system.

# Compressors

## DYNAMIC RANGE CONTROL

### Dark1176M

FET COMPRESSOR · 1176-STYLE · €30

Modeled after the legendary 1176 FET compressor. Aggressive, fast, and full of character. Feedback topology with programme-dependent release, sidechain high-pass filtering, asymmetric FET waveshaping, and per-mode tonal voicing. The SAT knob and Q control let you push harmonics from subtle warmth to all-in squash.

<b>Input / Output</b>	Drive the compressor and match output gain
<b>Attack / Release</b>	Classic 1176 timing controls
<b>Ratio</b>	4:1, 8:1, 12:1, 20:1, All-Buttons-In
<b>SAT</b>	FET saturation amount
<b>Q</b>	Per-mode tonal voicing
<b>Mix</b>	Parallel compression blend

**Tip:** Drums, bass, vocals. Try All-Buttons-In on parallel drums for aggressive room tone.

### DarkM2A

OPTICAL COMPRESSOR · LA-2A STYLE · €15

Vintage T4B opto-cell emulation modeled on the LA-2A. Slow, musical, and forgiving — perfect for vocals, bass, and anything that needs smooth, transparent level control. Switchable Limit / Compress modes, tube stage, and transformer harmonics.

<b>Peak Reduction</b>	Amount of gain reduction
<b>Gain</b>	Output makeup gain
<b>Limit / Compress</b>	Mode switch for ratio behavior
<b>Input Trim</b>	Acustica-style pre-stage drive
<b>Oversample</b>	1x / 2x / 4x cycle button

**Tip:** Set and forget on lead vocals. Chain after Dark1176M for the classic 1176→LA-2A vocal stack.

## DarkM3A

OPTICAL COMPRESSOR · LA-3A STYLE · €15

The faster, punchier cousin of the LA-2A. Same T4B opto cell, different timing. Great for guitars, drums, and anything that needs more attack preservation than the LA-2A provides.

<b>Peak Reduction</b>	Amount of gain reduction
<b>Gain</b>	Output makeup gain
<b>Input Trim</b>	Pre-stage drive
<b>Oversample</b>	1x / 2x / 4x cycle button

**Tip:** Electric guitars, snare, acoustic guitar rhythm tracks.

## DarkVComp

VARI-MU COMPRESSOR · €15

Vari-mu tube compressor inspired by the Fairchild 670 / Manley Vari-Mu school of design. Smooth, musical gain reduction with rich tube harmonics. Ideal for mix bus and mastering applications.

<b>Input</b>	Drive the tube stage
<b>Threshold</b>	Where compression begins
<b>Attack / Release</b>	Timing controls
<b>Output</b>	Makeup gain
<b>Mix</b>	Parallel blend

**Tip:** Mix bus glue. Leave 2-3 dB of gain reduction for gentle cohesion.

## DarkGBuss

BUS COMPRESSOR · SSL G-STYLE · €15

SSL 4000 G bus compressor emulation. Feedback topology, 55/45 peak/RMS detector blend, three-stage auto release, VCA polynomial saturation, and transformer with LF resonance and HF rolloff. The essential mix-bus glue.

<b>Threshold</b>	Gain reduction amount
<b>Ratio</b>	2:1, 4:1, 10:1
<b>Attack</b>	.1 / .3 / 1 / 3 / 10 / 30 ms
<b>Release</b>	.1 / .3 / .6 / 1.2 / Auto
<b>Makeup</b>	Output gain compensation

**Tip:** Mix bus: 2:1, slow attack, auto release, 1-2 dB of reduction.

## DarkMComp

MULTI-MODE COMPRESSOR · 15 MODES · €15 (sale, was €30)

Fifteen distinct compressor modes in one plugin. VU needle matched to the DarkM2A reference, SAT knob for harmonic push, click-free mode crossfade, and the full Maniac Audio dark aesthetic.

<b>Mode</b>	15 compressor character selections
<b>Input / Output</b>	Drive and makeup
<b>Attack / Release</b>	Per-mode timing
<b>Ratio</b>	Per-mode ratio
<b>SAT</b>	Saturation amount
<b>Mix</b>	Parallel blend

**Tip:** One plugin, fifteen compressors. Audition modes on any source to find the right character.

## DarkNComp

MULTI-TOPOLOGY COMPRESSOR · 33 MODES · €30

The flagship compressor. 33 modes spanning five detector topologies — OPTO, VCA, FET, DIODE BRIDGE, VARI-MU — each with dedicated saturation and transformer stages. Includes the THAT 2181 polynomial VCA saturation model. 99 factory presets covering every source and genre.

<b>Mode</b>	33 compressor selections
<b>Topology</b>	OPTO / VCA / FET / DIODE / VARI-MU
<b>Input / Output</b>	Drive and makeup
<b>Attack / Release</b>	Per-topology timing
<b>Ratio / Knee</b>	Compression behavior
<b>SAT / Transformer</b>	Harmonic enhancement
<b>Mix</b>	Parallel blend

**Tip:** Start with a preset close to your source, then tweak. The topology matters as much as the mode.

# EQ & Tone Shaping

## FREQUENCY SCULPTING

### DarkQ FREE

PARAMETRIC EQ · FREE · FREE

A clean, musical parametric EQ. Free forever. The entry point into the Maniac Audio ecosystem — same dark aesthetic, same professional quality.

<b>Bands</b>	Multiple parametric bands
<b>Frequency / Gain / Q</b>	Per-band controls
<b>Filter Types</b>	Bell, shelf, HPF, LPF

**Tip:** Install it free from the website. No account, no dongle.

### DarkQPro

PROFESSIONAL EQ · ANALOG SATURATION · €25 (sale, was €40)

Flagship EQ with dynamic EQ per band, spectral dynamics, Mid/Side processing, 8 hardware-inspired analog saturation modes, BandInfoPopup, A/B comparison, oversampling, and cross-instance spectrum sharing. The EQ you reach for first.

<b>Bands</b>	Multiple bands with dynamic mode
<b>Analog Modes</b>	8 hardware-inspired saturation characters
<b>M/S</b>	Independent Mid and Side processing
<b>Dynamics</b>	Per-band dynamic EQ and spectral dynamics
<b>Oversampling</b>	Eliminate aliasing from saturation
<b>A/B</b>	Instant comparison between settings

**Tip:** Use spectrum sharing across instances to match EQ moves across tracks.

## DarkQMg

MASTERING EQ · FLAGSHIP · €60

The mastering-grade EQ. Purple-theme UI, white-turning bug fixed, refined meter gradients, and the full feature set of DarkQPro tuned for final-stage work. 14-day trial available — try before you commit.

<b>Bands</b>	Mastering-grade parametric bands
<b>M/S</b>	Mid/Side processing
<b>Linear Phase</b>	For transparent mastering moves
<b>Oversampling</b>	High-quality oversampled processing

**Tip:** Grab the 14-day trial first to test it on your masters.

## DarkPultec

PASSIVE EQ · PULTEC-STYLE · €15

Passive program EQ in the classic Pultec tradition. Simultaneous boost and cut at the same frequency for that signature low-end curve. Warm, musical, and completely indispensable on bass and vocals.

<b>Low Boost / Attenuation</b>	Signature Pultec low trick
<b>Low Frequency</b>	Selectable frequencies
<b>High Boost / Attenuation</b>	Air band
<b>High Frequency</b>	Selectable frequencies
<b>Bandwidth</b>	Q of the high band

**Tip:** Boost AND cut at 60Hz for that classic punchy kick and bass trick.

## DarkMic

MIC MODELING EQ · €20

83 microphone models at your fingertips. Transform any mic into classic studio references. Includes TILT and BODY knobs for further tonal shaping and x2/x4/x8 oversample cycle button.

<b>Source Mic</b>	What you recorded with
<b>Target Mic</b>	What it should sound like (83 models)
<b>Tilt</b>	Broad tonal balance
<b>Body</b>	Low-mid weight
<b>Oversample</b>	x2 / x4 / x8 cycle

**Tip:** Great for giving budget mics the character of high-end references.

# Reverbs & Delays

## TIME-BASED FX

### DarkLx FREE

#### ALGORITHMIC REVERB · FREE · FREE

Free algorithmic reverb with the Maniac Audio sound. Clean, musical, and CPU-friendly. A great starting point for any mix.

<b>Size</b>	Room size
<b>Decay</b>	Reverb tail length
<b>Damping</b>	High-frequency absorption
<b>Mix</b>	Dry/wet blend

**Tip:** Free download from the website, no account needed.

### DarkLxPro

#### PROFESSIONAL REVERB · 16-LINE FDN · €20

16-line Hadamard FDN reverb with stereo dual diffusion chains, ER→FDN coupling, ER Level and Ducking parameters. Rich, dense, and dimensional — from small rooms to infinite halls.

<b>Size / Decay</b>	Space character
<b>Early Reflections</b>	ER Level and Ducking
<b>Diffusion</b>	Dual diffusion chains
<b>Damping</b>	HF absorption
<b>Pre-delay</b>	Distance from source
<b>Mix</b>	Dry/wet blend

**Tip:** Use ducking to keep vocals present while still sitting in a large space.

## DarkR

REVERB · COMPACT · €10

Compact, focused reverb for when you need space fast. Clean algorithm, minimal controls, maximum results.

<b>Size</b>	Space dimension
<b>Decay</b>	Tail length
<b>Tone</b>	Bright/dark character
<b>Mix</b>	Dry/wet blend

**Tip:** Great on send busses where you want a quick, tasteful reverb option.

## DarkDelay

DELAY · TAPE / TUBE / TRANSISTOR · €15

Professional delay with SVF filters, three saturation models (tape, tube, transistor), wow/flutter LFO, ping-pong mode, and filmstrip knobs in the signature Maniac Audio aesthetic.

<b>Time</b>	Delay length, sync or free
<b>Feedback</b>	Repeat count
<b>Filter HP / LP</b>	Shape the feedback path
<b>Saturation</b>	Tape / Tube / Transistor
<b>Wow / Flutter</b>	Modulation character
<b>Ping Pong</b>	Stereo bounce mode
<b>Mix</b>	Dry/wet blend

**Tip:** Tape saturation + wow/flutter = instant vintage vocal delay.

# Dynamics & Utility

## GATES & LIMITERS

### DarkGate

DRUM GATE · SPECTRAL · €15

Professional drum gate with FFT spectral analysis, instrument profiles, integrated transient shaper, and DeBleed processor. Designed specifically for drum bleed problems that a standard gate can't solve.

<b>Threshold</b>	Gate trigger level
<b>Attack / Hold / Release</b>	Envelope controls
<b>Instrument Profile</b>	Kick, snare, tom, cymbal, etc.
<b>DeBleed</b>	Spectral bleed suppression
<b>Transient Shaper</b>	Attack/sustain enhancement
<b>Sidechain Filter</b>	Isolate trigger source

**Tip:** Use instrument profiles on close-miked drums. DeBleed handles what the gate can't.

### DarkLim

LOOKAHEAD LIMITER · TRANSPARENT · €15

Lookahead limiter with fixed latency strategy, S-curve crossfade, and soft reset. Transparent, musical, and optimized for final-stage peak control on both tracks and masters.

<b>Threshold</b>	Ceiling below 0 dBFS
<b>Release</b>	How fast gain recovers
<b>Lookahead</b>	Preview time for transients
<b>Output Ceiling</b>	Output cap for intersample peaks
<b>Mix</b>	Parallel limiting

**Tip:** Set ceiling to -1 dBTP for streaming-safe masters. Keep gain reduction under 3 dB for transparency.

# Saturation & Preamps

## HARMONIC CHARACTER

### DarkPre

MULTI-SLOT PREAMP · 53 MODELS · €20

Multi-slot preamp saturation with 53 preamp models derived from harmonic analysis. ALL mode serial chain, per-slot oversamplers, per-slot parameter control. Layer preamps for complex harmonic signatures.

<b>Slot 1-3</b>	Up to three preamps in series (ALL mode)
<b>Model</b>	53 preamp models per slot
<b>Drive</b>	Per-slot saturation amount
<b>Tone</b>	Per-slot tonal shaping
<b>Oversample</b>	Per-slot oversampling
<b>Mix</b>	Per-slot parallel blend

**Tip:** Stack a clean preamp with a driven one in ALL mode for complex harmonic blends.

### DarkTube

TUBE SATURATION · €15

Pure tube saturation character. Warm, harmonically rich, and musical. Great on anything that needs that analog glow.

<b>Drive</b>	Saturation amount
<b>Bias</b>	Asymmetric harmonic character
<b>Tone</b>	Tilt control
<b>Output</b>	Makeup gain
<b>Mix</b>	Parallel blend

**Tip:** A touch on the mix bus adds glue without audible compression.

# Bundle

## THE COMPLETE COLLECTION

## Maniac Audio Bundle

ALL 18 PAID PLUGINS · €150

The full Maniac Audio catalog. Every paid plugin — compressors, EQs, reverbs, delays, saturation, limiters, gates, mic modeling, and more. One purchase, one price, one complete mixing toolkit.

<b>Plugins</b>	All 18 paid plugins included
<b>Updates</b>	Free updates for life
<b>Licenses</b>	Up to 3 computers per license
<b>Formats</b>	VST3 (Windows), VST3/AU (macOS)

**Tip:** Best value in the catalog. If you own more than 4 plugins, the bundle pays for itself.

# Troubleshooting

## COMMON ISSUES & SOLUTIONS

### Plugin doesn't show up in my DAW

Rescan plugins in your DAW preferences. Check that the VST3/AU file is in the correct system folder (see Installation). On macOS, you may need to trust the publisher in System Preferences → Security & Privacy on first launch.

### High CPU usage

Try disabling oversampling (set to 1x) while mixing, then enable it again at the final stage. Plugins with 4x or 8x oversampling are CPU-intensive by nature.

### Audio dropouts / latency warnings

Lookahead plugins (DarkLim) report their latency to the DAW. Make sure plugin delay compensation (PDC) is enabled in your DAW. For live tracking, use plugins with zero latency or minimum latency mode.

### I get clicks when changing modes

DarkMComp and DarkNComp use click-free crossfade internally. If you still hear clicks, make sure you're on the latest version — earlier builds had known issues that are now fixed.

### Validation fails in Logic

Open Logic's Plug-In Manager (Logic Pro menu → Settings → Plug-In Manager), find the plugin, and click Reset & Rescan Selection. Usually resolves first-install issues.

### Can I use these in Pro Tools?

Not currently. AAX requires PACE/iLok, which we don't use. The practical workaround is Blue Cat Patchwork — it hosts VST3 plugins inside Pro Tools as an AAX shell.

### How do I move my license to a new computer?

Sign in at [maniacaudiovst.com/my-account](https://maniacaudiovst.com/my-account) and download the installer on the new machine. Each license covers up to 3 computers. Contact support if you need to deauthorize an old one.

# Support

## WE'RE HERE TO HELP

If you run into issues, have a feature request, or just want to share a mix you made with our plugins, we'd love to hear from you. Every support request is read personally — Maniac Audio is a small operation built on direct contact with the people who use these plugins.

<b>Support Email</b>	support@maniacaudiovst.com
<b>Website</b>	maniacaudiovst.com
<b>Account / Downloads</b>	maniacaudiovst.com/my-account
<b>Plugins Catalog</b>	maniacaudiovst.com/plugins
<b>Free Plugins</b>	DarkQ Free · DarkLx Free
<b>Trial Available</b>	DarkQMg — 14-day free trial

## Refund Policy

All sales are final due to the digital nature of the product. Refunds are only considered for verified technical issues that support cannot resolve. See the full refund policy at [maniacaudiovst.com/refund\\_returns](https://maniacaudiovst.com/refund_returns).

## EULA & Privacy

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Go dark. Make it loud.

— Maniac Audio