
MANIAC AUDIO

DARK SERIES

Plugin Manual & Catalog

Handcrafted VST3 / AU plugins inspired by legendary analog gear
Built for engineers who hear the difference

22 Professional Plugins · Compressors · EQs · Reverbs · Delays · Saturation

maniacaudiovst.com

Welcome to the Dark Side

Maniac Audio is an independent audio plugin company based in Cyprus, building handcrafted VST3/AU plugins inspired by legendary analog gear. Every plugin in the Dark series is modeled from real hardware — T4 opto cells, FET waveshaping, VCA saturation, transformer harmonics — and built with Kaiser FIR oversampling to eliminate aliasing. Even with heavy saturation and compression, the audio stays clean.

Every knob is calibrated to musical ranges. Every interface is dark, focused, and built for long sessions without fatigue. Fast, focused, no bloat.

FORMATS & COMPATIBILITY

All plugins are available in **VST3** (Windows 64-bit) and **VST3 / AU** (macOS Universal Binary — Intel & Apple Silicon). Tested in Ableton Live, Logic Pro, FL Studio, Reaper, Studio One, Cubase, and GarageBand. AAX (Pro Tools) and 32-bit systems are not supported.

LICENSE

Each license allows installation on up to **3 computers** that you own or control. No account required to download free plugins. Full EULA available at maniacaudiovst.com/terms-of-use.

[22 professional plugins](#) · [Compressors](#) · [EQs](#) · [Reverbs](#) · [Delays](#) · [Saturation & more](#)

Catalog Overview

COMPRESSOR

- Dark1176A** — FET compressor — 'A' revision character €12.00
- Dark1176AE** — FET compressor — 'AE' revision, smooth low-end €12.00
- Dark1176F** — FET compressor — 'F' revision tone €12.00
- Dark1176LN** — FET compressor — Low-Noise revision €12.00
- Dark2A** — T4 opto compressor — Teletronix-spec timing €12.00
- Dark2Am FREE LT** — Light edition of the Dark2A FREE (was €12.00)
- Dark2As** — Stereo / dual-mono opto compressor €12.00
- Dark3A** — LA-3A-style opto/FET hybrid compressor €12.00
- DarkVComp** — Vari-Mu vintage compressor €15.00

EQUALIZER

- DarkPultec** — Pultec-style passive program EQ €15.00
- DarkQ FREE** — Clean parametric EQ — zero cost of entry FREE
- DarkQPro** — Professional parametric EQ with linear phase €25.00 (was €40.00)
- DarkQMg** — 16-mode saturation EQ — the flagship €60.00
- DarkQMg Trial 14Days** — Full DarkQMg — 14-day free trial FREE (14 days)

BUS / MASTERING

- DarkGBuss** — Glue bus compressor — VCA topology €12.00
- DarkMBuss** — Mastering bus processor €12.00

PREAMP / MIC

- DarkMic** — Microphone modeler — 83+ mic models €20.00
- DarkPre** — Preamp modeler with serial oversampling €20.00

REVERB

- DarkR** — Compact algorithmic reverb €10.00
- DarkLxPro** — Flagship FDN reverb — 16-line Hadamard €20.00

DELAY

- DarkDelay** — Tape / analog / digital delay €15.00

LIMITER

- DarkLim** — Brick-wall limiter with TPDF dither €15.00

GATE

- DarkGate** — Modern noise gate / expander €15.00

SATURATION / TUBE

- DarkTube** — Tube saturation & tone shaper €15.00

BUNDLE

Maniac Audio Bundle — The complete Dark series collection **€150.00**

COMPRESSOR

Dark1176A

€12.00

FET compressor — 'A' revision character · Compressor

Modeled after the classic FET compressor revision known for its aggressive, punchy attack and forward midrange. Built on a feedback topology with authentic 1176-style detector behavior, per-mode automatic knee, and calibrated FET waveshaping that captures the harmonic signature of the original hardware.

KEY FEATURES

- › Authentic 1176 feedback topology with per-mode parameters
- › FET waveshaping with calibrated harmonic distortion
- › Fast attack (20 us – 800 us) and release (50 ms – 1.1 s)
- › All-buttons mode for extreme compression and aggression
- › Filmstrip knob rendering with smooth drag response

BEST FOR

Vocals, drums, bass, electric guitar, parallel compression on the drum bus.

Dark1176AE

€12.00

FET compressor — 'AE' revision, smooth low-end · Compressor

The 'AE' revision flavor — a smoother, rounder take on the 1176 with corrected low-end behavior compared to early units. Same feedback topology and FET non-linearity, but voiced for fuller low-frequency response, ideal when you want 1176 bite without thinning out the source.

KEY FEATURES

- › AE-revision low-end correction
- › Per-mode automatic knee adjustment
- › FET-style waveshaping with transformer harmonics
- › Dry/Wet mix for parallel compression
- › Resizable interface with film-strip knobs

BEST FOR

Bass guitar, kick drums, acoustic guitars, full mixes that need character without losing weight.

Dark1176F

€12.00

FET compressor — 'F' revision tone · Compressor

The 'F' revision voicing. Slightly different bias and response curve from the A and AE — more transparent on slow material, still capable of aggressive compression when pushed hard. Same authentic feedback topology and per-mode tuning as the rest of the Dark1176 family.

KEY FEATURES

- › 'F' revision frequency-response shaping
- › Authentic 1176 feedback topology
- › Fully calibrated attack/release ranges
- › External sidechain input
- › TPDF dithering on output stage

BEST FOR

Vocals (especially male), brass, room mics, acoustic instruments.

Dark1176LN

€12.00

FET compressor — Low-Noise revision · Compressor

The Low-Noise revision flavor — the cleanest, most transparent voicing in the Dark1176 family while retaining all the punch and harmonic detail of the original circuit. Best choice when you need 1176-style dynamics control without the noise floor of the older revisions.

KEY FEATURES

- › LN revision noise-floor optimization
- › 5 distinct compression modes
- › Per-mode automatic knee curves
- › Dry/Wet for parallel processing
- › Zero noise on idle channels

BEST FOR

Mastering, mix bus duties, vocals in quiet productions, classical/jazz tracks.

Dark2A

€12.00

T4 opto compressor — Teletronix-spec timing · Compressor

Authentic LA-2A-style optical compressor with T4 opto cell modeling tuned to the original Teletronix spec sheet. Feedback topology, asymmetric program-dependent release, and a sidechain EQ path voiced for vocal and instrument duties. Smooth, musical gain reduction that 'just sits' on the source.

KEY FEATURES

- › T4 opto cell with 0.6–20 ms attack, 0.5 ms–5 s release
- › <0.1% THD, 15 Hz–20 kHz frequency response
- › Feedback topology with sidechain EQ wiring
- › SAT knob (–100..+100) for analog character
- › PDC alignment via `setLatencySamples`

BEST FOR

Vocals, bass DI, acoustic guitar, mix bus glue at low ratios.

Dark2Am FREE LT

FREE (was €12.00)

Light edition of the Dark2A · Compressor

A free 'lite' edition of the Dark2A optical compressor. Same authentic T4 opto cell modeling and feedback topology, with a streamlined feature set. The perfect way to try the Maniac Audio sound and add a genuine LA-2A-style compressor to your toolbox at zero cost.

KEY FEATURES

- › T4 opto cell with Teletronix-spec timing
- › Compress / Limit modes
- › Peak Reduction and Gain controls
- › Feedback topology
- › Free forever — no account required

BEST FOR

Anyone who wants to try Maniac Audio. Vocals and bass especially.

Dark2As

€12.00

Stereo / dual-mono opto compressor · Compressor

Built by combining the Dark2A and DarkM2A engines with measurement targets calibrated against the UADx LA-2A. Provides true stereo or dual-mono operation with linked or independent channels, sidechain de-emphasis for taming vocal sibilance, and asymmetric high-frequency saturation that mirrors authentic analog behavior.

KEY FEATURES

- › True stereo / dual-mono modes
- › Sidechain detector de-emphasis
- › Asymmetric HF saturation
- › Linked or independent L/R control
- › UADx LA-2A measurement targets

BEST FOR

Stereo bus, drum overheads, room mics, full vocal busses, acoustic guitar pairs.

Dark3A

€12.00

LA-3A-style opto/FET hybrid compressor · Compressor

A take on the LA-3A — the faster, punchier sibling of the LA-2A. Combines optical compression with FET-style aggression, giving you a snappier attack while still preserving the natural breathing release of an opto cell. Ideal when the 2A is too slow but the 1176 is too aggressive.

KEY FEATURES

- › Hybrid opto + FET response
- › Faster attack than Dark2A

- › Compress / Limit modes
- › External sidechain support
- › Calibrated transformer saturation

BEST FOR

Electric guitar, snare, percussion, snappier bass parts, lead vocals with fast transients.

DarkVComp

€15.00

Vari-Mu vintage compressor · Compressor

Vari-Mu (variable-mu) tube compressor character. Smooth, program-dependent compression with the natural saturation of tube gain reduction. Includes oversampling cycle button (x2/x4/x8), input trim with inverse output compensation, dry delay buffer for phase alignment, and accurate gain-reduction metering.

KEY FEATURES

- › Vari-Mu tube compression curve
- › Oversampling: x2 / x4 / x8 cycling
- › Input trim with inverse output compensation
- › Dry delay buffer for phase-aligned parallel mixing
- › Sidechain EQ topology

BEST FOR

Mastering, mix bus, vocals, acoustic instruments, anywhere smooth tube compression is wanted.

EQUALIZER

DarkPultec

€15.00*Pultec-style passive program EQ · Equalizer*

A faithful Pultec-style program EQ. The classic 'boost and cut at the same frequency' trick is fully preserved, giving you that signature low-end thickening and air-band sweetness. Includes wood-frame border styling and the famous tube-stage harmonics that make Pultecs sound so musical.

KEY FEATURES

- › Low Boost / Atten interaction (the 'Pultec trick')
- › High frequency boost with bandwidth control
- › Atten frequency selector
- › Tube-stage saturation
- › Resize persistence and wood-frame UI

BEST FOR

Kick, bass, vocals, mix bus, mastering for character EQ moves.

DarkQ FREE

FREE*Clean parametric EQ — zero cost of entry · Equalizer*

A clean, precise parametric EQ designed as your everyday workhorse. Multiple fully parametric bands, high-pass and low-pass filters, real-time spectrum analyzer, and zero latency. The perfect entry point to the Maniac Audio sound and a daily-driver EQ for any session.

KEY FEATURES

- › Multiple parametric EQ bands
- › High-pass and low-pass filters
- › Real-time spectrum analyzer
- › Resizable interface
- › Zero latency

BEST FOR

Daily mixing, surgical cuts, broad tonal moves, anywhere you need clean EQ.

DarkQPro

€25.00 (was €40.00)*Professional parametric EQ with linear phase · Equalizer*

The flagship parametric EQ. Includes everything from DarkQ FREE plus linear phase mode (FIR-based via JUCE convolution, 4097 taps), Mid/Side processing, dynamic bands, an enhanced spectrum analyzer, sidechain input, IN/OUT meters, and a fully optimized cascade engine. The cyan UI theme makes per-band navigation effortless.

KEY FEATURES

- › Linear phase EQ (FIR convolution, 4097 taps)
- › Mid/Side and L/R split processing
- › Spectral dynamic bands
- › Cascade loop optimization for low CPU
- › BandInfoPopup with per-band detail
- › Cyan accent UI with full meter integration

BEST FOR

Mastering, professional mixing, tracking when phase coherence matters, M/S work.

DarkQMg

€60.00

16-mode saturation EQ — the flagship · Equalizer

The flagship offering. Combines all DarkQPro capabilities with 16 saturation modes voiced and measured against legendary hardware EQs and channel strips. Per-band saturation architecture with click-free mode switching (256-sample cosine crossfade), shared dark-gray theme, and the most musical EQ in the Maniac Audio catalog.

KEY FEATURES

- › 16 saturation modes matched to hardware measurements
- › Per-band saturation with independent drive curves
- › Click-free mode switching (cosine crossfade)
- › ComboBox popup guard against re-entry
- › Symmetric quadratic drive formula per band
- › Shared theme with DarkQPro

BEST FOR

Mix bus, mastering, vocal channel strip, anywhere tone and EQ matter equally.

DarkQMg Trial 14Days

FREE (14 days)

Full DarkQMg — 14-day free trial · Equalizer

The complete DarkQMg with no feature limitations for 14 days. Full 16 saturation modes, all bands, all routing options. Try it on a real project before deciding.

KEY FEATURES

- › Full DarkQMg feature set
- › 14-day fully unlocked trial
- › All 16 saturation modes
- › All EQ and routing capabilities
- › Free download — no account required

BEST FOR

Evaluating DarkQMg on real material before purchase.

BUS / MASTERING

DarkGBuss

€12.00

Glue bus compressor — VCA topology · Bus / Mastering

An SSL-style bus compressor with feedback topology, 55/45 peak/RMS detector, three-stage auto release, and calibrated VCA polynomial harmonics. Optional transformer stage with 60 Hz LF resonance and sidechain presence emphasis make this a versatile glue compressor for drums, full mixes, and stereo busses.

KEY FEATURES

- › Feedback topology with 55/45 peak/RMS detector
- › Three-stage auto release
- › Calibrated VCA polynomial harmonics
- › Transformer stage with 60 Hz LF resonance
- › Sidechain presence emphasis

BEST FOR

Drum bus, mix bus, stereo subgroups, full-mix glue.

DarkMBuss

€12.00

Mastering bus processor · Bus / Mastering

A bus compressor and tone-shaper voiced for mastering and final mix duties. Smooth gain reduction, low distortion at idle, and musical attack/release ranges make it suitable for stereo bus and master fader applications where transparency and glue need to coexist.

KEY FEATURES

- › Mastering-grade gain reduction
- › Low THD at idle
- › Click-free mode switching
- › Mode-coloured accent lines on UI
- › Accurate GR metering

BEST FOR

Mastering bus, final mix bus, audiophile mixes, classical and acoustic material.

PREAMP / MIC

DarkMic

€20.00

Microphone modeler — 83+ mic models · Preamp / Mic

Transform your input signal into the tone of legendary microphones. Includes 83+ mic models, a linear phase EQ engine, and a refined UI built around accurate frequency-response targets. Use it to upgrade affordable mics or to add color to already-recorded tracks.

KEY FEATURES

- › 83+ microphone models
- › Linear phase EQ engine
- › Peak / shelf / cut filter audit fixes
- › Resizable, modern UI
- › Per-model authentic response curves

BEST FOR

Upgrading entry-level mics, color-matching existing recordings, vocal tone-shaping in mix.

DarkPre

€20.00

Preamp modeler with serial oversampling · Preamp / Mic

Single-slot preamp modeler with equal-power mix crossfade and JUCE serial oversampler implementation (always 1× single latency for accurate PDC). Adds the harmonic content of classic console and outboard preamp stages to any source — clean tube warmth, gritty FET drive, or transformer roundness.

KEY FEATURES

- › Single-slot streamlined design
- › Equal-power dry/wet mix crossfade
- › Serial oversampling (1× single latency reporting)
- › Multiple preamp models
- › Trim with inverse output compensation

BEST FOR

Re-amping DI tracks, adding analog character to in-the-box recordings, tone-shaping vocals.

REVERB

DarkR

€10.00

Compact algorithmic reverb · Reverb

A focused, easy-to-dial-in algorithmic reverb. Built on a tuned FDN engine for natural decay and density, with a curated control set so you spend less time tweaking and more time mixing. The most affordable Maniac Audio reverb.

KEY FEATURES

- › FDN-based reverb engine
- › Multi-band damping
- › Pre-delay and size controls
- › Stereo width control
- › Compact, focused control set

BEST FOR

Vocals, drums, sends, quick reverb duties when you don't need the full DarkLxPro feature set.

DarkLxPro

€20.00

Flagship FDN reverb — 16-line Hadamard · Reverb

The flagship Maniac Audio reverb. 16-line FDN with Hadamard mixing matrix, multi-band damping, early reflections engine, and the most musical decay tail in the catalog. The successor to DarkReverb / DarkR with extensive tuning for plate, hall, room, and chamber modes.

KEY FEATURES

- › 16-line FDN with Hadamard mixing matrix
- › Multi-band damping
- › Early reflections engine
- › Plate / hall / room / chamber modes
- › Pre-delay, size, decay, modulation controls

BEST FOR

Vocals, drum rooms, lush pad sends, mastering reverb, anywhere a serious reverb is needed.

DELAY

DarkDelay

€15.00

Tape / analog / digital delay · Delay

Three saturation models inside the feedback loop — tape, analog, and digital — for distinct delay character on every repeat. Includes wow & flutter modulation, ping-pong mode, and a proportionally scaling UI. From clean digital echoes to filthy tape decay, all in one plugin.

KEY FEATURES

- › Tape / analog / digital saturation in feedback path
- › Wow & flutter modulation
- › Ping-pong delay mode
- › Tempo sync with note divisions
- › Proportionally scaling UI

BEST FOR

Vocal slap, dub-style delays, tape echo, rhythmic sends, dotted-eighth lead lines.

LIMITER

DarkLim

€15.00

Brick-wall limiter with TPDF dither · Limiter

A brick-wall limiter built from scratch around an $O(1)$ sliding-minimum algorithm. Adjustable lookahead (replacing the old soft-clip control), accurate latency reporting, S-curve crossfade for smooth lookahead transitions, and TPDF dithering at the output. Transparent loudness without artifacts.

KEY FEATURES

- › $O(1)$ sliding-minimum lookahead algorithm
- › Adjustable lookahead slider
- › S-curve crossfade for smooth lookahead transitions
- › Accurate latency reporting (PDC-correct)
- › TPDF dithering at output

BEST FOR

Mastering, mix bus loudness, broadcast prep, streaming targets (-14 LUFS).

GATE

DarkGate

€15.00

Modern noise gate / expander · Gate

A precise, transparent noise gate with filmstrip-rendered controls and an instrument mode for clean transient detection on drums and percussion. Clean opening and closing, sidechain input for keyed gating, and a redesigned waveform display.

KEY FEATURES

- › Filmstrip-rendered controls
- › Instrument mode for percussive sources
- › Sidechain (keyed) gating
- › Hold and hysteresis controls
- › Redesigned waveform display

BEST FOR

Tightening drums, removing bleed, gated reverb sends, vocal noise cleanup.

SATURATION / TUBE

DarkTube

€15.00

Tube saturation & tone shaper · Saturation / Tube

Pure tube character on demand. Models multiple tube stages with adjustable bias and drive, expanded frequency selector, and the warm, slightly compressed harmonic content you only get from a real valve circuit. Adds depth and weight to sterile digital sources without harshness.

KEY FEATURES

- › Multiple tube stage models
- › Adjustable bias and drive
- › Expanded frequency selector
- › Wood-frame border UI
- › Resize persistence

BEST FOR

Drums, bass, vocals, full mix coloration, taming digital harshness.

BUNDLE

Maniac Audio Bundle

€150.00

The complete Dark series collection · Bundle

Every paid Maniac Audio plugin in one purchase, at a substantial saving over buying each plugin individually. The full Dark series toolbox — compressors, EQs, reverbs, delays, saturation, and utility — for one price. The most complete way to mix in the Maniac Audio sound.

KEY FEATURES

- › All paid Dark series plugins included
- › Single license, up to 3 computers
- › Free updates within the bundle scope
- › Substantial saving vs. individual purchases
- › Free FREE plugins also included

BEST FOR

Producers, engineers, and home studios who want the full Maniac Audio sound at the best value.

Support & Contact

WHERE TO BUY

All plugins are available directly at maniacaudiovst.com. Secure checkout via Stripe. Free plugins (DarkQ FREE, Dark2Am FREE LT, DarkQMg Trial) require no account.

INSTALLATION

After purchase, download the installer for your platform from your account page. Run the installer (Windows: .exe / macOS: .pkg) and choose VST3 and/or AU as needed. On macOS, plugins are signed and notarized; no Gatekeeper bypass required.

UPDATES

Updates are free for the lifetime of each plugin and are announced via the website and the Maniac Audio newsletter. Re-download from your account page when a new version is released.

REFUND POLICY

See maniacaudiovst.com/refund_returns for the full refund policy. Free trial versions are available for several plugins so you can evaluate before purchase.

Welcome to the dark side of mixing.

maniacaudiovst.com · Built in Cyprus