United Plugins FireMaximizer



Independent development teams federation United Plugins announces the availability of FireMaximizer from founding partner FireSonic - fuelling the virtual fire of loudness processing as the most flexible and detail-orientated loudness maximizer plug-in out there, though it is effectively easy as it gets in operation on account of only having to dial the DRIVE (dB) control and blend its maximization algorithms by ear to achieve job satisfaction - as of January 16...

It is fair to say that the so-called Loudness War — whereby increasing audio levels in recorded music reduces audio fidelity and, according to some critics, listener enjoyment — effectively peaked in around 2005 as the musical fallout from the introduction of DSP (Digital Signal Processing) techniques such as dynamic range compression and equalization enabling engineers to competitively increase loudness to the point of sacrificing sound quality finally took its toll. That ‘war’ may well be over, but sound still matters. Musically speaking, some tracks need a punchy, more aggressive treatment, while others demand a clean, transparent finish. It is also fair to say, however, that limiters alone are often too smooth, while clippers can be too aggressive. After all, saturators and clippers can make modern metal and EDM (Electronic Dance Music) tracks punchy and aggressive, while limiters lend themselves to producing pleasingly transparent sound suited to any

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genre - from ambient and classical music to pop, and, well, anything in between. Fortunately, FireSonic has a solution: surely combining those techniques is the way to go!

FireSonic’s FireMaximizer does just that and more by providing pristine clipper, saturator, limiter, and multi-band limiter algorithms, allowing users to blend between them to get the exact ratio of digital and ‘analogue’ grit and transparency needed to best serve the needs of their master - or, indeed, individual instruments! Thanks to those unique algorithms, FireMaximizer can comfortably accommodate transparency to brutalism. Better still, its photorealistic 3D yet flexible GUI (Graphical User Interface) makes it easy in operation. On the fact of it, dragging around an XY pad makes mixing the ratio between the CLIP (clipping) - highly useful for aggressive genres such as metal, drum ’n’ bass, hip- hop, and more; SATURATE (saturation) - similar to clipping, but also produces some ‘analogue’ warmth; LIMIT (limiting) - provides a classic brick-wall limiter that is as transparent as possible, so useful for less aggressive genres where the user does not want the spectrum to be altered; and MULTIBAND (multi-band limiter) - a multi-band version of the brick-wall limiter that performs the limiting in separate parts of the spectrum, so potentially squeezes more loudness out of it and mainly flattens it naturally, making it useful for various genres, including rock, pop, and more - modes an absolute breeze... blending those maximization algorithms by ear to achieve job satisfaction, in other words.

But beyond that, users only have to dial the DRIVE (dB) control - controlling IN (db) (input amplification) and, in turn, OUT (dB) (output loudness), which, when used wisely, can achieve the correct loudness for the media that the audio is being mastered for. It is worth mentioning, though, that there are several other useful controls always at hand: CEILING (dB) - controls the output level, allowing users to lower the output slightly from 0dBFS (Zero Decibels Full Scale) to provide room for true peaks and audio compression artefacts; CLEAN (%) - lets users lower the amount of distortion produced by the limiters at the expense of actually reducing loudness (without affecting the clipper or saturator); and LOOK-AHEAD (ms) - potentially lowers the distortion of the limiters (albeit at the expense of introducing a little latency).

Last, but by no means least, users can change the internal resolution of the FireMaximizer plug-in to achieve better quality results using the onboard OVERSAMPLING selections - up to 16x, in fact, allowing its algorithms to operate in way better resolution than the human ear can possibly hear (but with a significant impact on the final sound, still).

Saying that, FireMaximizer shares several admirable attributes with fellow family members now numbering 31 plug-ins, each playing their part in United Plugins’ proliferating product portfolio, providing maximum audio quality by using internal 64-bit audio processing as well as being able to handle any sampling rate - 192 kHz (or even higher) - and also the fact that it intelligently detects whether it makes sense to perform any processing at all; if not, it temporarily turns on sleep mode,

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meaning it requires virtually no CPU (Central Processing Unit) power at all, thereby saving computing resources for other processes.

Primarily intended to be used on the master track, users can choose to use FireMaximizer to power up almost any instrument track, too. It is outstanding on drums, acoustic or electric guitars, and also vocals. Time, then, to fuel the virtual fire of loudness processing with FireMaximizer as the most flexible and detail-orientated loudness maximizer plug-in out there.

FireSonic’s FireMaximizer is available to purchase for a time-limited introductory promo price of only €29.00 EUR through to the end of February 2023 - rising thereafter to its regular price of €119.00 EUR - as an AAX-, AU-, VST-, and VST3-compatible plug-in (using internal 64-bit audio processing capable of handling any sample rate) directly from its dedicated webpage , where a 15-day, fully-functional trial version for macOS 10.10 and newer and Windows 8/10/11 can also be downloaded for free.

FireMaximizer is also available as a free gift when purchasing the Ultimate FireSonic Bundle - comprising FireSonic’s FirePressor, FireCharger, FireCobra, and FireMaster - for €199.00 EUR - itself representing a significant saving over purchasing those four virtual effect plug-ins individually - through to the end of January 2023. Note that no iLok, dongle, or internet access is required for FireMaximizer activation. (All United Plugins software uses license files for activation and owners can freely use purchased software on all their computers as long as they are the user.)

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