P11 ABYSS

Presets Guide

Version 1.0

Presets Guide

In this guide, you will find descriptions of a number of presets that are included with Abyss. The intention here is to share what the designer had in mind when creating a preset, along with thoughts and suggestions for how to most effectively adjust it to suit your audio. There is so much that simply cannot be captured nor conveyed by a preset name. Presets have always been touted as a great starting point… but where do you go from there? Well, to that we say, read on…

Bass - DI Clarity and Stability bM

This preset is designed for Direct Input bass guitar recordings. It will provide control and clarity, to help the bass sit in the mix.

Parameters to tweak

Threshold should be set to so that you achieve around 4 to 6dB of compression, with some high peaks going as far as 8dB.

Knee should be set softer if you want more control and less dynamic movement. This will smooth out the compression substantially.

Attack and Release should be tweaked to taste. Default settings are a good starting point.

O2 knob can be used to greatly increase the density and weight but this runs the risk of overbearing the mix.

Transformer saturation can be turned off and levels set lower if your bass DI already is heavily saturated.

Limiter threshold should be set so that any stray peaks are caught. I don't recommend more than 1dB of limiting though or some clarity will be lost.

Bass- Body Bass Bite TM

Preset calibration: Gain stage to -18dBfs, with -6dBfs as the maximum peak.

Do you want body or do you want bite added to your bass? You can have both.

This is kind of a 'set every knob to 11' preset, where you just want a cool bass sound. If you come for a clean bass sound, this ain't it. It's aggressive, but really useful in some cases, when you want that dirty, raw bass guitar, that is still heavy in the low end.

Threshold: Set it so that the GR Limit that's set to 5.5dB flashes pretty often. If it gets too "buzzy" increase the GR limit or increase threshold. This is most of all a mangling/sound design preset, so don't be gentle. Fiddle with the ratio and knee to find the sweet spot of your tone.

Attack/Release: Fast, but not so fast that it deadens the sound.

S/C EQ: Boost low-mid with a bell (EQ1) and go crazy with the EQ2 with a high-shelf from about 800Hz set to 10. Surely source dependent, but you're allowed to boost over-the-top on this one.

IN EQ: EQ1 adding low-end with a low-shelf from 230Hz and giving it some bite around 900Hz with EQ2. If you already got the low-end for instance, you can use the EQ1 to add some extra bite in the high-mids to get it to cut through the mix.

Clipper and LMTR shares the load by taking care of the peaks. Experiment with the clipper position can be fun. I like to be conservative on these parameters for this preset, to keep some dynamics and transients. Or else it can become a flat sausage of a wav-file.

Tone Adjustments:

Soul: 100. Because I can.

Transformer IN/OUT: As much as you can tolerate. This is for the rockers!

O2: Don't think about it, set it to 100.

Drums - Drumbus Flattening bM

This preset is designed to flatten too peaky drums at the drumbus stage of processing. It will take the edge off any drums and help the drums sit further back in the mix.

Parameters to tweak

Threshold should be set so that you get between 3 and 6dB of compression, all depending on how flat you want your drums to be. Further flattening happens at the Limiter stage which should be adjusted accordingly when you move the threshold of the compressor.

Clipper side-chain threshold should be set so that you get a generous amount of clipping on peaks. This keeps the compression steady and predictable. Up to 4dB of clipping is fine.

Limiter should be set so that it further flattens the remaining peaks. About 2 to 3dB of limiting should be plenty enough.

Knee can be adjust for a softer approach if so desired.

Release should be tweaked to the groove of the song.

Attack can be made slightly faster if you want a tiny bit of transients poking through but to keep with the original idea of the preset, it's best to leave it on the default setting (89 micro seconds).

O2 and Transformer saturation should all be set to taste, though it is important to realize that these further help to flatten the sound. If you remove all the extra processing you'll end up with slightly more peaky results.

Drums - Drumbus Parallel Slammed bM

This preset is for parallel processing of the drumbus. You slam the drums hard with the compressor and then blend it in with the original source to create thickness, power and cohesion.

Parameters to tweak

Threshold should be set for 5 to 10dB of compression.

Clipper side-chain threshold should be set for a lot of clipping of the side-chain signal. At least 4dB on most peaks. Don't be afraid of painting the whole clipper gain reduction bar red!

Attack and Release should be tweaked to taste, though I recommend fast settings on both controls.

PSI knob is your main tool for changing the compression feel and type. Set it towards zero for more punch and towards 10 for more transient killing brutality!

Wet/Dry is set to 50% by default but should be tweaked to taste.

O2 brings extra meat on the bones. Set at 50% by default but can be turned off for more transient punch.

Drums - Drumbus Punch Drive bM

This preset aims to punch up drums on the drumbus that are a bit flat and boring, pushing them further in front of the mix.

Parameters to tweak

Threshold should be set so that you get between 1 and 6dB of compression, all depending on how punchy you want your drums to be.

Clipper side-chain threshold should be set so that you get a generous amount of clipping on peaks. This keeps the compression steady and predictable. Up to 4dB of clipping is fine.

Attack and Release should be tweaked to taste.

PSI knob can be tweaked for a different character of punch.

Wet/Dry can be set to blend the added punch with the original

Drums - Jungle Loop Smasher bM

This preset aims to smash your vintage drum loop samples tastefully. It gets extra punch by clipping the side-chain signal into oblivion before applying compression, which results in more “chunky” attack. The side-chain EQ is also tuned to smash those vintage loops which are usually quite saturated with high frequency content from cymbals and rides. You can of course use this preset on any ordinary drum bus that needs smashing! Use Wet/Dry mix knob to mix it in parallel for great results!

Parameters to tweak

Threshold should be set to taste, but preset was designed for about 4 to 8dB of compression. If you set it for more you’ll need to tweak the output volume compensation.

Clipper threshold should be set so that its clipping at least 5dB on the highest peaks.

Attack and Release should be tweaked to taste.

Limiter should be tweaked for around 3dB of gain reduction but can of course be set to taste.

Drums - Kick Any Mic bM

This preset is designed for any miked kick drum source. It’s designed to give control and punch. Use the compressor post EQ, meaning you should first EQ the kick the way you want it, then apply compression with this preset.

Parameters to tweak

Threshold should be set to so that you achieve around 4dB of compression on most ordinary kick hits.

Clipper threshold should be set so that its clipping around 2 to 4dB on the highest peaks. This allows the compressor to be more “chunky”. Alternatively you can remove the clipper from the side-chain if you want less chunky compression.

Ratio can be increased all the way to 50:1 for controlled and aggressive compression.

Knee can be set to softer settings for a more controlled and less punchy kick.

Attack and Release should be tweaked to taste.

O2 knob can be used to greatly increase the density and weight of the kick in a mix. Alternatively set it to zero to have a more lean sounding kick.

Drums - Snare Top Mic bM

This preset is for compressing a top miked snare, post EQ. Meaning, you should EQ the snare the way you want it and then apply Abyss after it with this preset. It aims to dynamically control and fatten up the snare. This will help it cut through the mix. Clipper is in the Side-chain for additional punch.

Parameters to tweak

Threshold should be set to so that you achieve around 4dB of compression on most ordinary snare hits. The GR limiter will kick in after that, forcing the overshoot into the main output limiter.

Clipper threshold should be set so that its clipping around 1 to 2dB on the highest peaks. This allows the compressor to be more “chunky”.

Ratio can be increased all the way to 50:1 for more punch and click on the snare.

Attack and Release should be tweaked to taste.

Limiter should be tweaked for around 3dB of maximum gain reduction but can of course be set to taste.

Drums- Massive Low End Beat TM

Preset calibration: Gain stage to -18dBfs, with -6dBfs as the maximum peak

Use it on heavy low-end tracks/beats: pulsating kicks, toms, 808s etc. The aim is to keep the source in control, while still breathing. Making sure that the low end stays consistent, but not choked.

Parameters to tweak:

Threshold: Set to be between 4-5dB of gain reduction (GR).

PSI Knob: I find 7.5 to be a great starting point, to feel how the compressor behaves. If the “pressure gets to you”, like it feels strained, decrease the value. Or if you want to push further, increase it towards 10.

Attack: Depends on the material. As the clipper is the one shaving the peaks, the attack should be set to a medium-fast attack.

Release: It certainly depends on the feel of the track and sometimes BPM, but in this case make sure the drums make you move the right way.

Side-chain EQ: Letting the subs pass through (HPF), while pushing the very low-mids into the sidechain detector (EQ1), I find preferable.

Clipper: If the track has high transient peaks that takes too much headroom, dial in the clipper to reduce the dynamic with the clipper position set to RAW>CLIP. So that it's placed first in the chain.

Wet/Dry: For a more subtle effect use the wet/dry to find your sweet spot.

Tone Adjustments:

O2: Makes the lower-level details – most times the ambience – more prominent. Brings what you didn't know was there come to life. Warning: can be addictive.

Soul: Depends on how dense the drums are. I've set it to 35 to add some sparkle, to make the beat more defined. But it can definitely go all the way to 100 without affecting the source in a bad way.

Transformer IN/OUT: More saturation please! I prefer A/B most of the time when I want the full package. The amount depends on the material and its surroundings. It's a balancing act, like everything in life.

Drums- Smash Those Barricades TM

Preset calibration: Gain stage to -18dBfs, with -6dBfs as the maximum peak

Do whatever you have to do to make your drum smash through those barricades. If you need one instance of P11 Abyss, that's fine, but you can also go with multiple ones and just destroy what's in your way. No rules on this one.

Guitar Acc- Wanderer TM

Preset calibration: Gain stage to -18dBfs, with -6dBfs as the maximum peak.

Just like a train, you got an acoustic guitar which defines the pulse and feel of the song. This is a preset for the typical singer-songwriter, which wants to enhance the groove of their guitar. What used to be (maybe) somewhat flat sounding now has been giving a bounce, which makes the performance come alive.

Parameter to tweak:

Threshold: Set it so that P11 Abyss compresses about 2dB with a light ratio. You don't want to hear the compression. The goal is to feel the instrument more and glue it together.

PSI knob: If the guitar lacks some body to it, bringing the knob more towards 10 I find helps. But if the recording is already there, I'll stay closer to 0.

Attack: Let the fast transient pass through, the clipper can take care of that, but you can go with pretty fast settings.

Release: Depends on the feel of the song, but if you want it bounce, not smooth it out, I'll go with a medium-fast release time.

Clipper: With the clipper being set first in the chain, my goal is to tame the peaks of the performance before doing any compression. Have it set to clip about 0.5-1dB.

S/C HPF/EQ: I got it set so the compressor detects frequencies around 1.25kHz a little more and if there are any rumbling noises below 50Hz, the S/C HPF doesn't trigger that. The EQ IN is set to add some body and presence to the track. Not much, but I find it pleasant most of the time. Tweak to your own benefit☺

Tone adjustments:

Transformer IN: Class A to add some weight to the sound.

MOD on makes it more present, if you want it to sit back, disable it.

Soul: Yes, please. I find a little over half way (60-70) brings what I want to the table.

O2: Just like any other organic instrument, adding some O2 in makes me smile.

Guitar El- Fatten Up Arpeggio TM

Preset calibration: Gain stage to -18dBfs, with -6dBfs as the maximum peak.

To me, this one is all about adding mojo and making sure that the guitar sits perfectly behind the singer. Adding warmth and controlling the high-mids are the main goals.

Parameters to tweak:

Threshold: With a gain reduction of about 4dB of compression with a light ratio and soft knee, I prefer the compressed sound to the raw.

Attack/Release: Medium is where I found both to be sitting the best for this task.

IN EQ: To get some honk out of the guitar I set the S/C EQ (bell) 600-800Hz and boost it so the compressor detects it more than it would do. I'm also adding in some presence from 3kHz on the EQ2 (high-shelf) to add some clarity to the guitar tone.

Transformer IN/OUT: Yes, I want to fatten it up, so I go pretty aggressive here. Add some sprinkles with O2 as well. You will not regret it.

Guitar El- Funky Rhythm Peak Tamer TM

Preset calibration: Gain stage to -18dBfs, with -6dBfs as the maximum peak.

You got this funky electric guitar that has some excessive transients that pokes out and takes up unwanted headroom? The performance dynamically is also all over the place, so it doesn't sit right in the mix. This might be the starting point for you.

Parameters to tweak:

Threshold: I got it set so that it goes all the way up to about 8dB of compression, with an 8:1 ratio and medium hard knee. Too much some might say, but for it to sit in a mix you have to make some big moves a lot of the time.

Attack/Release: Set to the faster side of the spectrum, not stepping on the initial transient (that's the clippers job), but set it to a fast setting that makes the guitar sound energetic and enhances the groove of the song.

Clipper: I got it set as the first step in the chain, taking care of those unwanted/excessive peaks. I got it set so it shaves off about 3-4dB at peaks. Go too far and the guitar sound sounds lifeless, so be careful.

Transformer IN/OUT: As most funky rhythm guitars have this thin sounding character too it; it might be good to experiment by adding some body to it. Adding some warmth with soul, making it more present/adding energy with MOD and dial in some O2 can make the tone of the guitar sound nicer. I for one have gone a little bit radical adding a lot of transformer harmonics to the sound too achieve a richer guitar tone. It might ruin the funk aesthetics, but if it sounds better, who cares!?

Mixbus - EDM Movement and Punch bM

This preset aims to give punch and movement to the track by triggering off the kick and snare/percussion at around 50-100Hz and 3 to 4kHz respectively. The most important control to tweak is Release, to suite your tracks tempo and movement. Threshold should be set so that you get between 3 to 5dB of gain reduction.

Parameters to tweak

Threshold should be set to achieve between 3 and 5dB of compression.

PSI knob controls the tightness of the compression. Lower numbers result in “fluffy” movement whereas higher numbers result in “clicky” movement and punch.

Attack controls the tightness of the punch. Longer attack for more substantial punch and shorter attack for more clicky punch.

Release is probably the most important control in this preset. You set the movement timings to suite your track. Values between -9 and -4 on the Auto Release are all viable. Just set it somewhere in this range to suite your tracks movement and to get the desired punch to fit the tempo.

Side-chain EQ is used to tune the compressors movement to your kick fundamental and to the percussive elements up top at around 3 to 4kHz.

Wet/Dry control is used to blend the desired amount of punch into the mix of the original signal. Default is at 50%.

O2 control can be used to fatten up everything. Note that this does reduce the amount of “punch” and gives a bit more glue instead. It defaults to zero for highlighting punch over glue. Also note that O2 can affect both the wet and dry signals depending on where it is positioned!

Mixbus - Parallel Density bM

This preset aims to give density to a track by heavily compressing the wet signal and blending it in with the original dry source. The most important parameters to tweak are Threshold and Release.

Parameters to tweak

Threshold should be set to achieve around 4 to 5dB of compression.

PSI knob can be set to lower numbers to achieve more subtle movement.

Attack should be set so that you get the amount of transients coming through that you desire. The default value works for most tracks but it can be set slightly faster or slightly slower (10 to 40ms range is optimal).

Release should be set so that you get optimal density without any pumping. A good range is between 2.0 and 6.0. Faster release will result in more apparent density but it can also cause the feeling of fatigue and too much movement. Slower settings will cause a more glued feel but can result in some subtle pumping if you go too far with the control.

Wet/Dry control is used to blend the desired amount of density into the mix of the original signal. Default is at 67%.

O2 control is used to further fatten up the track and thus give more density. This can affect both the wet and dry depending on where O2 is positioned. Default is at 7%.

Mixbus - Silky Focused Highs bM

This preset gives you what the name suggests. Silky “radio ready” highs and high-mids. It is one of the major strengths of Abyss, how it effortlessly controls extreme movement with the most gentle of a touch.

Parameters to tweak

Threshold should be set to give around 1 to 1.5dB of compression.

Release is probably already at an optimal setting at default for most songs but it can be reduced further to slightly speed up the movement. Optimal range is 50 to 120ms.

Side-chain EQ 1 can be tweaked to target exactly the range of high-mid frequencies that you want. It will subtly change the way Abyss sounds. Optimal range is 2 to 7kHz. Default is at around 5kHz.

Mixbus - Sounds like a Record bM

This preset aims to do what it says. It’ll make any audio track sound “more like a record” by balancing the frequency spectrum and adding some subtle glue. This is a set-and-forget type of preset. Simply add Abyss to your mixbus, open this preset and you are done!

Parameters to tweak

PSI control will change the aggressiveness of the compression and thus can subtly alter the feel. Optimal range is the full movement of the knob, from 0 to 10. Default is at 4.

Knee control can be further tweaked to go from hard to soft. This will affect the perceived compression in a similar manner. Hard knee will be more clicky/punchy while softer knee will be.. softer!

Release can be tweaked to achieve more aggressive transients. For genres like heavy metal with fast kick patterns, you can set the Auto-Release all the way down to -10 to really get those kick transients and snares punching through. Combine this with a PSI setting of 10 and you can really enhance the experience on this kind of genre. Conversely, if you are dealing with softer genres like an R&B ballad or smooth jazz, then setting release closer to, or even past zero will smoothen out the action. Again, combined with a PSI setting to match, closer to zero, you’ll get extremely smooth and nice action for genres that require this instead.

Trim In & Trim Out controls can be used to further drive the compression. Set trim in to +9dB and trim out to -9dB to achieve maximum amount of compression at the set ratio. Alternatively you could very carefully change the ratio but it’s more effective to tweak the trim levels while still keeping the same action going.

Mixbus - Xpander for Mastering bM

This is a bit of a special case preset. It can be used to breathe new life into an already processed audio source. An expander is sort of the opposite of a compressor. To get your head around how it works, try to imagine the attack and release knobs a little differently than how they work when you are compressing.

Attack will control “how quickly the signal goes towards the original dynamics” and the Release control will be “how quickly the signal goes towards maximum processing”. Thus the interplay between attack and release is what controls the dynamic movement of the original audio sources dynamics. Attack will move Abyss towards the “original signal” dynamics whereas release will move it towards expansion.

Note how this preset has Gain Reduction Limiter set to 3dB. This means that no matter how you set the threshold, you will never have attenuation more than 3dB (and thus no expansion past 3dB of peaks due to 0dB being the ceiling where all processing stops).

Threshold also works the opposite way. Instead of tweaking the threshold towards ever higher negative numbers to get more processing, in expansion mode it works the opposite way around. You set it to ever smaller amounts to get more processing, of course completely depending on the incoming signal level. You can think of it as this; Any audio levels that “reach the threshold” will start the attack phase, forcing the dynamics process to go towards zero dB, which equals no processing at all. Whereas any audio levels that fail to reach the threshold, will start the release phase and force the dynamics process towards the Gain Reduction Limiter which is set at 3dB.

Makeup gain can also be thought of in a different manner than usually. When in expansion mode, don’t think of makeup gain as making up for the lost gain but rather as a gain makeup for getting back to the original volume levels.

Parameters to tweak

Threshold should be set towards ‘high ’until you see the GR needle start moving towards -3dB (the GR limit setting). Once the needle constantly hovers around -1 to -1.5dB of gain reduction, you are at the optimal setting for this preset.

Clipper side-chain threshold should be set so that most of the sudden peaks in your music get clipped. Around 1 to 3dB works well but it is completely safe to clip even more. For a more average expansion type of sound, where the individual peaks don’t trigger the dynamics process, you may set clipping all the way to 5 or 6dB! This will calm down the expansion and let the overall loudness of the track dictate the expansion instead of individual peaks.

Release knob can be tweaked to make the expansion more or less aggressive. It defaults to 1 second which works for most material quite nicely. Optimal range is 400ms to 2 seconds. For really long swelling dynamic material, like some orchestral pieces, you may want to set the release to even slower than 2 seconds.

Knee is another control that controls the aggressiveness of the expansion. I recommend keeping it rather soft though. Otherwise the expansion will start to “ride the peaks” which can sound really unnatural.

Stereo Link switch can be turned on if the music contains vastly different energy on either left or right. The expansion will skew the center image if this is the case.

Mixbus- LoFi, Alternative, Whatever TM

Preset calibration: Gain stage to -18dBfs, with -6dBfs as the maximum peak.

So, you got this creative somewhat messy production filled with emotions and it's a big task to make everything go in the same direction. Using P11 Abyss to make a sonic imprint on the song might help you. You've probably heard "don't compress your mixbus too much". With this preset, the aim is to do the total opposite, though not sounding worse. With a top-down mixing philosophy, set on the mixbus to start with and don't be scared if you see the needle go over 4dB of GR. You want P11 Abyss to add movement and mojo in this use case.

Parameters to tweak:

Threshold: As said, don't be scared to use the compressor for what it's worth. Close your eyes and push your limits and then dial it back a few cents.

Tone adjustments:

You're pretty much allowed to do anything, twist the knobs so that it makes whatever comes out of it sound awesome with a lot of mojo. Me explaining you what to do, is pretty useless in this case, I would say…

Mixbus- Make it Bounce a little more TM

Preset calibration: Gain stage to -18dBfs, with -6dBfs as the maximum peak.

You have arrived at the mixbus but the song doesn't feel like it used to do. The spark is gone. It might be on the verge of being slightly overcompressed? Add some life into it, using the Xpand feature of P11 Abyss.

Parameters to tweak:

Threshold: Set it so that it only affects the audio you want to expand. It can be useful to check this by pushing the Delta button, to hear what it affects. You really don't want to overdo it and it should be a subtle effect when used on the mixbus imo, so I set the ratio to 2:1 and the GR limit to 2.5, but you're of course free to experiment more and make it more obvious, and use the Dry/Wet knob to blend the expansion into the track.

Attack/Release: I got them set to Auto and finding the sweet spot purely depends on the song, so again if you're uncertain of what to do, the Delta button might be your friend, to get it to where you want it to sit.

S/C EQ: I've done some radical and aggressive moves here, boosting the upper low-mids and the air a lot. It is inspired by bManic's Xpander for Mastering bM preset, just tweaked to fit my needs in this scenario.

Clipper is set to go into the side-chained signal, so that the original transient doesn't poke out, but stays pretty equal, which makes the S/C EQ more musical/not as aggressive as it might seem and this makes for a more consistent result. Shaving off 1-2dB at the peaks.

Mixbus- Slow Dancer TM

Preset calibration: Gain stage to -18dBfs, with -6dBfs as the maximum peak.

You got this slow-paced song, that you could have slowed danced to in high school, but it doesn't move you, this might be the solution for you. This preset is set to be smooth, add glue and dimension to your song.

Parameters to tweak:

Threshold: Set it so that it compresses the peaks about 2dB. You can adjust the GR limit if the peaks are all over the place and you want a calmer behavior from P11 Abyss. For most of the time I like to see the needle stay between 0-1dB of GR most of the song and it being pretty active during the song, but with a light ratio, soft knee and close to perfectly dialed in attack and release times, you can't really hear the compression, but when bypassed it's clear to hear the added dimension P11 Abyss adds to the song.

PSI knob: I got the pressure knob set pretty low as I want it to act more transparently. Experiment with it, if the song sounds a bit sterile to you.

Attack: Medium-slow settings makes the slow dancer move like they should.

Release: Needs to be set slow. No rush, just close your eyes and sway with the song.

Dry/Wet: Letting some dry signal pass through can be useful as well, if the song is already pretty compressed, just to add some nice dimension to it.

S/C HPF: As with a lot of slow-paced songs, the low end can be pretty essential and you probably won't do any harm to it. Therefore, I got the detector set to a little over 100Hz.

Transformer IN/OUT: As the PSI knob and Soul is set fairly conservative, so that it acts more subtle, I've set the transformers more aggressively to add some nice harmonics to fit the tone of the song. Dial it in as you see it best suited.

Piano- Grand Chords TM

Preset calibration: Gain stage to -18dBfs, with -6dBfs as the maximum peak.

You got a pop track, which it's pretty dense and the piano takes up a lot of headroom, but it's barely heard, this might be the preset for you.

Parameters to tweak:

Threshold: Should be set to compress in the realm of 6-8dB.

PSI Knob: 10. This is a pushed sound. So heavy pressure is needed.

Release: This all depends on the song and how often the chord changes happen. Usually as slow as you can allow yourself to get it.

S/C EQ: You got some heavy bass notes, set the filter so that the sub/bass isn't triggering the detector of P11 Abyss, it could also be wise to set the side-chain EQ1 to trigger some of the low-mids that can get rid of some mud, as the main goal for this preset is to let the piano chords cut through the mix, without taking up too much space.

Wet/Dry: 100% Processed Wet imho.

Main Out: Use it to push levels into the LMTR.

LMTR: Just tapping it, so that I see decimals of GR. Surely depends on the amount of transients, but I would just be looking to shave off the loudest peaks just a tiny bit.

Tone Adjustments:

O2: Yes please, though it can be a bit addictive on VST pianos I have to say. Kind of like an Aural Exciter too much of its effect can sound unnatural on this.

Mod: You want the piano more towards the front? Yes. Let it sit where it's at; No.

Soul: I want the full range of harmonics, so it's 100 for me. But if the source already has the color you are looking for, I can see why you would go without the soul, this time.

Transformer IN/OUT: I don't mind adding color to the input circuit of the transformer.

Piano- Soft Theme Smoothing TM

Preset calibration: Gain stage to -18dBfs, with -6dBfs as the maximum peak.

You got this beautiful piano theme/motif, that just needs a tiny bit of compression for the performance to bloom. This preset will give you that gentle touch, supporting what the main performance. You put it on to be felt, not heard.

Parameters to tweak:

Threshold: With a gentle ratio let the peaks of the performance only be the ones triggering the compressor. Let it shave of 2-3dB. And you'll be golden.

PSI Knob: I like it to be set half way, 5, giving the track a little weight and not sounding clinical.

Attack: Medium attack. You definitely don't want to step on the transients this time.

Release: Medium to slow attack is probably where it's at. Play around with it, but be careful and not go too fast.

S/C EQ: No HPF, as I want the full spectrum to trigger the compressor. If the piano sounds a bit too dark, I'll like the EQ1 on the side-chain to detect some of the low-mids in the 200-300 area. Adding some air to the EQ IN signal with a high shelf might be something to consider.

Wet/Dry: As the compression needs to be subtle, letting some of the dry signal pass through, more than 20% in my case, might solidify the emotions.

Tone Adjustments:

O2: I love it on pianos, so it's a definite for me. Though as previously said in the 'Grand Chords' preset, be careful to not overdo it. Warning: can be addictive.

Mod: Not this time, unless it's hidden behind a blanket.

Soul: Giving it some extra warmth is in my book where it's at when it comes to pianos, so why not give it some extra soul.

Transformer IN/OUT: If you're not happy with how the source sounds at this moment, using these knobs might be the way to solve your problems. I was happy with the default setting.

Strings- Smooth _ Steady TM

Preset calibration: Gain stage to -18dBfs, with -6dBfs as the maximum peak.

You have a beautiful string arrangement that you really don't want to mess up with a lot of processing. P11 Abyss can make it bloom in a really nice way.

Parameters to tweak:

Threshold: This needs really light compression; 2:1 ratio and a soft knee and set the threshold so that it compresses about 1-2 dB at max.

Attack/Release: Set it medium-slow and it feels like a warm vari-mu leveler.

Tone Adjustments:

IN EQ2: Add some nice air, to make it shine.

O2 is made for this. Give it a little hint of harmonics with Transformer IN and Soul and you should be settled.

Vocals - Gentle Levelling bM

This preset is for gentle levelling of vocals. The purpose is to gently control the general dynamics of the whole vocal performance while not taking anything away from it. It's the preset you choose for extremely skilled singers who have great controlled dynamics and nuances in their performance. This preset also works for all kinds of general purpose levelling tasks, not just for vocals!

Parameters to tweak

Threshold should be set so that compression is happening virtually all the time. The Gain Reduction needle should be moving between 4 and 8dB of gain reduction almost all the time.

Clipper in the side-chain should be set so that the loudest peaks clip about 3dB. This guarantees gentle levelling.

Release can be adjusted for faster action. Optimal range being quite wide, from about -4 to 10.

Attack can also be adjusted but it's optimal range is around 40 to 100ms. Setting faster attack times can lead to pumping, depending on the source.

O2, Transformer saturation and Soul can all be adjusted according to taste.

Side-chain EQ is set by default to be optimal for vocals but the target frequencies can of course be set differently for other sources.

Vocals - Peak Limiting bM

This preset aims to transparently tame stray peaks in a vocalists performance. The preset can of course be used for other sound sources as well but the Side-chain EQ has been setup optimally for vocals.

Parameters to tweak

Trim In and Trim Out are the easiest tools to quickly get the desired amount of limiting of peaks. Simply set Trim In until you get the desired amount of compression and limiting. Then set Trim Out so that you level match at the output of the plugin.

Threshold should be set to achieve a subtle transparent gain reduction of around 1 to 2dB.

Limiter should then be tweaked to take care of the bulk of the actual limiting. It's usually a few dB above the compressor threshold. The limiter can handle up to 5dB of limiting without too many issues (slightly depending on source).

Vocals - Present and Punchy bM

This preset is for vocal compression post EQ. This means you should do the basic vocal EQ first and then add Abyss as the compressor after your EQ. The aim of the preset is to add control, clarity and presence. This will help the vocal cut through a mix.

Parameters to tweak

Threshold should be set to so that you get most of the compression movement going between 3 and 7dB of gain reduction. However, do not be scared if some stray peaks go all the way to 12dB. If you find that the preset is pumping too much you could set the clipper in the side-chain so that it limits the worst offending peaks before it hits the compression detection.

Knee can be set softer together with a faster release to get some more control and presence.

Attack and Release should be tweaked to taste. Default settings are a good starting point.

Vocals BG- Consistently in Place TM

Preset calibration: Gain stage to -18dBfs, with -6dBfs as the maximum peak.

The target here is to make sure that the background vocals enhance the lead vocal, by sitting behind, making sure that it doesn't poke out and takes the attention away from the lead. While being the difference maker if you want a well sounding vocal production.

Parameters to tweak:

Threshold: Main goal is to even out the dynamics, so compressing 8dB at the peaks should be fine, if the source asks for it. Setting it up with a solid ratio 6:1 or even more with a medium-soft knee, makes for not subtle but tasty compression for this task.

PSI knob: As I want a more pushed compression, I tend to like it to sit around 6.

Attack/Release: Attack needs to be set fast. "How fast can you set it before it deadens the sound?" Release set to medium or medium-slow. This is all song dependent. Just don't go too fast.

LMTR: Shaving off the peaks that has been let through. Important to not go too far, so 1-1.5dB of GR is something to aim for, unless the distortion breaks up before that.

Tone Adjustments:

MOD off, to let it sit behind the lead vocal, but if you want the background vocals to take charge, then MOD can do your thing.

Soul 50-60: Most of the time I want a little different sounding BG than lead, so just hear how they compliments each other.

S/C EQ: Pushing some of the “muddy” low-mids into the compressor with EQ1 and de-essing some of the harsh S-es by boosting the S/C with about 7dB around 8kHz, makes so the BG vocals sit better in the mix.

IN EQ: Add some nice air to the BGs if it calls for it.

As always, a little bit of **O2**, the 20-30 range being my favorite, does the trick most of the time.

Transformer IN/OUT: Dial in the color you want to taste.

Just as a reminder: this is meant to be a starting point, not a set and forget solution.

Vocals Lead- 1st F Pop TM

Preset calibration: Gain stage to -18dBfs, with -6dBfs as the maximum peak.

This is the first part of a series of two instances of P11 Abyss in a row. Inspired by the combo of an 1176 going into a LA-2A.

Parameters to tweak:

Threshold: This being the most aggressive of the two presets, the aim is to get the vocals more in-your-face, without harshness or annoyance. Depending on how dynamic the vocal is, it wouldn’t be uncommon to see the needle hitting about 8dB of GR and still sounding good.

Attack/Release: Let the initial transient through by setting the attack not too fast and instead go for a fast attack to get that aggressive in-your-face sound.

LMTR: I got it so it shaves off 1dB of GR at max. Not always necessary if it’s already dynamically controlled.

Tone Adjustments:

MOD on, to get it more mid-forward.

Soul set to about 60 gives it some mojo, just like pushing the Transformer IN in Class A with a few dBs.

Some **O2** makes the details of the vocal come forward.

EQ2 is set to 5kHz with about 3dB of boost to really make sure that the clarity and presence shines through the mix.

Remember this is just step one and they are set to work in combination, so if you only play with this one first without doing anything with the other (part 2), it might not be that pleasant of a sound.

Vocals Lead- 2nd F Pop TM

Preset calibration: Gain stage to -18dBfs, with -6dBfs as the maximum peak.

This is the second part of the preset, which is set to even/smooth out the vocal after it's been set with a more energetic compression with the first one.

Parameters to tweak:

Threshold: This one being the gentler of the two, it's better to be more conservative here. Aiming for 4dB of GR at max, with a gentle ratio and soft knee, helps the vocal to be smoothen out, without sounding dull.

Attack/Release: Medium attack and medium-slow release makes leveling out the vocal pretty nice. You can tweak the attack as you like, but the purpose of this preset is to make the vocal smoother after part 1.

Tone Adjustments:

No **MOD**, to chillout the vocal a bit. Double MOD in series would be in most cases too much I believe, but it might be useful if you really want it THAT upfront.

Soul 80-90 to add some extra warmth to it.

Transformer IN/OUT in Class A/B pushed pretty generously to fatten up that lead vocal.

IN EQ: Make the vocal pop by setting EQ1 to 2kHz with a boost of about 2.5 and EQ2 with a high-shelf at 10kHz with the slider set to 5. Surely this depends on how the vocals sound to start with. You're welcome to tweak it as you like.

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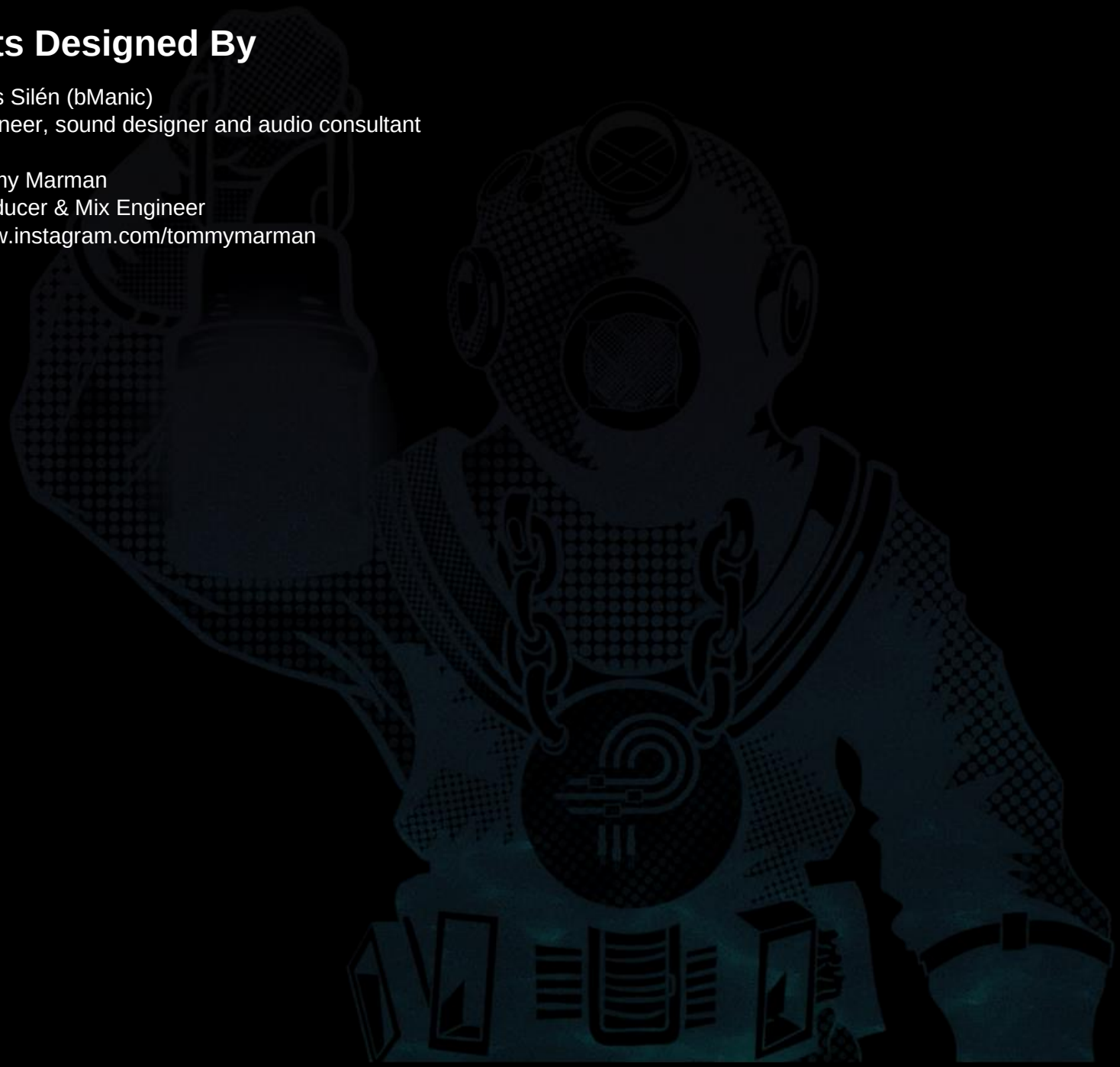

PULSAR MODULAR

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