

Universal Audio UAD 4K Plug-ins

Channel Strip & Dynamics Processor

Just in case the line-up of plug-ins available for the UAD cards wasn't tempting enough already, Universal Audio have now added emulations of classic SSL hardware.

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Last year's release of the UAD2 cards gave Universal Audio's DSP platform a healthy performance boost, and ensured compatibility with future systems, thanks to the jump to SHARC DSPs and PCI-e connectivity. They've also been busy adding new plug-ins to the range, many

of which mimic the sound and performance of vintage gear. The latest additions (additions?) model the channel strip and bus compressor sections from an SSL console. According to the manual, both plug-ins are exact (albeit unofficial and unlicensed) emulations of the relevant modules from the SSL 4000G+ desk, which has been the console of choice for many hit mixers over the past 25 years. Both are available for UAD1 and UAD2, in all the usual plug-in formats.

The English Channel

The UAD 4k Channel Strip contains a filter section, expander/gate, compressor and four-band EQ, emulating the much favoured Type E 'black knob' EQ found in earlier SSL consoles. The filter section consists of a high- and low-pass filter that may also be used for side-chain filtering, making them

excellent tools for frequency-dependent compression and expansion. The dynamics section has an easy-to-use compressor with ratio, threshold and release controls, plus a slow/fast attack switch and a stereo link function. Ratio is continuously variable from no compression to full limiting, and although attack time is normally auto-sensing and programme-dependent, it can also be set to a fixed 1ms value via the Fast Attack button. Finally, the release time is continuously variable between 0.1 and four seconds. In use, the compressor has a seductive automatic make-up that



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Universal Audio UAD 4K
Plug-ins **\$249/\$199**

pros

- Excellent sound quality.
- Performance close to the original hardware.
- The Buss Compressor provides the magic 'glue' effect.

cons

- Threshold control on the Channel Strip's compressor has restricted range.

summary

The UAD 4K Buss Compressor and Channel Strip set a new standard for analogue emulation in software, convincingly replicating the performance of the original hardware. The Channel Strip is excellent for everyday work and the Buss Compressor provides the glue to produce a finished-sounding mix.

