Master Plan

v1.0.15

Master Plan

Bypass
Unity

In
-6 0 +6

Out
-6 -3 -9 -12 -0.1

Low
-6 0 +6

High
-8 0 +8

Loud
0 4.0 12 24

Wide
x1 x1.5 x2

N-10
Phone
Band
Mono
Dim
Off

Thick Clean Multi Smooth Calm 2x Tape

LUFS-I: −24.5   LUFS-S: −53.1   Peak: −6.9   Crest: 46.2   Quick Master >   XL >

MUSIK
HACK

TECHNIQUE (QUICK START)

Setup   Remove all plugins from your master bus/2-track and insert **Master Plan.** Select a **Quick Master** preset.

Amplify   Adjust **Loud** until the **LUFS-S** & **LUFS-I** are mostly green and white. Click the meters to reset them.

Tune   Adjust the **Low** & **High** tone controls to your preference.

Expand   Turn up **Wide** until it feels like your track comes alive. Turn back if things get too spacey.

Fix   Muddy? Flip on **Clean**. Harsh? Flip on **Calm**. Thin? Flip on **Thick**. Adjust sliders under each control to dial it in.

Style   To add some glue, reach for **Smooth** and **Tape**.

Tweak   Have problems with resonance in loud spots, or distortion on long notes? Turn on the **Multi** control and dial back the frequency range that's causing you trouble.

Audition When you're happy, test your track through different systems using the filter controls on the right.

Learn some moves

- To **type** a value for a control, **double-click** it.
- To set a **precise value** when moving a dial or slider, hold the **shift** key.
- To **reset a control**, hold the **option** (Mac) or **alt** (PC) key, and **click** it.
- To reset meters, click anywhere in the metering area.
- **Presets preserve loudness**, so don't be afraid to explore after dialing in.
- To check for **updates**, click the **gear** (⚙) to open the **settings screen.**

CONTROLS

Loud A special limiter/clipper circuit designed to maximize loudness while maintaining clarity. Click the **Loud** label to enable or bypass this control.

Wide Phase coherent stereo depth. Click the **Wide** label to enable or bypass this control.

Low/High Tone controls, buttery and open. Click the **Low** or **High** label to enable or bypass these controls.

Thick Fine-tuned, analog-inspired saturation. When enabled, use its slider to control additional saturation.

Clean Remove mud in the lows. When enabled, use its slider to increase the effect.

Smooth Gently tame dynamics very slightly and add subtle glue to the sound of your mix.

Multi No-nonsense multipressor. When enabled, use the **L**, **M**, and **H** sliders to control the amount of gain reduction in the low, medium, and high bands of your mix.

Calm Tame harsh high frequency buildup that tends to make its way into modern music production. When enabled, use its slider to control the amount of the effect.

Tape True analog tape glow. At low levels, tightens up the bass. As you push it higher, hysteresis (the physical effect of using magnets to record sound) adds subtle saturation and tames the high end.

In/Out Control the level into and out of the plugin. Raising input pushes harder into the saturation. If you peak on the way in, the LED next to the input control will flash.

Bypass   Delay-compensated bypass circuit.

Unity   Compensates for the volume increase in processing, so you can hear what you are doing without taking loudness into account. That's important! We react strongly to loudness, and sometimes let it fool us into thinking something sounds better, when it is simply louder. Turn unity on when working for a fair comparison, then turn it off to hear how much Master Plan boosts your track. Always disable **Unity** before bouncing!

Filters   The filter section on the far right of the interface emulates different playback systems, so you can hear what your mix will sound like in different environments.

METERS & EXTRAS

Located at the bottom of the interface for convenience, the following controls and settings help you see what Master Plan is doing and

LUFS-I — Integrated loudness. Averages loudness since the last time the meters were reset. Click to reset. Keep this meter white or green. If it turns red, consider easing up!

LUFS-S — Short-term loudness. Averages loudness over the last three seconds. Click to reset. See the note about colors in **LUFS-I**.

Peak — The loudest true peak since the last reset. Click to reset.

Crest — The difference between **LUFS-S** and **Peak**. It's a rough measure of the dynamics in your music. More is better!

Presets — Select a preset to get started, keeping loudness constant. For more information, see the **Presets** section.

Size — Interface size as S, M, L, XL (on front, near presets).

⚙ — Settings and updates (see the next section).

Undo/Redo — Located in the upper right, these controls look like loopy arrows and undo your last action or redo it.

SETTINGS

Click the gear (⚙) in the lower-right of the interface to access the following settings. In addition, this screen provides a download button if an update is available, and reminds you of your login email. To close the settings screen, click the **X** in the upper-right corner.

Faceplate
Dark or light.

LED Color
Set the central color of the LED display.

Color Mode
Set the way the colors change over time.

Meter Targets
When off, meters are always a neutral color. When on, meters turn **green** as you approach -8.5 LUFS, then **yellow** as you push harder, and **red** when you are likely pushing your track into distortion. Always use your ears, but these target colors can help you stay in the boundaries!

Visual FX
When **on**, the lights change colors over time and glow to peak changes in audio. However, the plugin's interface uses more processing power when open. When **off**, the color stays constant and does not change with the audio, but uses less resources.

Use GPU
Renders the interface with your computer's graphics processor. **This feature is experimental** and may cause issues in some hosts, so test it out on a session that is not important before enabling it elsewhere. It may offload some processing from your CPU when the editor is open.

Make Settings Default
Makes the current settings default for new instances of Master Plan. Any change you make to your settings after instantiating the plugin are saved with that instance and override the default.

PRESETS

Quick Results

Master Plan has some presets in the lower right of the interface. To get started quickly, choose one of the **Quick Master** presets and go from there. Presets maintain your selected loudness when you choose them. To save your currents settings as a preset, select **Save Preset** from the menu. To delete, import, or export presets, choose **Manage Presets**.

True Peak vs. Loud Presets

Master Plan's presets are divided into three groups. **FX** should be self-explanatory. But the difference between the **Loud** and **True Peak** groups is worth an explanation.

There's a lot of discussion in the mastering world about loudness wars, LUFS, streaming platforms, encoding, true peaks, etc. At the end of the day, we can boil all this down into two perspectives:

1) **Loud:** I want maximum loudness for myself and my audience. There are standards to normalize loudness across tracks, but many people never enable them, and people who listen to downloaded, uncompressed music aren't affected. True peaks might pop up when my music is encoded into MP3 or AAC, but they are not always audible. I want to stand out whenever possible!

2) **True Peak:** Standards created by AES will get me the highest quality music across all platforms, because they will help me eliminate nearly all true peaks, even after conversion to AAC or MP3. Over time, more services will make volume normalization default so there's no need to push volume beyond -14 LUFS. Pushing the volume of my music lowers its dynamic range and I want the listener to hear every detail as close to the original recording as possible, so that is fine with me.

Both of these perspectives are reasonable for different people making different music. Choose what speaks to you!

DETAILS, TIPS, TRICKS

Push, don't shove

Master Plan has an excellent loudness circuit that can often add +4dB or more into a track without flattening your drums or audibly distorting. That's *much louder* than other limiters, compressors, and clippers, which deaden your drums or start to snap and growl too early unless you do a lot of hand holding. When **Master Plan** is shoved too hard, it behaves like a clipper taking too much heat; if you start to hear the bass growl or a pop in front of your kick, ease up!

Less is more

You don't need to use every control to get an incredibly polished sound! Start by focusing on the four main knobs: **Loud**, **Wide**, **Low**, and **High**. The buttons below the knobs are for tackling specific problems your track may not have.

Broad strokes before the finer points

Dial in the important bits so that they're "close enough" and move through the plugin until everything sounds right. Then go through again with a fine-toothed comb to amp things up. Think of it like building a desk from a box: get all the screws in loose, then tighten them up. If you try to get one control "perfect", adjusting the others may shift the sound, so don't get too precious too soon!

Give the coders some

Credits and software licensing information (we couldn't do this without you!) is on the **settings screen**. Get there by clicking on the **gear** (⚙).

Help! I need somebody!

If you need help with your licenses or technical support, contact info@musikhack.com and we will get back to you as soon as we can. You can also click on the Discord icon in the settings screen to chat with us!