

Reference: <https://estradaistudio.pl/mieszanka/32204-tbproaudio-ablm2-glosnosc-jak-truczna>

Volume like poison

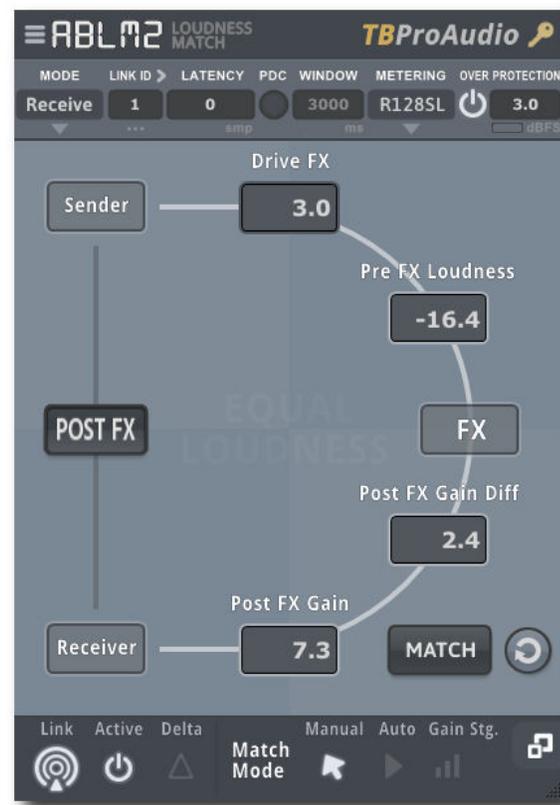
For several years I have been obsessed with loudness, the fluctuations of which make it very difficult to judge actions during mixing or mastering, after all, everything louder seems to sound better. Unfortunately, in most cases, when we use an equalizer, compressor or saturation, the gain structure changes and that does mean, and the apparent better sound turns out to be just louder. I remember working on my first album, using compressors on every track, and it always sounded better to me. If only I knew then what I know today ...

But enough veteran memories, it's time to take a look at the latest TBProAudio plug- a company which I became a fanboy after reviewing their DSEQ automatic dynamic equalizer a few months ago (by the way, a few weeks ago, it was improved again and is available in the third version).

TBPro is a company that does not have a giant marketing machine and a stunning website behind it, but has simple and effective plugins that solve key problems in studio work. In addition, their offerings are stable and constantly improved, with no additional racketeering for the update.

ABLM2 is an abbreviation of AB Loudness Match - as the name suggests, we are dealing with a seemingly banal plug that allows you to adjust the volume of the signal before and after the effect / effects, so it is equal. But as it happens in life, the devil is in the details and they make a given tool stand out from the crowd, and this is the case with ABLM2. First of all, stability. A few months ago, I was describing a similar Gainmatch plugin here that does exactly the same. Everything would be OK, if not for the fact that after some time it turned out that I have a lot of problems with it - Ableton Live does not see it, and it does not start in the session, and I had similar problems in Reaper ... Nothing like that happens in the case of ABLM2. After a week of testing, I haven't found any problems with stability on both platforms.

How does it work? It's very simple. We fire one instance of ABLM2 before the effect or the whole chain of effects, and one by one after the effects on a given track. Now you just need to make sure that the former works in "Sender" mode and the latter in "Receiver" mode (menu on the top left), although it happens automatically and you shouldn't worry about it. The volume equalization is also performed automatically and after a few seconds, just click on the



icon on the left to be able to safely and reliably compare the signal before the effects (“PRE FX”) and after (“POST FX”). And that's pretty much it when it comes to basic functionality. The user can also opt out of automatic compensation and enter the appropriate value manually (at the bottom in the "Match Mode" field instead of "Auto", then select "Manual" and press the "Match" icon. Everything is done quickly and painlessly, and a large, clear interface additionally makes work easier.

However, ABLM2 offers much more. I like the idea of a "graph" in the shape of a semicircle of signal flow and gain changes. First we have the "Drive FX" field, which allows us to boost the signal to properly drive the effect. This makes a lot of sense, if only because many plugins work optimally at -18 dbFS (analog zero), and some of them just behave differently at different input gain (I mean guitar amp emulations, for example). In the next “Pre FX Loudness” window we can see the exact volume with which the signal enters the effect. The "Post FX Gain Diff" shows the differences in the levels of "before" and "after" the effect. The next “Post FX Gain” window tells us what gain adjustment the plug-in has applied to keep the original volume. This graph makes it much easier to control the signal and understand how some plugins work. Very useful. As if that was not enough, the listening session can be performed in perfect synchronization without latency. Again, you can manually enter the latency introduced by the plug, or automatically - just press the round icon "" PDC " and after a few moments you will see what latency is introduced by a given plug with automatic compensation. Also interesting is the "Inverse" option that equalizes the volume through the application of changing the volume of the signal before it enters the effect. The option to save four snapshots of the current settings is also welcome, which facilitates all experiments and linking multiple instances of the plug-in (there can be as many as 256 of them in a given project). To sum up - if you want to really hear what changes in the sound are made by the plug-ins you use, you've just come across a messiah who will reveal the truth to you. One of the most important plugins in my arsenal today.

Marcin Staniszewski

www.colormysound.com