

Reference: <https://estradaistudio.pl/mieszanka/31690-gladko-cieplo-tbproaudio-dseq>

Smooth, warm, TBProAudio DSEQ



A few years ago, the soothe oeksound dynamic equalizer appeared out of nowhere, completely changing the rules of the game. The elimination of unpleasant resonances and other "surprises" has never been easier (its second, improved version was launched recently). It's no wonder then that other manufacturers are trying to improve this concept. One of them is the small but thriving company TBProAudio.

It's hard not to be a fan of semi-automatic dynamic equalizers like the so-called soothe or Gullfoss - these are quick and effective tools, although paradoxically this also makes them dangerous, because it is very easy to pour a child with a bath. In the case of soothe, sometimes the problematic sound is devoid of resonances, but at the same time it can lose a lot of body and become bland. Although it must be admitted that this happens mainly in really severe cases. In turn, Gullfoss can not only eliminate spectral bandits, but also highlight specific bands, making the mix more balanced and selective. DSEQ, however, is closer to the first one - so how does DSEQ present against the soothe?

We are dealing with a dynamic equalizer based on FFT analysis. The idea is simple, effective and the method of use similar to the soothe. Activate the plug on the problematic track and grab the "Threshold" knob on the bottom left. The further left from 12 o'clock, the more we lower the action threshold and thus deepen the process of eliminating unruly resonances. Then reach for the "Slope" slider at the top left. Here we are tuning the algorithm - positive values focus the plug-in operation on the high band (useful for example when deessing unpleasant vocals), and negative values on the low. Just below is the "Selectivity" parameter, which can be compared to the "Q" parameter in traditional equalizers - it allows you to specify the width of the algorithm. "Sharp" means a single, selective reduction, while lower values mean a wider range of action that potentially may sound less natural.

As in the soothe, we can monitor the difference in the incoming and outgoing signal, which allows you to quickly determine what is really happening with the signal and whether there are any problems with the phase or distortion. The "Delta" icon located on the top bar is used for this.

The icing on the cake is the "Pre-Filter" section. It works on a similar principle as the internal keying module in compressors - when we nudge a given band up, the algorithm will be more sensitive to it, so its operation will be more radical. In turn, when we weaken a range, we "anesthetize" the algorithm in this band. Thanks to this, we can process only part of the signal, without harming its healthy areas.

I tested DSEQ mainly on vocals, because they are the most demanding and you can hear all unnatural artifacts on their example. Compared to soothe, DSEQ has a larger "sweet spot". I mean, in the case of the former, the effect is often barely audible, but when the depth of action is turned up, the signal quickly loses coherence and becomes "translucent". In the case of DSEQ, I was able to solve the problems faster, with quality not inferior to my competitor. Only with really extreme settings and lacking in common sense, DSEQ began to sound plastic. In "Ultra" mode, DSEQ appears to be one of the best deessers I've dealt with. And speaking of "Ultra", even in this most intensive setting of the quality of operation, the plug-in consumed twice as few resources on my computer than soothe2.

DSEQ also works great on the master bus, especially as a tool for smoothing the digital harshness. Just a gentle brush with a filter boosted around 4-7 KHz and the mix becomes warmer, gaining nobility. It is also worth noting that the plug can work in both stereo and M / S mode, which allows even more subtle interference in the processed material.

Nice additions are also: an extensive monitoring section (pre-filter, delta, side-chain) and spectrum analyzer (stereo, left, right, mid, side), as well as the option to compare A / B settings.

Given the relatively low price (79 Euro), quality and ease of use, DSEQ appears to be solid competition for more than twice as expensive soothe.

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