

## Super-compressors

For when just attack, release, threshold and ratio won't do, these are the most compress-hensive dynamics devices out there right now



## u-he Presswerk €129

u-he's compression brainchild can be taken many ways. To start, it's simple: Threshold, Ratio, and Attack that goes down to 0.1ms, Release and Adaptive Release, Dry/Wet, Auto Makeup, and a lovely saturation section to boot.

But let's head back into esoterica again. You can select between Feedback and Feedforward circuit models or an 'Interactive' mode that combines the best of both worlds, the detector's RMS Window can be tweaked, and the knee response changed using the Soft Knee and Non-linearity controls. The sidechain can be high- and low-pass filtered, and both internal and external sidechains can be blended between. There's a 'dual phase rotator' to make Presswerk behave more like an analogue compressor. Very nice touches.

Bearing this complexity in mind, perhaps the best thing about Presswerk is the ability to load it in different views with more bitesize controls. These focused interfaces – Easy Compressor, Drum Compressor, Limiter, etc – let you concentrate on just what you need to carry out specific tasks. It's the perfect balance of simple tasks and advanced treatments within a single plugin.

[u-he.com](http://u-he.com)

**VERDICT 9.2**



## Blue Cat's Dynamics

€149

A no-nonsense device that can handle both gating and compression in the same transfer curve, BC's Dynamics provides two circuits for these different duties. Both the 'Up' and 'Down' circuits contain Threshold and Ratio controls, a Knee, and Depth (range, by any other name). These two stages can be pushed into positive or negative ratios, with the two stages plotted on the same graph, and the attack, release and hold of both determined together in a separate pane. Attack and release 'Shape' parameters are a nice touch, although not obviously descriptive of what those shapes are. Elsewhere, there are some niceties like VCA/Opto processing style blending and Peak/RMS detection blending, Lookahead, and L/R M/S stereo linkage.

The Ashley Madison of compressors, BC Dynamics has just the right amount of new dynamics experiences to pique the interest of someone who's bored of the same four controls and wants to go further down the rabbit hole.

[bluecataudio.com](http://bluecataudio.com)

**VERDICT 8.7**



## FabFilter Pro-C 2 £134

A compressor souped-up with that legendary FabFilter sauce, Pro-C 2 gets you compressor with eight flavours, including Vocal, Opto, Punch and Mastering, and Auto makeup Gain on output if desired. There's Lookahead, Hold and fairly comprehensive sidechain editing, with Pro-Q-style EQ. The Stereo Linking slider spans Unlinked (0%), Linked (100%), and pushing it past 100 lets you determine linking in mid/side combination.

Pro-C 2 doesn't quite take it as overboard as the other compressors in this round-up, remaining focused and restrained in its implementation of compression. The options it does give you, though, are all stunningly easy to use, immediately available and intuitive. Other than that, the best thing about this one is probably its waveform visualiser, running by alongside the knee so you can immediately see how your changes are affecting the compression.

[fabfilter.com](http://fabfilter.com)

## VERDICT 9.0



### DMGAudio Compassion £150

Starting off in a similar way to your average compressor, Compassion offers Threshold, Ratio, Attack and Release dials. The first sign that the plugin goes above and beyond is the negative ratio settings, which bring the signal down further than the set threshold. Expand the interface, though, and you'll find the advanced controls in a fold-out panel. Features like auto release behaviour, hysteresis, ceiling and expansion controls are here, giving access to a world of microtweaks to get your compression in any shape you can conceive. The result is an eminently customisable plugin, although the interface isn't as immediate as it could be, resorting to menus and separate views too often.

Compassion's Mods button is an interesting touch. Mods save and load similarly to presets, but they only change certain parameters within the plugin, letting you try out, say, an Opto or FET compressor type, settings prepared specifically for vocals or bass, or different noise floors, mid/side configurations and expansion types. With your other settings retained, loading a mod instead of a preset is a good way to manage the web of settings in the plugin as a whole.

[dmgaudio.com](http://dmgaudio.com)

## VERDICT 8.6



## MeldaProduction MTurboComp €199

On the surface, you get the usual Threshold, Ratio and detector EQ controls. Measuring their values as percentages is a strange choice, but this is easy to overlook once you see what's lurking beneath 'easy mode': a panoply of controls for what is probably the ultimate in compression customisation in this round-up. With an astounding *four* envelope followers and another four processors to match, plus post-compression EQ and Saturation, this is a dynamics processor that hears the phrase 'less is more' and punches it into the ionosphere.

For example, not content with simply offering Attack, Release Minimum and Maximum, Peak Hold, RMS Length, Delay and assorted other controls for each of those four detectors, each also offers a further 'Settings' window, featuring custom-drawn Attack and Release Shapes (editors open in yet another window), Psychoacoustic Prefiltering, Spectral Smoothing... the list goes on! If you're a super-doooper compression nerd par excellence, this *could* be enough for you. And if it's all a bit too much, you've still got the Easy Mode to fall back on.

[meldaproduction.com](http://meldaproduction.com)

## VERDICT 8.9