

—BLACK—

 ACUSTICA



1.Introduction

Thank you for purchasing Black! We highly recommend you to read the following documentation in order to fully take advantage of all the amazing features that this plugin suite has to offer.

Black is an Acqua plugin suite made of two FREE players that focus on gain staging: a standard version (BLACK) and a "Pro-Oriented" version (BLACK GURU). Both plugins are available in the following formats: VST, VST3, AU and AAX.

When designing Black we had in mind to offer you two simple and easy to use players that would bring to life our preamp emulations and at the same time handle filtering and saturation intuitively.

Black will give you the best tools for gain staging in the digital domain by easily finding the best gain levels possible while keeping the source in the optimal range and keeping distortion levels under control.

Keep an eye on this suite! You will be able to choose from many preamp emulations available in the "Additional Volumes" including modern, vintage, discontinued, custom or still existing hardware emulations.

You'll enjoy going through all the emulations in Black, for Authentic Analog Sound recreation!

2.Black Suite

2.1 Overview

Black includes:

1- Black:

FREE player (standard version), it includes a default emulation bank ('Navy Geranium')

2- Black 'Guru':

FREE player (pro-oriented version), this plugin is an advanced 'extra' version, featuring additional fine-tuning controls, it also includes a default emulation bank ('Navy Geranium')



Black (standard version)



Black 'Guru' (pro-oriented version)

The Additional volumes (A-B) are already available on our website for purchase.

- VOL A** includes 10 different preamp emulation banks.

- VOL B** includes 10 different preamp emulation banks.

For further details about the Volumes and their emulations please consult Chapter 6 (Appendix) of this document. To stay constantly updated about new Volumes, we recommend you to keep an eye on our website.

2.2 Product download, installation, and authorization

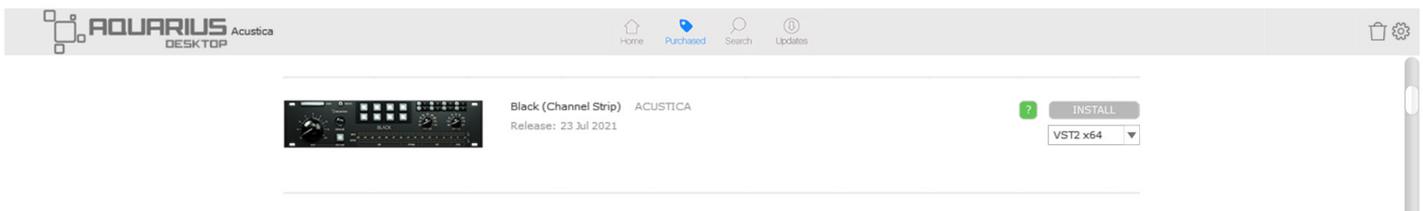
Black, and all of Acustica Audio's products, can be downloaded, installed, and authorized using the Aquarius application. The Aquarius application is a free standalone application that will manage the downloading, installation, and authorization of your product in an automatic way without user intervention. To learn more about the Aquarius application, read the users PDF manual included in the installer. Please, make sure the Aquarius application is always updated to the latest version available.

In the Aquarius application, Black comes in the form of a single item that includes Black (Channel strip) and Black Guru (Channel strip).

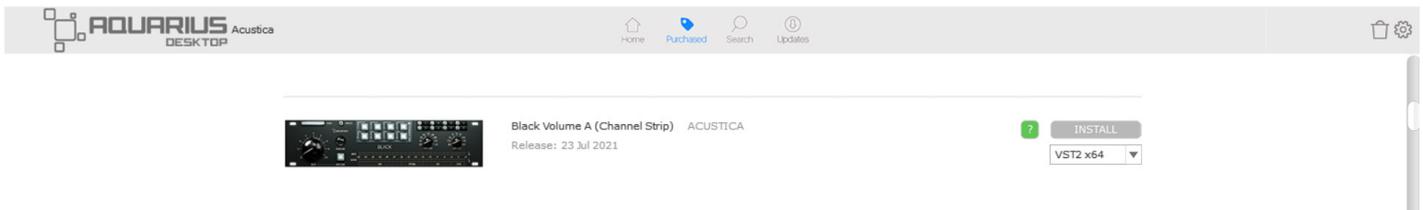
IMPORTANT:

In order to install Black - Additional Volumes correctly it is mandatory to download the Black (Channel strip) first.

- Log-in to the Aquarius application using your username email and your password.
- Click on the purchased page, and scroll down until you find Black (Channel strip).
- Select the correct plug-in format for the installation from the drop-down menu.
- The Aquarius application will download, install, and authorize the commercial product automatically.



- Click on the purchased page, and scroll down until you find Black Volume 'X*' (Channel strip).



- Click on the install button.
- Select the correct plug-in format for the installation from the drop-down menu.
- The Aquarius application will download, install, and authorize the commercial product automatically.



Black Volume A

Black Volume A includes 10 different emulations of pre-amplifications of vintage and modern consoles for a total value of over 100K. For more info about the content and details of Black Volume A please consult the User manual.

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Information

Category: Aqua
Release date: 23 Jul 2021
Release: A001
Size: 2364 MB
Developer: ACUSTICA

INSTALL
VST2 x64



- Repeat the operation for the libraries you wish to install.

*->conventional alphabetic letter, example that identifies any letter of the corresponding Black commercial library/additional Volume.

IMPORTANT:

In order to install Black - Additional Volumes TRIAL correctly it is mandatory to download the Black (Channel strip) first.

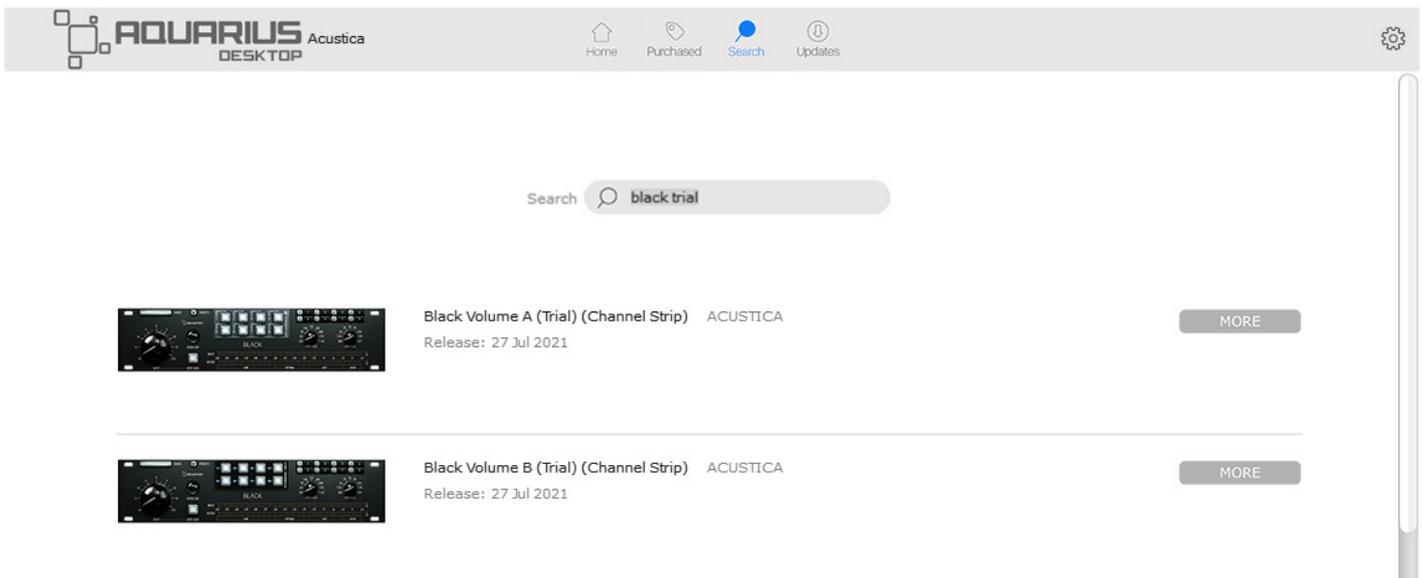
- Log-in to the Aquarius application using your username email and your password.
- Click on the purchased page, and scroll down until you find Black (Channel strip).
- Select the correct plug-in format for the installation from the drop-down menu.
- The Aquarius application will download, install, and authorize the commercial product automatically.



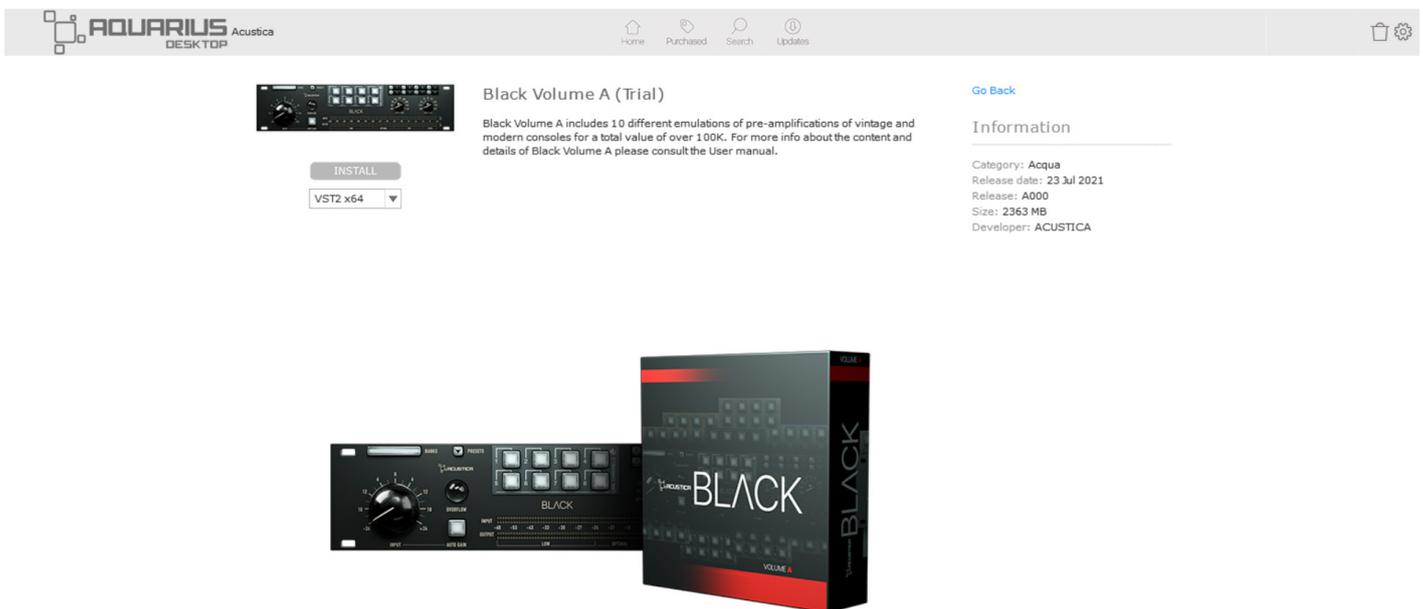
Black (Channel Strip) ACUSTICA
Release: 23 Jul 2021

INSTALL
VST2 x64

- Type the product name in the 'search' field inside Aquarius to find the '(trial)' version of the Additional Volume, then click on the thumbnail or on the 'Install' button. This will take you to the product page (the trial version of a product is also visible in the 'related products' section on the right).



- Select the right plugin format according to the DAW you are using and click 'Install'.
- Aquarius will download, install, and authorise the Black Volume 'X*' (Channel strip) automatically.
- Run your DAW. You're set!



*->conventional alphabetic letter, example that identifies any letter of the corresponding Black commercial library/additional Volume-Trials.

2.3 System Requirements

Modern computers are powerful enough to run many plugins at once. However, our technology requires more resources than algorithm-based software. Please, consider optimizing your system to work with high CPU loads and low audio latency.

All technical specifications of Acustica Audio products provided are intended to be estimates or approximations. Due to numerous variables, no guarantees of compatibility or performance can be made. The end-user is solely responsible for, prior to purchase, ensuring that the end-user's devices are compatible and meet the system requirements for Acustica Audio products.

	PC Windows		Apple macOS	
	MINIMUM	RECOMMENDED	MINIMUM	RECOMMENDED
OPERATING SYSTEM	Windows 10 64 bits ^{(1) (9)}	Windows 10 64 bits ^{(1) (9)}	macOS 10.13 ^{(1) (9)}	macOS 10.15 ^{(1) (9)}
CPU	Intel i5 Broadwell 3.1 GHz ^{(2) (8)}	Intel i9 Coffee Lake 3.5 GHz ^{(2) (8)}	Intel i5 Broadwell 3.1 GHz ^{(2) (8)}	Intel i9 Coffee Lake 3.5 GHz ^{(2) (8)}
RAM	4 GB of RAM ⁽³⁾	64 GB of RAM ⁽³⁾	4 GB of RAM ⁽³⁾	64 GB of RAM ⁽³⁾
SSD	It depends on the product ⁽⁴⁾	It depends on the product ⁽⁴⁾	It depends on the product ⁽⁴⁾	It depends on the product ⁽⁴⁾
SCREEN RESOLUTION	FHD (1920x1080)	UHD (3840x2160)	FHD (1920x1080)	UHD (3840x2160)
PLUG-IN FORMAT	VST & AAX	VST & AAX	VST, AAX & AU	VST, AAX & AU
PLUG-IN ARCHITECTURE	64-bits		64-bits	
TRIAL / DEMO	30 Days ⁽⁵⁾		30 Days ⁽⁵⁾	
SUPPORTED DAW / NLE	Cubase 64-bits & Pro Tools 64-bits ⁽⁶⁾		Cubase 64-bits & Pro Tools 64-bits & Logic Pro X 64-bits ⁽⁶⁾	
AQUARIUS APPLICATION	YES & Mandatory		YES & Mandatory	
INTERNET CONNECTION	YES & Mandatory ⁽⁷⁾		YES & Mandatory ⁽⁷⁾	

(1) Case sensitive file systems are not supported.

(2) Intel i7/i9 X and Xeon processors need CORE 16 or superior. The CPU speed is more important than the number of CPU cores.

(3) In order to run more plug-ins instances it is always necessary to increase the amount of RAM.

(4) Each format needs three times more space than what the product is in order to download and decompress the installation files.

(5) Trial settings cannot be transferred from the trial to the commercial version.

(6) For others DAWs or NLEs, try trial before buy

(7) TCP/UDP ports 8080 and 443 should be open. Reliable and fast internet connection is recommended

(8) For Apple Silicon (ARM) computers, check compatibility before purchasing. AMD processors are not officially supported.

(9) For other operating systems, check compatibility before purchasing using the trial version.

IMPORTANT: Genuine Apple device with a valid serial number or valid volume ID on Windows operating systems is mandatory.

IMPORTANT: It is highly recommended to make a complete backup before making changes to your computer systems.

IMPORTANT: Acustica Audio cannot be held responsible for any loss or damage arising directly or indirectly from any error or omission in this manual.

2.4 What is a ZL plugin

Acustica plugins come in two versions: ZL (zero latency) and a regular version. While the ZL version does not introduce any latency to your system, the standard version does. This buffer varies in size for each plugin and helps reduce the CPU and system load of your computer significantly.

We recommend that you use a ZL instance when tracking. Basically, both plugin instances are identical, but the current Acqua engine can work either with or without an audio buffer. The idea behind a ZL instance is to give you the option to run an Acqua Effect with minimal latency, which is helpful for tracking or direct monitoring.



3.Operation

Before we immerse ourselves into the explanation of each plugin control, a necessary consideration must be made concerning the nature of this new Acqua EffectPlugin suite.

We have carefully sampled a wide variety of modern and vintage preamps which you will be able to find in Black and its "Additional Volumes". Each player comes with an extremely powerful digital filtering section as well.

Black is our pinnacle solution for gain staging, an essential step in any audio workflow process.

What's the idea behind Black?

The basic concept behind BLACK is to re-create in the digital domain that warm and tone rich feeling that an analog setup is capable of delivering.

Samples and recordings are usually distributed with 0dbFs while user set processors require an operational level of around -18dbFs.

So as per any analog mixer, prior to mixing it is quite important to set a correct amount of pre amplification to your signal since the rest of the chain depends on it.

So, with that said you should consider Black as the first plugin suite to add to the channels of your DAW: just set the Input signal level using both the meters and the overflow led.

By increasing the input gain you will also affect harmonic distortion, just like on a real mixer.

Then you should use the filters to eliminate any rumble and useless content in the top end and then fiddle with the different pre-amplifications until you find the one you like most, that adds the best coloring to your source.

By taking advantage of the numerous emulations you will be able to recreate that non-linearity which is characteristic of those deep and open mixes, just like on a real analog piece of equipment.

Thanks to the contribution of the sound engineer and producer Alex Trecarichi (www.alextracarichi.it), who is an invaluable collaborator of Acusticaudio, and has been deeply involved in the production of this project, the Acustica team are very proud to release this high-performance yet easy-to-use plugin suite.

In the following chapter you will find the explanation of two of the plugins of the Black suite, Black and Black Guru (which is the full version with all the features introduced with this suite and which we recommend to experienced users).

NOTE: All information on Additional black volumes is covered on the relevant product pages, more details here: <https://www.acustica-audio.com/store/t/acqua/tools/black>

IMPORTANT: The Black plugin suite, due to the way it is designed and is used (to achieve good gain staging), does not follow the usual Acustica convention of using an input level of -18 dBfs = 0 dBu. In order to understand what your optimum level is, please use the overflow led and meter indicators.

3.1 Black

In its simplest configuration, Black enables you to:

1. Select the Banks model (Menu 1).
2. Select the available Bank channel (from 1 to X ->The maximum number depends on the respective bank model, generally the number is a multiple of 8).
3. Adjust the INPUT/ INPUT TRIM level using the relative control (Menu 3).
4. Save and reload your favorite user banks (Menu 2) -> only four user banks available.
5. Use the filter section (HPF-LPF).
6. Use the PRESETS (to automatically filter using our AI technology).
7. Check the Input signal level (Overflow LED).

3.1.1 Controls

Let's take a look at the controls of this plugin.



1. Banks: To choose the desired BANK simply click on the bar and select the model from the drop-down menu.

NOTE: Black and Black Guru include the following BANK by default: -NAVY GERANIUM (1-18)

2. Presets: Click on the arrow button and select the AI preset from the drop-down menu to Load it. These presets have an effect only on the filter section, see chapter 5 for more details.

3. User Banks (save your settings): Black (standard version) includes 4 different slots for you to save and reload your favorite bank configurations. First, set your controls as desired, at this point simply press the first available save icon (PIC). To recall the settings simply press the 'numeric' button associated with the save icon you used (1/2/3/4).

IMPORTANT: If you save a configuration using the user banks, the settings will be stored as files on your computer and will therefore not be lost. So by opening your plugin in any daw you can recall the banks as you like.

User banks paths:

OSX: ~/Library/Application Support/Acustica
WIN: C:\Users\%username%\AppData\Roaming\Acustica

Names of the User banks files:

BLACKUSERPRESET1.N2X
BLACKUSERPRESET2.N2X
BLACKUSERPRESET3.N2X
BLACKUSERPRESET4.N2X
BLACKUSERPRESET5.N2X
BLACKUSERPRESET6.N2X
BLACKUSERPRESET7.N2X
BLACKUSERPRESET8.N2X

4. Input/ Input Trim: This knob can be used as an input gain control of the plugin ranging from -24dB to +24dB. By pressing the AUTOGAIN button (LED ON) it becomes an Input Trim, a one-knob internal gain structure control linking the input and output gain stages with an inverse law. The control sets the input level from -24dB to +24dB of the plugin, and it is used to adjust the plugin's internal level.

The behavior of this knob changes according to the activation/bypass of the AUTO-GAIN button which can be set to INPUT TRIM (AUTOGAIN enabled) or Standard INPUT GAIN (AUTOGAIN DISABLED). In both modes the INPUT range level is set between -24dB to +24dB.

Note: When the preamp BANK is not selected, the 'Input Trim' mode (AUTOGAIN = LED ON) has no effect so it is not possible to increase the harmonic saturation.

5. Autogain button: This button effects the INPUT stage of the plugin. It allows you to change the behavior of the INPUT control, switching from the Standard INPUT GAIN control to the INPUT TRIM control.

6. High Pass Filter: The Frequency range (Hz) is from 40 to 1100, Off (the first knob step by-passes the HP filter).

7. Low Pass Filter: The is from 25k to 800, Off (the first knob step by-passes the LP filter).

8. Overflow LED: Indicates when an appropriate input level is reached: LED Off (bypass), Green (good), Yellow (optimal), Red (very hot).

9. Channels buttons: These buttons allow you to choose between different preamps according to the emulation selected from the BANKS menu. Press the desired preamp button to select the emulation; (LINE/MIC) from 1 to X ->The maximum number depends on the respective bank model, generally the number is a multiple of 8).



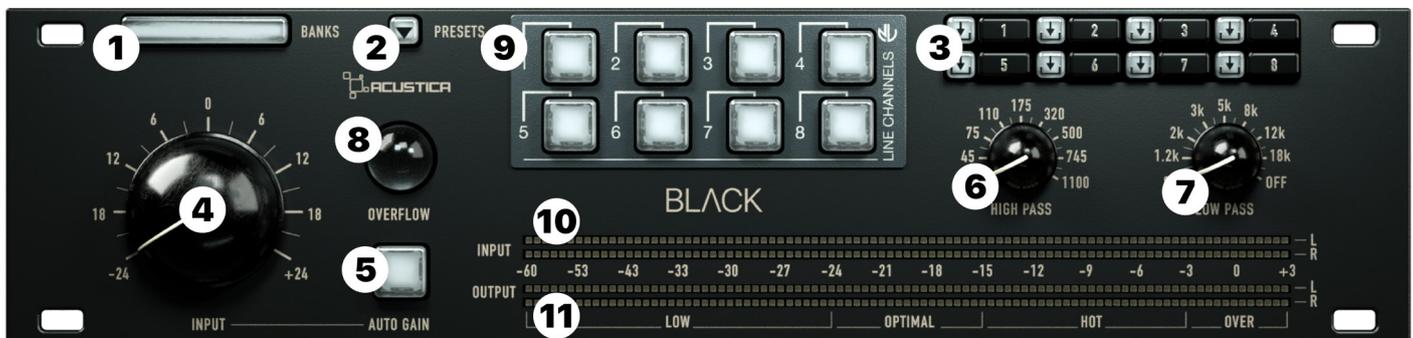
3.2 Black Guru

In its simplest configuration, Black GURU enables you to:

1. Select the Banks model (Menu 1).
2. Select the available Bank channel (from 1 to X ->The maximum number depends on the respective bank model, generally the number is a multiple of 8).
3. Adjust the INPUT/ INPUT TRIM level using the relative control (Menu 3).
4. Save and reload your favorite user banks (Menu 2) -> it's equipped by the 8 available user banks.
5. Use the filter section (HPF-LPF).
6. Use the PRESETS (to filter automatically using AI technology).
7. Check the Input signal level (Overflow LED – Input meters) and Output signal level (Output meters).

3.2.1 Controls

Let's take a look at the controls of this plugin.



1. Banks: To choose the desired BANK simply click on the bar and select the model from the drop-down menu.

NOTE: Black and Black Guru include the following BANK by default: -NAVY GERANIUM (1-16)

2. Presets: Click on the arrow button and select the AI preset from the drop-down menu to Load it. These presets have an effect only on the filter section, see chapter 5 for more details.

3. User Banks (save your settings): Black (GURU version) includes 8 different slots for you to save and reload your favorite bank configurations. First, set your controls as desired, at this point simply press the first available save icon (PIC). To recall the settings simply press the 'numeric' button associated with the save icon you used (1/2/3/4/5/6/7/8).

IMPORTANT: If you save a configuration using the user banks, the settings will be stored as a files on your computer and will therefore not be lost. So by opening your plugin in any daw you can recall the banks as you like.

User banks paths:

OSX: ~/Library/Application Support/Acustica

WIN: C:\Users\%username%\AppData\Roaming\Acustica

Names of the User banks files:

BLACKUSERPRESET1.N2X
BLACKUSERPRESET2.N2X
BLACKUSERPRESET3.N2X
BLACKUSERPRESET4.N2X
BLACKUSERPRESET5.N2X
BLACKUSERPRESET6.N2X
BLACKUSERPRESET7.N2X
BLACKUSERPRESET8.N2X

4. Input/ Input Trim: This knob can be used as an input gain control of the plugin ranging from -24dB to +24dB. By pressing the AUTOGAIN button (LED ON) it becomes an Input Trim, a one-knob internal gain structure control linking the input and output gain stages with an inverse law. The control sets the input level from -24dB to +24dB of the plugin, and it is used to adjust the plugin's internal level. The behavior of this knob changes according to the activation/bypass of the AUTO-GAIN button which can be set to INPUT TRIM (AUTOGAIN enabled) or Standard INPUT GAIN (AUTOGAIN DISABLED). In both modes the INPUT range level is set between -24dB to +24dB.

Note: When the preamp BANK is not selected, the 'Input Trim' mode (AUTOGAIN = LED ON) has no effect so it's not possible to increase the harmonic saturation.

5. Autogain button: This button effects the INPUT stage of the plugin. It allows you to change the behavior of the INPUT control, switching from the Standard INPUT GAIN control to the INPUT TRIM control.

6. High Pass Filter: The Frequency range (Hz) is from 40 to 800, Off (the first knob step by-passes the HP filter).

7. Low Pass Filter: The Frequency range (Hz) is from 25k to 800, Off (the first knob step by-passes the LP filter).

8. Overflow LED: Indicates when an appropriate input level is reached: LED Off (bypass), Green (good), Yellow (optimal), Red (very hot).

9. Channels buttons: These buttons allow you to choose between different preamps according to the emulation selected from the BANKS menu. Press the desired preamp button to select the emulation; (LINE/MIC) from 1 to X ->The maximum number depends on the respective bank model, generally the number is a multiple of 8).

10. Input L-R meters: This meter displays the Input level of the plug-in. Range: -60dB to +6dB.
11. Output L-R meters: This meter displays the Output level of the plug-in. Range: -60dB to +6dB. They also indicate when appropriate input level is reached: LOW (from -60 to -21 dB), OPTIMAL (from -21 to -12 dB), HOT (from -12 to 0 dB), OVER (FROM 0 TO +6 dB).

4. CONTENTS

4.1 Technical Support

Technical support is exclusively provided via our dedicated 'Freshdesk' platform. Please visit our website to learn more.

4.2 Troubleshooting and bug report

We are constantly improving our products and adding new features. On-going issues, bugs, and rare crashes can still be possible. If you are experiencing problems with your product, please head over to our website and visit the dedicated knowledge base section. Many answers have already been answered, and ready-to-use solutions can be found there.

4.3 Copyright and Credits

All names, product names, logos, and brands displayed on this document are the property of their respective owners. The content included in this manual, such as graphics, icons, images, is the exclusive property of Acusticaudio s.r.l. or its suppliers and is protected by international copyright laws. The information contained on our website may not be downloaded, modified, distributed, uploaded, or otherwise used without the express written consent of Acusticaudio S.r.l. Acustica Audio is a trademark of Acusticaudio s.r.l.



5. AI PRESETS

Black includes AI (Artificial Intelligence) Presets. By clicking on the 'Preset' drop down menu on the plugin GUI you can select a preset from the displayed list. Our AI Presets are based on a large amount of data 'sampled' from real - life mixing sessions by renowned engineers. Any AI Preset will assess the audio being fed into the plug-in and then, based on the data stored in its memory, will automatically modify the FILTERS settings, emulating what the referenced engineer would have done in the same situation. Here's how you can get the best results:

- loop a short section of audio that you think is most significant for the AI evaluation. The analyzed time frame is quite short (only a couple of seconds) so different points in the audio will obviously produce different results;
- click the preset you would like to use;
- sit back and watch as the filter settings change.

This brand new technology works very well on individual tracks and groups, where as results on the masterbus may vary. Don't be afraid to experiment.

5.1 Presets list

1.ALEX TRECARICHI

Alex Trecarichi - Class 1977, Alex Trecarichi has been involved in countless productions for recording, mixing, mastering, arranging, producing and playing instruments for some of the most famous Italian artists and TV Shows. In September 2012 Alex opened Monodynamic Studio, where he has produced and mixed several multiple platinum hits.

2.MAX PAPARELLA

With over 20 years of professional experience in the audio and music business, Max has worked as a musician, producer, remixer, mixing, and mastering engineer. His work has been published worldwide by BMG Production Music, Good Looking Records, Cabana Recordings, Selekt Records, IRMA Records, and many more.

3.EMI CIONCOLONI

Emi Cioncoloni is a multi-instrumentalist with a passion for recording. Over the last 20 years, Emi has worked on countless Jazz, Metal, Blues, Rock, Electronic, and Funk records. Emi also specializes in music composition and sound design for video games, TV, and cinema.

4.MATTEO NOLLI

Matteo Nolli has been working as a sound engineer and producer since 2007, specializing in Rap and Urban music. He has a deep passion for vintage samplers and has mixed and produced over a thousand songs.

6. APPENDIX

6.1 Black - Volumes

Black suite is composed of two different FREE players and it is equipped with only one bank/library: 'NAVY Geranium'.

Additional commercial banks/libraries are available in several 'Volumes' on our store:

<https://www.acustica-audio.com/store/marketplace>

For more info about the content and details of each additional bank/library please consult the Operating manuals of each Volume available at the following page:

<https://www.acustica-audio.com/pages/acqua-manuals>





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