

## Instruction Manual



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**We thank you for expressing your confidence by purchasing our professional compressor/limiter; The Mace. This 2 channel high-quality compressor/limiter was designed with our experience of compression (both creative and for mastering tasks) in the digital realm as well as the crafting of audio for all types of users; producers, engineers and artists alike.**

**We hope you continue to enjoy using the The Mace in your projects for now and for future.**

**Lab:One Recordings © 2015**

**Thanks to all of the Lab One Alpha and Beta Teams for all the testing, comments, suggestions and feedback, as well as rootling out the erroneous bugs (which should be totally eradicated)**

**Thanks to Juan Pablo (aka synclab) for his hard work with the marketing design collaboration (and the front page image in conjunction with LB3DStudios)... Keep it up!**

**Propellerhead Software (for Reason, the SDK and the concept of the Re)**

## **DEDICATIONS**

**This Re is dedicated to all the Propellerhead Reason users & forum threaders, friends & colleagues we have spoken to over the years.**

**DjFresha: Thanks goes out to my studio buddies; Dos aka Ocro, Dj EQ, for the support & feedback, shouts go out to all who know me; Ben 'Devious', Andy 'Ruthless', Scott 'Sniper', DJ D + Mrs C, Jayeye and Mrs I, the REBIRTH massive & head honcho Aybee, and good long-time friends Kealey 'Keels' & Chris 'Drope'.**

**Also not forgetting my family for the support, and last but by no means least, my wife Alicia who after waiting for me to code this up is now a happy bunny ... again :D**

**Now let's get into The Mace....**



**The Mace is a dedicated rack unit, built as a Rack Extension for the Propellerhead Reason environment. This device has a maximum of what would be 4U space in the real world. Being a Rack Extension (Re), this gives you various options of versatility within your projects.**

**The Mace features at a glance:**

- Dual Mono, Stereo Linked & Mid/Side modes for Compressor / Limiter**
- Independent Input, Threshold, Ratio controls**
- 7 Soft knee settings (0dB to 30dB, in 5dB increments)**
- Compression Depth control**
- Independent Sidechain boost/attenuation plus high pass filtering**
- Sidechain audition**
- Independent Limiter controls, with 5 Look Ahead Modes**
- 2 Compressor characteristic modes (Modern & Classic)**
- Attack, Hold and Release controls**
- Time based and Sync-Tempo based controls**
- Soft clip with calibration control**
- Attack Divider calibration control**
- Dry/Wet mixing control**
- Sidechain metering with Input/Output compressor plot display**
- Output metering**
- Peak hold assessment metering**
- Gain Reduction CV outputs**

**All these controls are adjustable to suit your application, and these settings can be stored as your own presets, so you can recall them again and again at a later time (see 'How to save and load presets' section).**

**The Mace features two audio inputs, two External Sidechain audio inputs and two audio outputs, which are processed independently; this allows you to have two totally separate signals being processed together at the same time using one set of controls. Mono operation is also an option (see 'How to connect audio' section). Be aware that Mid and Side processing of audio works primarily on a stereo source, but can be used artistically to create differential effects on your signals.**

**The Mace includes a novel approach to compression; tempo-sync Attack, Hold and Release controls; a real time saver for artists and producers to get their compressed signal setup to their tempo sync settings without the need to grab that calculator. This helps the end-user to spend less time in the science and more in the art of music production.**

The Mace is based on most hardware compressor/limiter units.



### The Front Panel

#### Controls include:

- Bypass fader (Enable / Bypass / Off)**
- Input Gain / Threshold / Ratio trim controls**
- Attack / Hold / Release time trim controls**
- Time Sync toggle controls**
- Sidechain detection, Gain trim control, High Pass Filter frequency, Hear Sidechain signal**
- Limiter trim control, activate Limiter toggle**
- Softclip toggle**
- Make-up Gain control**
- Compression Depth control**
- Wet Mix balance**

#### Controls within the main display:

- Soft Knee setting**
- Look ahead time setting**
- Linked / Unlinked toggle**
- Stereo (L/R) / Mid-Side (M/S) toggle**
- Compressor type**



**The Input Gain controls allows you to drive audio input at the main audio sockets, or attenuate if the input is 'too hot'. The control allows from -25dB to +25dB gain control.**

**The Threshold control allows you to set the level where the compressor will react. Audio above this level will start to apply gain reduction (see Attack details below), while audio below this level will decrease gain reduction, or apply no gain reduction (after the set time has passed – see Hold & Release details below)**

**The Ratio control determines the scaling ratio between input signal to output signal, once the audio has exceeded the Threshold level.**

**Attack, Hold and Release controls determine the time setting that the compressor function will react, in relation to the audio signal (the Sidechain). Longer times can cause delayed response of the compressor while faster settings can cause near immediate effect. The Hold control is a special control that is triggered once the audio level has decreased below the Threshold level – see the 'Working with The Mace' section below.**

**The Sync toggle controls determine if the Attack / Hold / Release controls are time based (milliseconds to seconds) or tempo-sync based (time signature settings ie 1/2, 1/8T)**

**Sidechain Gain is an additional trim control to allow internal or external Sidechain signal to be attenuated or boosted, to have more or less of an effect on the processed audio. There is a Sidechain signal indicator LED to show that there is a Sidechain source signal present at time of compression. YELLOW LED indicates internal sidechain, while a GREEN LED indicates external sidechain.**

**Sidechain High Pass Filter affects the Sidechain signal, to help with avoiding of 'false triggering' of the compressor when loud low frequency signals occur (ie the tail of a kick drum).**

**Hear Sidechain allows you to audition the sidechain signal, so you can hear what the compressor is listening to, so you can fine tune the sidechain signal accordingly.**

**The Limiter is a brickwall limiter (also known as an inf:1 ratio compressor), with a fast look-ahead and balanced release. This ensures that any stray audio peaks that may cause clipping are caught (post compressor).**

**The Soft Clip toggle inserts a softclip 'protector' to the specified compressor. This also helps overloading signals from clipping, making audio sound 'warmed up' opposed to harsh digital clipping. Soft Clip is post Make Up Gain.**

**Make Up Gain control allows you to increase the audio level of a compressed/limited signal.**

**Depth control sets the maximum strength of the Gain Reduction (think of it as a hard-clipper on a signal). This can be used to stop the Gain Reduction from going too low and making the compressed signal too quiet.**

**Wet Mix allows the dry signal to be mixed with the processed signal. Any value below 100% mix can be classed as 'New York Compression', also known as Parallel Compression.**

Within the main display there are additional controls. These are as follows;

**Compressor type:** By default 'Classic' compressor mode is active when The Mace is initialised. This means that the compressor style is analog in nature, so a slower smoother sound can be heard when compressing audio. By comparison, 'Modern' compressor mode is styled after digital compressors, which is a better solution for faster musical styles (EDM or fast tempo music). To change the type, simply click on the type 'Classic' or 'Modern' to change the mode

**Linked / Unlinked modes:** This sets the compressor up so it either works as a dual mono unit or as a stereo linked unit. Stereo linked will ready both left and right channel sidechain signals and use the maximum level as the target for compression.

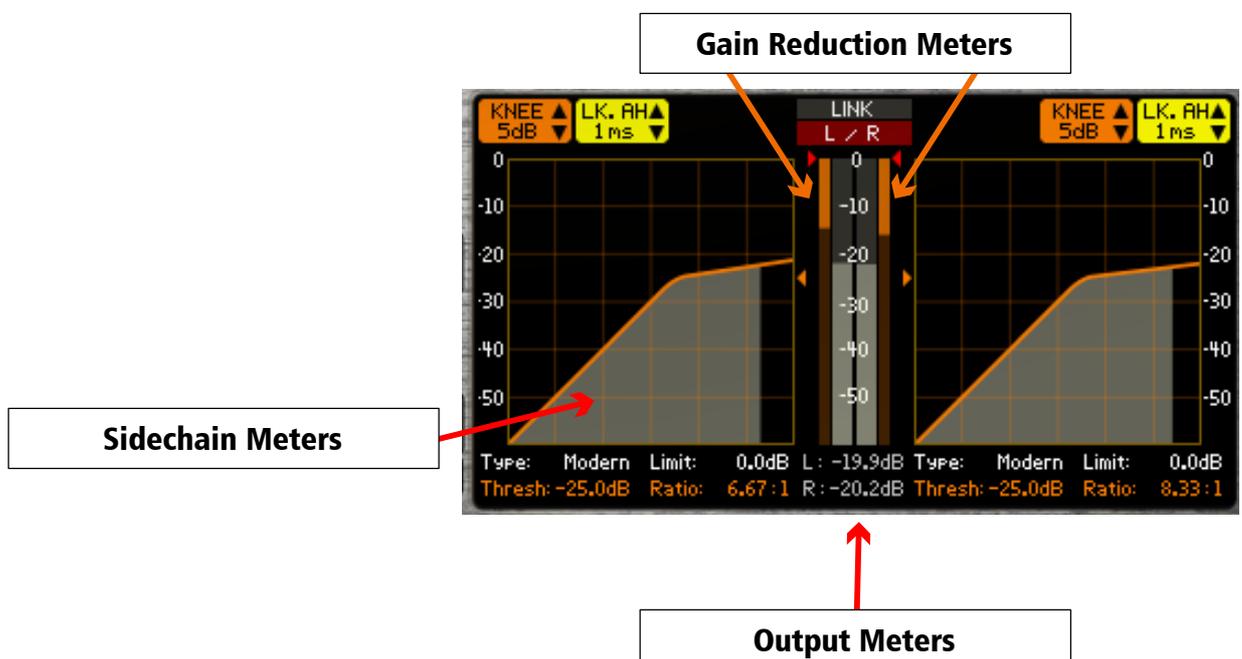
**NOTE: In Linked mode, only the left side of The Mace is in operation, and affects both channels at the same time. Both Gain Reduction outputs are identical, so you can use both CV outputs to any CV in sockets on any other accepting devices**

**L/R and M/S modes:** This turns The Mace from standard audio (left/right) mode to Mid/Side processing mode.

The Knee control allows 7 different settings, which determine the soft knee width. The wider the width the more natural the compression sounds. The 7 steps range from 0dB (hard knee) to 30dB (fully soft), with 5dB increments.

The Look Ahead control determines how long the Limiter will hold on the gain reduction for before starting to release. There are 5 Look ahead time settings: 0ms, 0.5ms, 1ms, 4ms and 10ms.

The metering system in The Mace includes the Sidechain signal in the main graph displays. This shows the input level to output level as a graph plot. The central meters show signal output post compressor/limiter/make-up/softclip. The outer central meters indicate the level of Gain Reduction applied to the audio signal.





## The Rear Panel

### Controls include:

**Softclip Calibration**

**Attack Divider**

**Main Audio Input**

**Main Audio Output**

**External Sidechain Input**

**Gain Reduction CV Out 1 & 2**

The standard setup for The Mace would involve the Main Audio inputs and Main Audio outputs being connected as an insert device on a Mix Channel or on a sound module. You may decide to have an additional sidechain source to feed into the Mace instead of using the standard internal sidechain (the original signal).

The Softclip calibration trim control sets the strength of the softclip function. 1% is the minimum amount of softclip on the audio signal output once it exceeds past digital 0dBfs. 100% is the maximum amount of softclip on the audio signal output, and may affect signals above -4dBfs (approximately) – this gives you the freedom to colour your sound based on the softclip strength.

The Attack Divider allows the attack control to be divided into a smaller timescale. If Attack Divider is set to 1, then the divider math on the Attack ms control is 1/1 (no effect), while larger values will divide the audio time by that set amount, ie if Attack Divider set to 10, then the Attack ms time will be divided by 10 (full effect). The Attack Divider uses a logarithmic math to determine the divider value.



## **HOW TO CONNECT AUDIO**

**To connect The Mace you can use Reason's own auto-connection system, and The Mace will decide the best way to auto-wire; if you have a mono-output device (Subtractor, for example), and you wish to add a Mace to it, the Mace will auto-connect the Subtractor output to the Left input, and then continue to route the Left output of the Mace to the Left input of the mix-channel (or next device in your processing chain).**

**You can do any of the following to create the Mace;**

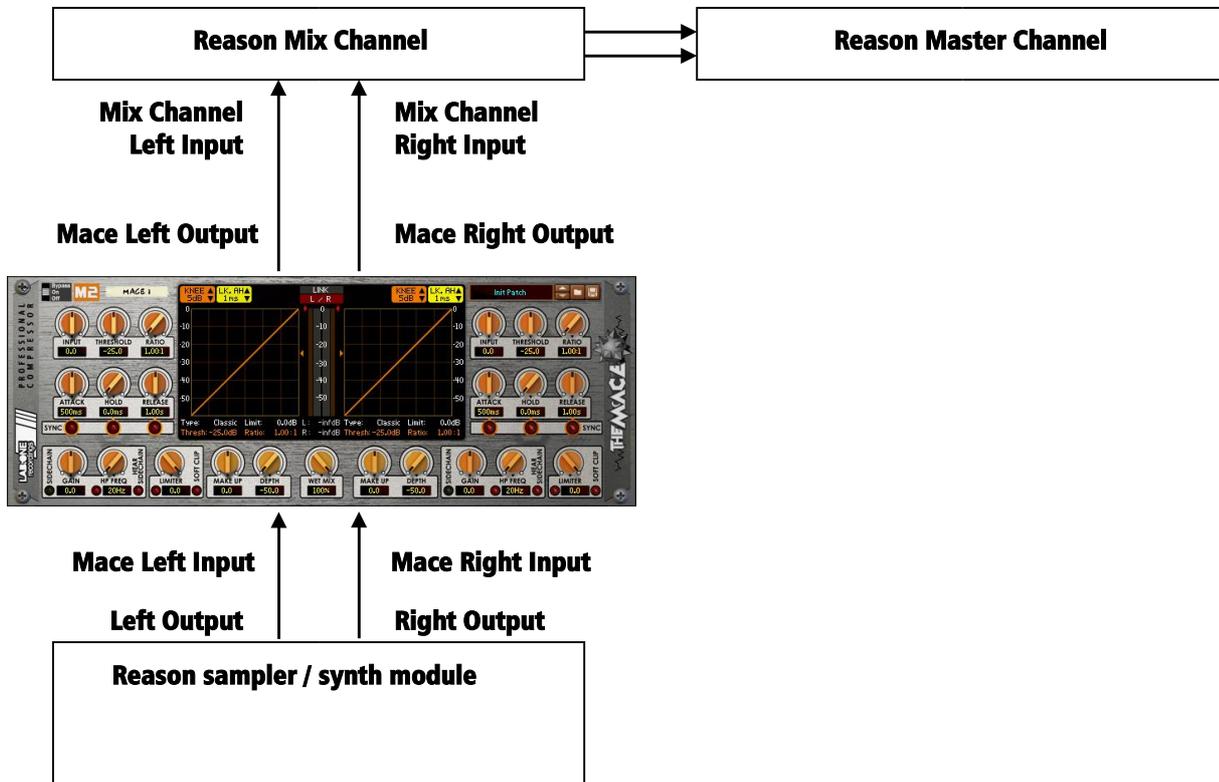
**a) right-click (Win) / CTRL-click (Mac) on the rack, select 'Effects', choose sub-menu 'LAB ONE Recordings', and select 'Mace Professional Compressor' from the final listing.**

**b) using the Tool Palette in Reason (F8), select 'Studio FX' when in the 'Devices' tab, and locate the 'Mace Professional Compressor' device, double-click on the icon or drag it to the device you wish to add it to.**

## WORKING WITH THE MACE

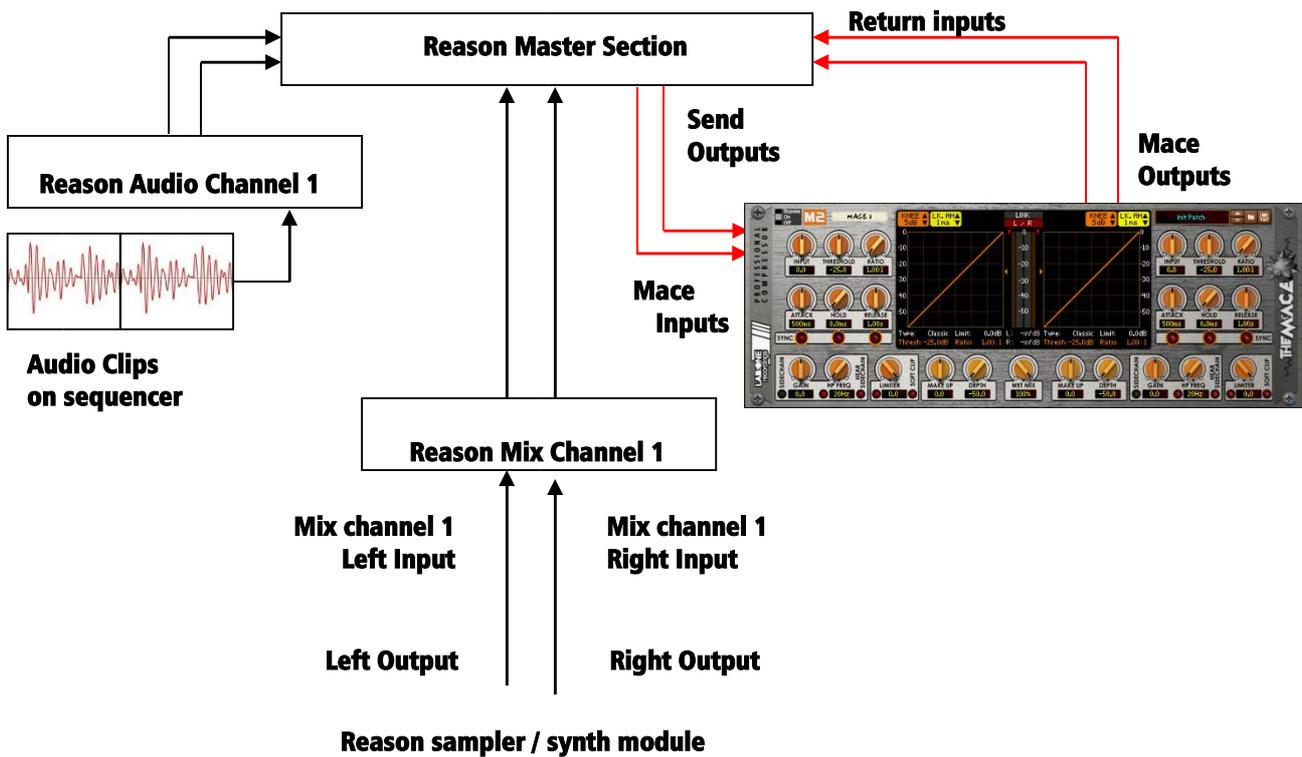
The Mace is designed to be a flexible device, allowing it to be used however you see best fit. Only typical applications will be listed in this manual.

### A) Using the Mace as an insert (mix channel setup).



In setup (A), this would use the Mace as an insert effect. This means that whatever control you adjust on the Mace, it will affect the total sound coming out of the sampler / synth module. If the Mace is in bypass mode or has the 'Init Patch' preset loaded, the audio playing would still sound 'clean' and unaffected.

### C) Using The Mace as a send effect (from main desk)



In setup (B), this would use The Mace as a send effect. This means that whatever control you adjust on The Mace, it will affect the sound coming from the Master Section at a set amount, determined by the Send Effect dial on that specific Mix / Audio channel. This means you can have a clean sound mixed with an altered equalized sound. This is known as Parallel Processing, and may be desired in some cases.

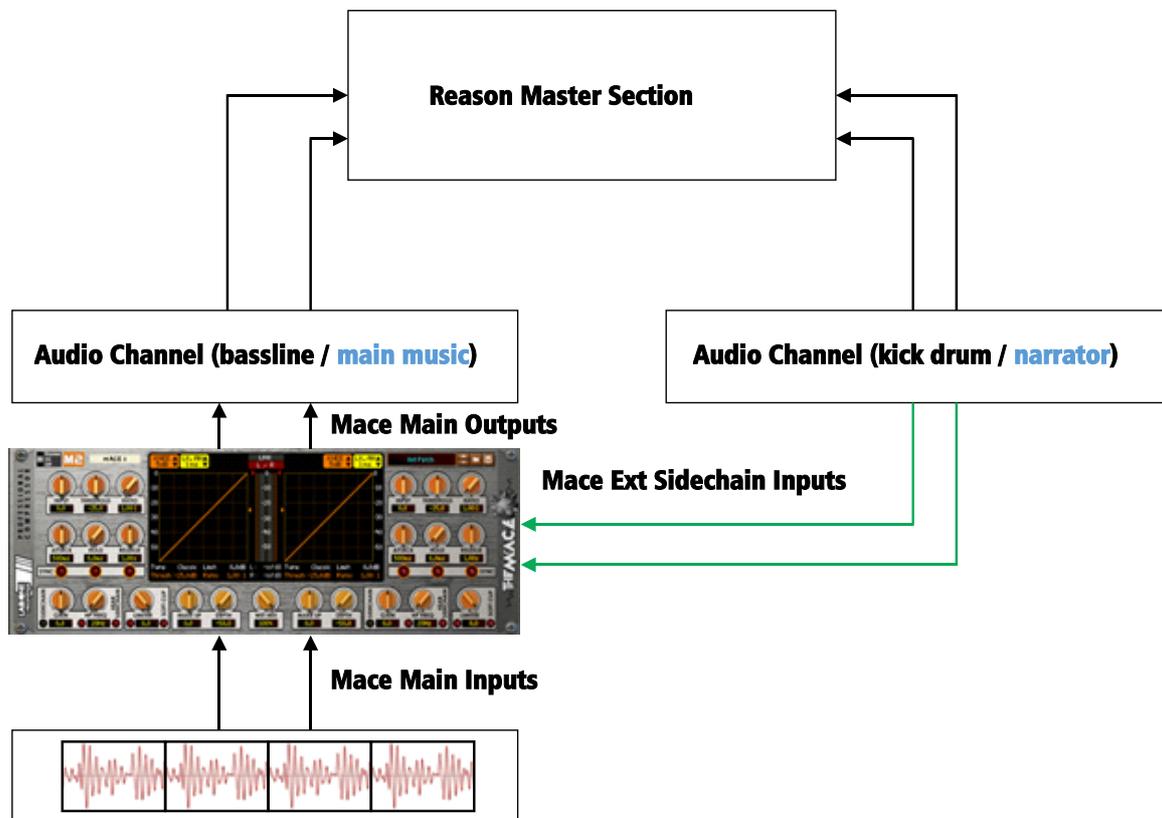
Again you can adjust The Mace as mentioned in setup (A) above, with the addition of the Send dial located on the Main Mixer in Reason. Full left setting of the Send dial has no effect on the sound, while full right setting of the Send dial will send a maximum level possible to The Mace. This means you can have one Mace as a send device for all your audio channels.

#### Alternative setups

For devices which have multiple outputs (ie NN-XT, Redrum, Thor, Spider Audio), then if required additional Mace's could be added as either mono devices (only connecting left audio input & output sockets), or as stereo devices. This in turn allows you to edit specific sounds within a preset if you so wish (ie split zone instrument patches may have a bass guitar for one half of the keymap, while a synth lead is using the other half, and you wish to effect the sounds independently). See the next page for more examples of setups.

Another possible option would be to use one instance of Mace, and have 2 mono devices linked into it, and process both inputs in parallel or as separate channels, and output the two signals to two separate mixer channels. This may be desired to help use different compression settings on two mono devices at the same time, resulting in one unit doing two tasks.

## D) Using The Mace with an external sidechain source



Above you will see an optional setup using The Mace with an external side-chain source to trigger the gain reduction. This method is used when you may have two instruments / sound sources fighting for the same frequency space, and headroom may be compromised resulting in signal overloading.

An external sidechain signal may help by using the conflicting audio source to turn down the signal during the time the external sidechain is playing.

An extreme example is synonymous to House music and other electronic styles of music, where the Kick drum is the 'leading' sound and is used as an external sidechain source on other material in the production.

Another common use is for voiceover work (think of your natural world documentaries, where the narrator is speaking while music and the video audio is playing – the narrator is the sidechain source and can be used as the controller to turn down other content, again to prevent overloading the final output signal.

Experiment with setups to your own way of working, use these as a guide, but not necessarily as the be-all-and-end-all approach.



**The Mace has 3 specific modes when processing audio:**

- 1) Dual Mono (Left and Right audio can be treated as separate processes)**
- 2) Stereo linked (Left and Right audio can be treated as a linked process)**
- 3) Mid-Side (Mid signals and Side signals are treated as separate processes)**

**The benefits of this can be useful, in respect to audio engineers, musicians and producers alike.**

**Dual Mono (Unlinked L/R) can be seen as having two separate compressors in the same unit. The left hand controls affect the left audio signal, while the right hand controls affect the right audio signal. This can be particularly creative when you have a mono sounding stereo signal (both channels identical) and want to give the signal some panoramic effect, to make it less 'static' and 'uninteresting'. This can be particularly good on mono sampled drum kits or electric guitar sounds for example.**

**Stereo linked can be seen as one compressor working on both left and right channels using one control set. This helps keep a stereo sounding signal it's width, due to compressing both channels at the same time. The Mace uses both signals together and finds the maximum between the two channels and gain reduces both at the same rate together.**

**Mid-Side mode is something that can be creative and help bring more body of your sounds to life.**

**A brief explanation of MID and SIDE signals: What are they?**

**So some users new to this may think that left and right equalization is the only approach, without any knowledge of Mid and Side information. So what is Mid and Side?....**

**In simple terms, Mid/Side processing is when a recorded stereo signal, consisting of a left and right channel (representing what will be played through the left and right speaker), is encoded to a mid and a side channel (using sum and differences of the left and right channel;  $\text{mid} = \text{left} + \text{right}$ ,  $\text{side} = \text{left} - \text{right}$ ), then processed as desired, then decoded back to left and right.**

**To enhance stereo width, you may decide to compress the Side signal, to give the sound more 'space' or maybe bring up some ambience that may be lost. Mid can be controlled to sound fatter and more upfront if you compress the mid alone. An example would be a main vocalist and backing singers. If the main vocalist needs to be a little louder, the MID signal can be boosted, while the backing singers (usually panned) may benefit a boost or attenuation to help balance with the main vocalist. This helps to affect specific areas of the sound panorama instead of trying to affect the whole audio signal as one 'entity'.**

**To select any of the possible signal paths and dB ranges, click the Process Mode and dB Range Selector to reveal a popup with the available options. On selecting your specific path and range, the display will update as well as the maximum / minimum scale displays on the device front.**

Whichever mode you are using, when you use the WET MIX control as a balance, you will be mixing the compressed (wet) signal with the uncompressed (dry) signal. This gives you the ability to 'New-York' / Parallel compress audio for effect.

## THE COMPRESSOR & LIMITER CONTROLS



The Mace has 2 sets of controls for compression, for each channel. The left side controls the compression for the left signal (in unlinked mode) or the mid signal (in mid/side mode). The right controls in turn control the compression if the right signal (in unlinked mode) or the side signal (in mid/side mode). The only exception is in linked mode, where only the left controls will be used to affect both left and right channels together in tandem.

The input control allows you to control the signal before it hits the compressor. Range +/-25dB  
 The Threshold control sets the threshold point where compression will occur. 0dB to -50dB.  
 The lower the threshold the more chance the audio signal will be subjected to compression.  
 The Ratio control sets the scaling of compression above the threshold point. 1:1 to inf:1. The higher the ratio setting the stronger the effect.

Attack, Hold and Release control the time settings compression occurs. Attack determines how long it take to apply the compression. Hold will suspend the gain reduction for the set time. Release will determine how long it takes to return the signal level back to normal.

The Sync buttons set the mode of the Attack, Hold and Release controls, so you can mix and match between milliseconds / seconds and BPM sync time divisions.



**The Sidechain gain is an additional trim control that aids in boosting or attenuating the sidechain signal. Range +/-25dB**

**The Sidechain HP Freq is a high pass filter that can be used on the sidechain signal, to prevent over-compression of low frequency signals. This is exceptionally useful on drum kits so the body of the kick and snare can come through unaffected, while the transients (the initial 'spikes') can be controlled and tamed.**

**The Hear Sidechain button allows you to audition the sidechain signal. This can be useful to determine what audio signal is triggering the compressor.**

**The Make Up Gain control is a final gain control to bring the output level upwards (or downwards), to help with rebalancing the compressed signal.**

**The Depth control is used on the Gain Reduction, and works in a similar way to the Hold function, with the following difference;**

***The Hold control will 'suspend' the Gain Reduction over a set period of time, while the Depth control will 'suspend' the Gain Reduction to a set level***

**This can be useful as a hard limiter on the Gain Reduction itself, and not directly on the audio signal. This could help set a level so the gain reduction stops 'wandering' if for example a vocalist has a very wide dynamic range and you want the compression to be a bit more natural but under control.**

**The Knee setting rounds off the compression with the threshold being centre of the knee 'curve'. The rounder the knee the less obvious compression will be heard. Soft knee also affects the Gain Reduction effect.**

**The Limiter has a trim control and a toggle switch which is used to hard limit and signals above the Limiter threshold. Used in conjunction with Look Ahead timings, this makes the Limiter a flexible section of The Mace, and can be used to sound less obvious and more natural.**

**The Softclip button engages the softclip post Make Up Gain. This ensures that if there are any possible overloads missed by the compressor / limiter then the signal is 'rounded' off and will never exceed 0dB (a bit below is the softclip internal workings, in relation to the softclip calibration round the back). This can help 'warm up' a signal instead of having harsh digital hard clipping.**

**The Mace includes two modes of compression characteristics – Classic (Analog emulation) and Modern (digital emulation). These two modes affect the compression circuit as well as the limiter circuit, and either can be used in your productions. Classic mode may lend itself more towards 'real world' sounds such as acoustic guitars and vocalists, while Modern mode may be the style needed for electronic styles of music (due to the speed).**



## **Gain Reduction CV**

**The two output CV sockets allows you to connect CV (control voltage) cables from the Mace to any other device in the rack that accepts CV input signals. The CV signal that is sent from The Mace is the Gain Reduction signal. For a +1 signal from The Mace, -50dB Gain Reduction would need to be applied. The CV signal follows the Gain reduction based on the compressed/limited audio signal, and each CV output signal can be monitored via the Gain reduction metering (the orange vertical bars) on the main display. Gain Reduction CV out 1 is the meter on the left, Gain Reduction CV out 2 is the meter on the right.**

**The Mace only ever outputs unipolar CV signals (+1 to 0).**

## **MIDI Implementation table**

**Below is a listing of all MIDI Control Change (CC) numbers, which can be applied to your choice of device.**

[12]	Comp 1 Input Gain	[31]	Comp 2 Input Gain
[13]	Comp 1 Threshold	[33]	Comp 2 Threshold
[14]	Comp 1 Release	[34]	Comp 2 Release
[15]	Comp 1 Attack Sync	[35]	Comp 2 Attack (ms)
[16]	Comp 1 Hold Sync	[36]	Comp 2 Attack (ms)
[17]	Comp 1 Release sync	[37]	Comp 2 Attack (ms)
[51]	Comp 1 Attack (ms)	[39]	Comp 2 Attack Sync On
[52]	Comp 1 Hold (ms)	[40]	Comp 2 Hold sync On
[53]	Comp 1 Release (ms)	[41]	Comp 2 Release Sync On
[18]	Comp 1 Attack Sync On	[42]	Comp 2 Sidechain Gain
[19]	Comp 1 Hold sync On	[43]	Comp 2 HPF Frequency
[20]	Comp 1 Release Sync On	[44]	Comp 2 Hear Sidechain
[21]	Comp 1 Sidechain Gain	[45]	Comp 2 Sidechain filter On
[22]	Comp 1 HPF Frequency	[46]	Comp 2 Limiter On
[23]	Comp 1 Hear Sidechain	[47]	Comp 2 Softclip On
[24]	Comp 1 Sidechain filter On	[48]	Comp 2 Limiter
[25]	Comp 1 Limiter On	[49]	Comp 2 Makeup Gain
[26]	Comp 1 Softclip On	[50]	Comp 2 Depth
[27]	Comp 1 Limiter	[54]	Comp 2 Attack Sync
[28]	Comp 1 Makeup Gain	[55]	Comp 2 Hold Sync
[29]	Comp 1 Depth	[56]	Comp 2 Release sync
[30]	Wet Mix		
[57]	Comp 1 Limit Look Ahead	[61]	Comp 1 Type
[58]	Comp 2 Limit Look Ahead	[62]	Comp 2 Type
[59]	Comp 1 Knee	[63]	Comp Mode
[60]	Comp 2 Knee	[65]	Comp Linked



**Reason allows the user to re-define certain controls via MIDI devices by using the Remote Override configuration. This means that a control on The Mace can be mapped by any MIDI controller you have connected to your DAW. However, you can only map one specific control to any of the available Remote 'receiving' controls on the Rack Extension. Also, Remote Override controls are only saved within each independent Reason song file. Ideally, if you use a dedicated piece of MIDI equipment for the Mace, a template start-up file would be a better option, so that the Remote Override template is pre-defined on each new song from the off.**

**All the controls on The Mace are Remote Override-able. To access the override editor, select from the 'Options' menu 'Edit Remote Overrides'. The Rack will now display the specific device selected, with either pre-defined Remote control indicators (the Remote symbol), yellow lightning bolts (overridden Remote controls pre-defined) or blue arrows (unassigned Remote controls)**

**You can right-click one of the controls and select 'Edit Remote Override Mapping'. This will open a new popup window, with some available options, and to show you which MIDI controller is currently set to that specific Remote Override.**

**By moving one of the controls on your MIDI device (already predefined in Reason), you should then see MIDI activity indicator display that a MIDI message was received. Note also the control surface and the control itself on the MIDI device that was adjusted relays to the new Remote Override.**



**Once you are happy with the control being set, you can click 'OK' to continue with the new setting, or 'Cancel' to abort the mapping. Also note that if you accept this mapping, the control (if already linked to another) will be fixed to the new mapping. Any previously set mappings will be 'moved' to the new mapped control. This should be used with care if you already have pre-defined Remote Override Mappings.**

**This Remote Overriding method can be handy if you don't know how to set up your own MIDI controller to the dedicated MIDI controls mentioned in the previous chapter. For speed, you can simply double click a blue arrow, and the arrow will turn into a spinning yellow lightning bolt, indicating that Reason is awaiting a MIDI signal to that control. You can then adjust a MIDI control on your MIDI device, and the control will map automatically without the need to use the popup previously mentioned. Double-click each specific control you want to map to save time and to use the mapping in a faster method.**

**All Remote Overrides can then be used to record automation within Reason, which can be fine-tuned using the sequencer and the clips (see the Reason Operating Manual for more information on how to edit & record automation).**

**Remote templates (which are currently in use by supported manufacturers) can be amended to allow The Mace to be fully Remote Controlled**



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