



Shure Level-Loc

user manual SLL 1.0.0

KORNEFF
the other side of sound



Shure Level-Loc

The Shure Level-loc is a compressor—really a limiter, that, thanks to its unique design, adds a very distinctive and ear-catching color to anything you process with it. We developed our plug-in with Shure and the master of the Level-Loc, Tchad Blake. It sounds like the original but has added functionality for tremendous flexibility in the modern studio

The Level-Loc Story, or how we made this thing

The Shure M62 Level-Loc was designed in the 1960s, specifically to control the levels of people speaking into microphones through a PA system. So, if the high school principal had rotten mic technique, or the mayor's wife was very soft-spoken compared to the chief of the fire department at the annual town fundraiser, the Level-Loc was there, making sure no one was too quiet or too loud, saving audience ears and speaker cones from damage.

But as the sixties progressed into the 70s, speaker and PA system design became more sophisticated, such that by 1977, the Level-Loc had outlived its original purpose and Shure discontinued it. The plain little gray boxes were mostly thrown out when a church or a Knights of Columbus would upgrade the PA system. You could occasionally find one at a flea market or a pawnshop, or a ham radio swap meet, but as far as its pro audio career, the little Level-Loc was unemployed.

In 1990, producer/engineer/mixer and audio experimenter extraordinaire Tchad Blake was working with Tom Wait's on the album *Bone Machine*. The two decided to take the afternoon off and visit a local swap meet in Northern California — both Tchad and Tom were always on the lookout for some sort of musical or audio oddity. Tchad found a Level-Loc and bought it for \$5.

They brought it back to the studio, Tchad plugged it into a line-level insert on the console and promptly blew it up. Tom said he knew a guy that could fix it (sounds like a Tom Waits lyric) and a day later they had the Level-Loc back, along with a warning from the repair guy to only plug mic level signals into it, because that's what its designed for.

They plugged a mic into it, pointed the mic at some drums and BOOOOOM. In Tchad's own words: "It was life-changing." Tchad loved what it did to drums, smashing them yet adding character and something undefinable. He went on to record the rest of Tom's album with the Level-Loc and used it on every record he recorded after that. Tons of records. Soul Coffin's *Ruby Vroom*. Los Lobos' *Kiko*, Grammy-winning records for Sheryl Crow, Lisa Germano, Crowded House, Bonnie Raitt, etc., etc.

Tchad's use of the Level-Loc caught the ear of other engineers, and suddenly the little Level-Loc was popular again, used in a way almost antithetical to its original design



purpose. The price on Level-Locs shot up—hardware units sell for over \$1000 these days, if you can find one.

As recording became increasingly digital, and mixing moved "in the box," hardware Level-Locs became increasingly difficult to use and were unreliable due to aging components. A number of companies developed software recreations, and while useful, none of them captured the sound that Tchad Blake knew as the Level-Loc.

Fast forward to May of last year: Shure's Matt Engstrom had a vision to revive the Shure Level-Loc as both a hardware unit and a plug-in. With Shure's blessing, Matt began looking for partners for the project. Based in Chicago, where he frequently records in his studio, Reelsounds, Matt found himself gravitating towards using plug-ins made by a small company on Long Island. Us. Matt sent an email to Dan enquiring if he'd been interested in developing a plug-in for Shure. Dan emailed back, "Love to. Let's make a Level-Loc." A few weeks later, Tchad Blake was on board. Dan was already breaking down the Level-Loc's circuit and coding. By July he had a prototype working.

In October of 2024, the guys from Korneff flew to Shure's headquarters in Niles, IL, and spent a week hunkered down with Tchad Blake and the entire Shure team in their fabulous studio. Together with Tchad, Matt, and Shure's talented engineers and techs, we fine-tuned the plug-in you now have in your DAW. And we had a wonderful time with the lovely people from Shure, who were so helpful, friendly and generous, and with Tchad, who is as interesting, creative and nice a person as you could ever meet.

Our Shure Level-Loc can rightly wear the name "Shure Level-Loc" on it. Perhaps more importantly, the man who single-handedly revitalized the Level-Loc, Tchad Blake, has a hard time distinguishing between the plug-in and one of his hardware units. As Tchad puts it, "It's like comparing the sound of two hardware Level-Locs, and all hardware units sound a little different. It's never, 'Oh, that sounds like a plug-in.'"

We worked with Tchad and Shure to add features to make this plug-in more versatile and useful for modern studio applications. While Tchad primarily used the original hardware on drums, he now incorporates the Korneff Audio Shure Level-Loc all over his mixes. Dan has been mixing with it as well, also using it everywhere, on busses, channels — everywhere. We think you'll want to use the Level-Loc everywhere, too.



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SPECIFICATIONS

Minimum System Requirements

Quad Core i5 Processor
4GB of RAM
Mac OS X 10.14 or Later
Windows 7 & Above

Supported Plug-in Formats

Intel Mac 64bit: VST3, AU, AAX
Windows 64bit: VST3, AAX





USING THE LEVEL-LOC

Quick Start Guide

In keeping with the nature of the Level-Loc and Tchad Blake, put the Level-Loc somewhere on your mix and start playing with the knobs and switches.

How to Do Things

The Level-Loc has quirky controls and a strange workflow. Here's a quick guide on how aspects of it work.

Setting Gain and Compression

The compressor in the Level-Loc has a ratio of like 1000:1 and the threshold is set to -50dB, so it is basically always compressing. Turning up **INPUT LEVEL (2)** will make it compress even more, similar to what happens when you increase the input level on an 1176. When **INPUT SELECT (5)** is set to **MIC** the signal is padded by -30dB; when switched to **LINE** that pad is removed. So, it is very easy to ram a lot of signal through the Level-Loc, compress it to smithereens and generate a ton of saturation and weird compression artifacts.

If you want less compression, turn down the **INPUT TRIM (1)**. Turn it down a lot. Like -20 to -40 dB. This will make the Level-Loc act somewhat more like a "normal" compressor, but really, did you buy a Level-Loc because you wanted "normal?"

Switching the **DISTANCE SELECTOR (3)** left to right lowers the threshold by -6dB (so **18" OR MORE** drops the threshold to around -62dB). The knee varies a bit at each setting, so experiment with things.

Adjust the output using the **OUTPUT AMPLIFIER (6)**. Since the unit runs at microphone level, you'll need to follow it with a preamp to bring the signal back up to line level. Kind of obvious, but hey, it's worth mentioning! By the way, this is a purely digital gain that's added, with no coloration. Obviously, the hardware unit didn't have this.

Adjusting Saturation

The Level-Loc was built around a bunch of mic transformers that overload very easily. Hence, the Level-Loc is already adding a fair amount of harmonic distortion. Of course, the more you increase the gain the more saturation and distortion you'll get, but you can also get even more!

Click the **Korneff name plate** top center of the plug-in to go to the "inside" of the Level-



Loc. The controls for **INPUT IMPEDANCE (17)** model the transformer's behavior at different settings, while **MICROPHONE LOAD (18)** models different loads on the mic input.. As you switch through different settings, you'll notice the bottom end changing, gain getting louder or softer, etc. The effects are very dependent on the signal you put through it, so in some cases it won't sound different at all and sometimes it will sound radically different. It's worth it to take a moment to flip around the settings each time you run something through the Level-Loc and see if you get something that catches your ear. In general, feel free to flip all the switches on the Level-Loc. It rewards experimentation, and unlike the original hardware units, you can't blow it up!

Switching **OUTPUT IMPEDANCE (19)** also changes saturation and gain. Want less saturation? Switch **OUTPUT SELECTOR (20)** to **AUX** and a transformer is removed from the circuit.

Adjusting Release

The original hardware unit had a fixed release that could only be changed by swapping out components with a soldering iron. We've given you some switches that actually modify the **RELEASE TIME (21)** circuit in a way consistent with the possibilities of the original unit. Again, experiment. The original units came from the factory with settings of 1 second or 2 seconds. We tend to enjoy the faster release times.

Adjusting Attack

Not really possible. It's fixed somewhere around 10ms. At top right on the front panel is the **LEVEL-LOCK MODELS SELECTOR (16)**. There are three different fully modeled Level-Locs to pick from and they all sound a little different. They all have slightly different attack times (in keeping with the variability of this found on the hardware units). DK has a slightly faster attack time than the other two.

Battery Drainage

Level-Locs could run off an AC adaptor or off a 9-volt battery. You can choose one or the other on the back panel at **POWER SUPPLY (22)**.

Listen to me here: switch it to **BATTERY** and play with the voltage setting! Low battery voltages affect the way a circuit operates, and we've modeled that for you. The more you lower the voltage, the more unpredictable things will get. From about 5v to 8v it seems to change the release somewhat, probably because it's adding a ton more harmonic distortion. Below 5v it starts to crackle and as it gets even lower it spits, drops out, fuzzes, stutters, etc. REALLY COOL!



SIDECHAIN EQ

This is only available on our plug-in. **SIDECHAIN EQ (8)** inserts a sweepable EQ with 18dB of boost or cut into the detector circuit. If you boost a frequency, the compressor becomes more sensitive to that area; if you cut, it becomes less sensitive to that area. Cutting around 10dB will really change how the compressor responds to kicks and things, and boosting at 8kHz turns the Level-Loc into a de-esser that likes to wack people in the mouth. It's pretty brutal, but sometimes that can be useful... again, play around with this. And remember, this doesn't affect the frequency response of signals going through the unit, only the way the compressor responds to them.

PRE / POST FILTERS

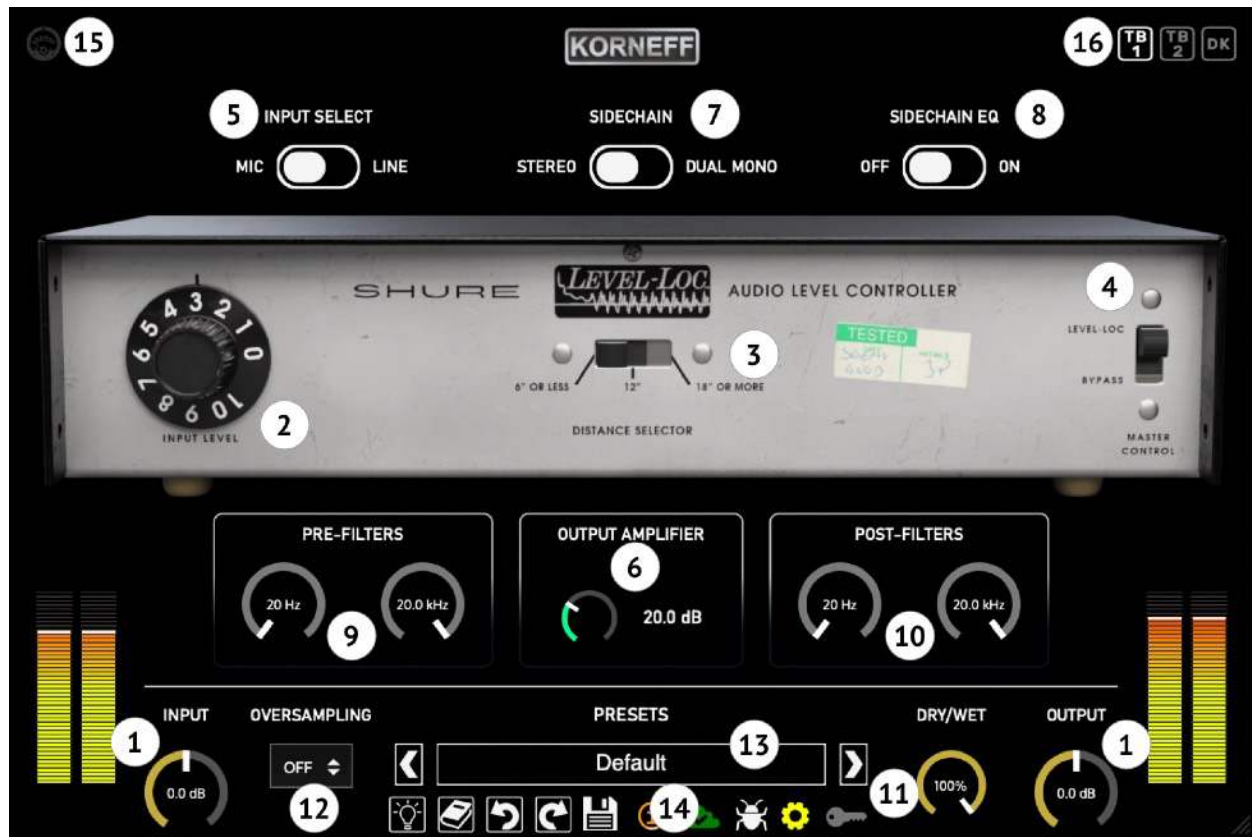
Tchad almost always used filters before and after with his Level-Locs, so we incorporated that for you. The **PRE FILTERS (9)** lets you remove stuff before it hits the compressor circuit, which changes the way the compressor reacts, like the SIDECHAIN EQ, but the difference is the frequencies you filter out are gone forever. These are really fun and useful, and you can really reshape a sound with them (and the utter crushing murder of the Level-Loc's compressor).

The **POST FILTERS (10)** shape the signal after it's been compressed, and can help you clean up the bottom end (which might get huge and pillowy) or trim out excessive high-frequency chuff caused by harmonic distortion. In other words, use them to fit things into your mix better.

DRY/WET

Tchad Blake usually uses the Level-Loc as a parallel processor, and the **DRY/WET (11)** allows you to do the same thing but without using up another channel. At 100% WET it's all Level-Loc; at 0% it's all unprocessed. Sometimes a really low setting (like 20%) gives just a touch of that Level-Loc flavor. Here's a quick trick: Set the DRY/WET to 60%, mess around with the Level-Loc, and then when you add the sound into your mix, adjust DRY/WET again for a little more or a little less.

FRONT PANEL



FRONT PANEL CONTROLS

1. **INPUT and OUTPUT TRIM** and Meters: Adjusts the level feeding into and out of the Shure Level-Loc in order to properly gain stage the signal chain.
2. **INPUT LEVEL:** Sets the gain feeding into the FET compressor circuit of the SLL. Since the threshold of the Shure Level-Loc is basically fixed (see #3 below), the more you turn this up, the more compression and Level-Loc mayhem you'll get.
3. **DISTANCE SELECTOR:** This is basically a three-position threshold control. Originally it was designed to allow compensation for mic to source distance. You'll use it along with the INPUT LEVEL control to adjust the amount of limiting. The further the distance setting, the lower the threshold, so **6" OR LESS** sets the threshold at -50dB, **12"** sets it to -56dB and **18" OR MORE** sets it at -62dB. The knee of each threshold is also slightly different. In practice, switch this around and pick what sounds best to you.



4. **MASTER CONTROL:** Switched up to **LEVEL-LOC**, the compression circuit is engaged. **BYPASS** disables compression, allowing the signal to still flow through all the various transformers of the unit for their sonic character.
5. **INPUT SELECT:** When switched to **MIC**, the input signal is padded down (reduced) by -30dB, resulting in a cleaner, more controlled limiting operation. The **LINE** setting switches off the -30dB pad, allowing you to hit the compressor much harder, overloading it for creative, aggressive effects.
6. **OUTPUT AMPLIFIER:** This is adjustable digital gain. It adds no color to the sound. The hardware Level-Loc had a mic-level output, because it was designed to be plugged into a microphone input. The OUTPUT AMPLIFIER allows you to compensate for this gain imbalance.
7. **SIDECHAIN:** This switch allows you to select between a **STEREO** or **DUAL MONO** operation of the Level-Loc. In stereo, the left and right detector circuits are linked together for equal compression applied to both channels of the Level-Loc. This yields a signal with a stable stereo field and center. In DUAL MONO, the left and right detectors are not linked and compression is applied differently to each channel. The result is more movement of the stereo field and a more noticeable effect. Experiment to see which you prefer.
8. **SIDECHAIN EQ:** This switches single-band sweepable EQ into the sidechain, with up to 18dB of boost or cut and a fully adjustable frequency from 20Hz - 20kHz. Boosting will make the detector circuit more sensitive to the selected frequency while cutting will make it less sensitive. Use this to adjust how the compressor circuit responds to a signal. Note that this EQ only affects how the compression circuit responds to the signal, not the frequency response of that signal.

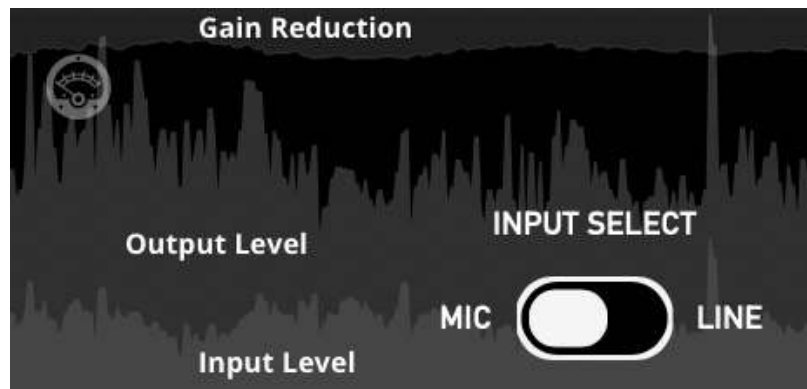


9. **PRE-FILTERS:** The PRE and POST filters are from Tchad Blake's toolkit. Use the **PRE-FILTERS** to shape the signal before it hits the compressor circuit to control frequency response and avoid unnecessary compression of unwanted frequencies. The PRE-FILTERS are similar to the SIDECHAIN EQ, but bear in mind they do affect the frequency



response of the signal as it feeds through. Once you roll stuff off with the PRE-FILTERS you're not getting it back.

10. **POST-FILTERS:** Use these to shape the signal after it has been compressed. This allows you to further shape the sound of the SLL and tailor the output to better fit your mix.
11. **DRY/WET:** At 100% the output of the plug-in is the processed signal of the Level-Loc. As this control is turned down, the unprocessed signal is blended in, which reduces the sonic signature of SLL. Use this to adjust the overall footprint of the Level-Loc in your mix. Rather than adjusting the settings of the Level-Loc to get a sound to sit properly, think about using WET/DRY.
12. **OVERSAMPLING:** If you're hearing digital processing artifacts, switch in OVERSAMPLING to correct the issue.
13. **PRESETS:** We've included a bunch of presets to give you ideas. This is covered in detail later in the manual.
14. **UTILITIES PANEL:** Again, this is covered towards the end of the manual.
15. **GAIN REDUCTION DISPLAY:** Clicking on this will activate a gain reduction display. Light gray at the bottom indicates Input LLevel, middle gray above that indicates Output Level, and the gray at the very top indicates Gain Reduction.



16. **LEVEL-LOC MODELS SELECTOR:** We've fully modeled three different vintage hardware Level-Locs, each with their own sound and quicks. TB1 and TB2 are two different units owned by Tchad Blake. DK is a Level-Loc owned by Dan Korneff. TB1 is fuller sounding than TB2, but with the same basic response characteristics. DK has an inherently faster attack and a flatter response. Switch and experiment.

BACK PANEL



BACK PANEL CONTROLS

17. **INPUT IMPEDANCE:** This control simulates the subtle frequency and saturation changes that occur when an input transformer is tapped in different locations. In practice, it changes the gain and frequency response of the plug-in. Experiment! Switch that switch!
18. **MICROPHONE LOAD:** Microphones have different impedances, similar to the Input Impedance of a device. If these impedances match, there's maximum transmission of the signal. If they don't, there's a change of gain and frequency response. This is another switch to play with and see what sort of effect you get. It is typically subtle.
19. **OUTPUT IMPEDANCE:** This control simulates the subtle frequency and saturation changes that occur when an output transformer is tapped in different locations. You'll notice that control simulates the subtle frequency and saturation changes that occur when an output transformer is tapped in different locations. **LOW** will sound a bit louder than **HIGH**, and depending on the signal you're processing, you'll also hear some



low-end frequency response changes. Please note that this control is only available when OUTPUT SELECTOR is set to MIC.

20. **OUTPUT SELECT:** The original level-Loc had two outputs. The **MIC** output was designed with an additional transformer in its circuit path to help it properly interface with a mic preamp. The **AUX** output was designed to interface with a console line input and doesn't have the extra transformer, while the AUX output was designed to feed into a console input and didn't have the additional transformer. Sonically, the AUX output has a slightly more airy, cleaner sound, while the MIC output is a bit more "pillowy."
21. **RELEASE TIME:** Hardware Level-Locs had a factory-set release time, which could be adjusted by soldering in different resistors and capacitors. We've provided you a digital soldering iron. Change the resistor and capacitor values to get different release times. This gives the plug-in better adaptability to source material and more versatility as a creative tool. Release time values are 47ms, 94ms, 100ms, 200ms, 470ms, 940ms, 1 sec and 2 sec.
22. **POWER SUPPLY:** The hardware Level-Loc could be plugged in or run off a 9v battery. Switching this to BATTERY and then adjusting the VOLTAGE knob simulates the effects of a dying battery on the unit. The lower the voltage, the stranger things get.

UTILITY PANEL



Running across the bottom of the plug-in, the UTILITY PANEL allows you to save and recall presets, futz around with your license situation, and some other stuff. You're not reading this part anyway. And if you do actually read this, write to luke@korneffaudio.com, include a screenshot of this part of the manual, and he'll send you a coupon code as a reward!

Oversampling

The Oversampling feature enhances audio quality by upsampling the audio signal before processing. It helps reduce aliasing artifacts and provides a more accurate representation of the audio. Oversampling is selectable between 2X, 4X, 8X and 16X.

Tool Tips/User Manual

The **LIGHTBULB** brings up the tool tips, and the **BOOK** opens the user manual, which you are currently reading. Well done! You've mastered the BOOK button and the day is still early! **UNDO**, to the left, undoes the previous setting. **REDO**, to the right, redoes the previous setting... pressing both of them a lot can be very confusing.

INFO (letter I in a circle) Click this to see the version number of the plug-in, a list of who did what to make it happen, tips for how to behave around people in an elevator, etc.

UPDATE NOTIFIER (colorful cloud symbol): This indicates whether or not there is an update to your plug-in software. Green means good, and there is more information about this under Activation.

The **BUG** (it looks like a bug) is a link to a place on the Korneff Audio empire where you can report problems with this software. If you don't see the BUG, then it means everything is utterly perfect with our software.

The **GEAR** brings up the Global Settings Panel. There's a section about this coming up next...



Click on the **KEY** symbol to see your license activation options. There's a whole bunch about licensing looming in your immediate future.

Preset Browser

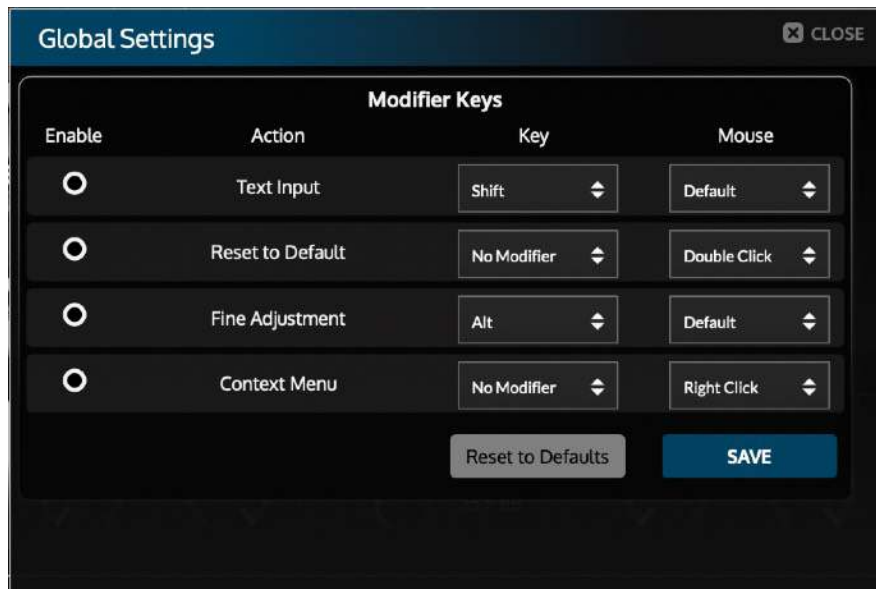
Click on the Preset Name to access the preset browser and load and save presets. The **ARROWS** allow you to step through the presets and audition them. The **DISK** button saves the current setting to the preset library.

The **PRESET BROWSER** has three columns. The column to the far left shows the name of the Bank, the middle column shows the Category and the third column shows the Preset.



GLOBAL SETTINGS

The Global Settings Panel allows you to personalize how you interact with the application's controls by customizing key and mouse modifiers for specific actions. This flexibility enhances your workflow and ensures that the application behaves according to your preferences.



Accessing the Global Settings Panel

To open the Global Settings Panel:

1. Locate the Settings Icon in the application's interface. It typically appears as a gear or wrench icon.
2. Click on the Settings Icon.
3. The Global Settings Panel will appear, overlaying the main application window.

Modifier Keys Section

The Modifier Keys section is the main area where you can adjust settings related to key and mouse modifiers for various actions.



The Modifier Keys section is divided into several columns:

- Enable: Toggle whether an action is active or disabled.
- Action: The specific function you can customize (e.g., Text Input, Reset to Default).
- Key: Select the keyboard modifier key for the action.
- Mouse: Select the mouse action modifier for the action.

Customizing Modifier Keys and Mouse Actions

You can tailor the behavior of the application by adjusting the key and mouse modifiers for each action.

Enable/Disable Actions

- Enable Checkbox: Located in the Enable column next to each action.
- Enabled (Checked): The action is active and will respond to your specified modifiers.
- Disabled (Unchecked): The action is inactive and will not respond, regardless of modifiers.

Selecting Key Modifiers

1. In the Key column, click on the dropdown menu corresponding to the action you wish to customize.
2. Choose from the following key modifiers:
 - Shift
 - Alt
 - Ctrl
 - Cmd
 - No Modifier



Selecting Mouse Modifiers

1. In the Mouse column, click on the dropdown menu for the desired action.
2. Select from the following mouse modifiers:
 - Right Click
 - Double Click
 - Default (Single Click or Drag, depending on the action)

Actions You Can Customize

- Text Input: Allows direct text entry for controls.
- Reset to Default: Resets a control to its default value.
- Fine Adjustment: Enables precise adjustments of control values.
- Context Menu: Opens a context-specific menu with additional options.

Resetting to Default Settings

If you wish to revert all your customizations back to the application's default settings:

1. Click the Reset to Defaults button located at the bottom of the Modifier Keys section.
2. A confirmation message will appear: "Key modifiers reset to default. Click 'Save' to apply changes."
3. Note: You must click Save to apply the default settings.

Saving Your Settings

After making changes:

1. Click the Save button at the bottom of the Modifier Keys section.
2. A message will confirm: "Settings saved successfully! Changes applied on next launch."
3. Important: The new settings will take effect the next time you launch the application.



Important Notes

Applying Changes: Remember that changes to modifier keys and mouse actions will be applied the next time you launch the application.

Duplicate Modifiers: The application will alert you if you assign the same key and mouse modifier combination to multiple actions. Ensure each action has a unique combination to avoid conflicts.

Modifier Combinations: Some combinations may not be valid depending on your operating system or keyboard layout.

Troubleshooting

- **Settings Not Applying:**
 - Ensure you have clicked the Save button after making changes.
 - Restart the application to apply the new settings.
- **Failed to Load Settings:**
 - An error message may indicate issues with the settings file.
 - Try resetting to default settings and saving again.
- **Duplicate Combination Warning:**
 - If you receive a warning about duplicate combinations, adjust the key or mouse modifiers to create unique combinations for each action.

By customizing your modifier keys and mouse actions, you can optimize your interaction with the application to suit your workflow. If you have any further questions or need assistance, please refer to the application's support resources.

LICENSING ACTIVATION

Activation is a crucial step in getting your plug-in up and running. In this section, we'll guide you through the activation process, explaining the available options and how to use them.

Activation Options



Upon launching the plug-in, you'll be presented with a set of activation options. Here's a breakdown of the available choices:

Online activation: Allows you to connect to your Korneff Audio account and activate the product seamlessly. This method ensures that your plug-in is always up to date and connected to your account, providing you with the latest features and improvements.

Offline activation: While currently disabled, will soon allow you to transfer and activate your license on a device that isn't connected to the internet. This feature is ideal for situations where internet access is limited or unavailable.

Please note that offline activation is marked as "Coming Soon" and will be available in future updates of the plug-in.

Buy Now: Clicking this button will take you to the Korneff Audio website, where you can purchase a license for the software. Once the purchase is complete, you will receive your license key via email.



Support: Clicking this button will take you to the Korneff Audio Support page where you can submit a support request. Fill in the required details and our support team will get back to you as soon as possible.

FAQ: Clicking this button will direct you to our FAQ page.

Online Activation



Online activation allows you to easily activate your product by connecting to your Korneff Audio account. Follow these steps to complete the online activation process:

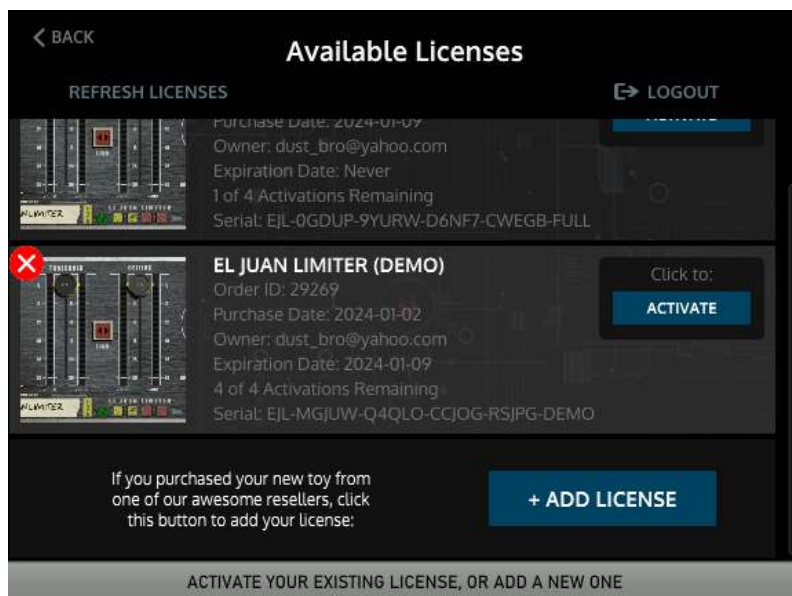
Select Activate: Start by selecting the ACTIVATE option from the activation options panel.



Log In to Your Account: You will be prompted to sign in to your Korneff Audio account if you haven't already. Enter your email and password associated with your account

Keep Me Logged In: This will bypass the sign-in screen and automatically log you in with your saved credentials.

Activate Your License: Once you're logged in, you'll see a list of your licenses associated with your account.



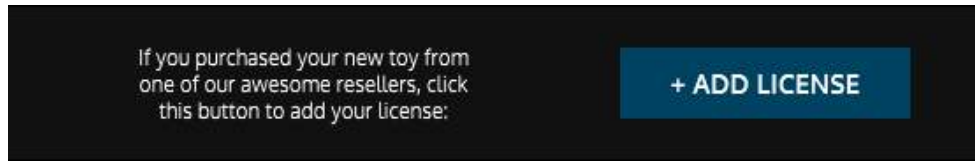
Locate the license you want to activate in the list, then click on the blue ACTIVATE button next to the license you wish to activate. This will initiate the activation process for that specific license.



Add License: If you purchased your product from a third-party reseller, you may need to click on ADD LICENSE to import the license to your Korneff Audio account.



Add License



Once you log in to your account, you can access the Add License panel by selecting the **ADD LICENSE** option from the License panel. This panel is specifically designed for users who have purchased their Korneff Audio product from an authorized reseller.

In the Add License panel, you will find a text input field where you will enter your license key. This key is provided to you by the third-party reseller from whom you purchased the product. Copy and Paste the entire code, including dashes.

Once you've entered your license key, click on the SUBMIT button. This action will send your license key for validation.

The system will validate the license key to ensure it's authentic and associated with a legitimate Korneff Audio product. If the validation is successful, you will receive a confirmation message indicating that your license has been added to your account.

After successfully adding your license, you will be automatically redirected back to the main license panel. Here, you will see your newly added license in the list, ready for activation.

Offline Activation

This option is currently under development and will be added soon.

UPDATE NOTIFICATIONS



The Update Notifier is a tool designed to keep you informed about the status of your software updates. This section outlines the different statuses and panels associated with the update notifier.

Auto-Update Off (Expired): This status indicates that either you've manually turned off the auto-update feature or haven't checked for updates in the last 30 days. When you see this status, it's a gentle reminder to consider enabling auto-updates. Keeping your software up to date ensures you have access to the latest features and improvements.

Update Available: When there's a new update waiting for your software, this status lights. Clicking on this icon will reveal a panel packed with information about the available update, including its version number, release date, update type, and a detailed description. Plus, you'll find a handy button that takes you straight to the downloads section of your account, making the update process a breeze.

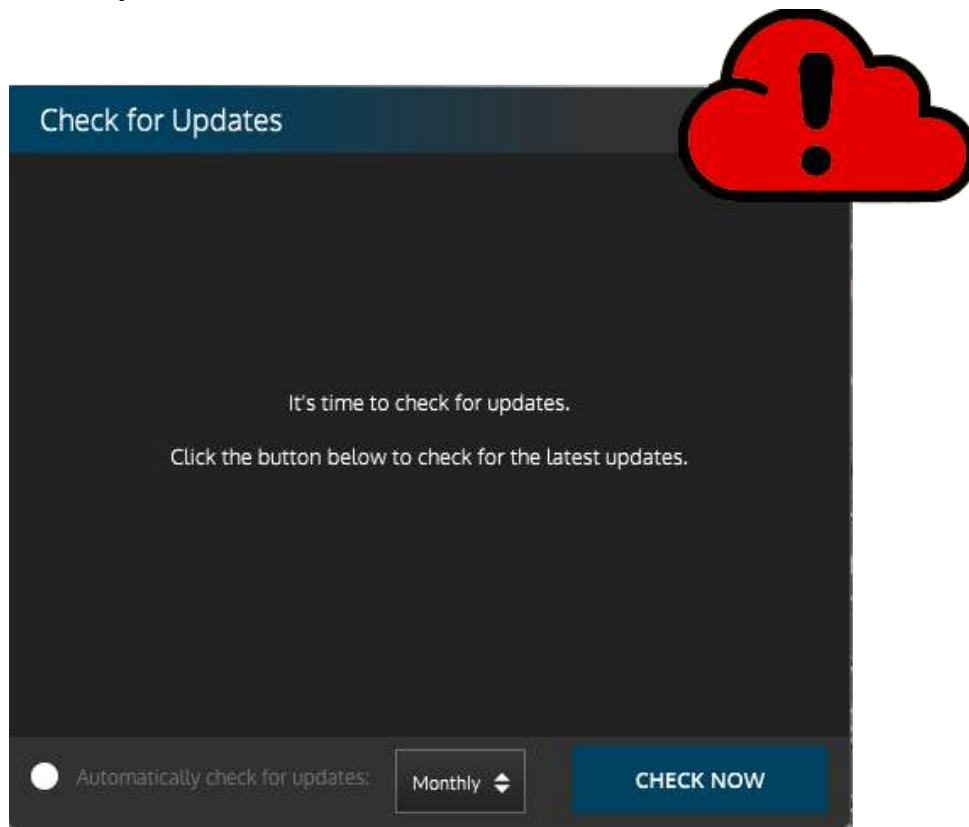
Up to Date: When everything's ship shape and your software is already running the latest version, this status puts your mind at ease. It's a reassuring pat on the back, confirming that you're already on the cutting edge of what your software has to offer.

No Internet Connection: If you find yourself in a digital desert with no internet connection available, this will appear. This status is a friendly way of saying, "Hey, we can't check for updates right now because the internet is out of reach." It's a temporary reminder that you may want to reconnect to the web when it's convenient to ensure you don't miss out on any future updates.

Clicking on the Update Notifier icon

No matter which status the icon displays, clicking on it will trigger a corresponding update panel. These panels provide you with actionable information and options, allowing you to make informed decisions about your software updates. Let's dive into the details of each panel. What fun:

Auto-Update Off (Expired)



When you encounter the **Auto-Update Off (Expired)** panel, it's essentially your software's gentle nudge to consider enabling auto-updates. This status appears for two main reasons:

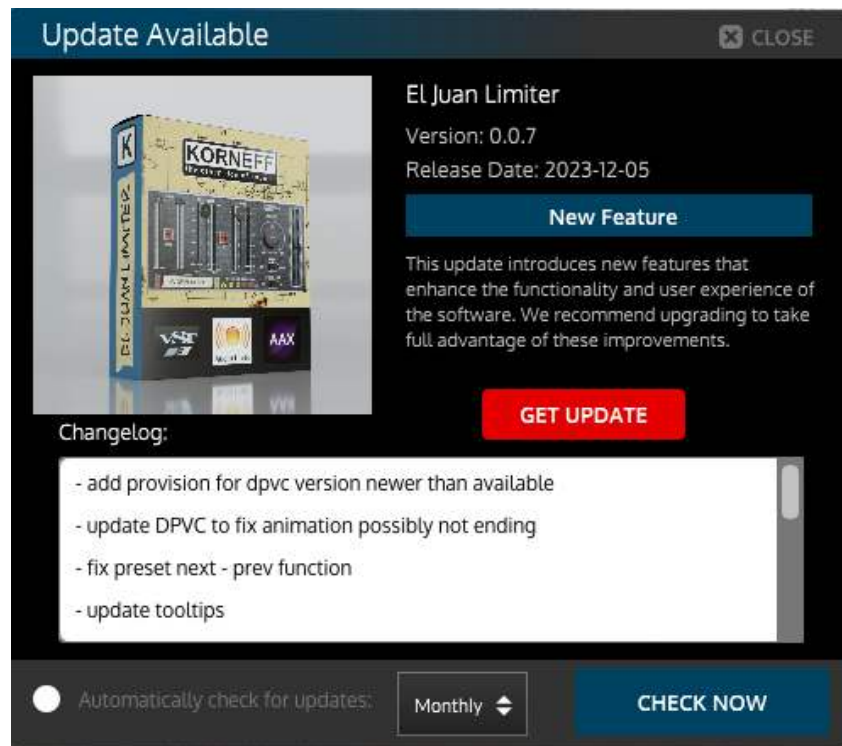
Auto-Update Turned Off: You might have manually turned off the auto-update feature, which means your software won't automatically fetch update information.

30 Days Since Last Update Check: if Auto-Update is off and it's been a month since you last checked for updates, this panel will remind you to stay current. Staying up to date ensures your software remains robust, secure, and packed with the latest enhancements.

Consider enabling auto-updates to streamline the update process and keep your software at its best.



Update Available



The Update Available panel signals exciting news – there's a new update ready and waiting for your software. This panel provides comprehensive information about the available update, making it easy for you to decide whether to proceed with the update. Here's what you'll find:

Project Name: The name of your software project, ensuring you know exactly which application is receiving the update.

Version Number: The specific version number of the update, indicating how significant the changes are

Release Date: When the update was released, so you can gauge its freshness.

Update Type: This section highlights the type of update. Is it a minor bug fix, a major feature enhancement, or something in between? This detail helps you understand the nature of the update.

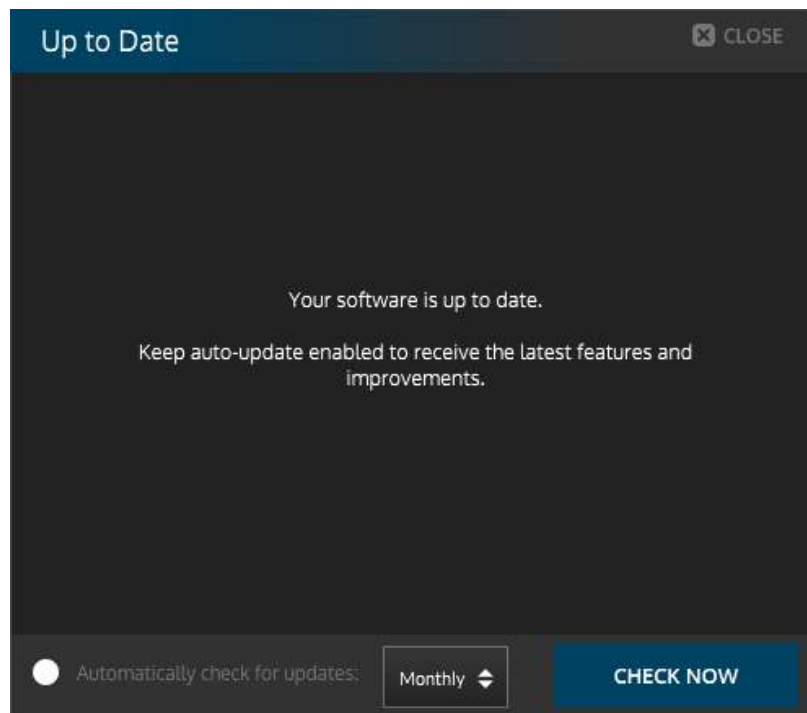
Update Description: A detailed description of what the update entails. This can include new features, bug fixes, and other improvements. It's your roadmap to what's changing.



GET UPDATE Button: A convenient button that, when clicked, takes you directly to the downloads section of your account. This means you can initiate the update process right away.

The Update Available panel equips you with all the information you need to make an informed decision about updating your software. Whether it's new features, bug fixes, or security enhancements, you'll know exactly what you're getting.

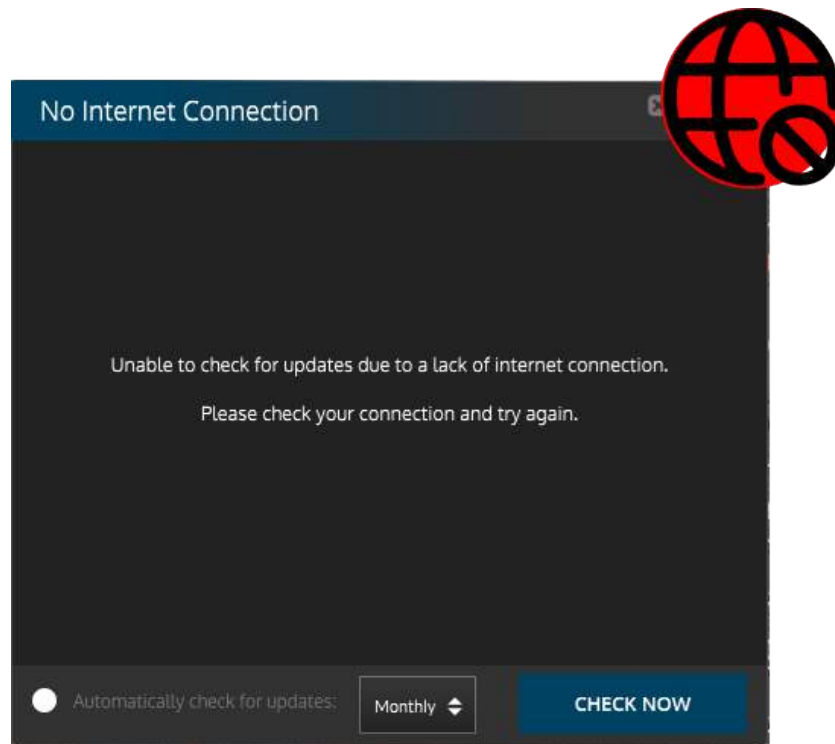
Up to Date



The Up to Date panel is your digital seal of approval, confirming that your software is already running the latest version available. When you see this status, it means you're in sync with the latest developments, features, and improvements. There's no immediate action required because you're already enjoying the best your software has to offer.

It's always a good feeling to know that your software is up to date and optimized for peak performance, and it's the least we can do to comfort you, given the mess that is this modern world and the inevitable rise of SkyNet and the extermination of the human race.

No Internet Connection



The No Internet Connection panel steps in when there's a temporary hiccup in your internet connection. This status politely informs you that, at the moment, it's unable to check for updates due to the lack of an internet connection.

While this status may appear momentarily, it serves as a reminder to ensure your device is connected to the internet. Once you're back online, the Update Notifier will resume its role, keeping you informed about your software's status.



Recording Like Tchad Blake

Be Subversive

Tchad is a total sonic experimenter. He loves strange, unknown pieces of gear and tends to plug them in and start using them without looking at the manual or even the back panel (which explains why he blew up his first Level-Loc). Shoot first, ask questions later.

Tchad uses a binaural dummy head as a drum overhead. He records interesting environmental sounds with a little recorder, and he's also never without a camera these days and he's a hell of a photographer. He perpetually has his ear and eye out for something interesting or out of the ordinary.

But Tchad's penchant for odd sounds doesn't mean he's constantly making odd-sounding records. He doesn't pursue weirdness just for the sake of it. He always tailors his approach to serve the artist and the song. Yes, his Tom Waits recordings sound weird, but that's because of Tom Waits. His work with more mainstream artists fits on the radio quite nicely. Tchad functions as a partner, not a dictator.

Tchad often uses the word “**subversive**” to describe his techniques. He's seeking to add distortion and effects that throw things a bit off-kilter, that disrupt things in an almost unnoticeable way. He uses distortion and saturation, often generated by the Level-Loc, to catch the listener's ear. There's something a bit odd going on, but you can't quite place it. It sounds great, but it's like getting poked by an invisible finger. But mute the weird, subversive element out of the mix and you'll immediately notice something is missing — you will really hear the Tchad Blake-shaped hole.

None of this suggests that Tchad Blake's records sound typical or like anyone else's, because they don't. He brings something unique and distinctive to the party, but it remains very much the artist or the band's party. He's also aware that he's a bit of an acquired taste and turns down gigs if he doesn't feel he can make a contribution.

The Level-Loc Bloom

Tchad claims he doesn't understand reverb, but his records have depth and ambiance. Sounds like reverb to me, but according to the man himself, the ambiance is the by-product of a lot of parallel compression and saturation. Lots of compression brings up quiet details and resonances, especially with a short release time.



The Level-Loc is one of his key tools. He'll crush a track with it, get that characteristic "Level-Loc Bloom," but then bring that up from behind. He rarely uses the Level-Loc in a way that dominates the recording: it's usually as a spice, not the main ingredient.

The Level-Loc Bloom - this is a distinctive pumping sort of sound the Level-Loc makes as it releases. It's a combination of things, the release time combined with a ton of transformer saturation, which adds lower frequency harmonic distortion and a certain "smear" to everything.

The PRE and POST FILTERS on our Level-Loc are essential here. Use the PRE-FILTERS to isolate the particular frequencies you'd like to process, compress that, and then use the POST-FILTERS to smooth up the highs and weed out some of the lows. This is very similar to how one uses an EQ to focus a reverb: you clean it up to get clarity in the mix.

Additionally, our Level-Loc features a POWER SOURCE control. Setting this to BATTERY and then dropping the voltage can radically change the bloom of the Level-Loc. Tchad has been especially enthusiastic about this feature.

The Search for the Repeatable Unexpected

One thing that can't be emphasized enough is Tchad Blake is constantly looking for fresh inspiration. He keeps current with music. He's always down to visit a new place. While touring Shure Headquarters in Evanston (a great tour, by the way) Tchad asked questions about everything and went as far as to sniff the bottle of commercially-made human sweat (I kid you not) that Shure buys to test its products for, well, human sweat resistance.

In the studio, it's the same thing: a constant search for something new. Our Level-Loc plug-in was really built with Tchad in mind. We added a lot of the features with a sense of, "Oh, Tchad is going to love to play with this."

The Battery Drain is something Tchad uses a lot and you should too. By using battery drain, it's possible to turn an acoustic instrument into an electronic one. Between the filters and battery drain, one can easily make a kick into a snare drum or a vocal into a baseline.

We've included three different Level-Locs for you to play with. TB1 is a full modeling of Tchad's first and favorite Level-Loc (the one he blew up with Tom Waits). TB2 is another unit he had, one that wasn't working until a technician from Shure opened it up and fixed it. TB1 and TB2 sound different from each other. DK is a model of Dan's M62V Level-Loc. This unit is in very good shape and has low hours on it, and is probably as close to a new Level-Loc as one can find. DK has a slightly fuller sound and a slightly faster attack time. It's



also... perhaps the tamest of the bunch. It does distort and overload, but it isn't quite as bizarre as TB1 or TB2.

One of the things Tchad is most excited about with our plug-in is that it's more versatile than the hardware unit.

The hardware unit, in the studio, requires padding to interface properly with a console. There's no way to adjust release times, and if there's not some sort of filtering available, the only control one really has on a vintage hardware Level-Loc is the level in and the level out. The plug-in lets you digitally open up the unit and switch things around without electrocuting yourself.

Typically, there's only one functional hardware Level-Loc available at a time. Although Tchad once owned around five, several were often out of commission. Hence, unless he was tracking things with it, he had only one Level-Loc to use in the mix. He's using the Level-Loc plug-in all over his mixes now, not just on drums. Dan is using it on just about every track of his mixes these days. Level-Loc: it isn't just for drums anymore.

Speaking of the mix, everyone wants revisions of mixes these days, which means having to recall of everything. Even on a good day, a vintage hardware Level-Loc is an inconsistent beast. You'll never get that INPUT LEVEL knob back to where you originally had it, and the temperature and humidity of the studio changes the sound of it as well. The plug-in is very stable, and there's a preset library where you can save your custom settings. The library also features presets from actual Tchad Blake and Dan Korneff sessions for you to use as a jumping-off point for your own experimentations.

Bonus: Tchad on Drums

Tchad mainly mixes these days, but while we worked with him at Shure in their beautiful studio, I had the opportunity to watch and photograph him "Tchad Blake'ing" a drum set.

The kit was already mic'd up in a fairly standard manner - spaced-pair overheads, two on the kick (in and out), two on the snare (over and under), and mics on the toms and hi-hat. All Shure microphones (you were expecting Neumann's?). Sounded dandy fine.

Tchad requested a large tube or pipe, so off we scurried around the premises, looking for tubes of various lengths, diameters and materials. Tchad would look at them, put his ear to them and listen, tap them and consider the resonance. He finally selected a three-foot length of steel pipe about 4" in diameter.

He stuck an SM-57, using a boom stand, down the pipe and then placed the whole assembly into the center of the drum set, sitting on a towel on the kick, somewhat under the toms, pointing towards the snare. In the control room, he'd listen and adjust both the



placement of the tube and the location of the SM-57 within the tube. I have to emphasize that he was quick about all of this—the man has a great ear and knows what he’s looking for.

Once he had the sound, he put a hardware Level-Loc on it and crushed it down. He then pulled the channel down in the mix until there was a wonderful flavor to the drum submix. Mute the track and the magic and interest simply vanished... leaving a distinct Tchad Blake-shaped void in the mix.

The real test of our Level-Loc plug-in happened during this session. We split the tube/mic contraption Tchad concocted and sent one through the hardware Level-Loc and the other through our plug-in. In blind A/B tests it was virtually impossible to tell the two apart. It was more that it sounded like two of the same hardware units, like the difference between two channels of a vintage recording console. Tchad was very happy. And so were we!

We hope you're happy with the Shure Level-loc, as well. We love hearing from you, whether it's comments or suggestions. Thanks for supporting Korneff Audio. We appreciate you!