



The WOW Thing

user manual WOW 1.0.0

KORNEFF
the other side of sound



The WOW Thing 1.0

Audio production these days tends to be precise and nitpicky: Everything is pristine, mixes are polished, things are quantized and pitch-corrected. It's easy to forget that, in audio, a lot of the magic is from the unknown, the happy accident, the flawed, and the downright weird. Like the time a major audio engineer picked up a little crappy plastic box at a Walmart or Target and used it to track guitars on a major metal album.

Welcome to the story of **The WOW Thing**.

The original WOW Thing was released in the early 1990s. It was a little blue box that went between your computer's audio output and your speakers or headphones. It claimed to make gaming or listening to music on your computer more enjoyable by improving the clarity, enlarging the sound stage, and improving bass response.

The WOW Thing achieved this (kind of?) by radically EQing the signal, gently rolling off everything below 1 kHz (because nothing increases clarity like getting rid of the mids, the low mids, and the bass), and adding a gentle shelving boost above one 1 kHz (because nothing increases clarity like adding in a bunch of high end). After this, the signal was subjected to a range of delay and phase processing. These changes in signal timing fooled the listener's ear into hearing things outside of the actual location of the speakers. And some further processing and EQ'ing was used to bring back the bass that was stripped away initially.

WOW Thing technology was also built into computers (because licensing agreements) and -

In the interests of respecting copyrights, this next part of our story will be narrated by Elmer Fudd, who has issues pronouncing some letters.

- award-winning engineer Wandy Stwaub had one of those computers. And he was fasciwated with the WOW effect. So, he spent \$20-, got himself a WOW and brought it into the studio. Specificawy, Wun On Wun Wecording in Wos Angewes, where Wandy was engineewing for mega-pwducer Wob Wock. Together they worked on an awbum called *Wetallica*, better known as The Bwack Awbum.

(Yes, you're currently reading the manual for a plug-in that precisely replicates (and goes beyond) the sounds of a \$20 chunk of plastic that redefined the sound of heavy guitars.)

Stwaub went on to use the WOW Thing on twacks for Won Wovi, Wavid WOWie, Mötwey Cwüe, Wickelback (yes, Wickelback)... you get the pictuwe.

Ok, thank you, Elmer!



Look at you — you have a WOW Thing!

Yes, it's great for HUGE guitars, but it is more than that. Use it on vocals and reverbs, keyboards and pads, the drum bus or on the room mics. Yes, the WOW Thing is a junky little thing, but it's magical, really fun to use, and there's nothing else quite like it.

Features:

Quirky Sonic Enhancements: With WOW Thing, inject your tracks with a dose of the extraordinary. From unexpectedly wide guitars to bass lines that defy the limits of conventional speakers, this plugin brings the unexpected front and center.

Blend it: A simple yet powerful dry/wet blend knob puts you in control. Mix just the right amount of weird with your polished tracks for a sound that's uniquely yours.

Selectable TrueBass Frequencies: Our plug-in version adds selectable enhancement frequencies, perfect for finding that 'just right' level of warmth or punch that was never actually there in the first place.



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SPECIFICATIONS

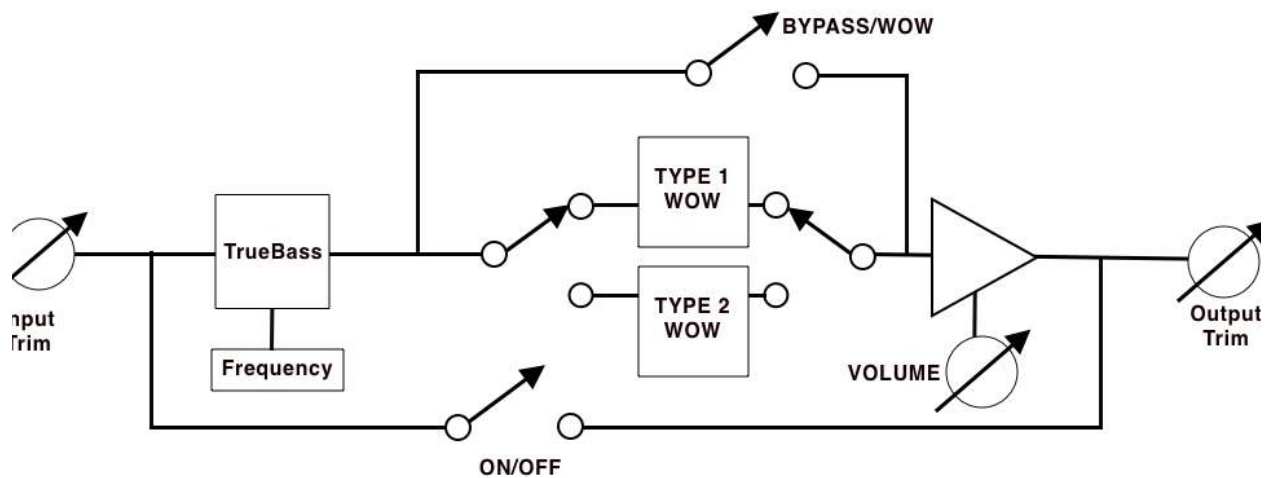
Minimum System Requirements

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

Supported Plugin Formats

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

SIMPLIFIED BLOCK DIAGRAM



CONTROLS and OPERATION



1 - Input/Output Trim Controls

The Input and Output Trim controls adjust the levels feeding into and out of the WOW Thing. Use these controls to prevent clipping and smoothly interface the plug-in into your signal chain.

Use the **Input Trim** to ensure that the signal being processed is at an optimal level, maximizing the effectiveness of the plug-in's effect while avoiding digital clipping and unwanted distortion.

Use the **Output Trim** control the volume of the processed audio, ensuring its properly level matched to the next plug-in down the line.

More often than not you won't be touching either of these controls, but if you're hearing distortion or crackling, look at the Input and Output level meters and adjust accordingly.



2 - Dry/Wet Control

The **Dry/Wet** Control is probably the most critical control on the WOW Thing. You will be playing with this when you use the plug-in.

Dry/Wet adjusts the balance of Dry (unprocessed) signal to Wet (processed) signal.. or, in the case of the WOW Thing, the balance to Wet, totally overprocessed signal. Turning it counterclockwise increases the amount of Dry heard, turning it clockwise increases the amount of Wet, processed, spacial pandemonium heard.

Usage

Starting Point: Begin with the Dry/Wet Control set to 100%, where only the processed signal is heard.

Adjustments: Use the WOW and TrueBass controls to dial in an exaggerated amount of width and rumble.

Back It Down!: Back down the Dry/Wet towards Dry to get the effect you're looking for. Remember, not only does WOW Thing add spaciousness, it also adds a lot of brightness and tilts the whole signal towards the high-end. You might want that... you might also want to dive into a pool that has no water in it. We at Korneff Audio tend to back the Dry/Wet way down, usually under 50%. In many cases, 50% or even much less, 20-30% wet, is plenty. But if you want to crank it up, you do you! The empty pool perhaps awaits your head.

3 - OFF/ON Switch

The **Off/On** Switch bypasses all the functioning of the plug-in completely. It turns off WOW, it turns off TrueBass, and it removes the radical EQing of the signal. We tend to A/B compare things more than average when using the WOW Thing. Remember, a little bit goes a long way.

4 - BYPASS/WOW Switch

Bypass/WOW switches off the just the WOW stereo enhancement, leaving the TrueBass effect untouched AND leaving in the radical EQing. This allows you to focus more on the TrueBass adjustments without the distractions of stereo spatial effects and phase artifacts.



5 - WOW Control

The **WOW Control** is the namesake feature of the WOW Thing plug-in. Turning this control clockwise increases the amounts of delay, filtering and phase manipulation of the signal. The result can range from a gentle widening of the stereo field to a complete collapse of it.

The WOW effect is a sophisticated form of M/S processing. When the WOW control is turned completely counterclockwise, you will hear mostly the Mid or "Center" channel of the signal—the signal has moved towards what is essentially mono. Turning it clockwise adds in the Side channel while decreasing the Mid. There is a sweet spot around .3 on the control where Mid and Side information is balanced. As you continue turning WOW clockwise, the Side channel continues to increase and once you go beyond .5, the sides will begin to fold in to the center. At high settings, the stereo field is essentially a chaotic shambles.

We have provided you with a choice between the classic little blue box "WOW Thing" processing (Type 1) and the rare, rackmount "SRS Megawide" unit (Type 2) settings for varied spatial experiences. The two are similar—Type 1 a bit more extreme, Type 2 a bit more subtle. You'll find this particular setting on the back of the plug-in (click on the Korneff nameplate).

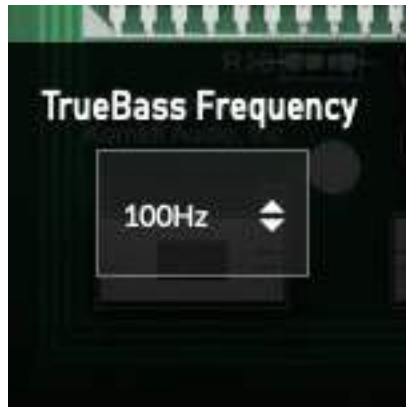


6 - TrueBass

The TrueBass Control "creates" bass using filtering and phase. We think of it more as a warmth control than a bass control. Remember, the WOW Thing was designed to enhance bass on tiny little speakers that had no bass response at all. TrueBass is like using air freshener to "clean" a room rather than actually cleaning the damn room. "Oooh! It smells like bass in here."

Our TrueBass functionality goes beyond that of the original hardware unit. It features a frequency selector, which you can access by clicking on the Korneff nameplate and going to the back panel.

The available frequencies are 40Hz, 60Hz, 100Hz, 150Hz, 200Hz, 250Hz, 300Hz, and 400Hz. The default setting is 60Hz. We tend to switch it lower when working with kick drums and such. If you're using TrueBass on multiple tracks, avoid bass build-up by ensuring that different frequencies are selected on each plug-in instantiation. Or set everything to 40Hz, crank it up and break something. The empty pool awaits your head.



7 - VOLUME Knob

The **Volume Knob** adjusts the overall output level of the processed signal. This control allows for precise adjustments to ensure the enhanced audio integrates smoothly into your mix or achieves the desired loudness. You can increase the output level for creative effect, driving the signal into the output stage for added warmth and saturation.

8 - 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, reverses all the damage mankind has done to the planet. **REDO**, to the right, restores all the damage mankind has done to the planet, starting with the latest control you tweaked on the EJL. There are unlimited levels of Undo, so feel free to go back to Junior High and ask her out.

9 - PRESET BROWSER

Click on the piece of tape with the Sharpie text on it at the bottom of the unit to access the preset browser and load and save presets. The **RED ARROWS** to the left of the tape allow you to step through and audition presets. The yellow **SAVE** 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.

LICENSE MANAGER: Activate or deactivate your plug-in here. (More on this later)



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 naked people, 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**.

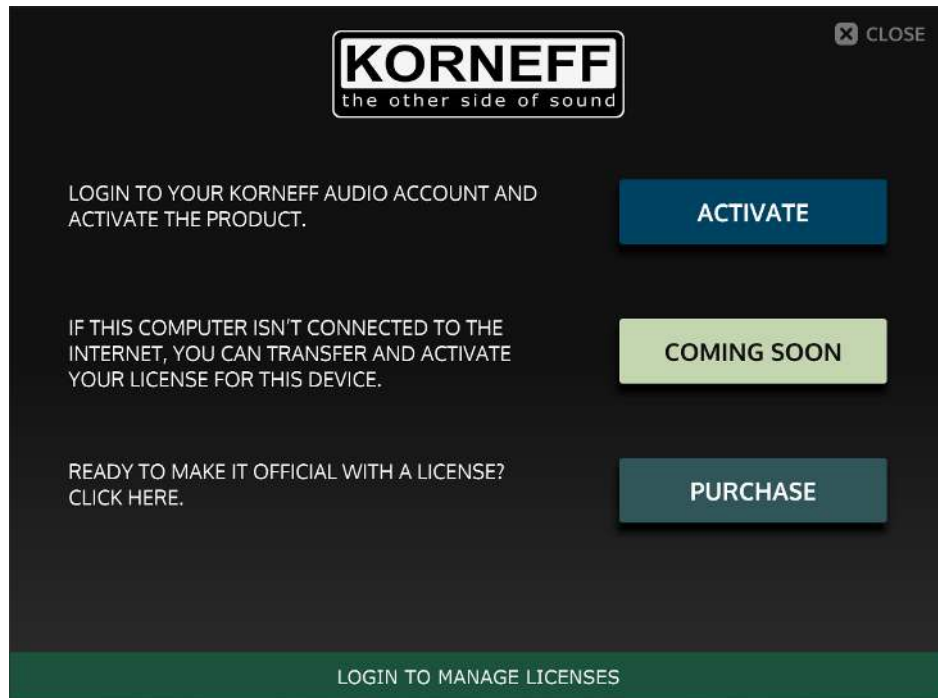
The **BUG** is a link to a place on the Korneff Audio empire where you can report problems with this software. If you don't see the BUG, then it means everything is utterly perfect with our software.

Click on the **KEY** symbol to see your license activation options, conveniently our next chapter...

ACTIVATION

Activation is a crucial step in getting your plugin 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 plugin 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.

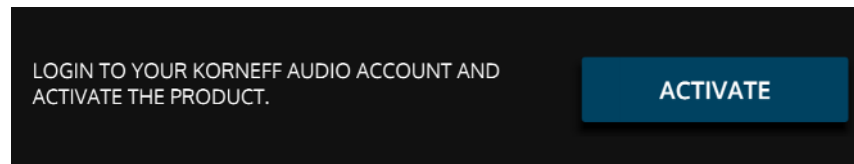
Please note that offline activation is marked as **COMING SOON** and will be available in future updates of the plugin.



Purchase: If you haven't obtained a license yet, you can easily purchase by clicking on the **PURCHASE** button. This will direct you to the Korneff Audio website, where you can make your purchase and receive your license.

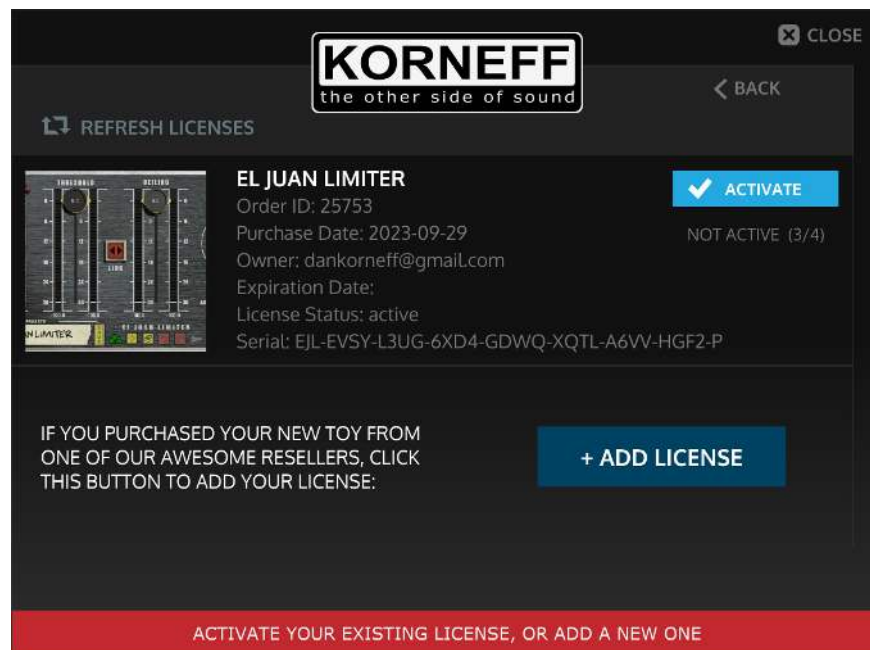
Online Activation

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.



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 **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.

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.

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ADD YOUR THIRD-PARTY LICENSE

WELCOME! IF YOU'VE PURCHASED OUR PRODUCT FROM AN AUTHORIZED RESELLER, YOU CAN EASILY ADD YOUR LICENSE HERE. SIMPLY ENTER YOUR LICENSE KEY BELOW, AND WE'LL TAKE CARE OF THE REST. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR NEED ASSISTANCE, OUR HELP RESOURCES ARE JUST A CLICK AWAY.

Enter your License Key above.

SUBMIT

ADD A NEW LICENSE TO YOUR ACCOUNT

- 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



RED - 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.

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 will appear if Auto-Update is off and it's been a month since you last checked for updates. This panel reminds 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.

YELLOW - 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.

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.

OLIVE - 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.

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.

RED GLOBE with TILTED DEATH STAR - 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. Also, the Empire might be waiting to destroy your planet.

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.



USAGE IDEAS

The WOW Thing is very simple to use and lends itself to experimentation. It is a really fun plug-in to use. It appears to be a one-trick pony, but it's a very good trick and there's a lot of places where the pony can perform.

Use the Dry/Wet Knob!!

We almost never use the WOW without turning down the Dry/Wet a lot. One of our beta testers described the WOW as "over-exaggerated and undomesticated." Yep, that's what this thing is, and the Dry/Wet is the key to taming it, and especially moderating all the high-end this thing adds. It adds a ton, but it is nice sounding and not harsh usually, but still it needs to be backed down.

You'll find you'll be adjusting Dry/Wet a lot, especially as your mix builds up, and more and more things are added. Final tweaks of the WOW will be happening right up until you're printing things, so be prepared for that.

Guitars

The WOW Thing is famous for this, and if you're looking for that huge "Wetallica" guitar sound, this is it.

The WOW Thing really only works on stereo tracks or submixes, so that is where you usually want to put it, for maximum effect.

So, we suggest, if you're going to use it on a heavy guitar bus, that you put it on the bus first, before you do any EQing or compressing, because the WOW Thing will massively change the frequency response of things. You don't want to spend an hour using the AIP getting everything amazing and throw the WOW Thing on it and suddenly you're back to square one. The WOW Thing might not be the first thing in the guitar processing chain, but it helps if it is the first thing you apply to the guitar signal chain as you proceed through time.

So, crank up the **WOW Knob** and get the guitars to feel like they're giving you a bear hug. Then crank up **TrueBass**. Depending on how the low-end layers stack out (where the kick is, where the bass is, the tuning of the guitars, and the nature of the part) use the **TrueBass Frequency** selector on the back to place the guitar low-end where you want it in the mix compared to the other stuff down there.



By now you're probably already reaching for the **Dry/Wet Knob**. This is a good indicator that you're a normal person. Back the effect down!

Perhaps play the Volume knob on the front. The WOW Thing has an output stage that you can overload and generate some harmonics, etc.

After you get something going that you like, now pop in other plug-ins and get going.

You don't have to use the WOW Thing first, but it does make things easier and a bit more efficient.

BVox and Pads

Anything recorded or submixed in stereo is a suitable victim for the WOW Thing. We love it on backing vocals, keyboard pads, strings, etc. If a part has a strong stereo motion to it, or an open diffuse nature, the WOW Thing almost always adds interest and color.

It can be a bit addicting and you don't want to put it on everything, although for a break or a bridge, every part of the song is transported into a phasey hellscape... I'm down for that.

A key to a good mix is contrast, and that applies to space and distance as well. We tend to use the WOW Thing to put a few elements of the mix outside the span of the speakers. This can be a subtle ear candy sort of thing, or it can be massed guitars, but the point is more that you probably don't want subtle ear candy and huge guitars out there, or at least not out there at the same time.

A Wide Return

A great, and easy way, to use the WOW Thing is to feed it from a stereo aux send, and then return it to your mix on a stereo channel. We call this a Wide Return: anything you feed to it will get WOW'd.

Set the WOW Thing wide and crazy and then feed the send from a stereo set of tracks, or from the reverb return. Bang! Instant width increase. Using this set-up, you can get WOW Thing effect on any track you want without having to deal with Dry/Wet, etc.

TrueBass

Does it bother you that calling it TrueBass is a lie? I understand marketing and all, but TrueBass? Really? It's like calling makeup "RealSkin."



ANYWAY... TrueBass. It works really well for making a kick sound big and resonant. There are lots of ways to get a sort of 808 thing happening to a kick, but TrueBass on the WOW is certainly one of the fastest. Turn it up and go. Maybe mess with the frequencies, whatever.

You can make a "Fat Return" with the WOW Thing. Feed it from a send, return it to a pair of channels, either bypass the WOW effect (use the WOW/Bypass switch, not the ON/OFF switch) or turn it way down, and crank up the TrueBass knob. For additional fun, turn up the VOLUME knob to get some distortion happening. Now, anything you feed into the send will return into the mix with some big ass bottom end. You can also set the TrueBass frequency higher and make a "Warm Return," and then feed anything that needs a bit of low mid love into it.

Final Thoughts

Think about automating the WOW Thing, or at least automating the mutes on the channels returning it. Think about muting it out during sections of the song that need to sound tight, and then unmuting it during sections that have a spacier feel or lyric. Pop it in for specific moments — a keyword or phrase on a vocal, a pick scrape on a guitar part, a particularly obnoxious huge drum fill with lots of toms in it. Effects are only as effective as how little you use them.

The WOW Thing has been winding up on every mix we've been working on the past few months, as we've been beta-testing the plug-in. Sometimes it is central to the conception of the mix, sometimes it is a cool little moment of color. We've been finding it fun and useful.

And that is it for me. We hope you have a ball with your WOW Thing.

Make great music! Make cool records!