



WELCOME TO **SILIKA**

After 9 years in the plugin game, Kush can finally say without exaggeration that, at least for one particular flavor of vintage compressors that clip beautifully, we have completely closed the Analog/Digital gap. SILIKA is not 'close', it's not 'different but just as good'. It's 'Sonically Identical' to the types of hardware it's modeled after.

When you drive this plugin's input, everything melts deliciously. In particular, the high frequencies lay back and spread out without getting edgy, or bright, or even the least bit 'zingy'. It may get too grindy, but it won't hurt your ears. Think Led Zeppelin IV's hazy grunge, and you'll start to get the idea.

SILIKA owes its killer sound to an extraordinarily complex harmonic distortion generator, but operationally it's a relatively simple compressor with a familiar feature set. All of its distortions are controlled with the Input knob, which can be switched and blended to taste. The resulting signal then gets passed to a compressor/limiter with 4 available ratios, standard Attack/Release/Threshold/Mix controls, and sidechain filtering options which, while simple, allow for a dramatic reshaping of the compressor's behavior.

It's a straightforward plugin with an absolutely killer sound, and represents the dawn of a new era for Kush plugins and digital sonics in general.

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UNDERSTANDING THE SIGNAL FLOW



SILIKA has two major engines underneath the hood, the DIODE distortion and the COMPRESSOR. When a signal enters the plugin, it passes through the Diode stage first. The hotter the input, the harder it hits the Diode and the more saturation you get. You then blend that saturated signal with the dry signal using the BLEND knob, and the resulting Dry/Sat mix is sent to the COMPRESSOR as well as the Sat tap on MIX knob. The compressor reshapes the Dry/Sat signal's dynamics as you wish, and feeds the result to the Wet tap of the MIX knob.



The above deserves repeating for clarity: the MIX knob is not a dry input vs. compressor output blender.

As with the ubk-1, the MIX knob blends Sat/Dry (as determined by the BLEND knob) with Compressed Sat/Dry.

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THE CONTROLS



INPUT Think of this like a Drive control. The further you turn it up, the harder your signal will be driven into both the Diode engine and the Compressor. More input = More saturation & compression, Less input = Less Saturation & compression. If you want to control Saturation and Compression separately, the Threshold control is your best friend.

OUTPUT The Output knob is the last control in SILIKA's signal path and adjusts the level of the signal after the MIX knob. This signal flow guarantees that whatever balance you've

established between Dry, Saturated, and Compressed signals will be preserved as you adjust SILIKA's Output control.

THE DIODE The input section of SILIKA is a Franken-box that could only exist in the digital realm. It takes the distortions of a 1973 ADR* Compex's Input & Output Transformers and, in between them, inserts the harmonic character of a 1969 Neve* 2254's diode-bridge gain reduction circuit. The result is a dense, extraordinarily rich and complex saturation that favors hard clipping in a distinctly crusty, old-analog way.

DIODE TYPE Use this switch to modify the flavor of saturation SILIKA dishes out. ZENER has a brighter, slightly more aggressive harmonic character, while GERM (short for Germanium) brings a darker, slightly mellower personality to the party.

DIODE BLEND Use this knob to blend the Saturated signal with the unprocessed Dry input signal, combining the two into a SAT + DRY blend that is then sent to the compressor.



FURY MODE Want to really dial up the aggro factor? Fury mode takes this already aggressive plugin and multiplies everything by 10, literally. Distortions become 10x more complex, Attack & Release times become 10x faster than their stated values. SILIKA in Fury mode can shave transients down to nothingness, much like an 1176 with all-buttons-in, but it actually loves slower settings as well and can produce some lovely punchy-squishy vibes with Release times set slower than 200ms.

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ATTACK Hey, you've probably seen this knob before! It adjusts the attack of the compressor from as low as 100 *microseconds* up to 50 milliseconds.

RELEASE Adjust SILIKA's release speed from 15 up to 5000 milliseconds. Just like mom used to make!

THRESHOLD The higher you crank this knob, the lower your threshold gets and the more gain reduction you'll see from the compressor at a given input level.



SC HPF SILIKA's built-in sidechain allows you to adjust a High-Pass Filter on the signal that hits the detector, from OFF up to 300Hz. It doesn't EQ your signal, it simply filters what the compressor 'sees' and therefore changes how it responds. The higher you turn this control, the less sensitive the compressor will be to the low frequencies of the sound you're treating and the more they'll 'pop' through with transient impact.

SC BOOST The Sidechain also contains a unique 'boost' feature, allowing you to boost your sidechain with a +9dB bell at the selected frequency (from 2.6k - 10k). Great for getting the Compressor to soften the nasal hardness in a vocal, the mellow the brittle snap of a snare, or even mellow out and darken an entire mix. The possibilities are endless!



RATIO Determines how much gain reduction SILIKA applies in response to signals over the Threshold. SILIKA auto-offsets the Threshold internally for each ratio, so if you have compression happening and the ratio changes, the signal's level remains consistent. This way, you can instantly and accurately hear the change in personality each ratio brings to the table. Thanks Kush!



SAT/COMP MIX SILIKA's Sat/Comp 'dry' tap is NOT your dry signal. Instead, it mixes the uncompressed DRY + SAT mix from your Blend control with the *compressed* DRY + SAT signal from the compressor.

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VU TRI-METER



SILIKA is the first Kush plugin to adopt our Tweaker hardware's groundbreaking 'tri-meter' display. On the bottom of the plugin you can choose whether the meter displays Input & Output (great for setting up initial levels and final level matching), Gain Reduction only (great for when you're dialing in compression), or all three (great for those of us who work fast and don't want to bother switching modes). Side note: when things get cooking, you'll need a somewhat modern, fast computer for all 3 needles to animate smoothly.

Geek notes: the ballistics of the Input and Output are true-VU, with an 'integration time' of 300ms. OVU is calibrated to -18dBFS, which is SILIKA's nominal operating level. If all that is meaningless nonsense to you, the main thing to understand is this: the Input and Output needles ignore the powerful peak-transients of instruments like drums, so a kick level of -7VU is a good starting point... but note that this does NOT equate to -7 on your DAW's meters. In fact, if you treat SILIKA's I/O meters like a modern DAW peak meter and bury them in the red, you will have a hard time reigning in the distortions or minimizing compression... which is exactly how it works with analog.

One last thing to note: the Input VU's levels do not change in response to Input control adjustments. This allows you to easily level match SILIKA's Output with the level of your Input signal, regardless of how you have all the controls set.

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DSP / AUXILIARY CONTROLS



BYPASS Bypasses SILIKA (Surprise!)

OVERSAMPLING Toggles Oversampling On or Off for all instances of SILIKA in your session. Oversampling eats precious CPU cycles but, in return, reduces the amount of enharmonic (aka aliasing aka unpleasant) distortions inherent in all DSP distortion and compression processes. If you're working at 44.1k or 48k, and you've got a beefy CPU, you may wish to leave OS on the whole time. If you're working at 88.2k or 96k, oversampling becomes far less critical. If you want OS on but your computer objects to the work, consider turning OS off to mix, and then turning it back on to bounce for maximum analog-sounding goodness.

I/O • GR • TRI This selector allows you to choose whether SILIKA's VU meter shows Input/Output gain levels, Gain Reduction levels, or the Kush-Special TRI-METER which shows all three meters at once, allowing you to visualize the movement of your compression in analog-modeled real time.

SIDECHAIN Toggles the plugin's sidechain from Internal (default) to External. Note: selecting External disables SILIKA's Sidechain HPF and Push features.

PARAMETER DISPLAY (#) Toggles SILIKA's parameter display on or off. ON shows the precise values of each control and allows for direct input of the values. OFF removes the visual clutter and lets you mix with your ears instead of your math skills.

POLARITY (Ø) Toggle this switch to invert the polarity (aka "flip the phase") of the SILIKA Output.

STEREO LINK Toggles how the detector responds to the L and R signal from your track. In linked mode, the compressor responds to your left and right channel together. In unlinked mode, the compressor responds to the L and R channels independently.

HELP Press this button to go directly to this manual page at thehouseofkush.com, where you can find links for downloading updates, contacting support, and more!

SILIKA INFO Click to view a handy reminder of what all these fancy controls are for.

PRESET MANAGEMENT



BANK Banks are handy ways to organize groups of presets into categories you create. To select a bank, click directly on the current bank name and a dropdown list will appear. Select New to add a new bank to this list. Select Rename to rename the current bank, editing directly on the name itself. Select Delete to delete the current bank. **WARNING** deleting a bank deletes ALL of the presets within that bank, and cannot be undone. A warning dialog will appear to confirm you wish to do this, please choose carefully!

PRESET A preset stores the state of every knob and switch on the main GUI, as well as the state of the Sidechain select, Polarity switch, and detector Link. Use this to save and recall your favorite settings, trade settings with other SILIKA users, and import new banks from UBK whenever he can remember to do such things.

To select a preset, click directly on the current preset name and a dropdown list will appear. Select Save As to create a new preset in the current bank. Select Save to overwrite the current preset.

STATUS LED This light indicates whether the current state of SILIKA's controls is identical to the settings in the currently active preset. Green indicates that the SILIKA's settings and the preset are identical, Red indicates that controls have been changed since the preset was loaded. **WARNING** If you load a different preset when the Status LED is Red, you will lose the changes you've made to the current preset.

PRESET MANAGEMENT TIP It's common practice to organize presets by Instrument type, such as Drums, Guitars, Mix Bus. But consider organizing some by tone, attitude, or theme. UBK's preset folders contain banks named 'fast and aggressive', 'smooth and open', 'slow but dirty' etc. These allow you to explore textures regardless of what instrument you're focusing on, and can promote a different state of mind when mixing, namely one that thinks in terms of color and personality.

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WHAT'S NEXT?

GOT QUESTIONS?

We've got answers! Head to www.thehouseofkush.com/support for all your plugin support needs.

INTO ANALOG?

Ready to pull the trigger on some of Kush's Analog options? Head to www.thehouseofkush.com/analog to read up on all the latest Kush has to offer. Watch videos, hear demos, and drool over the fantastic warmth and detail only Analog can bring to your sound.

WANT TO WIN A FREE PLUGIN?

Learn to mix while Gregory Scott (UBK) of Kush Audio and ITB Mixing pro Nathan Daniel answer listener questions, crack themselves up, and offer weekly chances to win FREE Kush plugins! Search "UBK Happy Funtime Hour" on iTunes and Stitcher, or visit...

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