

SigMod and Instant Dialogue Cleaner plug-ins

DAVID KENNEDY tests custom signal architecture from NUGEN and removes police sirens from dialogue with a denoiser from Audionamix

NUGEN SIGMOD

NUGEN Audio's SigMod plug-in is a signal modification utility that can apply a range of simple processes — presented as modules — in any order required. Like other NUGEN plug-ins it is available as 32- and 64-bit-supporting AAX, VST2, VST3 and AU. Now, with a recent update, you can also incorporate any compliant VST3 plug-in in an AAX, VST2 or AU environment. The SigMod interface is a simply laid out interactive representation of the signal-flow through the plug-in, which resizes automatically depending on what you're asking it to do and adapts to reflect the state of available controls. If you like a signal diagram then I think you'll find this pretty intuitive. The settings panel allows you to reconfigure the signal flow with up to ten modules and, whilst you can save your own presets, there is no scope for automation control. The fixed input and output modules are either stereo or Mid/Side and individual inputs can be deactivated. None of the 11 single process modules are really unique, but having them all in one place allows for complex signal-flow and routings.

For both equipment and ears, the Protect module does just that by muting an offending signal or feedback above a given level, in dBTP. Reset modes include a practical popup window for when plug-in is buried somewhere obscure.

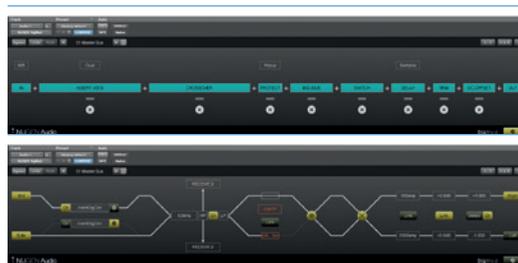
Crossover module splits the signal at a given frequency, allows one part to pass through and can send the other part to an instance of the NUGEN Audio Receive plug-in so you can easily construct your own simple parallel processing routing. There is also the Tap module which can also add sends from within the SigMod plug-in.

Mid/Side module will encode a L/R input to M/S or decode the reverse. Using a couple of instances of this either side of an L/R plug-in would allow you to use it in M/S mode.

Switch module switches channel components over, so L/R to R/L and M/S to S/M. This could be achieved in the input module as well.

There are three modules — Delay, Trim and DC Offset — for which I'd expect to find something equivalent within any decent DAW and the remaining three — Mute/Solo, Phase and Mono — work as you might imagine.

Not really a single process module as such, the Insert VST3 module is new for SigMod v1.1.



/ Signal flow graphically displayed

This allows for the insertion of a single VST3 plug-in — as either stereo or dual mono — in any instance of SigMod. On first use it scans for available plug-ins and if any don't play ball they are 'blacklisted'. Once a compliant VST3 is selected its interface can be opened up and parameters adjusted though automation is not offered. Not having had much luck with plug-in format wrappers in the past, I've never been inclined to use plug-ins that are limited to one format, but the Insert VST3 module in SigMod works perfectly well and doesn't add any additional latency.

Clearly SigMod has many applications — I've thought of several that are specific to my unique needs — such as overcoming DAW limitations on master and channel strips, signal monitoring and routing, Mid/Side conversion and output level protection. **i**

resolution/VERDICT

PROS A very useful tool.
CONS At £34 for the suite, none.

www.nugenaudio.com

AUDIONAMIX INSTANT DIALOGUE CLEANER

The IDC plug-in aims to do what it says on the tin and comes all in the usual flavours — AAX, VST2, VST3 and AU. There is no standalone version. In use IDC could hardly be simpler as the plug-in does not require a sample of material — no latency spec is given but I'm getting around 40ms — and only has three primary controls which are background and dialogue levels, and separation strength. There is also an overall output gain slider and a stereo RMS meter. The default settings are essentially



neutral — which would always be my preference as a starting point — and the plug-in does not initially seem to introduce much noticeable effect into the signal chain. You start by attenuating the background

noise, giving the dialogue a bit of a boost if needed, and then increasing the separation strength if it isn't discriminating sufficiently between the two.

On dialogue with little background noise I feel IDC struggles to discriminate between the two and substantially attenuating the background noise level quickly has a detrimental effect on dialogue. This said, there are many plug-ins that can handle gentle noise reduction under dialogue perfectly well and chances are you already have a favourite. It is with challenging low signal-to-noise ratio conditions that IDC comes into its own, as it can tease out something intelligible from a cacophony.

I had it remove close sirens and yet retain off-mic dialogue, in another instance I got it to remove breaths from a personal mic whilst retaining dialogue from a distant car radio, and all of this over loud engine and other background noise. The most extreme settings wwww.nugenaudio.com artifacts into the signal, and in a way I like that you can push IDC too far, as it reassures me that no more noise attenuation or increase in separation would be desirable.

IDC is such a simple plug-in there really isn't much more to say other than if you think it might be of use to you then I urge you to try it out. A licence will set you back \$119. **i**

resolution/VERDICT

PROS An effective dialogue denoiser for challenging audio.
CONS Better tools are available for minimal background noise scenarios.

www.audionamix.com