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# Test: Brainworx bx\_digital

by Mario Schumacher

Brainworx could already make themselves a brilliant name with their bx\_digital Plug-In for the CreamWare SCOPE platform. Now the Stereo-Mastering-Plug-in with M/S technique is also available for native VST systems.



Audio Demos  
on CD!



These solo-buttons allow the user to separately listen to and work on the Mid- and Side-Signals (Sum & Difference). The S-signal will automatically be phase-corrected in Solo mode, and the L- or R- signals will be played mono on both speakers. Furthermore there is an "Image Shifter" to "tune" your low end and high end. The Bass-Shift can make the bass frequencies more direct and dry or less direct and softer. The Presence Shift though can breath more "air" into a mix and can compensate for the loss of high frequencies caused by potential de-esser use. Speaking of the devil: the bx\_digital has a de-esser with adjustable mid-frequencies on board. Another useful feature is the "Mono-Maker" with whom you can blend out the difference signal of a stereo signal from 20 Hz up to 400 Hz to guarantee mono compatibility in this part of the signal. This is very important for vinyl mastering and mastering Club-mixes.

This process will not at all effect the directness of for example a bass drum or the vocals, usually mixed mono / centered. You can also get rid of annoying stereo information, for example if you want to reduce some reverb from a drum loop. Thanks to the Link-function the Plug-In can also be used as a phase coherent stereo equalizer. Interesting to know that you can unlink any band or function individually though.

## Conclusion

Regarding the GUI there is only good news: due to the many possibilities and features the user interface doesn't seem overcharged. After a short training time the bx\_digital is fast and intuitive to use. I just wished there was a Reset-button for all parameters. The 16-pages manual is well written, and shows a lot of tricks and tips for recording and mastering with the plug-in. There is also a very helpful video tutorial on the manufacturer's website.

Even though the bx\_digital is an outstanding and very musical stereo equalizer it will mainly show all its strength in a mastering setup. The M/S possibilities alone make clear that the bx is a mature mastering tool. Together with a good (multiband-) compressor and limiter the bx\_digital can be the heart of a professional mastering setup which justifies the considerable price. The target group will be professional mastering and recording studios who are looking for a flexible plug-in for these tasks. Although similar encroachments would be possible with the realtime effects of professional audio editors in combination with several other high quality plug-ins there is no other VST "all in one" solution of that sound quality and versatility around. The EQ can not only correct stereo mixes, its possibilities make it a good choice for creative sound design as well.



## bx\_digital

Hersteller: Brainworx

Web: brainworx-music.de,  
www.creamware.de

Preis: VST-, RTAS- und AU-Version:  
498 Euro, Creamware-Scope-Version:  
349 Euro, TDM-Version:  
998 Euro

- ▲ distinguished sound quality
- ▲ musically equalizer
- ▲ flexible Solo- and Link-features
- ▲ multiple M/S features
- ▲ extensive possibilities
- ▲ useful functions
- ▼ no editing of the EQ via the graphic panel
- ▼ no Reset-button

RATING 6/6



Beat

The analogue examples of the bx\_digital are the proto-typed Hardware Equalizer bx1 and its extension unit bx2. The Plug-In offers almost all features of these two units. bx\_digital supports 3 different EQ-modes: In the "L/R" (dual mono) mode it works like a conventional Stereo-EQ. In the M/S-Mastering mode the built-in M/S matrix will split the incoming stereo-signal into a Mono-Sum (M) and the Stereo-Difference (S). Both signals can then be processed independently with the EQ. The M/S-Recording mode finally converts two separate M- and S- microphone-signals into a Stereo-signal. The 3-channel mode (for surround-mastering and recording purposes) solutions offered by the hardware is not implemented in the VST plug-in for VST standard reasons.

## Interna

The Equalizer contains 5 fully parametric bands per section, offering Gain, Frequency and Q-controls. All bands are Peak-filters, whereas the Lo-Mid and Hi-Mid bands (bands 2&4) can be switched to Lo-Pass and Hi-Pass via the Q-pot.

A unique feature of the bx\_digital are the SOLO-buttons for the M and the S - signals and the L- and R- signals respectively (depending on the selected mode).

Optical control tools have been implemented as well: first there is a graphic panel for each section showing up to 9 eq bands (eq plus shifters, etc.), then there are various LEDs for the different levels in the unit. Of course you can store presets with the bx\_digital.

## Applications

Possible applications for the bx\_digital would be precise corrections and accentuations of certain elements of a stereo mix. Compared to conventional stereo EQs the plug-in offers the advantage of being able (for example) to de-ess the vocals (centered in most mixes) and at the same time boost the high frequencies of the harmony instruments, that are usually mixed in the stereo field. With the input gains L and R you can balance out any mix that might not be centered perfectly. With the output gain in M and S (or L and R in dual mono mode) you can balance out levels between the different channels. In the M/S modes you can even control the stereo width of a mix by controlling the S-output. More S signal will widen any stereo mix.