
Subject: More Pulsar Observations

Posted by [Nil](#) on Mon, 25 Dec 2006 17:00:11 GMT

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OK, after twiddling around with this beast quite a bit more yesterday, I have a few more observations, FWIW, in case any others of you were still thinking of going this route:

1.) The overall sound, is, IMO, really good... in the configuration in which I am able to use it, I can only get a total of 8 inputs (4 stereo submixes in my case, running through 2 lightpipe in's), but even with just that (i.e.: not being able to sum like all 40 channels of a given project or whatnot) I am definitely hearing a bit more well-defined or clearer sound.

2.) I'm not all that impressed with the plugins... the "Optimaster" one is very useful, and the MasterVerbPro & Vinco are also pretty cool, but since I'm using this as a summing tool, I'm not about to slap a reverb across the 2-buss or one of the submixes - same goes for the Vinco (it's a pretty much dead-on 1176 emulation; sounds great, but there's not much of a chance I'm going to use that particular comp across an entire mix or submix). While some of the other plugins are "cool" in concept (like the PsyQ, which is a spatial manipulator, of sorts), IME they're not very useful - the PsyQ, for instance, has about two degrees of manipulation available before it starts sounding like crap LOL now that's kind of a waste of code, if you ask me! There are quite a few plugs like that one in the bunch, trust me, but again, there are also a few useful ones... I'm just not all that impressed with a lot of them. Maybe I was expecting more from a whole crop of DSP-based plugs, I dunno.

3.) The Mixer, is not much of a mixer... if you're expecting something like you'll find in Paris or Cubase/Nuendo in terms of versatility, automation, etc, forget it. It sure LOOKS pretty, though! :) it doesn't have built-in EQ, you have to select an EQ plugin (of which there are a couple), and there are only a couple of plugin slots per channel (depending on which Mixer you select).

4.) The software is not very intuitive, but it's also not overly cumbersome, either - once you learn how to speak German, you'll be fine LOL j/k... seriously, though, once you learn how "they" do things (certain click/drops & "is it a right or a left click?" - stuff like that), you'll find that those patterns pretty much repeat themselves across all the windows &

menus/submenus. It's very much like Paris in the sense that it's got a routing window (virtual patchbay-style), a main project window, a separate mixer window, etc. It does NOT have an editor of any kind (that I have come across, anyway), or a tracking feature similar in any way shape or form to any DAW wherein you have a window that shows what audio tracks you have, where they start & stop, etc, etc. You CAN track a number of tracks to disk through this gear alone, but then you'd have to reimport those into some DAW app to do anything really useful with them... so in case there was any confusion, the Creamware stuff in & of itself, is NOT really useable as a standalone DAW application - you'd have to have some other ASIO-compliant DAW partnered with it to be able to work in any manner even remotely close to what you're currently used to.

5.) Finally, DSP: DO NOT be fooled by your brain telling you: "Wow that card has THREE whole DSP chips! That should be PLENTY of power for what I want to do, since I have exactly ZERO DSP chips now!!!" Lemme tellya something... I have the Project Card - six DSP chips - and if I insert one big plugin like the Optimaster, I can insert exactly ONE more plugin before it gives me the white flag of DSP surrender. If I don't have a "big" plugin like the Optimaster inserted, I can insert, for example - exactly FIVE Vinco compressors before the DSP resources are exceeded. There's a thing called SBC (Spectral Balance Controller), and even if NO OTHER PLUGINS are inserted, if I insert that at 88.2k, all DSP resources become maxed-out. Now I can also kinda see why DeeJ opted for a couple of the "Home" (3-DSP) cards & one of the Project (6-DSP) cards, because there's also an i/o & routing issue, and so DeeJ ended up with a dozen total DSP chips across the three cards he's got, plus a bit better i/o flexibility as compared to if he'd gotten just one of the Pro (14-DSP) Cards. Now also, keep in mind I'm running at 88.2k, so that indeed is going to take more DSP horsepower to process in three different Pulsar stages (Mixer channels/any plugins/and Mixer bus) than those of you running at 44.1 or 48, but if I can only insert TWO big plugins or five normal less-DSP-intensive ones on this card, how many instances could you get at 44.1k? Far from what we're used to in Paris or Native, methinks.

So if you're looking to get into this stuff, I'd say do your homework here first, asking the guys who have it already, and don't trust what the Creamware reps tell you, because in my own personal experience, they don't know their product very well, and they certainly they don't stand behind it (I mean, when a guy whines to me that he's going to lose money if he takes the product back, even after he told me it WOULD do something

that it DOESN'T, then THAT is a guy that ought not to be running any kind of business in the first place).

Anyway, the stuff doesn't suck, and I'm sure some of you could find it useful; just pick your cards and i/o options carefully is what I'm trying to say, because it's very unlikely that if you need to swap something out, these guys will be willing to make it happen. Or they'll bitch & whine if they do - who needs that when you're forking over hundreds or perhaps thousands of \$\$\$? Not me, baby! lol

Merry Creamwaresmas!

Neil
