

Distressor



MODEL EL8-X Classic Knee Compression

The Best Keeps Getting Better!

"In keeping with our future-proof design philosophy, we made our Image Link and British Mode upgrades standard-issue on the new EL8-X. These modifications turn the Distressor into a new, fun-loving beast with a whole new set of colors and functionality."

- Dave Derr, President & Designer

All the features of our EL8 Distressor plus the following Xtras:

British Mode

The original concept of the "British Mode" came from an unusual setting on the classic UREI LN1176 limiter. The unit was designed to have only four ratios, each ratio being engaged by selecting one of four buttons. However, as early as 1980 (or before), renegade recording engineers, always on the lookout for something a little more "over the top", found that you could make all four buttons stay "in" if you pressed them just right. What resulted was a very, very aggressive sound that had some elements of the unit's 20:1 ratio, but with an unusual knee and new envelope shape. Somewhere along the line, someone called it a "British Mode" and the name has stuck.

The EL8-X Distressor has the advantage of being able to apply this "aggressive" nature not only to the new British ratio (1:1) but also to all the ratios since a

separate switch is installed, which can be enabled with any ratio. At the flick of a switch, the Distressor becomes more aggressive and stressful on any instrument you desire.

Stereo Image Link

The original Distressor stereo link implementation used a summing and phase detection method which allowed stereo image shifting. "Image shifting" occurs when the interchannel balance (the relative volume between Left and Right channels) changes during compression. Although known for its phase correction, and its "thickening" on open room mics and other stereo sources, this approach has sometimes been a problem on stereo program material where the producer/engineers want to maintain absolute left/right balance at all times.

With the new "Stereo Image Link" option, the EL8-X Distressor user now has three link options - the original "phase" link, the new Image Link and the combination of the two, phase and image linking. This has never before been offered on any compressors or limiters.

**Hand wired and calibrated in the USA by Empirical Labs Inc.
Built by people who take audio as seriously as you do.**

"Every once in a while a product comes a long with 'classic' written all over it. And in a certain sense of the word, the Distressor already is a classic."

- Barry Cleveland, Mix Magazine



Start with 6:1 "Ratio" and set all four knobs to 5, the midway position.

This is a great starting place for anything. Push the "Ratio" button until the LED's cycle to the 6:1 "Ratio" (Yellow LED). Adjust input to drive into more compression. The harder you drive, the more knee you'll hit, and the greater the "Ratio" will be. Only 2 LED's should be lit- the "BYPASS" LED and the 6:1 LED (not counting any Bar-Graph LED's). If you need more obvious compression, push "Ratio" button to progress to higher ratios. If you would like lower ratios, the very long knees of 2:1 & 3:1 are silky smooth. The 2:1 "Ratio" has a +15 dB knee, where the "Ratio" gradually increases. The 10:1 is a special "Ratio" employing "opto-mode". It closely emulates vintage "light controlled" compressors (like the ubiquitous LA2a).

Example Settings:

Source	ratio	attack	release	detector	audio mode	notes
Vocals	6:1, 10:1	5,10	4,0	HP	HP	Use Dist 2 to add bite and low frequency warmth.
Acoustic Guitar	4:1	3	4	HP	HP	6:1 is great too. Lengthen attack for more "pick".
Electric Guitar	6:1	4	5	-	-	Fab on clean guitar. Try Det BP for piercing solos.
Bass	2:1-6:1	5	5	-	-	Audio HP may be useful for getting rid of rumble.
Drums	6:1-20:1	4-6	3	-	-	Snares, Toms, Kick - Try wide range of attack.
Room Mics	6:1-Nuke	3-8	0-5	-	-	Use up to 30dB of compression for huge sound!

Classic Emulation

Besides providing unprecedented control and it's own "musical" gain reduction, the Distressor can be made to sound very similar to rare and expensive vintage units. This is due to a classic topology and it's discrete, non-linear VCA. Here are some example settings:

UNIT SIMULATED	ratio	attack	release	detector	audio mode	notes
LA2, LA3, LA4 (other Opto - DeMaria, Meek)	10:1 (OPTO)	6-10	0-5	HP	Dist 2	Simulates Opto (light)-controlled models. Weird attack & decay shape.
LN1176	3:1, 4:1, 6:1, 20:1	0-4	1-10.5	-	-	The LN1176 attacks extremely fast, so keep attack under 3.5.
LN1176 "Brit Mode"	1:1	0-4	1-10.5	-	-	Available on EL8-X only. Flip the Brit Switch on and go animal!
DBX160	2:1 (over easy) 4:1&6:1	9	2	HP can be useful	-	Slower attack and quick release.
Fairchild IGFET	2:1-10:1	0-5	2-7	off	-	Old radio peak limiting.
Fairchild 670	6:1	4	4	-	Dist 2	Very smooth knee with lots of 2nd harmonic.

The Distressor Manual is filled with easy and foolproof settings for almost any instrument or source, and has been called a treatise on compression.

Empirical Labs
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