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Really Nice Compressor
QuickStart Guide
V0.50

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INTRODUCTION

The Really Nice Compressor (RNC) is a small and inexpensive stereo compressor with both a high-fidelity audio path and compression scheme. The RNC was designed to give the user two different compression "recipes" in one box:

- **WYSIWYG Operation** — What-You-See-Is-What-You-Get operation is a hallmark of high-quality (and sometimes, *high-dollar*) dynamic processors. This is one of the unheralded aspects of vintage equipment that gives the older equipment such a positive feel. So too with the RNC—there are no surprises in this mode—dial up a specific parameter to a specific setting and that's what you get. It's predictable and repeatable. This mode was intended to be used for *signal control* (taming really dynamic signals) as well as *special effects*.

- **Super-Nice Operation** — This proprietary mode layers three compressors together to minimize compression artifacts while still providing control over the signal. *This is not an "auto" mode*...all parameter knobs still work to give YOU control over the signal. The intended purpose of this mode is gentle compression of an entire mix (i.e., program compression) and compression of sound sources that must be very gently compressed, yet controlled.

HOOK-UP

The RNC is designed to interface with unbalanced audio gear (nominal operating level = 0dBu) two distinct ways:

1) **TRS Inserts** — The RNC can be hooked into Tip-Ring-Sleeve (TRS) insert points found on many consoles where: TIP = Console insert out, RING = Console insert in, SLEEVE = Ground reference. This means that each channel of the RNC can be hooked to a each channel of a TRS console insert with a single TRS cable. For example, on my Mackie 1604VLZ, the main out has left and right insert points so that my RNC can be put in the main out insert (Left and right) *with only two TRS cables!*

2) **All Other Equipment** — Hooking up the RNC to gear other than TRS inserts must be done with *a pair of TS (Tip-Sleeve) jacks for each RNC channel*. Thus, the full stereo hook-up of an RNC must be done with four TS 1/4" cables.

   NOTE — *Hooking up the RNC to balanced lines with TRS 1/4'' plugs will not work! If the equipment you are connecting the RNC to is balanced, you must first unbalance it and only connect into the RNC with TS 1/4'' plugs.*

NORMAL MODE

Mode Selection
This mode is selected upon power up of the RNC. If the **SUPER NICE** indicator lamp is extinguished, then NORMAL MODE is selected.

Initial Settings
We recommend that you start using the NORMAL mode by:

- Setting all knobs in the 12 o'clock position (i.e., all knob pointers strait up).

- Making sure that the **NORMAL** mode is engaged (SUPER NICE mode off).

- Ensuring that the **BYPASS** mode disabled (i.e., **BYPASS** LED off—RNC is in the signal path).

Adjustments
NORMAL mode is the most flexible of the two RNC modes. **NORMAL** mode can be subtle or bombastic depending upon your desires and the settings. Here are some general guidelines to help to achieve your desired compression effects:

- **Subtle Compression —** Keep the **RATIO** control between 1:1 and 6:1. The **ATTACK** time is best set for 2.0 msec and higher. **RELEASE** time should be above 1.0 sec. Adjust the **THRESHOLD** for maximum **GAIN REDUCTION** levels of 6 to 8 dB.

- **Pumpin' and Breathin' —** Set the **RATIO** to between 6:1 and 10:1. **RELEASE** time should be set between 0.3 sec and 1.0 sec (adjust to taste). Set the **THRESHOLD** to give you 8 to 12 dB of **GAIN REDUCTION**.

- **Maximum Control —** Set the **RATIO** to 25:1. **ATTACK** time to its fastest, 0.2 msec. **RELEASE** time to taste (for fast transients, like snare drums, use a fast release; for slower signals, increase the **RELEASE** time accordingly). Adjust the **THRESHOLD** lower than you would for either of the other two effects, so that the compressor starts at a lower level on the signal to maximize your control over it.

SUPER NICE MODE

Mode Selection
This mode must be manually selected by depressing the **SUPER NICE** switch until the **SUPER NICE** indicator lamp is on.

Initial Settings
We recommend that you start using the **SUPER NICE** mode by:

- Setting all knobs in the 12 o'clock position (i.e., all knob pointers strait up).

- Making sure that the **SUPER NICE** mode is engaged (of course!).

- Ensuring that the **BYPASS** mode disabled (i.e., **BYPASS** LED off, RNC is in the signal path).

Adjustments
Once you've dialed all controls to the 12 o'clock position, use the following steps to get the most of **SUPER NICE** mode:

1) **Set Threshold for Desired Gain Reduction Amount —** Dial the amount of gain reduction during the loudest passages in the song. In general, you shouldn't be gain reducing more than 8dB (although it's possible *and* your music will still actually sound pretty good...).

2) **Use ATTACK Knob for More Control —** If more control over the signal is required, decrease (turn anti-clockwise) the **ATTACK** time. This causes the compressors to more aggressively grab onto the transients.

3) **Use RATIO Knob for (Still) More Control —** If more control is still needed, increase (turn clockwise) the **RATIO** until you're controlling the signal to your satisfaction.

4) **Adjust RELEASE Time —** In general, the **RELEASE** knob is adjusted to give the music *punch*. The shorter (turn anti-clockwise) the **RELEASE** time, the "punchier" the sound. The most natural sound is achieved at settings greater than 0.5 seconds **RELEASE** time (i.e., 12 o'clock to 5 o'clock).

5) **Adjust GAIN Control —** The **GAIN** control should be adjusted to make up for the average gain reduction amount. So, if you're gain reducing 6-8 dB, then your GAIN setting should be set for +6-8 dB.