



WHAT IS IT?

A software emulation of five classic console channel and buss paths

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Great sounding emulations
- 2 A master control section allowing simple and quick setups
- 3 Makes mixes sound more cohesive faster



SSL 4000 series. Lots of mix engineers like to run them 'hot', that is pushing the line gains into the channels so the console is internally running near or beyond its headroom. This is most typically done on drums but can work on anything. Back in the '70s the Trident was another console which was run 'hot', particularly on Rock records. Think of classic Queen, Bowie, Thin Lizzy and Elton John.

American manufacturer API is a name synonymous with fat lows and beautiful transparent highs. They have been used by artists as diverse as Van Halen (the early albums), Stevie Wonder, Earth Wind and Fire, Radiohead and pretty much anyone produced by Daniel Lanois.

Staying in the US, RCA made some stunning valve consoles in the 1950's which found their way into studios and radio stations alike. Fat and with a real presence to them the early recordings of a certain Mr Presley certainly benefited from their sound. Last but not least come the great period of Neve, when Rupert was still in charge and it was all hand built to order. Lots of transformers meant there was plenty of colouration, especially in the low end, fattening it out, and giving a wonderful warmth to everything. These are the console types that Slate Digital are emulating, so what do you get?

In the box

The VCC comes with two separate plugs, the Virtual Channel and the Virtual Mixbuss. By placing one of these as the first plug on each of your DAW channels, busses and master out your DAW mixer is transformed into Slates interpretation of an API, Neve, SSL 4000K, RCA Tube or a Trident.

As you can see from the screenshots the VCC has a very simple user interface. You select which emulation you want from the five position knob at the top, adjust the input control to get the gain that you need (only on the Virtual Channel) and then set the drive to taste. As you are going to be having multiple instances of the Virtual Channel and the Virtual Mixbuss you get the option of switching each instance to a group setting. This opens up a second panel containing master controls for each instance.

The two vertical rows of switches allow you to set up to eight group masters so you can easily master control different sets of channels and busses. Very convenient if you have high track counts and want to quickly

Slate Digital Virtual Console Collection

€229

Slate want to turn your DAW into a selection of Vintage Consoles. **Stuart Bruce** goes warm and fuzzy

While digital offers huge numbers of benefits over analogue in terms of signal processing and editing one thing that old blokes like me really miss is the way that an analogue console helps to blend the sound in a mix. Different consoles have very different characters and that

doesn't just mean the sound of the EQ. What Slate Digital are doing here is attempting to emulate the sound of the signal paths of five classic consoles. While that may seem a little esoteric for most people the reality is somewhat different. Listen to most big records of the mid to late '80s and the '90s and you are listening to the sound of an

see what it sounds like to swap consoles and how you drive them.

Can you hear it?

The VCC can be a very subtle device. Using one instance on one channel doesn't make that much of a discernible difference. You'd be excused for reaching for the bypass button and scratching your head.

It's when you bring it into play in the way Slate intended that things really get interesting. With an instance on every channel, buss and your stereo output it becomes very much more evident and exciting. Pushing up the group drive adds more of each individual consoles 'colour' and further pushing the group input really gives you the feel of an analogue console beneath your fingertips. I have used every type of console emulated here and VCC really does give me the character I expect of each individual one. The

Studios in the Box

In big budget projects recording and mixing studios are chosen to suit the music down to the last detail. The qualities of the recording room, the console itself and the further varieties of outboard in the racks all add up to give a distinctive sonic character to a recording. With the advent of convolution

reverbs like Altiverb where you can even create your own room/reverb samples it is becoming possible to take the character of individual recording spaces and use them wherever you are. Alongside the many great emulations of vintage EQ and compression available get you a long way to simulating that

major studio sound. However console choice has still eluded us. There's a very good reason why lots of engineers use analogue summing as part of the mix process. VCC adds that final element in the digital domain and so takes us all ever closer to the Holy Grail of an analogue studio 'in the box'.



SPECS

System Requirements:
Mac: Intel Processors only, 32 bit: RTAS, AU and VST; 64bit: AU and VST.
PC: Windows 32-bit: RTAS and VST; 64-bit: VST

It's that final bit of Audio Glue which until now only existed in the analogue domain

Audio glue

Read pretty much any old school engineer interview and they will say the same thing. Almost every one of them likes to

group assigns mean you can push certain parts of the console (for example your drum inputs) more than others (the vocals?) and then do the same with busses and even the master out. That is exactly what most

engineers do in the purely analogue domain and what most of us miss in digital. In the audio examples I have taken one track and done just that with every different console so you can compare them, and then did this...

track through one type of console and mix through another. The last example on the cover disc does just that.

For the example 'Mix 2 consoles' I inserted two instances of VCC on each channel, the first set to Brit N and the second to Brit 4K. The result is pretty much what I would hope for. The Fatness of a Neve coupled with the bite of an SSL.

VCC does exactly what it says on the tin and I for one love it. It's that final bit of audio glue which until now only existed in the analogue domain. It sounds great and should help to get your mixes to sound better, faster. Excellent stuff. **FM**



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