review

D16 Group Decimort

by Ginno 'g.no' Legaspi

Lo-Fi Charm

I have fond memories of the 80's: acid-washed jeans were the fad; kids went crazy for Nintendos and Rubik's Cubes; millions watched as the Berlin wall collapsed; new wave music was catching the airwaves; etc.. Yes, those were the 80's. Also, it was the era when digital sampling was also introduced.

Big dinosaur hardware samplers ruled the Earth in those days and made their way into expensive recording studios. First up was the Fairlight CMI, which led the pack in '81. It was then followed by E-MU with the launch of their affordable Emulator one year later. Many of the early samplers (including Ensoniq, Akai, Roland, etc.)

were expensive compared to the hardware available today. But, there is something about these vintage samplers that you just can't deny: their sound. They have their own unique sound. That "uniqueness" or "certain charm" I'm talking about is the sound they produced due to the 8 or 12-bit sampling they used. Often their sound is produced by poor anti-aliasing and distinguishable noise levels. Needless to say, they had their flaws but this was, dare I say, a good thing. That vintage 'gritty' sound they produced is what makes them 'classic'.

Forgive me for the long intro, but if you're a producer who craves that unique character and charming sound that only the old school samplers impart; we may have finally found

their modern match, in software form: Decimort. D16 Group's Decimort, high-quality bit crusher plug-in is aimed at giving you just that - instant 'grit' and 'coloration' to your tracks. Let's take a look.

Installation and Copy Protection
I had no problem installing this plug-in. It was a piece of cake. After installation, I downloaded the key file at my User account, which D16 provided. Once the key file is copied to the VST plug-in directory, the plug-in is activated for unlimited use. It's as easy as that, hassle-free. I give kudos to D16 for adopting this type of copy protection scheme. I think it is fairly quick and very convenient compared to some others.

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PRICE: €35 (Silverline Collection and Total Bundle are available)

COPY PROTECTION: Key file

FORMAT/SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS: Decimort is available in VST and AU format for PC and Mac. It's a dynamic library (.dll file) for PC (VST only) and Universal Binary bundle for Mac (VST and AU). To use the product you need Windows 2000/XP or Mac OS X 10.4.3 or later. It is not a standalone program, so you need a VST or AU compatible host application to use it.
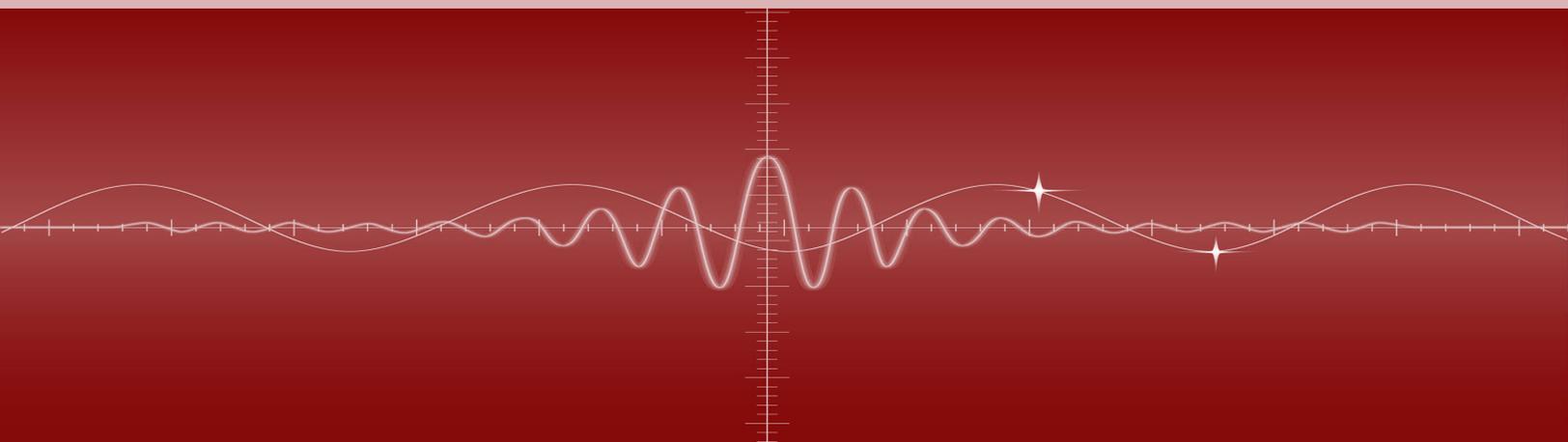
GUI and Controls

Decimort has the same color, led, buttons, output meter, knobs and layout as its older siblings Devastor and Fazortan. The thing that I like about the whole Silverline package is how functional they all are, not just their sound. Dabbling with these tools is dead-simple and Decimort is no exception. Thanks to its clean and neat interface, one can instantly get down&dirty and start roughing some audio material.

Control-wise, Decimort's main controls are the sample-rate and bit-depth reduction knobs, otherwise known as Decimator module. Value settings range from 0-44.1kHz and 1-16-bits and there is an Anti-Aliasing LPF button along with the Link Parameters. Decimort allows you to process L+R channels independently,

but enabling the Link Params will set path parameters the same values for both channels. Next, the analogue-like Filter section adds further shaping of the sound. It sports the usual adjustable cutoff, reso/band width and features four filter types: low-pass, band-pass, high-pass and band reject. Other controls include the Preamp knob (for overdriving the input signal), dry/wet FX knob and a master volume.

In Use

I programmed some hip-hop drum loops in my sequencer and wanted to see if Decimort was up to the task. After a bit of parameter tweaking, I came up with good results. The added 'grit' I'm accustomed to hear on hip-hop drum loops was audible. While Decimort was a bit CPU hungry with my tests, D16 tells us that it

guarantees no aliasing even from a high frequency source. It is a very high-quality plug-in and no compromises were made in the methods of coding the plug-in.

Bottom Line

Armed with the decimator, multi-mode resonant filter and a preamp to boot I don't see why this cool little plug-in couldn't be used for various applications. I mean, Decimort is not purposely built for drums only, although lo-fi drums can be a real treat. I urge users to try to manipulate audio in any possible with it. Experiment a bit. Use Decimort's filter section to filter technoid guitars or play with the decimator to recreate vocals with a 1950's vibe. Decimort is one nifty little plug-in. And the price is right. ᴡ