

Soundtoys Effect Rack

Multi-Effect Creation Tool

User's Guide

Version 5.4 : For Mac and Windows



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Figure 1: Soundtoys Effect Rack loaded up and ready to go!

Soundtoys Effect Rack makes it incredibly easy to create simple or complex effect chains using the full palette of Soundtoys effects. Combine, create, rearrange, and save it all as a single preset. The sonic possibilities are endless. Build your own with drag and drop ease, or browse the built in presets for inspiration or starting points.

Create lush, expansive reverberation with SuperPlate. Custom vocal chains with some tube warmth from Decapitator, some slap delay doubling from EchoBoy and super width from MicroShift. Or a swirling pitched delay for your shredding lead guitar with Crystallizer and PhaseMistress. Even go into rhythmic remix insanity with the Rhythm Modes in FilterFreak, Tremolator, and PanMan. The perfect tool to enhance any track.

Soundtoys Effect Rack ensures that your Ultimate Effects Solution truly reigns supreme. So let's get started!



Figure 2: Empty Effect Rack with Gear List displayed

SOUNDTOYS EFFECT RACK LAYOUT

Soundtoys Effect Rack is made up of three areas; the Control Panel, Rack, and Gear List. At the top is the Control Panel, containing global controls for any effects loaded into the Rack below. Soundtoys Effect Rack will load as default without any gear in the Rack. Loading gear into the Rack is as easy as dragging and dropping your desired piece of gear from the Gear List on the right-hand side of the Rack. To hide or display the Gear List simply click on the “Show Gear” button in the Control Panel header. We'll begin by going over the options in the Control Panel.

TEMPO CONTROL

Tempo can be entered into Soundtoys Effect Rack one of three ways; syncing to MIDI (default), tapping in a tempo, or manually entering a BPM value.

MIDI tempo sync will lock on to your project's tempo, aligning all loaded effects to the correct project BPM.

Tap Tempo does what it says; start tapping on the grey button and it will

TEMPO CONTROL (continued)

determine the BPM tempo of your tapping. This control is useful not only in determining the tempo of live tracks not recorded to a click track but also for finding the appropriate “feel” for any modulation.

The current tempo is shown in the LCD-style display window to the right of the Tap Tempo button. By clicking on the display window, you can manually enter in a BPM value.

INPUT AND OUTPUT LEVEL

The Input and Output controls determine the signal level entering the rack and subsequently leaving it. The Input control determines the level going into the first piece of gear in the Rack. The Output control determines the level leaving the rack *after* the last piece of gear in the chain.

This means that any Input/Output controls in the individual pieces of gear will function as they would in stand-alone mode. Since each piece of gear is feeding the signal into the next one inserted beneath it, attention must still be paid to the Input/Output sections on each piece of gear, especially if you are driving any of them hard.

The Input and Output controls for Soundtoys Effect Rack make it easy to

adjust levels in your mix without having to go back and tweak individual plug-ins. Is the signal from your effect chain a little too hot for the mix? No problem, simply turn down the Output control a bit. It’s as simple as that in Soundtoys Effect Rack.

RECYCLE

The Recycle control routes a portion of the output signal from Soundtoys Effect Rack back into the input. This is most commonly done to generate repeating echoes. Increasing the Recycle amount will increase the resonant presence of your audio. Recycle can be used to create lush echoes, increase saturation, or at extreme settings create runaway self-oscillation.

Higher settings of the Recycle control can boost the output level from Soundtoys Effect Rack significantly, so please be careful when turning up the Recycle knob at high volumes, especially when any high gain plug-ins (Decapitator, Radiator, Devil-Loc, etc.) are present in your rack.

MIX

The Mix control determines the ratio between the dry (unprocessed) source audio and the wet (processed) signal. When placed on an aux or bus we recommend placing the mix value to 100% wet and using the send levels to determine the level going into Soundtoys Effect Rack. At the control knob's 12 o'clock position the mix balance is 50/50. Turning to the left decreases the amount of wet signal while turning to the right will increase it.

SIZE

The Size section allows you to select how much screen real estate Effect Rack uses. By default the 'Auto' option will be selected which sizes the rack relative to the resolution of your screen.

The 'Full' option can be selected to see the rack in its full-sized state. The 'Small' option will allow for the rack to take up the smallest amount of screen space possible. To further reduce the space Effect Rack uses you can also hide the Gear List using the next option we will discuss under the Toolbox header.

TOOLBOX

The Toolbox Show Gear control is used to display the Gear List panel on the right-hand side of Soundtoys Effect Rack if selected and hide that list if deselected. Once you've created a Rack setup that you are content with, you might find it helpful to hide the Gear List to free up some screen real estate.



Figure 3: Soundtoys Effect Rack's Rack - Loaded!

USING THE RACK

Loading up the Rack is as easy as grabbing a piece of gear from the Gear List and dragging it over to the Rack. You'll see that the plug-in is loaded and assigned a slot in the rack.

You can insert additional pieces of gear either above, below, or to replace existing slots in the rack. Up to 6 plug-ins can be placed into the rack at one time. To insert a piece of gear either above or below an existing plug-in in the rack, drag it either towards the top or bottom. You will see the rack space open up slightly if inserting an item above or in-between existing items. Figure 4 illustrates how inserting an instance of Devil-Loc above Crystallizer would look before it is secured into the

rack:



Figure 4: Inserting above an existing Rack item

USING THE RACK (continued)

You can also swap out rack pieces where the newly inserted piece of gear will take the place of an existing piece and remove it from the rack. To do this, simply drag your new item to the Rack and center it over the piece of gear you would like to replace. You will see that the entire effect to be replaced will be highlighted yellow (as shown in Figure 5 below).



Figure 5: Replacing a Rack item

Removing an item from the Rack is as simple as dragging it back into the Gear List area.

EFFECTS PRESET MENU BUTTON



You will notice that once a new item is placed into the Rack, 3 small control buttons appear on the right-hand side of the Rack. The first of these is the Effects Preset Menu Button, which will load the Effects Preset menu for the selected plug-in below it (please note that this is different from stand-alone mode where this menu is located at the top). This allows you to load, modify, and save presets for your individual plug-ins while in Soundtoys Effect Rack.

POWER BUTTON



This button toggles the power to a Rack item on or off, essentially a per unit bypass. This control is useful for when you would like to simply bypass an effect as opposed to removing it from the rack entirely. Great for seeing if one effect is actually adding the right mojo to the chain. This individual plug-in bypass is stored with the preset in case you want chains with effects you can turn on and off to add extra flavor. Keep in mind that while bypassed, signal is still being processed internally by the bypassed item. Reactivating a bypassed item will output any signal still being processed by the effect (such as a long delay trail).

SOLO BUTTON



The Solo button mutes the output of any other items in the Rack. This control is helpful for focusing on individual rack elements quickly.

ADDING EFFECTS TO EFFECT RACK

A license is required in order to use SuperPlate in Effect Rack. If you have purchased an upgrade to the latest Soundtoys 5 bundle, or have already purchased and activated SuperPlate, it will appear in the plug-in list in the Rack and will be ready to rock.

If you have not purchased a license for SuperPlate, you will still have access to SuperPlate's presets in Effect Rack, but you will not be able to edit the parameters. You will also notice that SuperPlate is grayed out on the right-hand side of the Rack, and displays a red banner that says 'NO LICENSE' like on the image below:



Figure 6: Unlicensed SuperPlate in Effect Rack

If you wish to purchase and / or activate SuperPlate from Effect Rack, simply drag SuperPlate from the plug-in list on the right over to the main Rack window on the left.



Figure 7: Drag unlicensed SuperPlate to the main Rack window

ADDING EFFECTS TO EFFECT RACK (continued)

You'll notice that the bottom of SuperPlate has another 'NO LICENSE' warning, along with a prompt to 'Click for more info'. Click the text to proceed.

From here you can either click 'Learn More' to be taken to the website to purchase SuperPlate, or the green 'Activate' button if you have already purchased SuperPlate but have not activated it.



Figure 8 : SuperPlate NO LICENSE notification

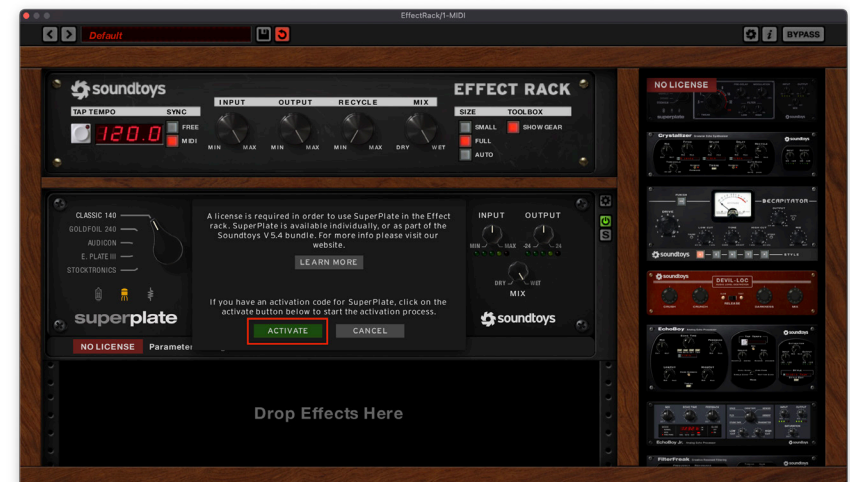


Figure 9 : Green ACTIVATE button

AUTOMATION

Effect Rack has 128 “generic” automatable parameters. When you load a plug-in into the rack, it automatically assigns its available parameters to any currently unassigned automation parameters. These automation parameters are renamed on the fly to communicate exactly which parameter (and which effect) it is connected to. Each plug-in in the rack is given a “Slot Number” (S1, S2, etc) corresponding to its position in the rack. Automation parameters are dynamically assigned names according to the following convention - *Slot Number: Effect Name: Parameter Name*.

For example, if you have Decapitator in the first “slot” in the rack, each parameter of Decapitator will show up in the rack’s automation list as depicted below in Figure 6.

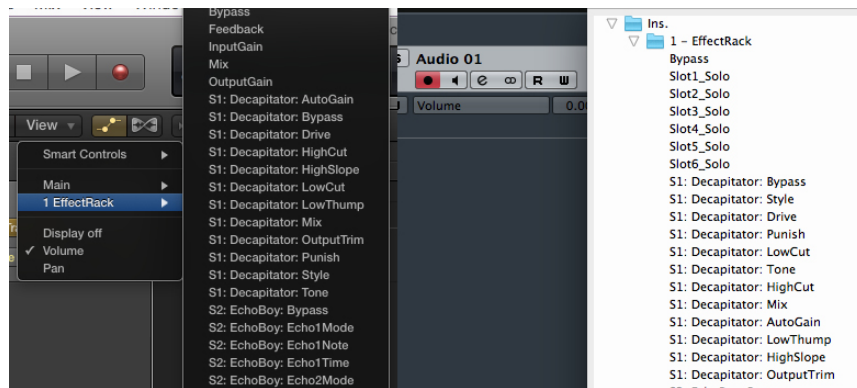


Figure 10: Available automation parameters (Logic/Cubase)

While DAWs differ from each other in menu layouts, the naming convention will always appear like this:

S1: Decapitator: Style
 S1: Decapitator: Drive
 (etc.)
 S2: EchoBoy: Input Gain
 S2: EchoBoy: Output Gain
 (and so on)

Most of the time you may never need to see these parameter names as you’ll be flying along in real-time writing automation like a boss, but when it’s time to get to the nitty gritty and edit, now you’ll know what you’re looking for.

Limitations:

If you re-order your plug-ins in the rack, remove or add more, the names should update accordingly, but some DAWs handle this better than others. We designed this with all the most popular DAWs in mind, but if you are having trouble with your particular DAW, contact technical support to let us know. For example: in Pro Tools, if your preferences default to all automation parameters being enabled, you will need to open the automation dialog and disable/re-enable all parameters to get their names to update.

We also found that very few DAWs were able to support continuous

AUTOMATION (continued)

parameters changing to discrete (stepped) parameters on the fly. Therefore, all automation parameters in Effect Rack are always continuous. Discrete parameters (like Decapitator: Style) will still display proper string values (instead of a generic 0 to 1) when supported.

IMPORTANT:

Once you have written automation data to your host DAW, that automation is permanently locked in place. If you change your rack in any way by adding, re-ordering, or removing plug-ins, you may get automation data being routed to parameters it wasn't intended to be routed to. Therefore we recommend that you do NOT write automation until you have settled on the patch you want in the rack.

How do you get rid of unwanted automation? Well, you have to go erase it. You might just save your preset, and remove Effect Rack, drop a fresh Effect Rack in, reload your preset and start new with automation. Pain? Sort of, but there's a pretty huge leap in DAW technology that will need to happen before this can change.

Also, be aware, it is possible to run out of automation parameters in Effect Rack. If you load up 5 or 6 EchoBoy plug-ins with its massive parameter list, you can fill up the available automation slots and not be able to access them all. We're looking at expanding the number of possible parameters (and effects!) in the rack in the future, but for now, this should handle 99% of most needs.

SUPPORT INFORMATION

Now that you've taken the time to learn all about Soundtoys Effect Rack, have fun, experiment, and make greatness! If our plug-ins helped you take your production to the next level, let us know, we'd love to hear from you and what you were able to create with our software.

If along the way however you should run into any hiccups or anything unexpected, we offer free technical support for all registered users.

Our FAQ contains many helpful answers. You can find it and our contact form at:

<https://support.soundtoys.com/>

You can also reach our support staff by e-mail at:

support@soundtoys.com

If neither of those options work for you, our office can be reached via telephone at:

1-802-951-9700

Please have the following information available to help assist our support team:

- The product version and serial number or activation code
- The version number of your audio system (e.g ProTools 12, Cubase 9.5, Logic 10.7, Ableton Live 9.2.2)
- Your interface/hardware (e.g. Apogee Quartet, RME Fireface, etc.)
- Your computer and operating system info (e.g. Mac OS X 10.9.5, Windows 10, etc.)
- A detailed description of the problem

Wave Mechanics, Soundtoys, SuperPlate, Crystallizer, EchoBoy, FilterFreak, PhaseMistress, PitchDoctor, PurePitch, SoundBlender, Speed, Decapitator, PanMan, Tremolator, Devil-Loc, Radiator, MicroShift, PrimalTap, and their respective logos are all trademarks of Soundtoys, Inc.

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