

Another notable feature is Soft Clip mode, which applies a further limiter to the signal to smoothly clip very loud transients. This helps to maximise mastering levels, and an accompanying LED lights up when the threshold is crossed.

right up to 150% extra wide. If you're trying to resuscitate a lifeless mix that has too much content into the middle, some extra interest can be added by widening it a touch. Conversely, it is also possible to tame phasey stereo effects to some extent using this

THE P38 OFFERS A WIDE RANGE OF HIGH-QUALITY COMPRESSION THAT IS A JOY TO EXPERIMENT WITH.

Unusually, the P38 utilises sum-and-difference signals, whereby the stereo signals are processed separately as centre and sides rather than as left and right. This ensures the stability of the centre image, and also introduces another interesting feature – the Width knob. This is a variable control that goes from mono at one extreme, through detented stereo (which leaves the image unchanged)

feature. Helpfully, a Balance knob is also provided for centring uneven stereo signals.

What's in a name?

The P8 was given the name 'Edward' apparently in reference to the 11th-century English king, Edward the Confessor. This particular monarch oversaw a relatively peaceful period, and Edward the Compressor's

Measuring Up

The P38 is cheaper than most mastering compressors. For a little more, the Rupert Neve Designs 5043 (£1,470) offers excellent mastering compression, while the DAV BG4 (£1,750) offers sidechain filtering. At the top end is the API 2500 (£2,500).

successor appears to be equally adept at keeping control. It's an improvement on the more fiddly P8, and offers a wide range of high-quality compression that is a joy to experiment with. **MTM**

SUMMARY

WHY BUY

- Sounds excellent
- Easier operation than the P8
- Effectively four compressors in one
- Transient Release function simple to use and now works in all modes
- Suitable for a wide variety of program material
- Cheaper than most high-end mastering compressors

WALK ON BY

- No provision for dual-mono operation
- No 'hard-wire' bypass
- Protective rack handles have gone

VERDICT

A terrific-sounding mastering compressor with wildly different modes – four great compressors in one!



METHOD SPOT

The P38 is not just for mastering – you can enhance most instrumental recording with its analogue warmth. If you don't want to overdo it, use a gentle amount of LA-2A mode compression with medium attack and release settings (depending on your material), a low ratio (up to 3:1) and threshold set so that maximum compression reaches only about 3dB. For vocals, try 1176 mode with a 4:1 ratio for a powerful, present sound. Pushed harder, 1176 is also great for drum ambience. For more aggressive rock guitar, use Green Box mode. For taming bass guitar, try VCA mode with fairly fast settings.



In keeping with the overall design ethos of the P38, the unit's rear panel is sparsely populated with only mains, input and output sockets. The protective rack handles have been omitted.