NUGEN Audio

OPERATION MANUAL

AB Assist 2

Referencing and comparison tool

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Introduction

AB Assist 2 is a convenient referencing and comparing tool designed to help the user compare audio before and after a plug-in chain, mix with level-matched reference tracks, blind test up to four masters of the same song, and much more. AB Assist 2 also supports multichannel audio up to 7.1.4.

A/B referencing, also known as A/B testing or A/B comparison, is a crucial step in the audio production workflow. Human perception can be subjective, and our ears can become fatigued during long production sessions, making decision making harder. A/B referencing aims to solve this by providing an objective point of comparison.

In addition to AB referencing, AB Assist supports blind testing (XY testing), allowing you to compare different mixes and processing chains anonymously, with automated statistical measurement if required.

Interface

General Layout

AB Assist 2 works by connecting up to four instances of the plug-in. Once connected, all instances can be controlled by one GUI - any change you make will be made in all of the connected instances.

1 Utility Bar

2 Main section

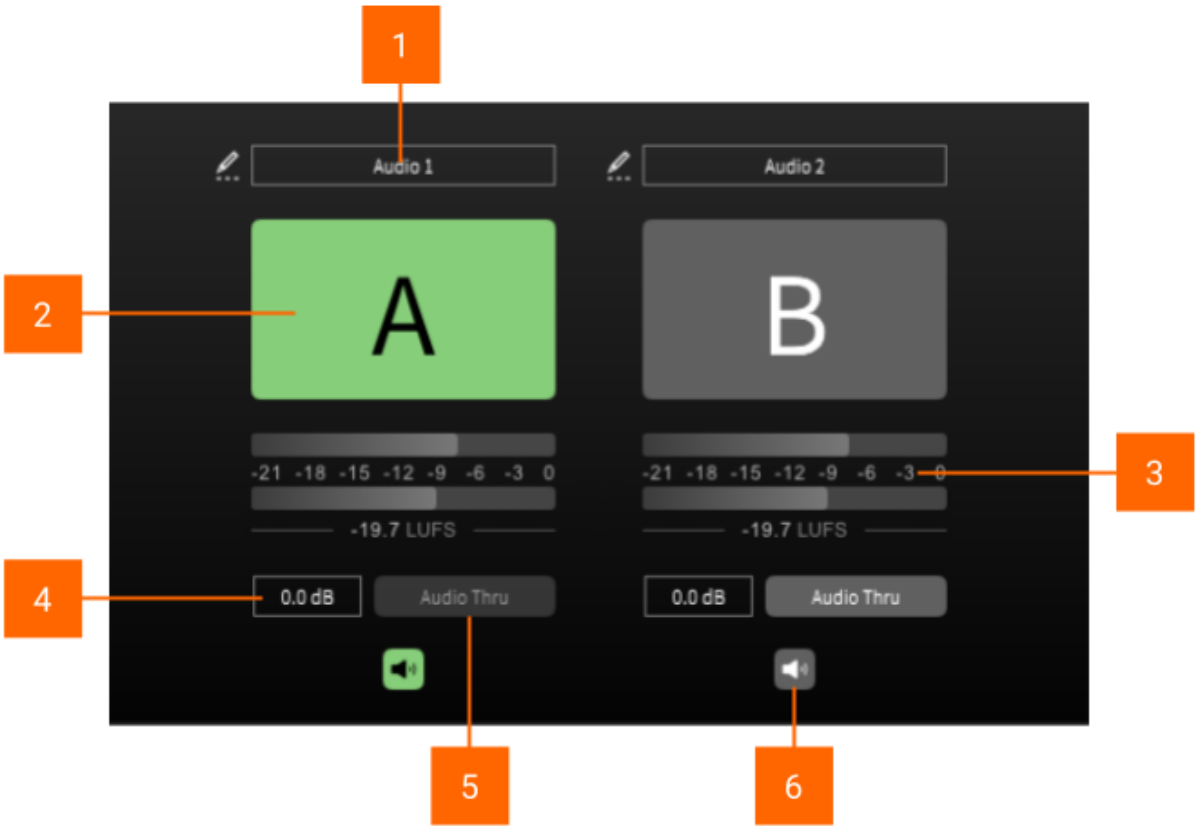
3 Bottom section

Utility Bar

1 **Instance name.** Double click to rename.

2 **?** Opens the 'About' page, with access to credits and the product manual (if installed).

Main Section



1 **Audio source.** This shows the instances of AB Assist 2 that are assigned to 'A', 'B', 'C', or 'D'. By default the instances are named 'Audio 1', 'Audio 2' etc. but can be renamed by clicking on the pencil icon. Click on the box to select from a list of available audio sources.

2 **A/B(/C/D) switch.** Click to toggle between audio sources.

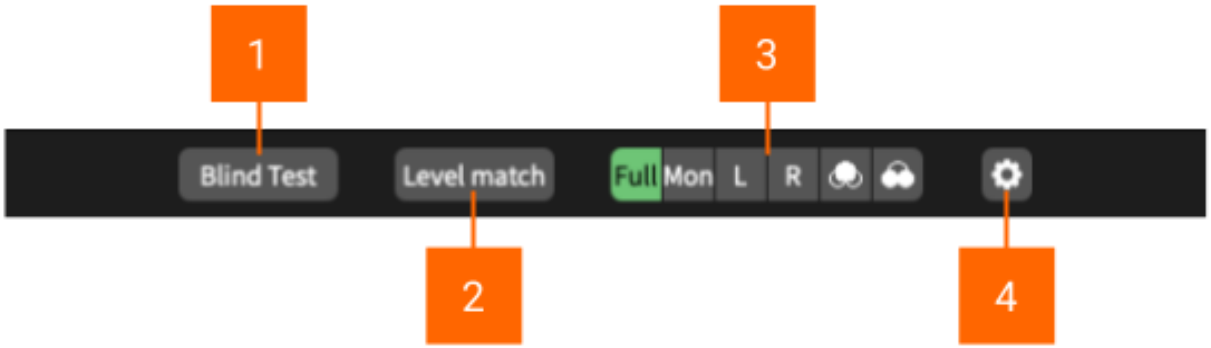
3 **Metering**. This section contains a basic level meter and a short-term loudness (LUFS) read-out for each audio source.

4 **Trim**. Manually adjust the output level of each audio source. This can be done by clicking and dragging, or by typing in an exact value.

5 **Audio Thru.** Allows audio to pass through the plug-in when enabled. This is useful for when two instances of AB Assist 2 are inserted on the same track - the first instance should have Audio Thru enabled in order for audio to reach the second instance.

6 **Speaker button**. Use this button to select which instance of AB Assist 2 audio is being played out of. When two instances are inserted on the same track, this should be selected on the second instance.

Bottom Section



1 **Blind Test.** Click this to enter the Blind Test mode (more info on Page 9).

2 **Level Match.** Click this during playback to automatically match the loudness level of the audio sources. This allows for a more objective listening comparison.

3 **Monitoring**. Listen to your audio in mono, or solo individual channels for a closer inspection of your audio.

4 **Settings**. Click to open the settings window (more info on Page 10).

Quick Setup

AB Assist 2 works by connecting up to 4 audio sources and allowing the user to switch between them. These sources are A, B, C and D.

Setting up AB Assist 2 is easy, however the way it is setup depends on the type of comparison you are intending to make. Here are three common use cases, and instructions on how to set them up:

Comparing your mix or master with a reference song

1. Insert AB Assist 2 on your master bus, after any other plug-ins. This will be source 'A'.
2. Insert another instance of AB Assist 2 on a track containing the reference song. This will be source 'B'. The two instances of AB Assist 2 will automatically connect.
3. Using the speaker buttons, select to play audio out of source 'A'. Audio from both source 'A' and 'B' will now be outputted here.
4. Switch between your mix (A) and the reference track (B) to compare.

Comparing audio before and after a plug-in chain

1. Insert AB Assist 2 on an audio channel, placed **before** the plug-in chain. This will be source 'A'.
2. Insert another instance of AB Assist 2 on the same audio channel, **after** the plug-in chain. This will be source 'B'.
3. Using the speaker button, select to play audio out of source 'B'. Audio from both source 'A' and 'B' will now be outputted here.
4. Turn on 'Audio Thru' on source 'A'.
5. Switch between 'A' and 'B' to compare.

Comparing multiple masters

1. Add the masters to your project, each on their own separate track.
2. Insert an instance of AB Assist 2 on each of these tracks.
3. Switch between the different audio sources to compare each master.

Blind Testing

The Blind Test mode in AB Assist 2 aims to remove bias from a listening comparison test by hiding the identities of the audio sources. Instead of labeling them with ‘A’, ‘B’, ‘C’, and ‘D’, the audio sources are randomly assigned to letters ‘W’, ‘X’, ‘Y’, and ‘Z’ and therefore allowing impartial comparison tests that are not influenced by what is known about the signals under comparison.

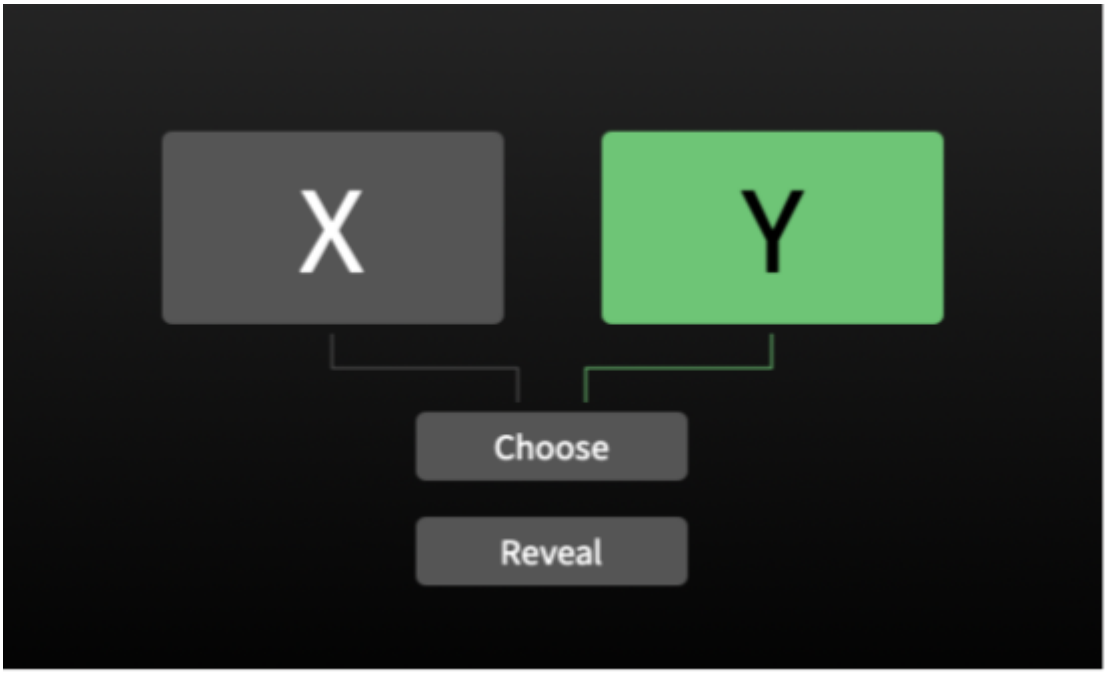
Follow these steps to use the Blind Test mode:

1 Setup AB Assist 2 (more info on page 8) on the audio sources you want to conduct blind testing on.

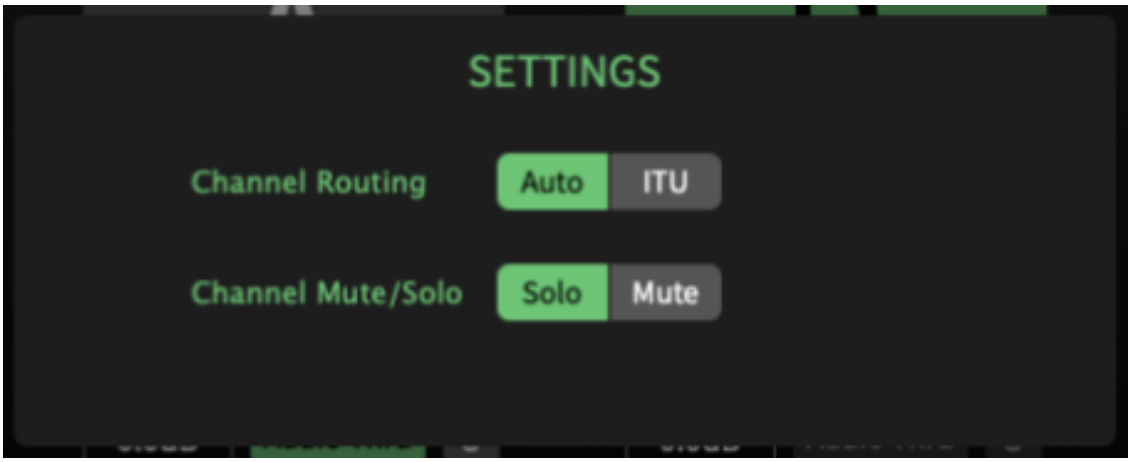
2 On one of the instances of AB Assist 2, click on the ‘Blind Test’ button. The audio sources will now be randomly assigned to the letters ‘W’, ‘X’, ‘Y’ and ‘Z’, depending on how many audio sources are present.

3 Toggle between audio sources, and click ‘Choose’ to select the one you prefer. Each time you make a selection, the audio sources and labels will be reshuffled.

4 Repeat step 3 as many times as you wish, and then click ‘Reveal’ to find out which audio source you prefer.



Settings panel



Channel Routing. Selects the channel routing of AB Assist 2.

Channel Mute/Solo. Determines the function of the channel buttons in the monitoring section.

Reporting a Problem

If you encounter a problem with any of NUGEN Audio's products, please let us know, to help us improve them.

You can email the NUGEN Audio support team at support@nugenaudio.com.

To make it easier for use to resolve the issue you are seeing:

- Please give a clear explanation of the problem, including any steps required to reproduce it if appropriate.
- Please state how frequently you've experienced the problem.
- Please supply details of the system you are using, in particular:
  - The operating system (Windows/Mac OS) and version.
  - Host application and version.
  - CPU speed and RAM available.

Please be patient with any problems you may experience, particularly with products at a beta stage of release. At NUGEN Audio we take problems with our software seriously, and will endeavor to correct them as quickly as possible.

Version History

2.0 Initial release

Notes:

AAX, VST and AU are registered trademarks of their respective owners.

Due to new security measures on macOS, the first time the plug-in is opened, a pop-up box may appear asking you to lower the security settings for the DAW you are using. This is a one time dialogue and won't be triggered by any future plug-ins.

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