SPAT 64Bit – Sneak Preview!

By Peter Lawrence Alexander / June 20, 2014

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EASY INSTALL
The download was quick and installed with absolutely no hitches. Launching Logic 9.1.8, the program found SPAT and added it to the Audio Units folder. Once launched it loaded immediately with no hiccups. I haven't yet tried it in Vienna Ensemble Pro.

SHARPER LOOK
Although some of the type is a bit difficult to read, overall SPAT's look is much more clean and efficient looking. With SPAT, you can select between a day and night view. Here's the Night view, which is how SPAT opens.

Now the Day version.
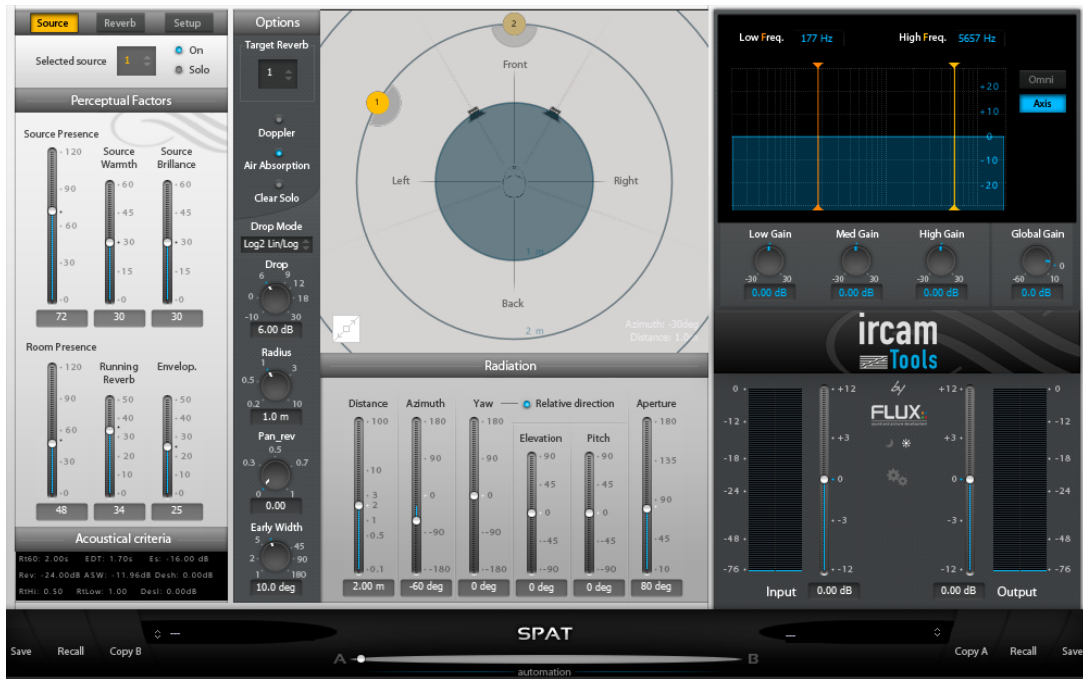
The Display, pictured below in Day view, is where you can manually spatially place and set stereo width. This is a much easier graphic to work with then the previous version. In stereo, the 1 is left and 2 is right.
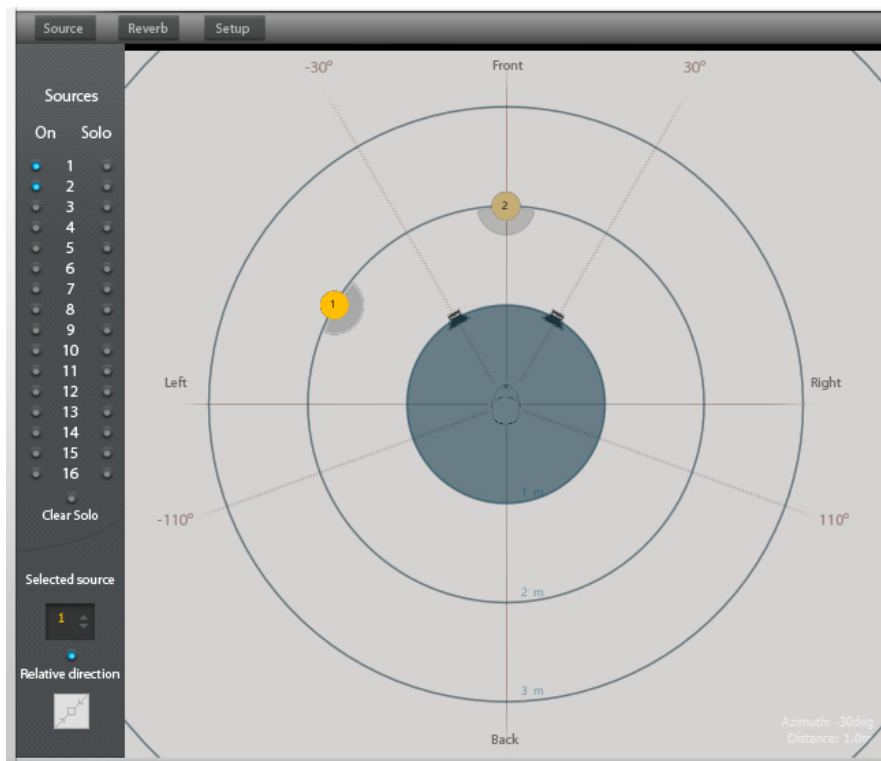
SETTING THE RT60

With every reverb on the planet, you set the RT60 (also called reverb decay in some programs), with a knob or you can type it in. Not with SPAT. With SPAT you get three sliders and these are used in combination to set reverb decay. However, there's no table in the manual telling which RT60 the slider positions represent for each factory preset. Fortunately, when you buy SPAT, you also get Verb, and both Verb and SPAT have presets in common. The table below I created, gives you the positioning of the Reverberance sliders by RT60 for the presets in common.

Studio	RT60	Reverberance	Heaviness	Liveliness
Studio 1	0.74s	43.5	27.4	35
Wood Floor	0.80s	43	26.1	37.1
Bathroom	0.80s	45.1	31.4	35
Studio 2	0.85s	46.5	27.4	35
Studio 3	0.92s	48.2	29.4	35
Small Narrow Hall	1.17s	53.4	31.1	50
Small Smooth Hall	1.26s	55	29.4	50
Stone Corridor	1.42s	63.2	26.6	29.1
Medium Hall	1.69s	55	27.5	30.5
Default	2.00s	65	25	35
Large Hall	2.79s	76.3	31.5	30.5

The secret behind SPAT is that all room sizes are based on cubic meters, whereas reverbs like B2 or Logic's Platinum Verb use length in meters to determine room size. So if you have a studio you'd like to emulate, look it up and look for the dimensions in meters (quite a few publish this information) along with the room's published RT60. Once you calculate the m3, you can then use the above table as a starting point for setting reverb decay and from there, adjust by ear.

SPAT'S USEFULNESS TO COMPOSERS

I've worked with SPAT 32bit for well over a year. I found it so critical to my own work, that I wouldn't update to Logic X until SPAT 64bit came out. Though SPAT is a serious high end product for engineers and sound designers that have ears to the max, once learned even at the most basic level, it's quite invaluable for the composer. Unlike Altiverb and MIR, SPAT is algorithmic. Once the room size is set, you get a 3D space with adjustable ERs and the Verb engine reverb. You do have the option of either keeping the reverb turned on or off. It all depends on the sound you want. But if you turn the reverb off inside SPAT, you can then apply any convolution for the main reverb, or any other algorithmic reverb like B2.

For example, B2's *Medium Wide Hall* reflects the dimensions of Abbey Road Studio 1. Position with SPAT, add B2, and you've got a beautiful professional sound.

Positioning is the other thing I find extremely valuable with SPAT. Thanks to the Distance slider, you can move a sound out as far as 100 meters, and with the Azimuth slider position stage left to stage right. While this may sound to the extreme, you'll be glad you have it.

For example, the last few days I've been working with creating a 16 player violin section with Vienna's Dimension Strings. Benchmarking with Tadlow Music's newly released Goldsmith

classic, *The Salamander*, I was able to position Violins 1 to match the album cut. It turns out that 3.25 meters appears to be the matching number. Once I had the distance, which took all of 10 minutes to work out, the rest of the section will be easy to set up.

I mention this because, yes, SPAT is more hands on than Altiverb and VSL's MIR, but the end results you can achieve really make SPAT an investment worth considering depending on your mixing needs.

This article was previously published at the SonicControl website.