

iZotope Ozone 7 Advanced Mastering Software

By Paul Lau



As the company has proven with previous versions of this popular mastering collection, iZotope's Ozone 7 Advanced is a versatile and effective mastering tool worthy of the workflow of budding engineers and professional mastering studios alike.

Ozone 7 Advanced can be used as a stand-alone unit or a plug-in within the DAW environment. Considering the depth of its offerings, where should one begin when discussing its capabilities? To be honest, I was quite overwhelmed. iZotope has made Ozone 7 simultaneously simple and complex. What I mean is, if you're a beginner or novice, some of the many advanced features and tools in this suite may be foreign to you; however, the program incorporates a number of presets and shortcuts to help you get your mixes where they need to go.

To name a few in the various categories for practical applications, first, there are All-Purpose Mastering presets, which will make just about any song pop with settings like CD Master, Punchy and Clear, or Warm and Transparent. Then there are the Genre-Specific Mastering presets for everything from disco to funk to smooth folk. The Instrument and Busses category is for those using Ozone 7 Advanced as a plug-in during recording and mixing, featuring presets for Live Drums, Rich Piano, Acoustic Guitar, and Soft Vocals. What's more, there is also the Greg Calbi collection that brings some signature mastering presets by the famous senior mastering engineer at Sterling Sound (who has put finishing touches on records by Eric Clapton, Bob Dylan, and The Beatles) right to your fingertips. These are just some examples of the various presets to help kick-start your mastering workflow.

For more advanced users, the complexity comes in understanding the individual components of Ozone 7 Advanced, of which there are many. I should note that Ozone 7 Advanced features all of the

processors from Ozone 7 with an additional number of collections to significantly boost your palette of tools.

I'm going to highlight the new featured audio processor modules, such as Vintage Tape, Vintage Limiter, Vintage Compressor, Vintage EQ, an updated Maximizer with IRC IV, and an MP3/AAC Export and Codec Preview.

Vintage Tape, which is based on the Studer A810 tape machine, simulates analog tape saturation for your digital audio. This module replicates the frequency coloration, saturation, and phase response of this classic tape machine. In other words, it can add some desired analog characteristics to your digital recording, giving a richer and warmer sonic depth. We generally find this module at the beginning of the chain, as it would be in any mastering studio.

The Vintage Limiter (usually found at the end of the chain) is inspired by the Fairchild 670 and features a Tube mode, which offers more control and versatility than in previous editions of Ozone. It allows you to set the upper limit of the volume level of the audio and fine tunes your work to give an analog-sounding end result.

How this differs from the Vintage Compressor is that the gain reduction occurring in a limiter is not decided by a ratio control, but rather an absolute output ceiling set by the user; hence, the Vintage Compressor's volume control reduces volume once it hits the pre-determined threshold, with a ratio control determining the amount that the gain is reduced. This allows for a more consistent overall level, especially for peaks that are clipping or just too loud in the recording. The Vintage Compressor has a certain warmth in its programming that gives a nice, natural compression to your mix.

The Vintage EQ is based on the famous Pultec EQs, which allows you to pull out certain frequencies and make detailed adjust-

ments. There are six controls for frequency adjustments: low shelf, low-mid boost, mid boost, hi-mid boost, high boost with adjustable Q, and a shelf for high frequency cuts. I would suggest starting with the presets and from there you can adjust your sonic flavour quickly and easily. The Maximizer is another tool that can enhance your master with more clarity and transparency.

The Codec Preview is an incredibly useful feature that allows you to audition different types of renderings for your final mix without actually rendering, thus saving time but still giving an accurate reference of what the rendered track will sound like.

The sound quality here should be commended. iZotope has done a stellar job of hardware modeling, bringing very true and accurate replications of industry standards from Studer, Pultec, and Fairchild.

As audio professionals or musicians, we're all results-oriented, and with its numerous presets and easy-to-use front-end parameters for very complex and feature-rich tools, iZotope has tailored Ozone 7 Advanced to its user. For musicians and beginners looking to add some polish to a demo, the presets and controls are almost foolproof; conversely, professional mastering engineers will have no trouble digging deep into its complex controls for detailed sonic sculpting.

Ozone 7 Advanced offers a deep treasure chest of tools to explore, and I can tell you first hand that my masters have already benefited greatly from its use.

*Paul Lau B.Sc.
Musician/Producer/Film Composer
MIDI/Digital Audio Specialist
(www.docaudiotech.com)
Managing Director of PowerMusic5Records
(www.powermusic5.com)
Member of the Cool Christian Pop Band
Scatter 17 (www.scatter17.com)*