

DC SEVEN And Tape

So how well do the worlds best audio restoration and enhancement tools hold up on your tape restoration projects...pretty darn well if we do say so ourselves!

There are several popular tape formats out there - reel to reel, cassette, 8 track, etc. All these have one very important problem in common - hiss. Trust us on this, every tape, no matter how good and how well recorded, WILL have hiss. The only question is how much hiss it has. Typically, the slower the tape moves, the more hiss you will get. That's why cassettes tend to have quite a bit of audible hiss. A 15ips reel to reel will also have hiss, but likely a much smaller amount.

So we should use our Continuous Noise Filter in DC7 to attack the hiss. We want to use a subtle touch with this and make sure we don't touch the good audio at all. I think the Anti-artifact mode in DC7 will do a just super job on tape hiss. Use it wisely and it'll remove the hiss completely.

See? Noise reduction with tapes is pretty easy. But that's not really the worst problem. Ever notice how your commercially recorded cassettes just don't sound as good as the ones you made at home? If you recorded your favorite Monkees LP onto tape, you probably ended up with a pretty good recording. But if you went out and bought that exact same Monkees album on cassette (can you ever really have too many copies?) you'll probably find that it sounds dull and lifeless compared to your home made recording.

The reason is that the record companies were turning out these 45 minute tapes in 2 minutes or less as they dubbed them at high speed. They may have had good equipment to do this duplication, but they live under the same laws of physics as the rest of us and the result was tapes that were pretty mediocre.

DC7 can be used to help with this problem as well. Try two enhancement tools, Punch and Crunch and/or the Virtual Valve Amplifier. Be sure and use the new "low noise" mode in the VVA - we don't want to bring back that hiss we removed earlier. One or both of these tools will often work a miracle on these bad sounding commercial cassettes.

Lastly, we'd like to deal with a question we get pretty often. It goes something like this - "I recorded this back in the day on my tape deck using Dolby B. My tape player doesn't have Dolby in it today. What can I do?"

So why was Dolby so popular on cassette decks? Because it was designed to reduce hiss, of course. DC7 wasn't around in those days and folks had to do something. Anyway, here's what you do:

1. Record your Dolby encoded tape with your non-Dolby deck using DC7.
2. Once the file is open, bring up the Dynamic Noise filter - it's under the Filter menu
3. Do not check the Enhancer box. Set attack to about 20ms and release to about 40ms

4. Set filter Frequency to around 2.5 kHz and HFGain to about -6 dB
5. Preview and adjust Threshold for the most natural sound.

This filter works because Dolby artificially increases the high frequencies only when there is energy there. This filter is doing close to the opposite.

Let's note that this is not a Dolby decoder - we can't and don't offer you such a thing. But this procedure will allow you to enjoy your Dolby encoded tapes and restore the natural sound to them.

DC SEVEN is perfect for recording, editing, and playing your favorite audio tracks...no matter which format they started on. If you truly love those tracks, shouldn't you be hearing them in the best possible light?