# JAMES THE CAT

SATURATION




USER MANUAL

ABSTRACT DSP

VERSION 1.0

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# 1 Welcome

James the Cat is a saturation plugin with four characters: tape, tube, transistor and a wavefolder. Drive it gently for warmth and weight, or hard for grit and fuzz. Auto gain keeps the level steady, so you hear the color, not just a louder signal. And on the screen, James reacts to how hard you push him.

James is a real long-haired tabby. Thank you for choosing his plugin.

### Quick start

1. Insert James the Cat on a track or bus. It opens on **Tape** with 6 dB of drive.
2. Pick a **TYPE**: Tape, Tube, Transistor or Fold.
3. Turn **DRIVE** up for more saturation. Watch James wake up.
4. Use **TONE** to make it darker or brighter, and **MIX** to blend it with the dry signal.
5. Click **A** and **B** to compare two settings.

Or click the preset name and pick a starting point.

# 2 Installation

Run the installer for your system. If James the Cat doesn't appear, rescan plug-ins in your host.

| | WINDOWS | MACOS |
|---|---|---|
| **System** | Windows 10 or 11, 64-bit | Apple Silicon or Intel |
| **Formats** | VST3, CLAP | AU, VST3, CLAP |
| **Installed to** | C:\Program Files\Common Files\VST3 and \CLAP | /Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/Components, /VST3 and /CLAP |
| **Hosts** | Any 64-bit VST3 or CLAP host | Logic Pro, GarageBand and any 64-bit AU, VST3 or CLAP host |

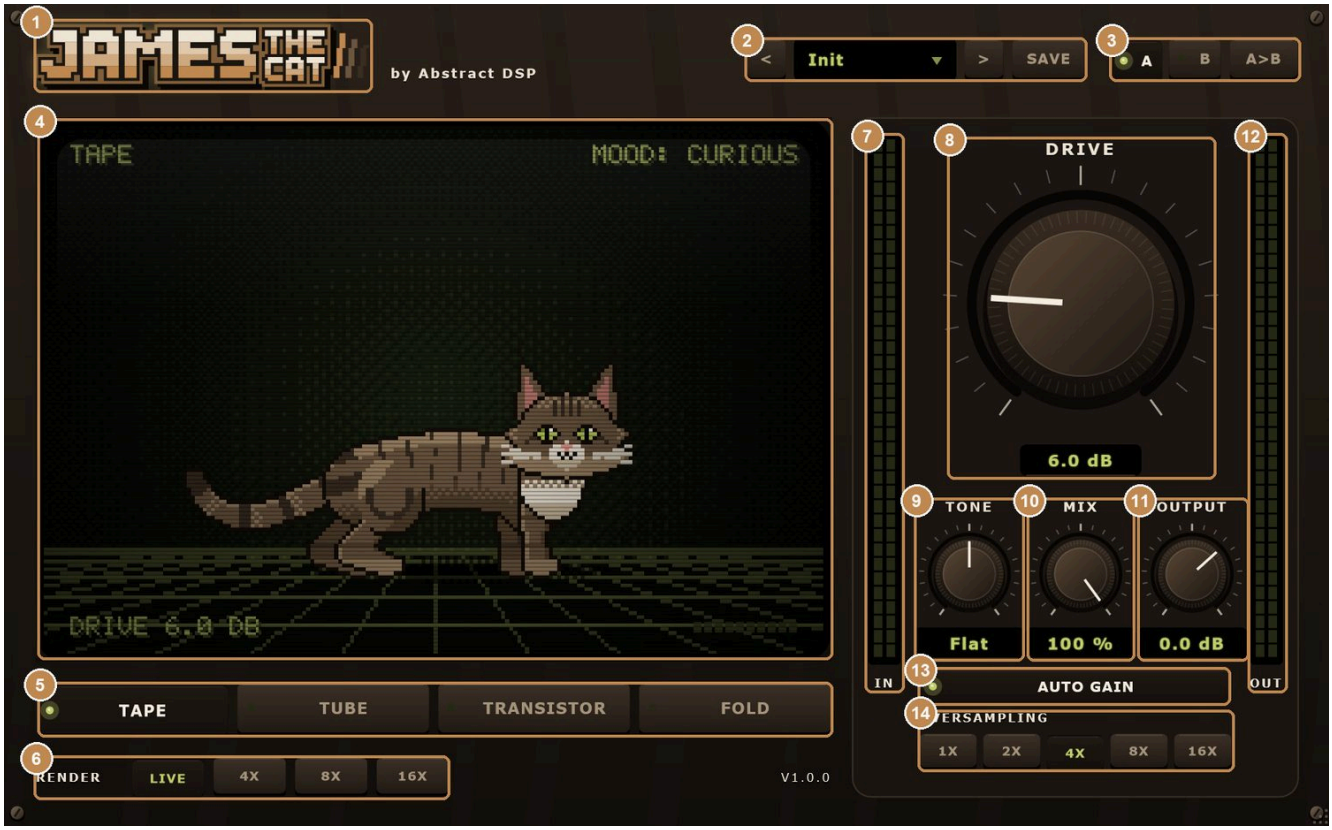
**FL Studio:** open Options > Manage plugins and click Find installed plugins. James the Cat appears under Effects.

Your presets are saved in **Documents/James the Cat/Presets**. Back up that folder to keep them.

> James the Cat has no license key, trial or time limit: install it and it works on the computers you own or control. Thank you for buying it; it helps us make more plugins.

# 3 The front panel

Drag a knob up or right to turn it up, use the mouse wheel, or double-click to return to the default. The value shows under each knob.




| CONTROL | RANGE | DEFAULT | WHAT IT DOES |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 **Logo** | | | Click for the About card (version, website, support email). Click again to close. |
| 2 **Presets** | | Init | The current preset. Click the name for the list; the arrows step through it; SAVE stores your own. |
| 3 **A / B** | | A | Two complete settings to switch between. A>B (or B>A) copies the active one to the other. |
| 4 **CRT** | | | James, the type, his mood, the drive and a signal bar showing how hard the output is hitting. See section 5. |
| 5 **TYPE** | Tape, Tube, Transistor, Fold | Tape | The kind of saturation. See section 4. |
| 6 **RENDER** | LIVE, 4X, 8X, 16X | LIVE | Oversampling used when your host renders or bounces offline. LIVE uses the OVERSAMPLING setting. |
| 7 **IN** | | | Input level. |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | **DRIVE** | 0 to 30 dB | 6 dB | How hard the signal hits the saturation. More drive, more harmonics. |
| 9 | **TONE** | Dark 100 to Bright 100 | Flat | A tilt around 800 Hz: up to 8 dB darker or brighter from lows to highs. |
| 10 | **MIX** | 0 to 100% | 100% | Blends the dry and saturated signal, for parallel saturation. |
| 11 | **OUTPUT** | −24 to +12 dB | 0 dB | Output level. |
| 12 | **OUT** | | | Output level. |
| 13 | **AUTO GAIN** | on / off | on | Matches the saturated level to the dry one, so DRIVE changes the tone, not the loudness. Turn it off to drive into the next plugin harder. |
| 14 | **OVERSAMPLING** | 1X to 16X | 4X | Runs the saturation at a higher rate while you play, for less aliasing at high drive. |

# 4 The four types

| TYPE | CURVE | HARMONICS | CHARACTER | GREAT ON |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Tape** | The softest knee | Odd, gentle | Rounds peaks off slowly, with a little low-end weight and softened highs. Glue more than grit. | Buses, drums, the master, anything that needs to sit together |
| **Tube** | Soft and lopsided | Even and odd | Warm and full. The lopsided curve adds the even harmonics people hear as warmth. | Vocals, bass, keys |
| **Transistor** | Flat, then a harder knee | Odd | Clean until it gets close to full scale, then holds it firmly. Bites and crunches. | Drums, 808s, guitars, synths |
| **Fold** | Folds back past full scale | Many, high | Clean up to full scale, then the wave folds back on itself instead of clipping: metallic, synthy, wild at high drive. | Synths, sound design, parallel sparkle |

> Fold makes very high harmonics. Use 8X or 16X oversampling with it at high drive to keep aliasing down.

# 5 James's moods

James reacts to DRIVE. His mood shows in the top right of the screen, and it turns pink when he's feral.




| MOOD | DRIVE | JAMES |
|---|---|---|
| **Sleepy** | Below 3.6 dB | Lying low, barely awake. |
| **Curious** | 3.6 to 10.5 dB | Up and looking around. |
| **Alert** | 10.5 to 18 dB | Ears up, paying attention. |
| **Spooked** | 18 to 25.5 dB | Back arched, tail up. |
| **Feral** | 25.5 dB and up | Full fluff. You asked for it. |

# 6 Presets

James the Cat includes 9 factory presets. A preset sets every control, so settings it doesn't mention go back to their defaults.

| PRESET | TYPE | WHAT IT DOES |
|---|---|---|
| **Init** | Tape | Every control at its default. |
| **Warm Tape Bus** | Tape | 9 dB of drive, a little darker: weight and glue for a bus. |
| **Tape Glue Master** | Tape | Gentle and parallel at 70% mix, 8X oversampling, for the master. |
| **Tube Vocal Warmth** | Tube | Warmth and presence on a lead vocal. |
| **Fat Tube Bass** | Tube | Harder and darker, to thicken bass. |
| **Transistor Drum Crunch** | Transistor | Bright crunch on drums at 60% mix. |
| **808 Grit** | Transistor | 20 dB of drive to make an 808 cut through on small speakers. |
| **Fold Sparkle** | Fold | Parallel fold at 35% mix for shimmer on synths and keys. |
| **Feral Fold** | Fold | 24 dB into the folder, darkened: full sound-design chaos. |

### Your presets and A/B

Click **SAVE** to save your settings. They appear in the preset list after the factory presets. **A** and **B** each hold a complete setting; **A>B** copies the active slot to the other.

# 7 Quality and specifications

OVERSAMPLING sets the quality while you play; RENDER can raise it for offline bounces only, so you get the cleanest result without the CPU cost while you work. The latency is reported to your host, so tracks stay aligned.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Channels** | Mono or stereo |
| **Oversampling** | 1x to 16x live (default 4x); same as live, 4x, 8x or 16x for offline renders |
| **Latency** | None at 1x; a few samples with oversampling, reported to the host |
| **Level** | With AUTO GAIN on, the saturated signal is level-matched to the dry one |
| **Formats** | VST3, CLAP (Windows); AU, VST3, CLAP (macOS); 64-bit only |

# 8 Tips

**Start subtle.** On a bus or the master, Tape at 3–6 dB of drive adds weight and glue you feel more than hear.

**Make bass audible on small speakers.** Tube or Transistor on an 808 or bass adds harmonics your ears fill in as low end.

**Parallel saturation.** Push DRIVE hard, then bring MIX down to 20–40% for character without losing the clean transients.

**Darken the grit.** High drive gets bright. Pull TONE toward Dark to keep it warm.

**Compare fairly.** AUTO GAIN keeps the level the same, so A/B and bypass tell you about the tone, not the volume.

**Bounce clean.** Set RENDER to 16X before your final export, especially with Fold.

# 9 Troubleshooting and support

| PROBLEM | SOLUTION |
|---|---|
| **James the Cat doesn't appear in my host** | Rescan plug-ins and check the install folders in section 2. On macOS, restart the host for AU. |
| **I don't hear much change** | Turn DRIVE up; with AUTO GAIN on, the level stays the same, so listen for the tone. Check MIX isn't at 0. |
| **It got louder** | AUTO GAIN is off. Turn it on, or lower OUTPUT. |
| **High CPU** | Lower OVERSAMPLING while you work and use RENDER for the final bounce. |
| **Tracks are out of time** | Your host should compensate for oversampling latency. If it doesn't, use 1X. |
| **Where are my presets?** | Documents/James the Cat/Presets. Copy that folder to move them to another computer. |

## Support

Email **support@abstractdsp.com** or visit **www.abstractdsp.com**. Please include your operating system, your host and the James the Cat version shown on the About card.

## Legal

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