

Size 1

Size 2

Settings

Stats

Clear Peaks

?

START

Rounds 5
Round No. -
STOP

HOFA
4U+ Blind Test

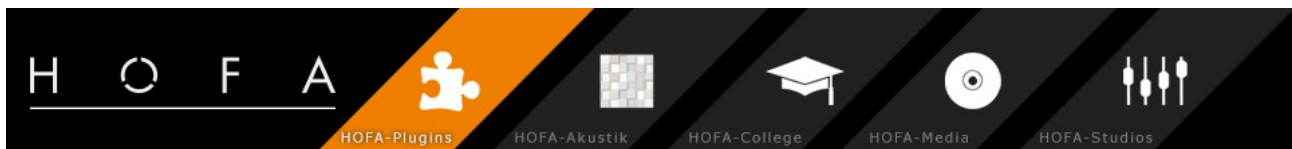
	Name	Notes	Rate	Peak	Gain
1	SOLO Plugin 4	Notes are shown in the stats overview.	Ø 3.4 ★★★★★☆	-1.8 dB	0.0 dB
2	SOLO Plugin 2	Notes are shown in the stats overview.	Ø 2.2 ★★★★★☆	-2.8 dB	0.0 dB
3	SOLO Plugin 5	Notes are shown in the stats overview.	Ø 2.8 ★★★★★☆	-5.5 dB	0.0 dB
4	SOLO Plugin 1	Notes are shown in the stats overview.	Ø 3.0 ★★★★★☆	-1.8 dB	0.0 dB
5	SOLO Original	Notes are shown in the stats overview.	Ø 2.8 ★★★★★☆	-5.4 dB	0.0 dB
INACTIVE					
	SOLO Plugin 6	Notes are shown in the stats overview.	Ø 5.0 ★★★★★★	-2.3 dB	0.0 dB
	SOLO Plugin 7	Notes are shown in the stats overview.	Ø 1.0 ★☆☆☆☆☆	-inf	0.0 dB
	SOLO Plugin 3	Notes are shown in the stats overview.	Ø 0.0 ☆☆☆☆☆☆	-41.6	0.0 dB

HOFA 4U+ BlindTest

User Manual

HOFA 4U+ BlindTest

V1.0 / M1



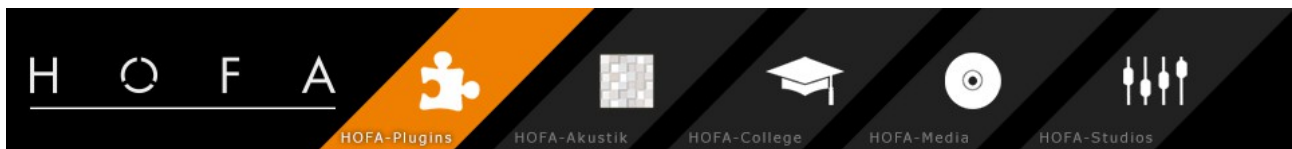
Introduction

When comparing different plugins or mixes, it is often difficult to judge objectively without being influenced by other factors like names, the user interface or loudness. The HOFA 4U+ BlindTest plugins allows to hide these influences in order to allow a blind comparison. Besides a random order with hidden names it is also possible to run a test sequence to get a statistically significant conclusion.

For conclusive results, besides the rating notes can be taken per entry and round. This makes it possible to evaluate qualitative aspects additionally to the rating. The rating maximum can be set between one and ten.

As “louder” signals often sound “better”, an included EBU analysis allows to automatically match the loudness. This can be useful to evaluate different sources independently from their loudness.

All HOFA 4U+ BlindTest plugins are linked so you only need to have one user interface opened.



Installation

To install HOFA 4U+ BlindTest you will need the HOFA-Plugins Manager which you can download here:

<http://hofa-plugins.de/en/downloads>

The HOFA-Plugins Manager also allows installing all further products by HOFA-Plugins which you can test for 14 days if you are interested.

Select "Install" in the field "HOFA 4U+ BlindTest". Furthermore you need to select the plugin format that you want to install at the bottom of the window. The plugin is available in VST, VST3, AU (Mac only) and Pro Tools (RTAS/AAX) format.

By clicking "INSTALL" or "APPLY CHANGES", the latest version of the software will be downloaded and installed on your computer.

Activation

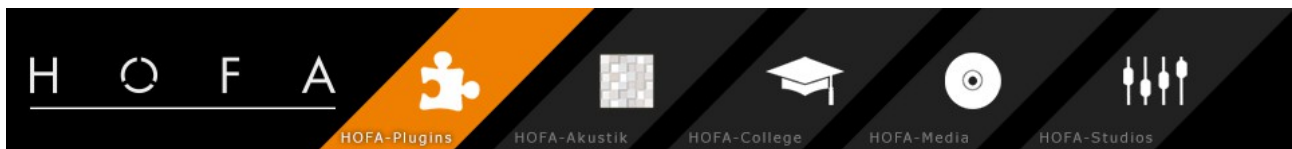
The activation of the plugin is done with the HOFA-Plugins Manager, which is also used for the installation.

A detailed description of the activation and deactivation process is available here:

http://hofa-plugins.de/media/HOFA_Plugins/manuals/Activation-Deactivation_en.pdf

Freeware Restrictions

HOFA 4U+ BlindTest can also be used without a license. The freeware has the same feature set as the licensed plugin. The only restriction is that only up to three plugins can be used at once.



Quick Start

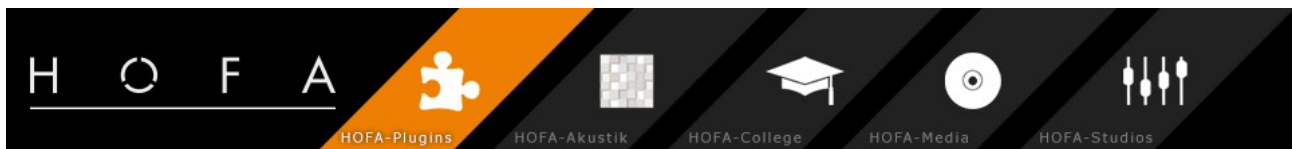
The 4U+ BlindTest plugin needs to be inserted in all tracks that should be compared. The different tracks can contain different content or the same content with different plugins that should be compared. When comparing plugins, 4U+ BlindTest should be inserted as the last plugin in each chain.

With the latest versions of Cubase/Nuendo (only VST3), Logic Pro X and Pro Tools the entry's name is automatically inherited from the track name. With other DAWs the entries should be given a name according to the track manually.

All 4U+ BlindTest plugins except the one set to "SOLO" will mute any incoming audio.

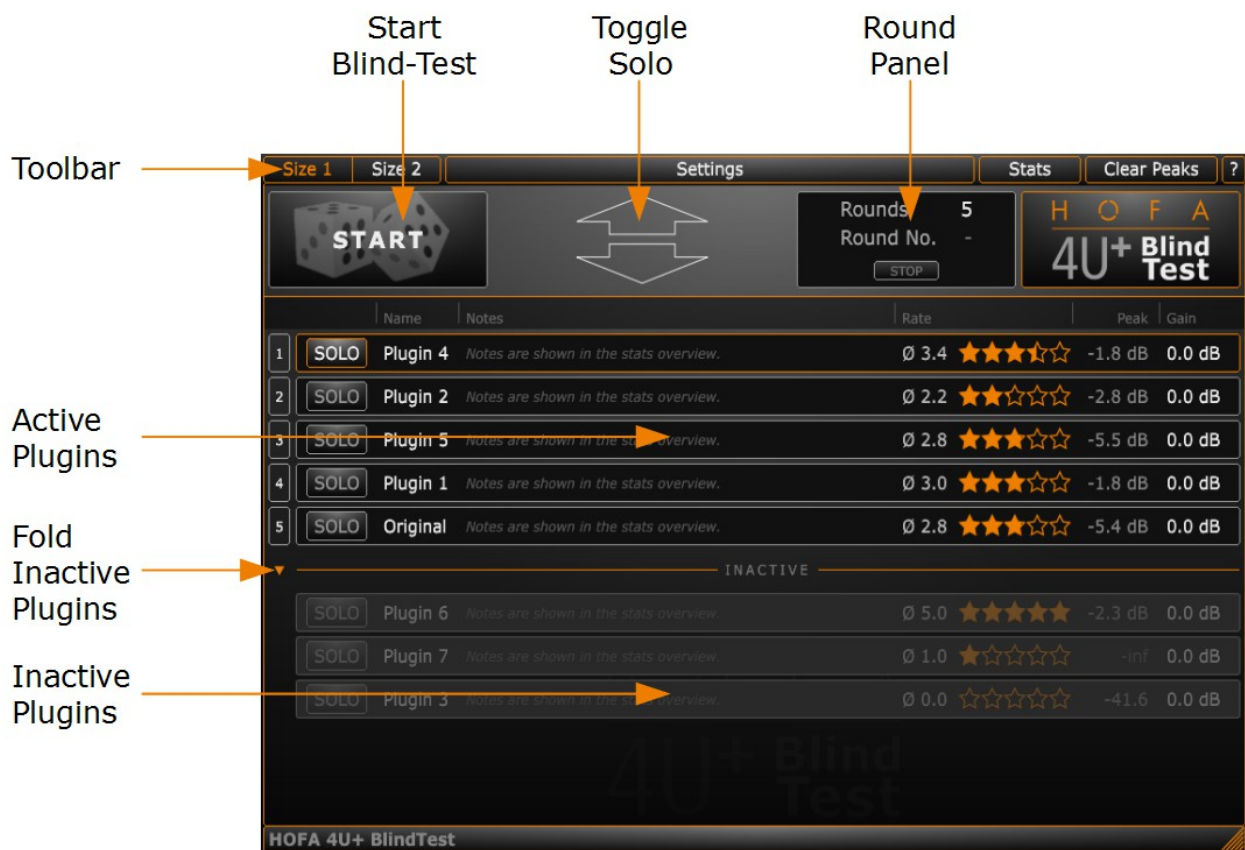
To allow an uninfluenced blind test, the user interface's size can be adjusted (for example to cover the mixer channel) in order to avoid seeing the playing track due to level meters.

A click on "START" randomly shuffles the entries and hides the names so you can start your blind comparison.



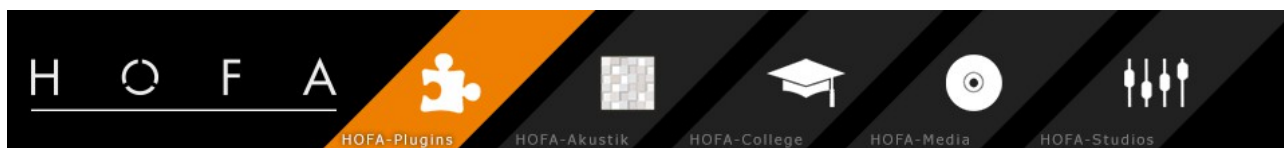
Controls

Besides the toolbar, the plugin is separated into three areas: On top you find the controls for the blind test, containing the "START" button and the "Round" settings. The latter is only available in "Series" mode. The arrow keys can be used to toggle the currently soloed entry while the "START" button starts a blind test and continues to the next round in "Series" mode.



The plugins are listed below. Every plugin has an entry containing columns for the name, notes, rating, level and gain. The columns for notes, rate, level and gain can be disabled in the settings menu.

Entries can be moved to the "INACTIVE" area via drag and drop and won't be used for a blind test. The area can also be folded which is done automatically during a blind test.



Toolbar



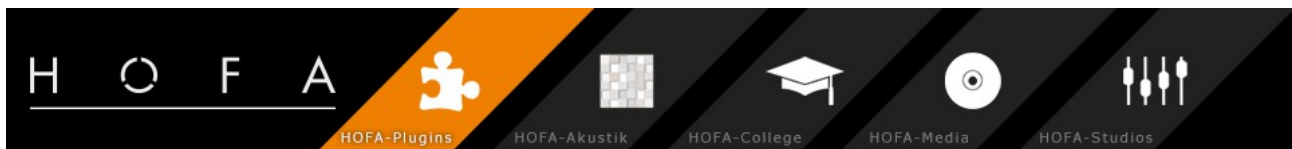
Size 1 / Size 2	You can set two different plugin sizes here. For example you could use one size to cover all faders of your DAW's mixer to quickly toggle between one size that covers all faders during comparisons and a smaller size when working with the project.
Settings	Opens the settings menu where the test mode and shown columns can be set.
Stats	In Round Mode "Series", you can see your ratings and notes for every round. Also see the Statistics section below.
Clear Peaks	Clears all peaks. Only available if peaks are shown. You can also click on a peak display to clear all peaks.
?	Opens the help menu.

Loudness Compensation

When "Loudness Compensation" is activated in settings, the following controls are shown.



While the "Analyze" button is activated, the EBU level of all entries is analyzed. After the analysis, you can enable the EBU compensation using the "Compensate" button to listen to all entries at the same loudness level. The loudness is adjusted to match the lowest level in order to prevent clipping.



Statistics

STATISTICS						
			Export CSV		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> show stars <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> show notes	
Name	Ø (max 5)	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Round 5
Plugin 4	3.4 ★★★★★	3 ★★★★★	4 ★★★★★	4 ★★★★★	2 ★★★★★	4 ★★★★★
		-	balanced	balanced	distorted	OK
Plugin 2	2.2 ★★★★★	3 ★★★★★	2 ★★★★★	2 ★★★★★	2 ★★★★★	2 ★★★★★
		muddy	boomy			
Plugin 5	2.8 ★★★★★	2 ★★★★★	4 ★★★★★	1 ★★★★★	4 ★★★★★	3 ★★★★★
		OK	OK	harsh	OK	balanced
Plugin 1	3.0 ★★★★★	3 ★★★★★	3 ★★★★★	2 ★★★★★	3 ★★★★★	4 ★★★★★
		OK		sosolala		tight milds
Original	2.8 ★★★★★	3 ★★★★★	3 ★★★★★	4 ★★★★★	3 ★★★★★	1 ★★★★★
		harsh	-	OK	heavy	

After finishing a blind test series, the average ratings are shown for each entry. The Toolbar's "Stats" button will additionally show the ratings and notes for every round. You can also export a .csv file here for importing and further analyzing in a spreadsheet.

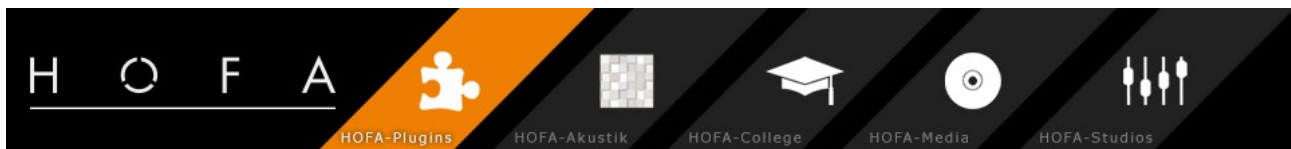
Settings Menu

Close		Closes the menu.
Default Settings ▶	Set as Default Reset to Default	Save the current settings as default or reset to default settings. The default settings are also used when the first plugin instance is inserted in a project.
✓ Show Notes		Show notes for entries
✓ Show Stars ▶	Stars 5	Show stars for rating. Additionally, the maximum number of stars can be set.
✓ Show Gains		Show gains for level adjustments.

<div>✓ Show Peaks ▶</div>	<div>Detect Intersample Peaks</div>	Show peaks and toggle whether intersample peaks should be detected. It is only possible to show either peak or EBU levels.
<div>Show EBU Loudness</div>		Show EBU loudness options. This allows to analyze and compensate the loudness. It is only possible to show either peak or EBU levels.
<div>Round Mode ▶</div>	<div> Single ✓ Series </div>	Toggle between Single and Series mode. The series length can be set on the user interface.
<div>Rate Mode ▶</div>	<div> ✓ Rate All in Every Round Ignore Unrated Unrated = 0 Stars </div>	This allows to set the behavior for unrated entries in series mode. If "Rate All in Every Round" is set, one needs to rate all entries before continuing. Otherwise rounds of unrated entries can be ignored or can be set to zero stars.

Help Menu

<div>Close</div>	Closes the menu.
<div>Open Manual</div>	Opens this manual.
<div>Show Introduction</div>	Shows a short introduction which is also shown when first starting the plugin.
<div>Show Tooltips</div>	Toggles whether tooltips are shown.
<div>Check for Updates</div>	Checks whether updates are available.



Contact

HOFA GmbH

Lusshardtstraße 1-3

D-76689 Karlsdorf

E-Mail: plugins@hofa.de

Phone : 0049 7251 3472 444

www.hofa-plugins.de



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