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If you're looking for the largest amount of dynamics control for the least amount of money, look no further than the PreSonus ACP22. With 16 knobs, 13 switches, and 46 LEDs occupying its 1U rack-mount faceplate, this dual-channel compressor/limiter/gate is a dynamics tweaker's dream come true. Each gate provides separate threshold, attack, and release controls, as well as a Range switch that toggles between -6 dB (for soft gating/downward expanding) and -60 dB (for hard, on/off operation). The detection circuit includes a switchable Spectral Noise Gate lowpass filter that enables the gate to open only for midrange and low-frequency information; perfect for drum applications in which you don't want the gates to be triggered by high-frequency sources, such as cymbals. The ACP22's dual compressors are equally well appointed, offering separate controls for threshold, ratio, attack, release, and output, as well as separate switches for soft-knee/hard-knee and program-dependent (automatic) operation. The unit also provides switchable input/output metering, separate channel-bypass switches, and a Stereo Link mode. Of course, this bounty of control notwithstanding, we would never have considered the ACP22 had it not performed well and sounded good. Reviewer Myles Boisen was impressed by its extensive feature set and its clean, colorless sound. He found the unit especially well suited to fast-attack compression applications (such as funk bass and rapid-fire percussion) and low-frequency source sounds, and he liked its transparent handling of vocals in Auto mode. Also notable was the ACP22's smooth performance as a stereo-bus compressor; a feat many inexpensive VCA-based compressors can't boast. The ACP22 provides ample I/O, as well, including XLR and 1/4-inch connectors, dual sidechains, and switchable operating levels per channel. It's obvious why the ACP-22 is an award winner.

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