

Test: Lindell LiN76

With the LiN76 Vintage Limiting Amplifier, Lindell Audio launches another replica of the legendary 1176 compressor – in the mid-price segment. We reveal for whom the remake is interesting. **by Sascha Blach**

Features

- Vintage dynamics processing
- Transformers from the USA
- All buttons mode
- Vintage-style VU meter
- Ultra fast attack times



With the LiN76, Lindell Audio offer a valuable 1176 replica with all known features for a small budget.

Swedish company Lindell Audio, founded in 2010 by producer Tobias Lindell (Bohus Studio), is dedicated to providing high-quality hardware gear at affordable prices. The Universal Audio 1176 Peak Limiter is one of those legendary hardware compressors that can be found in almost every major studio. Since the late '60s, it has shaped many legendary productions, from Led Zeppelin to Michael Jackson. First introduced to the market in 1967, the FET compressor can also be used as a limiter with ratio values up to 20:1. Visually, the LiN76 is very similar to its prototype, also comes in 19" rack format with 2 height units and weighs 8kg. It is a single-channel compressor with a balanced jack input and output.

On a budget

Due to the fact that the originals are only available as expensive second-hand goods, the replicas are a good thing. Of course, Lindell is not alone with this idea, because after early replicas like Andrew Roberts Purple Audio MC76 or Universal Audio's 1176LN reissue, especially Warm Audio's WA76 and Klark Teknik's 76-KT have found their way into many studios in recent years. Lindell position themselves exactly in between them in terms of price. Qualitatively, all three devices are rock solid.

Functionality

This is a rotary point compressor that does not have a threshold control. Stronger compression is created by turning

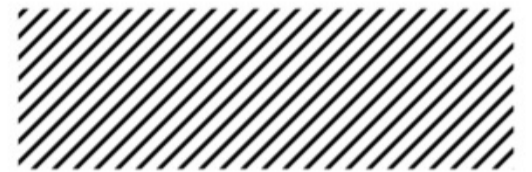
up the input control, which automatically lowers the threshold and increases the input level. What makes the LiN76 special - analogous to the 1176 - are the short attack times of less than a millisecond (20µs to 800µs). It should be noted that the controls for attack and release (goes from 50ms to 1200ms) work exactly in reverse to most compressors. This makes operation less intuitive at first, but you can quickly get used to it.

Sound

In return, you are rewarded with an exquisite sound - as well as a great flexibility: The LiN76 can color the signal analog and compress it subtly, but also flatten it and distort it. That distortion effect is created by an extreme setting of attack and release, and is just as iconic as the all buttons mode, which creates a particularly dense and lively sound by pushing all the ratio buttons in, which is difficult to reproduce. Any other combination of ratio buttons is also possible and leads to interesting results. Producers appreciate the 1176 for its „musical“ character and unconventional sounds. In addition, the sound hasn't „aged“ since the 60s and is still as popular today as ever.

Comparison to plug-ins

Over the years, not only analog replicas of the 1176 were put on the market, but also digital emulations. The analog LiN76 has a clear advantage here, because the fact that real current flows means it sounds rounder, especially in extreme settings, and the sound coloration when the ratio is switched off is more concise. This also applies to legendary basic settings such as Dr. Pepper setting, All Buttons mode or distortion of the signal, which we take a



closer look at on the opposite page. These are also possible with the Lindell LiN76. The difference to digital emulations becomes less obvious with moderate settings. The disadvantage of the Li76 is also that you can't integrate as many instances as you want into a mix without a lot of effort.

Use

The key question is, for which people is the LiN76 predestined. Stylistically there are no restrictions here, because a good compressor is welcome in every genre, isn't it? Therefore, the target audience is primarily home recordists who want more than just producing „in the box“. The LiN76 does well for digital recordings that you want to give an analog flair, such as vocals, bass, guitars, drum single tracks or synthesizers. For the latter, the limitation is that you need two instances of the compressor for stereo signals, as it is single-channel. If you have two devices, you will also find applications that come to mind in the processing of drum room microphones or mix sums.

Facts

Manufacturer: Lindell Audio
Web: lindellaudio.de
Distribution: Audiowerk
Price: 499 euros

- ▲ Original sound
- ▲ Moderate price
- ▲ All features of the 1176
- ▲ Noble appearance

Sound:
Operation:
Price/perf.:
Total:

Alternatives

Klark Teknik 76-KT
309 euros
klarkteknik.com

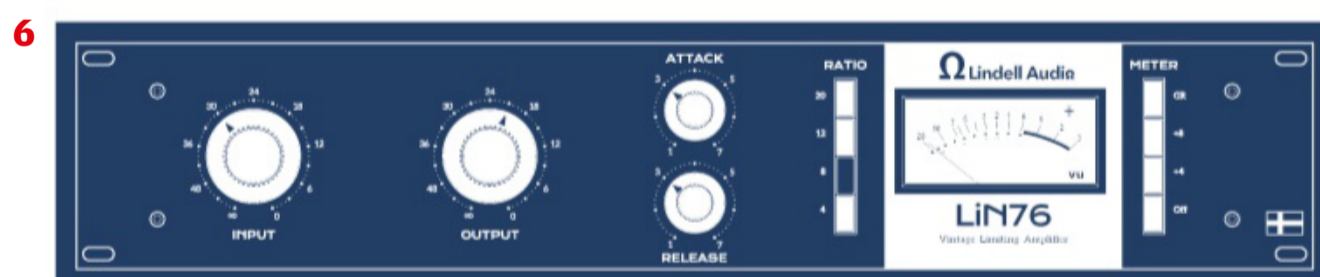
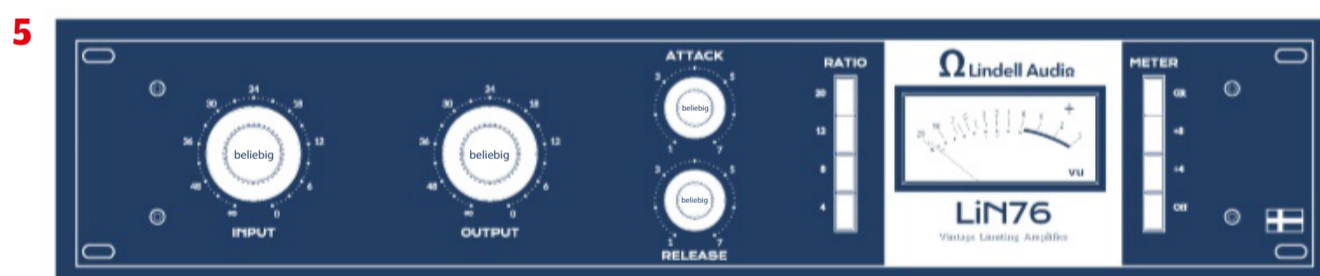
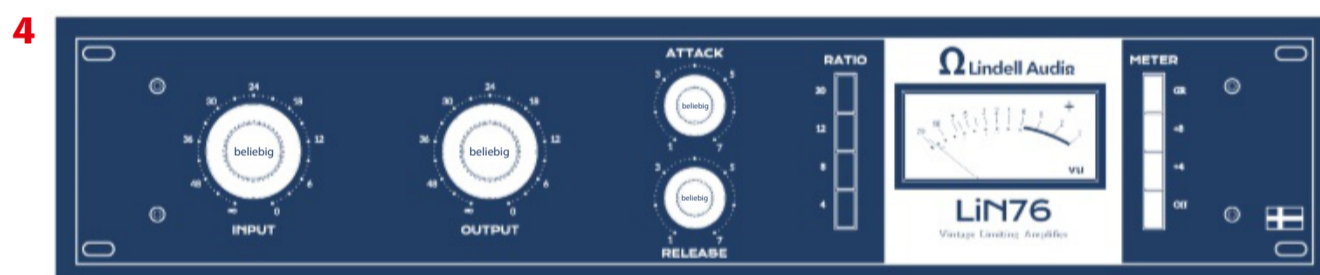
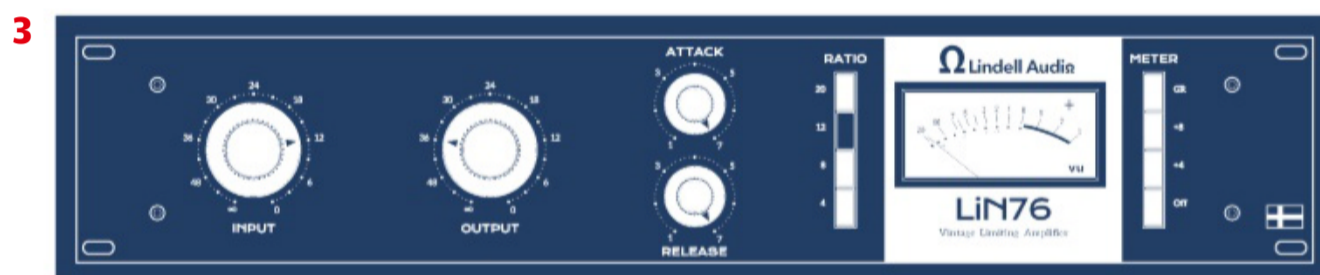
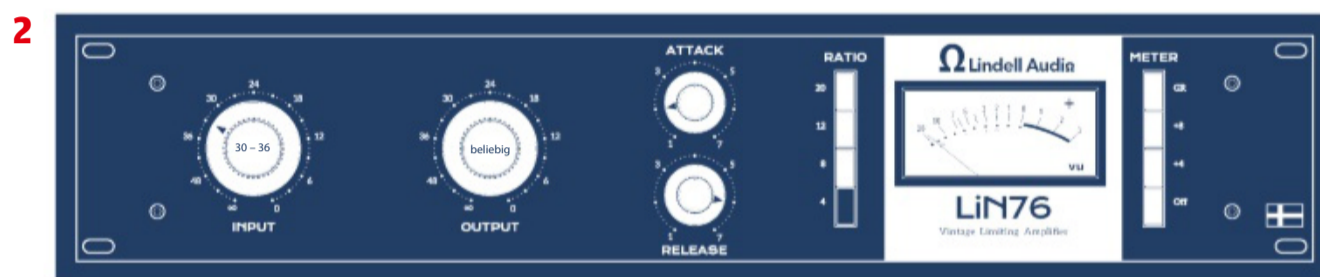
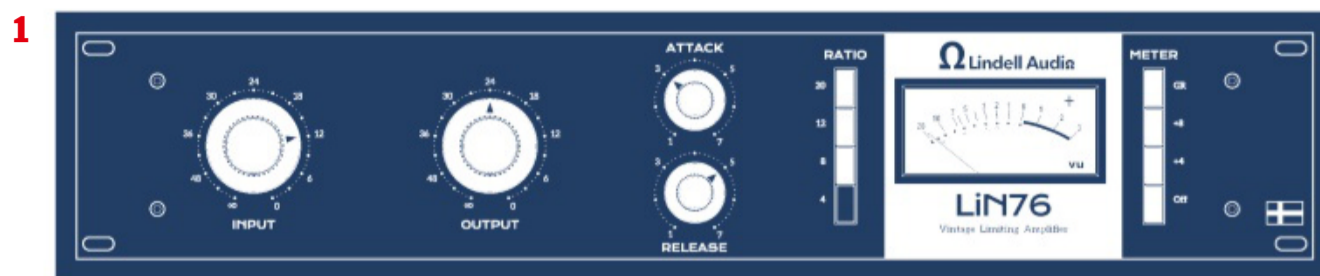
Warm Audio WA76
629 euros
warmaudio.com

VERDICT



With the LiN76, Lindell Audio offer a good and faithful sounding alternative to the 1176. The compressor, which costs just under 500 euros, is primarily aimed at hobby producers who are uncomfortable with the super-affordable 76-KT and for whom the WA67 is too expensive. Lindell have copied it 1:1. In view of the competition, the only question that arises is whether it would not have meant added value if one had deviated slightly from the original and expanded it with practical extras such as a bypass switch or a stereo version. ❖❖

The main LiN76 settings inspired by the legendary 1176:



1 // Dr. Pepper setting

Very well known is the Dr. Pepper setting, named after an advertising campaign for the soft drink Dr. Pepper, which recommended people to drink a bottle every day at 10 o'clock, 2 o'clock and 4 o'clock for the necessary sugar boost. Transferred to the compressor, this means: Attack control at 10 o'clock



(3), Release control at 2 o'clock (5), and Ratio at 4:1. We adjust input and output levels to match the audio material. The more we turn up the input, the more compression. The Dr. Pepper setting is suitable for vocals, guitars, basses, piano or drum elements that require only light compression.

2 // Thickening vocals

With vocal recordings, we only want to add slight compression to the input signal so that we can be flexible later in the mix and not overemphasize breathing, for example, or rob the performance of any

dynamics with too high values. It's more about thickening the voice here. We set the input somewhere between 30 and 36 and adjust the output to compensate for the level loss. Attack at 9 o'clock and release at 3 o'clock preserves the natural character of the voice.

3 // Distortion with the compressor

For this old 1176 trick, we turn attack and release up full so that they have the fastest possible values. This creates a slight distortion that comes from the compressor controlling the attack and release of the input signal so quickly that tiny variations in level act like distortion. The result is a soft distortion that sounds a bit like tape saturation. We can further enhance this effect by using the All Buttons mode, i.e. by pushing in all four ratio knobs. Works well on vocals, bass or synthesizers of all kinds.

4 // All buttons mode

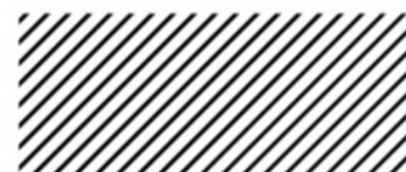
An old secret trick of many successful producers, which was already frequently used in the original, is the All-Buttons mode. Here, all four ratio buttons are switched on and the ratio value is 20:1. More importantly, this also changes the bias of the circuit. It makes the compressor more punchy and the curve changes from soft knee to hard knee. The sound becomes dirtier. Works great on drum signals, especially with so-called dirt microphones, powerful electric basses and effect vocals.

5 // Color the signal

Unlocking all ratio knobs will not compress or affect gain, but the signal still passes through the LiN76's circuitry and is analog colored by them. This is a nice refinement especially for signals that don't necessarily need compression, such as guitars or synthesizers, but should still sound analog. The coloring is subtle and nothing that immediately jumps out at you. But doing this for multiple signals in the mix does have an impact and can add warmth and presence.

6 // Bass compression

With bass, it depends a lot on the type of signal. A synth bass is in most cases less dynamic than an organic electric bass, where the compressor has more work to do. We therefore assume an ordinary electric bass, whose dynamics we want to get smaller. We set the input to 10 o'clock (ergo 30) and the output to 1 o'clock (18). Attack and release at 3 are a good starting point to adjust these values to the song tempo. Ratio makes equal sense at 4 and 8, but we prefer to choose 8 for an electric bass to properly limit dynamics. ::



More on the topic