

# Steinberg Cubase 7.5 £488

PC MAC

Without warning, the mighty German DAW gets upgraded with some exciting new features – but is this a point release worth paying for?

> The last-minute announcement of Cubase 7.5 was a nice surprise from Steinberg at the end of 2013. But can a point release offer enough to pry more of that hard-earned dough from our pockets? Surprisingly for a point upgrade (even a paid one), Cubase 7.5 comes armed with new instruments and effects designed to appeal to those new to the world of desktop recording, as well as the more experienced. However, it's actually the less obvious tweaks and additions that are the real headlines here, as they represent truly significant improvements to Cubase's long-standing core workflow.

The new Re-record mode is a perfect example. With this active, you can hit the record button again during a recording to instantly start the recording over from the original position, count-in and metronome included (assuming you have them set up). It seems like a

fairly throwaway addition until you use it, after which you'll wonder how you ever got along without it before, particularly if you're engineering your own recording sessions – it saves a great deal of frustration and repeated hammering of the stop/delete/record keys. Although the record button on Steinberg's iOS remote controller Cubase iC Pro doesn't currently change its appearance to indicate

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that re-record mode is active, you get the same result when controlling Cubase from the app nonetheless.

## New view

Also new to v7.5, track visibility management works in a similar way to the mixer's channel visibility management, allowing you to show or hide any tracks in the Arrangement view that you may or may not need to see at any given time. Again, it seems insignificant, but it'll soon become a workflow essential for those working with large projects, doing a lot of rendering but wishing to retain access to MIDI clips, or working with remixes. The View Agents help you get the most out of the feature, giving specific commands for showing or hiding tracks based on various criteria – inverting the view status of all MIDI tracks, for example.

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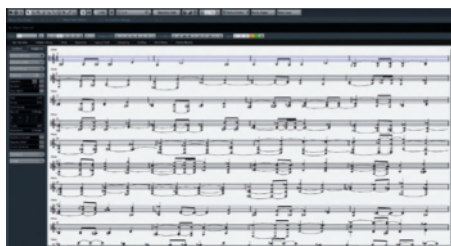
One of the most potentially transformative additions is TrackVersions. This enables you to create multiple versions of various track types that can be easily switched between within the track itself. Perhaps you want to record alternate lyrics for your vocal track, or present a few versions of a guitar solo for narrowing down later – TrackVersions allows you to store multiple takes or versions on a single track lane, without having to copy over the entire track and all its plugins wholesale, saving CPU and time. Not to be confused with comping Take Lanes, a TrackVersion actually includes all of the individual Takes and comping for that version. However, TrackVersions can easily be created, accessed, and switched from a dedicated area in the Inspector.

Also in the “track-related features” category, you can now save and recall a track’s Quick Controls, and copy them over to other tracks, regardless of track type.

## Scoring the hits

Cubase’s Hitpoints system has long enabled transient detection for loop manipulation, audio quantise and more. Prior to v7.5, using Hitpoints has involved selecting a target audio file and subjecting it to a process via menus or the sample editor. Now, all audio brought into the Pool (via recording, import or bouncing) is instantly subjected to Hitpoint detection. Better still, you can now navigate audio clips in the Project window by using key commands to jump to adjacent Hitpoints. It’s worth mentioning that Hitpoint detection is a calculation rather than a destructive process, meaning it has no audible effect on your track’s data unless you employ further processing, so no harm is done if you don’t need it – but it’s fantastic having it there instantly when you do.

The formally schooled muso will be glad to learn that Steinberg have given the Score Editor a much-needed once-over, bringing in a new tabbed Inspector for switching between the regular musical symbols and newly-enhanced MIDI functionality. Very helpfully indeed, MIDI functions from the Key Editor have been added to the Score Editor, giving access to quantise,



Cubase’s new and improved Score Editor now offers useful MIDI functions in the Inspector

transposition, length and chord editing. It really is the best of both worlds.

## Point made

Some cynics have been quick to brush off this paid point upgrade as a hurried money-grab, but they’d be missing out on some excellent enhancements.. Cubase 7.5 has a lot to offer, and the upgrade fee is quite reasonable for what you get. Maybe it’s wishful thinking to expect all of Cubase’s bugs to have been ironed out, and some early adopters have reported carry-overs from version 7, but it performed very well for us on our test machines, never hiccuping, stuttering or crashing. The new features all worked as advertised, adding up to an easier and more enjoyable workflow than ever before. Those with plugin folders filled to bursting might not be fussed about the additions and enhancements to the bundled instruments and effects, but newcomers looking for an all-in-one solution will (some would say at long last) get it in Cubase 7.5. An unmissable upgrade for all Cubase 7 users, not to mention those still on earlier versions. **cm**

Web [www.steinberg.net](http://www.steinberg.net)  
Upgrade from v7, £41; from v6.5, £162



Our old friends Groove Agent and HALion Sonic SE have been given some slick new features in v7.5

## On the rack

The bundled plugin package has improved in recent versions of Cubase, and 7.5 is no exception.

An overhauled old favourite returns in the shape of the Magneto II tape emulator, which now has a Dual mode to simulate running the signal through a pair of decks and the ability to specify the affected frequency range.

LoopMash FX provides DJ-style processes like tape-stop, stuttering and gating. Fun, but we imagine its lean list of effects might grow tiresome quite quickly. REVeLation is far more impressive, being a quality algorithmic reverb with oodles of control and a thick, rich sound plucked right out of a

high-end studio rack. To our ears, this one’s clearly the best of the bundle.

VST Connect SE 2 adds the ability to transfer MIDI as well as audio over the internet. HALion Sonic SE 2 gets some new features including a decent built-in synth (though we’re not sure why Cubase needs another virtual analogue). Groove Agent SE 4 qualifies as a major step up from the previous version, with its many new goodies including bit reduction, new effects and pattern tools. Oh, and the Instrument Rack itself has been beefed up with dedicated Quick Controls and direct integration with Instrument Tracks, allowing the latter to use multiple outs.

## Alternatively

Cockos Reaper 4  
**cm170 » 9/10 » \$225**

Cross-platform and well priced, but fewer fancy plugins and no scoring

Ableton Live  
**cm190 » 9/10 » €349**

Powerful and functional, but a very different environment to Cubase’s

## Verdict

**For** Track visibility management  
Automatic Hitpoint detection on all audio  
REVeLation sounds fantastic  
MIDI integrated into Score Editor  
Re-record mode makes life easier  
TrackVersions are great

**Against** Still a few longstanding bugs

The best Cubase yet, 7.5 provides solid and impressive new features that belie the fact that this is merely a point version

**9/10**