

iZotope PC MAC RX 2 \$1439/\$419



We awarded full marks to the original RX audio repair tool - and the sequel aims to clean up once again

> On the face of it, this latest edition of RX is much like its predecessor. We're going to focus on the new features here, so for details on the rest, check out the **cm DVD**, where you'll find the full manual.

The primary objective is to repair damaged audio, and RX 2's strategy is multifaceted. The first aspect is an unconventional standalone audio editor built around a spectrogram view. This presents a three-dimensional display of the audio, where blobs of colour indicate frequency, time and amplitude. Spectral editing enables you to isolate and modify details of your digital audio that are out of reach with traditional waveform editors (though RX does have one of those, too).

Alongside the spectrogram/waveform view are a series of intelligent restoration modules. These are much more extensive than the (already impressive) lineup of the original RX.

The standard version of RX 2 retails at \$419, skimping only on the most in-depth of features, but here we're looking at the full-fat Advanced edition. The most notable additional modules for this version are Deconstruct and Plug-In, the latter of which enables you to process the audio with your favourite third-party effect plug-ins (DX/AU/VST). Furthermore, six of RX 2's modules are available in plug-in format, so you can use them within a compatible host.

Faith restored

It makes sense for a piece of software that heavily relies on visual editing to give us the kind of tools we're used to seeing in graphics apps like Photoshop, and the new selection tools in v2 are perhaps the most obvious examples of this. You now have a free-hand lasso tool, a scalable paint brush and even a magic wand, which analyses the point at which you click and guesses the appropriate region you want to select. Now it's possible to select the resonance of a snare or the sibilance of a vocal for isolated processing with a single click.



You can go into greater detail with your selection by holding down the Shift key, which enables you to add to your selection. You could, for example, draw a rectangle next to a circle. You can pick up your selection and move it, too, even after zooming in for a close-up. Refining a selection is easy - holding Alt/Option puts the tools into deselection mode, so you can, say, create a 'hole' in a selection.

These tools improve the ease of fixing clipped or clicking audio and removing background noises, unwanted incidental noises or hum. As a general rule, the closer you can zone in on the problem area, the better you can deal with it, producing seamless, natural-sounding results.

The new Deconstruct module (exclusive to the Advanced version) intelligently splits the audio into what it perceives as tonal and noisy qualities, and lets you mix them as desired. The results are most fascinating. You can't help but exploit the creative uses for this package, which go way past the obvious practical roles that it fulfils so excellently. **cm**

Web www.izotope.com
Contact izotope@izotope.com

System requirements

PC Windows XP/Vista/7, DX/VST/RTAS host for plug-in use

Mac OS X 10.5 or later, AU/VST/RTAS host for plug-in use

Alternatively

Sonnox Restore cm152 >> 10/10 >> £1434
Suite of three targeted plug-ins, giving superb results

Adobe Audition 3 cm126 >> 8/10 >> £327
Full-blown MIDI and audio editor with awesome spectral editing

Verdict

For Astonishingly good results

Rescue damaged audio...

...or enhance decent audio

Easier than ever to use

Real-time and offline algorithms

Improved spectral editing features

Against Can be resource-hungry

Certain aspects take a while to grasp

iZotope keep up the pace with this great update to a first-rate audio-restoration tool

10/10

Easily converted

iZotope's MBIT+ technology is included in RX 2 Advanced to preserve the fidelity of audio that's been converted from a higher bit depth - say 32-bit - to a lower bit depth, like the consumer standard 16-bit. They've also included their 64-bit SRC technology for similarly clean conversion from one sample rate to another. It uses steep, linear phase filtering and, like the MBIT+ module, is both tailored to suit music and highly configurable. To our ears, both sound

flawless and are definitely suitable for the most demanding tasks.

Perhaps most intriguing for producers is the included Radius algorithm for timestretching and pitchshifting. Imagine being able to isolate a single drum hit in a recorded loop and stretch it 200% with minimal artifacts - maybe even cleaning it up with RX's restoration modules - before pasting it back into the mix. That's just one example of what you can do with RX 2.