

# iZotope RX 8 Advanced \$1199

The audio repair stalwart adds and improves a few modules. Can it give a fresh sheen to **James Russell's** tracks?

**CONTACT WHO:** iZotope **WEB:** [izotope.com](http://izotope.com) **KEY FEATURES** Guitar De-noise including amp, pick and squeak modules; Loudness Control helps you easily conform to various standards; Music Rebalance sees improvements; Spectral Recovery brings back your frequencies over 4kHz; Wow and Flutter compensation





Two years on from version 7, RX 8 seeks to go above and beyond the call of clean-up duty. Its new modules – Guitar De-noise, Spectral Recovery, Loudness Control and Wow and Flutter – are joined by improvements to multiple modules. Trackpad users will be pleased with horizontal scrolling, but there's still no pinch zooming to be found in RX.

Guitar De-noise has multiple elements: Amp de-noise, Squeak control and Pick control. Of these, the Squeak and Pick functions work remarkably well, removing unwanted elements and unmasking pure musical tones – a similarly impressive try-out when the Mouth De-Click module was first introduced. That Amp De-Noise module, however, is nowhere near as good as the Spectral De-noise module for removing the overbearing hiss of a dodgy amp. Even on subtler amp hums, the Amp module seems more likely to scoop out the timbre of the actual guitar than remove the hum itself.

The new Wow and Flutter module aims to correct for tape-style pitch drifts caused by rotational deviation. This is another RX module that hits the target in effectiveness but not in intuitiveness. It's tough to work out how to get going with this one – Wow and Flutter act as separate modules

within the same module, and selections like Slow, Medium and Fast (for flutter speed) don't help the user get it right without some real comparison. Once you've found your footing, The Wow and Flutter module (modules?) can do a great job of straightening your audio's posture.

Spectral Recovery is iZotope's solution for a world where recordings are increasingly conducted via phone and VOIP connections. The results are very impressive, restoring fidelity and high frequencies, and even working pretty great on MP3 files. This might be the most CPU-intensive process in RX, depending on your material, but it's worth it.

Music Rebalance, RX 7's best-in-class stereo file stem separator, may be seeing an upgrade due to recent competition from Acid Pro 10 and Steinberg SpectraLayers 7. iZotope didn't originally recommend this module as a stem isolator, but rather for performing tweaks of the levels of individual instruments when you only have a stereo file. Whatever you're using it for, the performance of v8's Music Rebalance is far better, although the CPU cost still seems to scale the same with effectiveness. RX 8's lowest quality option now is slightly better than (and takes a similar time to compute as) RX 7's Advanced Joint Channel mode, so it's not certain whether the processing is better per

se or if there are simply a larger number of quality options here.

The Loudness Control module (replacing the old Loudness module), lets you specify loudness targets in properties such as True Peak and LKFS as well as a tolerance in LU; although the only thing you'll really need to reach for is the presets, which include Podcast Delivery, Music Streaming and many recognised standards. It would've been nice to find some common loudness controls for particular streaming services (based on each one's target loudness) here too.

RX 8 adds valuable new modules and noticeably improves others, although the overall experience of the package is starting to overwhelm with both its size and layout and parameters of some modules. **FM**

## FM VERDICT

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**RX adds great new possibilities in post production and music production, although not every process is perfect**

## THE PROS & CONS



Guitar pick and squeak removal reveals more tone

Music Rebalance is even better than before

Loudness Control is a no-nonsense master checker



Amp hiss remover is more likely to harm guitar tone than remove amp hiss

The package has grown and needs a UX rethink for several modules