

EQ Plug-Ins

EQ plug-ins are one of the most important parts of the modern production tool kit. **Stuart Bruce** takes a look at a selection of the latest sound shapers



Soundtoys Sie-Q \$129

Like the Lindell TE-100 this is directly inspired by another German EQ, this time the Siemens w295b. Unlike the TE-100 this is simple stuff. LF shelf, switchable midrange (0.7 to 5.6kHz) and a shelving HF. The last control is the Drive which basically gives you more character and eventually distortion. I know these EQs from years ago. The originals have a certain something in the high-end, a kind of magical sheen and translucence, rarely found and all the more special because of it. The lows and mids also have a special depth to them and can be powerful without getting too harsh, even with extreme settings. The joy of this is that the Sie-Q has it too. As modelling progresses it gets better and better and this, like the TE-100, is a fine example of it. It's like the best 'tone' control you ever heard breathing life into a dull sound and further enhancing a great one.

<http://www.soundtoys.com>

VERDICT 9.5



Sound Radix Surfer EQ2 \$199

This is a highly individual EQ, the main reason being that it will follow the pitch of a monophonic musical source and adjust each band to remain 'in tune' with it. There are sophisticated controls to keep this tracking accurate and they work well with a minimum of octave leaps. The EQ itself is 5-band with switchable curves for each band including a very interesting Harmonic Filter which turns a single band into a four mode tracking filter. Each band can Surf (track) the pitch individually so you can do a bit of low mid removal and just have the high-end 'Surfing'. It really does give a different kind of presence to a lead line or a voice and, as you are not fixed to just the octave harmonics of the incoming note (you can offset each filter to the pitch), when used with extreme settings you can force some fantastically strange sounding harmonics out of a melody. It's a good sounding EQ too, and that Harmonic Filter is great. Very creative.

www.soundradix.com

VERDICT 9.0



Kush Hammer DSP \$149

Another emulation, this time of an excellent modern valve EQ, the Hammer is a twin channel 3-band device with low and high-shelf, a bell midrange and switchable low and high-pass filters. Each band has switched frequencies which all seem to be in exactly the right places. When using it on a stereo source the channels can be ganged or left independent so it's a true dual channel EQ. The low-end is warm and round while the highs can be subtle and smooth but can also add a real bite to a dull sound without harshness or any nasty artifacts. But it is the midrange which is most impressive as it is powerful and warm without ever being offensive. It's quite remarkable

as you can radically change the character of a sound without losing its musicality, especially good for putting some bark into an electric guitar while retaining the body. Well up to Kush's high standards, and something you'll come back to again and again.

www.thehouseofkush.com

VERDICT 9.1



iZotope Neutron from \$249

Neutron is something of a one off. As a processor it has six stages, a 12-band equaliser, two compressors, an exciter/saturation circuit, a transient shaper and a master limiter. The equaliser has eight parametric bands plus high and low shelving and high and low-pass filters but the really novel feature is the Masking Meter. With multiple instances of Neutron across different instruments you can compare two channels and Neutron shows you where potential frequency buildups are so you can easily adjust each instrument. It's particularly effective where you have two sources in the same register and, because you can link bands across two channels, boosting a frequency on one channel automatically reduces it in the other. The EQ sounds great, clean and open but with a subtle bit of warmth. The masking option helps to open up a mix and put definition into every part. The compressor has switchable characteristics that go from vintage warmth to digital clarity, the exciter has four types of saturation colour and the transient shaper has three response curves and separate controls for attack and sustain. All three of these dynamic processors are capable of being divided into three bands with variable crossover points so the dynamic shaping possibilities are endless and sound excellent. There is a final peakstop limiter which can go from a clean pumping to a hard-edged brickwall feel. An incredible device that can get clarity into your mixes and add colour to any sound.

www.izotope.com

VERDICT 9.5



Lindell Audio TE-100 \$149

The TE-100 is a very faithful reproduction of the all valve Klein and Hummel UE-100, an incredibly sophisticated equaliser first produced in 1961 but with the simple addition of finer control of the boosts and cuts than the original. As you can see, there are a myriad of controls but in essence it is a 4-band EQ with high and low-pass filters. The HP and LP frequencies are selected using push button steps and you have a choice of slope. The same push buttons are used on the other bands, LF and HF boost are shelving with a choice of slope while the mid range filters are something very different. The red and black buttons define the upper and lower frequencies of the filter so it is possible to make some pretty individual sounding curves which you can switch into boost or cut mode. Finally there is a Low Shelf cut at 60Hz and a High Shelf cut at 10kHz. But it's the sound which matters and somehow Lindell have managed to reproduce the character of the original. Smooth and strong lows with a powerful yet forgiving midrange and the sweetest of high-ends, it's a real enhancing tool with a true valve-like warmth. I regularly use a pair of the originals so I'm very impressed at how close they have got this. Hats off Lindell – I love it.

<https://www.plugin-alliance.com>

VERDICT 9.5