



# Softube TubeTech CL 1B Compressor

## £319

Want the sound of a stalwart for your productions?  
*Jono Buchanan* unwraps a cloned beauty...

### ON THE DVD

#### WHAT IS IT?

A native emulation of the classic CL 1B hardware compressor that adds the compression sound of a thousand hits to your productions

#### CONTACT

Who: Softube  
Tel: +46 (0)1321 1623  
Web: [softube.se](http://softube.se)

#### HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Classic sound for a fraction of the cost
- 2 Warm, smooth and undeniably musical
- 3 Magical results on vocals, single instruments

#### SPECS

**Minimum requirements:**  
Windows XP or higher, PIII or higher  
Mac OS X (10.4 or higher), Intel or PowerPC processor (G3 or higher)  
512MB RAM  
Any VST, AudioUnits or RTAS compatible host application  
iLok USB key and the latest Pace Interlok drivers

**S**oftube is a name with an increasingly solid reputation in the music tech industry as the company is now

presiding over a growing collection of fresh sounding plug-ins. Among these are clones of the FET compressor and the Trident A-Range EQ, but the subject of this review is the TubeTech CL1B.

Replicating the sound of classic gear is never easy but choosing to take on the recreation of a hardware unit which has made its presence felt on hit records for the likes of Madonna, Elton John and U2 and thousands more besides makes the job that much harder. Hitherto available for TDM and PowerCore platforms alone, the compressor's now available natively for AU, VST and RTAS hosts and has been developed in conjunction with Lydkraft/TubeTech, designers of the original.

#### Ground control

The sumptuously rendered GUI gives you access to a single panel of controls. These are Gain, Ratio, Threshold, a meter monitor switch, Attack and Release dials, a selection dial for their

operation and an option to toggle between the internal signal or a sidechained trigger.

Ratio is continually adjustable between 2:1 and 10:1, while the threshold dips to levels of -40dB and up to 30dB of gain can be added, while a VU meter keeps you in touch with your choice of input or output levels. What's so impressive is how much of this gain can be added before the sound breaks up or sounds unmusical. The twin tube configuration of the original unit made for ultra smooth results and this is wonderfully replicated here.

The unit shines on vocals and single instruments such as bass and guitar, bringing dynamics under control with the bare minimum of fuss and adding wonderful clarity and warmth to anything you shove its way.

#### Attack and release

The Attack and Release dials are worthy of note too, in that they can be adjusted manually as normal, or 'Fixed' to provide one millisecond of Attack time and Release of 50ms. As you might expect, this mode represents a fantastic

opportunity to get more extreme bite and crunch into your mixes and really shows off CL 1B's nasty side. Even the tamest of drum loops or electric guitar signals can go wild, with the results providing a pleasingly different personality to an already powerful plug-in. Another key addition is the option to switch in an external signal as a sidechain trigger for the compressor, meaning that it has the capability to be strapped across a master output for pumping results. Again, anything from subtle to ball-busting can be achieved here, so producers of all musical types should sit up and take note.

#### To conclude

The cost of the hardware version of the mono-only TubeTech CL 1B, at over £2,000, means that it's available to industry professionals alone. While Softube's clone is by no means cheap, its wonderfully accurate sonics mean the access doors have been busted open and many more of us have the option to add that classic sound.

What separates this compressor from so many is its musical response. You can add gain aplenty without the results becoming silly, though crunch, bite and drive are all here too. While this plug-in is pricier than some others, it's well worth your attention. **FM**

#### FutureMusic VERDICT

STABILITY	■■■■■■■■■■■
VALUE	■■■■■■■■■■■
EASE OF USE	■■■■■■■■■■■
VERSATILITY	■■■■■■■■■■■
RESULTS	■■■■■■■■■■■
One of warmest, natural and most musical compressors I've ever heard. Buy it.	