



**WHAT IS IT?**

Beat repeats and glitch-on-demand, using effects combinations and noise generators suitable for live performance.

**CONTACT**

Who: iZotope  
Web: [iZotope.com](http://iZotope.com)

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- 1 Instant access to live performance glitch/stutter/break effects via a MIDI keyboard, or incoming MIDI notes from a sequencer
- 2 Works great within Ableton Live
- 3 Individual timelines for each effect add movement and evolution



# iZotope Stutter Edit | \$249

**Martin Delaney** asks if the Stutter Edit plug-in is just a BT-in-a-box effect, or if it has wider uses for real-world DJs and producers

**I**t feels like stutter and glitch effects have been around forever. Originating as time-consuming edit jobs, they've become more accessible to the average joe, and Stutter Edit is the latest plug-in designed to provide instant access to those sounds. American DJ/producer/soundtrack guy BT has used custom software to create stutter effects in his live shows for years, and now that he's made a deal with iZotope, Stutter Edit is available to us all.

I used Ableton Live for this review – that seems the most likely candidate to use with Stutter Edit, although it'll work with any compatible host, as long as it can manage some basic MIDI routing (there's no standalone version of Stutter Edit, by the way). Add the plug-in to a track that's playing some audio, and then feed it MIDI notes from another track, or an external keyboard; the notes will trigger what iZotope call Gestures – preset effect combinations – and Generators, which add new

sounds/noise effects to the mix. Stutter Edit continually samples audio into a buffer that is accessed to create the playback-abusing effects. Stutter Edit looked strong on achieving complex-sounding effects with minimum effort, especially in live situations, but I couldn't help thinking that might lead to limitations in terms of flexibility.

**MIDI routing matters**

To configure Stutter Edit with Ableton Live, you need an audio track containing Stutter Edit and some audio clips, and a MIDI track that's routed to the audio track – this'll work in Session or Arrangement Views. Launch a clip, trigger some notes on your MIDI keyboard, or from a clip in the MIDI track, and you're off, ready to explore the factory banks and presets. At first it doesn't look like there are too many in there, but remember there are different Gestures or Generators on the keys within the preset (check out the Spacial Satellites bank, I liked that one), and yes, of course, there are some Richard Devine presets – it just wouldn't be the same without him! Each Gesture can use pans, delays, filters, and bit

crushers simultaneously, as well as buffer/playback tools – each effect also has its own timeline – a big part of the Stutter Effect sound.

Generators add another texture to the mix, with a library of noise effects that can play on their own, or on top of a Gesture. You can only trigger one Gesture or Generator at a time, but you can trigger one Gesture and one Generator together. On top of all of these effects there's a global filter, controlled by just one knob.

The filter acts as a high- or low-pass depending on whether you turn the knob clockwise or anti-clockwise, and goes off when returned to the original position. Strangely, with all of these effects, there's not much MIDI control – all you've got is the notes, the global filter, which defaults to pitch bend, and mod wheel to override the timelines.

### Effects sequencer

Gestures and Generators can vary in length from 1/16th triplet notes to two

## Gestures and Generators

In Stutter Edit lingo, a **Gesture** is a single key press that triggers an effects preset. It's not really as simplistic as it sounds, because each preset can contain several effects, and they all have their own little timelines, so there's a lot of room for evolving sounds. The timeline behaviours are editable, and you can watch them happening on screen, so you get a clear visualisation of what's

going on. Using one of Stutter Edit's few MIDI assignable controls, the **Mod Wheel** on your keyboard can override these timelines, so you have a bit of real-time control. I have to say that I liked the **Time Warp/Reversal** bank. There's just something irresistible about audio going in the wrong direction... Try **B2/Reverser 12**, and put it into **Latch**, then turn on the high- or low-pass

filters and toggle **Palindrome Looping** on and off. Nice!  
Generators work along the same lines as Gestures, and have their own filter and delay effects, but they add noises, like 'Big 909 Crash' to the mix. I liked the Generators more once I started messing with the **Release Modes** to get more staccato effects... which isn't necessarily what they're intended for.

rhythmic values for audio repeats, and note pitches for the stutters – it's like using a step sequencer. Although you can only trigger one gesture at a time, it doesn't feel like a problem – it's possible to get enough going on inside a single preset, and besides, you could

### Instant gratification

It's easy to be sceptical about the Stutter Edit hype – these aren't cutting edge sounds anymore, they're kind of retro, if anything. As I used it more, though, it transformed into a cool audio processor. The lack of MIDI automation

wasn't really an issue, because you can do so much with the effect timelines, the Gesture length and release settings, and the Stutter Matrix – I think

# Generators add texture, with a library of effects that can play on their own, or on top of a Gesture

bars, and the first things to play with on each preset are the **Gesture Length**, **Release**, and **Grid** settings – these determine how long the effect stays active, and are very important for changing the sync'd feel of the effects. A latched effect stays on indefinitely, and that's cool because it gives you time to work those effect parameters. The **Stutter Matrix** area is where things get yet more interesting, as you set

always have another track with another instance of the plug-in!

Once the 'instant BT' vibe wore off, I really liked Stutter Edit as a drum processor – sending notes from a MIDI clip to trigger synced effects on a kick drum within a drum loop, then resampling it. The same technique also worked great with live vocal and guitar inputs – maybe iZotope should make more of that.

there's enough control there. For DJs, the idea is that you make your heavy tweaks in advance, then you get one-button instant gratification at the gig (as long as you don't mind carrying a keyboard). Outside of the software itself, the price is a problem – it's expensive compared to the competition, slick interface or not. That aside, if you're a DJ who wants a new arsenal of sound effects, or you're a programmer who sees this as an extra processing tool, or a soundtrack composer who needs fast 'genre' results, you'll have fun using Stutter Edit. **FM**



Generators create new sounds while Gestures effect what's playing through the plug

### SPECS

#### System requirements

**PC:** Windows XP, x64, Vista, Win 7

**Mac:** OS X 10.5.8 or later

Stutter Edit is an AU/VST/RTAS plug-in, and needs a host DAW such as Ableton Live, Logic, Reaper, or ProTools 7.4+

### ALTERNATIVES



#### Native Instruments Reaktor 5

**379Euros**

Die-hard DIYers will prefer to use Reaktor to configure their own, entirely individual effects devices – and with full MIDI control. See also: Max for Live.

[nativeinstruments.com](http://nativeinstruments.com)



#### Sugar Bytes Artillery

**149Euros**

Very comparable to Stutter Edit, though this 'effect keyboard' has a standalone mode with audio player.

[sugar-bytes.de](http://sugar-bytes.de)



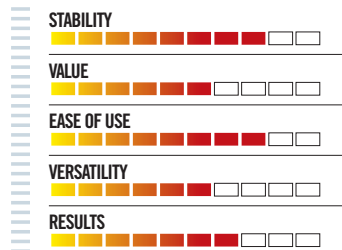
#### Native Instruments The Finger

**69Euros**

NI again, at the cheaper end of the price range. The Finger is another keyboard-driven effects device, that can run within the free Kore Player.

[nativeinstruments.com](http://nativeinstruments.com)

### FutureMusic VERDICT



Stutter Edit is expensive and produces a limited range of sounds, but it is a lot of fun to use!