

Audio Denoising Solutions

They're not sexy, but they get the job done. For post-production and remedial tasks, which noise and reverb reduction plugins are the best on the market right now?



Accusonus ERA-N \$59 & ERA-D \$299

You've got options when it comes to Accusonus' suite of audio clean-up tools: ERA Noise-Remover (\$59) is a 'one-knob' denoiser, while the larger ERA-D (\$299) brings that and the company's one-knob reverb remover together into one package with more controls. The ERA processors analyse the whole signal as it plays and therefore can adapt to any changes in the noise's character or any processing you might apply beforehand. Although skeptical when we first added them to a channel, it turns out that one knob is all we needed for quick and light denoising jobs. The one-knob ERA Noise-Remover plugin functions like a dream, and does remarkably well for heavier jobs too, although ERA-D's de-reverb and extra controls are invaluable. We recommend you let your wallet make the decision. Same score for both.

www.accusonus.com

VERDICT 9.3



WNS (Waves Noise Suppressor) \$99

WNS is real-time – in fact it's probably the most real-time processor on the testbench. You don't need to click a 'process' or 'learn' button to get things going, making it a quick and useful plugin. However, it's important to point out that Noise Suppressor is just that – it suppresses (ie, reduces) backdrops such as crowd sounds, rather than fully neutralising background hums and buzzes. WNS suggests reductions you can make based on the frequency content of non-dialogue sounds, and you use six frequency-band faders so take away said background noise to an extent of your choosing, almost like you're 'mixing in' the intended vocal and the sonic backdrop. There are Threshold and Smoothing settings to customise the effect too.

We found WNS to be effective at what it does, although some 'EQing' of the intended vocal/dialogue was experienced along with the effect in the background. Don't misconstrue it as a traditional 'clean up this bad recording' processor, but for subtle tweaks to a decent pro recording, WNS should be a go-to.

www.waves.com

VERDICT 8.4



Klevgrand Brusfri \$60 (plugin) \$15 (iOS)

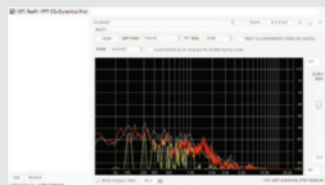
A 'learn then churn' denoiser, Brusfri takes a noise-only signal, learns the profile of the unwanted sound, and then removes it from the output.

Play around with the envelope and Edge (a sort of 'Reduction' control), tweak a high-pass filter and restore the high frequencies with some shelving, and you're done.

Brusfri's a great candidate for those work-a-day denoising jobs, and although we did experience a few artefacts on noise-heavy sources – some attack/decay noises which reminded us of gating, something you shouldn't really stoop to in the quest for denoising – the treatment provided by Brusfri is ultimately loads better than not having any noise reduction at all. With denoisers – and every audio processor – it's the sound that counts, but one other brilliant thing about Brusfri is its interface. It's responsive, it's easy to use, and it's friendly for denoising n00bs. Oh, and iOS producers, look no further – Brusfri is also available on iPad, iPhone and iPod Touch as an AUV3 processor plugin.

www.klevgrand.se

VERDICT 8.1

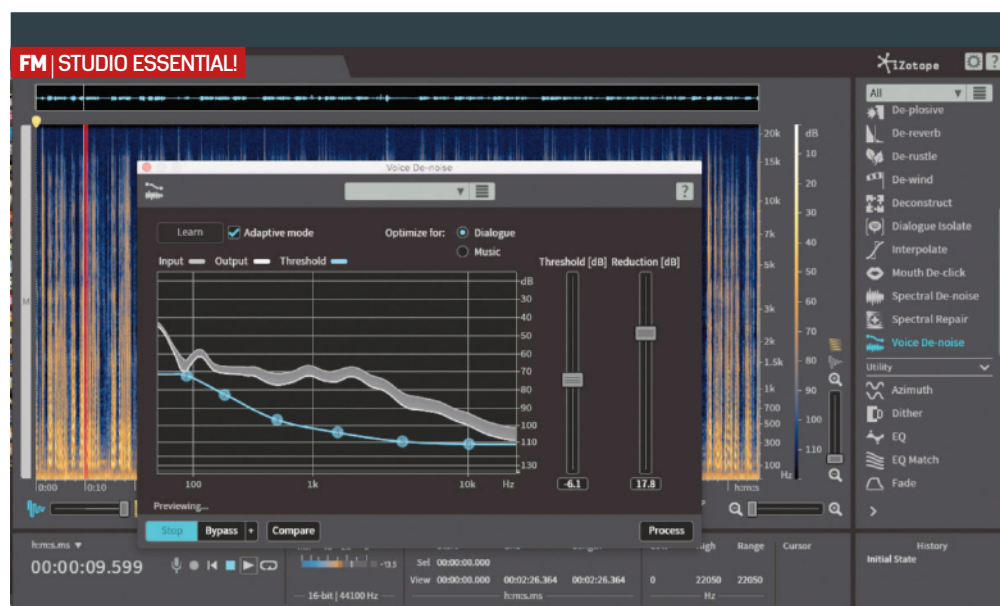


Cockos Reafir \$60

Only available in Cockos' Reaper DAW, Reafir (FIR as in Finite Impulse Response) can also work as an EQ, a compressor or a gate. In Subtract mode, it takes time to learn the input signal before turning into a processor tuned to remove your noise. While we'd like to use a more diplomatic term, Reafir is, bluntly, old, and it's not the most high-end denoiser out there, introducing some artefacts especially if your signal's heavy on the noise. But if a simple denoiser for a quick and easy job is all you're looking for, and you're also eye-ing up the rest of the Reaper package, Reafir could be a decent excuse for getting it. At \$60, a non-commercial licence for Reaper won't get you in any trouble with the irascible bank manager, either.

www.cockos.com

VERDICT 5.9



iZotope RX 6 from \$129

Now at version 6, RX is one of the most trusted audio editors out there, and with a choice of denoising processors made by the DSP dons at iZotope, there's very little that can stump it. The Voice De-noise and Spectral De-noise modules make short work of lightly noised sources, and their performance on heavily-soiled audio would make a '70s producer evacuate at once. RX's denoising modules do an alarmingly good job at doing away with unwanted sounds, but the fact that they're joined by many other equally supercompetent essential audio cleanup tools inside an easy-to-use interface – with recording capabilities – makes an RX licence a total no-brainer. That is, as long as you've got a studio sugar daddy or enough of your own money to send one of your cars into space.

www.timespace.com

VERDICT 9.7