

## Software Pultec Emulations

We gather together a mere six versions of this frequently-emulated EQ to compare and contrast, while bringing you some Pultec history along the way



## Universal Audio Pultec Passive EQ Collection

£229

First created in 1951 by Ollie Summerland and Gene Shenk, the original Pulse Techniques Program Equalizer EQP-1A, or more simply, 'Pultec', used overbuilt transformers and tube amplifiers to bring its boosts and cuts together, resulting in an EQ with one of the most sought-after sounds, even in the digital age.

Running as a UAD 2.0 plugin for owners of the requisite hardware, Universal Audio's emulation models the 'definitive' Pultec, which added a 20Hz setting to the 30, 60 and 100 options for its two low shelves, plus a separate frequency selector and on/off switch for the high-shelf attenuation filter.

The sound, response and tone are near-as-dammit recreations of the original unit, and its highly-prized tone, for a fraction of the price of the hardware. Alongside the EQP-1A emulation, you also get UA's MEQ-5 Mid-Range Equalizer and HLF-3C Low/High cut filters. All three are true timepieces, bringing that famous Pultec sound to as many instances as your UAD hardware can support.

[www.uaudio.com](http://www.uaudio.com)

**VERDICT 9.3**



### OverTone DSP PTH-2A £12

This wallet-friendly Pultec is up with the best of them in its painstaking modelling of the EQP-1A. Low-shelf boosts extend to +12dB at max, and cuts go down to -18dB, extending well into the midrange like the original. The high boost and attenuation controls offer more dramatic gain changes. This one, as all the others in this round-up, is also modelling the 'definitive' Pultec with 20Hz and attenuation selector. In operation, PTH-2A brings the musical cuts and boosts (even at extreme settings) that the original hardware is famous for, and sweeping the frequency of the High Boost is simply seamless, which is helpful. You can also bypass the EQ, leaving just the tube amp sauce in the signal. An excellent, CPU-friendly Pultec you can use again and again in one project, unlike an original hardware version!

[www.overtonedsp.co.uk](http://www.overtonedsp.co.uk)

**VERDICT 8.9**



### Acustica Audio Purple P-1 €119

One big Pultec feature is the 'low-end trick'. As the two low shelves and high bands rest at slightly different frequencies (and low attenuation is broader than low boost), you can boost and cut at once, for a boost with a dip straight after. This is present in all the Pultecs here, but, built on Acustica's Core9 technology, this emulation goes further than the original EQP-1A by offering an Input Trim control, which controls both a rise in level before the EQ circuit and a compensatory reduction in level after it, making your processing a little grittier when raised – useful for adding 'tube drive' to a classic setup. Purple's GUI isn't seamless, with some clicks when moving parameters, but these are minimal.

[www.acusticaudio.com](http://www.acusticaudio.com)

**VERDICT 8.7**



### Ignite Amps PTEq-X FREE

PTEq-X doesn't just emulate the EQP-1A – it also takes on the MEQ-5 mid-range EQ and HLF-3C high- and low-cut filters in the same package. And the bang-for-buck ratio works out at somewhere around infinity!

As for the EQP-1A part of this plugin, the low frequency selector includes 45Hz and 150Hz settings, helping you refine that scoop a little better than the original could. Three frequency settings have also been added to the high-shelf attenuation (6, 8 and 15k), and a 5kHz setting to the high bell. You can also switch the tube emulation off.

PTEq-X doesn't just give you loads, for free – it also emulates the original Pultec sound to a T. The only gripe here is some clicking when changing settings.

[www.igniteamps.com](http://www.igniteamps.com)

**VERDICT 9.2**



### Lindell PEX-500 \$99

Pultec EQP-1A hasn't just been emulated in software. Lindell's PEX-500 hardware models the legendary EQ in your rack, and in a meta move, they've made a plugin emulation of that!

PEX-500 just offers three low frequencies, staying true to earlier Pultecs, but adding some excellent new features – the Analog switch lets you engage or disengage the tube 'circuitry', while the EQ switch helps you isolate just that warming saturation. PEX-500 also scores points for its Mid/Side capability, which lets you commit to separate settings for those two channels. A great update to a classic sound.

[www.lindellplugins.com](http://www.lindellplugins.com)

**VERDICT 9.2**



## PSP NobleQ \$69

NobleQ is a real Pultec Plus, adding well-thought-out features that enable a more modern, slightly more clinical take on the original design. First of all, there's a high-pass filter added into the control set. Next, the low shelves now have a whopping 13 frequency settings, helping you fine-tune the scoop when performing the low-end trick – a great idea, and one that we miss when moving back onto other designs.

The high bell filter can now cut as well as boost, as the high shelving filter can boost as well as cut – again at 13 frequency settings, this time from 5kHz all the way to 40kHz. The boost setting on the high shelf provides less gain, and when mixed with the highest frequencies, this introduces a lovely musical sheen, adding extra air where you need it. Lastly, you can switch from Valve to Clear mode, or just leave these characterful circuits out altogether.

These perfect Pultec tweaks really update the unit for today's producers.

[www.pspaudioware.com](http://www.pspaudioware.com)

**VERDICT 9.6**