Arturia 3 Compressors You'll Actually Use $199

Arturia turn to compressors for their next effects bundle. **Si Truss** feels the squeeze

CONTACT **WHO:** Arturia **WEB:** arturia.com **KEY FEATURES** **FORMATS:** VST 2.4, VST 3, AAX, AU, NKS-compatible. **PRICING:** full bundle $199. Compressors also available individually priced $99, or as a package alongside previous filter and preamp bundles

After years in the synth emulation game, Arturia broke into the world of plugin effects last year with two bundles of outboard emulations – covering classic filters and preamps – under their new 'Effects You'll Actually Use' branding. Now they are adding a third bundle to the range, taking inspiration from vintage compressor hardware.

As with the previous bundles, we get three processors, each of which is based on a classic studio effect. These are the FET-76, emulating the UREI 1176, the VCA-65, based on the dbx 165A, and TUBE-STA, which takes its cues from the Gates STA-Level. The latter is certainly the most interesting; both the 1176 and 165A have been replicated on multiple occasions, but the STA-Level will likely be new to most producers.

The original hardware was a US-made valve compressor popular in the broadcast world and larger recording studios in the '50s and '60s. For recording applications, the STA is prized for its non-linear attack and release times, which can prove very musical when used on the right material. Of the three emulations, the STA is the least versatile but the most characterful. Arturia brag about its effect on bass sounds, and it does do a great job of adding extra body to low-mid sounds. I particularly enjoyed the way it sounded on bass-heavy 808-style drums and arpeggiated synth basslines. It's easily pushed into subtle saturation, which adds a lovely bit of extra 'oomph' to sounds.

The UREI and dbx emulations are a little more common. The dbx 165A is perhaps a little less frequently seen than the ubiquitously-emulated 160, but the 1176 has appeared in software form more times than we'd care to count, with the likes of Slate, Softube, Waves and more all offering up variations. There are online forums where you can read multiple pages of debate on the authenticity of the emulations – but to my ear Arturia's compare favourably with other plugin emulations in side-by-side tests.

As for the bold claims about usability, Arturia presumably base these on the extra features, which add considerably to the functionality of the original hardware. Each plugin adds a comprehensive sidechain section, capable of accepting internal or external signals, with EQ, filters and transient shapers for the sidechain signal along with multiple detection modes including mid/side varieties. Each also has input and output gain linking, plus a wet/dry control for easy parallel processing. The resizable UI for each is sleek and well-designed too. The photo-like graphics won't be to everyone's taste, but the expandable 'advanced' control section is a convenient space saver and Arturia's preset browser and smart tutorials make these effects easy to get to grips with.

Are these additional features enough to tempt producers away from their existing vintage-style compressor plugins? That's debatable; unlike Arturia's filter bundle, which added genuinely unique sequencing tools, the extra sidechaining here probably won't have quite such a big impact on your creative workflow. I do find these plugins convenient and nicely designed though. The STA-emulation in particular is an excellent addition to your plugin arsenal. **FM**

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FM VERDICT

8.8

Three worthy additions to the crowded compressor emulation market, with a few modern tricks up their sleeves