

Vocoder plugins

Do the robot – and much more – with this handful of processors based around that blue-sky, evergreen vocal effect



MeldaProduction MVocoder €49

A versatile and powerful vocoder with up to 100 bands, MVocoder works as an effects plugin (VST/AU/AAX) inserted on your Carrier signal by default, with a sidechain input adding your modulator into the mix, although you can swap the carrier and modulator signals at will. The number of bands trades off quality against CPU, while the original mod and carrier signals can be blended back into the mix.

MVocoder does vocoding, dual vocoding (carrier modulates modulator signal in parallel), ring mod, two types of morphing (crossfading but more combinatory), exciting and inversion. That's a far more creative possibility than you'd get in a straight 20th-century vocoder, and it's good to see some new modes of inspiration added here. Other controls include envelope times, 'Whitening' and Formant Shift, a band matrix, and other perks. Hours of fun to go as deep as you please, this is a hella solid modern vocoder.

meldaproduction.com

VERDICT 9.2



XILS-lab XILS 5000 €149

This recreation of the EMS Vocoder 5000 goes deep on modelling the original circuits – pin-style band matrix and all – and adds a few of its own into the mix as well. The synthesis here is deep, complex and... well, very '70s. If you're looking for a modern, digital, clarity-focused vocoder, this one ain't it. But you can indeed pipe your own carrier signal through those retro circuit emulations, and the result is just as modern as you'd expect from any decent vocoder.

This is a timepiece vocoder specifically meant for recreating the classic effect. As such, you'll find features like voice smoothing, LFOs, FM (better named vibrato), 22 graphic EQ bands, frequency and pitchshifting... the list goes on. While the modelling quality is excellent, the practical usage of the onboard tones don't get much further than a Wendy Carlos *Switched On* nostalgia trip, but if that's what you want it for, this is a charming little tribute to vintage vox.

xils-lab.com

VERDICT 8.6



TAL-Vocoder Free

This 11-band Vocoder effect (VST/AU/AAX) is '80s all over, thanks to the onboard synth featuring Pulse, Saw, Sub and Noise oscillators, with a slider for each. Other controls here include Mono/Poly, Portamento, Oscillator Sync, Octave, Tuning and Fine Tuning for the Pulse and Saw oscillators. This onboard synth is what gives TAL-Vocoder its classic '80s kick, which sounds great despite the limited synthesis controls, but there's far more tone on

offer if you pipe another audio channel through the sidechain input.

You can connect an external audio signal through a sidechain routing to get more tone, although for best results, using Input Mode, the routing is complicated to set up in your DAW, requiring the carrier to be in the left channel and the modulator on the right.

Other perks include that 11-band EQ, Ess Volume for the vocal signal, Release control for the modulated sound, and a Harmonics control to excite the carrier a little more. Being a free plugin, this is a no-brainer, although the tone of its onboard synth is very particular, and the lack of controls and routing fiddliness when you want to pipe in two signals of your own make it less convenient. tal-software.com

VERDICT 8.1



Sonivox Vocalizer Pro

\$199

This sound resynthesiser is a vocoder-esque processor with the added benefit of being built not specifically for use on vocals. Said resynthesis comes via four discrete spectral synthesis modules, which can be run separately or as two pairs, and which contain Filter, LFO, and Pitch and Balance envelopes. The results are high-quality and inspirational, and the onboard system of snapshots and chords, accessed through two rows of eight pads, gives you more control. The workflow isn't intuitive, but once you've got your head around this effect's unique way of doing things – preferably through the manual, not the questionable Groove 3 video course sold via Sonivox's website for \$20 – Vocalizer Pro is a powerful way to reimagine your sounds.

sonivoxmi.com

VERDICT 8.9



iZotope VocalSynth 2

\$199

The ultimate toolkit for manipulating vocal sources, VocalSynth contains a Vocoder module as well as classic Talkbox, Polyvox, Compuvox and Biovox processors for getting more than just classic vocoding sounds. All five modules can be switched on or off to be used in any combination, and cooked to your liking in the advanced view (presets are available per module). The vocoder itself is powerful, and spans rigid one-note sounds to interesting digital scapes, while the rest of the modules show there's an even bigger world of tone waiting below the surface.

But wait, there's more! You can also sidechain your own carrier sounds into VocalSynth using the sidechain operation mode, using the five modules as effects. And then there's the actual effects: seven great-quality effects processors that sit on VocalSynth's output, giving out great distortion, delay, filtering, ring mod, complex beat-repeat-style stuttering and lots more.

VocalSynth is a forward-looking processor that has pretty much every effect you'd associate with wild vocals. Most of the transformation happens with just a few parameters, with the rest being just subtle sonic gravy, but it's all very, very tasty.

izotope.com

VERDICT 9.0