

## Introduction

This manual contains complete documentation for FabFilter Pro-Q in printer-friendly format. All information in this manual is also accessible via the Help button in FabFilter Pro-Q's user interface.

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## About FabFilter Pro-Q

The equalizer is by far the most used tool in audio recording, mixing and mastering. That's why there are probably around 1001 EQ plug-ins available. But the strange thing is: most of them don't meet top quality standards by far! Most just lack sound quality and the ones that do sound okay, often have poorly designed interfaces that obstruct your workflow and creativity.

Now here's where we come in. FabFilter Pro-Q gives you the best of both worlds: the highest possible sound quality, and an innovative interface that is designed to help you get 'that' sound quickly and easily.



Key features include up to 24 separate EQ bands (bell, low cut, low shelf, high shelf and high cut), state-of-the-art filter algorithms with precise analog modelling and unlimited internal headroom, zero-latency or linear-phase processing, mid/side support, customizable stereo placement for every band (stereo, left/mid or right/side), 6 dB, 12 dB, and 30 dB display ranges and the easiest yet most powerful EQ interface ever.

FabFilter Pro-Q is available in VST, VST3, AU (Audio Units), AAX Native and AudioSuite formats (all both 64-bit and 32-bit), as well as RTAS (32-bit only), for Mac OS X and Windows.

### Windows requirements:

32-bit: Windows 8, 7, Vista or XP

64-bit: Windows 8, 7 or Vista (x64)

VST 2/3 host or Pro Tools

### Mac OS X requirements:

32-bit: OS X 10.5 or higher

64-bit: OS X 10.6 or higher

AU or VST 2/3 host or Pro Tools

Intel processor

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### See Also

[Using FabFilter Pro-Q](#)

[Acknowledgements](#)

## Quick start

The installer will copy the FabFilter Pro-Q plug-in into the common VST, VST 3, AU (OS X only) and Pro Tools plug-in folders on your computer. On Mac OS X, the global plug-in folders in /Library/Audio/Plug-Ins are used.

In most cases, your host will then recognize the plugin automatically. However, if the instructions below do not work, see [Manual installation](#) instead.

- **Cubase**

Choose an empty insert slot, for example in the Mixer, and select FabFilter Pro-Q from the menu that appears. To use the MIDI features in Pro-Q, create a new MIDI track and set its output to the Pro-Q instance you have just created. (The VST 3 version of Pro-Q can be found in the EQ section.)

- **Logic Pro**

Choose an empty insert slot on one of your audio tracks, instrument tracks or buses and select FabFilter Pro-Q from the pop-up menu. You will find FabFilter Pro-Q in the *Audio Units* -> *FabFilter* section (named FF Pro-Q).

- **Ableton Live**

In Session view, select the track you would like to place FabFilter Pro-Q on, for example by clicking the track name. At the left top of Ableton Live's interface, click on the Plug-in Device Browser icon (third icon from the top). From the plug-ins list, double-click FabFilter/FabFilter Pro-Q, or drag it onto the track.

- **Pro Tools**

Choose an empty insert slot on one of your audio tracks, instrument tracks or buses and select FabFilter Pro-Q from the pop-up menu in the EQ section.

To begin, just open the plug-in and double-click in the display to create new EQ bands. Enjoy!

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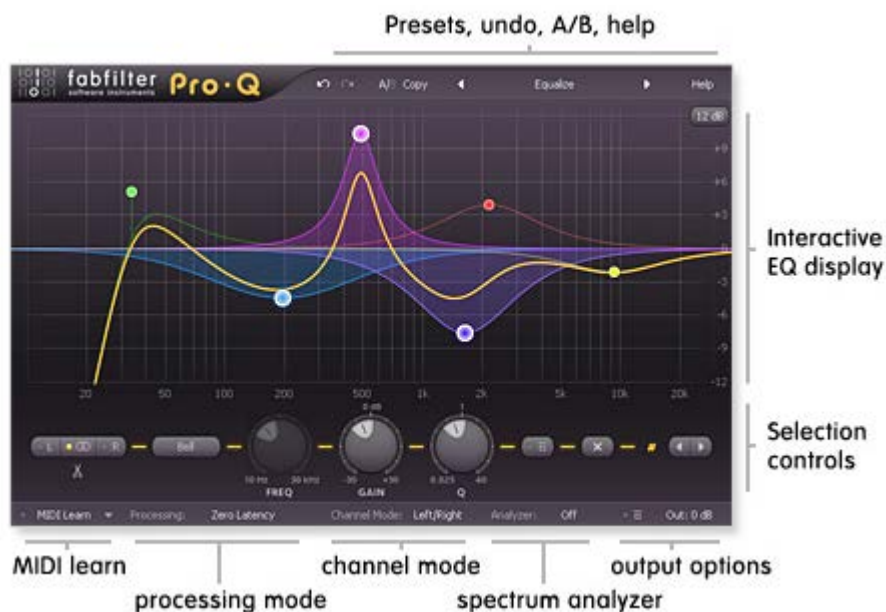
Next: [FabFilter Pro-Q overview](#)

### See Also

[Overview](#)

## Overview

The interface of FabFilter Pro-Q is simple and straightforward. The top part of the interface consists of the interactive EQ display that lets you add and edit EQ bands. The selection controls below the display change the settings of the currently selected EQ bands. The bottom bar offers advanced features like the processing mode (zero latency or linear phase), channel mode (stereo or mid/side), a spectrum analyzer, global bypass and output level and panning.



- **Interactive EQ display**  
The interactive EQ display shows you in a glance what's going on and lets you easily create and edit EQ bands. See [Interactive EQ display](#).
- **Selection controls**  
The controls below the EQ display adjust the parameters of the currently selected curves in the display. See [Editing EQ bands](#).
- **Processing mode**  
FabFilter Pro-Q can work in both zero-latency mode or in various linear-phase modes. See [Linear-phase processing](#).
- **Channel mode**  
Each EQ band either works on both stereo channels, or on a single channel. The Channel mode parameter in the bottom bar toggles between left/right and mid/side processing. See [Stereo options](#).
- **Spectrum analyzer**  
The Analyzer button enables or disables the built-in spectrum analyzer that lets you visually judge the effect of the equalizer on the incoming signal. See [Spectrum Analyzer](#).
- **Output options**  
On the far right of the bottom bar, you can bypass the entire plug-in and adjust the output level and panning. See [Output options](#).
- **MIDI learn**  
MIDI Learn lets you easily associate any MIDI controller with any plug-in parameter. See [MIDI Learn](#).
- **Presets, undo, A/B, help**  
With the preset buttons, you can easily browse through the factory presets or save your own settings so you can re-use them in other songs. The Undo, Redo, A/B and Copy buttons at the top of the plug-in interface enable you to undo your changes and switch between different states of the plug-in. Finally, the Help menu provides access to help and version information. See [Loading presets](#) and [Undo, redo, A/B switch](#).

Next: [Knobs](#)

See Also  
[Quick start](#)

## Knobs

It is easy to control FabFilter Pro-Q's parameters with the large round knobs. They will light up when you move the mouse cursor around to indicate that you can adjust them. The moment you move the mouse cursor over a knob, a parameter value display will pop up, which shows the name and the current value of the parameter.



All knobs support four ways of control:

1. **Vertical mode**  
Click on the center area of a knob and drag up or down to rotate it. The knob reacts to the speed with which you are dragging, so if you move the mouse slowly, you make precise adjustments.
2. **Rotate mode**  
Grab the arrow of the knob and drag it around. By moving the mouse cursor further away from the knob while dragging it, you can make precise adjustments.
3. **Mouse wheel mode**  
Perhaps the easiest way to make adjustments is by using the mouse wheel when you hover over a knob. This mode works for all the knobs and possible panning rings. (On Windows, you might need to click in the plug-in interface first to make sure it is the active window.)
4. **Text entry mode**  
Double-click on a knob to enter an exact value using the keyboard.

### Tips

- To reset a knob to its default position, hold down the *Ctrl* key (Windows) or *Command* key (Mac OS X) and click the knob once.
- To fine-tune a value when using vertical drag mode or the mouse wheel, hold down the *Shift* key while dragging or moving the mouse wheel.
- In text entry mode, there are several handy shortcuts. With frequency values, you can type e.g. '1k' to set the value to 1000 Hz. With dB values, you can type e.g. '2x' to get +6 dB (the value that corresponds to two times louder). With all values, you can also type a percentage (e.g. '50%' will put a knob exactly in the middle position).
- Pro Tools note: the RTAS/AS and AAX versions of our plug-ins implement the default Pro Tools keyboard shortcuts for fine tune (*Ctrl*+drag on Windows, *Command*+drag on Mac OS X) and reset to default (*Alt*+click).
- Sometimes, knobs in our plug-in interfaces are linked: these be adjusted simultaneously by holding down the *Alt* key while dragging on one of them. For example, an output level and input level setting of a plug-in could be adjusted simultaneously (in the opposite direction) this way.

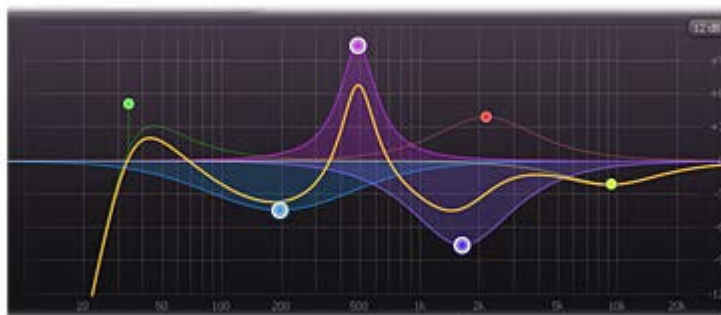
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Next: [Interactive EQ display](#)

See Also  
[Overview](#)

## Interactive EQ display

The large display shows all EQ bands and lets you easily create new bands and edit them. The thick yellow curve shows the overall frequency response of the equalizer.



- To **add** a new EQ band, simply click on the yellow overall curve and drag it up or down. Alternatively, double-click or Ctrl-click (Command-click on Mac OS X) on the display background. The shape of newly created curves is determined automatically depending on where you click. See also [Editing EQ bands](#).
- Click the dot on an EQ band to **select** it.
- Hold down *Ctrl* (*Command* on Mac OS X) and click another dot to **select multiple bands**. Hold down *Shift* and click a dot to **select a consecutive range** of bands.
- Click and drag on the display background to **select adjacent bands** by dragging a rectangle around them.
- Click once on the display background to **deselect** all bands.

Once you have one or more EQ bands selected, the display highlights the shapes of the selected bands. The easiest way to adjust them is simply by dragging them around:

- Click and drag a selected dot to adjust the **frequency** and **gain** of all selected bands. If you have multiple bands selected, the gain of all selected bands will be scaled relative to each other.
- Use the mouse wheel to adjust the **Q setting** of the selected bands, making them narrower or wider. This works while dragging or when the mouse pointer is above a curve dot. Alternatively, hold down *Ctrl* (*Command* on Mac OS X) while dragging vertically to adjust the Q.
- Hold down *Shift* while dragging to **fine-tune** the settings of the selected bands.
- Hold down *Alt* while dragging to **constrain** to horizontal adjustments (frequency) or vertical adjustments (gain or Q, depending on the *Ctrl/Command* key).
- Hold down *Alt* and click the dot on an EQ band once to toggle its **bypass** state (enabling or disabling the band).
- Hold down *Ctrl+Alt* (*Command+Alt* on Mac OS X) and click the dot on an EQ band once to change its **shape**. See [Editing EQ bands](#).

In the top-right corner of the display, there is a drop-down button to choose the **display range**: +/- 3 dB, 6 dB, 12 dB or 30 dB. When you are dragging a curve outside the current range of the display, the range will expand automatically as needed.

### Tips

- If you right-click on the dot for an EQ band, a pop-up menu will appear with various options. This is a quick way to modify the EQ band while you're working in the display.
- It is possible to turn off the automatic adjustment of the display range by clicking **Auto-Adjust Display Range** in the Help menu.
- Even though frequencies above 20 kHz are generally inaudible, the display extends to 30 kHz so you can put filters above this limit. The left part of the filter, extending into the audible frequency spectrum, still affects the sound. This gives you even more possibilities to shape the frequency response of the equalizer just the way you need it.

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Next: [Editing EQ bands](#)

### See Also

[Overview](#)  
[Interactive EQ display](#)

## Editing EQ bands

The selection controls below the [interactive EQ display](#) show the current settings of the selected EQ bands and enable you to adjust them precisely.



From left to right, the following parameters are available:

- The **L/stereo/R** buttons control which channels are affected by the selected bands. See [Stereo options](#).
- The **shape** parameter selects the filter shape of the selected bands:
  1. Bell, the traditional parametric EQ shape and probably the most versatile of them all
  2. Low Shelf, to boost or attenuate low frequencies
  3. Low Cut, to cut all sound below the filter frequency
  4. High Shelf, to boost or attenuate high frequencies
  5. High Cut, to cut all sound above the filter frequency
  6. Notch, to cut a small section of the spectrum

When Low Cut or High Cut is selected, a **slope** parameter appears below the shape parameter that sets the steepness of the filter from 6 dB/octave to 48 dB/octave.

Note that you also change the shape of an EQ band by *Ctrl+Alt*-clicking it (*Command+Alt* on Mac OS X) in the display.

- The **frequency** knob sets the frequency of the selected band between 5 Hz and 30 kHz. If multiple bands are selected, this knob is disabled because it would otherwise set the frequency of all bands to the same value.
- The **gain** knob sets the gain in dB of the selected bands between -30 and +30 dB. If the Low Cut or High Cut filter shape is selected, this parameter is not used.
- The **Q** knob sets the bandwidth of the selected bands, widening or narrowing them. Because there are different interpretations of Q values in various EQ plug-ins and scientific papers, we have chosen the value 1 to correspond to the average bandwidth. For the shelf filters, the internal Q values are chosen such that they result in a good range of shelf shapes. Keep this in mind when trying to reproduce the filter shapes of another EQ plug-in in Pro-Q: the interpretation of the Q values might not be the same.

The 6 dB/octave variant of the Low Cut and High Cut filters does not have an adjustable Q setting.

- The **bypass** button lets you easily bypass the selected EQ bands. Note that you can also bypass an EQ band by *Alt*-clicking it in the display. While an EQ band is bypassed, it is dimmed in the display and a red light glows in the bypass button.
- The **delete** button removes the selected EQ bands. If you have accidentally deleted some bands, you can easily restore them using the [Undo](#) button at the top of the plug-in interface.

Finally, the **previous/next** buttons at the far right let you easily advance the selection to the adjacent band in the display. To the left of these buttons, the band number of the currently selected EQ band is shown to help you to identify this band in the host when automating EQ parameters.

### Tips

- When multiple bands are selected, adjusting the gain or Q knobs will set the gain and Q for all selected bands to the same value. In contrast, when you drag multiple bands in the display, this modifies the frequency, gain and Q settings in parallel without setting them all to the same value.
- Double-click a knob to enter the value directly using the keyboard. See [Knobs](#) for more information.

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Next: [Solo](#)

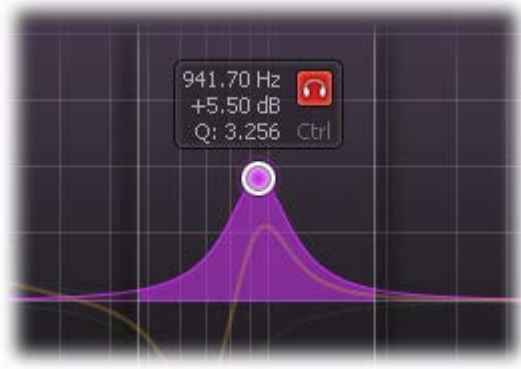
### See Also

[Overview](#)  
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## Solo

When you move the mouse cursor near to an EQ dot, a parameter value display pops up showing the current parameter values for the corresponding EQ band.



Click and hold the **solo button** (with the headphones icon) to enter **solo** mode for the current EQ band. The other EQ bands will dim, just like the yellow overall curve. Simply **drag** the solo button to change the frequency of the band.

In solo mode, you don't hear the effect of the EQ band itself, but instead you will hear the part of the frequency spectrum that is being affected by that band. Of course, the frequency range depends on the frequency and Q settings, and is visualized in the display as well.

When using solo mode with **Low Cut** or **High Cut** bands, you will hear the frequencies that are being cut away instead of the frequencies that pass, which helps you to determine whether you are cutting the right frequencies.

Generally, solo mode aims to expose the parts of the incoming audio that matter to the current EQ band, but that you can't hear just by listening to the regular EQ sound.

### Tips

- When using solo with **Bell** or **Notch** bands, hold down Ctrl (Cmd on Mac) while dragging to change the Q, which will of course affect the frequency range that you hear.
- You can turn the parameter value display on and off by clicking **Show EQ Parameter Display** in the Help menu.

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Next: [Stereo options](#)

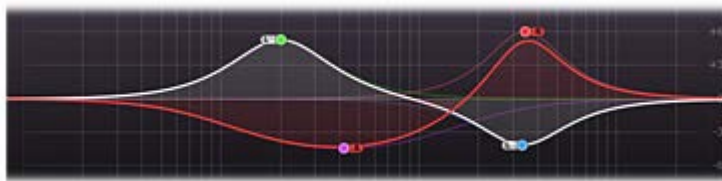
### See Also

[Overview](#)

[Interactive EQ display](#)

## Stereo options

One of FabFilter Pro-Q's best features is that it's very easy to equalize both stereo channels in a different way. This is a great way to surgically remove unwanted sound artefacts, or even to add stereo effects.



To make this even more powerful, Pro-Q offers both Left/Right and Mid/Side channel modes. In the default Left/Right mode, each EQ band works either on both stereo channels, or on the left or right channel only. This is controlled by the stereo options at the lefthand side of the [selection controls](#):



- Click the **L** or **R** button to let the selected bands affect only the left or right channel.
- Click the **stereo** button (in the middle) to let the selected bands affect both stereo channels.
- Click the **split** button underneath the buttons to duplicate the selected band, making two identical copies, one operating only on the left channel and one operating on the right channel. This makes it very easy to slightly adjust one of the channels.

As soon as one or more of the EQ bands are operating on a single channel, the EQ display switches to per-channel mode, where it shows two overall frequency response curves: a **white** one for the left channel, and a **red** one for the right channel, as shown by the picture above.

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## Mid/side mode

The **Channel Mode** parameter in the bottom bar switches between **Left/Right** and **Mid/Side** operation. In Mid/Side mode, the incoming stereo signal is converted into Mid (mono) and Side parts, which you can then easily filter independently. This is often an even better way to fix artefacts or modify stereo information because it represents the stereo signal in a more natural way.

In Mid/Side mode, everything works as described above, except that the stereo options above change to M/stereo/S buttons. In addition, the display shows the two overall frequency response curves in **white** (Mid) and **light blue** (Side) so you know at a glance in which mode Pro-Q is currently operating.

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## Techniques

Independent channel equalization is very useful when dealing with stereo audio containing unbalanced frequency content over the stereo field. Let's say you want to combine a stereo drum recording with a stereo acoustic guitar recording. The drum recording contains more low-mid frequencies in the left channel (for example a low tom-tom), and more high frequencies in the right channel (like cymbals or a hi-hat). The guitar sound, recorded with a mic capturing the sound-board/hole panned left and one capturing the fretboard/neck panned right, might have similar frequencies as the drum recording, making it hard to combine them in a balanced way. By using independent left/right channel EQ-ing, it is possible to balance these elements so that they do not fight each other. Instead of EQ-ing the whole stereo track of the drums and guitars one can simply EQ where it is necessary to get the two elements to complement each other.

Mid/Side EQ is perhaps most commonly used to bring some stereo elements further up within a recording, either by cutting certain frequencies in the mid channel or by boosting the wanted frequency range in the side channel. It is great for adding a bit of depth to typical hard panned rock/heavy guitar recordings where you boost the "bite" frequency range of the guitars (around 2-4kHz) with a quite narrow eq. Combine this with cutting some of the "mud" away from the side channels will give the illusion of huge guitars that still sit well within a mix.

Independent Mid/Side equalization is also often used during mastering. For example, raising high frequencies in the Side channel can freshen up the sound, while a low-cut filter in the Mid channel can work very well to clear up the low end.

Consider using linear-phase processing when filtering both stereo channels (either in Left/Right or Mid/Side mode) differently to avoid introducing unwanted phase changes.

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## Mono operation

FabFilter Pro-Q can also work as a mono equalizer plug-in, but in this case the stereo options and the Channel Mode parameter are not available, of course.

When loading 'stereo' presets (containing EQ bands that work on e.g. the left or right channel) in the mono version of Pro-Q, all EQ bands are treated as if they work on the mono channel. You should be aware that this can sometimes yield unexpected results. For example, if a stereo preset contains two bands working on the left and right channels respectively, at the same frequency, with gain=+10 dB, this will result in a +20 dB peak in the mono version. Therefore it is best not to use any presets that use per-channel processing in the mono version of Pro-Q.

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Next: [Linear-phase processing](#)

See Also  
[Overview](#)



## Linear-phase processing

When filtering audio, traditional analog and digital filters always introduce phase problems. What happens is that the phase of different frequencies in the signal is changed in different ways. This can subtly change the sound (not necessarily in a bad way though). It does affect transients and it can make the sound less transparent.

Moreover, problems arise when you mix a filtered and phase-altered signal with another similar signal that has not been filtered, or that has been filtered in a different way. In this case, it is very likely that the different phase components of both signals won't match up properly and will cancel each other to some extent.

This situation can for example occur when mastering. It is quite common to apply an equalizer only to a part of the song, using crossfades at the beginning and end of the affected region. Because the phase information in the original and filtered parts is different, the fades won't work as intended.

**Linear-phase equalization** provides an answer to these problems. Linear-phase filters change the phase of the incoming signal in the same way for all frequencies. This ensures that no unwanted phase cancellation will take place, preserving transients and the transparency of your music.

However, linear-phase filters also have some disadvantages. First of all they introduce latency: the entire signal is delayed when passing through the plug-in. Longer latency means greater resolution when making low-frequency changes to the signal, but unfortunately this also can lead to the creation of 'pre-echoes' that can make low-frequency transients (e.g. a kick drum) lose their edge. Choosing the latency correctly is a compromise depending on the program material and your personal preference.

To give you the best of both worlds, FabFilter Pro-Q provides both **zero-latency** and various **linear-phase** processing modes. Apart from the differences discussed above, the EQ has the same frequency response in both modes.

To change the processing mode, use the **Processing** setting in the bottom bar of the interface.

- **Zero latency** mode is the default. While it introduces phase changes, it is CPU-efficient and doesn't result in any latency, so it is the best mode for e.g. live usage. Also, it's quite possible you might like the coloration introduced by the phase changes when mixing, for example.
- **Linear Phase - Low Latency** provides linear-phase processing with a minimal latency. Use only with low Q settings, or when only changing the mid-high part of the spectrum. With a sample rate of 44.1 kHz, it results in a total latency of 3072 samples (about 70 ms).
- **Linear Phase - Medium Latency** is a good compromise between low-frequency resolution and latency and we recommend to use this in general for linear-phase processing. The total latency is 6144 samples at a sample rate of 44.1 kHz (about 139 ms).
- **Linear Phase - High Latency** gives very good low-frequency resolution. If you need to use high Q settings when changing the low end of the spectrum, use this mode. The total latency is 12288 samples at a sample rate of 44.1 kHz (about 279 ms).
- **Linear Phase - Maximum Latency** results in even better low-frequency resolution at the expense of latency and possible pre-echo problems. The total latency here is 24576 samples at a sample rate of 44.1 kHz (about 557 ms).

To conclude, Pro-Q lets you freely choose between zero-latency and linear-phase processing as you go. If you use high Q settings combined with low-frequency filtering, you need to use a higher latency; if you only work on the mid-high frequencies, you can get by with a lower latency.

### Notes

- Not all hosts are capable of switching the latency of a plug-in dynamically. Cubase 5 and Logic Pro do this successfully. However, in Pro Tools HD it is necessary to deactivate and re-activate Pro-Q after changing the processing mode. Also, note that Pro Tools HD supports only a maximum latency of 4096 samples (on supported hardware), while Pro Tools LE doesn't support latency compensation at all.
- When working with different sample rates, the latency in samples of the various linear-phase modes can change to give you approximately the same low-frequency resolution (and the same latency in ms).
- Due to Pro-Q's advanced filter design, the CPU usage is very low, even when using up to 24 EQ bands, and it doesn't change much with the different linear-phase processing modes. On the other hand, the latency might be higher than in other plug-ins.

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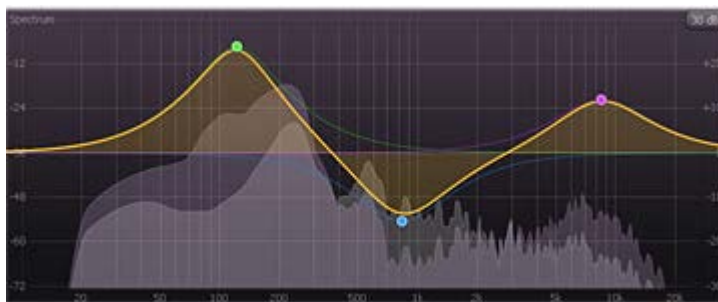
Next: [Spectrum analyzer](#)

### See Also

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[Interactive EQ display](#)

## Spectrum analyzer

To help you judge the effect of the combined EQ bands on the incoming audio signal, FabFilter Pro-Q includes a powerful real-time frequency analyzer.



The spectrum analyzer is controlled by the **Analyzer** menu in the bottom bar.

- **Off** turns the spectrum analyzer off so it doesn't consume any CPU power.
- **Pre-EQ** turns the spectrum analyzer on and connects it to the incoming audio signal before it is modified.
- **Post-EQ** turns the spectrum analyzer on and connects it to the outgoing audio signal, after all the EQ bands have been applied. Note that the [global bypass](#) parameter is ignored by the Post-EQ mode: if global bypass is active, the analyzer will still show the signal after having been filtered by all EQ bands.
- **Pre+Post** turns the spectrum analyzer on, showing both the spectrum of the incoming audio signal and the outgoing audio signal at the same time.
- The **Resolution** submenu selects how precise the spectrum analyzer works. Higher resolution settings allow more precision in the low-frequency area, but because more incoming samples are needed to calculate a single spectrum, dynamic changes are less clearly visible. The **Low** value corresponds to a resolution of 1024 points, **Medium** to 2048, **High** to 4096, and **Maximum** to 8192 points.
- The **Speed** submenu selects the release speed of the spectrum. A fast release shows dynamic changes more clearly, while a slow release gives you more time to examine the spectrum before it disappears. Higher resolution settings generally work better with slower release speeds.

If the spectrum analyzer is enabled, a separate gain scale is shown at the lefthand side of the EQ display, ranging from -72 to 0 dB.

### Notes

- When skipping through presets, the current analyzer settings are not changed, but they are saved in songs.
- By default, the spectrum analyzer is off. If you would like it to be on by default, set the desired mode for the analyzer in the bottom bar, and then [overwrite the Default Setting preset](#). Now all parameter values you just saved, including the analyzer mode, are used as the default setup for any new Pro-Q instances.

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Next: [Output options](#)

### See Also

[Overview](#)  
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## Output options

At the righthand side of the bottom bar in the interface, FabFilter Pro-Q contains a set of global output level and bypass parameters.



- The **Output Gain** parameter lets you adjust the output level between minus infinity and +36 dB. You can use this to correct any overall level change that the EQ bands might introduce. Note that FabFilter Pro-Q features unlimited internal headroom so it won't clip internally at any level. You only need to be concerned about any clipping that might occur after the signal has left Pro-Q.
- The **Output Pan** parameter lets you change the relative levels of the left and right audio channels. When [Mid/Side mode](#) is active, it adjusts the relative levels of the mid and side channels instead.
- You can bypass the entire plug-in with the **Global Bypass** toggle button to the left of the output level button. While most hosts already provide the ability to bypass plug-ins, our internal global bypass feature is guaranteed to work correctly in [linear-phase mode](#) (compensating for the latency of the plug-in) and also applies soft bypassing to avoid clicks. While the plug-in is bypassed, the EQ display dims and a red light glows in the bypass button itself.
- The **output level meter** at the far right of the bottom bar shows the current output level, together with a clipping indicator that lights up red if the output signal has exceeded 0 dB. Click on the meter to reset it. You can hide/show the meter by clicking **Show Output Level Meter** in the Help menu.

Note that FabFilter Pro-Q has unlimited internal headroom and will never clip itself: the clipping indicator merely warns against possible clipping during further processing of the output signal.

### Tips

- You can directly adjust the output gain by clicking and dragging the output button vertically, so there is no need to click it first to view the output knobs.
- When the output knobs are visible, you can double-click them to be able to enter a value directly using the keyboard.
- You can hide/show the small output level meter by clicking **Show Output Level Meter** in the Help menu.

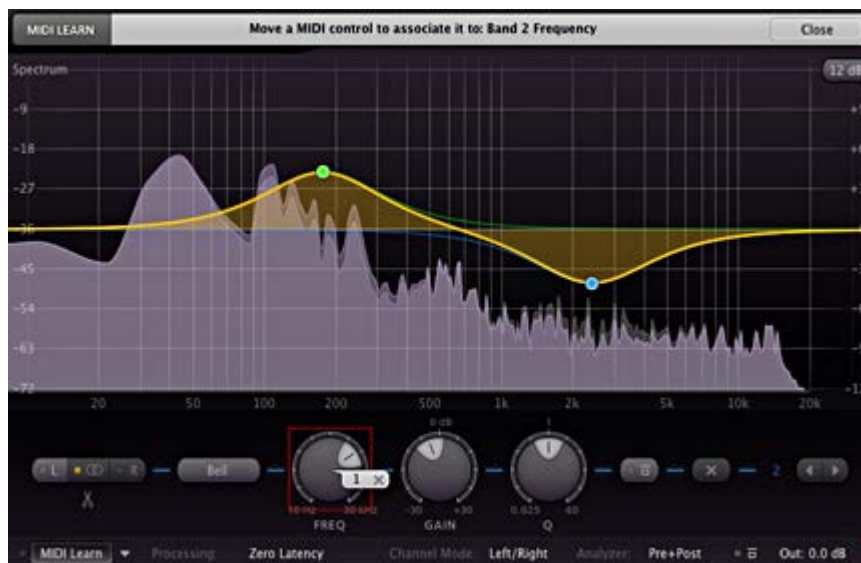
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Next: [MIDI learn](#)

**See Also**  
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## MIDI Learn

Controlling FabFilter Pro-Q's parameters directly with MIDI is very easy using the MIDI Learn feature. With MIDI Learn, you can associate any MIDI controller with any parameter.



Click the **MIDI Learn** button in the bottom bar to enter MIDI Learn mode. The interface dims and the parameters that can be controlled are highlighted. Each parameter has a small text balloon that displays the associated controller number. Now do the following to associate a controller number with a parameter:

1. Touch the control of the desired parameter in the interface that you wish to control. A red square will mark the chosen parameter.
2. Adjust the slider or knob on your MIDI keyboard or MIDI controller that you want to associate with that parameter.

That's it! The parameter will now be controlled with the MIDI controller. You can now go back to step 1 to associate a different parameter. Note that there is no warning when you associate a different knob with a controller number that is already used. It will just be replaced.

To exit MIDI Learn mode, click the MIDI Learn button again, or click Close at the top of the interface.

Click the small menu drop-down button next to the MIDI Learn button to access the **MIDI Learn menu**:

- **Enable MIDI**

This globally turns MIDI control of parameters on or off: useful in hosts that automatically send all MIDI events on a track to all effect plug-ins associated with that track as well.

- **Clear**

This submenu shows all parameter associations and lets you delete individual associations or clear all associations in one step.

- **Revert**

Reverts to the last saved MIDI mapping (or the state when the plug-in was started).

- **Save**

Saves the current MIDI mapping so Revert will go back to this state. The current mapping is automatically saved when closing the plug-in.

## Routing MIDI to effect plug-ins

For MIDI Learn to work properly, the plug-in needs to actually receive MIDI of course. Depending on your host, it can be quite difficult to route MIDI data to effect plug-ins. Here's how to do it in the most important hosts:

- **Logic Pro**

Instead of adding FabFilter Pro-Q to one of the insert slots, create a new **Instrument Track**, and click on the Instrument slot. Then choose **AU MIDI-controlled Effects** > FabFilter > FF Pro-Q. Now, the plug-in receives MIDI. To get audio into the plug-in, click the **'Side Chain'** drop down menu in Logic's plug-in header and choose the actual input track. Next, you can mute that original track, so you only hear the audio through the plug-in. The only downside is that plug-ins with an external side-chain cannot use it anymore.

- **Cubase**

Simply create a new **MIDI track** and set its output to the Pro-Q instance you would like to control via MIDI.

- **Pro Tools**

Create a new **MIDI track**. From the MIDI input drop down menu, choose your MIDI device (if not already selected) and from the MIDI output drop down menu, choose FabFilter Pro-Q -> channel 1 for the instance you would like to control.

- **Ableton Live**

First of all, create a new **MIDI track**. From the 'MIDI from' drop down menu, choose your MIDI device (if not already selected). Then, in the 'MIDI to' drop down menu, choose the Audio track that has FabFilter Pro-Q on it. NOTE: only the first plug-in on any track can receive MIDI!

Next: [Undo, redo, A/B switch](#)

See Also  
[Overview](#)

## Undo, redo, A/B switch

The Undo and Redo buttons at the top of the FabFilter Pro-Q interface enable you to easily undo changes you made to the plug-in. With the A/B feature, you can quickly switch between two different states of the plug-in.



- The **Undo** button at the left will undo the last change. Every change to the plug-in (such as dragging a knob or selecting a new preset) creates a new state in the undo history. The Undo button steps back through the history to restore the previous states of the plug-in.
- The **Redo** button cancels the last undo command. It steps forward through the history until you are back at the most recent plug-in state.
- The **A/B** button switches from A to B and back. Before switching, the current state of the plug-in is saved, so if you click this button twice, you are back at the first state. The button highlights the currently selected state (A or B). In the example above, the A state is active.
- The **Copy** button copies the active state to the inactive state. This marks the current state of the plug-in and allows you to go back to it easily with the A/B button. After clicking Copy, the button disables itself to show that both states are equal, so there is nothing to copy anymore.

### Notes

- If the plug-in parameters are changed without using the plug-in interface, for example with MIDI or automation, no new undo states are recorded.
- The Undo and Redo buttons will disable themselves if there is nothing to undo or redo.

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Next: [Loading presets](#)

### See Also

[Overview](#)



## Loading presets

FabFilter Pro-Q comes with a small set of basic presets, giving a good idea of what you can do.

- To load a preset, click the preset button. The presets menu will appear with all available presets. Click a menu item to load that preset. The currently selected preset is highlighted with check marks.
- To explore the presets one by one, click on the little arrow buttons to the left and right of the main preset button. This will load the previous or next preset in the menu.

The preset button shows the name of the current preset. If you have changed the preset by adjusting one or more parameters, the name is dimmed to indicate that this is not the original preset anymore.

### Tips

- The **Default Setting** preset is loaded automatically when FabFilter Pro-Q is started. To change the default settings, simply overwrite this preset by clicking **Options > Save As Default** in the presets menu.
  - To open a preset outside the [presets folder](#), click **Options > Open Other Preset**. This might be useful if someone sends you a preset by e-mail, for example.
  - If somehow the factory presets are lost or not installed properly, click **Options > Restore Factory Presets** in the preset menu to restore them.
- 

## MIDI Program Change and Bank Select

Loading a presets can also be done via MIDI, using Bank Select and Program Change messages. Click **Options > Enable MIDI Program Changes** in the preset menu to enable or disable this feature. When enabled, the corresponding bank/program numbers are shown in front of the preset name (for example: *(2/65) My Preset*). This means that you can load that preset by first sending a Bank Select message to select bank 2 and then sending a Program Change message to select program 65.

**Important:** All the presets in your preset folder are numbered automatically, starting with bank 0 and program 0. This way, you are able to access any of the presets via MIDI. However, this also means that when you add new presets to the menu, bank/program numbers of other presets might change. Be aware of this when recording program changes in a session!

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## Working with Pro Tools control surfaces

FabFilter Pro-Q supports the most important Pro Tools hardware control surfaces, such as Avid ICON D-Control and D-Command. Because you need a fixed number of bands in Pro-Q to use this effectively, we have added a *Flat 7 Bands* factory preset that can be used as your personal default preset. To set this preset as FabFilter Pro-Q's startup setting, load it once and then choose **Options > Save As Default** in the presets menu.

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Next: [Saving presets](#)

**See Also**  
[Overview](#)

## Saving presets

You can easily extend the included presets with new settings to build your own library of presets for FabFilter Pro-Q that you can reuse in various projects. This is also a good way to copy settings across multiple instances of FabFilter Pro-Q in a session.

To save the current setting as a preset, click the preset button, and then click *Save As*. A standard Save dialog will appear. Type a name for the new preset and click *Save* to finish.

In the Save dialog, you can also rename and delete existing presets and create a new folder to store presets in. New folders will show up as new categories in the preset menu. (On Mac OS X, this should be done with the Finder.)

See [How presets are stored](#) to determine the preset folder location and learn more about factory presets.

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Next: [How presets are stored](#)

### See Also

[Loading presets](#)

[Overview](#)

## How presets are stored

Presets for FabFilter Pro-Q are stored in separate files with the .ffp extension (for FabFilter Preset). All presets reside in subfolders in the main preset folder. The subfolders will show up as separate categories in the preset menu. You can also further divide the subfolders into categories.

You can manage the preset files just like other files on your computer. The easiest way to do this is in the Save dialog that appears if you are saving a preset. The preset menu will automatically reload itself with the changes when the dialog is closed.

Furthermore it is very easy to share your newly created presets with other users since FabFilter presets use the same file format on both Windows and Mac OS X.

The default location of the main preset folder is *My Documents\FabFilter\Pro-Q* for Windows, and *~/Library/Audio/Presets/FabFilter/FabFilter Pro-Q* for Mac OS X. To change this location, first copy all presets to the desired new location, and then click **Options > Change Preset Folder** in the preset menu and select the new folder.

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## Restoring factory presets

If you have accidentally lost the factory presets, you can easily restore them by clicking **Options > Restore Factory Presets** in the preset menu. This will install all factory presets again.

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Next: [Purchasing FabFilter Pro-Q](#)

### See Also

[Saving presets](#)  
[Overview](#)

## Purchasing FabFilter Pro-Q

Once you have downloaded and installed the evaluation copy of the FabFilter Pro-Q, you may evaluate it during 30 days. Every time you start the plug-in, you will see the following dialog:




While there are still days left, you can click **Evaluate** to start working with the plugin. If you want to keep using FabFilter Pro-Q after the evaluation period, you must buy a copy in the online FabFilter Shop by clicking the **Buy Now** button in the evaluation dialog.

- [Go to the FabFilter Shop and purchase FabFilter Pro-Q now](#) 

We accept credit cards from all major companies, check payments, wire payments, and PayPal. The FabFilter Shop uses secure connections and encryption: therefore your personal information is completely safe.

Within a few minutes after you have purchased your copy, you will receive an e-mail containing your personal license key. You use this license key to turn the evaluation copy into a fully registered version without the evaluation dialog and the 30-day trial restriction.

**Note:** If the evaluation period has expired but you didn't have the chance to properly evaluate the plug-in, you can request a new evaluation period by contacting us at [info@fabfilter.com](mailto:info@fabfilter.com) .

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Next: [Entering your license key](#)

### See Also

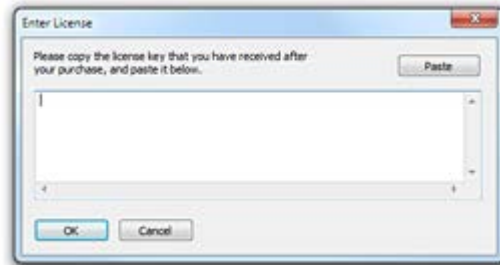
[Support](#)

[License agreement](#)

## Entering your license key

After you have purchased FabFilter Pro-Q in the online [FabFilter Shop](#), you will immediately receive an e-mail containing your personal license key. This license key will turn the evaluation version into a fully registered plug-in.

- Start FabFilter Pro-Q and click **Enter License** in the evaluation dialog, or click Enter License on the Help menu if the plug-in is already running.
- Copy the license information from the e-mail you have received and paste it into the text field. Make sure that you are copying the entire license key including the *Product* and *Licensee* lines! If you are not sure what text to copy, just copy and paste the whole e-mail.



After you have entered your license information, you will need to restart the plug-in host, so make sure you save your settings if needed. From now on, you will be able to use FabFilter Pro-Q for an unlimited period of time with full support via e-mail.

### Tips

- After your purchase, you can always retrieve your license key again by logging into your [personal FabFilter account](#). Here you can also keep track of all your orders and take advantage of great discounts when buying other FabFilter plug-ins!
- To deauthorize your license key and remove it from the computer, click **Deauthorize** on the Help menu. If you temporarily needed to install your license on another computer, or if you have transferred your license to someone else, this is the way to deinstall your personal license key safely.

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Next: [Support](#)

### See Also

[Purchasing FabFilter Pro-Q](#)  
[Support](#)  
[License agreement](#)

## Support


If you need help with problems or questions, and the help file does not provide an answer, please visit the support pages on our web site.

- [Go to FabFilter Support](#) 

From here, you have direct access to the customer support forum, very useful tutorial videos for all FabFilter plug-ins, online and PDF versions of all our help files, and a section with extra downloads (such as presets, controller templates, older plug-in versions).

For sales-related questions and technical support, you can also contact FabFilter directly at [info@fabfilter.com](mailto:info@fabfilter.com).

### Reporting a bug

If you have encountered a bug in FabFilter Pro-Q, first of all make sure that you are using the latest version of the plug-in, which you can find at [www.fabfilter.com/download](http://www.fabfilter.com/download) . You can easily check the version of FabFilter Pro-Q that you are using by clicking Help > About in the plug-in interface. If the bug is still present in the latest version, please send us an e-mail at [info@fabfilter.com](mailto:info@fabfilter.com) and include as much technical information as possible: operation system and version, host software and version, steps to reproduce the bug, etc. Thanks in advance!

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Next: [Manual installation](#)

### See Also

[Overview](#)

[About FabFilter](#)

## Manual installation

When installing FabFilter Pro-Q, the installation program will try to copy the plug-in into the appropriate plug-ins folders, and in most cases your host will recognize FabFilter Pro-Q automatically. Otherwise, please follow these instructions:

### Windows


On Windows, most hosts have their own VST plug-ins folder. So if you are using Windows and your host does not recognize FabFilter Pro-Q, you need to locate the proper plug-ins folder for your host first (it is usually shown in the Preferences or similar dialog). Then, copy the file *FabFilter Pro-Q.dll* from *C:\Program Files\FabFilter\Pro-Q* (or *C:\Program Files (x86)\FabFilter\Pro-Q* if you are using a 32-bit host on 64-bit Windows) to the plug-ins folder that you have found and restart the host so it can reload all its plug-ins. For the AAX version of Pro-Q, copy the *FabFilter Pro-Q.aaxplugin* folder to the common Pro Tools AAX plug-in folder on your computer; for the RTAS version of Pro-Q, copy the *FabFilter Pro-Q.dpm* and *FabFilter Pro-Q.dpm.rsr* files to the Pro Tools RTAS plug-in folder on your computer.

### Mac OS X

On Mac OS X, plug-ins are installed in the standard plug-in folders in the system Library folder. These are the *only* possible correct locations:

- Audio Units: */Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/Components*
- VST/VST3: */Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/VST* and */Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/VST3*
- RTAS: */Library/Application Support/Digidesign/Plug-Ins*
- AAX: */Library/Application Support/Avid/Audio/Plug-Ins*

Note: AU and VST/VST3 plug-ins may be placed in the user's Library folders under *~/Library/Audio/Plug-Ins* as well.

If you still have problems, contact [FabFilter Support](#) .

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Next: [VST plug-in versions](#)

### See Also

[Quick start](#)  
[Support](#)

## VST plug-in versions

FabFilter Pro-Q is available in both VST 2 and the new VST 3 formats. They can be installed and used both at the same time. The VST 3 format can only be used by hosts that support it, for example Steinberg's Cubase 5. At this moment, the VST 2 format is compatible with more different hosts and it has more thorough MIDI support (i.e. polyphonic aftertouch).

### VST 2

For the VST 2 format, there are two versions of the FabFilter Pro-Q plug-in, a mono and a stereo one:

- *FabFilter Pro-Q*: Stereo version of the plug-in
- *FabFilter Pro-Q (Mono)*: Mono version of the plug-in

Note: The VST 3 version of the plug-in can be used on both mono and stereo tracks.

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Next: [License agreement](#)

#### See Also

[Quick start](#)

[Manual installation](#)



# FabFilter Software License Agreement

## 1. Disclaimer

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You may use an evaluation copy of this FabFilter product for an period of up to 30 days. Once the evaluation period has ended, you must either purchase your copy, or remove it from your computer. If you have purchased your copy of this FabFilter product, you may continue to use your evaluation copy beyond the end of the 30-day evaluation period until your license key arrives.

We encourage you to distribute the evaluation copy and give copies to friends, as long as there is no payment involved.

You may not reverse engineer, reverse compile, or disassemble any of the files in the distribution.

You are not allowed to distribute or copy the full version of any FabFilter product. The license key that you receive when purchasing it is personal and confidential and may not be disclosed. The full version is a commercial program. It is a violation of international copyright laws to give copies to other people. You may give them the evaluation copy, so they can purchase the program on their own.

## 3. VST plugin technology

VST is a trademark of Steinberg Soft- und Hardware GmbH.

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Next: [Acknowledgements](#)

### See Also

[Purchase FabFilter Pro-Q](#)  
[Support](#)

## Acknowledgements

Credits go to Thorsten Schmidt for laying the foundation for Pro-Q during his internship at FabFilter, having to cope with two very stubborn know-it-alls all of the time.

And of course, a huge thanks to our beta testers for their relentless testing of all different beta versions! Thanks especially to Mark den Hartog and Niklas Silen for sharing valuable EQ tips and techniques.

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Next: [About FabFilter](#)

### See Also

[Purchase FabFilter Pro-Q](#)

[Support](#)

## About FabFilter

Beautiful sound. Fantastic workflow. These are the foundations of FabFilter. We create powerful audio plug-ins with superb sound quality and innovative interfaces.

### A unique perspective

At FabFilter, we make the best possible tools for music production and audio processing. To achieve this, we continually rethink and challenge industry standards: we've never been afraid of reinventing the wheel. Considering every little detail, we tune our algorithms and interfaces until they sound perfect, look amazing and feel great to work with.

### It's the sound that counts

Above everything else, you need superb sound quality. That's why we put a lot of effort into developing unique audio processing algorithms, ranging from our famous resonating filters to transparent high-end EQ and dynamics processing.

### Innovative interfaces, great design

Every FabFilter plug-in has an easy-to-use, well-designed interface aimed at providing unsurpassed workflow. Our plug-ins focus on the task you're performing at that specific moment: they expose the features you need, when you need them. And because of our special attention to design, you'll be delighted every time you open a FabFilter plug-in.

### Don't take our word for it

We always set the highest standard for sound quality, usability and design to make truly great products that raise the bar on what audio software can do. That's why we're very happy with the praise we've received from users and press alike:

"In the decade since the release of its first plug-in, One, FabFilter has made an indelible mark on the music production landscape." - Computer Music magazine

"While many other software developers are busy trying to model hardware, FabFilter is leaving them in the dust by being visionaries and reaching into the future. FabFilter stuff is just on another level." - Jeff Sanders

"FabFilter has an enviable reputation for making easy-to-use, powerful tools." - Music Tech magazine

*FabFilter was founded in 2002 by Frederik Slijkerman and Floris Klinkert, and is based in Amsterdam, The Netherlands.*

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### See Also

[Support](#)

[FabFilter web site](#) 