

Audio Ease Speakerphone



Audio Ease's Speakerphone provides an astonishing array of IR-based speaker simulation effects.

It's a speaker emulator. It's a distortion designer. It's a sound effects library. And a convolution reverb. And an equalizer. And a compressor. And a left-handed wire-stripper engraved with the Latin

phrase *Esto Perpetua*, the state motto of Idaho.

Okay, I made up the Idaho wire-stripper part, but I wouldn't be surprised to find one in there. Speakerphone is a wildly imaginative sound design tool; one that rewards adventurous users with an endless supply of cool and unusual sounds.

Speakerphone uses impulse responses (IRs) to mimic the sounds of almost 300 speakers—including cell phones, guitar amps, vintage radios, car stereos, PCs, electronic toys, and many other devices. You can mix wet/dry levels, customize distortion, and fine-tune EQ, compression, and stereo imaging. There are built-in effects such as delay, modulation, gramophone, and radio emulation. There's even a small but powerful IR reverb section (sort of an "Altiverb Lite"), so you can slather convolution reverb over your convolution speakers. It gets deep.

And who is the target audience for all this inspired tweakability? The likeliest applications lie in film and TV post-production, where evoking sound coming from phones, radios, and the like is a frequent task. With Speakerphone, you can imitate these devices, situate them in a realistic space (a PA in a huge train station, say, or a radio in an airplane cockpit), and then fine-tune your tones in the mix. In addition, Speakerphone includes 5 GB of ambiences and special effects such as applause, street atmosphere, telephone rings, and other relevant sounds. You can "play" the effects within Speakerphone's sample bay via a MIDI controller, or just drag samples into your Pro Tools sessions. You can also drag and drop new sounds into the Speakerphone library.

The plug-in also has countless purely musical applications, from distorting vocals to imparting character to sampled and synthesized sounds. It's particularly wicked on guitars. While Speakerphone boasts IRs from many guitar amps—both classic and kooky—the static quality of the IR speaker emulations means you probably won't be substituting Speakerphone for a straight-up guitar amp emulator such as Eleven or Amp Farm. But man, the offbeat colors you can pry from this thing! I got particularly inspiring results blending Speakerphone with conventional amp simulations.

Speakerphone runs as an RTAS plug-in on all Pro Tools systems, and lists for \$495.

www.audioease.com

IK Multimedia Advanced Room Correction



ARC analyzes your studio's acoustic properties and calculates a corrective EQ curve.

If you sometimes work in less-than-perfect rooms (you know—like a *normal* musician), you might want to take a listen to IK Multimedia's new ARC Advanced Room Correction plug-in.

Or rather, ARC might want to listen to you. The product includes not just software, but a specially

calibrated, omnidirectional condenser microphone that ARC uses to evaluate your listening space and calculate corrective EQ curves.

Here's the basic procedure: Connect the mic to your usual I/O and open ARC in standalone mode. As the plug-in generates a series of audio pulses, you move the mic around, capturing profiles of the dozen or more spots your ears might occupy while mixing. The process only takes about ten minutes, thanks to the ARC interface's

superb step-by-step instructions.

Next, save your measurements as an ARC preset. You can even save multiple sets. You might, for example, have one for the mix chair and another for a "client couch" 10 feet behind it.

When you boot up Pro Tools, just insert ARC on your stereo master out and call up your measurements, and ARC applies its customized corrections to your mix. The interface depicts three EQ profiles: your original sound, an ideal flat response, and sound with ARC correction. You can compare Flat and HF Roll-Off EQ curves (with or without midrange compensation to resolve directional differences within crossover systems), choosing the appropriate setting for your studio and musical style. There's also a trim control that adjusts the corrected level only, so you can compare ARC correction and ARC bypass at equal volumes (correction tends to lower overall levels).

I tried ARC in my home studio, a room whose acoustic treatment doesn't fully compensate for parallel walls and none-too-high ceiling. ARC revealed a hefty low-mid peak and a 2 kHz dip—your typical, woolly, home-studio sound. With ARC engaged, the sound was flatter, more compact, and very *different*—different enough to know that there's some much more careful listening and adjustment in my near future.

ARC lists for \$699.99. It runs as an RTAS plug-in on all current Pro Tools systems.

www.ikmultimedia.com