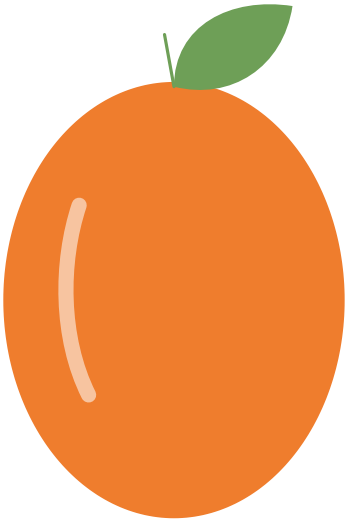


KA Contour

Instruction manual

Kumquat Audio · Edition 1.7.11 · October 2026

kumquataudio.com

NO. 23

KA Contour

Evens out a voice by itself: turns down boomy, nasal and harsh bumps and fills in holes, with a high pass.

KA Contour evens out a voice. It listens for a few seconds, finds the narrow peaks and valleys in the sound of the voice (a boomy note, a nasal honk, a harsh ring, a hole in the middle), and turns the peaks down and fills the valleys in a little. It does this by itself, in the background, with one main knob.

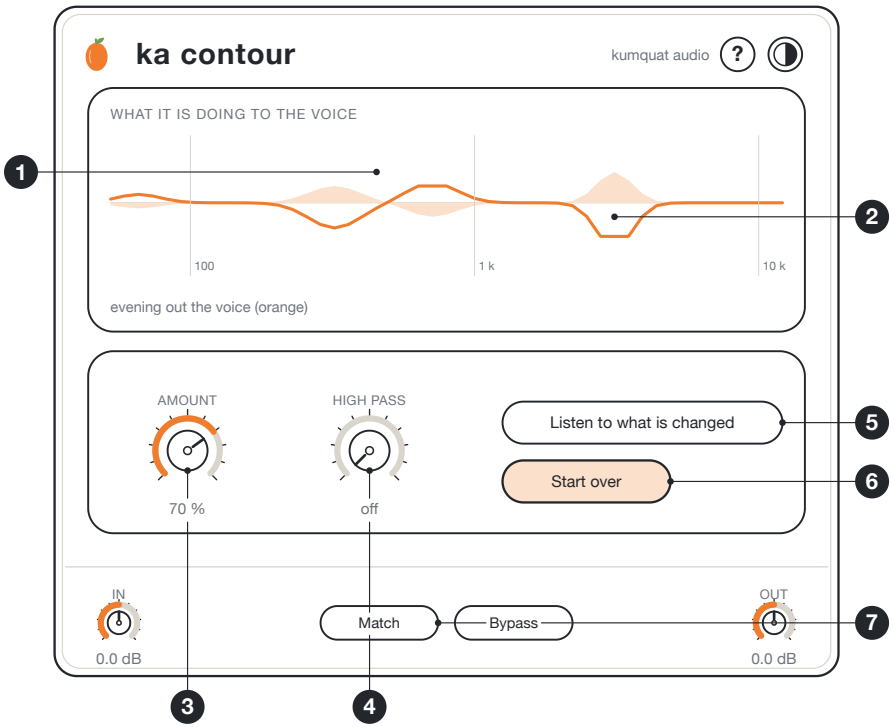


FIG. 1 The parts of KA Contour. The numbers are explained on the next page.

Parts

fig. 1

1. **What it found**
   The faint shape shows how far each part of the voice sits above or below its own smooth line.
2. **What it does**
   The orange line is the correction: where the voice sticks up it is turned down, where there is a hole it is turned up. It never moves faster than 1.5 dB a second.
3. **Amount**
   How closely the voice follows its own line.
4. **High pass**
   Takes out rumble below the corner, with a gentle slope. Off at the far left.
5. **Listen**
   Plays only what is being changed, and what the high pass takes out.
6. **Start over**
   Forgets the voice and learns it again.
7. **In, Out and Match**
   In turns the sound up or down before the plug-in hears it, and Out turns the result up or down. Bypass plays the sound without the plug-in. Match keeps the output as loud as the sound that came in, whatever In and the plug-in do, so you hear what a setting does and not just a change in loudness.

Operation

step by step

1. Put the plug-in on one voice, a dialogue or a vocal, and play it. The picture says it is listening and counts up to 100 %. That takes about three seconds of talking or singing.
2. Watch the picture. The faint shape shows how far each part of the voice sits above or below its own smooth line. The orange line is what Contour is doing about it: where the voice sticks up it is turned down, where there is a hole it is turned up.
3. Turn Amount to taste. At 70 % the voice follows its line closely without changing its character. Press Listen to hear only what is changed: it should sound like a faint, thin version of the voice, and never loud.
4. Turn High pass up to take out rumble and thumps: a hand on the stand, traffic, an air conditioner. Start at about 80 Hz. Listen plays what it takes out as well.
5. When the voice on the track changes, press Start over. Otherwise Contour follows the change by itself over about ten seconds of the new voice.

Controls and settings

range · start

Control	Range	Starts at	What it does
Amount	0 to 100 %	70 %	How closely the voice follows its own smooth line. 0 leaves it as it is.
High pass	20 to 400 Hz	off	Takes out rumble below this frequency with a slope of 18 dB an octave, and adds no delay. Off at the far left.
Listen	on / off	off	Plays only what is being changed, and what the high pass takes out.
Start over	button		Forgets the voice and learns it again.
In / Out	In ±24, Out ±12 dB	0 dB	The two knobs under the meters: before and after the plug-in.
Match	on / off	off	Keeps the output as loud as the sound that came in, whatever In and the plug-in do. See In, Out and Gain Match.

TIP Give it a few seconds of the voice before you judge it. While the picture says it is learning, the correction is still growing.

CAUTION Contour is made for one voice at a time. Two people on one track are averaged together.

CAUTION The plug-in delays the sound by 85 ms. Your music software lines everything up. Do not compensate by hand.

Specifications

Formats	Audio Unit, VST3
Channels	mono or stereo
Delay	4096 samples (85 ms at 48 kHz)
Window	560 × 400, can be resized

How it works

a closer look

KA Contour measures how loud every part of the spectrum is while the person is speaking or singing. It does this in 46 bands, a sixth of an octave apart, from 70 Hz to 12.7 kHz. Pauses, breaths and hiss are left out: only the parts that are clearly voice count.

From that average it draws a smooth line that ignores anything narrower than about an octave. A boomy note, a nasal honk or a harsh ring sticks up through the line, and a hole in the middle falls under it. Contour turns the peaks down, by up to 8 dB, and fills the valleys in, by up to 4 dB. A dark voice stays dark and a bright voice stays bright: only the bumps are evened out.

It starts after about a second of speech and is fully working after about three. The correction then moves by at most 1.5 dB a second, so nothing pumps, and it stays where it is while nobody speaks. The average covers about the last twelve seconds of speech, and it is saved with your project.

The high pass is separate from all this. It takes out what is below its corner, with a gentle slope of 18 dB an octave, and does not delay the sound.

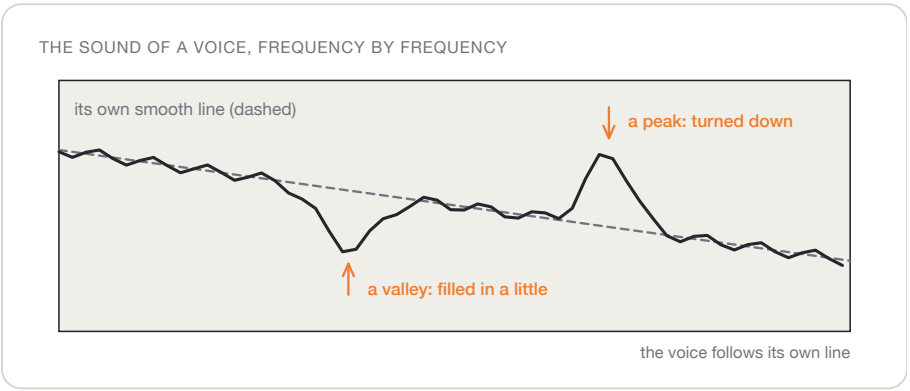


FIG. 2 A narrow peak is turned down and a valley is filled in, so the voice follows its own smooth line.

CARE

Care and troubleshooting

If this happens	Do this
A plug-in does not appear in the list	Restart the music software. In Logic Pro, open the Plug-in Manager, select the Kumquat plug-ins and choose Reset & Rescan Selection.
An old name is still showing	Quit Logic with Cmd+Q and open it again. If it persists, remove the old copies from /Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/Components.
My key was not accepted	Copy all of it, from KA1 to the end, with no spaces added or lost. A key for one plug-in does not unlock the others.
The pop-up help does not show	Press the “?” at the top of the window to turn it on. It is one choice for all the plug-ins.
Which part of the picture does a knob change?	Point at the knob, or hold it down while you turn it: the part of the picture it controls lights up, with the knob’s name and value.
KA Drum Gate, Silence Trim, Auto Mixer or Time Align shows a message instead of a picture	Open Logic Pro using Rosetta, put the plug-in first in the Audio FX list, select a region and press play.
The sound is late	KA De-Click, De-Verb, De-Noise, Contour, Mic Blend, Saturator (it oversamples), EQ (with the suppressor), Multiband (in Linear phase) and Limiter delay the sound a little and tell the music software, which lines everything up. Do not compensate by hand. For playing through a plug-in, the Saturator, EQ and Multiband have a Live switch that takes the delay away; the compressors, De-Esser, Delay, Reverb and Rider have no delay at all.
A window is too small or too big	Drag the corner at the bottom right. The size is remembered, and it is the same for all the plug-ins: make one bigger and the others open that big.
The Limiter pumps	Leave Release on Auto, or set 60 to 100 ms. A release of a millisecond or two is the dirtiest setting.

If something is not right, write to **audiokumquat@gmail.com** and say which plug-in, which music software, and what you were doing.

FOR YOUR OWN NOTES

Notes