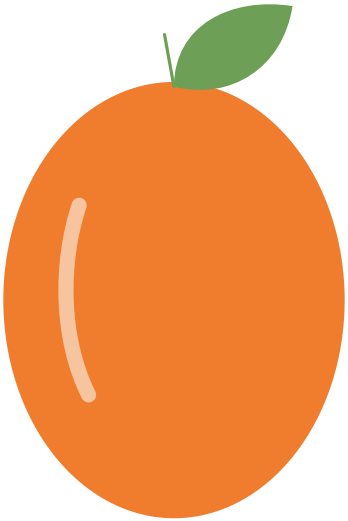


KA Target

Instruction manual

Kumquat Audio · Edition 0.9.6 · October 2026

kumquataudio.com

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

To the owner

KA Target listens to a whole mix and tells you where its tone is away from a target curve. Then it can fix it.

A target curve is a picture of a balance you like: how much bass, how much top. KA Target compares your mix with it, shows the difference, and offers a plan made of three tools you already know: an EQ for specific moves, a multiband for broad ones, and a suppressor for build-ups and ringing. Nothing is changed until you press Learn, and you can blend the plan in with Strength or undo it.

For dialogue there is a Speech mode, with voice targets, a rumble filter and a de-esser.

What you need

Formats	Audio Unit, VST3
Channels	mono or stereo
Delay	2048 samples while the Suppressor is on, none otherwise
Window	1100 × 640, can be resized

Signs used

TIP A tip is something that will help you get a better result.

CAUTION A caution is something that can cost you time if you are not careful.

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GETTING TO KNOW IT

The window

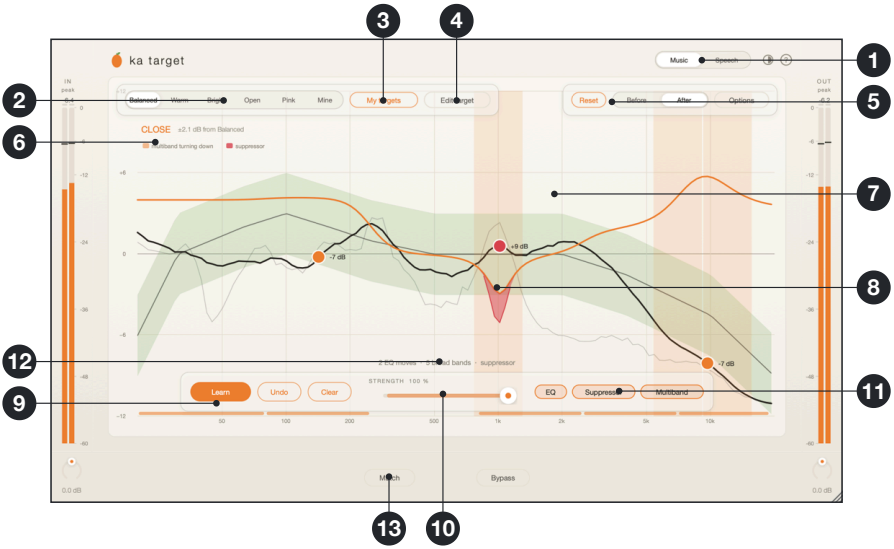


FIG. 1 The window of KA Target.

The parts

fig. 1

1. **Music | Speech**
   Music targets and plans, or Speech targets with a rumble filter and a de-esser.
2. **Target**
   The curve your mix is compared with. Mine is your own target.
3. **My targets**
   Your own targets. Pick one you saved, learn a new one from the mix that is playing now, save the one you are looking at under a name, or delete it. They are kept for every project.
4. **Edit target**
   Reshape the target: ten points on the curve. Drag one and the part of the curve around it follows, a smooth hill an octave wide each way. Your changes are kept in Mine, and Save keeps them under a name.
5. **Reset, Before / After, Options**
   Reset forgets what was heard and starts the picture again. Before shows the mix as it comes in, After the mix after the plan. Options holds Forgiveness (how far from the target counts as on target: 1.5, 3, 4.5 or 6 dB) and Average (Off, 3, 5 or 10 seconds).
6. **The verdict**
   ON TARGET, CLOSE or OFF TARGET, and how many dB, on average, the mix is from the target.
7. **The picture**
   The thin line is the target and the green band is the forgiveness. The dark line is your mix. The orange line is what the plan does. A dot marks each place that is too quiet (orange) or too loud (pink), with how many dB.
8. **Live work**
   While it plays, the suppressor shows as a sharp red shape hanging below the orange line, only where it is turning something down. The multiband shows as a soft orange block across a band while that band is turned down for being loud.
9. **Learn, Undo, Clear**
   Learn listens, then makes a plan and puts it on. Press it again (it says Done) to stop early. Undo goes back one step. Clear makes the EQ flat again.
10. **Strength**
    How much of the plan is used, from none to all of it. 100 % is a firm move, not the raw plan. It can be changed while it plays.
11. **EQ, Suppressor, Multiband**
    Switch each layer on or off to hear what it does.
12. **The plan**
    A short summary of what the plan does, such as how many EQ moves and broad bands.
13. **In, Out, Match and Bypass**
    At the bottom: the In and Out knobs (each under its level meter), a Match button for the level, and Bypass.

USING IT

Learning a plan

Operation

step by step

1. Put KA Target on the master bus (or on any track or bus you want to shape), after your other plug-ins.
2. Choose a target: Balanced, Warm, Bright, Open or Pink. For dialogue, switch to Speech at the top right and choose a speech target.
3. Play the loudest, most typical part of the mix. The picture shows your mix against the target.
4. Press Learn, keep playing, and press Done when you have played enough (it stops by itself after ten seconds of music). It makes a plan and puts it on at once: the orange line on the picture is what it does, with a short summary above the buttons.
5. Turn Strength down to hear less of it, or press Undo to take it back. The EQ, Suppressor and Multiband switches let you hear each layer alone, and Bypass compares with the plug-in off.

TIP Learn listens to the loudest ten seconds. If the chorus is where the mix matters, play the chorus.

TIP Learn a target from a mix you love (My targets), then play your own mix against it: you are matching its shape, not its loudness.

CAUTION A plan from the wrong part of a song is the wrong plan. If the verdict is worse after Learn, press Undo and Learn again from a better moment.

Average

The Average switch in Options (Off, 3 s, 5 s, 10 s) smooths the picture over the last few seconds so a slow build-up stands out and one hit does not move it. Before and After shows the mix as it comes in, or after the plan.

WHAT IT DOES

The layers

Each layer has its own job. Learn decides which ones are needed, and the three switches beside the buttons turn them on or off while you listen. The picture shows the suppressor and the multiband at work as it plays.

Layer	For	What it does
EQ	Specific, narrow moves	A few bells at the places where the mix is off by a clear amount, up to 6 dB down and 4 dB up. In Speech there is also a rumble filter.
Multiband	Broad moves	Six bands (edges at 80, 250, 800 Hz, 2.5 and 7 kHz). Each is turned up or down to lie closer to the target, and compressed only if it was loud now and then. The low end is never cut by more than 1 dB, and the top by lifting more than 5 dB.
Suppressor	Build-ups and ringing	Turns down narrow peaks that stick out of the mix, only while they stick out, and only near the places Learn found. It also watches the areas the multiband lifts.
Rumble filter	Speech only	A high-pass at 80, 100 or 120 Hz, 12 dB per octave, chosen from how much low end there is to clear.
De-esser	Speech only	Turns down the band around the “s” (between 4.5 and 9 kHz) when it jumps above its own recent level. It shares the Suppressor switch.

TIP The suppressor and the de-esser work after the multiband, so they see what a broad lift brings up: a boost in the top end is checked for harshness.

CAUTION Under about 100 Hz the plan is careful: a mix loses its punch there first, so music is cut by at most 1 dB. Speech may be cut more, since a voice has little to lose.

AIMING

Targets and Speech

Target	Mode	The shape
Balanced	Music	The Brüel & Kjær house curve: a gentle bass lift, flat through the mids, easing down above 2 kHz.
Warm	Music	A bass shelf of about 5 dB below 100 Hz and a lighter top.
Bright	Music	Flat bass and the top kept up.
Open	Music	The small-room cinema curve: flat to 2 kHz, then a roll-off of 1.5 dB per octave.
Pink	Music	Flat. Every octave equally loud on the display.
Mine	Both	Your own target: one you shaped with Edit target, or learned from a mix you love with My targets. Save it under a name and it is kept for every project. Only its shape counts, not how loud it was.
Natural, Broadcast, Warm, Clear, Plain	Speech	Voice targets that roll off below about 100 Hz (the same shape as the rumble filter) and in the highs. Broadcast and Clear push the presence a little.

Speech

Switch to Speech for dialogue and voice-over. The targets change to voice targets, the score ignores everything under 100 Hz (a voice has little there, and the rumble filter takes the rest), and the plan always includes a rumble filter and a de-esser. The picture says it is waiting for the voice when nothing is playing.

Your own targets

There are two ways to make a target. Press Edit target and drag the ten points on the curve: the part of the curve around a point follows it, a smooth hill an octave wide each way. Or play a mix you love and choose Learn a target from the mix that is playing now in My targets. Either way the result is Mine. Choose Save this target under a name, and it is in My targets from then on, in every project. Show the saved targets in the Finder shows where the files are.

Forgiveness

The green band around the target is how far a mix may be from it and still count as on target. 3 dB is a good place to begin; a rough room or a quick mix can use 4.5 or 6.

CARE

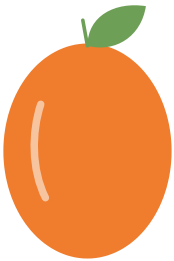
Care and troubleshooting

If this happens	Do this
Learn says to play longer.	It needs at least three seconds of sound. Play the loudest part of the mix and keep going.
The picture stopped and says HELD.	Nothing is playing. It holds the last picture so you can read it, and moves again when sound returns.
It says off target but sounds right.	Raise Forgiveness (in Options, to 4.5 or 6 dB), or choose another target. A target is a guide, not a rule.
The plan lifts the top end a lot.	The target asks for more top than the mix has. Try Open or Warm, lower Strength, or learn a target from a mix you like (My targets).
It delays the sound.	The Suppressor adds a small delay (2048 samples) while it is on. The music software lines it up. Turn the Suppressor off to remove it.
I do not hear a difference.	Play from the start of a loud part, press Learn, and use Bypass at the bottom to compare. At low Strength the plan is gentle.

If something is not right, write to **audiokumquat@gmail.com** and say which host you use, what you did, and what you saw.

FOR YOUR OWN NOTES

Notes



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Audio Unit is a trademark of Apple Inc. VST is a trademark of Steinberg Media Technologies GmbH.

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