

## Sonalksis SV517

Formats: Windows VST & Direct X, Mac OS X VST & AU, Mac OS 9 VST

Liverpool-based plug-in developers Sonalksis have been around for a little while now, and *SV517* has already established itself as one of the best-regarded EQ plug-ins out there. Nevertheless, there are probably SOS readers who haven't come across this little gem yet — and if you haven't, it's definitely worth a look. Sonalksis claim to have developed a proprietary technology known as 'State-space' in order to model the behaviour of analogue equalisers on a component level, and their graphic design also recalls classy analogue units from the likes of Focusrite. As with many plug-in designs, though, the overall frequency response is displayed in a graphical window, and the easiest way to edit the EQ curve is simply to pick up the centre points of each band with the mouse and drag them around.

Like the analogue equalisers it's designed to emulate, *SV517* is intended mainly for 'broad brush' applications rather than as a surgical tool for notching out problem frequencies. Within its intended role, however, it's pretty versatile. You get low- and high-pass filters, with a range of slopes, plus four fully parametric bands, the outer two of which can be switched to shelving responses. You also get the option to switch between three different algorithms for the parametric bands, and two for the shelf EQs. These affect the overall shape of the response; the second parametric algorithm is particularly broad and smooth, whilst the third offers much steeper slopes, and the first is somewhere inbetween. Adjacent EQ bands can interact to produce resonant peaks and troughs in a similar fashion to Waves' *Renaissance EQ*.

The most important feature, though, is the sound. Running *SV517* as an RTAS plug-in via FXpansion's invaluable VST To RTAS Adapter, I substituted it for the basic *Pro Tools EQII* on several channels in a rough mix I'd been working on. The effect was instant and impressive: what had been a OK-sounding mix suddenly began to sound smoother, warmer and generally classier. The difference was especially apparent where boost was concerned — whereas previously I'd strained to apply the required amount of gain without descending into harshness or phasiness, I could now achieve the desired result almost effortlessly. Like URS's impressive *Classic Console* EQ plug-ins, *SV517* gives clearly audible results from even a slight cut or boost, but instead of the aggressive bite of those equalisers, it offers a smooth, polished tone. It's like comparing a luxury saloon to a vintage sports car — it doesn't offer quite as many thrills, but it's a lot more comfortable to drive! At £150, *SV517* is well beyond the shareware price bracket, but in terms of quality, it's comparable to the best plug-in EQs around. *Sam Inglis*