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VOCAL SESSION, PART 3: EDITING AND MIXING

“The voice is the instrument of the artist... he or she is usually very particular about how you use his or her voice in your mix.”

—Armin van Buuren

SUBCHAPTERS

- Editing Vocal Tracks
- Effects and Mixing
- Getting the Best From Your Vocalist

CHAPTER REVIEW

Armin explains the importance of listening back to your composite vocal on its own, without any effects processing or any music behind it. You should listen carefully for imperfections, any background noises, strange mouth sounds or clicks, pitch inaccuracies, etc. If you or your vocalist are unhappy with your composite, ask your artist to do more takes. Once you are satisfied, you can begin to clean up the track.

When Armin edits a vocal, he leaves some breath in to give it a natural sound, but takes out any noisy breathing that might distract from the music. He also uses a de-esser plug-in to reduce the sharpness of harsh sounds like “s,” while taking care not to lose important parts of the singer’s words.

Armin recommends you record all of your lead vocals at the same time to avoid changes in the sonic quality of the vocal, due to the food the artist has eaten (such as milk), sickness, or strain on the vocal cords. If Armin isn’t getting the best performance out of his vocalist, he plays around with what the singer’s hearing in their headphones by adding reverb to their voice or playing a different backing mix. The goal is to get the vocalist excited and encouraged to make the next take their best.

EXPLORE THE PLUG-INS

Armin uses these plug-ins while working on Josh’s vocal:

- [FabFilter Pro-C 2](#)
- [FabFilter Pro-DS](#)
- [ArtsAcoustic Reverb](#)

ASSIGNMENT

- If your vocal track is ready for cleaning, begin to edit and add effects. Aim for a clean but more or less natural sounding vocal.