



SPL

# ANALOG CODE PLUG-INS

FOR PC & MAC  
**MusicTech**  
**EXCELLENCE**  
 ★★★★★★★★★★

Germany-based hardware specialists SPL is going digital with the Analog Code range. Mo Volans checks out the transition.

## KEY FEATURES

- Analog Code advanced component modelling
- Passive circuit replication
- Based on SPL hardware
- Compatible with all major DAWs

## ANALOG CODE PLUG-INS

Manufacturer **SPL**

Price **Transient Designer €200, EQ Rangers**

**Volume 1 €240**

Contact **Audio Professionals 01923 693770**

Web **www.soundperformancelab.com**

**S**PL (Sound Design Labs) is well-known for building quality hardware signal processors and the company's awesome Transient Designer. You would be forgiven for not associating the name with plug-ins – until now, that is...

SPL has recently announced the company's first virtual devices – and they are rather special to say the least. Named the Analog Code series due to the advanced component modelling they're built on, the plug-ins all share the same design and interface as SPL's RackPack hardware series.

The Analog Code range aims to cover all bases in the future, but for now, only four plug-ins have been released – and they give us a taste of the sheer quality we've come to expect from SPL. The four plug-ins consist of three equalisers and a software version of the Transient Designer.

## On the Range

The three EQs are modelled on the passive SPL Ranger units. For those of you who aren't familiar with passive analogue technology, it simply means that there are no active components in

a device's signal path, resulting in an extremely open, natural sound. This pristine signal path leaves your audio uncoloured by the EQ – needless to say, the plug-ins share these same qualities.

Although each EQ has a very similar front panel and identical interface, they are individually tuned to carry out very specific tasks. Each model works over

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eight bands, but, unlike standard static graphic EQs, these span certain frequency ranges, making them specialist tools to treat and enhance certain types of instrument.

Each EQ has a useful multiple-settings feature: A, B, C and D buttons that enable you to switch quickly between four different variations. And if you're in any doubt as to what the separate EQs are designed for, the names should be a dead giveaway.

## From bottom to top

With eight frequency bands ranging from 30Hz–2kHz, the Bass Ranger EQ is perfectly suited for treating not only your bass lines, but any instrument containing low frequencies. We tried it out on a few signals and the results were outstanding. Using subtractive or additive methods, the outcome was never hyper or muddy.

Designed specifically for vocal treatments, the Vox Ranger supplies eight bands from 220Hz–4kHz. We loaded it in an older vocal project and were able to accurately isolate different aspects of the vocal. Even when adding large amounts of gain to any one particular band, the sound remained transparent and musical.

The last EQ – The Full Ranger – is more of a general equaliser, covering the entire frequency range. The bands are therefore less tightly grouped. The quality, of course, is top-drawer and every band feels extremely musical, with that elusive analogue quality. The sound quality is good enough for use across the master buss without fear of colouration or distortion.

## Soft landing

If you haven't used the Transient Designer before then you have really missed out – this is the perfect tool for enhancing or reducing the attack and sustain phases of just about any sound. Although the process lends itself particularly well to drums and percussion, it really is at home anywhere in the mix and can be used on guitars, vocals and keys.

The Transient Designer has only a few simple controls but the sound is nothing short of perfect – shut your eyes and you could be listening to the

hardware version. The only difference with this software counterpart is that there are no wires, no patching and you can run as many of them as your CPU can handle. **MTM**

## SUMMARY

### WHY BUY

- Clear, musical sound
- Can realistically replace hardware
- Easy to use

### WALK ON BY

- If you just have to have the hardware versions...

## VERDICT

The Ranger EQs are stunning, with a wide, open and musical sound. The Transient Designer produces results of the same high standard and is a must-have for any studio.

★★★★★★★★★★

## MEASURING UP

There are more than a few alternative plug-ins on the market that claim to replicate analogue sound. Few of them come as close as these, but there are some worthy contenders. Try Universal Audio's UAD-2 system (from £399), Nomad Factory's Blue Tubes series (from £200) or the Saturation and Channel Strip Pro plug-ins from URS (around £430).