

## HumBox VM1 FAQ

### General FAQs

#### **Q: What is HumBox exactly?**

A: It is sampler player&synthesizer that combines prerecorded vocal samples and patches with powerful synthesis, so the user can play various human voices as a musical instrument or for manipulation purposes.

#### **Q: What would I use it for?**

A: For backing vocals, short vocal lines in different music styles, and for vocal effects in movies, animation and games, in other words, in a song or to create a soundtrack to any type of video. You can use it in studio, at home or live performance.

#### **Q: Is it a sample player/Rompler with multisamples of different vocalists?**

A: It is a sampler with advanced vocal sound manipulating: all samples have 3 phases: Attack, Loop and Ending, which are cross-fading through 3 layers with phase correction, pitch shifting, and processing by complex modulation curves. Every HumBox vocal bank is provided with several Styles (singing characteristics).

#### **Q: Is it samples or synthesis that generates the sounds?**

A: It is sampler that has some synthesizer components mostly used for different modulations.

#### **Q: What is Context-Dependent Expressive Synthesis?**

A: HumBox has an advanced system of patch parameters: actually, every Style is a set of 7 patches, and their parameters are used for calculating the current patch on the base of musical context: Velocities, Note Numbers and music Intervals. Due to "morphing of patch parameters" the sound reaches sensitivity to musician's play or to a MIDI score. "Phrasing" and insertion of noises add sufficient liveliness. We call this approach a "Context-Dependent Expressive Synthesis".

#### **Q: Which vocalists were used to create the Banks?**

A: All the banks for HumBox were developed by Virartech. Professional vocalists were used, but timbre was more important than manner.

#### **Q: Why not just use vocal FX plugins to tweak vocals?**

A: You need a real vocalist to process vocals, Humbox is a great option if you do not have access to one or just want to add a humanistic sounding line to your production.

#### **Q: How many vocalists are recorded and what are the styles?**

A: The first version includes 3 male and 3 female voices. All the banks for HumBox were developed by Virartech. Professional vocalists were used, but timbre was more important than manner. Some additional information can be found in Bank comments.

#### **Q: Can I use it in my commercial compositions, e.g. on my CD album that I am planning to sell?**

A: Yes, once you have bought the program, you can use it commercials and compositions royalty free.

#### **Q: Can I resell HumBox?**

A: No. The software comes with a single user license. The license pertains to the original purchaser only.

**Q: Can I create sound bank using HumBox for other samplers and sell it as separate product?**

A: Yes, once you have bought the program, you can use it for such a purpose.

**Q: Can I use standard bank formats in HumBox?**

A: No, HumBox only uses its own format.

**Q: Is HumBox PC only or can I use it with a Mac?**

A: Currently, HumBox is PC only, there are plans for the Mac version will come later.

**Q: What hosts are HumBox compatible with?**

A: Any host that has good VST support (VST 2.4. compatible): Steinberg Nuendo, Cakewalk Sonar, Fruity Loops, ACID Pro.

**Q: What are the system requirements?**

A: Operating system: Microsoft® Windows 98 / 2000 / XP / Vista® or compatible.

A VSTi host application with MIDI support.

About 32Mb of memory per VM1 instance, in addition to operating system / host requirements.

Processor Requirements

An Intel Pentium II compatible processor.

SSE support is highly recommended (Intel Pentium II or higher, AMD Athlon XP or higher, VIA C7 or higher).

1 GHz minimum, 2 GHz or better highly recommended.

Faster CPU will allow you to choose high rendering quality, use more voices in polyphonic mode, and run more instances of VM1 simultaneously in real time.

**Q: How do I install Humbox?**

A: Run the installer and follow the instructions.

Make sure your Host application (i.e. program in which you use the plugin) is set to retrieve HumBox VM1.dll from the folder C:\Program Files\PowerFX\HumBox VM1, or copy this DLL file to your default plugin folder and restart the Host.

When you first open the HumBox VM1, you are prompted to enter the registration information: your name, email address and registration key. You can press CANCEL to access the program interface, but you will still have to register it later. Unregistered program interface shows graphical warning as well as emits sounds, until it's properly registered.

**Q: Is there an activation code?**

A: Yes, you get the registration key by email after you've bought the plug-in.

**Q: Can I install HumBox on different computers?**

A: No, the HumBox license is for one PV only.

**USER FAQs**

**Q: Can I use MIDI files to play back voices in HumBox?**

A: Yes. Just take into account, that HumBox is dramatically sensitive to the MIDI Score (like any other pro synthesizer!), so you probably need to adjust, to correct your MIDI data. In any case we strongly recommend you to check HumBox behavior using standard MIDI keyboard: it's the fastest way to understand how HumBox works.

**Q: Can I make choirs and play chords with the individual vocalists?**

A: You can make choirs using appropriate banks and styles. If you use ONE bank for all voices you get similar sounds (even note are different) because it is the same bank. To get an ensemble with different vocalists you need to use separate tracks and set a few HumBox with different banks and styles.

**Q: Can I use HumBox for live performance?**

A: Yes. You need a convenient hardware device, you can use a PC laptop or a hardware VST players like [Receptor 2 \(www.museresearch.com\)](http://www.museresearch.com) or [V-Machine \(www.smproaudio.com\)](http://www.smproaudio.com).

**Q: Why is the sound interrupted when I keep holding down a key or there's a long note in Piano-roll?**

A: This is a special important feature imitating a real vocalist, who can't hold a note forever. This happens if Phrase/Noise section is On. If it's Off, the note will hold.

**Q: Why do some notes seem to sound later, which happens randomly?**

A: Several reasons:

- 1) Vocal sounds themselves rarely have sharp attack. And especially if they were recorded with slight breathing (to make it natural), the actual sound starts later.
- 2) This is especially noticeable on syllables. A real vocalist will first utter a consonant (a bit before correct rhythmic measure), and only after that utters a vowel. For example, in SAY, S should start off time, and only A should be at the right beat.
- 3) This process can also be affected by phrasing and breath insertion, if Phrase/Noise section is On.
- 4) If Prior Noise is On, the note may be delayed slightly, to allow "vocalist" take in air before singing.

All these matters can be corrected by editing notes in Piano-roll, and also if you can play MIDI keyboard carefully.

**Q: Why is breath sometimes heard on some chords?**

A: In polyphonic mode HumBox redistributes notes to channels (voices) and with complex musical structure when one voice sings long notes, and another voice sings short notes (i.e. these chords are not strictly parallel), each voice behaves like a separate instrument and adds breath in pauses between phrases.

**Q: When I play the same notes on a MIDI keyboard with Syllables, the sounds are different. Why?**

A: These banks (and you can see it in the bank comments) have different syllables on different notes with different Velocity. When you play MIDI keyboard, your fingers hit keys with different force, hence the syllables are different.

**Q: Different Velocities give different character of sound, but how can I keep the volume from changing?**

A: Input/Settings section has a parameter Vel Expr. (influence of Velocity / CC11 Expression to sound volume). If you set the slider to zero, the volume will not depend on Velocity.

**Q: I record chords, but they change the vowel in a style when it sounds long. How can I keep the vowel unchanged?**

A: Layer section has Position slider, which defines the layer from which to start sound synthesis, and Layer EG, slider, which defines the depth of movement through the layers. If you set Layer EG to minimum (10), the movement through the layers will be very small. Then you can select the vowel you need (if it is in the Bank you use) with Position slider.

**Q: What is the difference between Solo and Dual?**

A: These are two different modes of solo play. In Solo mode, the notes played legato will be consequently connected on the middle phase. For example, for Syllables bank, syllables TUM and PEEN will sound as TU-EEN. If you play the same notes in Dual both syllables will be uttered, but if the notes M and P are played legato, they will be layered on another.

**Q: Can I change Vibrato frequency and delay?**

A: You can't change the actual frequency. However, since each style is a set of 7 patches, which normally have different Vibrato frequency and delay, you can experiment with sliders in Scaling section. If you decrease Depth, Central Patch will be used, and if you change Velocity, Note#, Interval values, you will get different sound variations, where you may find Vibrato frequency and delay that suits you.

**Q: The behavior the plug-in in some modes looks like quite unpredictable and random. Is this normal? How can I reduce it?**

A: HumBox doesn't have random behavior, all variations of sound are its features due to using Context-Dependent Expressive Synthesis approach, when parameters of synthesis depend on musical context: i.e. note Velocities, their Numbers and Intervals. Of course, if you want a simpler sound and more predictable behavior, you can get this by reducing parameter these values. Depth regulator in Scaling section is a good place to begin.

**Q: Why do the vocals at times sound like they have characteristics of real instruments, like strings or harmonica?**

A: In most cases this happens when the initial phase of sound was cut off for various reasons. It is this phase that enables our hearing to differentiate timbres, during mid phase many sounds can be quite similar.