PHIL SPEISER

THE_PITCH 2 MINI

USER MANUAL

Tuning for vocals, done in one dial. Pick the key, turn HARD - NATURAL, and watch every note land, from a hard robot snap to a correction nobody hears.

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The latest version is always at philspeiser.com/manual/the_pitch-2-mini

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What It Is

THE_PITCH 2 MINI is a pitch-correction plugin for vocals and other single-note sources (a lead line, a bass, a sax). It listens to the note being sung, decides which note of your key it was meant to be, and moves the voice there. How fast and how firmly it does that is one dial: **HARD - NATURAL**.

All the way left, every note snaps to the key at once: the hard-tuned, robotic effect. Turn right and notes are still pulled in tune, but slides, scoops and vibrato come through the way they were sung. A new note is caught twice as fast as a held note is corrected, so short notes land on pitch while long notes keep breathing.

The window shows what is happening: a **note lane** where the grey line is what was sung and the coloured line is where MINI sends it. Below it you set the key and scale, choose how the plugin runs (0 MS, LIVE or STUDIO) and, if you are not sure of the key, let **DETECT KEY** find it for you.

THE_PITCH 2 MINI is free. You sign in once with your philspeiser.com account.

Why You'll Love It

- **One dial from robot to natural.** No settings to puzzle over: HARD - NATURAL is the whole sound.
- **Sing through it live.** LIVE runs at 2 ms, 0 MS reports no delay to your DAW at all: record and perform with it on the track.
- **STUDIO for the mix.** It looks 50 ms ahead for the cleanest result; your DAW compensates the delay.
- **See every note.** The note lane draws what was sung and what MINI made of it, note by note, and you can scroll back over the last minute.
- **DETECT KEY.** Play the vocal and MINI tells you its key, how sure it is, and what would make it surer. Nothing changes until you click APPLY.
- **Eight scales plus CHROMATIC.** Major, minor, harmonic and melodic minor, harmonic major, both pentatonics and blues.
- **Singer's drift.** If a singer sits a little sharp or flat over the whole take, MINI measures it and offers to compensate, with one click.
- **Automate the tricky notes.** NOTE, LEAN and AMOUNT exist for DAW automation: force a note, round a note up or down, or let an ad-lib through untouched.
- **KEY LINK.** Share the key with THE_INSTRUMENT 3 and other MINIs in your session: change it in one, the others follow.
- **Light on your computer.** Uses very little CPU while singing and almost none in silence.

The Interface at a Glance

- **Top bar** — the tooltip bar, undo / redo, Settings and the Bypass button.
- **Readout** — above the lane: the note being sung right now and how many cents it is off.
- **Note lane** — fills the middle of the window. Each row is a note; the notes of your key are lit and the root is named in gold. Grey = what was sung, colour = where MINI sends it, and the faint band between the two lines is the correction itself.
- **The strip above the lane** — shows LEAN / NOTE when DAW automation is overriding the note pick, and the singer's DRIFT when MINI has measured one.
- **Bottom row** — KEY & SCALE, MODE (0 MS / LIVE / STUDIO), and the **HARD - NATURAL** dial with **DETECT KEY** and **LINK** under it.

Hover over anything to read what it does in the tooltip bar.

Controls — In Depth

HARD - NATURAL (the dial)

- **What it does:** Sets how fast and how firmly notes are pulled to the key. Left = instant, every note snaps. Right = gentle: notes still end up in tune, but the movement inside them (slides, scoops, vibrato) is kept. The word above the number tells you where you are: ROBOT, HARD, TIGHT, SMOOTH, NATURAL.
- **Range/units:** 0 to 100. Default 50 (SMOOTH).
- **In your music:** 0 is the classic hard-tune effect. 20-45 is a modern pop vocal: clearly in tune, still human. 45 and up is invisible correction for ballads, jazz and anything with expressive vibrato.
- **Handling:** Drag up / down. SHIFT drags fine. Double-click resets to the default.
- **Automation:** Yes, as **Retune** (0-100).
- **Pro tip:** Set it on the hardest part of the song (fast runs, long held notes), not on the easy verse. If runs smear, go left; if held notes sound frozen, go right.

MODE: 0 MS / LIVE / STUDIO

- **What it does:** Chooses how the plugin trades delay for accuracy.
  - **0 MS** — LIVE with nothing for your DAW to compensate. The sound passes in about 0.2 ms. Made for hard tune; LIVE is about a cent more exact.
  - **LIVE** — 2 ms of delay. Sing through it while you record or on stage.
  - **STUDIO** — looks 50 ms ahead for the cleanest result. For mixing: your DAW compensates the delay, so the vocal stays in time with the rest of the track.
- **Default:** STUDIO.
- **In your music:** Record with LIVE or 0 MS so the singer hears the tuned voice in the headphones, then switch to STUDIO for the mix.
- **Automation:** No, it is a setting saved with your session (switching changes the plugin's delay, which a DAW should not do mid-song).

KEY & SCALE

- **What it does:** Sets which notes a voice may land on. Click to open the panel, pick the key and the scale together; the strip shows the notes the scale keeps, the root in gold. Scroll over it to step the key up or down.
- **Range/units:** Key C to B. Scales:
  - **CHROMATIC** — all 12 notes. Every sung note goes to its nearest note. The key is not used.
  - **MAJOR / MINOR** — the 7 notes of the key; the others are skipped.
  - **MORE** — harmonic minor, melodic minor, harmonic major (7 notes), major pentatonic, minor pentatonic, blues (fewer notes).

- **Default:** C, CHROMATIC.
- **In your music:** With the right key, a note sung between two notes of the scale goes to the one that belongs to the song, which sounds far more musical than CHROMATIC on a wobbly singer.
- **Pro tip:** With the fewer-note scales, a sung note outside the scale is pulled further, to its neighbour. Pick one only when the melody really keeps to it.
- **Automation:** No, setting saved with your session.

DETECT KEY

- **What it does:** Listens to the singing and finds its key. Click it and play the vocal. The button counts LISTENING 0:12 while it listens, and a panel shows:
  - the **one key** it hears (the lane previews that key's notes),
  - **how sure** it is: SURE, LIKELY, A GUESS, or NO KEY FITS (then CHROMATIC is the better choice),
  - **one hint** when it needs more: for example "play a passage with more notes", or which notes would decide between two keys.
- **Then: APPLY** sets KEY & SCALE to that key (one undo step). **DISCARD** stops listening. Nothing changes before you choose.
- **In your music:** The first answer comes after roughly 8 seconds of singing; a whole verse and chorus makes it sure. The key it shows does not jump around while you keep playing: it only changes when another key fits clearly better for a few seconds.
- **Pro tip:** A minor key and its relative major (A minor and C major) use the same notes and tune exactly alike, so MINI shows one name. Pick the other name in KEY & SCALE if you prefer it; the sound is the same.

LINK (KEY LINK)

- **What it does:** Shares KEY and SCALE with THE_INSTRUMENT 3 and other THE_PITCH 2 MINIs running on this computer. Pick a key in any linked one and the others follow. The number beside the link icon counts the other linked instances running now.
- **Default:** On.
- **Details:** A MINI on CHROMATIC follows the others but has no key to share. When THE_INSTRUMENT 3 plays a mode (for example D Dorian), MINI takes the major or minor key with the same notes (A minor). When you reopen a session, each MINI keeps the key saved with it.
- **Automation:** No, setting saved with your session.

The note lane

- **What it shows:** Grey = what was sung. Colour = where MINI sends it. Each row is a note, the notes of your key are lit, the root is named in gold.
- **Playback running:** The lane scrolls with your DAW's transport, also through silent parts, and stops the moment you stop.
- **Playback stopped:** The last phrase stays on screen. Drag or scroll the lane to look back over the last minute; double-click returns to now.

- **Pro tip:** If the coloured line jumps to a note you did not want, that is the place for NOTE or LEAN automation (below).

Readout

- The note being sung right now and its distance from that note in cents. It stays calm on purpose: it does not flicker between two notes on a shaky tone. When playback stops it keeps the last note, dimmed.

DRIFT (the singer's tuning)

- **What it does:** Some singers sit a little sharp or flat over a whole take, say 28 cents high on every note. MINI measures that in the background. When it finds a drift of 5 cents or more, the strip above the lane reads **DRIFT +28 CENTS COMPENSATE**.
- **Nothing changes until you click.** Click **COMPENSATE** and each note is read the way the singer meant it, so a voice that is sharp everywhere is no longer mistaken for the note above. The voice still lands on the normal A = 440 notes. Undo takes it back.
- **Click the value** for the choices: COMPENSATE, IGNORE, or LISTEN AGAIN (measures a new take).
- **The strip then reads** DRIFT ... COMPENSATED or DRIFT ... IGNORED.
- **Automation:** No, it is saved with your session.

Bypass

- The Bypass button in the top bar switches all processing off; the window then says BYPASSED - CLICK ANYWHERE TO RE-ENABLE PROCESSING. Bypass keeps the plugin's delay, so the bypassed voice stays in time.

Automation

THE_PITCH 2 MINI shows four parameters to your DAW. Everything else is a setting saved with your session.

Parameter	Values	What it does
Retune	0 - 100	The HARD - NATURAL dial. 0 = hard snap, 100 = most natural.
Note	Auto, C, C#, D ... B	Forces that note while it is set. It wins over LEAN and over the scale, and keeps the octave the singer is in. Auto = MINI chooses.
Lean	-1 Down, 0 Auto, +1 Up	Rounds the singing to the next scale note above (Up) or below (Down) instead of the nearest one.
Amount	0 - 100 %	How much of the correction plays. 100 % = full correction (default), 0 % = the voice passes exactly as sung, 60 % pulls it most of the way.

Note and **Lean** are not on the window: they exist for automation, for the few notes where the automatic choice is not the one you want. While one of them is active, the strip above the lane says so (NOTE, LEAN UP, LEAN DOWN) and the lane marks the note it forces. Set them back to Auto in your DAW to let MINI choose again.

Amount is also automation only. Changes glide over a few milliseconds, so you can switch it in the middle of a note without a click.

In your music:

- A singer lands a note between two notes and MINI picks the wrong one: draw **Note** to the right note for that word, or **Lean** Up / Down.
- A spoken line, a laugh or an ad-lib should not be tuned: draw **Amount** to 0 % there.
- A doubled vocal should sit close but not identical to the lead: **Amount** around 60-80 % on the double.
- The verse should sound natural and the hook hard-tuned: automate **Retune**.

Quick Start

1. **Insert** THE_PITCH 2 MINI on the vocal track (mono or stereo).
2. **Set the key.** If you know it, open KEY & SCALE and pick it. If not, click **DETECT KEY**, play the vocal, and click **APPLY** when it says SURE or LIKELY. Not sure at all? Leave it on CHROMATIC.
3. **Pick a MODE.** LIVE (or 0 MS) while recording, STUDIO for mixing.
4. **Turn HARD - NATURAL** until it sounds right: left for the effect, right to hide the correction.
5. **Watch the lane** and fix the odd note with Note / Lean automation, or leave it untuned with Amount at 0 %.

Tips & Workflows

- **The hard-tune effect:** dial at 0, 0 MS or LIVE, the song's key (not CHROMATIC). A wrong key is the most common reason the effect sounds odd.
- **Invisible correction:** STUDIO, dial 50-70, the song's key. Listen for held notes: they should still move.
- **Monitoring while recording:** LIVE on the input track, then switch to STUDIO later for the mix.
- **Backing vocals and doubles:** the same key as the lead (LINK does this for you), dial a little harder than the lead so the stack sits together.
- **Instruments:** MINI works on any single-note source. On bass, check the low notes on the lane; on chords it has no single note to follow.
- **Several vocals, one key:** leave LINK on in every MINI; set the key once.

FAQ

Does it work on stereo tracks?
Yes. A stereo vocal stays stereo: both sides are tuned together.

Which delay does it add?
0 MS: none reported (the sound passes in about 0.2 ms). LIVE: about 2 ms. STUDIO: about 50 ms, which your DAW compensates automatically.

It tunes a note to the wrong pitch. What can I do?
First check the key: with the wrong key, sung notes get pulled to notes that do not belong to the song. If the key is right, automate **Note** or **Lean** for that word.

DETECT KEY says A GUESS or NO KEY FITS.
Play a longer passage with more different notes (a chorus usually helps). NO KEY FITS means the melody uses notes from outside any one key: CHROMATIC is the right choice then.

It says A MINOR, but my song is in C major.
They use exactly the same notes and tune the same. Pick C MAJOR in KEY & SCALE if you prefer the name.

What does DRIFT mean, and should I compensate?
The singer sits slightly sharp or flat over the whole take. Compensate when MINI sometimes snaps notes to the wrong neighbour on that take; ignore it if everything already sounds right. The tuned voice lands on A = 440 either way.

Why are Note, Lean and Amount not on the window?
They are meant for single words and passages, and that is exactly what DAW automation does well. A knob on the window would apply to the whole song.

Does it use CPU when nobody sings?
Almost none: about a second after the input goes silent, MINI rests until the voice comes back.

Stuck, or found something this manual doesn't cover? Write to me at philspeiser.com/support. I answer support myself.