Spectrum analysers

Interrogate your frequency spectrum with this range of visualisers that come in all shapes and sizes. Or just, y'know… get SPAN

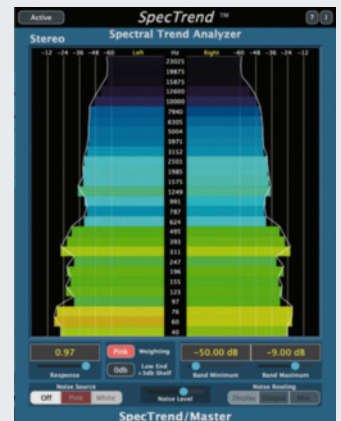

FM | MUST HAVE!

Voxengo SPAN FREE

It's likely already in your plugins folder, and it's well and truly the one to beat, so how does the world's favourite freeware plugin compare to the other analysers in this round-up?

SPAN is legendary for many reasons, including spectrum smoothing, custom resizing, True Peak reading and LUFS metering, mid/side, multichannel analysis with channel grouping, A/B-ing and loads more besides. For most situations, though, you'll just need to drop it onto a channel and start ogling it – after that, you're hooked on the simple, to-the-point visuals. For those who want to dive further into SPAN – or at least customise the default green colour-scheme – there's plenty for you to get through in its Settings window.

Yes, SPAN's looking slightly dated but not by a huge amount, and with a feature set you simply cannot argue with, this is still the best free spectrum analyser out there. It's a great advertisement for SPAN Plus ($45), which adds even more features.

voxengo.com

VERDICT 9.2

Direct Approach SpecTrend $20

Designed to help you reference your mix to a pink noise signal, which descends by 3dB per octave, SpecTrend gives you a mission to 'fit it into the rectangle' to get yourself a well-balanced mix, with any frequency bands that are over/undercooked appearing in red or blue. Green is your achingly simple target here.

Plus, you can reference to white noise if you prefer, and play (inaudible but displayed) white noise or pink noise signals. There's a low-end 3dB boost too, if you're going bass-heavy. It's a simple plugin that uses a well-known rule of thumb to give you a simple mixing mission.

directap.com
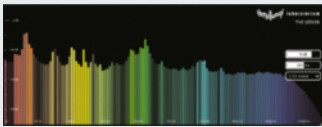
VERDICT 7.9

Gramotech GT Analyser FREE

With an FFT, stereo correlation and dual metering system, GT Analyser gives you a choice of

Mid, Side, Mid/Side, Left, Right, Stereo and Mono view options (one at a time). Signals are displayed with a very nice aesthetic, with a dedicated colour for each of those just mentioned. The interface is completely customisable in size, letting you have it large, small, square, letterbox, portrait… whatever works on your setup.

Over in the settings panel, you can customise the curve behaviour, resolution and weighting (Tilt). There's also the ability to save a snapshot of your current curve profile (hit Record and then Stop when you're done), in order to compare it to currently playing frequencies in the main analyser window. This could become your new go-to analyser very quickly!
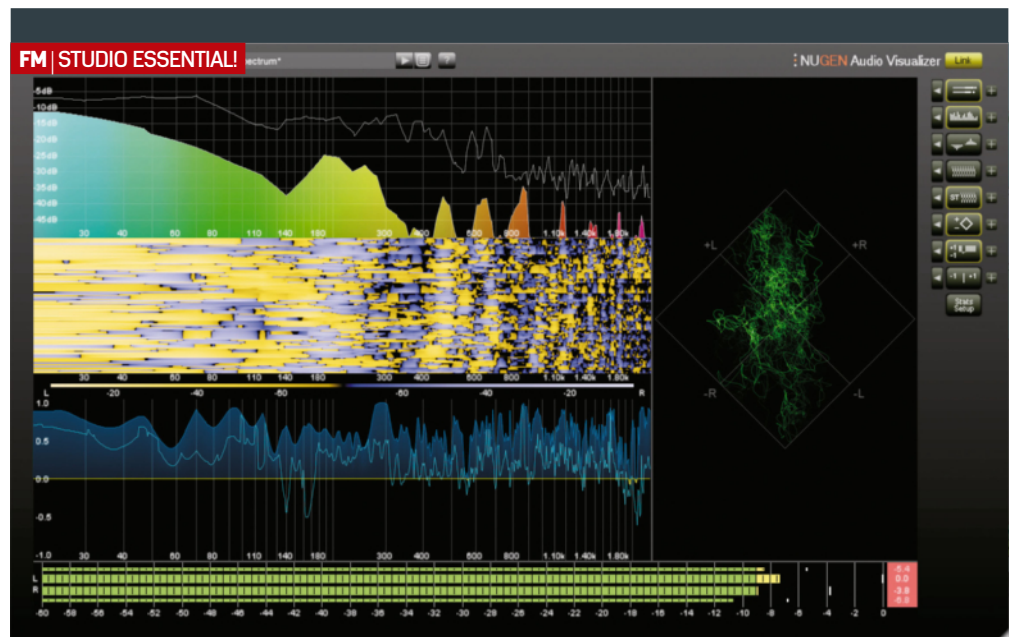
gramotech.co.uk

VERDICT **8.9**

Himiltungl Labs The Seeker FREE

This "analogue style" frequency analyser was the winner of KVR's Developer Challenge 2018. With a choice between one-per-octave and 192-per-octave bands, the plugin uses not just height on the Y axis to denote amplitude, but also brightness to denote the dynamics of any given band. Add to this the tweaks over resolution and integration time (release), and you've got an analyser that can tell you a few things that others can't.

The Seeker is free to play, and its unique insights can give you a little more info about the state of your tracks, so there's little reason not to see if you find it useful.

kvraudio.com

VERDICT **8.2**

Nugen Audio Visualizer
$199

A sort of 'modular visualiser', this one offers multiple ways to inquisite your audio signals, all of which can be switched in or out as you like – all within a resizable interface to help you customise things even further.

There's a level meter, spectrum analysers and spectrograms, a vectorscope, lissajous meter, two correlation meters and a polar meter, all of which can be switched in or out, making the interface bigger or smaller. Said interface is also resizable, making it very useful for placing anywhere you see fit, including its own dedicated monitor.

The UI itself is responsive when resized and re-ordered, although the visuals themselves could do with something of an update, which is a shame in a plugin so focused on the visuals. Fonts and text are also a little dated, but again, the visualisation data itself has a lot of substance to it. This is a very comprehensive, if not comprehensively slick, visualiser toolkit. It could be the only one you ever need, if you're happy with the graphics themselves… and the price of course.

nugenaudio.com

VERDICT **8.7**