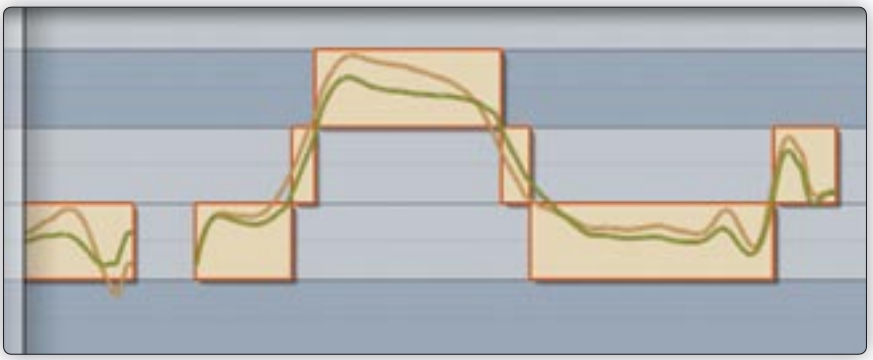
Vocals

Tracks 44 – 54:

Since the vocals are the lead "instrument," it's important to keep in mind their priority and function in the arrangement. I used the same vocal take in each of the three versions of this song (electric, acoustic, and remix) in order to demonstrate the variety of options that are possible using the same sources across differing backdrops.

Before applying any processing to the channel, I tuned the vocals offline using the Waves Tune plug-in. Waves Tune is very intuitive and displays its segmentation using notes rather than frequencies. The recognition of the source and target correction or manipulation is defined within a quarter note of the target pitch, which makes for a very real representation of the way the human voice behaves.



I didn't use the plug-in for heavy pitch correction or manipulation, but rather to smooth out some of the transitions between relatively large intervals.

There are three main parameters to consider when using Waves Tune. Ratio determines the depth of correction applied in relation to the source pitch and the target. Applying a ratio of 100% will produce full correction towards the target pitch.

Smoothing the vocal track before EQ resulted in a firm sound with tight dynamics that will minimize the need for extreme automation later on.

The next parameter is Note Transition, which applies a smoothing transition curve between the source and the desired target. At 800, the highest setting, the transition will be the smoothest, while at a setting of 0, correction commences immediately.

The final parameter is Speed, which refers to the attack of the correction, determining the amount of time it takes the correction to reach its maximum effect.

Once tuning was complete, I saved my changes in a renamed session so that I could go back to the original if needed.

With the tuned vocal track in place, I began applying online processing to the channel itself **(track 44)**, beginning with a Renaissance DeEsser. I like to eliminate unwanted sibilance before continuing with further processing. This allows greater flexibility later in the mix, and usually produces better results when boosting high-mid and high frequencies.

The Renaissance DeEsser's adaptive threshold mechanism automatically adjusts the threshold in relation to the 6 dB overall difference between the verse and the chorus. The reduction range is determined by a shelving curve, which lowers the high end and delivers a more effective spectral clean up. I wanted to mask the higher sibilants that existed above the 5 kHz detection filter point rather than reduce the "ch" or "sh" sounds. The threshold was set to deliver a maximum of 9 dB reduction.

We can apply the psycho-acoustic characteristics of human hearing to allow instruments to cut through the mix without overloading the master section.