

Make One Voice Sound Like a Choir.

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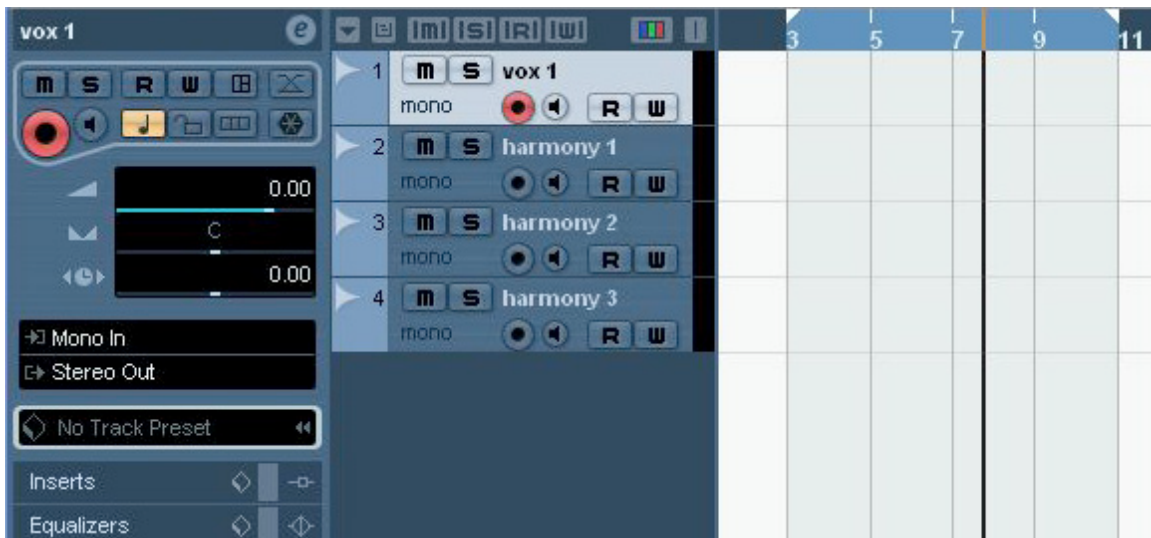
In this tutorial we are going to explore how we can make a simple four-part vocal harmony sound like a full choir. We're going to do so by using a freeware VST plug-in called "Clone Ensemble" and a few simple recording techniques. This effect is useful for creating an ethereal sounding backing vocal, and it's also a lot of fun! I'm using Cubase 4, but the techniques would be the same in any audio sequencer.

Step 1

First, go grab yourself a copy of [Clone Ensemble](#) and drop the .dll in your plug-ins folder. The unregistered shareware version is unexpiring but feature limited, meaning you are restricted to one preset with no control over the settings. However, this preset is still very impressive. I'm using the registered version, so I will be able to add things like bass, alto and unison voices. If you like the effect I'd recommend that you purchase it, as the price is very reasonable. You could also use Antares Avox.


Step 2

Right click in the track column (in Cubase 4) and add four mono audio tracks. In the example below I have double-clicked the text box for each track and named them.



Step 3

Record your first vocal line.

 *vox 1.mp3*



Step 4


Record your three other harmonies in the remaining tracks. Now we have a four part harmony.

 *4 harmonies dry.mp3*



Step 5

Add Clone Ensemble as an insert effect on Track 1. There are plenty of settings that can be tweaked, but for now I'm just going to reduce the number of clones (centre-left button) to 8. I find this amount of clones is about right and still sounds fairly natural. Add Clone Ensemble in the same way, and with the same settings, on each track.

 *vox 1 cloned.mp3*



Step 6

If we look at the "Sex Machine " button on the left, the default setting is "Unison", but on my audio Track 1 I want to enhance some of the bass. To achieve this, I've selected B:U (Bass and Unison) and experimented with the formant buttons and the wet/dry mix until I'm happy with the sound.



I've also selected U:A (Unison and Alto) and adjusted some settings on track three to enhance the higher harmony.

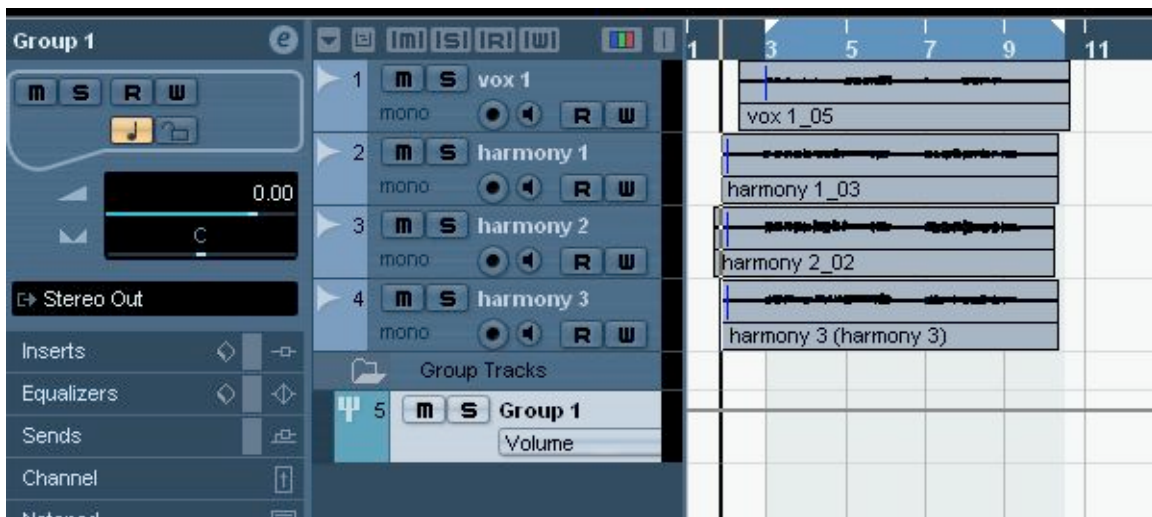


Step 7

It's all sounding pretty good now, but I want to apply a long reverb over all four parts. To do this, I've added a group track. You can do this by right-clicking in the channel column and selecting "add group track".

In the tab that says "Stereo out" on each audio track, select "group 1". This routes the audio output of each audio track to the input of the group track, and any effects or EQ applied to the group track will effect all the audio tracks routed to it. The volume of all four tracks can then also be controlled by the group track.

🔊 *4 harmonies cloned.mp3*



Step 8

Now I've added Steinberg's Roomworks reverb as an insert effect to the group track. I've selected the "Hall Saint Pauls" patch for a nice long Cathedral sound and I've adjusted the wet/dry mix to 60%.



Step 9

As a final touch, I've adjusted the EQ on the group track to cut out some of the bass.



The finished product is a very nice backing choir sound that would be great underneath a powerful lead vocal... although with someone who is a better vocalist than me!

Listen to the finished product:

 *finished choir.mp3*

To experiment further with this sound you could try using a different vocalist for each harmony, and record 4 tracks of each harmony with Clone Ensemble applied to each track. To do this I would record each harmony x 4, with Clone Ensemble applied, bounce this to one stereo track, and repeat with each harmony to save on CPU load. For some further examples of this effect used really well you should check out the 'Music' section of the Clone Ensemble website.

Happy cloning!