

> reviews / peavey revalver mk III

**INPUT/OUTPUT LEVELS**  
Click the Learn buttons, both the strings and the correct levels are automatically set

**PRESETS**  
There are plenty of presets to get you started

**OPTIONS**  
Click here to enable the mixdown quality mode, amongst other options

**GENERAL CONTROLS**  
Bypass and tweak modules, switch between mono and stereo and load/save presets

**SIGNAL ANALYSERS**  
View things like the frequency response and check out the transient response

**TRIPLE CHANNELS**  
Several of the amp models have three channels and, like other controls, this switch has MIDI learn

**ADDITIONAL OPTIONS**  
Some modules have extra parameters

**TUBE EDITOR**  
All of the tubes are editable - see the boxes opposite for details

**HARMONIC DISTORTION ANALYSIS**  
This shows the relative strengths of up to twelve of the component's harmonics

**RIR SPEAKER SIMULATOR**  
Contains numerous impulse responses of real speaker/dynamics, with tone and quality options

# Peavey PC MAC ReValver Mk III £179



The third edition of Alien Connections' venerable amp sim sees guitar gear giants Peavey lending experience and models to the cause

## System requirements

**PC** 1GHz CPU, 512MB RAM, VST host for plug-in usage

**Mac** 1GHz CPU, 512MB RAM, VST/AU host for plug-in usage

## Test system

**PC** HP Pavilion 2.8GHz processor, 1GB RAM, Windows XP

> When we reviewed ReValver Mk II in **cm111** (7/10), we were impressed by the control the user had over its modules, but we found the basic sounds lacking. A lot has changed since Mk II's release, though, as ReValver's developers, Alien Connections, were acquired by hardware giant and guitar amp specialists Peavey.

Software amp simulators have always featured thinly disguised 'sound-alike' units, based on classic hardware amps. The companies who make said amps have generally stayed away from software, but Peavey have taken the unusual step of creating computerised versions of their most popular real-world offerings.

## The new guard

The big new additions for ReValver Mk III come in the shape of six new amp models. Peavey have been bold enough to emblazon these with the names and front panels of the real hardware, demonstrating their confidence in the sounds that the software delivers. As with previous versions, modules are added to a virtual rack and can be reordered by simply dragging. They're processed in series, from top to bottom, although

you can achieve parallel routing using the Signal Splitter tool. Tooltips pop up for almost all controls, making operation easy.

ReValver is MIDI mappable, with MIDI learn available for all parameters. Host automation can also be used in, say, Cubase or Live, although the range of accessible parameters is predetermined in this case. New for this version is the Mixdown mode, which increases the sound quality, intended for use when rendering your song.

As for those amps, first up is the dual-channel 6505. It works best when the gain is turned fully up, producing smooth, modern high-gain sounds that are perfect for rock and metal. The 6505+ is a variation that offers even more bite courtesy of extra virtual valves. It must be said that these emulations knock the spots off any previous attempts to model Peavey amps, and are definitely our pick of the bunch.

Next, there's the JSX - Joe Satriani's signature model. This three-channel amp can produce sweet, clean sounds as well as Satch's trademark heavy tones, though they're a bit more scratchy and classic rock-sounding than the 6505's.

The Triple XXX is intended to create the

"Peavey's involvement has clearly paid off because the six new amps are first-class"

ultimate in metal tones - with the mid-range attenuated, those frightening scooped sounds just pop out. It's also great for fluid lead tones, especially with a touch of delay.

It's not all screaming distortion and wailing leads, though - some more subtle, laid-back sounds can be found on the excellent Classic 30 combo model, for example. With it, we were able to produce fine, crunchy tones as well as that elusive 'just breaking up' sound that's ideal for blues rhythm parts.

The Valve King model, meanwhile, is a dual-channel affair that's also capable of pleasingly crunchy sounds, though its clean tones deserve mention too, ranging from Stevie Ray Vaughan to Robert Cray stylings.

All the amps in ReValver are available as separate preamp modules, as are many of the corresponding power amps; numerous speaker cabinet/mic combinations can be separately emulated by the RIR convolution-based speaker simulation. Alternatively, the Speaker Construction Set enables you to design speaker models, including ones that don't exist in the real world (huge or tiny cabinets, for example).

The only minor gripe we have is that it would've been nice to have seen a Peavey bass amp included to complete the set.

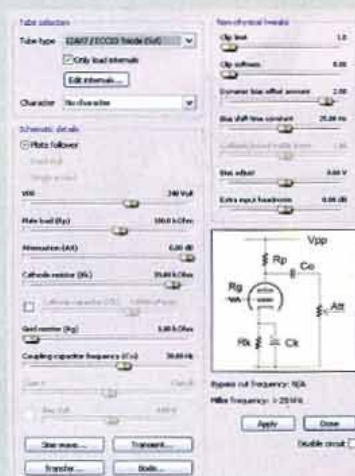
### Old school effects

Apart from the new amps, ReValver Mk III remains largely the same as before. You get nine other amps/preamps, including emulations of a Mesa Boogie Dual Rectifier, Marshall JCM900, Vox AC30, Fender Bassman and a Matchless. There's also a set of nine 'tools' (including tuner), and 30 stompboxes and effects. Among the latter, you'll find all the usual suspects, including overdrive/distortion, modulation effects, delay, reverb, octaver and so on.

The thing is, ReValver's 'old' sounds were



The modules from previous ReValver versions now sound a bit better, though they're still not amazing



Mess about with grid resistors, coupling capacitor frequencies and more - and all without the risk of electrocution

### Tweak till you're weak

ReValver's unique selling point has always been the astounding number of ways in which you can analyse and edit the virtual amp models - you'll certainly never hear a ReValver user grumbling about not having enough control over their guitar tones.

A casual right-click on any module enables you to select the understated Tweak This Module option. 'Tweak' is putting it mildly because you can alter just about any part of the virtual circuitry that makes up the unit's signal path. This is especially true of the preamp/amp models, where you can get inside any of the tubes (valves) and tinker with a great number of factors,

ranging from something as simple as tube type to more advanced, technical-sounding parameters like dynamic bias offset amount. And in case you doubt that these adjustments are really making any difference, there are four different signal analysis tools.

We mentioned in our Mk II review that we felt it was essential to use these options in order to improve the set of average factory sounds, but with the massive step up in quality afforded by the new amp models in ReValver Mk III, the tweaking facility takes on a different role: it can now be used to fine-tune and customise those already great tones to your personal taste.

average at best, so quantity isn't a big selling point - Peavey have made changes to the transformer, tube and power supply emulations, so the pre-existing modules do sound different, but it would be a stretch to say they sound significantly better. However, the brand new convolution reverb module is a worthy addition.

We should point out that ReValver does have one trick up its sleeve that no other amp sim can boast: its rack can host VST effects. This means you can use other guitar-oriented plug-ins in conjunction with ReValver, or, indeed, the sort of effects that you'd never find in a traditional setup.

While the old ReValver modules may still be a little uninspired, Peavey's involvement has clearly paid off, because the six new amps are first-class and easily rival the likes of Guitar Rig and AmpliTube. In fact, they're more convincing than the former and maybe even the latter, too. ReValver may not be as slick as the other big amp sims, but it has unique features such as in-depth tweaking and VST hosting. Sound-wise it's a giant leap in the right direction that gives us high hopes for future development. **cm**

Contact Peavey UK, +44 (0) 1536 461234  
Web www.peavey.com

### Alternatively

**IK Multimedia AmpliTube 2**  
cm101 >> 10/10 >> £265  
Great all-rounder, but lacks ReValver's high-gain quality

**Guitar Rig 3**  
cm120 >> 9/10 >> £230  
A wide range of modules, but some find the amp tones disappointing

### Verdict

**For** Great range of convincing sounds  
Official recreations of Peavey amps  
Convolution reverb now included  
Can host VST plug-ins  
A tweaker's dream

**Against** Legacy modules are average  
No Peavey bass amp

While the competition might be a little slicker, for realistic, great-sounding Peavey amp simulations, ReValver is the new king

9/10