

Mac PC What is it? Bass amplifier modelling plug-in **PRICE: £269**

CONTACT: IK Multimedia, 01223 234414 WWW.amegsvx.com INFO: Crossgrade from AmpliTube 2, £159

**PRESET MANAGER**  
A functional and intuitive preset management system hides ugly file selector screens unless it's absolutely necessary to show them

**AMPLIFIER SELECTOR**  
A drop-down list lets you choose from four Ampeg amplifiers: BA-500, B-15R, SVT-CL or SVT-4PRO

**MUTE AND BYPASS**  
Hit bypass to assess the difference Ampeg SVX actually makes. And be sure to click mute before unplugging your bass

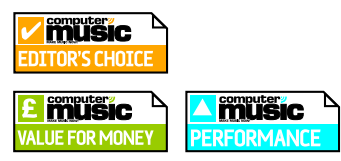
**MODULE SELECTOR**  
These four buttons provide instant access to the four screens in SVX (Tuner, Stomp, Amp and Cab)

**AMP CONTROLS**  
These faithfully recreate the sound and performance range of the controls on the original hardware amps

**TUNER**  
Even if you're not on the main Tuner page, it's still visible, albeit in a miniature form

**MAIN MIX CONTROLS**  
These controls adjust the level and phase of Ampeg SVX, so you can mix both the mic and DI'd bass sounds as you would on a hardware mixer

# IK MULTIMEDIA Ampeg SVX



**On the DVD**

**TUTORIAL FILES**  
Browse to the Audio demos folder to hear examples of two Ampeg SVX presets

With guitar amps done, IK Multimedia are turning their attention to the bass. Is this the plug-in your bottom end's been crying out for?

**SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS**

**PC:** Pentium III 1GHz/Athlon XP 1.33GHz, 256MB RAM, Windows XP, RTAS/VST host, USB port for Synchronsoft dongle  
**Mac:** PowerMac G4 866MHz, 512MB RAM, OS X 10.3.9 or later, RTAS/VST/AU host, USB port for Synchronsoft dongle

**TEST MACHINE**

**PC:** Carillon AC-1 Pentium 4 2.4GHz, 1GB RAM, Windows XP SP2, Steinberg Cubase SX 3.1, Ableton Live 5

IK Multimedia's star has undoubtedly been on the rise over the past few months. Of course, products such as SampleTank and T-RackS had already established them as developers to watch closely, but their most recent releases – Miroslav Philharmonik, AmpliTube 2 and Classik Studio Reverb – have utterly surpassed anything they've done before.

And so we come to their latest creation. Ampeg SVX is clearly cut from the same technological cloth as AmpliTube 2, and is a collection of

premium-quality (and, in the case of the original hardware, premium-priced), physically modelled bass amplification equipment. It was but three issues ago that we were lamenting how bass is often overlooked in music production, and – as if to answer our prayers – Ampeg SVX has come a-knocking (or, more accurately, a-thumping).

In general, bass rigs are physically bigger but less complicated than guitar rig setups. Consequently, although Ampeg SVX is based on AmpliTube 2 technology, its user interface is even simpler. There are only four modules

(Tuner, Stomp, Amp and Cab) and there are no routing options. This is because, unlike in AmpliTube, there's only one instance of each module.

**Black is back**

Taking their lead from the original Ampeg equipment, the graphical displays in SVX aren't so much greyscale as 'blackscale'. This means that the plug-in's user interface is pretty dark, but it's still sexy and clear enough that you can accurately see the settings of the dials.

As in AmpliTube 2, the dials aren't

MIDI assignable other than through your sequencer's automation system, and because there's no standalone version of Ampeg SVX, a host application is a requirement, though there's no shortage of free VST hosts for those who want to use the software as a live performance tool.

But is that a likely scenario? Perhaps more so than you might think. While most guitarists would balk at the idea of not having a real amp on stage, many bass players – even at heavyweight, full-size rock concerts – are quite willing to plug straight into the PA. This is because bass spreads very evenly, giving fewer monitoring problems than guitarists experience.

With Ampeg SVX, live bass performers can have the best of both

(BA-500, B-15R, SVT-CL, and SVT-4PRO) with any of the six cabinet models (B-15R, BA-500, BXT-410H, PB-212H, SVT-410H, and SV-T810E). You can also make a selection from the virtual mic cabinet, with models of the AKG C-414 and D-20, Sennheiser MD-421, Shure SM57, the near-indestructible Electro-Voice RE-20, and the microphone king that is the Neumann U87. The final output is stereo, but using the adjustable ambient field, you can also run the plug-in in mono.

You also get a selection of stomp boxes. These are well-voiced for bass, with the chorus pedal, for example, giving you instant access to that classic, swirling 'ballad bass' sound. There's also a delay, an auto-filter, a compressor, a volume pedal, a bass

## “EVERYTHING THAT YOU'D EXPECT TO BE ABLE TO DO WITH A BASS RIG, YOU CAN DO HERE”

worlds: the convenience of plugging directly into a PA coupled with the unique tones and heritage of some unquestionably classic bass rig systems.

As you might expect, you can mix and match the four amp models

wah, an octave divider, and a surprisingly usable overdrive pedal.

So how does it all sound? In a word, perfect. Everything that you'd expect to be able to do with a bass rig, you can do here. However, many (perhaps even most) home-based

### Who Are Ampeg?

Computer music aficionados will surely be familiar with IK Multimedia but perhaps not with Ampeg. So who are they?

Let's start by telling you who uses their gear: the likes of AC/DC, Linkin Park, Black Sabbath, Kiss, Blink 182, Van Halen, Pantera, Metallica and Marilyn Manson. Pretty big names, we're sure you'll agree.

Suffice to say, if you're looking for the kind of bass gear that makes you feel like you've swallowed a demented squirrel while simultaneously being kicked relentlessly in the groin – and yet makes you feel strangely positive about the whole experience – then you

need look no further than Ampeg's.

Don't assume, however, that the presence of only 'hard rock' bands on the above list means that Ampeg are only known for creating stadium-quaking bass boxes. They've been in business for well over 50 years now, and their bass gear has been used by bands working in every genre imaginable.

Although the selection of amps and cabinets in Ampeg SVX isn't as wide as the roster that comes with AmpliTube 2, it still covers plenty of ground and enables you to create a wealth of classic bass tones.



▲ Instant earthquake – just add cabs



▲ Don't try this at home – it's more than most bassists could dream of

production teams may hit a pretty big problem when it comes to using Ampeg SVX: the limits of their own studio environment. The unfortunate truth is that the amplifiers and speaker cabinets modelled by Ampeg SVX are so good that they significantly outperform the limited bass capabilities of most people's monitoring systems.

You can dial up any of Ampeg SVX's presets in the full confidence that it accurately simulates some of the best bass equipment in the business, but unless your studio is equipped with some seriously heavy-duty speakers, you'll neither fully appreciate the results, nor be in a position to modify them reliably.

### Think hard

So, although Ampeg SVX is an excellent product, you might be best upgrading your monitoring system before buying, if your budget (and neighbours!) will allow. Otherwise you might be doing your music more harm than good by using it. This problem is nothing to do with SVX itself, of course – we're simply issuing a word of warning before you part with your cash. When it comes to bass, you really don't want to be flying blind.

Speaking of cash, we reckon that Ampeg SVX represents excellent value for money. Those who buy it will be getting top-class, signature-approved physical modelling at a price that's a mere fraction of what you'd pay for the original hardware.

For those who want to create sophisticated bass sounds, Ampeg SVX is truly beyond fault. Simple, practical and useful, it will surely find favour among all who use it. **cm**

#### ▶ ALTERNATIVELY

**Native Instruments Guitar Rig 2**  
cm95 >> 9/10 >> £350

Although primarily a guitar amp simulator, Guitar Rig 2 does have a great Fender Bassman model

**IK Multimedia AmpliTube 2**  
cm101 >> 9/10 >> £269

Another guitar amp sim, this features a bass amp and selection of cabs. Plus, if you buy it, you can get Ampeg SVX for £159

### VERDICT

#### FOR

- + Emulates the best bass gear in the business
- + You can mix and match amps and cabinets
- + Excellent selection of virtual mics
- + Beautiful to look at
- + No need to read the manual

#### AGAINST

- Easily outperforms your monitoring system!

Ampeg SVX picks up where AmpliTube 2 leaves off. It's the best way to sculpt massive bass sounds without being issued an ASBO

#### RATING

