

IK Multimedia AmpliTube Fender £195



A version of the popular amp simulation software especially for Fender fans *by Trevor Curwen*

The usual remit of amp and effects modelling software is to provide us with as wide a variety of tones as possible, utilising different models from several different manufacturers. But IK Multimedia has broken this mould with the various specialist editions of its AmpliTube software. So far there have been editions to emulate the gear of Jimi Hendrix, to provide purely metal tones, and there's also Ampeg SVX for bassists, with the modelled amps and cabs based solely on the Ampeg brand. IK has now done a similar thing for Fender with its new AmpliTube Fender, the official Fender guitar amp and FX software, which, to quote IK, is "sound-certified and approved by the tone gurus at Fender".

What you get with AmpliTube Fender are 12 different amps with 12 matching cabs that can be mic'd with a choice of nine virtual mics. There are also six stompboxes modelled on Fender originals, plus six rack effects. Included in the package is the AmpliTube X-GEAR software, which enables models from the various AmpliTube editions to work together, and you also get the RiffWorks T4 recording software.

Sounds

AmpliTube Fender follows the established AmpliTube pattern of a signal path that goes through five modules – tuner, stompbox, amp, cab and rack effect. You can have up to six stompboxes and six rack effects in this path, and two such signal paths can be combined in various configurations offering



The graphical detail on the amps and effects is impressive

plenty of choice for sound creation. A large number of presets for each amp model can be called up for an instant hit, offering a well-rounded selection of tones for plenty of different musical genres.

The amps are split between five vintage fifties and sixties amps and seven modern or current model Fenders. As an official Fender release we can see why the company might want to put the emphasis on the modern, but it's probably not a choice that would suit all potential users. For example, we would rather have seen a tweed Champ than the modern Champion 600 version.

Nevertheless what's here does provide a balanced range of tones that capture the vintage Fender factor perfectly, as well as tipping the hat to the high-gain fraternity with the Super-Sonic and the MH-500 Metalhead. Worthy of particular mention is the new '64 Vibroverb model, complete with a switchable modification based on one that was done by César Díaz for SRV.

While the rack effects, taken from the Cyber Twin SE, are essentially generic, the stompboxes (with the exception of the tape delay) are Fender all the way and show enormous attention to detail both in the sound and the graphics, which

feature the light show from the Fender Phaser and the sideways and up-and-down movement of the pedal treadles. The speaker cabs are mainly those you'd associate with specific Fender amps, but one pleasant surprise is the presence of the Vibratone 1 x 10-inch rotary speaker, with its own unique sound.

Verdict

With plenty of variety and a great sound, we have no hesitation in recommending AmpliTube Fender. The package will doubtless provide a wide range of sounds for anyone who's looking to buy their first amp simulation software. It should be borne in mind, however, that other packages – not least the parent version of AmpliTube 2 – might just offer the user a broader palette for recording, as they include amps from Marshall, Vox and other brands.

But anyone who already owns one or more of the other versions of AmpliTube and has the means and the desire to expand on it will certainly get plenty of mileage out of the Fender package, and may feel it is worth buying for the new models included. **G**

The Bottom Line

We like: Great sound; new unique models; attention to detail in graphics

We dislike: Would have liked more vintage amps; no post-amp reverb

Guitarist says: If you favour Fender over all others, this is the software amp and FX package for you

The Rivals

As one of the staple guitar sounds, all major software packages have some Fender amp models. **Line 6's POD Farm** (£79) has several Fender models, particularly the **Platinum** (£251) version, with Twin, Deluxe, Champ, Bassman, Vibroverb and Dual Showman. **Native Instruments' Guitar Rig 3 software edition** (£229) includes the thinly-disguised Tweed Delight, Tweedman and Twang Reverb. **Peavey's Revalver III** (£179) offers mainly Peavey amps, but also features a Bassman. For those on a tight budget, **dB Audioware's Flying Haggis** (£49), although not actually name-checking any Fender models, does have some Fender-flavoured sounds.

IK Multimedia AmpliTube Fender

ORIGIN: Italy

PRICE: £195

FORMATS SUPPORTED: Audio Units, VST, RTAS (Mac OS X) – VST, RTAS (Windows XP/Vista)

COMPUTER SYSTEM

REQUIREMENTS: Mac or PC – See IK website for full details

AMPS: 12 (see website for full details)

CABINETS: 12 (see website for full details)

MICROPHONES: 9 (see website for details)

STOMPBOXES: 6 (see website for full details)

RACK EFFECTS: 6 (see website for full details)

EXTRAS: Tuner, SpeedTrainer phrase trainer, Metronome, AmpliTube X-GEAR shell-host software, RiffWorks T4 recording software

RANGE OPTIONS: AmpliTube Fender Studio (includes Stealthplug and LE version of the AmpliTube Fender software) – £126

IK Multimedia
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Test results

Build quality ★★★★★
Features ★★★★★
Sound ★★★★★
Value for money ★★★★★

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★