

16 different amp models cover most of the bases. TG was particularly smitten with the edgy sparkle of the Vox AC30TB

The Korg's backlit LCD screen ensures that even if the venue's lighting is poor, you'll still be able to see your delay parameters

The Korg's expression pedal lets you control anything from wah to volume, while a strip of LEDs tells you exactly where you're at

Moving between the Korg's banks of 32 presets is easy. Stamp away, because you won't be able to break it!

£249

KORG AX3000G

SERIOUS AMP MODELLING JUST GOT A WHOLE LOT CHEAPER... WORDS: HENRY YATES

Let me guess, another amp modelling unit?

When it comes to crowded marketplaces, the modelling industry is right up there with Spitalfields meat market. We've seen amps that replicate other amps. We've seen guitars that mimic other guitars. We've seen stompboxes, computer software and kidney beans. And now, just when you thought it was safe to nip down to Sotherby's for a genuine 1968 Marshall Super Lead, Korg have launched the AX3000G.

Normally, TG would respond to a new amp modelling unit with a gentle sigh and another cup of tea. But this is Korg: a manufacturer whose products have always blown us away with their authenticity, versatility and prices. The AX3000G takes the AX10G and AX1500G units we already know, and grafts on testicles and chest hair. Not literally, of course, that would be hideous.

So how does it compare to its rivals?

As a giggable, pedal-equipped modelling unit, the Korg is in direct competition with the Line 6 PODXT Live and Vox Valvetronix ToneLab SE. It's worth noting that, at £249, the plucky new contender is considerably cheaper than either (they're both £399). In terms of build, the AX3000G is also punching above its weight, with chunky knobs and a backlit LCD screen offering a marked improvement over the AX10G's fiddly dials.

Like some number-crunching accountant, it now becomes TG's task to assess how many modelling settings the AX3000G has in comparison to the competition. The answer? As many as the ToneLab SE, but fewer than the PODXT Live. You have 16 amp/drive models (covering all the usual modern and vintage bases), 11 different cabinet types (from tweeds to stacks), 11 pre-effects, 11 modulations, 11 delays and 11 reverbs.

The level of detail is mind-boggling, the authenticity generally great, and the price within the reach of anyone

Someone at Korg obviously has a *Spinal Tap*-style obsession with the number '11,' but we've no complaints over levels of versatility.

What do all the other buttons do?

You've also got 32 presets (pre-programmed from a combination of amps, cabs and effects), and space in the memory to save a further 96 of your own. This is the obligatory first step for the lazy gearhead – it's a simple case of stamping the footswitches until you strike gold – but it only scratches the surface of what the AX3000G can do.

Top of the 'That's bloody clever!' list is this unit's ability to change the tonal character of your pickups, ushering in a chunky humbucker swagger if you're using a Tele, or a singlecoil quack if you're rocking a Les Paul. And if you're really sick of your electric, why not replace it with an electro-acoustic? It's all done via a quick twist of the Pre-FX knob, with the intuitive LCD screen keeping you up to speed even if the house lights are down.

Yeah, and what else?

The AX3000G also features the expression pedal to end them all. Not only does it offer the usual control over volume and effects parameters (fruitiness of wah, depth of delay, etc), but it also has a veritable landing strip of LEDs that light up as you operate it, giving a visual representation of where you're at. Throw in the Expression Step Sequencer (it lets you assign up to eight parameters and specify how they're played back), four different output options (depending on

WHO'S IT FOR?

Anyone who plays regular gigs and is curious about amp modelling

INFORMATION

ORIGIN: China
PRESETS: 32 [plus space for 96 edited presets]
AMP/DRIVE MODELS: 16
CABINET MODELS: 11
EFFECTS MODELS: 11
 Pre-FX [autowah etc], 11 modulation types [chorus etc], 11 delay types [analogue etc], 11 reverb types [canyon etc]
ADDITIONAL FEATURES: Expression pedal, pickup modelling, Expression Step Sequencer, backlit LCD screen, tuner, amp/line selector, noise reduction
CONNECTIONS: Send/Return jacks, MIDI in/out
POWER SUPPLY: DC 9V adaptor (supplied)
CONTACT: Korg UK 01908 857101
WEB: www.korg.co.uk

ALTERNATIVELY

Korg AX10G – £115
 Line 6 PODXT Live – £399
 Vox Valvetronix ToneLab SE – £399

whether you're plugged into a mixing desk or a stack) and the option of editing/storing on your laptop, and TG needed to be fanned with a tea towel to calm down!

Hey, that's just the quantity. What about the quality?

Korg is rightly proud of its REMS modelling technology, and the results here are hard to criticise. If you held a gun to our head, we'd probably choose the POD's renditions of vintage amps over the ones served up by the AX3000G, but it's the closest of calls. The Bassman-style model booms and barks, the Vox AC30TB sparkles, and the model influenced by the Marshall Super Lead is pure 'brown sound'. The more modern amp settings were impressive, too (check out the 'US Modern' setting for a taste of Metallica-style grind), and we didn't really feel the need to sully them with too many effects – not that we'd be short of choices. Korg have provided an array of reverbs, pitchshifters and delays, plus a few wobbly curiosities that even The Edge wouldn't touch with a bargepole.

It doesn't seem too expensive...

Just as the AX10G was a great first step into the world of modelling, so the AX3000G is a giant leap into the world of serious modelling. The level of detail is mind-boggling, the authenticity generally great, and the price within the reach of anyone. If money grew on trees, we'd probably still go for the PODXT Live. Until that day comes, you won't go wrong with the Korg.

FOR: Great versatility and sounds, and it's bloody cheap!

AGAINST: Not as comprehensive as the POD

TG RATING:

