

BOSS RC-3 £189

The latest BOSS compact looper gives you three hours of recording time straight out of the box *by Trevor Curwen*

Launched at this year's NAMM show, the RC-3 is a looper in BOSS's ubiquitous Compact Pedal form. It's not the first time BOSS has provided a looper in this range, but the RC-3 differs from the previous and now discontinued RC-2 in that it offers stereo rather than just mono looping, adds a USB 2.0 connection and vastly increases the storage capacity by providing three hours of recording time and 99 memory locations to the RC-2's 16 minutes and 11 loops.

Other features of the RC-3 include a rhythm guide: 10 different rhythm types, including rock, pop, funk, shuffle, R&B, and latin with tempo, set numerically in BPM or via a tap tempo button on the pedal's control surface, with a choice of time signatures. Rhythm volume is set by the inner control of the pedal's dual concentric knob, the outer portion controlling the level of loop playback. Rhythm type and time signature are saved alongside any recorded phrases.

The RC-3 also sports an auxiliary input for recording stereo audio sources into the pedal and a USB connection, which as well as allowing backup of any loops you've got saved on the RC-3 to computer, also allows you to load any 16-bit/44.1kHz wav files (up to 1.7GB in size) into the onboard memory. Both of these input functions allow the loading of any music that you may wish to loop and learn or perhaps use as part of your live performance.

While loop recording, playback and overdubbing can all be controlled via the pedal's own footswitch, there is

provision for adding up to two external footswitches to allow more versatile foot control functions – stop, tap tempo, phrase clearing and memory shift – to be carried out.

In Use

One press on the footswitch starts recording, a second press starts overdubbing, a third press starts playback and to stop playback you press the footswitch twice. Alternatively you can set the RC-3 up so that the sequence of presses is record/playback/overdub. Holding the pedal down operates the undo/re-do function. Recording can also be initiated as soon as you start playing your guitar if you use the auto-recording feature.

All of this works fine and the sound quality is pristine but, as anyone who has used a looper knows, timing is crucial to getting a rhythmically correct looped phrase. The rhythm guide can obviously help here and you either have the option of playing along with the rhythm with recording starting as soon as you press the footswitch, or hitting the footswitch from silent and having one measure of rhythm as a count-in before recording starts and the rhythm continues. If you don't want to hear the rhythm, you can keep its volume turned right down and just use the flashing rhythm light as a visual clue.

There are plenty of different uses for this pedal, whether you just want to jam with yourself, lay down a set of chords to practise over, compose and arrange new songs by adding new parts in overdubs, or use it as a live performance tool,



either in recording phrases and looping them live to play over or by using it to trigger pre-recording backing tracks or sound effects – you can set up some of your phrases for one shot playback rather than as repeating loops. The RC-3 also has the facility, via the tap tempo button, to slow phrases down without changing pitch, so it can be used as a phrase trainer for learning any difficult parts that you load into it from computer.

Verdict

The RC-2 has been a very popular pedal, but the new RC-3 kicks the whole concept up to a new level with a balanced set of practical facilities that allow a range of uses, all in a value-for-money pedal that can easily slot onto any pedalboard. **A**

The Bottom Line

We like: Compact size; large capacity; onboard rhythms
We dislike: Not much
Guitarist says: A lot of looping power for such a compact package

The Rivals

The **DigiTech JamMan Solo** (£234), is the RC-3's main rival. It's a mono looper with rhythm patterns, 99 internal memories and 35 minutes of looping, expandable to 16 hours via an SD memory card. It can also speed up or slowdown loops without changing the pitch. If you just want a rudimentary looping function and need to save board space the **HardWire DL-8 Delay/Looper** (£186) offers 20 seconds of stereo looping while the **Akai HeadRush E2** (£129) offers over 23 seconds in mono.

BOSS RC-3

PRICE: £189

ORIGIN: Taiwan

TYPE: Looping pedal

OTHER FEATURES: Internal rhythms: hi-hat, kick and hi-hat, rock 1, rock 2, pop, funk, shuffle, R&B, latin, percussion

MAX RECORDING TIME:

Three hours

PHRASES: 99

DATA FORMAT: Wav (16-bit, 44.1kHz, stereo)

CONNECTIONS: Standard jack inputs (A and B), stereo mini jack aux input, standard jack outputs (A and B), standard jack footswitch input (stop/memory shift), USB

DIMENSIONS: 73 (w) x 59 (h) x 129mm (d)

POWER REQUIREMENTS: DC 9V: Alkaline battery (9V, 6LR61), AC Adaptor (PSA series: sold separately). Rechargeable Ni-MH batteries cannot be used

BATTERY LIFE: Approx three hours

INCLUDED ACCESSORIES: Alkaline battery (9V, 6LR61)

OPTIONS: AC Adaptor (PSA series), Footswitch FS-5U (£34), Footswitch FS-6 (£49)

RANGE OPTIONS: RC-30 (£279), RC-50 (£455)

Roland UK

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www.roland.co.uk

Test results

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

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

There are plenty of different uses for this pedal, whether you just want to jam with yourself, lay down some chords to practise over, or use it live