



Peavey Transtube Bandit 112 & Envoy 110

£249 & £179

In the market for a first
gigging amp? Perhaps your
search is over...
by Chris Vinnicombe



PEAVEY BANDIT 112
PRICE: £249
ORIGIN: China
TYPE: Solid-state guitar combo
OUTPUT: 80 watts RMS into eight ohms, 100 watts RMS into four ohms
VALVES: None
SPEAKERS: One 12-inch Peavey Blue Marvel driver
CABINET: Particleboard
DIMENSIONS: 530 (h) x 590 (w) x 28mm (d)
WEIGHT (kg/lb): 18.5/40.9
CHANNELS: Two
CONTROLS: Clean channel volume, vintage/classic/warm switch, low, mid, high, channel select, lead channel pre gain, classic/modern/high gain switch, low, mid, high, post gain, master reverb, boost. Rear panel: direct out level, power level switch, damping switch
CONNECTIONS: Two 6.4mm jack instrument inputs for high/low gain. Rear panel: 6.4mm jack connections for direct out, external speaker out, effects loop send and return, remote switch
FOOTSWITCH: Two-button unit (£TBC, not included) engages boost and switches channels
RANGE OPTIONS: The Transtube series starts at £29 for the Audition practice amp equipped with a four-inch speaker
Peavey UK
01536 461234
www.peavey.com

Almost all guitarists will have encountered a Peavey Bandit at some point in their playing career. Many a player's first gigging amp, the mere mention of the model's name is enough to make even the most hirsute pub-rocker misty eyed with nostalgia. Happily, the latest version looks well-equipped to continue the tradition, and the flagship model of Peavey's Transtube series is joined here by the slightly smaller and simpler Envoy 110, which carries a smaller speaker and has less going on around the back.

It's easy for players who have spent four-figure sums on all-valve backline to sneer at amplifiers such as this, but for aspiring teenage guitarists looking for an amp with which to cut their gigging teeth, or indeed any player on a tight budget, they more than fit the bill. This reviewer's first 'proper' amp was a Trace Elliot Tramp that did the business for banging out grunge covers as a teenager and it handled itself pretty well at gigs too. Both the Bandit 112 and Envoy 110 are substantial but not particularly heavy and could easily cope with being transported to that pub gig or garage rehearsal via nothing more spacious than a car seat. Open back construction in both cases also allows for a lead and a couple of pedals to be stowed relatively safely should

PEAVEY BANDIT 112	TEST RESULTS
Build quality	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★

- WE LIKED** Versatile range of drive sounds; enough power for gigs; 12-inch driver delivers more bottom than the Envoy
- WE DISLIKED** Very little, but buyers may expect more onboard bells and whistles



Both amplifiers benefit from efficient, neat Chinese construction that is entirely consistent with that exhibited by other products at this price-point

you wish to do so. Both amplifiers benefit from efficient, neat Chinese construction that is entirely consistent with that exhibited by other products at this price-point.

Both amplifiers have virtually identical front panels, with the only difference being the presence of a power switch on the wider Bandit, while the Envoy's is situated on its rear panel. Clean and lead channels are equipped with independent three-band EQ sections allowing for more precise adjustment than a shared configuration. The clean channels don't have separate volume and gain pots, but the vintage/classic/warm switch means that you should be able to get

a little break-up and warmth at less than excruciating volume levels.

Both amplifiers also benefit from a three-position voicing switch on their lead channels. The classic/modern/high gain demarcations are self-explanatory and allow you to dial in a variety of overdriven tones. In the master section, reverb level is global so setting the right amount for both the clean and lead channels will require something of a balancing act, while the boost control functions like a master volume unless the footswitch is utilised, when it offers up to an extra 10dB volume hike that is ideal for solos or big riffs.

The Envoy's rear panel is very simple, with connections for headphones, ➔

The rivals

BANDIT
 Kustom KGA65DFX £229
 Marshall MG100DFX £299
 Randall RX75R £269.99
Peavey has plenty of competition in the sub-£300 solid-state market. Kustom's KGA65DFX pumps 65 watts out of a 12-inch Celestion driver and offers a 24-bit digital effects processor. Marshall's MG100DFX is a hugely popular first gigging amp that again features onboard digital effects and plenty of oomph courtesy of its 100-watt power stage. Finally, Randall is one of the most respected names in solid-state technology and the RX75R is a must-try for metalheads.



There are enough tonal options to please any aspiring guitarist

PEAVEY ENVOY 110
As Bandit except...
PRICE: £179
OUTPUT: 40 watts RMS into six ohms
SPEAKERS: One 10-inch Peavey Blue Marvel Driver
DIMENSIONS: 431 (h) x 492 (w) x 234mm (d)
WEIGHT (kg/lb): 11.3/24.9

CONTROLS: Clean channel volume, vintage/classic/warm switch, low, mid, high, channel select, lead channel pre gain, classic/modern/high gain switch, low, mid, high, post gain, master reverb, boost.

CONNECTIONS: Headphone output, speaker-simulated direct output and footswitch socket

PEAVEY ENVOY 110	TEST RESULTS
Build quality	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★

- **WE LIKED** Light weight and easily portable; same preamp as its bigger sibling
- **WE DISLIKED** May struggle to compete with loud drummers!



→ footswitch and speaker-simulated direct out. The Bandit has some useful extras which impact on the amplifier's sonic performance and dynamic response. A variable power level switch attenuates the output power to either 25 or 50 per cent, which is useful should you find yourself in an environment where the full wattage is a little excessive, or more break-up is required from the clean channel. Similarly, the loose, medium and tight damping settings are worth experimenting with, particularly for higher-gain overdriven rhythm sounds. The Bandit lacks a headphone out, but instead features a level control for its direct output, allowing you to feed a mixer just the right level to avoid any ugly clipping.

SOUNDS: As both combos have the same preamp circuit there's obviously a great deal of tonal crossover, with the output power, speaker and cabinet size being the main differentiating factors. The Bandit's adjustable damping feature is more subtle in terms of its impact on the overall sound and there isn't a 'best' position as such, it's a very subjective thing. Both amplifiers' clean channels are exactly what one might expect from decent modern transistor



amps, being well-balanced and fairly neutral, allowing the character of the instrument to come through. If you like your cleans with a smidgen of valve-like grit we'd recommend looking elsewhere, but fans of Nile Rodgers-style percussive funk or country pickers will find plenty to like. In both cases the digital reverb is pretty convincing and provides a close approximation of an analogue spring-loaded circuit. The only problem is that adorning your clean sound with an abundance of reverb can make for a grainy and unfocused lead sound when switching channels.

As you might expect, the 40-watt Envoy 110 wilts a little at full tilt in a band situation, but that's really where the Bandit's larger driver and power rating is designed to come in. At stage volumes, the Bandit doesn't exactly have the richest or most detailed clean sound we've ever heard, but it's possible to retain plenty of pristine cleanliness and compete with a drummer. The larger cabinet dimensions and 12-inch driver contribute to a much chunkier, firmer bottom end response. This pays dividends on the lead channel for palm-muted metal rhythms; obviously there's not the physical thump of a 4 x 12, but close mic'd through a PA it isn't an issue as the amp provides more than enough stage volume for effective monitoring of your sound, and the perennial beer crate should never be forgotten if you are having trouble hearing yourself.

The range of drive sounds on offer is broad, with the pre-gain control and classic/modern/high gain switching

offering workmanlike voices for gritty blues, classic rock, eighties hard rock, alt-rock, modern metal and numerous other genres. While none of these sounds could be described as definitive, there is more than enough variety for aspiring guitarists to find their voices. At the highest end of the gain spectrum, proceedings can get a little fizzy and synthetic sounding, particularly on the modern voicing, so it's worth having another listen back to the heavy sounds that you like so much on record as there's often nowhere near as much preamp drive required as you might think.

Verdict

Although Peavey has a separate Transtube EFX series with built-in effects processing, we can't help feeling that the Bandit 112 and Envoy 110 look a little spartan in the features department when compared with some of their rivals. Competition at this end of the amplifier market is fiercer than ever, so the lack of onboard effects and other bells and whistles might turn off some potential purchasers. That said, there are countless players looking for a simple, solid clean channel and a versatile range of overdriven voices, and with that in mind we'd recommend checking out both amplifiers. The Bandit's bigger speaker, cabinet and higher output make it the best choice for anything at the louder, rockier end of the spectrum in a rehearsal or gig environment, while the Envoy is better suited to smaller situations. 📍

Peavey Transtube Envoy 110

Guitarist RATING ★★★★★

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