

Morevox Retroverb 3 : November 2009

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WAV Impulse Responses

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Retroverb 3 is a 24-bit/44.1kHz library of 450 Impulse Responses that can be used with any convolution reverb plug-in. Downloadable as a 341MB Zip file, it unzips to 440MB. The earlier Retroverb 2 offered 50 more traditional-sounding IRs divided into Halls, Large Spaces and Plates, but version 3 boosts this significantly with four more folders, each holding a further 50 IRs. The traditional Rooms & Chambers, Halls, Large Spaces, and Plates are covered, and there's more of the same in surround (both 4.0 and 5.0 formats), but there are two rather more intriguing selections: Combo-Amb and Classic Drive.

Impulse response libraries often tend to provide super-clean and realistic environments, or pure wackiness, but Retroverb falls somewhere in between: its IRs have all been recorded cleanly, using high-quality gear, but many were digitally mixed, using several responses captured from real spaces and vintage hardware reverbs. Many of the Classic Drive offerings were recorded onto one-inch tape (a Studer A80).

The 30 halls and churches offer smooth build-ups and decays, while the 25 large spaces tend to sound wider, and exhibit more lively, aggressive attacks and early reflections, and the 40 rooms and chambers cover smaller (real and hardware) environments, with some pre-delay and slapback reflections. Thirty plate IRs offer different flavours, with the rich, dense and slightly metallic tails that fit so well into modern music, and some were captured using a monster (8 x 4 feet) EMT 140 unit.

The 25 Combo-Amb selections provide a good range of shorter ambiances, created from claustrophobic real spaces or using the whippy, tangy spring reverbs of guitar combo amps. These are great if you need 'in your face' treatments, and edge into special-effect territory with some highly resonant offerings. However, the highlight for me was found in the Classic Drive folder, which hosts a versatile set of echo chambers, a collection of resonant and metallic 'Roomy Plates', some creative but sometimes aggressive 'Sounding Venues', and the special treatments of 'Sustained', with extended tails lasting up to seven seconds.

Recording to tape has given these IRs added 'head bump' warmth, for a more solid bottom end, some (mostly third-harmonic) distortion, plus squashed transients and a creamy, smooth high end. Purists might not appreciate this 'tinkering', but the acid test is whether they work in context, and with many instruments they sounded gorgeous, adding warmth, depth and a healthy dose of attitude.

Overall, Retroverb 3 provides an extremely varied range of high-quality reverb and ambiance treatments, is keenly priced, and offers something different. Finally, it's worth mentioning that Morevox offer a discount if you buy the rest of the Morevox range along with Retroverb 3. Like Retroverb, the DrumBuster kits incorporate the sound of a Studer A80, while Elektromorph I and II have added punch and character, and the more aggressive DriveDrums concentrates on added tube and preamp distortion. It all got a good response from me! Martin Walker

\$99 download.

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