Mac PC What is it? Vintage organ plug-in PRICE: €129

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LINPLUG Organ 3

computer music PERFORMANCE

Their charming budget organ won plenty of fans, but can LinPlug score similar success with this higher-priced update?

▲ Vintage vibes abound! We just can't keep our hands off that warm, wooden fascia

▶ SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

PC: 1GHz processor, 512MB RAM, Windows XP, VST host

Mac: 1GHz processor, 512MB RAM, Mac OS X 10.2.6 or later, VST/AU/RTAS host

▶ TEST SYSTEM

Mac: G5 dual 2GHz, 1GB RAM, OS X 10.4.8, Apple Logic Pro 7.2

On the DVD

AUDIO DEMOS
Three Organ 3 presets – a classic Hammond, a mellow tone and a bass – can be heard 'pon the disc

▶ ALTERNATIVELY

Native Instruments B4 II
cm96 » **9/10** » £150
This straight B3 emulation remains the standard by which all other software organs are judged

USB Retro Organs
cm109 » **8/10** » £66
A collection of sample-based organ patches, this has limited editing facilities but sounds lovely

When Steinberg introduced the plug-in instrument concept back in 1999, we didn't expect it to trigger the release of a glut of tonewheel organ emulations. But that's exactly what happened: Native Instruments launched B4 the following year, LinPlug released daOrgan in 2002, and USB gave us Charlie in 2004. What's more, we've been led to believe that all of these products have been strong sellers.

Organ 3 is the latest version of LinPlug's instrument – thankfully, the 'da' prefix now seems to have been dropped – and it's a much more serious, comprehensive proposition than its predecessor. Like its rivals, it takes Hammond's legendary B3 as its primary source of inspiration, though you also have access to other tonewheel sets (notably from classic Farfisa and Vox organs).

Everywhere you look in Organ 3 you find new features. There are now three playable 'manuals' – Upper, Lower and Pedal – and each of these has not only its own set of drawbars but also its own ADSR envelope. Dedicated Percussion and Vibrato sections have also been installed (both of which are essential to getting that classic Hammond sound) and two effects units are now in place. Each of these can host a reverb, delay, chorus, gater, lo-fi or rotary processor, the last of which emulates the sound of the classic Leslie speaker.

Countless other tweaks have been made too and, thanks to an easily navigable interface (tabs open up pages for the organ, effects and settings controls), Organ 3's considerable power is easy to harness.

Vital organ?

Most importantly, LinPlug have created an instrument that's a blast to play, sounds terrific and is far more versatile than you might at first imagine. The 100+ supplied presets ably demonstrate Organ 3's capabilities – you get everything from throbbing and mellow Hammond sounds to basses, effects and synth-like patches – and the plug-in's intuitive layout actively encourages you to create your own. Organ virgins will have to spend a bit of time working out how moving the drawbars affects the overall tone, but when considered as a whole, this is far from a complex bit of software.

It might be much more expensive than the first daOrgan (which was originally offered for a trifling $29), but this price rise simply reflects the fact that LinPlug's organ has matured to such an extent that it's now a serious alternative to NI's B4 II. If all you want are presets, check out USB's Retro Organs, but for those who crave superior control and flexibility, Organ 3 is an excellent choice. **cm**

VERDICT

FOR
+ Loads of new features
+ Authentic sound
+ Easy to program
+ Varied range of presets…

AGAINST
– …Though a few more would be nice
– More expensive than before

LinPlug's organ has blossomed into an instrument that will appeal to programmers and players alike. Those who buy it will find themselves using it frequently

RATING 8

The hard sell

Organ 3 can be purchased directly from LinPlug's website (it's just a 6.6MB download, by the way), but if you're looking for the complete Hammond experience, you might like to know that it also comes free with Doepfer's impressive-looking d3c.

Unlike practically every other MIDI controller on the market (Native Instruments' B4D excepted), the d3c (€420) is designed specifically for controlling software organ emulations. To this end, it offers nine drawbars for the upper manual, nine for the lower manual and two for the bass pedal. A selection of knobs and buttons, meanwhile, enables you to control the other elements of your onscreen organ.

The d3c can be partnered with the d3m (€420). This five-octave keyboard offers the classic 'waterfall' playing action and a set of preset selection buttons. Up to two d3m units can be used in combination with the d3c.

See **www.doepfer.de** for more info.

▲ Two d3m units and a d3c can be bolted together to make one great organ controller

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