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Revox B77 MK III

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THE COMEBACK OF A LEGEND

By Maximilian Merk (Text and Photography)





— During the golden decades of analog audio technology, reel-to-reel tape machines were considered the ultimate in sound quality. From the 1950s through the early 1980s, they shaped recording studios and high-end home Hi-Fi systems alike. Before that, tape machines were strictly reserved for broadcasters and professional studios. Yet as more convenient formats emerged—first cassette, then CD, and finally streaming—they slowly faded from the market. One reason for this was the relatively complex handling that required knowledge and care: threading, rewinding, spooling, archiving, and so on. Another was the fact that high-quality tapes were never cheap. But anyone who has heard a true master tape copy

knows: few other formats compare to this fidelity.

In fact, even today some music is still recorded on tape. A copy made directly from the original master bypasses several sound-degrading steps—such as creating a lacquer disc for vinyl pressings or potentially error-prone analog-to-digital conversion. This enables a listening experience that's closer to the source than anything offered in the digital world. Moreover, this realization is spreading, and with it a growing interest in reel-to-reel tape machines. Revox, a name synonymous with Swiss engineering excellence, is currently responding with an impressive comeback.

The new Revox B77 MK III is far more than a simple rehash of the beloved MK II. The near-indestructible mechanics of the MK II remain unaltered—no improvement was necessary. However, the electronics in the MK III have been redesigned from scratch. The entire signal path has been reworked, removing all capacitors that may affect sound quality. The tape heads and pinch roller are not only brand new but also technically superior. And, for the first time ever, the tape machine features a fully balanced design. It is complete with matching XLR inputs and outputs suitable for professional studio environments. Yet what's truly innovative is its network connectivity: the B77 MK III can be seamlessly



While the VU meters on modern power amplifiers can basically be regarded as decoration, they serve an actual purpose on a tape machine.



The (for now) limited availability of tapes is an argument against buying a tape machine (for now). The hefty price per recording is easily explained by the high license fees and the fact that each tape is produced individually in real-time.

integrated into Revox's in-house multiroom and multiuser system. It can be controlled through an app on a smartphone or tablet, and from anywhere in the world. This may seem contradictory. In fact it makes perfect sense: the technical excellence of the past meets the convenience of the present. There's nothing else like it on the market today.

Visually, the new B77 honors its heritage. The classic Revox design has been carefully modernized without losing its iconic character: black surfaces, solid aluminum parts, satisfyingly tactile switches, and the legendary open-reel drive. Simply turning the machine on is an experience to savor. All the mechanical

clicking and whirring grounds the machine in space. You can hear and feel what's happening, creating a true tactile delight.

But Revox doesn't stop there: acquiring Horch House, including master tape specialist Volker Lange, means that they've brought software competency to match their hardware under their roof. Master tape copies offered there sell for around €480 (approx. \$520). That may sound steep, but the expense makes sense: the licensing fees alone amount to about €120 per tape, then add the cost of high-quality RTM tape stock and the labor-intensive real-time duplication process, executed with utmost care. These are no high-speed, mass-produced

copies: each tape is made one at a time. The result is a level of quality that surprises even the most discerning ears.

Choosing a master tape copy is a conscious decision, which is what fundamentally sets it apart from streaming. To illustrate the difference, we can consider streaming as a buffet. Everything is available, accessible at any time, a quick bite here, a fleeting taste there. You browse, skip, and shuffle. Variety is the focus, not the individual experience. On the other hand, a master tape copy is a dinner at a fine-dining restaurant. You pay more, take your time, make a deliberate choice. In turn, you are rewarded with something ►

ACCOMPANYING EQUIPMENT

Turntable: VPI Prime Scout | **Phono preamplifier:** Van den Hul The Grail | **Cassette deck:** TEAC V-7010 | **Streamer/Music server:** Meridian Sooloos | **Integrated amplifier:** Krell K-300i with digital section | **Loudspeakers:** Wilson Audio Sabrina | **Subwoofer:** Velodyne DD12+ | **Cables:** Nordost cable family Red Dawn | **Rack:** Bassocontinuo Accordeon



Involved listening pleasure: A crash course in tape handling is clearly recommended for proper operation. For example, the push buttons in the picture above allow for switching between two equalization curves and magnetic flux densities in order to tune the playback conditions to suit various tape types



thoughtfully crafted and refined. It's not just about filling up—it's about savoring. Not speed, but depth.

And so this mindful listening—this renewed (and yet old) appreciation of music—is the real comeback that the B77 MK III represents. It's not a lifestyle product for background noise. Instead, it's a tool for those who want to truly hear what's on the tape.

The first time hearing a master tape copy on the new Revox B77 MK III will take you a moment to process. Not because something's missing, but because nothing is missing. The music feels immediate, physical, and natural. It's not "spectacular" in some artificial, polished way. Instead, it just sounds *right*. And that is the difference.

On the very first tape I played—a live studio session by Incognito—I was amazed by how organically the sound filled the room. The vocals positively reached into the room, the bass had body and precision, and the soundstage was wide, deep, and completely detached from the speakers.

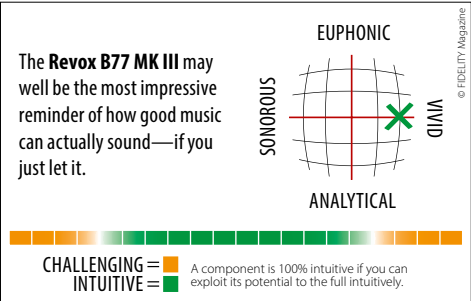
Right then, my girlfriend walked into the room. She's not particularly into Hi-Fi. She paused, listened for a few seconds, and then, genuinely surprised, said: "*Wow. What's that?*" And that's exactly the point: the Revox B77 MK III impresses not with specs or data, but with presence. The music itself becomes an experience simply through its quality. The Revox reveals its refined side with Al Di Meola's "And I Love Her.". The guitar is

tangible in every nuance, pluck, and subtle pause in timing. Yet it never sounds clinical or overexposed—it remains musical. The highs are silky, the mids open and natural, and the bass lean yet substantial. Nothing is artificially inflated. Rather, everything is honest and to the point.

Djabe & Steve Hackett's "Camino Royale" offers a completely different sonic landscape: this time denser, more complex, and more dynamic. Once again, the Revox is exhibiting perfect control. Nothing is lost, no details are veiled. For all the power, the Revox maintains structure. On this track its confidence with demanding passages is clear. Transients are crystal, and dynamic swings are fully realized instead of truncated. ►



Even in 2025, nothing about the B77 is digital. Its operation is purely mechanical. Even so, the machine can be operated through an app like you'd expect in our day and age, if desired.



In contrast to the original versions, the MK III is fully symmetrical, which can be seen from the XLR inputs and outputs. Laymen are advised to stay well clear of the voltage selector switch.



Next, Alice Cooper's "I'm Alice" brings its own energy—punchy, direct, and thrilling. The bass brings authority, the vocals locked in with precision. Even at high volume, the soundstage holds firm. Nothing ever becomes shrill or falls apart. Instead, everything remains transparent and controlled. And so all of the recordings have this in common: after a short while, you forget you're listening to a medium. The technology completely fades away. You don't hear the tape: you hear the *music*. Authentic, immediate, and moving. It's as if the B77 MK III steps aside on purpose, even though, technically, it's a very complex machine. The Revox B77 MK III is much more than a technical remake: it's a return to what really

matters. It's about sound, not features—it's about depth, and emotion. This isn't lifestyle décor. No, it's a serious tool for those who want to hear music as it should be: direct, unfiltered, and analog.

Combined with Revox's own Master Tapes—copied in real time at the Revox Klangwerk facility—you get a completely analog signal chain from the recording studio to your living room. Furthermore, it's so consistent and high-end that it's nearly unmatched worldwide. And yes, €480 for a master tape isn't cheap. But those who choose such a format aren't looking for compromise. In return, they get something that streaming can never truly offer: attention, depth, time. This music

doesn't just play in the background—it becomes the main event. ■

Tape machine | Revox B77 MK III | Concept: classic tape recorder with (optional) digital LAN control; test sample still without recording capability | **Playback:** 2-track, 19 cm/s and 38 cm/s | **Playable formats:** all common tape formats | **Drive:** Revox's own three-motor drive mechanism | **Counter:** digital totalizer | **Remote:** controllable via Revox multiuser system and app | **Special features:** fully balanced construction with XLR inputs and outputs, revised signal path without capacitors, precision sound heads with extended service life, production at Revox Klangwerk, Villingen (max. 20 units/month) | **Warranty period:** 2 years | **Price:** around € 16,000

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Along with production, warehousing, and classic restoration workshops, the Revox headquarters in Villingen is home to an in-house museum, where we explored iconic models from nearly eight decades of history. One example is the early E36 (1961–62), whose motor design and mechanical durability became the blueprint for all future models.



To make sure of optimal master tape quality, Revox integrated Horch House—along with CEO Volker Lange—into the company. The current music catalog includes 140 titles, all copied at original playback speed and thoroughly tested. The climate-resistant archival boxes used for delivery make these truly “quality tapes for eternity.”

77 Years of Innovation and Commitment to Tradition

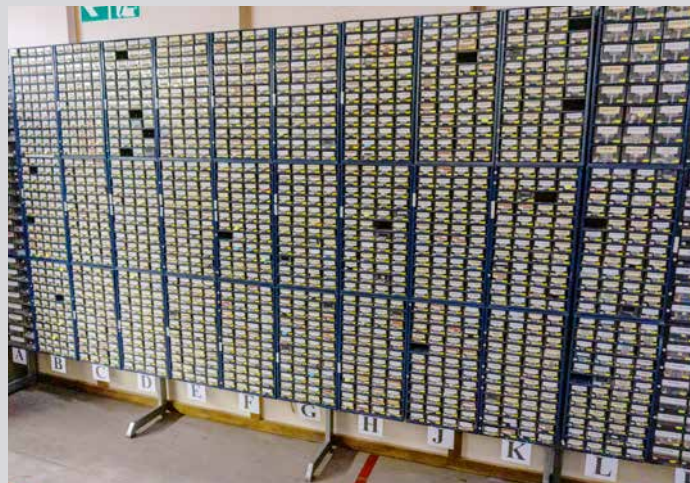
As part of our B77 review, we had the opportunity to visit the Revox factory in Villingen.

Revox was founded in 1948 by Willi Studer in Switzerland. From the very beginning, the goal was to produce reel-to-reel tape recorders of the highest quality. As early as 1951, the company introduced its first in-house model, the T26. This was a unit of such exceptional quality that it quickly became established in the broadcasting world. Yet the launch of the 36 series meant that Revox set new standards: three motors and a minimalist mechanical design formed the foundation for all subsequent models. After 80,000 units were produced, the A77 took over in 1967—a tape machine still regarded

as one of the best of its kind. This first “77 series” model became one of the best-selling tape recorders of all time. It floored users with its sound quality, reliability, and design, and its success marked what is often referred to as the golden age of Revox tape machines. Building on this legacy, the B77 was introduced more than a decade later in the late 1970s as an advanced evolution, which concluded the Revox tape machine lineup for the time being. When production ended in the mid-1980s, the company achieved another milestone, yet in a completely different field. In 1983, Revox introduced one of the first multi-room audio systems, at a time when few people even imagined such technologies.

Revox has continued evolving this concept for decades and has established itself as one of the leading providers in the field. Importantly, a key element of the system is its multiuser platform: every family member can enjoy a fully personalized audio experience.

After taking us on a journey through the company’s history, Marketing Director Jürgen Imandt brought us to a familiar face from the analog scene: Volker Lange of Horch House. Revox has integrated these tape specialists into the company to access their top-notch quality in-house tape production. To verify the results, the Villingen team uses a dedicated listening room with



The warehouse is a key part of the analog Revox world: its extensive inventory of components enables the Classic Department to restore vintage tape machines to like-new condition. The quality of the refurbishing is so high that Revox offers the same warranty as that for their new products.

a stylish, modern living-room atmosphere. In this space we got a first impression of the upcoming B77 MK III review model. We were especially impressed by the innovative app integration and remote-control capabilities of this analog machine.

Next, we explored the tape production area. The arsenal of Studer A80 tape machines would move any analog aficionado to tears: these legendary studio machines copy tapes at original playback speed onto raw tape from RTM. About 950 master tape copies are produced each month from the continually growing Revox music catalog. Then, the tapes are shipped in climate-resistant archival boxes, the same ones used by professional music archives. The tour continued through the warehouse and the quality control area. Every product is

thoroughly tested before shipping. Next to the warehouse is the production area, which features a dedicated burn-in department for circuit boards. This process shortens break-in time for the customer and guarantees a high quality experience from the very first minute of playback. This is also where the B77 is assembled, along with turntables and loudspeakers (including invisible in-wall variants). Due to the company's stringent quality standards, only about 20 units can be manufactured each month. Everything is made by hand, so you won't find any machines or automation here.

A unique part of the operation is the Classic Department, where they meticulously restore vintage Revox equipment to its original condition. This is a fitting approach, as the devices were designed for decades of reliable use. Many owners have their Revox

machines completely overhauled after 20 to 30 years, since their sound and build quality remain timeless. In fact, Revox still stocks replacement parts for every model it has ever produced—from knobs and motors to entire circuit boards. Each restored unit undergoes rigorous testing to make sure it not only functions perfectly but also matches the original appearance. Revox is so confident in its restoration process that it offers a two-year warranty on refurbished devices.

The service is currently in such high demand that customers can expect at least a one-year wait. The Classic Department feels like a memory workshop, where past and future meet in a truly unique way. Few companies take such active care of their own legacy. This is proof that a truly great machine never goes out of style.

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& ANALOG MASTER TAPES

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