



# Anthem AVM-60

If you're familiar with the current range of Anthem MRX audio video receivers, you'll be forgiven for believing that the AVM-60 is another member of that family – and it is, if not quite in the way you think.

While the MRX components are stand-alone AV receivers, the AVM-60 is an AV processor, which means it offers all the inputs and facilities of an AV receiver, but without on-board amplification.

Instead, the AVM-60 relies on external power amplifiers, such as Anthem's own P-Series, A-Series or M-Series devices. It's also ideal for installations employing active loudspeakers that don't need separate amplifiers.

Why opt for an AV processor/power amp combination, rather than an integrated AV receiver? Well, removing the power amps reduces the potential for interference and noise. It also means the pre-amp/processing circuitry and the amplifiers benefit from dedicated power supplies.

Next, a separate processor allows more flexible installation options, especially in larger home cinema installations where speaker arrays may require more power than even Anthem's flagship MRX-1120 AV receiver can offer. And besides, more

power and more headroom will generally offer enhanced performance, especially when it comes to the often taxing dynamics of a movie soundtrack.

I'm a declared fan of Anthem's room correction system, which comes standard with the AVM-60 (and all of its MRX AV receivers). The system comprises a calibrated USB microphone complete with stand, and sophisticated but user-friendly software that requires the use of a Windows laptop to run, but then optimises the performance of the AVR or processor for the specific room and loudspeakers used.

The AVM-60 is a full-featured AV processor, not only providing the latest surround sound formats, but also the increasingly popular, object-based surround sound codecs such as Dolby Atmos, and DTS:X. It offers an 11.2 channel array, which can be allocated in a number of ways, including 7.2 plus a second zone, or a full 7.2.4 Atmos configuration.

Its sonic class is underscored by powerful quad-core signal processing, and 768 kHz/32-bit differential output digital-to-analogue converters.

Video-wise, the AVM-60 is fully HDMI 2.0a and 4K Ultra-HD compatible,

complete with High Dynamic Range, BT.2020 colour gamut, 4K 50/60 switching and 4:4:4 subsampling at 4K:60. And for streaming fans, DTS Play-Fi makes app-based quality streaming from multiple sources and services easy.

The front panel is functional and uncluttered, with a clear, blue-hued alphanumeric display, a cursor controller on the left and a rotary volume control on the right. Clearly marked function buttons are located below the display, while additional facilities include a headphone jack, and an HDMI/MHL socket.

The rear panel illustrates the AVM-60's considerable versatility, with extensive input and output facilities spanning HDMI, analogue and digital interfaces. Of particular note are the fully balanced XLR pre-outputs, which allow for enhanced noise rejection and extended cable runs. An RS-232 port and IR inputs/outputs facilitate custom installation needs.

I ran the AVM-60 in a 7.1 configuration in conjunction with a NuPrime MCH-K30 power amp (review pending) and our usual Atlantic Technology surround sound speaker system. The source signal was provided by our ever-trusty Oppo BDP-95EU universal deck, with an Optoma HD80 taking care of video.





The Anthem AVM-60 is a fine AV processor – arguably one of the best. It has all the facilities you could wish for, with both the technical capability and the sonic splendour to match, while the ARC software ensures optimal performance.

Deon Schoeman

Installation and set-up was painless, thanks to clearly marked inputs and binding posts, with the ARC calibration and room correction process being a fuss-free affair.

Sonically, the AVM-60 delivered an all-immersive sound image that allowed movies to come thrillingly, viscerally alive.

It made nonsense of the notion that compact speakers (the Atlantic Technology fronts and surrounds cross over at 100 Hz) cannot sound large and involving, creating a sonic vista much more expansive than the listening environment, and extending both the sonic and the visual impact.

Inter-channel steering was succinct and precise, accurately tracking the on-screen action, but never losing sight of the need for seamless integration, so that the sense of a deep, wide and all-encompassing soundstage placing the audience in the epicentre of the action was always successfully maintained.

Watching *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, the 'Rathtar Mayhem' scene where Han Solo and Chewie are confronted by two rival gangs, each intent on retrieving their money, aboard Solo's Millennium Falcon freighter ably demonstrated the accuracy and sheer intensity of the soundtrack.

The sound perfectly mirrored the on-screen action as the two gangs try to kill Solo, only to find themselves under attack from the tentacled Rathtars. The action is fast and furious, and the effects can become a blur of blasts, impacts, shots and shouts – but with the Anthem in charge, every individual effect could be heard and sometimes even felt.

At the same time, dialogue remained clearly rendered above the rumpus – something that one tends to take for granted, but which many receivers and processors struggle with.

Tonal breadth and linearity were simply astonishing, again belying the fact that the sound was being produced by three sets of small, satellite speakers and a single subwoofer. The sound picture was expansively rendered, allowing plenty of room and air for the effects, yet always closely linked to the visual action, which in turn translated into a powerful sense of realism and involvement.

For all its multichannel excellence, the AVM-60 also entertained in a stereo, music-only role, bringing depth and momentum to a sound picture that retained both the air and the detail of the surround sound performance.

On *Crossroads Guitar Festival 2010* (Rhino Blu-ray), one of my personal highlights is 'One More Last Chance', featuring Vince Gill, Keb' Mo', James Burton, Earl Klugh and Albert Lee. Here, the Anthem processor sounded clean and precise, but also smooth and engaging enough to get feet tapping.



## VITAL STATS

Channels .....	11.2
Surround sound formats ..	Dolby Atmos, Dolby TrueHD, DTS-HD Master Audio, DTS:X ready
DSP chips.....	Quad-core, 32-bit
Audio DAC .....	786 kHz/32-bit
Frequency response ....	10 Hz – 35 kHz (+0, -0,25 dB)
Signal-to-noise ratio .....	110 dB
HDMI inputs/outputs.....	7/2
Analogue stereo inputs/outputs....	5/2
Analogue pre-outputs ...	11.2 balanced XLR, 11.2 balanced RCA
Digital inputs .....	2x RCA coaxial, 3x Toslink optical
Digital outputs .....	1x Toslink optical
Connectivity ....	802.11 Wi-Fi, Ethernet
Streaming.....	DTS Play-Fi
Dimensions (WxHxD)	439 x 165 x 364 mm
Weight .....	9 kg

### Verdict

Links the full benefit of Anthem's surround sound processing and room correction to pre-amp functionality, allowing use of separate power amps in urge-hungry applications.

Price ..... R78 995

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OUR RATING: 90/100

