

THE MIC MINI-MARATHON

A sneak peek into the 250+ mic mini-run-a-thon courtesy of the cats at Jam Room and Front End.

Last year we, well, actually *me*, Warren Dent from Front End Audio, approached Jay Matheson of the Jam Room Recording Studio with an idea about shooting out a bunch of mics in his studio, over 250 in all. Jay jumped all over the chance to satisfy his own curiosity about new mics and volunteered his studio for the project. After juggling schedules with Jay and our vendors, we jumped in the studio with the first 60+ mics, which mainly consisted of large diaphragm condensers. The focus of this first set of sessions was to listen to the mics on several different vocal types. We brought in three local artists, which included both female and male hip-hop vocalists.

Some of these mics we personally own and some were hitting our ears fresh. It was a very informative mic session to say the least. Some differences were subtle, some were just gigantic, and other times you could tell a mic was useful but maybe not on that particular application. In an

effort to better educate ourselves and the average mic seeker out there, we are scheduling many more of these tests and recording sessions in the near future. For now? Well, both Jay and I thought we'd share some thoughts on some old timers of ours, and first impressions of a few newcomers.

CAD M179

The CAD M179 is one of those pieces of gear that under promises and over delivers on sound and usefulness. Its flattish response makes it a great fit on tons of sources, but for vocals it is pretty neutral in a "poor man's 414" kind of way. The midrange is pleasing, not overly emphasized or hard, but somewhat forgiving. The top end isn't sizzly or sparkly, it just handles things well without getting nasty or spitty. Sibilance isn't much of an issue and it sounds good being worked close when needed. The mic sounded



sE Electronics Titan

great on each of our vocalists, and I wouldn't hesitate grabbing it for a vocal session. The completely variable pattern also allows for more choices when it comes to how much room sound you want in the track. A crazy mic for anybody to pass up, I use it on vocals, overheads, toms, acoustics and more every day in my personal collection. Bang for the buck, this mic is priced right and is one of the most versatile, budget-friendly mics on the market. —WD

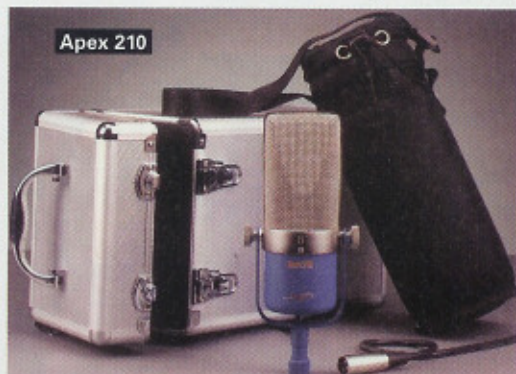
ADK GC3 (Generis)

This mic was my pick for value. I teach several audio classes, and my students always want advice on mics for their home studios. This seems to be a great one for someone getting their first nice mic. It's multi pattern, has a pad, has a low cut filter and comes with a usable shock mount. The main problem that most entry-level made in China mics exhibit is excess sibilance. This mic seems to have a warm low end, as well as a balanced, moderately crisp high end. It's no U47, but I would be comfortable tracking with it on a vocal session. A value for an entry-level, all-in-one mic. —JM

AEA R92

When it comes to real ribbons that actually perform at reasonable prices, Wes Dooley has the gig sewed up pretty well. The R92 is tuned higher than AEA's top selling R84 ribbon, giving it more bite in the high end and less boom on the bottom. This allows the R92 to be used in closer proximity compared to many ribbons, without being too woofy on the bass side of things. The midrange is very smooth, with a full present sound in the mids. The high end, while offering more response than many other ribbons, is still very forgiving

toward sibilance. You just don't get a crunchy/essy top end thing going on with this mic like you do with many condensers; the R92 is smooth, top to bottom, with a rich sound that offers more presence than many ribbons on vocals. The ability to work it close is a big benefit for some vocals, and instrument miking, as well. —WD



Apex 210

Apex 210

For \$169.00 this mic was a no brainer. It's worked well on violin, trombone and trumpet, as well as in combination with a 57 on guitar cabinets. I found this mic too dark for many applications, but



B.L.U.E. Bluebird

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Pearl CC22

This was my introduction to Pearl mics. At first impression, we thought the CC22 was a small diaphragm microphone because of its unique rectangular-capsule

design, when in fact the CC22 is a large diaphragm. When we got around to using this mic, everyone's eyebrows rose and both engineers present and the artists commented on their overall happiness with it. It's a very impressive sounding mic that would be ideal for a vocalist who is looking for an intimate, up-front sound. It seems to have the lows of a very expensive ribbon mic with a very smooth, crisp U47 type top end that sounded really nice on both the female and male vocalists. This mic sounds both silky and up front at the same time. It sounds like an expensive mic and ain't cheap either. —JM



ADK Hamburg/Vienna

MXL V67i

The V67i is a new mic with a new twist: dual capsule design that has two distinctly tuned sounds coming from both sides of the mic. The sides are labeled "warm" and "bright," and when compared to each other, that's what they deliver. The "warm" side is a somewhat darker condenser sound (same capsule as the V67G), with a thicker midrange response, as well. This would work best on more sibilant singers, or tracks that need to sound more "crooner" than pop based. The warm side worked well with each of our vocalists, and was especially nice on our female artist. The "bright" side is a crisp, clean sort of sound that would work for pop cut on vocals and also double as a decent entry-level instrument mic. It was a bit too sibilant for our female vocalist but sounded great on our male and hip-hop artist. The cool factor of this mic is if it's too dark on one side, you just turn it around and flip a switch and bam, a different sound. This is a very unique mic with two distinct sounds. —WD

B.L.U.E. Mouse

HUGE! The low end of the BLUE Mouse is big, beautiful, and full. This is just about the only



B.L.U.E. Mouse



CAD M9

condenser mic that can compete with a ribbon on low end, and it does low end very well. The Mouse is traditionally designed for use on low frequency instruments such as kick drums, and I can certainly see that as a starting point for this mic.

However, it really is a multi-purpose mic that can lend itself to a huge sound for vocals, which we found during our sessions. The midrange response is strong and there is a little upper-midrange dip going on that is either going to work really well or not work on a given source. It's not super pronounced, but we all heard it. The very top end is pretty balanced, not a bright mic. It is hard to beat this one for full low end and low mid response. —WD

ADK Hamburg / Vienna

On the entry level price end of things, the Hamburg and Vienna stood out very well, giving a rich sort of sound, each in their own way. The Vienna has a more present sound in the high end, with a clear midrange and low end response. It sounds great on a pop style vocalist and can handle instruments just as well. The Hamburg has a more natural sounding top end with a creamier midrange response, again with it an unhyphenated low end. The Hamburg works well on smoother types of vocalists and instruments that don't need as much cut in the sound. There is a richness, though, to each of the mics that wasn't really present on others in their price range. —WD

CAD M9

Kind of hi-fi sounding, the M9 has a complimentary type of sound. It has an extended low end that is pretty smooth, and a nice rich midrange thing going on with a bit of an upper mid scoop, and an extended high end with tons of detail. The M9 sort of has its own thing going on, and seems to impart a bit of a glassy, hi-fi sound on a lot of sources. It sounds pre-EQ'd so it's not exactly a flat response "point it at anything" type of mic. If you need some hi-fi hype that's not overdone I'd say the M9 is worth giving a listen to. —WD EQ



MXL V67i



Pearl CC22