

The Omega is a solid mic with a smooth sound and quality looks



Sontronics Omega

Sontronics has quickly established itself as a purveyor of quality mics, but with a twist. Jon Musgrave plugs in the Omega...

DETAILS

PRICE £369

CONTACT

Web: www.sontronics.com
www.sonic8.com

TECH SPEC

Large Capsule Cardioid Valve Condenser Mic
Capsule: 1.07"
Frequency Response: 20Hz to 20kHz
Output Impedance: <=200 Ohms
Sensitivity: 25mV/Pa
Equivalent Noise: 18dB (A-weighted)
Max SPL: 125dB (0.5% THD at 1kHz)
Power Supply: SPS-2 115/230V (included)

OVER THE PAST year, Sontronics has marked itself out as a serious contender in the more affordable end of the mic market. The distinctive styling of its large capsule condensers means that they don't get lost amongst the crowd. Indeed, the latest addition (the Sigma Ribbon) is no doubt already turning some heads. But back to the Omega.

At £369, this valve cardioid condenser looks like seriously good value for money. As we've come to expect with valve mics, the whole package comes in a sturdy flight case, with suitable Sontronics labelling. Inside you'll find the Omega in its own wooden box, the SPS-2 power supply,

8-way mic lead, mains cable and 'spider' shockmount.

All the components in the Omega are solidly made, and the mic itself is surprisingly large and weighty. Part of its hefty size may be down to the fact that it houses the industry standard ECC83/12AX7 valve. This high-quality component is reasonably compact, but still measures a good half an inch across. There are no switches on the body of the mic, with the high pass and 10dB pad positioned on the power supply. Also on the power supply you'll find the blue 'tube ready' LED (which speaks for itself).

As you may expect from a tube mic, at 18dB (A-weighted) the equivalent noise figure isn't stunning, but there's a healthy output level

(25mV/Pa), and a maximum SPL of 125dB should cover most situations.

Greek Gods

Part of the fun with valve mics is setting them up, and the Omega is a breeze. The mic takes a multitude of turns to screw into the cradle, but once there it all feels very stable.

The only thing I did notice as I shifted the mic around is that the cable imparts a knocking sound into the mic. Eventually I tracked this down to the tubular design of the mic casing. Tapping this revealed it to be quite resonant, producing a note somewhere around G-sharp. In practice, if you keep the mic cable tucked away this shouldn't be a problem, but I did wonder whether some extra internal damping might help matters.

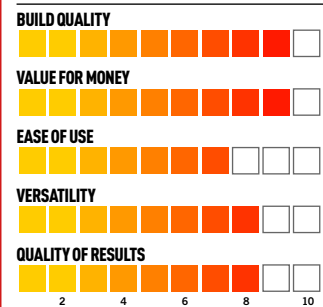
We all know large capsule condensers each have their own flavour, so firing up a new one is always an interesting moment. My initial impression of the Omega was its proximity effect. As you get up close this is very pleasing, making the mic sound good and solid. In the top end I didn't hear too much lift, although a quick look at the plot revealed a push to around 6.5kHz and then a tail off. In practice, this means anything with complex highs sounds pretty smooth.

My initial inclination was to add a bit of high EQ at 12kHz for added air, but I think this is a subjective response to hearing the Omega up against a mic with a more hyped top end. Overall though, its sound is very rounded and suits anything from vocals to drums and electric guitars.

Conclusion

If I had to sum up the Omega with one word it would be 'retro', but I say that in a good way. It has a solid flavour to it and this means it's not a jack-of-all-trades. But £369 isn't a large sum of money to add some character to your mic arsenal, and the Omega certainly has that. **FM**

VERDICT OMEGA



The Omega offers character and good value for a tube mic.