

Small Diaphragm Condenser Microphones

By George Petersen

Condenser microphones with small diaphragms (typically in the half-inch range) are an essential part of any music reproduction system. Offer fast transient response and upper-frequency clarity, these are often the first choice for drum overheads, cymbals, hi-hat, percussion, guitar, stringed instruments, reeds, piano, harp and orchestral strings. We checked out a variety of mics suitable for live sound use and found a wide range of models to fit anyone's budget.

3 Zigma Audio HA-FX/SD-C

Pattern: Cardioid
Max SPL: 153 dB with -16 dB pad
Sensitivity: 12.6 mV/Pa
Self-Noise: 15 dBA
Pad/Filter: -8/-16 dB pad and 3-way high-pass filter
Notes: Interchangeable capsules with other variants available.
Street Price: \$649, with shock-mount



hybridmic.com

AKG C 451 B

Pattern: Cardioid
Max SPL: 155 dB with -20 dB pad
Sensitivity: 9 mV/Pa
Self-Noise: 18 dBA
Pad/Filter: -10/-20 dB pad and 75/150 Hz high-pass filter
Notes: Satin nickel plated finish
Street Price: \$499



akg.com

Microtech-Gefell M300

Pattern: Cardioid
Max SPL: 147 dB
Sensitivity: 12 mV/Pa
Self-Noise: 16 dBA
Pad/Filter: None
Notes: Transformerless design
Street Price: \$757



microtechgefell.de

Miktek C5

Pattern: Cardioid/Omni
Max SPL: 126 dB
Sensitivity: 32.4 mV/Pa
Self-Noise: 17 dBA
Pad/Filter: None
Notes: Includes cardioid and omni capsules
Street Price: \$699



miktekaudio.com

Milab VM-44 Classic

Pattern: Cardioid
Max SPL: 140 dB (with -12 dB pad)
Sensitivity: 15 mV/Pa
Self-Noise: 21 dBA
Pad/Filter: -12 dB pad
Notes: Omni and supercardioid capsules optional
Street Price: \$985



milabmic.com

Audio-Technica AT4041

Pattern: Cardioid
Max SPL: 145 dB
Sensitivity: 15.8 mV/Pa
Self-Noise: 24 dBA
Pad/Filter: 80 Hz high-pass filter
Notes: Non-reflective black finish
Street Price: \$299



audio-technica.com

Audix ADX51

Pattern: Cardioid
Max SPL: 132 dB with -10dB pad
Sensitivity: 17 mV/Pa
Self-Noise: n/a
Pad/Filter: -10 dB pad; 150 Hz high-pass filter
Notes: Optional low-profile shock mount
Street Price: \$229



audixusa.com

Beyer MC 930

Pattern: Cardioid
Max SPL: 140 dB with -15 dB pad
Sensitivity: 30 mV/Pa
Self-Noise: 16 dBA
Pad/Filter: -15 dB pad; 250 Hz high-pass filter
Notes: Non-reflective black finish
Street Price: \$599



north-america.beyerdynamic.com

Mojave MA-101fet

Pattern: Cardioid/omni
Max SPL: 140 dB with pad
Sensitivity: -39 dB re: 1V/Pa
Self-Noise: 14 dBA
Pad/Filter: -15 dB pad
Notes: FET design; includes cardioid and omni capsules
Street Price: \$595



mojaveaudio.com

MXL V67N

Pattern: Cardioid/omni
Max SPL: 148 dB
Sensitivity: -49 dB re: 1V/Pa
Self-Noise: 16 dBA
Pad/Filter: None
Notes: Includes cardioid and omni capsules
Street Price: \$149



mxlmics.com

Neumann KM 184

Pattern: Cardioid
Max SPL: 138 dB
Sensitivity: 15 mV/Pa
Self-Noise: 22 dBA
Pad/Filter: None
Notes: Available in black or nickel finish
Street Price: \$849



neumann.com

Blue Mics Hummingbird

Pattern: Cardioid
Max SPL: 130 dB
Sensitivity: 15 mV/PA
Self-Noise: 8.5 dBA
Pad/Filter: -15 dB pad; 250 Hz high-pass filter
Notes: 180-degree swiveling head
Street Price: \$299



bluemic.com

CAD GXL 1200 BP

Pattern: Cardioid
Max SPL: 135 dB
Sensitivity: 16 mV/Pa
Self-Noise: 17 dBA
Pad/Filter: None
Notes: Offered in black pearl chrome finish
Street Price: \$69



cadaudio.com

DPA d:diccate 2011 A

Pattern: Cardioid
Max SPL: 158 dB with -20dB pad
Sensitivity: 10 mV/Pa
Self-Noise: 20 dBA
Pad/Filter: -20 dB pad
Notes: Twin diaphragm design
Street Price: \$949



dpamicrophones.com

RØDE NT5

Pattern: Cardioid
Max SPL: 143 dB
Sensitivity: -38 dB re: 1V/Pa
Self-Noise: 16 dBA
Pad/Filter: None
Notes: Interchangeable omni capsule optional
Street Price: \$219



rode.com

sE Electronics sE1A

Pattern: Cardioid
Max SPL: 137dB
Sensitivity: 10 mV/Pa
Self-Noise: 17 dBA
Pad/Filter: None
Notes: Stereo pairs available
Street Price: \$179



seelectronics.com

Sennheiser e914

Pattern: Cardioid
Max SPL: 157 dB with -20 dB pad
Sensitivity: 7 mV/Pa
Self-Noise: 19 dBA
Pad/Filter: -10/-20 dB pads; 58/130 Hz high-pass filters
Notes: Non-reflective black finish
Street Price: \$399



sennheiser.com

Earthworks SR25


Pattern: Cardioid
Max SPL: 145 dB
Sensitivity: 10 mV/Pa
Self-Noise: 20 dBA
Pad/Filter: None
Notes: Extended response to 25k Hz
Street Price: \$619



earthworksaudio.com

E-V PL37


Pattern: Cardioid
Max SPL: 132 dB
Sensitivity: 6 mV/Pa
Self-Noise: 25 dBA
Pad/Filter: None
Notes: Satin black finish
Street Price: \$79



electrovoice.com

Lewitt LCT 140

Pattern: Cardioid
Max SPL: 143 dB
Sensitivity: 8 mV/Pa
Self-Noise: 19 dBA
Pad/Filter: -10/-20 dB pads; 40/300 Hz high-pass filter
Notes: Illuminated switches for use on dark stages
Street Price: \$249



le Witt-audio.com

Shure KSM137

Pattern: Cardioid
Max SPL: 159 dB with -25 dB pad
Sensitivity: 37 dBV/Pa
Self-Noise: 14 dBA
Pad/Filter: -15/-25 dB pads; 80/115 Hz high-pass filters
Notes: Onboard 17 Hz subsonic filter
Street Price: \$299



shure.com

Sontronics STC-10

Pattern: Cardioid
Max SPL: 130 dB
Sensitivity: 11 dBV/Pa
Self-Noise: 18 dBA
Pad/Filter: -10 pad; 75 Hz high-pass filter
Notes: Includes lifetime warranty
Street Price: \$129



sontronics.com

Telefunken M60

Pattern: Cardioid
Max SPL: 130 dB
Sensitivity: 8.6 mV/Pa
Self-Noise: 19 dBA
Pad/Filter: None
Notes: FET design, interchangeable capsules
Street Price: \$595, with shock mount and cable



telefunken-elektroakustik.com