SE ELECTRONICS T2

Percussion Recording and Broadcast Microphone

ALAN BRANCH is stunned at the detail sE's T2 mic picks up from his percussive set-up.

SE Electronics continues in its armament of new original and workhorse microphones with a hybrid simply called the sE T2. sE has taken the success of the SE4400A, a versatile studio mic with the ability to fit in small spaces due to its slim design, and upgraded it by borrowing some of the technology from another sE mic, the SE Titan. This combination creates a Class A FET transformerless titanium-capsuled percussive recording wonder, the sE T2.

The sE T2 at first glance looks much like the infamous 414 with love handles, but apart from being as good a performer in the 'studio' bed that's where it ends. Inside the sE T2 is the centre terminated titanium capsule that has proved to be very popular with the larger Titan microphone. The Titanium metal used to make the thin diaphragm makes it lighter and stiffer than gold, which means a faster response time, which is essential for sounds with super fast transients like percussion, drums, or picked guitar, and so on. What you get from this is greater clarity and detail, with less distortion and a tighter low frequency response, perfect for a kick drum or bass; a sweet sound that sounds fat, much like an old favourite of mine, the Neumann FET U47.

Features

The frequency response is quoted as 20Hz-20KHz and the sensitivity is 28mv/pa-31, while the impendence is only 50Ω, giving a noise floor of 14dB (A weighted) and a max SPL of 140dB (for 0.5% THD@1000Hz for 0.5%). These specs show it's a nicely balanced mic for loud sound sources that's very quiet and will give a good strong signal for your mic amp. Not that many buy microphones on tech specs, but from my impression, judging the sound quality, character, and reputation, the T2 has a lot of the first two and will soon build the latter. One point I'd like to make is it's worth choosing a quality compatible preamp, otherwise your lovely microphone, studio, and talented musician can be wasted. It's the combination of the right microphone, a clean signal path to a quality preamp (usually quality equals expense here), and the correct gain into your recording gear, analogue or digital, that will give that pro sound so many seem to miss.

In Use

As with all sE mics the T2 comes with a nifty flight case. Encased safely in foam is the T2 and a shock mount that ►

THE REVIEWER

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looks like it's been chopped in half with a simple pivot mechanism. It's a neat design obviously made so that the mic can be angled and arranged easily into a small space or very close up. I found tightening the mic holder a little bit awkward, as the thumbscrew is close to the support bar beneath it, but it's still a clever job for a suspension mount. The T2 has selectable patterns of cardioid, hypercardiod, omni, and figure-of-eight. I first tested the mic on an acoustic guitar and was delighted with a very rich detailed sound, quite different to the C414 I first picked for a comparison. Recording percussion showed its fast transient reactions off really well – close miked or from a distance the timbre and articulations of the player really came through, and there was not a huge change in tonality as some mics present when switched to omni or figure-of-eight for more room.

Kick Drum Test

What really surprised me was the quality of the sound in front of a kick drum. I had an existing set-up of a close-miked Shure 57 inside the drum and a D112 outside. We added the sE T2 in both locations to check the difference and compare the blending we were using of the two mics. Ideally, enough click from the beater and natural bass from the drum. The clarity and bass response was tremendous, and the sub-bass I could get from the T2 alone was fantastic, the trick being to move it around until you found just the right spot. I didn't need to blend at all with the 57. Obviously, it depends on what kind of kick drum sound you're after, but the T2 could now be one of my favourite kick drum mics. I wish I'd had a Neumann 47 to compare it to, but really, as they often sound different depending on their condition it might have been misleading.

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Using the T2 on vocals it does a great job, probably better with spoken word and male vocalists. When comparing it to the richness of the sE Gemini II, a large diaphragm top end tube vocal mic, it just couldn't compete with a female vocal. But this would be a bit of an unfair test, as the Gemini is quite a different model – but a mic is a mic, and I have often found myself having to record something in less than perfect circumstances with little equipment. Still, if this was your only mic, it will be a great all-rounder.

Conclusion

In summary the T2 is a fantastic percussion mic. Its major success for me is the detail it can pick up with a frenetic and fast sound source, whether it be a guitar player attacking an extreme solo or rhythm, a percussionist with an array of instruments, or slap bass; all of these often need a mic that can be twisted, turned, and easily placed for the best capture of the natural performance. Then as a dedicated drum mic, I have a feeling this could become one of the major alternatives to the regular collection that people go for when choosing a kick drum mic. Here the sE T2 fits in between other mics in sE's range, and has been made for just this reason. Fitted with an enhanced Titanium capsule specifically designed for percussive material, well built, and doing an incredible job at getting quality results for a good price, what more could you ask for? I thoroughly recommend it.

INFORMATION

£ GB£780.00 (exc.VAT)

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