

# Top of the Line Handheld Condenser Microphones

By George Petersen

It's no secret that dynamic microphones have pretty much been the standard in vocal performance mics for decades. However, if you're looking for a handheld with extended bandwidth, greater detail and fast transient response, a condenser mic is just the ticket.

With that in mind, we present this look at some current top-end condenser models. No frequency response data is given; simply stating that a mic has a 20 Hz to 20 kHz spec is fairly meaningless, and many models include LF or upper-mid presence boosts to add character or intelligibility, so a "flat" response is rarely desirable. Weight is often a factor, particularly when using a handheld mic over extended periods with certain vocalists.



Audio-Technica AE5400

**Pattern:** Cardioid  
**Max SPL:** 157/147 dB (pad in/out)  
**Sensitivity:** 10.0 mV/Pa  
**Self-Noise:** 14 dB (A)  
**Weight:** 11.6 ounces  
**Notes:** Same capsule as AT4050 studio mic; 10 dB pad; LF roll-off  
**Street Price:** \$379

audio-technica.com



Audix VX10

**Pattern:** Cardioid  
**Max SPL:** 138 dB  
**Sensitivity:** 24 mV/Pa  
**Self-Noise:** 19 dB (A)  
**Weight:** 10.9 ounces  
**Notes:** VX10-Lo low-output version also offered for loud vocalists  
**Street Price:** \$479

audixusa.com



Blue enCORE 300

**Pattern:** Cardioid  
**Max SPL:** 146 dB  
**Sensitivity:** 11 mV/Pa  
**Self-Noise:** N/A  
**Weight:** 13.4 ounces  
**Notes:** Internal floating capsule shockmount  
**Street Price:** \$179

bluemic.com



CAD Microphones C195

**Pattern:** Cardioid  
**Max SPL:** 132 dB  
**Sensitivity:** 18 mV/Pa  
**Self-Noise:** 22 dB (A)  
**Weight:** 10 ounces  
**Notes:** Soft-feel, non-slip gray finish  
**Street Price:** \$159

cadmics.com



Earthworks SR40V

**Pattern:** Hypercardioid  
**Max SPL:** 145 dB  
**Sensitivity:** 10 mV/Pa  
**Self-Noise:** 22 dB (A)  
**Weight:** 12.8 ounces  
**Notes:** Extended 30 Hz to 40k Hz response  
**Street Price:** \$999

earthworksaudio.com



Ehrlund EHR-H

**Pattern:** Cardioid  
**Max SPL:** 127 dB  
**Sensitivity:** 8 mV/Pa  
**Self-Noise:** 9 dB (A)  
**Weight:** 9.6 ounces  
**Notes:** Unique triangular capsule combines features of large and small diaphragms  
**Street Price:** \$744

ehrlund.se



AKG C636

**Pattern:** Cardioid  
**Max SPL:** 150 dB  
**Sensitivity:** 5.6 mV/Pa  
**Self-Noise:** 20 dB (A)  
**Weight:** 11 ounces  
**Notes:** Switchable 80 Hz LF roll-off  
**Street Price:** \$499

akg.com



Apex Electronics 515

**Pattern:** Cardioid/omni/supercardioid  
**Max SPL:** 134 dB  
**Sensitivity:** 13.8 mV/Pa  
**Self-Noise:** 17 dB (A)  
**Weight:** N/A  
**Notes:** Includes three interchangeable capsules  
**Street Price:** \$99

apexelectronics.com



beyerdynamic TG V96

**Pattern:** Cardioid  
**Max SPL:** 150 dB  
**Sensitivity:** 4 mV/Pa  
**Self-Noise:** 20 dB (A)  
**Weight:** 11.5 ounces  
**Notes:** Capsule-only version also offered for TG-1000 wireless  
**Street Price:** \$569

north-america.beyerdynamic.com



DPA d:facto 4018

**Pattern:** Supercardioid  
**Max SPL:** 160 dB  
**Sensitivity:** 5 mV/Pa  
**Self-Noise:** 19 dB (A)  
**Weight:** 10.9 ounces  
**Notes:** Capsule head removes for use with wireless systems  
**Street Price:** \$1,049

dpamicrophones.com



Electro-Voice RE520

**Pattern:** Supercardioid  
**Max SPL:** 150 dB  
**Sensitivity:** 5.6 mV/Pa  
**Self-Noise:** 17 dB (A)  
**Weight:** 11.7 ounces  
**Notes:** Cardioid RE510 version also avail.  
**Street Price:** \$299

electrovoice.com



Galaxy Audio ErgoMic

**Pattern:** Supercardioid  
**Max SPL:** Not stated  
**Sensitivity:** Not stated  
**Self-Noise:** Not stated  
**Weight:** 11.8 ounces  
**Notes:** Includes interchangeable dynamic and condenser elements  
**Street Price:** \$139

galaxyaudio.com



Microtech Gefell M900

**Pattern:** Cardioid  
**Max SPL:** 143 dB  
**Sensitivity:** 17 mV/Pa  
**Self-Noise:** 13 dB (A)  
**Weight:** 8 ounces  
**Notes:** M910 supercardioid version also available  
**Street Price:** \$1,465

microtechgefell.de



Neumann KMS 105

**Pattern:** Supercardioid  
**Max SPL:** 150 dB  
**Sensitivity:** 4.5 mV/Pa  
**Self-Noise:** 18 dB (A)  
**Weight:** 10.6 ounces  
**Notes:** offered in black or silver; KMS104 is similar cardioid version  
**Street Price:** \$699

neumannusa.com



Røde S1

**Pattern:** Supercardioid  
**Max SPL:** 151 dB SPL  
**Sensitivity:** 5.00mV/Pa  
**Self-Noise:** 18 dB (A)  
**Weight:** 10.9 ounces  
**Notes:** available in black or nickel finish  
**Street Price:** \$329

rodemic.com



Sontronics STC-6

**Pattern:** Cardioid  
**Max SPL:** 140 dB  
**Sensitivity:** 8 mV/Pa  
**Self-Noise:** 14 dB (A)  
**Weight:** 15.4 ounces  
**Notes:** Switchable low-cut filter and 10 dB pad  
**Street Price:** \$219

sontronics.com



Lauten Audio LS-108

**Pattern:** Cardioid  
**Max SPL:** 135 dB  
**Sensitivity:** 5 mV/Pa  
**Self-Noise:** 12 dB (A)  
**Weight:** 7 ounces  
**Notes:** Large diaphragm capsule  
**Street Price:** TBA

lautenaudio.com



Miktek PM5

**Pattern:** Cardioid  
**Max SPL:** 142 dB  
**Sensitivity:** 18 mV/Pa  
**Self-Noise:** 19 dB (A)  
**Weight:** 10.4 ounces  
**Notes:** Handheld version of C5 studio mic  
**Street Price:** \$599

miktekaudio.com



Pearl TLC 90

**Pattern:** Cardioid  
**Max SPL:** 144 dB  
**Sensitivity:** 8 mV/Pa  
**Self-Noise:** 26 dB (A)  
**Weight:** 10.2 ounces  
**Notes:** LED indicates presence of phantom power  
**Street Price:** \$721

pearl.se



Sennheiser e965

**Pattern:** Cardioid/supercardioid (switchable)  
**Max SPL:** 152/142 dB (pad in/out)  
**Sensitivity:** 7 mV/Pa  
**Self-Noise:** 21 dB (A)  
**Weight:** 13.9 ounces  
**Notes:** Switchable low-cut filter and 10 dB pad  
**Street Price:** \$499

sennheiserusa.com



Superlux PRO-238MKII

**Pattern:** Cardioid  
**Max SPL:** 136 dB  
**Sensitivity:** 10 mV/Pa  
**Self-Noise:** 16 dB (A)  
**Weight:** 13.8 ounces  
**Notes:** 100 Hz low-cut filter  
**Street Price:** \$141

superlux.us



Lewitt MTP 940 CM

**Pattern:** Cardioid, supercardioid, wide-cardioid  
**Max SPL:** 144 dB  
**Sensitivity:** 10 mV/Pa  
**Self-Noise:** 9 dB (A)  
**Weight:** 11.7 ounces  
**Notes:** 3-way pad and high-pass filter  
**Street Price:** \$599

lewitt-audio.com



Milab LSR-3000

**Pattern:** Cardioid  
**Max SPL:** 150/138 dB (pad in/out)  
**Sensitivity:** 13 mV/Pa  
**Self-Noise:** 21 dB (A)  
**Weight:** 10.4 ounces  
**Notes:** 12 dB pad and 80 Hz low-cut switches  
**Street Price:** \$904

milabmic.com



Peavey CM1

**Pattern:** Cardioid  
**Max SPL:** 136 dB  
**Sensitivity:** 7.1 mV/Pa  
**Self-Noise:** 24 dB (A)  
**Weight:** 11.2 ounces  
**Notes:** Internal shock-mount reduces handling noise  
**Street Price:** \$129

peavey.com



Shure KSM9

**Pattern:** Cardioid/supercardioid (switchable)  
**Max SPL:** 152 dB  
**Sensitivity:** 2.81 mV/Pa  
**Self-Noise:** 22 dB (A)  
**Weight:** 10.6 ounces  
**Notes:** Class-A circuitry; available in grey or champagne finish  
**Street Price:** \$699

shure.com



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