

By GeorgePetersen

Handheld Condenser Microphones

Dynamic microphones have pretty much been the standard in vocal performance mics for decades. However, if you're looking for extended bandwidth and fast transient response in a handheld, a condenser mic is just the ticket.

With that in mind, we present this look at some current condenser models. All models listed require phantom powering. 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. And MSRP list pricing is listed; microphones are often greatly discounted and "street" pricing can vary dramatically.


Audix VX10



Pattern: cardioid
Max SPL: 138 dB
Sensitivity: 24 mV/Pa
Self Noise: 19 dB (A)
Weight: 11.2 ounces
Notes: Low-output model (VX10 Lo) also offered for use on loud stages or extremely powerful vocalists.
MSRP: \$590

audixusa.com


DPA d:facto II



Pattern: supercardioid
Max SPL: 160 dB
Sensitivity: 5 mV/Pa
Self Noise: 19 dB (A)
Weight: 10.9 ounces
Notes: Mic capsule removes to be used with various wireless transmitters.
MSRP: \$949

dpamicrophones.com


AKG C5



Pattern: cardioid
Max SPL: 145 dB
Sensitivity: 4 mV/Pa
Self Noise: 25 dB (A)
Weight: 12.2 oz.
Notes: Presence boost adapter offers two tonal choices.
MSRP: \$220

akg.com


beyerdynamic TGV96c



Pattern: cardioid
Max SPL: 150 dB
Sensitivity: 4 mV/Pa
Self Noise: 20 dB (A)
Weight: 11.6 ounces
Notes: Operates on phantom down to 11 volts without affecting performance.
MSRP: \$799

beyerdynamic.com


Earthworks SR40V



Pattern: hypercardioid
Max SPL: 145 dB
Sensitivity: 10 mV/Pa
Self Noise: 22 dB (A)
Weight: 12.8 ounces
Notes: Electronics are handcrafted to match each capsule.
MSRP: \$1,439

earthworksaudio.com


Apex 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.
MSRP: \$129

apexelectronics.com


Blue enCORE 300



Pattern: cardioid
Max SPL: 146 dB
Sensitivity: 11 mV/Pa
Self Noise: n/a
Weight: 13.4 ounces
Notes: Backlit logo indicates phantom power presence..
MSRP: \$199

bluemic.com


Electro-Voice RE510



Pattern: supercardioid
Max SPL: 146 dB
Sensitivity: 3.2 mV/Pa
Self Noise: 22 dB (A)
Weight: 9.2 ounces
Notes: LF roll-off switch.
MSRP: \$322

electrovoice.com


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 oz.
Notes: Same capsule as AT4050 studio mic; 10 dB pad; LF roll-off.
MSRP: \$529

audio-technica.com

CAD Audio C195



Pattern: cardioid
Max SPL: 132 dB
Sensitivity: 18 mV/Pa
Self Noise: 22 dB (A)
Weight: n/a
Notes: Transformerless design.
MSRP: \$99

cadmics.com


Lewitt MTP 940



Pattern: Switchable supercardioid/cardioid/wide-cardioid
Max SPL: 156 dB
Sensitivity: 10 mV/Pa
Self Noise: 9 dB (A)
Weight: 11.7 ounces
Notes: Three-way LF rolloff; -6/-12 dB pad; three pattern choices.
MSRP: \$799

lewitt-audio.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.
MSRP: \$999

miktekaudio.com

Peavey CM1



Pattern: cardioid
Max SPL: 136 dB
Sensitivity: 7.1 mV/Pa
Self Noise: 24 dB (A)
Weight: 11.2 ounces
Notes: Non-reflective black matte finish.
MSRP: \$199

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 preamp circuitry; available in grey or champagne finish.
MSRP: \$874

shure.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.
MSRP: \$1,116

milabmic.com


RØDE S1



Pattern: supercardioid
Max SPL: 151 dB SPL
Sensitivity: 5.00 mV/Pa
Self Noise: 18 dB (A)
Weight: 10.9 ounces
Notes: Available in black or nickel finish.
MSRP: \$599

rodemic.com


Sontronics STC-6



Pattern: cardioid
Max SPL: 140 dB
Sensitivity: 8 mV/Pa
Self Noise: 14 dB (A)
Weight: n/a
Notes: Switchable low-cut filter and 10 dB pad.
MSRP: \$249

sontronics.com


Neumann KMS 105



Pattern: supercardioid
Max SPL: 150 dB
Sensitivity: 4.5 mV/Pa
Self Noise: 18 dB (A)
Weight: 10.6 ounces
Notes: Cardioid KMS104 version also available.
MSRP: \$998

neumannusa.com

Samson CL5



Pattern: cardioid
Max SPL: 148 dB
Sensitivity: 14.1 mV/Pa
Self Noise: 19 dB (A)
Weight: 8.8 ounces
Notes: Available in black or nickel finish.
MSRP: \$359

samsontech.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.
MSRP: \$198

superlux.us


Pearl TLC 90



Pattern: cardioid
Max SPL: 144 dB
Sensitivity: 8 mV/Pa
Self Noise: 26 dB (A)
Weight: 10.2 ounces
Notes: LED power/phantom-on indicator.
MSRP: \$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.
MSRP: \$1,050

sennheiserusa.com

Violet Design Grand Pearl



Pattern: cardioid
Max SPL: 136 dB
Sensitivity: 20 mV/Pa
Self Noise: 8 dB (A)
Weight: 12.3 ounces
Notes: Class-A discrete electronics.
MSRP: \$999

violet-design.com