

Top-of-the-Line Handheld Condenser Microphones

By George Petersen

Dynamic microphones have long been the standard in vocal performance mics. 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; a "flat" response is rarely desirable and many models include LF or presence boosts to add character or intelligibility.

beyerdynamic TG V96



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

North-america.beyerdynamic.com

Ehrlund EHR-H



Pattern: Cardioid
Max SPL: 127 dB
Sensitivity: 8 mV/Pa
Self-Noise: 9 dB (A)
Weight: 9.6 oz.
Notes: Unique triangular capsule
Street Price: \$799

ehrlund.se

Neumann KMS 105



Pattern: Supercardioid
Max SPL: 150 dB
Sensitivity: 4.5 mV/Pa
Self-Noise: 18 dB (A)
Weight: 10.6 oz.
Notes: KMS104 similar cardioid version
Street Price: \$699

neumannusa.com

AKG C636



Pattern: Cardioid
Max SPL: 150 dB
Sensitivity: 5.6 mV/Pa
Self-Noise: 20 dB (A)
Weight: 11 oz.
Notes: Switchable 80 Hz LF roll-off
Street Price: \$325

akg.com

Blue enCORE 300



Pattern: Cardioid
Max SPL: 146 dB
Sensitivity: 11 mV/Pa
Self-Noise: Not stated
Weight: 13.4 oz.
Notes: Internal floating capsule shock mount
Street Price: \$199

bluemic.com

Electro-Voice RE520



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

electrovoice.com

RØDE S1



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

rodemic.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
Street Price: \$379

audio-technica.com

CAD Microphones C92



Pattern: Cardioid
Max SPL: 138 dB
Sensitivity: -40.0 dBv (10mV) @ 1Pa
Self-Noise: Not stated
Weight: 10 oz.
Notes: TrueFlex Equitek diaphragm
Street Price: \$99

cadaudio.com

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 oz.
Notes: 3-way pad, high-pass filter
Street Price: \$599

lewitt-audio.com

Sennheiser e 965



Pattern: Cardioid/supercardioid switchable
Max SPL: 152/142 dB (pad in/out)
Sensitivity: 7 mV/Pa
Self-Noise: 21 dB (A)
Weight: 13.9 oz.
Notes: Switchable low filter and 10 dB pad
Street Price: \$399

sennheiserusa.com

Audix VX5



Pattern: Supercardioid
Max SPL: 140 dB
Sensitivity: 5 mV/Pa
Self-Noise: 26 dB (A)
Weight: 8 ounces
Notes: -10 dB pad and bass roll-off switches
Street Price: \$249

audixusa.com

DPA 2028



Pattern: Supercardioid
Max SPL: 160 dB
Sensitivity: 5 mV/Pa
Self-Noise: 22 dB (A)
Weight: 10.1 oz.
Notes: Three-stage shock mount/filter/grill
Street Price: \$599

dpamicrophones.com

Miktek PM5



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

miktekaudio.com

Shure KSM9



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

shure.com

Austrian Audio OC 707



Pattern: Cardioid
Max SPL: 150 dB
Sensitivity: 10 mV/Pa
Self-Noise: 19 dB (A)
Weight: 12.35 oz.
Notes: Switchable 120 Hz low-cut filter
Street Price: \$479

austrianaudio.com

Earthworks SR40V



Pattern: Hypercardioid
Max SPL: 145 dB
Sensitivity: 10 mV/Pa
Self-Noise: 22 dB (A)
Weight: 12.8 oz.
Notes: Extended 30 Hz to 40k Hz response
Street Price: \$749

earthworksaudio.com

Milab LSR-3000



Pattern: Cardioid
Max SPL: 150/138 dB (pad in/out)
Sensitivity: 13 mV/Pa
Self-Noise: 25 dB (A)
Weight: 10.4 oz.
Notes: 12 dB pad and 80 Hz low-cut
Street Price: \$1,031

milabmic.com

Sontronics STC-6



Pattern: Cardioid
Max SPL: 140 dB
Sensitivity: 8 mV/Pa
Self-Noise: 14 dB (A)
Weight: 15.4 oz.
Notes: Switchable low-cut filter and 10 dB pad
Street Price: \$175

sontronics.com