

Aston Element

£159

Marketed as “the people’s mic”, Aston say their latest mic has undergone exhaustive public testing. But what does reviewer **Rob Redman** think?

CONTACT WHO: Aston Microphones **WEB:** astonmics.com **KEY FEATURES** Cardioid pattern, Magnetic clip on pop shield and shockmount, Phantom power needed



I'll start this review with the conclusion that the Element is a total success, that easily outperforms microphones that cost double and even triple the price. There, I've said it. There will be mic elitists out there who doubt the capabilities of such an accessible tool and while they are correct that a high end valve mic may produce slightly more pleasing results, the differences will be obvious to only a very few. So, what makes the Element so good?

First, Aston's Rydion capsule, which makes for a design that offers a combination of the warmth, focus, clarity and range of condensers, ribbon and dynamic microphones (hence composite name), which makes it perfectly suited for use recording vocals, acoustic instruments, drums and pianos. Placement of the mic for these tasks will change the character of the performance but it's more a case of added warmth for closer proximity, than a drop off when placed further. This is particularly noticeable when recording acoustic guitar and vocals. The proximity effect is barely noticeable when recording louder sources like electric guitar, which highlights the delicacy of the Element, possibly enhanced by the waveguide that helps funnel certain sources' output into the capsule.

The Element has a wide response with a tighter focus at closer proximity that warms the tones, without coloring it too much. This warmth is where high-end valve mics excel but it's a trade off, where personality can overpower true reproduction, and the Aston delivers as close as you could hope for and its warmth runs broad, making it a real workhorse.

If there's an area where the Element could do with a little help it's with the top end, which can feel just a touch empty. It never sounds stiff or brittle and a gentle lift around 15-16k sorts this.

The real key to the result of Aston's development is its drive to include its trusted user base to give feedback at key stages, helping make the design into the crowd pleaser it is sure to be. This has meant that the Element can hold its own against very popular options like Shure's SM7B.

With the community behind it, the one area that may divide opinion is the visual design, which some wits have compared to a showerhead. I



THE PROS & CONS



Noise free

Excellent clarity

Waveguide keeps mic focused



No onboard controls for pad or high pass

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quite like the looks, with a gentle purple light indicating power. Also, the lack of pad or high pass might bother some. Build is light but rugged and the housing connects to bespoke pop filter and suspension by clip and magnet, which I am all for.

All in all, the Aston Element has proved a well-rounded, versatile microphone that can turn its hand to many tasks. It excels at capturing vocal and acoustic performances but can just as easily be put to use as a drum mic. It's warm without colouring tones overly so may not win friends who crave mojo.

But for realistic reproduction with just a touch of magic, the Element has it covered. I can see this easily replacing much more expensive tools

and the build feels like it will last until it ends up in the 'classic retro mics of old' list posts 30 years from now. A true workhorse. **FM**

FM VERDICT

9.7

At this price, there's really nothing that comes close to the Element. Clarity, breadth of response and tonal characteristics are all there