WHAT IS IT?

Cardioid large dual diaphragm condenser micronhone

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HIGHLIGHTS

- Excellent proximity effect
- Detailed and smooth frequency response
 3 Magnetic pop shield



Shure KSM42 £791

Shure's KSM range gets a vocal specific addition. **Robbie Stamp** puts it to use

SPECS

Dual diaphragm with 2.5 micron, 24 karat gold, 1-inch mylar active front diaphragm and passive rear diaphragm 60Hz to 20kHz Sensitivity: 14.1mV/Pa (-37dBV), rated at 1kHz

open circuit relative to 94dB SPL (A-weighted)
Max SPL: 139dB SPL for
THD of 1% at 1kHz 131dB at 1kHz 147Ω

494g

he KSM42 offers a feature set that addresses the demanding task of capturing the human voice. The mic is supplied with a carry case, shockmount cradle and a magnetic pop filter that attaches to the cradle without the need for awkward clamps. Straight out of the case and onto the mic stand the KSM42 possesses a professional reliability that the Shure name has been synonymous with for decades.

Shure have created a capsule with an active front diaphragm and a passive (i.e. not electrically charged) rear diaphragm to specifically tailor the proximity effect behaviour of the mic. thus allowing dynamic performances to be captured without driving the engineer nuts ironing out the low frequency response. The ever challenging dynamic range of the voice is addressed with the proprietary Prethos preamplifier which, according

to Shure, achieves extremely low self-noise and distortion alongside wide dynamic range and superior transient response. The other area addressed in the KSM42 design is the 'sweet spot' width, i.e. the frequency response coherence over a wide angular range from the front diaphragm.

The KSM42 is a very truthful mic and the design quality is instantly apparent in use. The taming of the proximity effect is striking, as it allows for a lot of back and forth movement for a surprisingly small change in low frequency level. This really helps with balancing the room-to-signal ratio and even when right up against the pop filter the lows do not become overblown.

There is an audible drop off from around 100Hz so external bass interference is kept at bay, and yet the mic never lacks 'body'. A bass

instrument won't translate well with this mic, unless an excessive low end needs trimming, but I have found acoustic and electric guitars translate clearly over a large range of distances without getting bogged down by the proximity effect.

Higher up the frequency range the KSM42 is remarkably neutral, yet flattering. There is no hyping in the upper mids, which along with the clear transient response creates a smooth and detailed sound. The mic does not colour the source, letting the vocal do the work. The wide 'sweet spot' is one of Shure's main boasts, and as with the proximity effect control they have come up trumps. The phase shifts (frequency response) caused by lateral movement start to become audible after about 45° off centre and so the KSM42 keeps the vocal focussed even with a singer who is dancing about.

The smooth frequency response belies a lack of phase distortion that becomes all the more apparent when using EQ, and plenty of cut/boost can be used without masked spikes and notches rearing up. Lifting the low end does not reveal a hidden proximity bump or a pile of mic stand rumblings, and yet source LF content can be pulled up without upsetting the balance. Impressive indeed. The KSM42 is a refined microphone which is a pleasure to work with and, despite its vocal focus, can capture a range of sources with a great deal of clarity - I would definitely try it out on brass and percussion/drums.

The clear and detailed response in conjunction with the reduced effect of proximity and angle make it a trustworthy choice for any vocal session, from spoken word to rocked-out belters. And it is very, very quiet, so whispering from a distance is OK! The KSM42 comes in at sub-£600 street price, for which you get a lot of quality and reliability - it's a Shure for sure! F

