

Røde NT-USB Mini

£109

Need a compact podcasting mic? **Jon Musgrave** sizes up this new compact USB design from the Aussie mic giants

CONTACT WHO: Røde Microphones **WEB:** rode.com **KEY FEATURES** i/o: Cardioid electret condenser, 1 in 2 out USB interface, integrated zero latency monitoring, Headphone output with level knob, **INPUT SPL @ 1% THD:** 121dB, **FREQUENCY RANGE:** 20Hz to 20kHz frequency range **DIMENSIONS:** 54.5 x 142mm, **WEIGHT:** 585g





In current times, podcasting and video casting are more popular than ever and the call for good quality, good looking casting mics is on the rise. Røde Microphones already produce a few suitable candidates including their large capsule Podcaster condenser, the original NT-USB, and more recently their excellent and super stylish dynamic PodMic. Their latest release, NT-USB Mini, is a compact cardioid USB condenser with tabletop stand, headphone output, integrated zero latency monitoring and 1-in, 2-out USB interfacing (24-bit 48kHz). As you would expect from Røde, build quality is impressive. But the mic design also manages to be both stylish and functional.

First up, the mic has a rather clever captive swing mount clip. This incorporates a regular mic thread on the bottom, so you can attach it to any normal mic stand. But you also get a small rubber grommet that fits in the thread and allows you to slot the mic into the included magnetic desktop stand. The mic itself is quite weighty (the stand less so), but the combination of the two feels very stable and has such a small footprint it fits neatly into your desktop setup.

The cabling ports are on the back of the mic, so they're tucked out of

the way and don't foul the underside of the mic as you tilt it, which is good news. Connections are USB-C and mini jack for the headphones. NT-USB Mini is bus-powered class compliant (OS X 10.12 or later, Windows 10) and mic gain is handled by your OS. However, monitor level to headphones is set by the knob at the bottom of the mic. This knob also has a push action that adds the mic input into the headphone mix for zero latency monitoring. This provides a fixed balance between mic and USB audio output, so you'll have to adjust your DAW output level to get the correct balance. Finally, there are a couple of discrete LEDs on the front that confirm your USB activity and zero latency monitoring.

NT-USB Mini is a small diaphragm electret condenser and if you look through the headstock grille you can just about see that it's suitably mounted, lollipop-style, in the middle. The headstock has a built-in pop filter which didn't stop all pops but I still found surprisingly effective. It's pretty obvious when you hook the mic up that it's designed for speech, with a crisp sound and nice proximity effect when you get in close. There's no quoted noise figure but the mic was suitably quiet even at higher gain settings. With regards

to the table-top stand, it is quite low, and to get a decent up-close sound I actually perched it on something. The other thing is that it picks up plenty of table-top rumble, and I desperately wanted the mic to have a low-cut filter. Aside from this, and bearing in mind the pretty good plosive handling, it's actually ideal for speech, as you'd hope. But the response is also OK for plenty of other uses and once again that tabletop stand really comes in handy. Finally, I also found it worked fine with my iPhone with no further powering required.

Overall, NT-USB Mini is an excellent compact USB mic for podcasting and beyond that I'm sure will find many fans. **FM**

FM VERDICT

9.1

Great features combine with a compact stylish design and attractive price to make NT-USB Mini a highly desirable USB mic

THE PROS & CONS



Compact stylish design

Included desktop stand

Integrated interface and monitoring

Built-in pop shield

Great price



No low-cut filter