

Austrian Audio OC818 £899

Mics are rarely judged by their extras, but **Jon Musgrave** finds innovation in this new design from Austrian Audio

CONTACT WHO: Austrian Audio **WEB:** austrian.audio **KEY FEATURES** Handmade CKR12 edge terminated capsule inspired by classic AKG CK12 design, Microprocessor control of polarization voltages, 2 high-pass filters with 3 settings, 2 different types of level pad, **FREQUENCY RANGE:** 20Hz – 20 kHz **IMPEDANCE:** 275 Ohms (2x) **SENSITIVITY (all directions):** 13mV/Pa **EQUIVALENT NOISE:** 9dB SPL (A-weighted) **DIMENSIONS:** 63 x 35x 165mm **WEIGHT:** 0.36 kg



OC818 is a multipattern phantom-powered large-capsule condenser mic from Austrian Audio. It uses their own handbuilt CKR12 dual diaphragm ceramic capsule, heavily influenced by the classic AKG CK12. The mic has four pattern options (figure 8, supercardioid, cardioid and omnidirectional) with on-body high-pass filter and level pad. The Studio Set kit on review included a foam windshield, shockmount, regular mic clip, mini XLR cable and lightweight flight case.

The OC818 has a number of interesting design features. First, there's a second mini XLR output. When in cardioid mode this provides an output from the rear diaphragm so you can record both diaphragms independently and combine them later to create a tailored pattern. To facilitate this there's a plugin called PolarDesigner. Next up, OC818 incorporates microprocessor control. Used in conjunction with the OCR8 Bluetooth LE Dongle (£129) and PolarPilot app (Android and iOS), this allows remote control of the filter option, pad settings and most significantly the diaphragm polarisation voltages and hence polar pattern. Alas, this device was not included for review.

OC818 also has some pretty useful traditional features. First, the high-pass rumble filter has two steep second order options (40Hz or 80Hz). Meanwhile the third setting adds a first order filter at 160Hz, great for taming proximity. For level control, the -10dB pad reduces the capsule bias, so it can handle higher levels, while the -20dB option adds in a 10dB cut to the output stage.

Sonically, OC818 is not super bright, but clearly has some additional presence in the upper mids. The frequency charts reveal a boost at 5kHz across all except the omni pattern and some air at around 12kHz. Meanwhile the mid to low frequencies are pretty flat. The directional patterns have a decent, though not dominant, proximity and the capsule is tolerant of plosives. The included windshield allowed us to get in close and significantly reduced plosives. The mic sounds natural across a number of sources. Understandably the dual capsule



configuration means the omni pattern has a curtailed high frequency response at 90 degrees off axis.

PolarDesigner is a powerful plugin and in low-latency mode allows you to change the overall polar pattern smoothly from figure 8 through cardioid to omni and then reversed with the rear diaphragm as on axis. But switch low latency off and you gain multiband (up to five bands) pattern adjustment with band solo, mute and level (+18/-24dB). This is powerful stuff. Further features include adjustable proximity, two preset EQs (free field and diffuse field) and two source dependent algorithms – terminate spill and maximise target – that automatically change the polar patterns to provide different types of focus. Rounding things off is save and recall of presets and also settings sync across multiple plugin instances.

Overall, the OC818 is an incredibly flexible mic and if you buy the Bluetooth controller, it's very innovative too. Couple that with the quality sound, great selection of accessories and the polar pattern plugin and you have a pretty awesome package. **FM**

FM VERDICT

9.6

Flexible, innovative and stylish, you get pristine Austrian sound and build quality, accessories and a case – all for under a grand

THE PROS & CONS

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Multipattern mic with four patterns

Extensive on-body filter and pad settings

Additional output for recording rear diaphragm independently

Optional Bluetooth LE pack for remote control of settings

Plugin for adjusting polar pattern from dual diaphragm output

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You'll want the optional extras to get the most out of it