



MICROPHONE

SE Electronics Z3300A

A revamped microphone arrives on the latest boat from China. **Jim Warboy** tests it out...

DETAILS

SE ELECTRONICS Z3300A

PRICE £299

CONTACT

Tel: 01525 840400
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TECH SPEC

Polar Pattern: Cardioid, Omni, Figure 8
Switches: -10dB pad, 100Hz hi-pass filter
Frequency Response: 20Hz - 20KHz
Sensitivity: 12.6mV/Pa - 38 ± 2dB(0dB=1V/Pa 1000Hz)
Impedance: ≤200 Ohms
Equivalent Noise Level: 20dB(A weighted)
Max SPL for 0.5% THD@1000Hz: 125dB
Power: Phantom power 48V±4V
Connector: 3-pin

MOST HOME AND project studios usually have a limited number of microphones available to them due to the obvious budgetary limitations. So deciding where the money is invested is a huge decision when adding to the arsenal. Now some people opt for a few cheap mics that, between them, cover a number of bases, but maybe it makes more sense to dig a bit deeper and fork out for a quality all-rounder?

SE Electronics have released a profusion of products since they set their factory up in China a couple of years ago, and now they've revamped their large diaphragm capacitor Z3300 and stuck an A on the end. But this is not a minor tweak. The new model looks pretty much the same, but its solid-state interior has had an overhaul.

As soon as you open the hardy

aluminium flightcase you can tell you're looking at something a bit classier. When you're spending £300 you know that it's not the crème de la crème, but it sure has a robust and seductive satin finish that sits nicely in its shockmount cradle.

All fur coat?

It's easy to be seduced by things that look fantastic but that never quite deliver on the results. Luckily, this mic is not a case of all fur coat and no knickers. The results in use easily live up to its lustrous appearance. It gives vocals a creamy and detailed presence, producing results comparable with one of the more established top end mics. There's a luxurious low-end response and the 100Hz filter helps iron out any proximity effect bass anomalies introduced by close-up work. The top end is a touch bright and prone to emphasising sibilance sometimes.

FutureMusic
PLATINUM AWARD

With cardioid, omni and figure of eight polar responses on offer the potential uses are vast. Figure of eight is not available on that many mics, but it's great when recording interviews or room ambience, and has always been a favourite in broadcasting. It basically records front and back of the mic but eliminates a lot of the sides.

I recorded a vocalist singing and playing the ukulele at the same time. Figure of eight mics are perfect for this. By setting up between the ukulele and vocals, and then carefully positioning the mic, I was able to exploit the polar pattern properties to record individual tracks with far less spill. The sound was still very appealing and polished, and the vocalist actually commented on how flattering the sound was to her voice.

Vocalists seem to love singing into mics that sit in cradles. They probably conjure up images of those cheesy pop videos where the world's greatest stars are singing at top studios in front of cradled mics. And, of course, with that one you need the obligatory hand touching the headphones, Live Aid style.

Conclusion

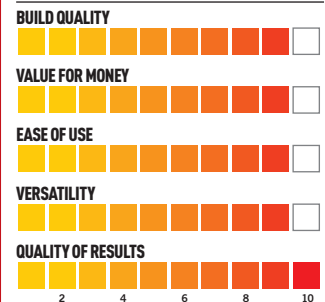
The impact China is having on mic production is becoming increasingly noticeable. SE Electronics are managing to produce mics that offer so much quality at such reasonable and affordable prices.

Maybe there are cheaper mics on the market offering similar functions, but most are not nearly so proficient at yielding the sleek results of this new and improved beauty.

The Z3300A is to the studio what the Kenwood Chef is to the kitchen. Sure, you can employ a number of gadgets to do the jobs, but it's so much handier to have one thing that does it all really well.

Given the quality and improvements that have been made to the original Z3300, it definitely deserves that A. **FM**

VERDICT SE Z3300A



A versatile mic that produces unbelievable results – considering the price.