



# SE Electronics 2200T

**MusicTech**  
CHOICE

First there was the solid-state version, then a USB version – now it's time for tubes. Huw Price feels a warming glow.

## KEY FEATURES

- Frequency response: 20Hz-20kHz
- Polar pattern: cardioid
- Impedance:  $\leq 200\Omega$
- Max SPL: 130dB
- PSU included

## 2200T

Manufacturer **SE Electronics**

Price **£349**

Contact **Sonic Distribution 01582 470260**

Web **www.seelectronics.com**

We've never made secret our admiration of the original SE2200a, which has invariably made it

onto our list of recommended sub-£150 condensers – although, like every other item on SE Electronics' price list, the 2200a has recently undergone a price hike. However, despite the crunchy times we live in, it remains something of an iconic product simply because it is an excellent example of a microphone manufacturer getting something just right in every department.

So, you might think that bringing out a substantially re-worked version is tantamount to messing with a winning formula, but don't worry: the 2200a is still a fixture in SE's catalogue. The impetus behind this product actually comes from customer demand for a valve version of the company's solid-state favourite – and SE Electronics has duly obliged.

## Bettering the best

Upgrading the 2200a seems like a smart move, and all the extras that accompany the 2200a are present and correct here. So, in addition to the -10dB attenuation and high-pass filter

switches you get a substantial spider mount plus a metal carry case with a formed foam interior.

## Solid states

Although people still seem to get extremely hung up on the whole valve-versus-solid-state debate, we'd always maintain that it's the capsule that has the most effect on the sonic signature of any condenser microphone. We're therefore pleased to report no changes in that department because the 2200a's tried-and-tested one-inch vapour-deposited capsule is safely installed under the grille. In fact, SE has been very careful about retaining the best features of the 2200a.

Naturally, the biggest change is to the onboard preamp impedance-lowering circuitry and the dedicated power supply required to run it. A five-metre cable with seven-pin Cannon connectors joins the microphone to the power supply. These aren't our favourite devices, but they certainly feel more positive and sturdy than some we have tried in the past.

The power supply itself gradually ramps up to full voltage and the unit is ready to go as soon as the red LED stops flashing.

The valve inside the 2200T is a Chinese-manufactured 12AX7, and its pins are tucked up nice and close to the capsule. A bare number of components sit on a printed circuit board with nice thick tracings, and a transformer handles output and balancing duties. All

in all, SE Electronics' factory should be congratulated for achieving such high build quality.

## Test tube

The 2200T compares extremely well with other valve mics – even those above its price point, such as the multi-pattern Oktava MKL5000 and the M-Audio Sputnik. It's less overtly coloured than the original SE 5600a and to our ears the 2200T sounds clearer and less fluffy around the edges. The SE Z5600a MkII produces a significantly brighter and edgier sound than the 2200T. In fact, the 2200T sounds warmer and smoother, and on balance we actually prefer it.

In the upper frequency range the 2200a and the 2200T sound similarly sparkly and detailed without any trace of harshness, but the midrange really sets them apart. The solid-state sibling is drier and perhaps less coloured, but the tube version produces a thicker and weightier sound that's tremendous for flattering vocalists and taking the edge off spiky electric guitars.

SE claims that 'the 2200T, with its silky low and mid frequency response improves on this already superb-sounding mic with classic tube overtones'. We're not entirely convinced it's an improvement, but we couldn't say that the solid-state version is better. In reality, both versions of the 2200 have much to recommend them.

However, the different tonal characters – especially through the mid frequency range – means that both have a place in any recording environment. We'd suggest taking advantage of SE's loan scheme and trying the two side-by-side. But be warned: it could backfire and you might end up keeping both... **MTM**

## SUMMARY

### WHY BUY

- 2200-style treble
- Juicy midrange
- Low noise floor
- Pad and HPF switches
- Wide sweet spot
- Workable proximity effect
- Free loan service

### WALK ON BY

- Cardioid-only

## VERDICT

A beautifully made and versatile cardioid valve condenser with a sound quality that competes beyond its price.



## MEASURING UP

Although this is SE's entry-level valve condenser, some multi-pattern valve condensers can be found for similar money, including the APEX 460 (£234), Carvin CTM100 (£319) and the Harper Diabate HDV-1 (£325). However, unlike the 2200T, these are mass-produced OEM mics that are all but identical. The 2200T is made in SE's own factory and the distributor claims that quality control is more stringent. Like SE, Rode also has its own manufacturing facility and the company's fixed-cardioid NTK (£479) is well-regarded.