



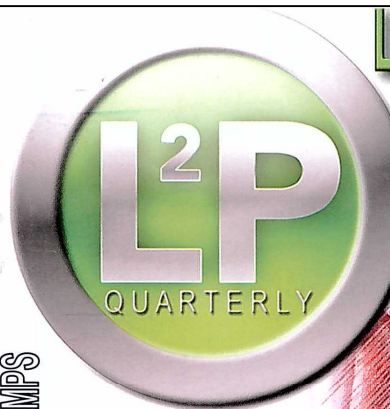
Microphones



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Blue Encore 100 and 200 Handheld Vocal Mics

By James D'Arrigo



Most know Blue to be a manufacturer of high quality studio microphones—Their creative, intuitive and distinctive designs have caught attention from many engineers over the years. Now, Blue's debut into live stage miking applications could not be more impressive.

The enCore 100 dynamic and enCore 200 Active Dynamic microphones enter the domain of the world's greatest, and most familiar stage microphones with a blast of freshness. The 100 Series is a dynamic microphone with a cardioid pickup pattern. It has a frequency response of 50 Hz – 15 kHz. The output impedance is 250 ohms and weighs in at just .88 lbs. One thing I was impressed to see is that this microphone has a maximum SPL of 147! That's pretty high, even for a dynamic. The 200 Series is an active dynamic, YES I said active dynamic. This microphone has a cardioid pickup pattern as well. What makes this mic an "active" dynamic is that it has an active circuit onboard, allowing the output to be transformed and give roughly 4db more gain out of the microphone. Since this microphone does have an active circuit in it, phantom power is required to power the circuitry. One small but really cool feature on this microphone is that it has an indicator light on it, letting you know that phantom power is active in the microphone. This is something that can be really handy in the troubleshooting stage of gigs. This one also has the amazing 147 SPL capacity.

Right out of the box you are treated to a premium looking and feeling piece of gear. Hefty machined casings with nicely detailed ridges give a rock solid grip. Blue's logo (cast and hand-painted before being inserted into the handle) and laser etched ring are nice touches (most others have a silk-screened identifiers), while the baskets look as if Harley Davidson themselves did the plating, and featuring a pronounced halo-ring really visually setting these mics apart from the competition. Blue's proprietary capsule mount does a great job of isolating handling noise.

These mics are specially tuned for vocals, but work beautifully with instruments as well. A comparison between the typical house mics and the Blue mics found the Blue's to have a more natural, smooth sound. The 200 Series in particular had a nice warm, deep sound on the low end and a clear sound to it on the high end,

almost like a condenser. From a performers point of view, these mics do not have a particularly tight pattern. So a performer doesn't have to be right on top of it all the time and can "work" the mic a bit

I have had the 100 and 200 onstage with me as saxophone and flute mics and both feel very comfortable and familiar. The sweet spots were easily recognized and what the engineer gave back in the monitors was clear and even.

I thought that the 200 would really impress me initially, but was surprised at how good the 100 responded with no drama, harshness, or need for EQ, and for about \$50 less than the 200. So say two of my friends who are engineers who both got to experience both mics with me.

These mics are pricing out at about \$99 and \$149 at most retailers so it's obvious which mic buyers Blue wants to impress. I cannot stop being impressed with the look and feel of these mics, but you are really going to get a great sounding mic that needs little to no EQ to sound great in most applications. The 100 is so great sounding that this reviewer would buy it over the 200 unless some dual use is planned for the studio as well as the stage. The 100 is easier to push around with the gain, volume, and eq than the 200, especially with smaller PA's and some that remain with only limited phantom channels.

Here is what a couple of friends have to say:

Ryan T. Peterson
Head Audio FOH
Sahara Hotel and Casino

"In testing the Blue 100 Series Dynamic Microphone, I found it to be very well constructed, sturdy, and well-adjusted for live performances. The look and feel of the mic is unique and new. Dynamically it was warm with an excellent range. I would recommend this mic for any live application including the miking of instruments."

Nate Pellegrini
Monitor Engineer
Sam's Town Live
Sam's Town Hotel and Gambling Hall

"I used the Blue enCore Series 100 microphone as a trumpet mic. It produced a very clear natural sound, and required very little EQ. I would love to use it on other applications to see how dynamic this mic really is!"

The market has spawned copy-cat mics from dozens of companies but Blue is just doing things their way, as always. These two rookie mics are not high dollar considerations either. They sit squarely in the \$8's price range, and while not yet the tried and true industry standards, are proving to be great performers. 🍷

