

Ocean Way Studios Hosts A Landmark Drum Recording Session

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VOL. TWENTY TWO
NUMBER ONE

OCTOBER 2008
USA \$5.99
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\$5.99US \$5.99CAN

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Blue Snowflake USB Microphone



It's a laptop world. Everyone is trying to find a way to create music on the run, and equipment manufacturers are responding by making products that are specifically tailored to laptop music creation. Blue Microphones, well known for its artistic take on quality mics, has created a small microphone that will be ideal for many types of laptop recording.

Overview

The Snowflake is a small (1½"), ball shaped microphone built into a brushed-metal stand. This stand can be either desktop-mounted or can be used to latch onto the top of a laptop computer's monitor. It also doubles as

There is more to this package than initially meets the eye. In addition to the mic, the Snowflake has a built-in USB interface and mic preamp, so no extra equipment is needed for mobile recording. The microphone itself is a pressure gradient unit with a fixed cardioid pattern. Blue lists the frequency response as 35 Hz–20 kHz, providing full-range recording (no ± deviation tolerances given).

In practice

Installation of the Snowflake couldn't be easier—you plug it in, and it appears as a mono audio input on your system. In my case, I tested the device on a

incredible sensitivity. In fact, the sensitivity was a little overwhelming; the first time I started recording, I was surprised by a strange hissing sound. As it turns out, that sound was my palm moving across the wrist rest of the computer! There is plenty of gain here for any recording you want to do, from location pickup to interview recording.

I did some acoustic guitar recording, and the Snowflake sounded very nice—rather bright and open, but very sensitive to placement. Initially, I was met with more room sound than I would have liked, but bringing the mic in close (and adjusting the input level on the computer) helped me find a good balanced sound. It's no replacement for a Neumann, but it was more than adequate for several songwriting sessions.

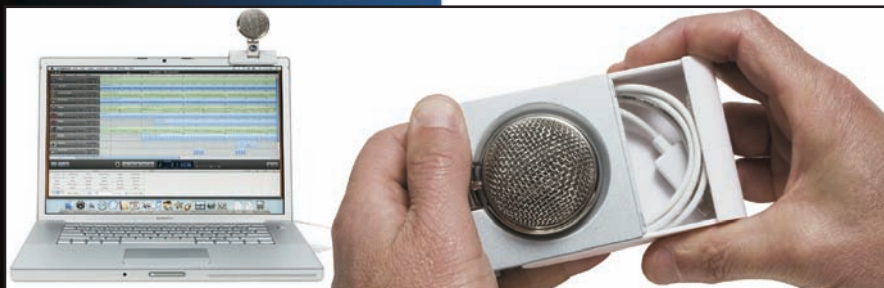
One of the most eye-catching features of the Snowflake is also one of its most valuable. The combined stand/case makes it easy to take with you everywhere, and location setup takes about 5 seconds. It is also a beautiful piece of gear—a guaranteed conversation starter! Over the last few weeks, I've carried the Snowflake with me everywhere, and I found the convenience of having quick access to a nice sounding mic to be more useful than I could have imagined.

Conclusion

Blue Microphones makes microphones that are as attractive as they are functional. In this case, they've created a mic that is inexpensive, sounds good and looks great. Combining this into a package that begs to travel is a triple-plus. At this price, the Snowflake's main competition is "consumer"-type gear that can't touch the sound and convenience of this unique device. ➤

Price: \$89.99 (\$69.99 street)

More from: Blue Microphones, 5706 Corsa Ave., Suite 102, Westlake Village, CA 91362. 818/879-5200, www.bluemic.com.



the transport case, with a slipcover that holds an included USB cable. This cable attaches to the back of the microphone body and plugs into your computer for a complete recording input system. When assembled for transport, the entire package is little bigger than a pack of cigarettes.

MacBook Pro; since there is no output, I created an "Aggregate Audio Device" that used the Snowflake for input and the Mac's headphone jack as output. This allowed me to use the system with all of the software on my system.

The combination of mic and preamp provides very detailed sound with