

TAPE OP

The Creative Music Recording Magazine

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Roswell Pro Audio

Mini K47 condenser mic

I received an email from Matt McGlynn of RecordingHacks.com, asking if I'd like to try the mic his new company was releasing. I am *never* going to say "No" to a new mic. A week or so later, a pair of Roswell Mini K47 mics arrived. Each mic came well packaged with a padded pouch and a hard stand mount. I'm told a shockmount is also available, but honestly, I had no issues of mechanical noise being transferred to the mic through the stands.

Normally, I start with some basic tests when I get a mic to try, but I had a session the next day and decided to just let fly. The first task was tracking vocals for Illinois-based Simon, a band that I've recorded many times. Singer Brad Benson has a good range and is quite talented. I've used a variety of mics with Brad over the years, and I know his voice well. During level tests with the Mini K47, I didn't hear anything odd or out of place. We jumped into getting takes, and I immediately thought, "This sounds good." What I noticed, as the night continued, is that the mic already exhibits the sonic attributes that you might sculpt into the vocal tracks during mix. Its low end is present, but not booming; its midrange is articulate; and its high end is there, but not annoying.

In an email conversation with Matt, I mentioned how nice it was to use an affordable mic that didn't rip my head off with its top end. I was told that Roswell chose the K47 capsule for that specific reason. They were trying to achieve a more pleasing (dare I say "classic") tone from the mic, and it's clear that they succeeded.

On the same session, I used the second Mini K47 on percussion. We did some shakers, a vibra-slap, and tambourine. I put the mic about a foot higher than the player's head, with a slight angle toward him. I had him step forward or back as needed. The sounds were true and quite even on all of the percussion sources. The capsule didn't seem to flinch with the harsh transients, and the mic delivered great results.

A couple of days later, I recorded an Indian gentleman singing to backing tracks. He was covering a variety of Indian pop music singing mostly in Hindi. I had both the Mini K47 and a Neumann U 87 on stands in the booth. I like to have a couple mics up when I work with new singers. I liked the low bloom of the U 87, but didn't feel it had the right articulation for such complex singing. The Mini K47 had just the right presence bump for this style. I ended up mixing the two mics together — to add just a touch of thickness from the U 87 to his lovely baritone voice. The singer and his wife/producer were incredibly happy with the tone. He was enjoying the sound so much that we ended up doing more songs than planned.

Mixing both of these projects, I noticed that I wasn't doing much (if anything) to the vocal tracks in terms of EQ and filtering. The Mini K47 places voices very nicely into the mix without any type of shoehorning. You don't sit in the control room saying "Wow!" when you hear it alone, but **it sounds solid and right in the mix.** I think this is a wonderful aspect of the mic.

I few days later, I had time to do what I normally do when I try new mics: I set up the Mini K47 mics as overheads and did some playing. I am a trained drummer and percussionist, and I know how instruments sound and what I should be hearing when I listen to playback. I had just gotten a set of 12 Gauge mics [Tape Op #102], so I set those up too. I had three sets of stereo overheads, along with kick, snare, and stereo room mics. (Having separate kick and snare mics gives me a better idea of how the overhead mics would perform on a real session, but the bass and snare mics are easy to mute during listening.)

I won't get into the 12 Gauge mic, as Joel Hamilton did a great review already. What I will say is that it's totally different from the Mini K47. This, by the way, is a good thing. The pair of Roswells delivered quite a meaty sound. The toms spoke in a lovely manner, the "air" I look for on the snare was there, the imaging (using ORTF configuration) was great, and the cymbal articulation was wonderful. The Mini K47 is a perfect choice for recordists who want the full picture of the drums in their overheads. As I listened to playback, I kept being reminded of the nice thickness you hear when using ribbons on overheads, but the Mini K47 tracks didn't have that "squishy" sound that ribbons can impart. I think the Mini K47 would also work great as a room mic because of its ability to tame the splashy sound of a brighter room.

I also used the Mini K47 on electric guitar. I'm not a condenser-on-amps guy most of the time. I often feel like condensers bring out too much "tizzzzz" if there's any distortion involved. The Roswell had none of that sound, and it delivered a full tone that I quite liked, much like a dynamic mic would, but with the "speed" of a condenser. I was really impressed, and I found myself wishing we had more songs beyond the two we were doing that needed guitar work.

I haven't touched on the size and look of the mic. It's called the Mini K47, and it *is* small. It's a side-address mic with a nice, flat-black color to its body. It looks as if your typical LDC was shrunk down in size. I dig it. I can see how its small form would be an advantage in tight places.

The Roswell Mini K47 is one of the best utility mics I've used.

It sounds great on a number of sources, fitting them perfectly into a mix. It takes EQ well (when needed), and it seems happy to do anything you ask it to do. \$299 for a mic of this quality is beyond fair — it's a steal.

(\$299 direct; www.roswellproaudio.com)

—Tony SanFilippo <Record@OxideLounge.com>