

A high-quality ribbon mic is a tough tool to beat. RUSS LONG thinks the new SE R1 has what it takes.

Anyone who has spent time working with me or reading my reviews knows that I'm a ribbon microphone fanatic. I discovered their natural, smooth sound back in the early 1990s and never looked back. First, I bought a pair of Coles 4038s, then a beyerdynamic M160, and then a beyerdynamic M260. Then Royer came along and introduced a fabulous line of ribbons that can actually handle rock 'n' roll volume levels. I even bought a pair of the Nady RSM-2 ribbon mics when they were released last year which I regularly use when I track drums. With the release of the new \$999 SE R1 Dynamic Ribbon Mic, SE Electronics has now entered the ribbon microphone market.

spectacular.

The mic worked equally well capturing drum kit ambience which, in my typical fashion, I squashed fairly hard through my Empirical Labs Distressor (set to Nuke). This time I didn't need any EQ. I used the mic on various hand percussion (tambourines and shakers) with great results. I used the Focusrite ISA 430 mk II and activated the high-pass filter (200Hz). I found the mic to have more top end clarity and sparkle than most ribbons.

Next, I threw the mic up on a guitar amp to see how it compared to my all-time favourite guitar mic, the Royer Labs R-122. The SE R1 surprisingly held its own. The bottom end was not as tight and defined as the 122 but there was more top-end sparkle and clarity that I found impressive. I

# SE ELECTRONICS

## R 1

### RIBBON MICROPHONE



#### Features

The R1's large ribbon geometry design is built around a 1.77-inch (45 mm) tall x .177 inch (4.5mm) wide 1.8 micron aluminum element, and a pair of rare earth Neodymium magnets. The electrodynamic pressure gradient microphone includes a custom design shockmount, an aluminum flight case, and a five-year warranty that includes three ribbon replacements. The 450 gram mic has a satin nickel mesh grille and a matte grey finish. It is 6.6 inches (168mm) long with a diameter of 1.57 inches (40mm).

The mic has a frequency response of 30Hz-15kHz and, as with most ribbon mics, it has a figure-of-eight polar pattern. The mic has a 300Ω output impedance and an output sensitivity greater than -52dBV Re. 1V/pa. The mic can handle a maximum SPL greater than 135dB over the rated frequency response. Even though the mic has a figure-of-eight polar pattern, because of the way the ribbon is mounted between the magnets the front and the back don't sound identical. The front actually has a bit more top-end presence than the rear.

Keeping this in mind when placing the mic can decrease the amount of equalisation that is needed. This characteristic becomes more apparent the closer the mic is to the sound source.

#### In Use

Until now I've never used an SE microphone, but I had heard good things about them since their introduction, so I couldn't wait to give their new ribbon mic a try. I initially put the mic to use as a single drum kit overhead. Unfortunately I only had one R1 so I wasn't able to listen over a stereo field but even with a single overhead I was impressed with the mic's performance. The cymbals sounded rich and clear and once I added a bit of sparkle with my GML 8200 EQ (+3dB shelf at 4.5kHz) they sounded

still prefer the R-122 but I was admittedly surprised by the performance of the R1. In one instance, when recording an extremely bright reissue Vox AC-30, I found that the signal through the front of the mic was too bright but through the rear of the mic it was perfect, thus reiterating the importance of listening to both sides of the microphone.

The mic also did a fine job recording acoustic guitar. I used it alone on the neck but had the best results using the R1 on the guitars body and using an Earthworks SR-77 on the neck of the acoustic guitar.

I found that the mic also works well on vocals. It does an amazing job of capturing a vocals low end presence, especially in the male vocal. The mic also worked well recording a tenor saxophone. I didn't have the opportunity to use it on soprano or baritone sax or on trumpet but based on my experience using it to record tenor sax, it would work well on these instruments as well.

#### Conclusion

The R1 provides the smooth classic sound of a high-quality classic ribbon microphone with an excellent warranty and a great package that includes a high-quality shock mount and a decent case. **AM**

#### INFORMATION

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#### THE REVIEWER

Russ Long, a Nashville-based producer/engineer, owns The Carport recording studio.