

INTERVIEW WITH SINGER/SONGWRITER STEVEN WILSON ON THE FUTURE BITES

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Audix A133

Large Diaphragm Condenser Microphone

A smooth, transparent and well-mannered microphone politely tailored to a number of sources

REVIEW BY ALEX HAWLEY

Headquartered in Oregon, Audix has been manufacturing high-quality microphones for studio and stage since 1984. During the 2020 NAMM show, the A133 was among fourteen products that Audix announced, alongside the A131 large diaphragm condenser. Both models are fixed-charge condenser designs.

Meet the A-Team

The Audix A133 is a large diaphragm condenser microphone with a fixed cardioid polarity. Its 33mm fixed-charge capsule features a gold-sputtered 3.4 micron thick diaphragm. The aluminum body is machined at the Audix facility in Oregon and features an internal shock mount to isolate the capsule from mechanical vibrations and handling noise, removing the need for a dedicated shock mount. The steel mesh grille is combined with an ultra-thin acoustic foam, helping to protect the diaphragm from plosives when recording vocals.

The only difference between the A133 and its A131 sibling is the -10dB pad and bass rolloff switch found on the A133. Otherwise, both models are the same.

The A133 has a frequency response of 40Hz–20kHz, sensitivity of 23mV/Pa, up to 150dB of SPL handling with the pad engaged, and a signal-to-noise

ratio of 84dB. The bass rolloff switch on the body engages a gentle highpass filter at 150Hz.

The A133 ships with a clip and hard nylon shell carrying case for storage. It's relatively compact but feels quite sturdy and rugged in the hands. Its size and weight, along with its ability to be used without a shock mount, make it easy to place without much fuss. The included mic clip is very snug and secure; it takes quite a bit of effort to get it on and off, which I consider to be a plus!

Sounds

The sound of the A133 is balanced and rich. The low end is transparent and sounds full without being overly boomy or bulky. The midrange is flat and true-to-source, while the top-end is slightly rounded without being dark. It certainly leans somewhat to the warmer side of the spectrum, but with a pleasing richness to it. A slight bump at around 300-400 Hz

presents itself on some sources, but it's subtle and quickly addressed with EQ. Its accurate and uncolored response makes it an excellent choice for any number of percussive or stringed instruments as well as voice. I wish the highpass filter reached just a touch lower in the spectrum; I would only engage it when the source doesn't require much low end. The off-axis rejection effectively reduces unwanted noises and reflections from the environment—the sound remains balanced if the source drifts slightly off-axis.

Studio Action

I started with the A133 on percussion. It sounded excellent on the barrage of hand percussion I used, and I think the smooth top end would translate into great overheads as well. The transparent midrange and slightly rounded top would make it forgiving when it comes to recording cymbals. The low end is full enough to add support, but it's not so thick or bulky that it creates too much energy in the lower midrange. For that same reason, I don't think I'd call on the A133 for a kick drum or floor tom, but

for overheads or rack toms, absolutely. And despite it being a large diaphragm condenser, I found its transient response to have some punch!

For vocals, the A133 feels right at home. There's a touch of airiness somewhere around 12 kHz that adds clarity with a nice modern touch. On most voices, that *should* be above sibilance territory, but it's a modest amount of energy regardless, so it shouldn't pose an issue there. The low end is clean and transparent, which also works out great for voice as it won't create any unwanted mud in that range. I also found it to be impressively well protected from popshots.

I tried it out on a few guitar amps as well, and it delivered a solid performance. Depending on the genre, however, I felt it lacked a bit of edge on its own. For example, in the context of a gritty rock song, it felt a bit too polite. The low midrange doesn't quite bring the thickness or punchiness that I'd seek for a rock rhythm part. That said, when used with cleaner tones that don't need to be too aggressive, it captures the amp with clarity and accuracy.

That brings us to my favorite source I used with the A133—acoustic guitar. I used the word 'polite' for guitar amps, but on acoustic, I found that its polite nature translates to richness throughout the spectrum. The top end has the right amount of smooth, and I didn't find myself wanting anything more or less in the lows or low mids. I gravitated towards fingerstyle acoustic guitar, both nylon and steel string. There's something very satisfying about the dynamics and detail the A133 can capture on a fingerstyle performance.

Straight A's

I found the Audix A133 to be a reliable mic for balanced and accurate sound. I enjoy its smooth top end and transparent character, especially on acoustic guitars and percussion. If you need the inclusion of the 10dB pad and 150 Hz highpass filter, then the A133 is the right call. While I didn't have a chance to test the A131 myself, it's the same microphone minus the pad and filter. So, if you can get by without, you can save yourself \$100 while still adding the great A133 sound! ➡



Price: \$499 (street)
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