

AKG DRUM MICS



From £79 Two new microphones from Austrian audio giant AKG

WORDS: ADAM JONES

This pair of AKG mics differs considerably in design, intended use and price. The bigger of the two – the D12 VR – is a reference quality bass drum mic suitable for both recording and live work, while the more diminutive D40 is a bulletproof workhorse built primarily for stage use.

Build

Lookwise, the D12 VR's twin grilles and full metal casing are a clear nod in the direction of the company's legendary D12 mic but under the bonnet is a set of modern components. Plugged into the mixing desk in the normal manner, the D12 VR works as a regular passive dynamic mic; it has an ultra-thin diaphragm to pick up every scrap of detail and an optimised bass chamber to capture the low frequencies. Add in Phantom Power and three active filter presets can be engaged to shape the sound further. Coloured LED lights indicate which of the filter presets are selected while a handy graphic above the sliding switch gives a visual indication of each filter setting. AKG reckons that as well as offering different options in the studio the filter settings also make nailing a killer live sound a breeze, especially when switching from one band's kick drum to that of the following act. With a frequency range that begins at a trouser-flapping 17Hz and climbs to 17,000Hz plus a whopping 164dB maximum sound pressure, even the most lead-footed Neanderthal would struggle to make it peak out. In common with all premium AKG mics, the D12 VR is manufactured in Vienna.

In contrast to the D12 VR, the D40 is a compact and unpretentious dynamic mic that has been designed to withstand nightly abuse. Described by AKG itself as being suitable for 'rough stage use' it is equipped

Also try...



1 SE ELECTRONICS X1D

We say: "This is an excellent kick drum mic; its wide frequency response and robustness make it suitable for other instruments too."



2 LEWITT MTP 440 DM

We say: "Lewitt's audio experience is evident in the road-proof build and excellent sound reproduction."

DYNAMIC MIC

Robust D40 has a protective metal casing and grille and has a frequency range of 50Hz-29kHz

with a protective metal casing and grille and has a built-in windscreen/pop filter. A frequency range of 50Hz to 20kHz and a maximum SPL of 156dB enables it to be placed in front of all manner of instruments.

Hands On

We test the mics in a studio setting, starting with the D12 VR, positioning it just in front of the ported and Kickported front head of my bass drum. In its unfiltered passive dynamic mode the D12 VR puts the kick right at the heart of the mix, giving such a quality sound that the EQ pots remain untouched. The combination of attack and depth delivers focus and 'oomph' in equal parts. Dialling in the middle filter preset (red light) scoops out some of the mid-range



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frequencies in order to leave space for other instruments in the mix. Here the drum does sound tighter and not quite as thumpy – there's more front note and less overall force. Flicking the switch to the left (green light) adds a bass boost to the mid-range scoop. This produces a wider sound and the response from the kick is a fatter and more saturated note. Sliding the switch to the right for the third and final position (blue light) the two existing frequency adjustments are joined by a high-end boost. In this configuration there is more presence and airiness to the kick as well as plenty of depth – more of a live room sound. While the filter options give the D12 VR a thoroughly modern degree of versatility, the sound it produces as a straightforward dynamic mic is so honest and strong that it's a good enough

reason to own one.

If the D12 VR is a sound-sculpting tool then the D40 has been built to capture an instrument faithfully in the sonic equivalent of a war zone. Placed over my snare and then each of my toms it certainly provides a healthy signal with no loss in frequencies. At the same time it does little to enhance the sound – not an issue in a live setting, but in the hallowed confines of the studio it's hard to get excited about it. This is a mic definitely more suited to its intended environment. **R**

VERDICT: While the D12 VR is designed to craft a sound, the D40 will deliver come what may no matter how noisy, crowded and sweaty the stage is. Both mics are solidly built so should give years of service and excellent sound reproduction.

BUILD QUALITY	★★★★★
PLAYABILITY	★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★
RHYTHM RATING	★★★★★

Essential spec

AKG

AKG DRUM MICS

D12 VR, £299; D40, £79

MICROPHONE TYPE

D12 VR: Dynamic with active filters; D40: Dynamic

FREQUENCY RANGE

D12 VR: 17Hz-17,000 Hz; D40: 50Hz-20kHz

POWER

D12 VR: Phantom Power required to engage active filters; D40: no power required

TYPE OF CONNECTOR

Standard XLR

LEAD SUPPLIED

No

CONTACT

Sound Technology Ltd
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FREQUENCY

Mic has a frequency range of 17Hz-17,000Hz plus 164dB maximum sound pressure

D12 VR

D12 VR is a reference quality bass drum mic suitable for both recording and live work

