

SPECS

Microphone
Type: 1-inch dual-diaphragm
Polar patterns: Omnidirectional, cardioid, figure-of-eight, plus six intermediate patterns (selectable on Remote Control Unit)
Frequency range: 20 to 20,000Hz
Sensitivity: 20mV/Pa (-34 dBV ±3 dB)
Max. SPL: 135/155dB SPL (0/-20 dB) for 0.5% THD
Pad: -20dB
Bass cut filter: Slope 12 dB/Octave at 80Hz
Impedance: <=200 Ohms
Connector: Dedicated seven-pin male XLR
Dimensions: 212 x 53mm
Weight: 870g
Remote Control Unit
Audio/control input: dedicated seven-pin female XLR connector
Audio output: standard 3-pin male XLR, balanced
Power voltage: 210-240 VAC or 110-120 VAC



AKG Perception 820 | £520

AKG's Perception range gains a new head of the family. *Jono Buchanan* warms to the 820 Tube...

WHAT IS IT?

AKG's new top of the Perception range microphone for providing tube microphone technology at a competitive price

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Nine polar patterns
- 2 Warm, smooth tube sound
- 3 Very attractively designed

As microphone manufacturers go, AKG should require little introduction. Starting life in 1945 as a company supplying acoustic products to Viennese movie theatres, AKG's mic department has gone on to produce classic models including the C12 and C414.

Their Perception range, which was launched in 2005 and which includes the sub-£100 Perception 120, has just gained a new big brother in the form of the 820, whose two standout features are that the microphone features a tube design and that its polar patterns and other tweakable controls are located onboard a separate remote control unit.

Up close and personal

Starting with the microphone itself, the internal design features dual 'back to

back' 1" diaphragm capsules which combine with ECC 83 dual-triode tube circuitry to deliver the 820's warm tube sound. The architecture is designed to enhance even-order harmonics which in turn form the backbone of a tube microphone's distinctive sound. The actual microphone itself features no on-body controls as, once it is connected to its control unit via the supplied seven-pin power/microphone cord, all setup is controlled from there.

The remote control unit itself is cast in classy silver and looks like a scaled-down high-end hi-fi amplifier, with a pleasingly minimalist front panel. The prominent central dial here is used to control the microphone's polar pattern and nine detented positions are available, from omnidirectional mode at the '7 o'clock' position, through cardioid

at 'noon', through to figure-of-8 at '5 o'clock', with intermediate positions available between these poles.

The other controls on the front panel include a -20dB pad switch and a bass roll off option which provides 12dB per octave high-pass filtering below 80Hz. As far as actually feeding the signal from the remote control unit to your audio interface or mic preamp of choice is concerned, a regular XLR cable is required, though you'll have to provide this yourself. You'll also find a ground lift button on the back panel which will help eradicate hum if this is something from which your studio suffers.

Warm and depth

While it's possibly almost too much of a cliché to use the word 'warmth' to describe a tube microphone, there's no other word to do the job better and it's certainly a quality the 820 oozes, with an immediately familiar comfortably smooth sound.

Don't be fooled into thinking that the sound it produces is falsely coloured or in some way 'too smooth' but what this mic does do is to provide a richness of sound which is a lovely option to have up your sleeve in the studio. The nine polar positions provide plenty of choice and you'll find what you need to get a great sound almost regardless of the source you're looking to record.

In summary

This is a great sounding microphone that breaks the mould of the rest of AKG's Perception range. It's over twice as expensive as the previous 'top range' model, which is to be expected bearing the tube technology on offer but which offers a much more mature sound to rival the price tag. The only dilemma is where to put the remote control bearing in mind its bespoke connector – in the vocal booth with the artist, or in front of you and your DAW? It's a nice dilemma to have – this is a very good mic. **FM**

FutureMusic VERDICT



A great way to get your hands on a tube mic from a respected brand at an affordable price.