

GEAR REVIEW

SHURE PG ALTA 98D AND 181 CONDENSER MICROPHONES



From £89 *Those esteemed audiophiles at Shure continue to impress with their newly expanded, PGA microphone line*

WORDS: TOM BRADLEY

A couple of months back, *Rhythm* was so impressed with the Shure 'PGADrumKit' microphone set that it earned a prestigious five-star rating. As you may have read in the September issue, the Alta range is designed to offer a more affordable alternative to that of the Beta series – bringing to the table a plethora of microphone types, intended to suit a wide range of both studio and live applications. Shure has now expanded its PGA family with the addition of several new multi-application microphones. This month, we get our hands on a couple of them and can't wait to put them to the test.

Build

For review we have three PGA 98D goose-neck condensers and a PGA 181 side-address mic; also of the cardioid condenser variety. All come supplied with a carry pouch and a 7.5m XLR to XLR cable. The 98D is provided with a sturdy drum mounting clip, while the 181 comes with a regular clip and thread adaptor for use with a standard mic stand. As with the rest of the PGA series, the mics are finished in a fetching metallic black with matching grille, establishing a smart, professional aesthetic.

Marketed specifically for use with drum and percussion instruments, Shure claims the 98D's tailored microphone cartridge design and in-built pre-amp will clearly reproduce the sound of its intended sound sources. The 181, however, is referred to as a multi-purpose mic, designed for "amplified and acoustic instruments and vocal recording". With a frequency response of 50Hz to 20KHz (not dissimilar to the 98D's 60Hz to 20KHz), this should make a perfectly versatile microphone for use pretty much anywhere on the kit.

Hands On

With the 181 positioned over the snare drum and the 98Ds mounted to the single rack



PGA 181

Compact design allows the mic to be easily positioned in tight spots

PGA 98D

Ergonomic, goose-neck design keeps cartridge section and cable out of the way of your playing

tom and two floor toms, I am instantly inspired by the quality of sound coming back through my in-ear monitors. Just as Shure suggests, every nuance of the snare and toms is relayed in crystal-clear quality (with absolutely no EQ present within the DAW). The mics not only impressively capture the articulation of the kit, but also the ambience of the room too.

The goose-necked 98Ds fit very securely to the toms, with the ergonomic design minimising the footprint over the playing surface and keeping the cartridge section and XLR cable completely out of the way. Not only does this look really smart but it drastically reduces the likelihood of clouting a mic halfway through your perfect take (we've all been there...). The practical and

compact design of the 181 allows it to be positioned in tight spots with minimal fuss – the perfect remedy to the age-old mission of trying to position a snare mic though the minuscule gap between your snare, hi-hats and rack tom. **R**

VERDICT: Shure has once again delivered exactly as promised with the PG Alta range. Simply put, they are affordable yet high-quality microphones which are equally at home on the stage as in the studio.

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

Essential spec

SHURE

PRICES

PGA98D-XLR, £95;
PGA181-XLR, £89

FREQUENCY RANGE

PGA98D: 60 to 20,000Hz; PGA181: 50 to 20,000Hz

MICROPHONE TYPE

Condenser

POLAR PATTERN

Cardioid

POWER

Phantom power (both mics)

LEADS SUPPLIED

Yes

CONNECTION

Standard XLR

CONTACT

Shure Distribution UK
01992 703058
shure.co.uk