

WHAT IS IT?

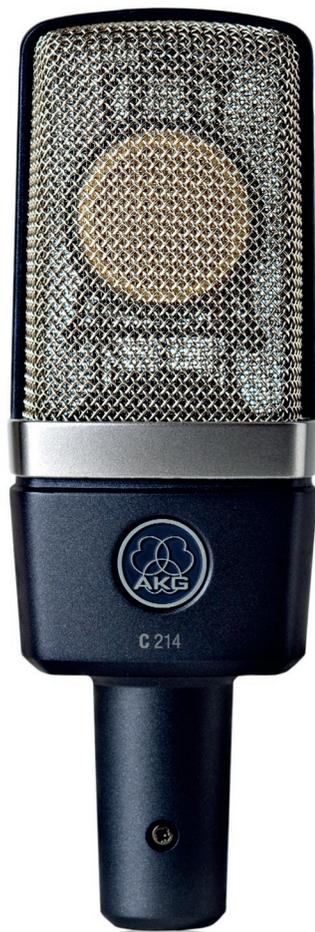
A large diaphragm cardioid condenser microphone, suitable for studio or stage use.

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Easy-to-use
- 2 Maximum SPL capability with minimum noise
- 3 Matte grayish blue finish



AKG C214 | £450

Looking for a good all-rounder studio microphone? *Mike Collins* recommends AKG's latest offering

SPECS

- Directional pattern:** Cardioid
- Frequency range:** 20Hz ~ 20,000Hz
- High Pass Filter:** 160Hz, 6dB/Octave, switchable
- Preattenuation pad:** 0/-20dB (switchable)
- Sensitivity:** 20mV/Pa (-34 dBV)
- Equivalent noise:** 13dB-A to IEC 60268-4 (A-weighted)
- Dynamic range:** 123/143dB (0/-20dB) (A-weighted)
- Maximum SPL:** 136/156dB SPL (0/-20dB) (for 0.5% THD)
- Signal/Noise:** (A-weighted) 81dB
- Weight:** 280g

Designed, engineered and built in Vienna, Austria, AKG microphones have had an enviable reputation for technical excellence ever since the company was established more than 60 years ago. These days, the company is starting to pay more attention to what their customers want in other areas – so the designs are looking sexier, lots of accessories are supplied with the microphones, and the technical features are continually being improved by the Austrian experts.

The new C214 large diaphragm, side-fire condenser microphone is very reasonably priced compared with its competitors. It has just one pickup pattern – cardioid – but it comes complete with a spider suspension mount and a foam windscreen all neatly packaged in a metal carrying case – ideal for taking out on the road. And you don't have to pay out extra for these items – most of which you are going to want.

Technically, it uses a 1" edge-terminated large diaphragm capsule that delivers a highly detailed, up-front sound – and it can handle an incredible 143dB dynamic range – accurately capturing transient details. It also features an integrated capsule suspension that reduces mechanical noise and resonances – further improving sonic accuracy.

The all-metal die-cast body provides a high degree of RF-immunity and has a shock- and scratch-resistant matte grayish-blue finish with a rugged double mesh grille to protect the capsule. The C214 has incredibly low self-noise, at just 13dB(A), along with very high headroom, and will work with phantom power sources ranging between 12 and 52V.

Removing the rumble

Switching in the microphone's 160Hz bass rolloff filter helps to remove unwanted low-frequency rumble (due to floor vibrations, handling noise or

whatever) without unduly affecting the sound of most recorded voices or instruments. Using this filter also minimises the proximity effect that you get when close-miking sources from less than six inches.

Also, by switching in the pre-attenuation pad, you can increase the microphone's headroom by 20dB when you are recording very loud sound sources such as drum kits, guitar amps or trumpets, thus preventing the microphone's output from overloading the input of the mic preamplifier.

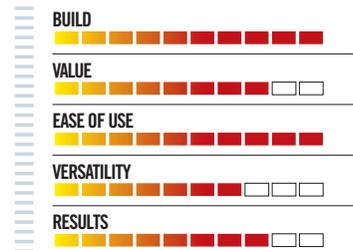
Horses for courses

The C214 works well with vocals and speech, piano and organ, acoustic and electric guitars, although not quite as well with electric bass. It is recommended for recording strings, such as double bass, violin or cello. And it also works well on drums – particularly for overheads.

The frequency response curve is flat from 60Hz up to 1kHz, giving it a very accurate and solid bottom end. It dips between 1kHz and 2.5kHz, down by a couple of dB at 2kHz, helping to prevent electric guitars from sounding too shrill, for instance, before rising again. This 'wobble' in the response is mirrored by a lift between 2.5 to 5kHz, up by a couple of dB at about 3.5kHz before falling back, which helps to make sure that instruments don't sound too 'dull'. Then, there is a steady rise in the response between 5.5kHz and 13kHz, giving a strong 'presence' lift to vocal and instrumental recordings.

In action, the C214 sounds extremely similar to the C414, but I found myself preferring the C214 for electric guitar – it has a slightly 'punchier' sound. So, if you are on a budget, but prepared to spend a reasonable amount on a general-purpose studio microphone, the C214 makes an excellent choice. **FM**

FutureMusic VERDICT



The C214 is a solid performer in the studio for recording instruments of most types.