

Violet Amethyst Standard Condenser Mic | £599

Violet's latest mic takes its name from the similarly coloured gemstone – *Jon Musgrave* finds out whether it has that semi-precious sparkle...

WHAT IS IT?

Cardioid condenser mic with 25mm single diaphragm capsule for vocals, guitars and critical recording applications

CONTACT

Who: Dolphin Music
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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Upfront modern sound
- 2 Beautifully made
- 3 Top class specifications

SPECS

Frequency range: 20Hz to 20kHz

Impedance: output 50 Ohms, rated load 1000 Ohms, suggested >500 Ohms

Sensitivity: 21mV/Pa

S/N ratio: 87dB-A

Equivalent Noise: 7dB (A-weighted)

Maximum SPL: 134dB (0.5% THD at 1kOhm load)

Dynamic range of mic preamplifier: 127dB

Dimensions:

168 x 63 x 41mm

Individuality can be both a help and a hindrance in the audio equipment world. Maybe that's why so many manufacturers opt to

play it safe. But not Latvia's Violet Designs. The last we heard, they'd designed an ear-shaped capsule. But even from a visual perspective, their products stand out from the crowd. The latest mic to come our way is the Amethyst, and the review unit is the 'standard' version (a 'vintage' capsule option is also available).

Compact

As I'm sure you've gathered from the design, this one's a large capsule condenser, although in the flesh it's a reasonably compact one. Like other Violet mics it comes in a luxury purple box, and the mic has an equally striking metallic deep purple casing. With a fixed cardioid pattern and no roll-off or pad

switches, there's not much to report on the features front. Instead of a mic clip, there's a stand thread on the bottom next to the XLR socket, and if you fancy more isolation it also has its own rather stylish suspension cradle.

At £599 the Amethyst is at the upper end of the mid-priced market, and with the cradle (which I'd suggest is a very useful addition) coming in at £59 extra, this isn't a cheap mic. But a look at the specs confirms they've done their homework, with figures very close to the thousand pound Globe we reviewed a couple of months back.

So what of the 'vintage' capsule? Well, whereas the standard capsule is a single diaphragm design, the vintage is dual-diaphragm. But their frequency

responses differ too, with the 'standard' offering boost above 10kHz and around 2kHz, while the 'vintage' gives a smoother response and softer lift above 10kHz. But, if the

vintage sounds more your thing, you'll have to rustle up a rather hefty £749.

In transit

The Amethyst comes with three transit screws to secure the capsule. These are easy to remove, although it's not entirely clear whether you should re-use them. The cradle had me scratching my head for a few minutes, but once set up the mic certainly looks the business.

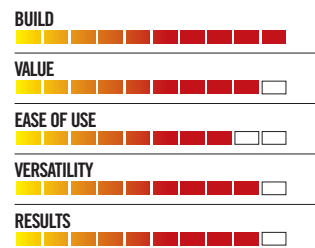
I was expecting the boosted top end to be the first noticeable thing, but actually the 2kHz lift was more obvious, giving the mic a great presence. Also interesting is the proximity effect, which doesn't really kick in until you're quite close in (a couple of inches). A quick look at the chart reveals a dip to around 700Hz. This may explain why, on close-miked acoustic guitar, it's really easy to position with little boominess. On vocals this means you get a nice balanced sound at about six inches, but if you want that 'close in' effect they'll have to come right in. Overall, the Amethyst is suited to a great many applications, especially if close miking is your thing.

The untouchables

Very little comes close to these mics. From the design through to the sound they ooze quality, individuality and style. Sure, these days it's hardly a cheap microphone, and I'm sure some people may dispute their 'non pad, non roll-off' philosophy. But if you plan to continue recording music for years to come (and bear in mind all their mics have a five year warranty) the Amethyst makes a great investment. **FM**



FutureMusic VERDICT



Another classy mic from the Violet stable with a detailed modern sound – it's a real gem!