

WHAT IS IT?

A pair of microphones suitable for hand or stand

CONTACT

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Crisp sound
- 2 Reasonably-priced
- 3 Handling noise kept to a minimum

PRICING

STC-80
£70
 STC-6
£106



Sontronics STC Mics | from £70

They look like identical twins, but can *Trevor Curwen* tell these dynamic newcomers apart?

SPECS

Response: 30Hz – 20kHz (STC-6), 50Hz – 15kHz (STC-80)
Sensitivity: -42dB ±2dB
Polar pattern: Cardioid
Impedance: ≤200 Ohms
Equivalent noise level: -24dB (A-weighted)
Max SPL (for 0.5% THD @ 1,000Hz): 140dB
Power source: Phantom power 48V ±4V (STC-6 only)
Connector: Three-pin XLR
Extras: Aluminium carrying case, mic clip
Weight: 425g

Sontronics, launched in 2005, are no stranger to the pages of *FM*. We've looked at some of their mics before – notably a large diaphragm condenser plus a valve and a ribbon mic. What we have here, though, are a couple of hand-held vocal mics more at the affordable end of the market. One, the STC-6, following in the footsteps of previous Sontronics models, is a condenser while the other, the STC-80, is a dynamic mic, the first, in fact, that Sontronics have released.

Both mics come complete with a mic clip and a stylish aluminium carrying case that should provide more than adequate protection. With the same smart black body and grille, side by side the two mics look like almost-but-not-quite identical twins – the visual differences being the model

number stencilled below the Sontronics logo and a small square panel on the other side of the mic which in the case of the STC-6 is home to pad and hi-pass switches and in the STC-80 simply has the word 'dynamic' letting you know that you won't be needing to go near your phantom power switch. Both mics have cardioid operation and both feature internal shock-mounting to help reduce handling noise.

Dyna-mic

Both of these are about 1.5" longer than the industry standard onstage vocal mic, the Shure SM58, and are almost a third heavier, which some singers using either as a hand-held vocal mic might find a little too weighty, although they do have an aid to performance in radial grooves around the centre of the body designed to

maintain grip. Not all singers want to hold the mic, though, and both mics sit comfortably on a stand in the supplied clip. In terms of vocal sound, in a side-by-side test the STC-80 dynamic mic sounded a touch brighter than a Shure SM58 and more similar to the more expensive Beta model, with plenty of presence that would help vocals cut through onstage.

The STC-6, by contrast to its dynamic sibling is the more sensitive mic, as might be expected. It has a very similar tonal character to the STC-80 but with more in the way of top end clarity. The 75Hz high-pass filter helps with both handling noise and any rumble if mounted on a stand and full marks to Sontronics for making that and the 10dB pad switch recessed so that they can not be accidentally switched when in use.

Besides the hand-held vocal role that both mics are admirably suited for, both could be put to good use in the studio for a number of applications. The STC-80 worked brilliantly in capturing the sound of a guitar cab in our test. The STC-6 also worked fine in that role, although with its extended top-end response, it should be suitable for recording instruments that occupy higher frequency ranges than a typical guitar speaker. In fact, we got great results using it on a hi-hat.

Verdict

We seem to be spoilt for choice when it comes to dynamic microphones these days – there's plenty of them out there to suit plenty of different applications and widely varying budgets – which is no bad thing at all.

This Sontronics pair are two more contenders among many but they have the advantage of being suitable for both stage and studio. If you're looking for mics you can use for both gigs and studio recording, they might be just what you need. **FM**

FutureMusic VERDICT

BUILD	████████████████████
VALUE	████████████████████
EASE OF USE	██████████████████
VERSATILITY	██████████████████
RESULTS	██████████████████

Affordable microphones for use both onstage and in the home studio. Great for the price.