

# Aston Microphones Spirit £299

Aston Mics' Spirit is big sister to the Origin, but is the acclaimed smooth sound genetic? Robbie Stamp checks the DNA

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**KEY FEATURES** **TRANSDUCER:** Condenser, **POLAR PATTERNS:** omni, cardioid and figure-8,  
**SENSITIVITY (1kHz into 1k):** 23.7mV/Pa, **MAX SPL (for THD 0.5%):** 138dB, **PAD:** -20dB/-10dB,  
**LOW-CUT FILTER:** 80Hz, **Weight:** 547g



**A**ston Microphones may only have two mics, but their wave-shaped spring mesh and stainless steel casing mark them out. The Spirit moves on from the shorter Origin adding switchable polar patterns (cardioid, figure-8 and omnidirectional) and an extra 10dB of pad, on top of the 80Hz low-cut filter.

The Spirit has a solid build that seems like it will survive the beating that work-a-day mics can receive. It's not that heavy, but a counterweight can be necessary for safe boom stand extension. The built-in 5/8-inch stand mount socket is fine for sessions where there is little floor/stand noise and the low-cut filter can be engaged. For other situations I'd recommend a quality shockmount (diameter = 54mm). The review model was supplied with the new Aston USM cradle, which performs very well and, with screw braces, can accommodate a whole range of mics.

Though I didn't have the Origin for side-by-side testing, it is one of those responses I can recall, and the Spirit displayed the same smooth mid range and high top, but there is an additional brightness. For vocals and many acoustic instruments this is a good thing, counterbalancing the low-mid proximity presence a little more when close mic'ing. This brightness is not harsh or peaky, just

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a little more present. I found the Spirit an easier mic to position on acoustic guitar, for example, with an instant quality tone in all three polar patterns. The figure-8 was a great match for the old Epiphone acoustic at my studio, and adding a double track using omni (to trim back the proximity-effect LMF tilt) was very pleasing; I would recommend the same technique for vocals and BVs, with cardioid on the former.

The Spirit is at its best on vocals and acoustic instruments, but with the switchable polar patterns and low noise characteristic it also suits room mic and distant mic'ing roles. The figure-8 makes it a good candidate for a clear 'side' in a mid-side pair arrangement. The proximity effect of the Spirit is not as strong as many condensers, making it a good mic for up-close vocals/voiceovers in cardioid and figure-8 patterns. Luckily this does not carry through into an overly thin omni mode, where proximity no longer dominates, and I found it a great tool

for balancing room and source on its own, and as part of a larger set-up.

The Spirit is 50% more expensive than the Origin, which I feel is reasonable. It is a slightly different mic with a more upfront condenser sound and would actually make a good partner in an m/s pairing. I'd factor in the expense of a shockmount, like the Aston USM, to get the most out of the Spirit. It will not disappoint. **FM**

## FM VERDICT

# 8.8

It is in C414 all-rounder territory, with its switchable polar patterns, a good balance of smooth low-end and detailed upper regions.

## THE PROS & CONS

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A smooth frequency response with a nice touch of peak-free brightness

The three polar patterns (cardioid, figure-8 and omni) add flexibility for an array of recording situations (close and distant/room mic'ing, multi-voice figure-8, etc) and set-ups (eg m/s pairs)

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Will need a quality shockmount to get the best out of it