



the t.bone freeU HT 823

The ultimate entry-level wireless mic. Maximum value, seamless performance, and professional sound without compromise

BY DANIEL FLITCROFT

THE T.BONE WIRELESS microphone system from Thomann is an all-in-one package designed to make reliable wireless audio accessible to everyone - from public speakers to gigging musicians, without breaking the bank. Priced at just £123, it's clearly aimed at those who want dependable performance and ease of use in a budget-friendly setup.

Operating within the 823-832MHz frequency band, the system combines a handheld super cardioid microphone and a compact receiver. The mic runs on two AA batteries, while the receiver is powered via a 12V 0.5A DC supply, though it's worth noting that a UK power adapter isn't included. Setup is refreshingly straightforward; once powered, the system pairs and performs within seconds.

The microphone itself feels reassuringly solid in hand, slightly bulky, but not heavy - and includes a stand clip for convenience. Thomann has built in some thoughtful functionality too: auto-squelch to reduce unwanted noise and an auto-scan feature that uses infrared to link the transmitter and receiver seamlessly.

Two included antennas boost transmission stability, while the receiver's 10 preprogrammed frequency groups, each offering 10 channels, give users plenty of flexibility for avoiding interference. Around the back, you'll find XLR and ¼-inch jack outputs, making it easy to connect to mixers or PA systems. On the front panel, a gain knob offers quick level adjustments, though it does feel a touch lightweight compared to more premium models.

Performance

There's no better test for a wireless microphone than a real gig, so we took the t.bone freeU HT 823 out for a two-hour pub performance to see how it stacked up against our trusty Sennheiser e945, a long-time wired favourite known for its clarity and dependability. We'll admit, we approached the test with a fair bit of scepticism, but the t.bone quickly proved it could hold its own in a live environment.

Straight out of the box, setup was refreshingly simple. The system powered up smoothly, connected instantly, and was ready to use within minutes. The front-panel volume

“Delivers outstanding value for budget-conscious users”

adjustment felt sensitive, offering plenty of headroom; we rarely pushed it past the 25% mark. Once up and running, the signal quality was clean and crisp, with no noticeable background hiss or unwanted interference. It might not deliver the rich, warm tonal depth of high-end models like the Sennheiser or Shure SM58, but the difference isn't as dramatic as you'd expect from a system at this price.

The microphone itself has a solid, confidence-inspiring build. At around 426 grams, it's not particularly heavy, though the larger grille does make it feel slightly oversized during longer performances. That said, it's comfortable enough to handle and sits nicely on a stand thanks to the included clip.

What really impressed us was the reliability. Over the entire two-hour set, we experienced no dropouts or signal interruptions, even while moving around the stage. The display showed around 60% battery life remaining at the end, which suggests it could easily handle a full evening of use without worry.

Sound-wise, the t.bone delivered punchy and well-balanced vocals that cut through the mix cleanly. It lacks a touch of the high-end sparkle and depth found in more expensive models, but for most live or spoken-word applications, the performance is more than adequate. Handling noise was minimal, and the microphone showed good rejection of background sounds, making it suitable for lively venues or events.

The system also played nicely with other wireless setups - no interference with our in-ear monitors or our guitarist's wireless rig, which is a big plus for anyone performing with multiple systems on stage.

If there's a weak spot, it's mainly in ergonomics. The grille could be slightly smaller for comfort, and the gain knob on the receiver feels a little lightweight. But these are minor quibbles in what is otherwise a very competent and impressively priced wireless package.

musicradar. VERDICT



Reliable, straightforward, and surprisingly capable, this wireless mic system performs admirably for its price. It may not match the high-end offerings from Shure or Sennheiser, but the t.bone delivers outstanding value for budget-conscious users.

PROS

- + Value for money.
- + Satisfyingly robust and comfortable.
- + Stable transmission with no drop-outs.
- + Low handling noise.

CONS

- Vocals can sound slightly muddy.
- No UK plug included.

SPECS

KEY FEATURES: Includes handheld Dynamic transmitter powered by 2 AA batteries; Frequency band: 823-832MHz; Polar pattern: Super-cardioid; 10 Preprogrammed frequency groups, each with 10 channels; Auto squelch; Frequency scanning at the receiver; Adjustable AF out; Infrared transmission setting from the receiver to the transmitter; LC-Display; XLR and jack output; Operation with 12V 0.5A DC power supply (+ inside)
ACCESSORIES: Includes microphone holder, antennas, EU power supply and rack kit for the installation of a receiver of 1 RU

Verdict

In short, the t.bone freeU HT 823 offers a reliable, great-sounding, and user-friendly solution for those wanting to ditch the cables without draining their wallet. It's perhaps best suited to public speakers, small venues, and emerging musicians - but at under £150, it's hard not to be impressed by the performance on offer.