

Stick Men Interview: Tony Levin, Pat Mastelotto and Markus Reuter

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Roswell Pro Audio Mini K67x Condenser Microphone

The first transformer-based member of the Mini K family



REVIEW BY PAUL VNUK JR.

The Mini K67x is the latest addition to the Roswell Pro Audio Mini K series of compact, affordable, large-diaphragm condenser mics. The fourth entry in the Mini K line, the Mini K67x, is the first model to attach a transformer to its output stage.

A Short History of the Mini K

Based in Northern California, Roswell Pro Audio is run by Matthew McGlynn, a microphone historian and founder of one of the most extensive online microphone databases, recordinghacks.com. Matt's deep dive into microphone technology and lore would lead to the launch of the DIY-based microphone-parts.com, followed by Roswell Pro Audio. Every Roswell microphone is built upon Matt's experience choosing the right microphone parts for the job.

The Mini K47 (reviewed September 2015) kicked off the Roswell brand. Its name is based on its size and the use of a custom K47-style capsule. It exhibits a clean, evenly weighted sound with a bold upper-mid forward color. The Mini K became a series five years later with the addition of the Mini K87, offering an open, neutral yet rich tonality built around a specially tuned K67/K87-style capsule (reviewed February 2020). There is also a bass drum tailored Mini K47 KD.

The Latest Mini K Mic

The Mini K67x is also built around a K67-style capsule, but according to Roswell, only nominally. The 34mm diaphragm is custom-tuned to what Matt calls a "Holy Grail" voicing. The "x" in its title denotes the mics JFET/transformer topology. The mic features a vintage European output capacitor, a custom bipolar electrolytic capacitor and other hand-selected audiophile-grade components.

The Mini K67x shares the same 5.91" x 1.73" body as the previous Mini K models. The body is made of thick steel and comes stock in a metallic gray sparkle finish with a triple-mesh brushed nickel grille. For a small upcharge, you can order the Mini K67x in any of a few custom powdercoat finishes.

Each mic comes in a set with a Cutaway™ shock mount and microfiber bag in a small aluminum briefcase. I was sent a stereo pair in a double-sized case with two of everything.

Frequency Range:20–20,000 Hz
Sensitivity: 12 mV/Pa
Impedance:200 Ω
S/N Ratio: 81 dBA
Equivalent Noise: 13 dBA

By the Numbers

As with the previous Mini K models, its numeric designation refers more to its internal capsule choice than a famous mic past. Is the mic a transformer equipped Mini K87? Actually, no. It is a different capsule and circuit. The Mini K67x takes much of its sonic inspiration from the full-size Roswell Pro Audio Colares (reviewed October 2018), known for its unique, vintage-toned, top-end tonality.

Sounds of Thick Air

The Mini K67x offers a full, rich, low-end versus the focused punch of the Mini K47. While it provides a similar rich, neutral, openness as the Mini K87, the word of the day is saturation. The way the transformer is implemented, with each mic custom-adjusted to drive the transformer just right, the Mini K67x offers what I would describe as a rich harmonic top end. The top end envelops overly bright sources, more so than rolling them off in the way many vintage-toned mics do. The phrase I keep returning is the Mini K67x captures sources with a thick, dusty sonic airiness.

Cymbals, Strings, Guitar and Things

My first use of a pair of Mini K67x mics right out of the box was on a Yamaha baby grand piano. When miked, this piano often comes across more as a bar-room upright. This time with the mics as a spaced pair just at the edge of the lid, I achieved one of the richest, most pleasing sounds I have ever recorded from this instrument.

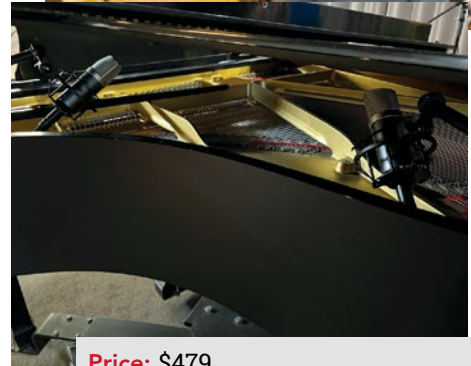
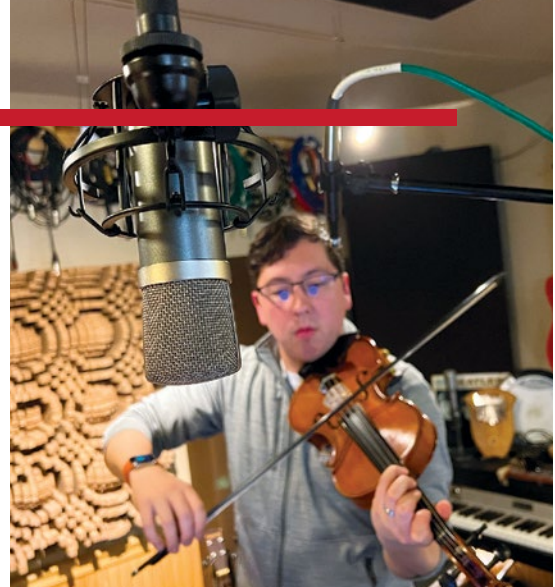
The Mini K47 has long been a favorite drum overhead mic of mine for its boldness and weight. At the same time, the Mini K67x is equally as pleasing as a drum overhead and helped gel the cymbals and the kit together while still offering an open-dimensional sound. Quite different from the Mini K47, but pleasing and useful in a different way. Also, like its predecessor, its size and weight make it easy to place above a drum set.

When recording a folk/country fiddle performance with a laser-focused, clean, pencil condenser about a foot above the violin, I decided to add the Mini K67x to the setup about 3 feet in front of the instrument as a room mic. I ended up only using the spacious, yet saturated, Mini K67x by itself in the mix.

Finally, I also enjoyed the Mini K67x on an electric guitar amp, an acoustic guitar, and a wide-spaced pair are a great option for room mic duties. The one area where I still preferred the Mini K47 was for its forward thrust on lead vocals, while the Mini K67x was the better choice on backing vocals and doubling.

Conclusion

For seven years, the Mini K47 has been one of my most recommended entry-level large-diaphragm condenser mics and one that, despite having an extensive mic locker, is a mic I still reach for regularly. I expect the Mini K67x to join its ranks quickly. A pair of these mics should be on your shortlist. The Roswell Pro Audio Mini K67x is one of those rare affordable, mid-priced mic options with a unique sound that performs well beyond its price bracket. ➡



Price: \$479

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