



(1) ZEN OF RECORDING

It's No Myth: There Is A One-Mic-Does-It-All Solution

By Sven-Erik Seaholm, January 2018

A year ago this month, I covered a pair of condenser microphones that I was quite obviously impressed with. Regular readers of this column may have noted by now that after reviewing literally hundreds of products, value runs a close second to performance when it comes to astounding me. This makes it worth mentioning that these mics were not only lovingly handmade audio wonders of extremely high fidelity, but they were also priced well within reach of the average home recordist.

Roswell Audio (www.roswellproaudio.com), the manufacturer of the matched pair of **Mini K47** microphones to which I'm referring, has taken a full-sized step forward with **Delphos** (\$899), a microphone that handily follows up on the promise of its predecessors; in a big way.

No evaluation of a Roswell microphone can in good conscience avoid mention of mic guru **Matt McGlynn**, who grew the company out his well-respected DIY websites recordinghacks.com and microphone-parts.com. His passion for music and superior audio drove this rise from retrofitting and improving average sounding low-cost mics, into making them the right way from scratch.

The *Delphos* is a large (34mm Gold plated, ultra-thin Mylar) diaphragm, dual pattern (cardioid and omni) condenser mic with an impressively flat frequency response from 20 Hz to 16 kHz. For those looking for comparisons to other mics for reference, think of a less "hyped" *Neumann U87* that can exhibit plenty of "air" without sibilant harshness and still reach way down into the sub bass range accurately. This ability to accurately reproduce such a broad range along with its invaluable -10 dB pad switch, enabling it to capture extremely loud sources makes it an excellent candidate for miking just about...*anything*.

I first used the *Delphos* to record some mono overdubs, using two acoustic guitars with very different personalities. My *Taylor 410* dreadnought, which exhibits lots of highs and lows and my smaller, 00-style *Recording King*, which displays a more forward midrange. On both guitars, I started out with the mic in cardioid mode, about 18" away from the lower bout, turned *slightly* inward toward the soundhole. I find this placement usually gives me a result that exhibits plenty of shimmer and body, that can be subsequently seasoned to taste when fitting them into the mix.

On the Taylor, the microphone performed so well that I had to pull it back a bit because it was capturing more bass than I'm used to getting! This could be great if it were just a solo voice and guitar, but when added to other mix elements like bass and drums, things could quickly become too muddy or boomy. Conversely, this helped in achieving a broader, natural sound for the *Recording King* and combined, the two guitars flattered each other nicely.

On electric guitar, I got excellent results by placing the mic about two feet away from a *Mesa Boogie* amp, which was set to a moderately loud volume. I set the *Delphos*' pickup pattern to "Omni" and engaged the -10 switch. This gave me an incredibly balanced sonic picture with plenty of grit, chunk, and chime, while the omnidirectional pattern imparted a beautiful sense of dimension from the room reflections captured all around the mic. **I absolutely loved the mic in this role.**

Vocals are always considered to be the true test of any large diaphragm condenser microphone and I was almost afraid to even try this mic in that application, considering how well it had performed to now. The opportunity to use it on a performer who had been notoriously hard to capture using myriad microphone choices over the years seemed to be the perfect scenario. Pulling the Delphos close in to the vocalist about 4-6 inches away delivered the exact amount of accuracy and intimacy and I had long been aiming for with this particular singer. The mic's proximity effect, which can make things a muddy mess with other microphones was instead a perfectly complimentary attribute, although I did need to employ a low cut filter on the very lowest frequencies later, due to some sub harmonic rumble introduced by the mic stand. In fact, the only things that would be on my wish list for this mic would be a low cut switch for just this purpose and maybe including a figure-8 setting where the pickup pattern switch is concerned.

Considering that this mic can handle any and every task placed before it, from vocals to drums, percussion, guitars, piano, organ, fiddle, upright bass, brass, and woodwinds all up close and far away—not just ably but *admirably*—brings me to the simple conclusion that **if you could only afford to own just one mic... the Roswell Audio Delphos is that mic.**

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