

→ NUDE MICROPHONES

\$420

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The Nude microphones stereo ribbon is cheap. And for good reason; they're Chinese-made ribbons. But here's the catch, Hugh Covill — the man behind Nude — takes all the guesswork out of the selection process for you. The proposition is this: Rather than buying a ribbon with a badge on it and paying a premium, or going the no-name route and getting a saggy, baggy, out-of-spec microphone, Covill goes to the factory floor in China and tests the ribbons as they come off the line. It's like flying in your own QC manager. He only brings back mics from trusted factories, that have the correct ribbon tension, output specifications, and have a decent transformer in them.

The mic itself is a clone of the Royer SF12, which is inspired by ribbon designs from the '60s. Covill doesn't presume to say his is an exact replica of the Royer; he, for one, only gives a standard 90-day warranty, not a lifetime guarantee. It's a stereo pair

of ribbons arranged in a Blumlein configuration, capturing very natural stereo ambiences. With a clean preamp, it captured plenty of detail, and was killer as a drum overhead. The two ribbon motors seemed very well matched, and the results were highly mono compatible.

The only issue I had was getting a handle on its angles. While it would seem easy to line up the middle of the two ribbons on axis, in practise it's actually a little harder to be confident the centre is where you want it. It would be nice to have a mark somewhere to denote a centreline. I guess there is a downside to not having a brand mark like the Royer badge on an SF-12.

While the Nude microphone wasn't as extended as the Rode, it did tend to look past flaws pretty well. As a front-of-kit mic, it gave a bit more of a compressed version of what the Rode was giving me. It didn't have the same presence to the toms,

but in this case, the floor tom sounded good that way, not hearing some of its skin slap in the room.

The Nude ribbon gives you everything you'd expect from a conventional ribbon-magnet-transformer design. It will benefit from your cleanest, highest gain preamp, but if you're looking for a great-sounding, easy-to-rig, stereo microphone for drum overheads, this is it. You don't even have to have a high-end preamp for that scenario.

The Nude stereo ribbon microphone comes in an aluminium carry case, with a five-pin XLR lead, splitter box, shockmount, slip-over pop shield, and a soft mic case. It's a lot of value for the price, two mics in one really, and a great way to confidently get a ribbon mic without paying loads. You can check out www.sounddesignsolutions.com/nudemic_FAQ for more info.

