

**WILLIAM
JAMES LEACH**
ventures into
the field with a
new offering
from Audix
and discovers a
live sound
microphone
that is a solid
contender for
your dollars.

It's a microphone explosion out there — new manufacturers left and right, new models up and down. I have sampled more microphones in the last two years than I ever did in the previous 25. I must say, most of them are pretty good, and quite a few are downright great. Through the years, I've had the opportunity to sample one or two mics from Audix. I had previously used their model OM-5 and OM-6 vocal mics, and I was sufficiently impressed with those two that I was looking forward to hearing more from them. Granting my wish, Audix sent me their new cardioid vocal condenser, the VX-10, to preview for *Audio Media*. In addition, they sent a veritable plethora of Audix mics in all shapes and flavors to sample for myself.

Appearance

The Audix VX-10 is an attractive package, jet-black in color. The lower section is similar to the OM-5 and OM-6 dynamic microphones, and the capsule windscreen is similar in shape to the OM's but, instead of a fully elliptical top, it is flattened



and contains a foam pop filter within. The VX-10 has a friendly grip, making it comfortable to hand hold for extended periods of time and has absolutely no handling noise or thumping whatsoever, thanks to the excellent isolation and mounting of the element. If you prefer a standmount, Audix provides a snug fitting, hard rubber mount with steel insert (making it a little more difficult to cross thread). With regards to construction, all of the Audix mics I sampled had a substantial solid feel to them — the bodies and windscreens appear to be absolutely bulletproof. Audix sent me a package of 13 mics in all, including several D Series drum mics, OM Series vocal mics, a large-diaphragm CX Series studio condenser and two overhead condensers. (All very nice, by the way.)

In The Field

I had occasion to mix Hal Linden (Barney Miller) at a show with a full orchestra, so I thought it was a good occasion to put the VX-10 to the test. I set him up with the mic and let it fly. Hal performs a two-hour show saluting the many Broadway shows he has appeared in. During the show he reprises many of those roles. Hal has a great speaking voice, and he also plays clarinet. Both sounded truly smooth and highly intelligible in the main system. I instantly found that the VX-10 had an output approximately 9 to 12dB hotter than any of the OM Series vocal mics, which are about the same output level as most of the common dynamic vocal mics. That hot signal level translates into a sound that accentuates the low end around 80 to 125Hz about 3 to 5dB, offers a smooth mid and a friendly presence in the sibilant range of 4kHz to 8kHz, making voice sound very intelligible and natural. Prior to Hal arriving,

I spent a little time comparing the VX-10 to the other Audix mics and some of the more well known vocal mics you would usually find in any sound company's mic collection. The VX-10 had an unusually clear, friendly sound, maintaining solid level and frequency response at distances of one to four inches from the mouth, but dropped off quite rapidly at further distances and at angles greater than 45 degrees. The VX-10 held up quite well next to other vocal condenser mics in that same price range and was clearly several orders of magnitude above most of the dynamic mics. In addition, the other Audix OM Series dynamic microphones held up quite nicely (fairness and modesty prohibits me from mentioning the brands and models of the other mics).

Many times, you will find that a mic sounds good in the mains but is difficult to stabilize frequency-wise in the monitors, especially a vocal condenser with a very hot signal that seems to be rabid with feedback at six or seven frequencies. The greatest issue in monitors is to attain the most level coupled with nice

AUDIX VX-10 VOCAL CONDENSER MIC

sound before feedback occurs. The Audix VX-10 made it a simple affair to eliminate feedback and, at the same time, create great sounding monitors. With the monitors we were using (Yorkville TX2Ms, similar to a Clair 12AM), I found I had to cut the following frequencies for feedback control — 160Hz, 630Hz, 1.5kHz and 3.15kHz. Using that EQ, the VX-10 maintained a sweet sound and was extremely stable at a moderate sound pressure level. With a slight tweaking of four more frequencies, I was able to attain a very hefty shed-rock volume.

Conclusion

In my opinion, the Audix VX-10 is an outstanding combination of vocal condenser mic and selected instruments mic. I tried the VX-10 with not only voice and clarinet, but also flute, acoustic guitar and upright bass — the resulting sounds were very nice. I was most impressed with the full frequency response the microphone provided for the human voice and the amazing clarity of all instruments tested. Audix has created a mic that is so tough you could hammer nails with it, but is still so friendly that you can nail down a great live mix. I highly recommend the Audix VX-10 vocal condenser microphone. □

INFORMATION

- 💰 **Audix VX-10 Vocal Condenser Microphone \$599.**
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