



BY DARWIN GROSSE

MXL V67i Microphone

There's two sides to every story—especially true with this mic

In a small studio environment, versatility is often prized above pure function. If a device is able to handle multiple tasks well, it means that one can get away with fewer pieces of gear, less storage area and (hopefully) less outlay of cash. While not all multi-purpose devices are great at what they do, MXL is trying to help out the space- and cash-challenged studio owner with the new V67i microphone.

What It Is

This is a unique microphone design, featuring two different capsules for two completely different sounds. The first capsule, identical to the capsule found in the popular V67g microphone, is selected using a "Warm" switch setting. The second capsule (selected with the "Bright" setting) has a pronounced high-end boost, meant to emulate the bright capsules used in vintage tube mics. The capsules are mounted on opposite sides of the microphone, so switching capsules means turning the mic around. As a handy touch, a small LED light glows from the active side of the mic, verifying both the capsule in use as well as a presence of phantom power.

The two capsules are housed in a dark green body with a bright golden mesh cover. In addition to the capsule selection switch, there is a low-end roll-off and 6 dB pad. The mic comes in an attractive wooden box, and includes a bottom-mount screw-on clip (but no shock mount).

Experiences

I've been using this mic quite a bit in my personal studio. The dual capsule setup makes this a versatile microphone when you only have room for a few mics. I found that the "warm" capsule works well on vocals, providing a smooth sound to both male and female vocals without the "hype" of many inexpensive condensers or the fuzzi-ness of tube mics. While very good for the lead vocal, it was exceptional on back-ground vocals, where you need to fit the sound in the pocket of a larger production.

It took a while to get used to the bright capsule of the V67i. Initially, I found it somewhat too harsh for many of the sources I tried. However, when I started thinking about it from a "vintage" standpoint, I started getting hits. The first time it nailed a session was in a faux-Jeff Lynne track, where strident acoustic guitars were used to propel the rhythm. The bright sound made the guitars seem "insistent", which (along with some heavy compression) is exactly what I needed. Subsequently, I found it useful for miscellaneous percussion tracks, low male vocal tracks, and even some "studio air" ambient applications. It sounded different from every other microphone in my collection, and brought a new sound to some of my recordings.

This is a visually appealing microphone; in a recent recording, I had several vocalists stop by for help with a demo track. Their eyes kept getting drawn to the V67i, often leading to the "What's that?" question (and the inevitable followup, "Can I try that mic?"). Within the occasionally dreary confines of the studio, the MXL's deep green and bright gold color scheme stand out from the crowd.

The V67i is also a rugged mic. The MXL is the microphone that took a fall to the floor during my testing of the SE Electronics Reflexion Filter (March 2007), and it survived with nary a bump. The solid-state circuitry and sturdy



all-metal construction of the V67i means it can take a lickin' without complaint, and would make it a good choice for on-the-road recording.

Conclusion

This microphone has become one of the few "always-up" microphones in my small project studio. The "warm" capsule does the heavy lifting, providing good results with most of the vocalists I've thrust upon it. However, having the versatility of the second capsule, with its unique bright sound, means that I have a new way to experiment with sound without resorting to a mic change. This makes it easier (and more likely) that I will experiment with a brighter sound – and more likely that I'll try this alternative on a whim.

The V67i is a great mic for many purposes; with a street price about the cost of a nice pair of shoes, it's hard not to recommend it as a useful alternative for every studio.

Price: \$199 (about \$149 street)

More from: MXL Microphones/Marshall Electronics, 1910 E. Maple Ave., El Segundo, CA 90245. 310/333-0606, www.mxlmics.com.