



Aston Microphones Element

Blind tests with industry pros and everyday users put this mic top of the pile against established brands four times this price

Words: Mark Whitlam

PRICE: £159

Aston have made a name for themselves over the past few years producing very reasonably priced mics whose performance rivals high-cost competitors. With the launch of the fixed-position cardioid Element, they have taken this to another level.

Having developed a completely new capsule design, Aston have managed to bring down production costs significantly without compromising on sound quality. Its sonic properties are described as having the low-end punch of a dynamic, the mid-range warmth of a ribbon and the higher-frequency precision of a condenser mic, hence the hybridised name 'Ridyon™' for the proprietary capsule.

Boasting a very flat frequency response, low noise-floor and high sound-pressure level (SPL) rating, we tried a pair of Elements in a few situations around the drums, with the first port of call being the

1. A Bundle of Fun

The Element comes with a unique clip-on shock-mount and ingenious magnetic pop-shield, should you need to tame platives.

2. A Mic for the People

Both everyday users and top industry producers helped finetune this mic in R&D, ultimately coming out top of the pile in their choices against the big guns.

3. One-of-a-kind Design

The unique grille and waveform-contoured chassis help avoid distortion of sound waves, directing them towards the capsule without affectation.

4. Deep Purple

The beautiful detail of the purple glowing logo shows the presence of the 48V phantom power required for this cardioid mic.

bass drum.

Being a moving coil mic, it captures very fast transients and has plenty of punch for beater attack. We found the sweet spot for us was just inside the hole of the resonant head and slightly off-axis to the beater, where the balance of low end and attack blended well.

A/B'd against a pair of AKG C414 XLS II in an X-Y configuration as overheads, the Element captures plenty of mids, whilst the AKG produced a more open top end.

The Aston came into its own in the Glyn Johns positioning with that mid-range punch capturing the whole kit well in a rock situation, the snare smacking you (pleasingly) around the chops.

The final position was on the toms, and – wow! – this was where these guys absolutely shone! They capture both the attack of the stick along with heaps of mid and low frequencies, allowing the tone of toms to speak really openly.

The only slight challenge we faced at times was regarding ease of

positioning (such as inside the bass drum) due to the fixing design of the proprietary shock mount, which doesn't allow the mic to rotate once it is attached.

That said, at this price and sonic performance, a little bit of extra mic stand tweaking can be taken on the chin.

CONTACT

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Verdict

A highly capable and versatile mic that holds its own against much pricier competitors. A great choice for punchy rock situations and a go-to for toms, in particular.

Rhythm Rating

9/10