

# Sontronics STC-20 CARDIOID CONDENSER MIC

An affordable condenser microphone ideal for both broadcasting and recording vocals? Watch us wreck the mic, watch us wreck the mic...



**PRICE**  
**£129.00**  
inc VAT

**W**hen recording vocals, the correct choice of mic is essential. If you're after consistent and transparent frequency response, a quality condenser microphone should be the first thing on your shopping list.

The STC-20 is a large diaphragm condenser mic from Sontronic, which should slot into any studio environment. The one-inch gold capsule has been borrowed from its big brother the STC-2 giving the STC-20 out-of-the-box pedigree.

Just some general background technical information... If you're new to condenser mics you will need a mixer with phantom power. If you're routing through a control/recording interface you will need a mic preamp fitted with phantom power. I would also advise investing in a shock mount to avoid any transient noise coming through the vibrations of the mic stand.

So, what's the difference between a conventional dynamic mic and a phantom powered condenser mic? The dynamic mics are designed for stage and live performances; they're much tougher and designed to take the abuse dished out on stage so their sound quality is generally not as accurate as a condenser. They also have a limited frequency response which allows them to withstand the high sound pressure levels that they will encounter on stage from monitors, guitar amps and drums. Condenser mics, meanwhile, are not so rugged but have a wider frequency response, making them ideal for picking up those higher and lower frequencies required for recording or broadcasting.

Back to the beautiful STC-20; a satin black microphone with its

gold trim certainly makes it look the part. While it's a no frills version of its bigger brother, with no pad or filter switches, it shouldn't be sniffed at, as most decent mixing desks will have these features on the mic channel inputs – just look out for the switch marked 48v as that will indicate a phantom power supply is present on the mixer.

Large diaphragm mics generally warm up the sound of what's being recorded, making them the best choice for vocals and acoustic instruments. So, with its one-inch capsule, the STC-20 is just as ideal for broadcasting, voiceovers and recording vocals as it is recording an acoustic guitar. The evenly balanced frequency response of the STC-20 adds depth to recordings, produces a well defined low end, natural presence and detailed top-end of the vocals. A pop screen is always worth the small investment, and will ensure the harsh P's and SH sounds from your vocals does not cause any distortion. That said, the cardioid pick up pattern of the STC-20 does ensure that only the sounds its pointed at will be picked up, while any sounds from the sides and rear will be rejected.

Bottom line, Sontronics certainly offer value for money. The STC-20 delivers on all fronts; whether you're recording or broadcasting, it offers superbly balanced and smooth vocals. It's a shame there is no shock mount included, as this will always improve the sound of this style of mic, but I guess that's how Sontronics are able to keep the cost so low. The STC-20 follows in its big brother's footsteps and would make a worthwhile investment if you are looking for quality and value for money. **idj**

**Words: Paul Morrissey**

## FEATURES

- Large-diaphragm cardioid condenser microphone
- Response: 20Hz - 20kHz
- Sensitivity: 16mV/Pa ±2dB (0dB = 1V/Pa 1,000Hz)
- Polar pattern: Cardioid
- Impedance: ≤200 Ohms
- Equivalent noise level: 18dB (A-weighted)
- Max SPL (for 0.5% THD @ 1,000Hz): 120dB
- Power source: Phantom power 48V ±4V
- Connector: Three-pin XLR

## ALTERNATIVES

Also worth checking out is the Shure PG27 or the AKG Perception 420

## PROS & CONS

- ✓ Price, flat response
- ✗ none

## VERDICT

Superb value for money, a well-balanced and transparent condenser microphone