

THE SESSION

To demonstrate Studio Projects microphones in a typical, real world applications. Two short songs were written, "What You Gonna Say" in a Pop/R&B style, and "Wicked One" in a Pop/Rock style, and sang versions of both through each of the three Studio Projects microphones:

- C1 Cardioid Pattern Large Diaphragm Condenser
- C3 Multiple Pattern Large Diaphragm Condenser
- T3 Multiple Pattern Tube based Large Diaphragm Condenser

In order to offer multiple perspectives on the sound of these mics, each mic was tracked through multiple preamps into Pro Tools. The following preamps were used for no other reason other than we had them:

- Focusrite Red 1: Solid State Mic Pre with Transformer
- Neve 1089: Solid State Mic Pre with Transformer, (electrically same as 1073)
- Modified V72: Tube Mic Pre with Transformer, modified for variable gain
- Trident A Range: Solid State Mic Pre with Transformer, reissue
- JoeMeek VC1Qcs: Solid State Mic Pre with Compressor

The Neve, Trident and JoeMeek pieces have equalizers which were switched off for tracking.

In each case, the mic was set up, plugged it into the mic pre, and adjusted the gain of the mic preamp so the output would be as close to 0dbVU (0 on the VU meter @ +4) as possible. In some cases the same gain settings were available on multiple preamps, and in those cases, similar settings were used for consistency. Of course, in other cases, one preamp would offer a +25db setting, while another had +24db, so recording levels could not be matched in any scientific fashion. More about this in a moment...

In order to make this real world, I inserted a compressor into the chain after the mic preamp. Each time, after having adjusted the gain of the preamp so the output would be as close to 0dbVU as possible, then plugged the output of the mic pre directly into the compressor. For the Focusrite, Neve, V72 and Trident, outboard compressors were used. The JoeMeek box has a compressor in it, so we used its compressor, instead of an outboard unit.

For the song "What You Gonna Say," I used an Anthony DeMaria Labs 1500, which is a tube based, transformer electro-optical limiter similar to an LA2(a).

For "Wicked One," I used an 1176LN, (blackface, rev. D) which is an FET based, transformer compressor, set to a ratio of 4:1.

In both cases, I set the compressor once before the first take to read about 3db of gain reduction, maximum, when seeing a signal hanging around 0dbVU. Having set the compressor once, I used it on every take for each microphone and preamp without changing any of the settings, and I observed around 3db maximum gain reduction each time. When the JoeMeek was used, I used its compressor, set for similar effect, at around 3db of gain reduction. Again, compression settings were untouched between takes.

The output of the compressor drove the input of an Apogee AD8000 A/D converter, where the signal was converted @ 44.1kHz/24bit with levels around 0dbVU (-15 on my Apogee), and recorded onto hard disk via a Pro Tools TDM rig.

THE RESULT

Even though we tried to keep things as closely matched as possible, each of these takes is still a different vocal performance. Obviously, each performance will vary. When you include discrepancies in the preamp's available gain settings, its easy to see how these takes ended up being somewhat different from each other in

volume and amount of compression. I made small overall gain changes to each take in Pro Tools to try to equalize their respective volumes, but without making rides throughout the performance, or other processing, this can only be achieved to a certain degree. For this reason, I think this set of takes is best used as a set of examples showing how these mics can sound in certain situations, rather than as a scientifically controlled shoot-out of mic preamps, which this is obviously not.

Level rides, EQ, editing or comping, pitch correction, and any of the hundreds of other things we all do to vocals would have clouded the issue at this point, so we chose to present these tracks simply, for the purpose of hearing their tone, unadorned. We would certainly have made many different choices had this been a record! More background vocals, more effects, level rides, etc. In this case, we thought it best to keep it simple. Think of these as tracks, not mixes, and nothing more!

In order to truly hear these mics and preamps fairly, these are complete vocal takes, with no punches, edits or comps. The good, the bad, and the ugly. Please excuse pitchy notes!

THE TAKES

Mono soloed lead vocal takes are offered. They are simply mic, mic pre, compressor, converter, and a gain change for level matching. No EQ, ambiance or further compression.

Vocals mixed in context with the track are also offered. These vocals have a small amount of ambiance mixed in with them, but still no EQ, edits or comps, rides, etc. We did use the Renaissance plug-in compressor across the stereo bus of these full track mixes, but only with a maximum of 3db of gain reduction.

There is also a background vocal stripe of "What You Gonna Say" which consists of 2 notes, each quadruple tracked (sung four times for thickness) on the C3, through the ADL compressor. These were comped, but no processing such as EQ, extra compression, pitch correction, ambiance, etc., has been applied. This is just 8 tracks of vocals, panned hard left and hard right.

Here is the key to the takes:

WSay = "What You Gonna Say" (used ADL1500, or JoeMeek)
Wkd1 = "Wicked One" (used 1176LN, or JoeMeek)
Mx = Mix with vocal (vocal includes ambiance)
Ld = Soloed Lead Vocal (vocal is unprocessed)
Bkvs = Background Vocal (vocals are unprocessed)

01 = C1 & Red 1
02 = C1 & Neve 1089
03 = C1 & V72
04 = C1 & Trident A
05 = C1 & JoeMeek VC1Qcs

06 = C3 & Red 1
07 = C3 & Neve 1089
08 = C3 & V72
09 = C3 & Trident A
10 = C3 & JoeMeek VC1Qcs

11 = T3 & Red 1
12 = T3 & Neve 1089
13 = T3 & V72
14 = T3 & Trident A

15 = T3 & JoeMeek VC1Qcs

Example: Wkd1Ld12 = Lead Vocal soloed version of "Wicked One" sung on the T3, through the Neve 1089, and then into the 1176LN.

CD Tracks:

<u>"What You Gonna Say" w/ADL1500</u>			<u>"Wicked One" w/1176LN</u>			<u>Mic & Preamp</u>		
01	WSayMx01	16	WSayLd01	32	Wkd1Mx01	47	Wkd1Ld01	C1 & Red 1
02	WSayMx02	17	WSayLd02	33	Wkd1Mx02	48	Wkd1Ld02	C1 & 1089
03	WSayMx03	18	WSayLd03	34	Wkd1Mx03	49	Wkd1Ld03	C1 & V72
04	WSayMx04	19	WSayLd04	35	Wkd1Mx04	50	Wkd1Ld04	C1 & Tri A
05	WSayMx05	20	WSayLd05	36	Wkd1Mx05	51	Wkd1Ld05	C1 & JMeek
06	WSayMx06	21	WSayLd06	37	Wkd1Mx06	52	Wkd1Ld06	C3 & Red 1
07	WSayMx07	22	WSayLd07	38	Wkd1Mx07	53	Wkd1Ld07	C3 & 1089
08	WSayMx08	23	WSayLd08	39	Wkd1Mx08	54	Wkd1Ld08	C3 & V72
09	WSayMx09	24	WSayLd09	40	Wkd1Mx09	55	Wkd1Ld09	C3 & Tri A
10	WSayMx10	25	WSayLd10	41	Wkd1Mx10	56	Wkd1Ld10	C3 & JMeek
11	WSayMx11	26	WSayLd11	42	Wkd1Mx11	57	Wkd1Ld11	T3 & Red 1
12	WSayMx12	27	WSayLd12	43	Wkd1Mx12	58	Wkd1Ld12	T3 & 1089
13	WSayMx13	28	WSayLd13	44	Wkd1Mx13	59	Wkd1Ld13	T3 & V72
14	WSayMx14	29	WSayLd14	45	Wkd1Mx14	60	Wkd1Ld14	T3 & Tri A
15	WSayMx15	30	WSayLd15	46	Wkd1Mx15	61	Wkd1Ld15	T3 & JMeek
		31	WSayBkvs					C3 & Red 1

Once again, this was done so you can hear how the Studio Projects microphones sounds on some various preamps. We make no claims, no tests, no comparisons. This is only to hear what the mics really sound like. You may not own any of the preamps used. The choice of preamps was done as these were what was owned. No attempt was made to obtain any other preamp, so therefore we can make no offering as to what they sound like. All we can do is make claim that these tracks were done fairly with no tricks. They are what they are off the preamps that was used.

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