



Neumann TLM 103

Amazing sound quality, low noise, great value... that's what you get with the Neumann TLM 103.

Description

The TLM 103 is a transformerless condenser microphone equipped with a large diaphragm capsule, based upon the famous U 67 and U 87. It has a cardioid pattern, which means that it accepts sound from the front in a heart-shaped pattern and rejects the sound at the back.

The TLM 103 can handle a high SPL with a maximum of 138db and it does so with amazingly low self noise.

In Session

I took the TLM 103 for a test drive in my personal studio over a two week period. In that time, I recorded several sources with very favorable results.

My first session was to record well-known country music songwriter, Tom Douglas. Country music is all about the story so it is extremely vital to capture every subtle detail of a lead vocal. The TLM 103 proved to deliver all that I hoped for... rich and warm low end textures, yet clarity and intelligibility. I would expect the TLM 103 to shine on wide range of male and female singers due to the smooth and balanced frequency response.

My second session with the TLM 103 was used recording violin and viola. David Davidson, most recently honored for his contribution on the hit song "I Can Only Imagine", was the masterful musician on the session. David is well known in Nashville for what he calls, "stack 'em ups". David performed all four parts of the string arrangement with four stacks per part. That's a total of 16 tracks. I needed to capture a full range of frequencies and dynamics to add up to a big sound. Once again, I was very pleased with the warm and full sound of the TLM 103. Even after stacking 16 tracks, I was very impressed by the low self-noise of this mic.

Lastly, I recorded a steel string and a nylon string guitar with session musician, Mark Baldwin. I found the TLM 103 to be a bit too "thick" in the low end for my taste, though something easily remedied with a low cut filter or minimal eq. Again, the mids and highs were smooth and pleasant.

Conclusion

The TLM 103 is a mic I would enthusiastically recommend to the semi-pro and professional user. It maintains that rich Neumann quality yet for a fraction of the price of it's more expensive siblings.

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