DPA Microphones 2028 Vocal Mic

By George Petersen

At a Glance

The DPA Handheld for the Rest of Us

This latest entry in the handheld mic sweepstakes brings a new contender with a different approach at an affordable price point.

DPA Microphones 2028

PROS

- Natural sound
- Low handling noise
- Affordable pricing

CONS

- Uncolored sound may not appeal to some singers
- No onboard rolloff or pad switches

STATS

Type	Pre-polarized condenser
Capsule Diameter	19mm
Pickup Pattern	Supercardioid
Frequency Range	100 Hz - 16k Hz (±2 dB)
Sensitivity at 1kHz	-46 dBV/Pa
EIN (self-noise)	22 dBA
Dynamic Range	117 dB (typical)
Max SPL	160 dB
Power Requirement	48 VDC phantom (±4 V)
Dimensions	1.9" x 7.4"
Weight	10.1 ounces
Price	$ 699
Manufacturer	DPA Microphones
More Info	dpamicrophones.com

It isn't every day that DPA comes out with a new handheld performance microphone; in fact, the company launched its first entry in the field, the d:facto, in 2012. That was followed a year later by the improved — and more versatile — d:facto (4018 V), which we reviewed in the Feb. 2013 edition of *FRONT of HOUSE*. Still in production more than six years later, the d:facto offers excellent performance and that ultra-low noise, super-clean, flat response that has traditionally been a hallmark of all DPA microphones.

The d:facto's perks — such as interchangeable capsules and a mic head that's removable for use on various wireless bodies — were a nice touch. However, "simple" little additions like that (which may not appeal to many users) added to the price, giving it a current tag of $1,049.

Fortunately, for those seeking high performance at a more affordable price, DPA unveils its latest handheld condenser mic. The new model 2028, has a fixed (non-removable) supercardioid capsule and is priced at $699 — right in line with other high-end choices, such as Neumann's KMS 104/105 and Shure's KSM9.

Figure 1

The 19mm supercardioid capsule

The Details

With that goal in mind, DPA designed the 2028 to bring the sound of the d:facto's 4018VL capsule to a wider range of users. The removable/interchangeable head approach is replaced with a brand-new, fixed-position 19mm capsule (**Fig. 1**). Users who'd like the 2028 sound for their wireless rig are not left out, as the mic is available in three variants: the standard wired-handheld with XLR output; and two mic head models for wireless systems — an SL1 adapter is compatible with Shure, Sony and Lectrosonics; and a Sennheiser-compatible SE2 adapter.

The 2028 handheld package includes the microphone, a tough semi-rigid protective case, a carry pouch and a stand clip.

The mic is finished in matte-black and weighs in at a comfortable 10.1 ounces. One key feature of the 2028 is its three-stage pop filter, which starts with a tough metal grill that unscrews for cleaning. Under the grill is an open-cell foam layer — also removable for cleaning — and the capsule itself is surrounded by a metal micromesh "basket" (**Fig. 2**) that adds a final layer of protection from breath pops and vocal plosives. This assembly also unscrews for cleaning, if necessary. The acoustical vents on the capsule's rear side — which provide the supercardioid polar pattern — are also fitted with a similar protective micromesh material.

Figure 2

A micromesh surrounds the capsule as the third step in pop protection.

On the Road

Over a period of weeks, I was able to use the mic in a variety of situations. It operates on standard phantom power (48 VDC, ± 4 V), so powering was never an issue, although as with any condenser design, applying phantom power to a live input is *not* recommended. The mic does not have any pad or LF rolloff switches, although the 2028's specs state it can handle 160 dB peaks without clipping, so overload should not be problem with most vocalists.

The mic does have a built-in, third-order 80 Hz high-pass filter that rolls off bass frequencies starting just above 100 Hz (see **Fig. 3**). The slope is gentle and has no effect on normal performance, other than removing low-end rumble and crud. In fact, the 2028's LF slope is exactly where I generally click in the console input's high-pass filter anyway, so there was no need to do that here.

The stated frequency response is 100 Hz to 16k Hz (±2 dB) and the mic's sound is very "DPA" in character — un-hyped and natural. The 2028 pretty much gives back exactly what you put in. This is not the type of mic you want if you're looking for an aggressive sound. There is no midrange presence bump or exaggerated high-end that is common in many other handheld mics. At the other end of the spectrum, however, the HF response is extended, providing an "airy" quality that can be nice, particularly on female vocals. On male rock vocals, I did need to add about 2 dB of upper mids to help the voice rise above the mix, but here again, that was a decision I made, rather than having that boost built into the mic's sound.

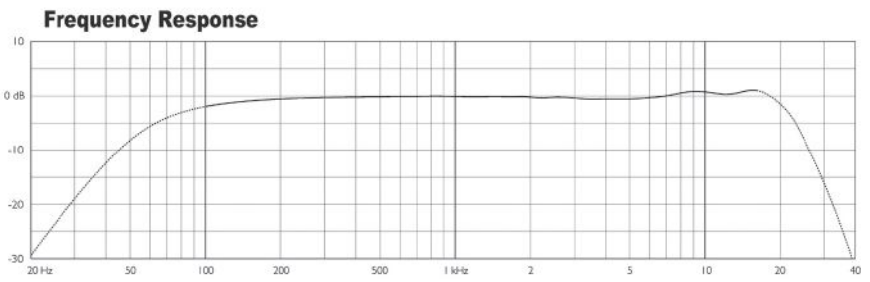
The 2028 does exhibit a nice, smooth — but not overblown — proximity effect when used up close, and performers that actually know how to "work" a mic may really appreciate this. Another nice factor is the effectiveness of the three-stage pop filters, and breath noise was never a problem, even up close. Combined with the (very effective) internal capsule shock mounting, LF problems from stand-borne stage thumps and handling noise were essentially non-existent.

As expected, the supercardioid polar pattern (**Fig. 4**) is fairly tight — so vocalists who like to move a lot around the mic while singing may need a slightly more forgiving pattern. However, if your singer understands proper mic technique, the 2028 will pay off big-time in terms of reducing stage bleed. Meanwhile, the mic's off-axis response was spot-on — definitely attenuated, but uncolored; the 2028 scored high marks in the gain-before-feedback department, and the polar pattern remains consistent at all frequencies — all of which made monitor mixing a much easier task.

The Verdict

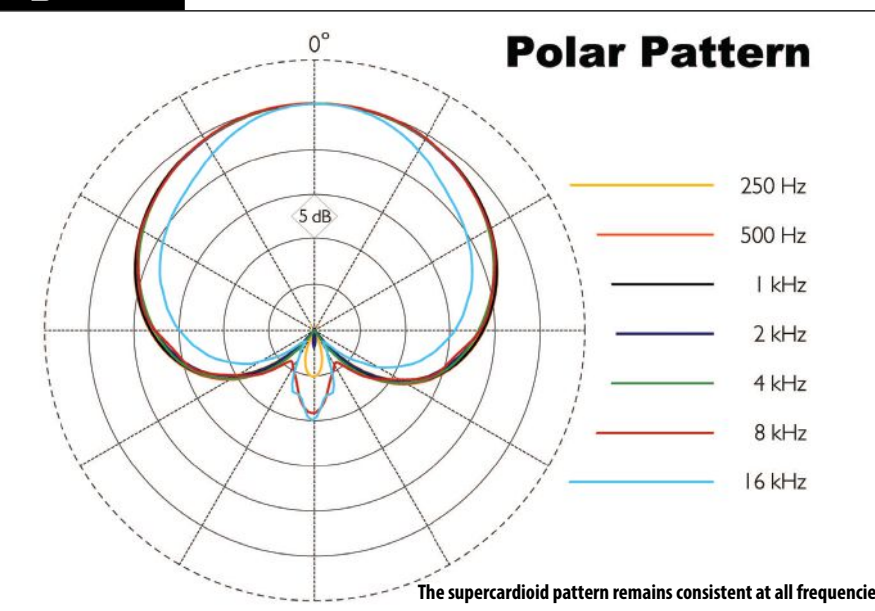
With the 2028, there's finally a DPA-quality vocal mic for the rest of us. At $699, you probably won't find these in your local thrash club, but it's nice to have more options for the vocalist seeking a high-performance alternative. I like that. FOH

Figure 3



The 2028's frequency response curve

Figure 4



The supercardioid pattern remains consistent at all frequencies.