

SE Electronics Z3300A and Gemini

reviewed by Jason Buchanan



Reminiscent of the famous U-87, SE Electronics have really hit the nail on the head with this well crafted and superb sounding condenser microphone. Cased in a tight aluminium roadcase, and featuring an associated shock mount and microphone cable, the Z3300A is a wonderful microphone suited for almost any vocal style and range, and as far as appearances go, it is quite an attractive looking piece of work, with a beautiful finish with vintage qualities. It is equally at home for use on drum overheads, and due to its selectable, variable polar pattern you can easily use it as part of an A/B or X/Y configuration.

Alternatively the omni-directional mode makes it perfect as an ambient room microphone that really captures the characteristics and qualities of the space you are recording in. While keeping the tone true to the source, the Z3300A adds a beautiful and unique flavour to the sound with a certain crispness and warmth. The large diaphragm captures every little nuance without any noise at all. Powered by phantom power obviously, the Z3300A has a handy -10dB pad switch on the microphone itself, so for hotter signals you can cool the mic down a little, making it just as applicable for miking up guitar cabinets or inside pianos or literally anything that has a higher SPL than your standard acoustic guitar. I found the Z3300A to be exceptionally adaptable to female vocals, as it really seemed to bring out the breathy-ness of the voice, especially when run through a fantastic Joe Meek Pre. The low frequency roll off was perfect on the female vocals and worked

even better with hi-hats and cymbals. I found that even when I ran the Z3300A straight into my A/D converters the sound was still absolutely crystal clean. After using the Z3300 I really want to give it back as soon as I can because if I hold onto it for any longer I won't want to give it back, and given the price this model retails for, I may just do that. Any studio no matter how big or small should get one of these in their microphone arsenal as it will be one of those microphones you just keep reaching for, no matter what application.

Type: A FET Condenser
Capsule: 1.07" sputtered gold 6-micron diaphragm
Frequency Response: 20 Hz to 20kHz
Polar Pattern: Cardioid, Figure 8, Omnidirectional
Selectors: -10dB pad and lo-cut filter
Sensitivity: 16mV/Pa or -38(±2dB)
Output Impedance: <200 ohm
Equivalent Noise Level: <18dB typical (A weighted)
THD: <0.5% at 130dB SPL
Power: Phantom power 48V(±4V)



y o u
anything
my vocal
w h e r e

My god... when I took what I definitely thought was NOT a microphone (judging by the weight and size of the beautiful aluminium roadcase the Gemini came shipped with), out its the box, I was literally blown away by this beast. The SE Electronics Gemini is a dual tube condenser microphone designed for studio or location use and I can tell right now, if looks and size are to judge this weapon by then my tracks and drum overheads going to sound beyond anything I could have hoped for. The Gemini is huge, and no wonder, as inside this large diaphragm transformerless condenser microphone is housed two... yes two... yes that's right... as in DUAL valves. These pre-tested 12UA7 and 12AX7 triodes deliver some serious tonal qualities... well-rounded and crispy vocals, guitar tracks with that added bit of edge and drum overheads that sizzle as the valves go about their business doing what valves do best, making things sound shit hot. The dual valve feature is a world first and proves that SE Electronics have really pushed the boundaries as far as valve microphones are concerned. The large gold diaphragm is massive, measuring in at 35mm and it didn't really matter what I set the mic up to do, whether it was using it as a room mic or as a close mic on an acoustic, the sonic details captured in the sounds were just so immediately recognisable. The whole package comes with a shock mount and

power supply that comes shipped in a very sturdy aluminium road case that you couldn't destroy, even if you ran it over with a truck. I don't usually get excited that much about microphones as to me they are all a much of a muckness but this one made me really stand up and take notice from the second I took it out of its case and held it like a newborn child. A great microphone and all things considered, very, very well priced.

Frequency Response: 20Hz-20KHz
Sensitivity: 12.6mV/Pa - 38± 1dB(0dB=1V/Pa 1000Hz)
Polar Pattern: Cardioid
Impedance: 200 Ohms
Equivalent Noise Level: 16dB(A weighted)
Max SPL for 0.5% THD@1000Hz: 130dB
Power Requirement: external PSU included
Connector: 8-pin army connector

For more details on S.E Microphones call Amber Technology on (02) 9452 8600

