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Hot Products On Review:
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DPA Microphones d:vote 4099 Clamp and Stand Mounts

by Paul Vnuk Jr.

Back in our June 2010 issue we took a look at the d:vote™ 4099 Instrument Microphones from Denmark's own DPA Microphones. DPA mics are known for a highly accurate, clear yet natural sound, and the d:vote 4099 was no exception.

Rather than being a company with a wide variety of mic models in dozens of shapes and sizes, DPA is better known for creating flexible (and often modular) microphone systems, many of which are built around a single capsule design with a wide variety of application-specific mounts and accessories. When we initially looked at the d:vote 4099 system in 2010, there were six mounting options/packages, and now that number has grown to eleven. Today we'll be looking at a couple of the very newest available mounts.

The d:vote 4099—a recap

The d:vote 4099 is based on the pre-polarized pressure gradient condenser capsule also used in DPA's d:fine™ headset and d:screet™ miniature mics. The capsule has a diameter of 0.2 inches and it's set at the back end of a 1.8-inch mesh tube that makes it, in effect, a miniature shotgun mic (DPA calls it supercardioid). This tube is nestled inside a full-body windssock which is attached to rubber O rings on a rubber shock mount. This is then attached to a 5.5-inch miniature gooseneck armature with an ultra-thin 6' mic cable that terminates in an industry-recognized Microdot connector.

The d:vote 4099 has a max SPL of 142 dB/152 dB before clipping, a 100 dB/90 dB dynamic range and a signal-to-noise ratio of 71 dB/66 dB. The second number is for the 4099T and 4099D models (for trumpet/sax and drums/percussion).

Its frequency range is 40 Hz to 15 kHz and it is flat from 40 up to 10 kHz, where there is a 2 dB boost at 10 to 12 kHz. Sonically the d:vote 4099 is a very honest microphone that is well suited to highlight the nuance and detail in any acoustic instrument. This is a "snapshot of reality" mic, and as I warned in my previous review, that's a blessing and curse. Stellar instruments and performances will be captured in all their detail and nuance... while buzzy, low-quality instruments and second-rate performances will, too.

Versatility and choice

Beyond its clean sonics, the d:vote 4099's versatility comes from the fact that you can attach the Microdot connector to your choice of adaptors: the DAD4099 standard XLR adaptor for phantom-powered wired use, as well as a host of wireless options for most systems. The DAD4099 XLR adaptor has built in 80 Hz rolloff, while all other cable adaptors are full range.

Further versatility is offered by the aforementioned mounting options available for most instruments in the string, brass, woodwind and percussive categories. You can purchase a d:vote system in a kit with the appropriate mounting option of your choice. As with most DPA microphones, each kit comes with a compartmentalized hard nylon zipper pouch with the mic and mount. Each package sells for \$619.95 street (\$1239.95 for the d:vote 4099P stereo piano set). You can then add additional mounting options as you need for \$35.95 each and additional mics for \$419.95.

Current Mounting sets include acoustic guitar (reviewed in 2010), violin/mandolin (ditto), upright bass, cello, drums (tom/snare), piano, sax/trumpet, woodwinds (flute/clarinet/oboe), and the recently introduced accordion mount, which I wasn't able



to test for this issue. But I did get to try two cool new mounts that totally change the d:vote ecosystem: the Clamp Mount and the Stand Mount.

Be d:voted anywhere!

In my previous review, I used the pair of mounts I was sent on their intended instruments as well as cello, clarinet, sax, and percussion. Of course the mics sounded great on each source; I wish I'd had the correct mounts for each, but as you know, sessions rarely work that way. Things would have been much easier and faster with the two newest members of the family!

The Clamp Mount is just that—a large, super-heavy-duty spring clip with bumpy textured rubber pads to keep the clamp from damaging finishes or slipping around. I used it on djembe, toms, snare, and even as a mono mic inside a grand piano!

This is a solid mounting option that you can use in a pinch (sorry) to place the d:vote 4099 darn near anywhere. It's great on a music stand, especially for woodwinds and brass.

Of course there are places the Clamp Mount can't go easily, like acoustic guitar, violin and such, and that is where the Stand Mount comes in. It's one of those "Why didn't DPA do this sooner?" solutions—it allows you to mount your d:vote 4099's gooseneck onto any standard microphone stand. Once that's done, you can place it pretty much anywhere considering its tiny size.

Conclusion

I have been using a d:vote 4099 regularly since the 2010 review. The mandolin player that I work with regularly was so impressed with it, he bought one for his mandolin, and he also lets me borrow it for violin use. With the addition of these new mounts, I see myself borrowing it even more... perhaps I should finally get my own!

My advice is twofold. If you have a specific instrument in mind for the d:vote 4099, get the mount for that instrument first. Then add one or both of these new mounts, because sooner or later you'll want to use the d:vote 4099 somewhere the specialized mount won't fit. If you don't have a specific instrument in mind, these mounting options now turn the d:vote 4099 into a miniature condenser mic with a hundred uses for any studio! ➔

Prices: \$35.95 each (not including mic; see above)

More from: DPA Microphones, www.dpamicrophones.com

