

Microtech-Gefell MD 300

You'll know them for those fabulous chunky studio condensers but M-G also makes some dynamics. Now they have a broadcast presenter's mic that's good at other things too. **JON THORNTON**



The name Microtech-Gefell is most commonly associated with high quality capacitor microphones of small and large diaphragm varieties. But dig down into the product list and you find that it also produces a small range of dynamic microphones of the standard stick type in cardioid, omni and hypercardioid flavours. The MD 300 is a new addition to the dynamic mic range, targeted primarily at broadcasters as a presenter's microphone and joining the likes of the EV RE20, Shure SM7 and Audio-Technica's recently introduced BP40 (*Resolution* V14.6).

Looks wise, there are some vague echoes of the design cues of the RE20 and the BP40, with prominent side entry ports to the cardioid capsule assembly. But of the three, the MD 300 is the most compact. It's slightly longer than the BP40 but substantially less chunky looking thanks to a smaller diameter body. It's a very solidly built piece of kit with an all-metal construction with a hard wearing and non-reflective dark grey Nextel coating.

There are a variety of mounting options available — a fixed clip that screws into the base of the mic U87-style, an elastic suspension, and an integrated 'half-moon' swivel clip that forms part of the body of the microphone, as supplied for review. Unfortunately, it doesn't appear to be an easy job to remove this last variant — which is a shame, as handheld use for reporting is very possible. This is not only because

of the mic's size, but also courtesy of a three-point elastic suspension for the capsule assembly that's clearly visible if you unscrew the protective basket. This does a very good job of suppressing handling noise, and the MD 300 feels comfortable and secure in your hand.

When plumbed in to our venerable RM1-D on-air console, the first thing that becomes apparent is that the mic needs hefty amounts of gain, to the point that I instinctively checked the XLR cable in case it had gone one-legged. A quick glance at the spec sheet shows a quoted sensitivity of only 1.6mV/Pa, which explains things. A decent preamp would be recommended — I was working right at the extremes of the RM1-D's 60dB of available gain for quiet speech.

Gefell lists the MD 300 as having a cardioid pattern — although in practice it sounds a little tighter than that to me — almost but not quite as tight as a Beyer M201 for example. Of course, this is no bad thing in most situations but it would fairly ruthlessly expose bad microphone technique if using it to conduct a two-way interview. Off-axis response is smooth sounding and rear rejection is excellent.

The response of the MD 300 has been tailored for intelligibility and close miking — and this was evident on first audition. There's a very broad but gentle presence boost between 2kHz and 8kHz, and this aids intelligibility in a very smooth and unobtrusive manner. There is a proximity bump, but it's fairly gentle sounding.

It seems that the response of the microphone has been built around this, so working at close (about 6-7cm) distances gives the most balanced sound, but there's room for a slightly fuller sound if you get even closer. The built-in pop suppression

is reasonably effective unless you really want that bass forward sound and need to get very close — at which point an additional pop filter would be needed. Overall, the mic gives a very solid, rich and 'rounded' sound on every voice I was able to throw at it — I put this down to that very broad presence lift, which avoids a 'pointy' sound on some voices. But sometimes a microphone like this will have to earn its keep by turning its hand to other applications.

So its next task was jammed up close and personal on a guitar cab, standing in for my usual SM57 and Royer 122 combo. And I have to say, it sounded very pleasing indeed — imagine an SM57 with more low-end weight, and generally smoother sounding and less 'peaky'. Of course that's playing to the MD 300s strengths with the broad presence lift and optimisation for close miking, but results on acoustic guitar were good too. For strummed rhythm parts that sit back in a mix, the MD 300 does a great job of 'rounding out' the sound without making it dull or lacklustre.

In comparison with its most obvious competitors, it's tonally more similar to an RE20 than to an SM7. Although a touch brighter sounding than the RE20, it has the same gentle, never overpowering proximity lift and the same sense of solidifying a voice. It has to be said that it's a good deal more compact and certainly easier to rig on a mic stand. Choosing between the MD 300 and the new BP40 from Audio-Technica will fundamentally come down to personal preference and price. The A-T is a bit more of a 'modern' sound, and is about half the price of the MD 300. However, the build quality and the sound of the MD 300 are reassuringly solid — and its performance as an instrument microphone might well tip the balance for some. ■

PROS

Solid build and solid sound; great intelligibility for speech without unduly hyping the sound; good suppression of handling noise; controlled proximity effect at close range; extensive range of accessories/mounting options available.

CONS

Low sensitivity requires lots of gain; no HPF option; 'half-moon' swivel clip option not easily removable.

Contact

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