

Peluso 22 47 LE

by Michael Saracino

Capturing a great vocal performance is one of the most essential aspects of making a great record. The vocalist needs a comfortable environment so that they can deliver a solid emotional performance, and the engineer has to have equipment that can capture that performance as best as possible. The chain of equipment needed is relatively simple: a mic, mic preamp, and likely an A/D converter as the majority of recordings are DAW based at this point. In my review of the Peluso 22 47 LE tube mic, I have concluded that it makes an excellent choice for a lead vocal microphone.

This American-made microphone and its accessories come in an elegant flight case. Inside the case there is a well-crafted metal shock mount, a power supply, a 7-conductor cable and the mic itself, which comes in a wooden box. There are nine polar pattern options controlled by a dial on the power supply including omni, cardioid, and bi-directional with six settings in between. The tube is of German design (EF Stahlröhren, Steel Tube) and Peluso chose a Telefunken steel tube that shares the same sonic characteristics as a Neumann VF14 found in the U47 Tube mic. The mic is comparable to the Neumann U47 in many ways, barring price point, in which the 22 47 LE comes in much lower. The mic is rated at 140 dB/spl so it can handle the loud sources one might want to throw at it (guitar cabs come to mind).

This review was given to me at an opportune time because I am currently doing an album with a California-based songwriter named Sarah Martensen and we are in the overdub stages. My first use was a Garrison Acoustic Guitar (original Newfoundland model, before being bought out by Gibson). This guitar almost always records well, whether it be with a tube mic, a Neumann TLM, or even an AT3035. As I suspected, the Peluso delivered a rich detailed sound with that beautiful tube warmth that I love on acoustic guitars. I also took the direct signal out of the guitar's Prefix pickup and when combined with the mic, it created a crisp detailed track with plenty of warmth and it fit nicely into the ballad that I was seating it in. The mic was not overhyped in the high end like some other tube mics I have used, which I liked because it gave me some working room. I could go with a more subdued sound, or brighten it up with a nice EQ if I so chose. The mic really shined, however, when I brought it into the vocal booth. The very clean and simple recording chain was the 22 47 LE into a Universal Audio Solo 610 tube preamp which then fed into Pro Tools HD. I remember when the value of this mic really struck me. We were in one of our vocal sessions, tracking a song tentatively titled "Will We Survive" and I just got lost listening to our second take. This particular song has sparse guitar work done with a '72 reissue thinline Telecaster into an Orange Rocker 30 and no other accompanying instruments, so the vocals are very dominant. Sarah's voice came through with a clarity and intimacy that gave so much life to the track. The song is very emotional and all of her emoting was captured with a vividly warm detail. In this type of scenario, I can now say I would prefer to go to the 22 47 LE over my other high end tube and solid state mics. To get more of an idea of the range of this mic, I used it on a strong and loud male singer by the name of Anthony Botting. We were recording a cover of a Red Hot Chili Peppers song and he was really projecting. The tube warmth definitely rounded out spots that could have otherwise had too much bite. The mic performed admirably in this scenario though it did not come out as the clear choice over

my other mics in this situation as I have another tube mic in my arsenal that softens out harsh spots in performances quite well.

The mic also sounded great on guitar cabs. I miked up an Orange Rocker 30 with an open back cab featuring a celestion vintage 30. I used the 22 47 LE on the front and an MD421 on the back and achieved great clean and dirty tones by blending the two mics (a technique I often use).

All and all, this mic is superb, with its high point being the capture of intimate vocals. With quality and sound comparable to a Neumann U47 and an MSRP of \$2025 USD it is a good purchase for the serious project studios wanting to take a leap up in terms of quality, or for professional studios looking for a nice tube mic to add to the arsenal.

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