



Deborah Martin and the KMS 105

October 2000 by Deborah Martin

I had been searching for the past couple of years for a vocal microphone that would work well with my voice, not only for song recording applications, but for live performance as well. I was beginning to feel that I would never be able to find such a microphone when, as luck would have it, I found what appeared to be a promising candidate while attending the AES Convention in Los Angeles this past September.



I stopped at the Neumann booth to say hello to some friends, including Tim Spencer of True Systems, the engineer and designer of the Precision 8 Mic Preamp, which Neumann distributes in the US. While talking with Tim, I mentioned I was looking for a great vocal mic to go with his preamp for recording at our studio, and that's when fate intervened at last.

Tim introduced me to the gentlemen at Neumann/USA, and they pointed out the new KMS 105 vocal mic. As they explained it, this was a mic that was designed to be used for live performance and yet have the sound quality enough for studio applications. I tried all the mics that were on display, including their large diaphragm studio models, then decided to walk the show a bit more to see what other mics new mics might be presented at the show. I ended up not deciding on anything during the show itself, but a few weeks later had to fly to New York to work with one of our artists on a new project, and HAD to get a microphone for the session.

So I had another friend of mine, Howard Givens (who also works with Tim Spencer at True Systems) call Neumann/USA on my behalf to see if it would be possible for me to try out the KMS 105. Within a few days, I had one of these mics in my hands, and the tests began. Here's an excerpt of the message that I sent back to Karl Winkler at Neumann/USA following the first tests:

"I just wanted to thank you so much for arranging for me to demo the KMS 105. Of course, it worked like a charm, as I knew it would! It sounds great with my voice, and I of course must have it. Thank you again for all of your help in making me a "happy singer" -- Best regards, Deborah"

Excerpts from another message I sent to Neumann/USA after more experience with the mic: "I am working on a new album project at the moment, and will be recording vocals this coming week (Latin phrases, actually, to go with the ambient textures we have composed) and will be using my new microphone for the recording. As a Spotted Peccary release, I would like to credit Neumann for the use of the microphone (if that's okay with you). I have already used it for a live performance at a Barnes & Noble in-store performance just last week, and everyone was commenting on how my voice sounded "great". How about that? Thanks again for all your help and expertise, I look forward speaking with you soon. -- Deborah, Spotted Peccary Music"

For the studio recordings, the KMS 105 was processed through the True Systems 8 channel mic preamp. The sound was crystal clear, both for straight vocal recording as well as ambient vocal "sounds". On playback, it was as though you were right there in the room with the singer. Amazing!

The mic has a warmth and clarity to it that suits my voice perfectly. Of course, every vocalist has a different timbre and tonality, but this mic seems to fit a wide range of dynamics without being overly dry. I highly recommend the KMS 105 to any artist wanting to record and perform live."

Deborah Martin

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