

by Stephen Murphy

# sE Electronics 2200A Condenser Microphone

This updated version of one of sE's earliest models may well become The People's Mic.

In the last several years, California-based sE Electronics has earned industry admiration for its line of reasonably priced, high-quality microphones and supporting products assembled in its dedicated Shanghai facility. This was accomplished through a focus on design creativity, production quality control and responding to user needs. A prime example of all of the above can be found in the large-diaphragm sE 2200A (\$399), a successful reworking of one of sE's earliest releases, the 2200.

## FEATURES

The original 2200 was remarkable primarily for its low entry price, which provided access for those on lower-budgets to an all-around quality large-diaphragm mic. The significantly improved 2200A now flips that equation on its head: its high-quality sound becomes the draw for its use — even, in other words, when other more expensive and well-suited mics are on hand — and its street price of around \$300 is a more than welcome bonus.

The cardioid-only 2200A utilizes the one-inch gold vacuum plated Mylar diaphragm

used in several other sE offerings (including its predecessor). Two mini toggle switches on the matte gray band just below the grille engage or bypass the 10 dB pad and 100 Hz high-pass filter.

The improvements over the original release are the result of a mic-equivalent "full-body makeover" that included circuit design, higher-spec components and improvements to internal stabilization and resonance dampening. The manufacturer-provided 2200A specifications state frequency response of 20 Hz – 20 KHz (no dB tolerance given), sensitivity of 14.1mV/Pa: (-37 ± 1.5dB), and 200-ohm impedance. Equivalent noise level is a respectable 17 dB (A-weighted), and the mic can handle a maximum sound pressure level of 135 dB (1 kHz at 0.5-percent THD).

## IN USE

Though it had been some years since I used the 2200, I could confidently say that, upon my first listen of the 2200A, sE had made some significant improvements in the design. To be more specific, it was one of those moments where, facing down a recently arrived review mic first time, I came to the pleasant realization that I would actually be able to use — and even look forward to using — the mic on actual sessions. Another good sign: The brand new 2200A provided for review was an impressively close sonic match to a few-years-old 2200A at the studio in which I was currently working.

The two previously unacquainted 2200A's ultimately proved to be a great stereo pair — in XY configuration, close-miked — for triple-tracking a four-part R&B backing vocal section. This was also a good test of the mics' overall character — repeated layering of tracks using

the same mic(s) quickly reveals and compounds poor mic and/or room characteristics. But the resulting tracks in this case were perfect, and required little EQ to achieve the close, sweet and smooth layered-chorus sound called for.

At about six inches from a source, the 2200A had a touch of low-end bump that was perhaps best described (on page) as full-bodied and pleasant, thanks in part to a reciprocal dip that smartly started just before things got boxy. The mic also exhibited a gentle (2 dB-ish) lift that

began ramped up in the 2K range and remained there, plateau-like, into the upper reaches of the mic frequency range. Like any other vocal mic, the 2200A was not ideal for every voice type; in general, I tended to employ the mic on more mid-range-heavy vocalists, where it simultaneously helped to round out and add air to the takes.

The mic could certainly be used on more than just close-miked vocals, though that is what I found to be its most appropriate application. Along with many other cardioid-only mics in this price range, this mic also suffered from an exaggerated degree of change in frequency response as a function of distance from the source (I am referring to distances beyond the typical proximity effect range). I would definitely favor its use on, say, a seated solo instrumentalist over a dynamic performer (movement-wise) or as an ambient/distance mic on a group source.



## FAST FACTS

### APPLICATIONS

Studio, project studio, broadcast

### KEY FEATURES

Cardioid condenser; one-inch gold vacuum plated Mylar diaphragm; 100 Hz low-cut filter; 10 dB pad; locking-swivel shockmount; aluminum flight case

### PRICE

\$399

### CONTACT

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PAR Studio Editor Stephen Murphy has over 20 years experience, including Grammy-winning and Gold/Platinum credits. His website is [www.smurphco.com](http://www.smurphco.com).