

# PRO AUDIO REVIEW

Gear & Software Reviews For The End-User

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## Studio

BY BETH JOHNSON

I had the opportunity recently to try a few different mics by a relatively new company called SE Electronics. SE Electronics is making a line of affordable microphones that are of high quality. The line consists of several different types of condenser/tube microphones.

### FEATURES

For review I used the SE1A (\$199), a small capsule cardioid condenser; the Z3300A (\$599), a multipattern (cardioid, omni, figure 8) condenser and the Gemini (\$1,499), a cardioid tube microphone. The Z3300A is a Class A FET 48V phantom powered large capsule condenser that incorporates twin 1.07-inch gold-plated diaphragms. It has a 10 dB pad, and a 100Hz low-frequency rolloff. The Gemini dual-tube condenser uses two different vac-

## Fast Facts

### ■ Applications:

Studio

### ■ Key features:

SE1A - small capsule condenser; Z3300 - large capsule, multipattern condenser (cardioid, omni, figure 8), -10dB pad, 100 Hz rolloff; Gemini - dual-tube condenser

### ■ Price:

SE1A - \$199, or \$449 for matched stereo pair in wooden case with stereo mounting bar; Z3300 - \$599; Gemini - \$1,499

### ■ Contact:

SE Electronics/Sonic Distribution at 617-623-5581, [www.seelectronics.com](http://www.seelectronics.com).

## SE Electronics Microphones

uum tubes in a large diaphragm transformerless design. It contains a 35mm gold diaphragm and two tubes: a 12AU7 and a 12AX7. All three microphones came in very nice cases: either nice wooden boxes with sturdy closures, or briefcase-style metal cases with lots of padding inside.

### IN USE

I tried the microphones in several different applications. First, with the pair of the SE1A small capsule condensers, I used them as drum overheads in a spaced pair setup. I compared them with the AKG C451B microphones. I found them to not have quite as much bottom end as the C451Bs, but they sounded absolutely wonderful with all the drums spot-miked. If you are in a situation where you are able to mic up all the toms, snare, and kick, these are the mics for you. I absolutely loved them, and have used them as my overheads ever since.

I have also tried one as a hi-hat mic, with great results. On acoustic guitar, they are very open-sounding, and I was able to get them very close to get a little bit of proximity effect to add to the bottom end. I placed one on the neck, and one on the body, just above the sound hole, and those two different sounds combined together were great. I also switched the setup to an X-Y stereo pair, again getting a great sound.

The Z3300A was used on a few different applications. First, on mid-range and high-



range male vocals, it sounded great. It was used in cardioid, with no pad and no rolloff for both sets of vocals. It definitely had a lot of brightness, but also a great round low end to add to the vocals. I used the Z3300 on a saxophone and the artist commented that he has always had trouble finding a mic that works well on that particular instrument,

and he thinks I may have found it with the Z3300, in cardioid, with the rolloff and no pad. I used the mic about halfway between the bell and the mouthpiece, tilted slightly downwards.

I also used the Z3300 on acoustic guitar, in omni so as to not get any proximity effect, and it sounded great as a mono guitar mic. As a room mic for electric guitar amp, it also sounded very nice. I just wish I had two of them to use them as a M/S pair! I imagine that they would sound great in that setup on acoustic guitar or drum overheads.

I used the Gemini tube mic as a mono overhead for the drummer, and compressed the mic quite a bit to tape. The drummer I was working with loves the “trash” mic sound added into the spaced pair, and the

Gemini was great for that. It was also very warm sounding on vocals. It is a very large and heavy dual-tube mic, and the one thing I did not like about the Gemini was that the shockmount would not hold it up. Even with the screw tightened all the way, it was not a sturdy enough shockmount for the mic, so I always had to plan my setup around the mic being tilted down on the stand. [Editor’s Note: SE has since replaced the shockmount with a new design.] Even so, the mic is definitely worth being used, and would always be my “trash” mic of choice for drums.

### **SUMMARY**

Of the three microphones, the pair of SE1A small capsule condensers are definitely my favorite, especially for the price.

The Z3300 is also a great deal for a multi-pattern condenser with pad and rolloff. Like I said, I would love to own two of these to use in many different applications in a stereo pair. The Gemini is a great value for the dual-tube design, again my only complaint is the shockmount. I would highly recommend any of these mics to a studio looking to expand their collection inexpensively, while still getting a great value. I look forward to hearing more SE Electronics products in the future.

*Beth Johnson has a BM in Percussion Performance from Central Missouri State University, and attended the Conservatory of Recording Arts & Sciences in Tempe, AZ. She teaches at the Conservatory of Recording Arts & Sciences.*