

# Product Review

## Rode M3 Studio Microphone

Australian Made



I don't usually promote any product unless it offers great value for money with equally great performance. Usually the microphones provided by radio manufacturers, besides the high price tags, don't seem to give the expected audio quality that can be had with non OEM units.

I did do some work in the modification of a cheap condenser microphone know as the BM-800, this microphone provides acceptable audio for the money, whilst using this microphone I made contact with a VK4, we discussed audio quality and the kind of microphones that are suitable for radio applications.

I had many an issue on my station with RF from getting back into the audio when using 400 Watts, this on microphones that use a preamp, as does the Kenwood MC-60, resulting in my work and modification of the BM-800 microphone.

The VK4 station I was in contact with, did not dislike the audio I was producing from the BM-800, However there exist some limitation of this microphone that I am aware of, its easily overloaded with sound pressure, plus requires careful impedance matching, requiring modification to its internals for unbalanced output. In the discussion that followed the operator suggested I should take a look at the RODE M3 unit.

I looked up the specifications for this unit, they looked good on paper, as I am sceptical of manufacturers stated features and benefits, having been disappointed many a time, I looked and what kind of money was required to have a proper look at this unit, the price was not excessive.

## Features

- Heavy duty metal body
- Internal capsule shock mount
- High level of RF rejection
- On-mic selectable high pass filter @ 80Hz-12dB/Oct (-10 and -20dB PAD)
- Heat-treated high-strength mesh head
- Battery status indicator
- 9V Battery Power, 24 or 48V Phantom Power
- Includes wind shield, mic clip and zip pouch
- 10 year extended warranty when you register your microphone

The first feature of this unit that appealed to me was the "High Level of RF rejection" the second feature is that it can operate using an internally fitted 9V battery, further the internal capsule is shock mounted, an indication of good quality construction.

When I looked at what sort of investment was required, expecting a high price tag, usually the case with professional grade microphones, I was pleasantly surprised that I could purchase one for less than \$200.

Looking around on the net, a company in Sydney "DJ City" offered the unit cheaper than any other, plus it was available on Ebay from the same retailer with an EBay discount . So I pulled trigger and ordered a unit, this cost me \$129.00

When the microphone arrived, I did try to open the body to insert a battery, I found that I could not, not wanting to damage the unit, I contacted RODE service, explaining my situation, that I did not wish to force the unit, I was advised to try and unscrew the lower part to access the compartment, that if any damage took place, they would replace the unit.

With some force I managed to unscrew the body, revealing that something had caused the thread to gall, I rang the service department once again, stating what I found to be the problem, they immediately offered a replacement unit, with no fuss issued a return number, and further offered a free vibration mount for my trouble. HOW GOOD IS THAT?

It gets better. I got a phone call some time later, that the kind of microphone did not have a suitable vibration mount, so instead of returning the faulty microphone (That I had now repaired correcting the thread defect) I could keep it and receive a replacement just the same, plus a free T shirt. WOW I was lost for words.

The replacement is on the way but with Easter and Anzac day in the way, it will take a few more days to get here.



I have a 50 mm vibration mount from the BM-800, I made a Foam Rubber 50 mm to 30 mm adaptor, now I can mount the unit in the vibration mount.

The build quality, excluding the thread issue, as this is a minor defect, that the company exceeded its duty to compensate me, is excellent.

The actual interfacing to the radio was as easy as it gets.

The link points to the electrical specifications. <http://www.rote.com/microphones/m3>

With a sound pressure of 142dB SPL it will be very hard to overload the unit

The output impedance of 200 Ohms makes it a marriage made in heaven if you own an Icom IC-7300

I connected the unit to the radio after wiring a cable for unbalanced, expecting some noise degradation, pleasantly surprised this not to be the case.

With a sensitivity of  $-40.0\text{dB re } 1 \text{ Volt/Pascal}$  ( $6.30\text{mV @ } 94 \text{ dB SPL}$ )  $\pm 2 \text{ dB @ } 1\text{kHz}$  providing an output of  $9.2\text{mV}$  ( $@ 1\text{kHz}$ ,  $1\% \text{ THD into } 1\text{K}\Omega$  load) No need to have a preamp, plus I did not foresee any issues to accommodate the microphone to the Icom, as expected this was the case.



The microphone has a selectable output switch, the output can be adjusted from 0 db to -10 db, or -20 db, making it easy to adapt for the desired application.

Another feature this unit has is the in built filter selectable from the on/off switch, when applied, will cut frequencies below 80 Hz

Concluding, the on air reports of my station audio after adding this microphone have been very good, many complement the audio, was very easy to install and adjust.

The support was more than expected

Am I going to recommend this microphone? **ABSOLUTELY**

I have in the past purchased at great expense many microphones

that did not live up to the hype. The RODE M3 is not one of these, did not break the bank and performs far better than expected, plus its Australian Made.

73's

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