

AKG C2000B

Konrad Skirlis finds a back-electret with some spine.

I've been receiving many affordable good quality microphones of late. But I don't need to tell you that over the last decade or so, the cost of a decent capacitor mic has dropped. This is obviously a response to the continuing growth of the home/project studio market. Because this mass market exists, mass-production techniques are used. This reduces manufacturing costs and savings are invariably passed on to the buyer. AKG are no exception to this production approach.

The C2000B is an all-purpose small-diaphragm cardioid condenser. The 'B' in the model number implies the use of AKG's new diaphragm development of back-electret technology. The capsule itself has a gold-splattered diaphragm only on one side to withstand diaphragm-to-backplate shorts during high-SPL use! Additionally, the C2000B features a 500Hz bass roll-off filter (6dB/octave response) and -10dB pad, each with recessed switches to protect against accidental usage. The internal shock-mount and built-in pop screen reduce low frequency vibrations and vocal plosives respectively. The overall frequency response is 30Hz to 20kHz and maximum SPL level is up to 150dB (with -10dB pad switched in). The signal to noise ratio is 74dB (A-weighted) and phantom power requirements are in the range of 9v to 52v. Included with the microphone is the nicely engineered H100 shock-mount. An easy twist of its base, clamps the mic safely. The mic body design has a slightly raised lip at its base to prevent the C2000B from sliding out when upside down. But if you do happen drop it, the C2000B's cast metal housing seems quite robust and includes a durable single-layer mesh as a wind screen. The mic's XLR connector is gold plated to protect against corrosion, and it's wired standard for pin two hot. Its 'metallic champagne'

look belongs to the latest generation of AKG mics that sport the distinct red stripe around the body.

As a vocal mic, the AKG C2000B has an 'airy' high frequency response with a full low frequency register. On vocals, at a distance of eight inches, the mic produced warmth and clarity with some midrange boost. It seems as though the C2000B has been designed for optimum vocal use. The built-in pop screen was successful at keeping vocal plosives under control, however, using an additional pop shield is also recommended.

On acoustic guitar, the C2000B reproduced a solid

sound with definition and clarity. The mic did a great job in maintaining acoustic subtleties. On electric guitar, I miked a cranking Fender 'champ', placing the mic about three inches from the speaker at a 45 degree angle between the centre cone and outer edge speaker. The C2000B maintained a solid mid-range boost without overloading. A maximum SPL of 150dB (pad in) allows the C2000B to handle most loud situations. As a room mic, the C2000B performed well in capturing room nuances, providing a relatively uncoloured guitar sound but with a touch of presence. As expected, this mic is not cut out for bass cab and kick drum work – the frequency plot begins a roll-off at 100Hz before reaching 50Hz at -6dB. (Interestingly, the AKG plot does not give a reading below 50Hz even though the stated frequency response is 30Hz to 20kHz... not sure how that works.)

It's not often that you come across a microphone with a 500Hz high pass filter, but, unfortunately, it's best left deactivated as it makes the C2000B sound somewhat thin! The idea is to counter the proximity effect when the mic is used at a very short distance (under four inches). I found other techniques like mic placement and desk/mic preamp roll-offs (at a more conventional setting of 75Hz to 100Hz) to be more useful. While a whopping 500Hz of roll-off may prove useful for live work, I couldn't justify using it in the studio. Anyway, few vocal performers will get closer than the stated four inches for the roll-off to counter bass boost due to proximity effect.

With price in mind, the C2000B is a great-sounding mic! Aimed at the project studio market, it will be utilised mostly for voice recordings and acoustic reproductions where low frequency requirements are not critical. The C2000B doesn't aim to provide a flat low frequency response but does give you high frequency clarity and mid range solidity. Its construction is durable yet there's no carry case to protect the mic in transit. Considering it's a little more than the cost of a high quality dynamic, the AKG C2000B is a class above for studio use. In short, the AKG C2000B is a versatile mic at a very good price. It is well constructed and provides a honest and somewhat bright sound with slight mid range emphasis.

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