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LEWITT

LCT 440 PURE

No frills—just great sound in a mic suitable for any recording rig

REVIEW BY PAUL VNUK JR.

I can't believe it's been five years since we first met Austria-based LEWITT Microphones. In that short time, LEWITT has built quite the lineup, with a reputation for sonically clean, technologically innovative, and visually unique microphones. The various lines of handheld, dynamic, and digital-interface mics are headed up by the LCT line of studio condenser mics.

In February of 2012 we looked at the company's flagship LCT 640, which featured all of LEWITT's digitally controlled goodness: 5-position pattern switching, multiple pad levels, multiple highpass filter settings, and even clip indication and clip history, all via three mic-mounted digital buttons. In September 2016, we looked at the LCT 550, which is for all intents and purposes a cardioid version of the LCT 640 that retains all of its other digital tricks while boasting an even lower noise floor. We didn't review the LCT 450, which slims things down a bit farther by retaining the clip history indicator but offering only one pad and one highpass filter setting.

All of these mics fall in the workhorse category. They are suited for standard rock instrumentation and are equally stellar in classical and jazz settings, especially on piano and stringed instruments like cello. They are also very nice vocal mics. This is why LCT microphones are becoming quite popular in the sample library creation crowd, especially the newer LCT 640 TS reviewed in our January 2017 issue. This mic offers the ability to take a separate signal off of the rear capsule, making it useful for stereo applications, Mid/Side work, and even pattern adjustment in the mix, thanks to LEWITT's Polarizer plug-in.

The possible downside to all of this technology and innovation is its price. The LCT 640 TS costs \$899, the LCT 550 is \$699, and the LCT 450 is \$499... and that's not even considering the LCT 940 Authentica tube/solid-state hybrid mic, whose blendable dual-architecture electronics brings its price well above \$1000. Is there no LCT for the budget-minded beginner? Now there is.

This month we are looking at the latest model in the LCT series, the new LCT 440 PURE. LEWITT bills this mic as the



"distilled essence" of the LCT line. This is very accurate; what you get in the LCT 440 PURE is the LEWITT sound minus the digitally controlled bells and whistles. In fact, the LCT 440 PURE features no bells and whistles at all.

It is a fixed cardioid pattern microphone with no switching, pads, clip history, or onboard filters. At \$269, it is also a much more affordable way to get the LEWITT sound in your studio. Note that it is not the most affordable way—at the 2017 NAMM show, LEWITT also released the less expensive and even smaller LCT 240 PRO, which we will review in a future issue.

Purity

The LCT 440 PURE is visually similar to each of the abovementioned LCT models, only shorter—measuring 5.43 x 2.04 x 1.42 inches. It is dressed in matte black with a dual-layered gloss black headbasket. Inside, there's one of LEWITT's dayglow-green-rimmed 1" cardioid capsules with a 3-micron gold-sputtered diaphragm.

As mentioned earlier, it has no buttons or switches of any sort. It also features a slimmed-down accessory package; rather than coming in a briefcase like previous models, it ships in a cardboard box with a vinyl pouch. It does, however, still include a slightly smaller version of the excellent LEWITT open-front shockmount, as well as a windscreen and a magnetically-attached pop filter.

Some specs: the LCT 440 PURE has a sensitivity of 23.1 mV/Pa (-32.7 dBV), a signal-to-noise ratio of 87 dBA, an equivalent noise level of 7 dBA, and a maximum SPL of 140 dB. Its frequency response is 20 Hz to 20 kHz, fairly flat and neutral in the lows and mids with a boosted mid and high section that rises gently at 1.250 Hz with a 3.5 dB peak at 4 kHz and another 5 dB peak at 13 kHz. Although this response is boosted in the midrange and highs, it's still significantly more gentle than many of today's bright condenser mics, which can peak out at 9 to 12 dB around 12 kHz.

In use

The first thing I did when I received my LCT 440 PURE, one of the first production models to arrive in the country, was to compare it to the previously-reviewed LCT 640 TS in cardioid pattern. Sonically I could perceive little difference between the two. The LCT 440 PURE lives up to its name and does its big brothers proud, being ultra-clean and natural sounding. It's very much in the "what your source sounds like is what you get" camp.

As with my previous LCT reviews, I want to point out that this is not a clinical or sterile sort of clean. The LCT 440 PURE does have a sound to it that is forward, open, and clear, but

with a subtle richness to keep it out of the strident uber-bright realm.

Given that, there is no place or source where I would be hesitant to use the LCT 440 PURE. Despite its slimmed-down feature set compared to its siblings, it provides the LEWITT sound through and through. This is an entry-level mic that no studio would ever outgrow!

In fact, at this low price, I would recommend that beginners consider purchasing a pair of LCT 440 PURE models for dual-mic and stereo work. If you don't need multiple patterns yet, and you use your mic preamp and/or DAW for highpass filtering (gain control at the preamp isn't the same as a pad on the mic itself), you can get two wonderfully clean mics that will do great service in all sorts of applications for about the same price as a single LCT 450, and for far less than the fancier LCT models.

PURE satisfaction

I love the logical progression and pricing structure in the LCT line. Each model steps up logically from the last in price and features, allowing you to get exactly the mic you need and want. With a price that fills in a tier below that of the previously least expensive LCT mic, yet offering great sound and a complete set of accessories in the box, the LCT 440 PURE is an exceptional investment in any studio's mic locker. ➤

PRICE: \$269
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