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## PRODUCT REVIEW

# Lewitt DGT 650 The Mobile Recording Studio

by Michael Elsner

Everything these days seems to be going mobile. Whether we like it or not, we live in a mobile world. Music creation is not exempt from that, and I'm continually blown away by the quality of products that are being created for the traveling musician. Case in point is the Lewitt DGT 650. This high quality microphone/audio interface gives music creators the ability to write and record music out on the road and away from the studio.

### Overview:

The DGT 650 is the first in Lewitt's Digital Series of microphones. However, this is much more than just a simple stereo USB microphone that you plug into your iPad, iPhone, or computer. The DGT 650 is a complete 24bit/96kHz audio interface for Mac, PC and iOS devices that offers 4 selectable recording modes: XY Stereo, Cardioid, Singer/Songwriter, and Stereo Line In. While XY Stereo and Cardioid are self explanatory for those already familiar with microphones, Singer/Songwriter mode allows for the simultaneous recording of a vocal and instrument line source, and Stereo Line In mode allows for the recording of a stereo instrument signal.

Other features of the microphone include a -10dB and -20dB pad, an 80Hz and 160Hz high pass filter, as well as the ability to mix direct and tape return signals. The microphone features a push wheel selector switch, which makes stepping through the various settings quick and easy, and the back lit user interface provides ample light to see these settings in a dark environment. The DGT 650 also features a built in lithium-ion battery that, with a full charge, can provide over 3 hours of recording time on mobile devices.

Finally, the entire unit is completed



with the included heavy-duty shock mount, foam windbreaker, and folding tabletop stand.

### Setup:

Everything with the DGT 650 centers around a small breakout box, which provides all the necessary connections and is, in essence, the main hub of the unit. The breakout box interfaces with the microphone via an 18-pin data connector, and the computer or iOS device via a USB cable or Apple Lightning connector respectively. Other connections include an 1/8" headphone output, 1/4" stereo line input, and a MIDI jack, because the DGT 650 supports MIDI.

Connecting to an iOS device is as simple as plug and play. Connecting to a Mac requires selecting the DGT 650 as your audio input and output device in the system preferences menu, while connecting to a PC involves downloading and installing an audio driver.

### Test Drive:

Lewitt calls the DGT 650 'The Mobile Recording Studio,' and that's precisely what it is. I've been able to put this microphone through its paces in a variety of situations, each with very successful results.

I've used it in XY stereo mode to record everything from Podcast style audio, full band rehearsals and concerts (employing the various pads to prevent any kind of signal overload), as well as direct to YouTube performance videos with an artist I'm working with named Adam Searan. Adam and I have also used Cardioid Mode to great effect in my studio to record some of his vocals. Out on the road I've used singer/songwriter mode when writing ideas in the back lounge of the bus, and Stereo Line In mode to record a board feed from the live mixing console.

Navigating through the various parameters is as simple as pressing the se-

lector switch and rolling the wheel to the desired selection. I also have to say that a fantastic feature I didn't realize it had until I started to take it out on the road is the internal battery power. The battery doesn't draw power from your phone or tablet when you are using the microphone, which truly makes it a fully mobile package.

I've found that it's a very balanced sounding microphone and the overall sound quality is phenomenal. The stereo spread can be heard in XY mode very clearly, especially when placed in the center between two sources. I'm also extremely impressed at the results I get while tracking vocals and acoustic guitars in the studio in Cardioid mode. Vocals are very clean and balanced and the same can be said for the guitar, with the microphone picking up the subtle nuances and articulations quite well. Combining the microphone source with an instrument or line source, Singer/Songwriter mode is a godsend for those of us who are constantly writing and creating in various non-studio environments, giving clear separation between the vocal and instrument sources. Finally, Stereo Line In is ideal for recording keyboards, stereo guitars, and any other type of stereo signal.

Overall, the portability with the DGT 650 is about as good as you can get, essentially eliminating the need for a separate interface and mic pre.

**Final Thoughts:**

Personally, I'm all about practicality. It's fun to discover and play with new gear, but when the rubber meets the road I ask myself, "Is this something I'm actually going to use?" In this case, the answer is a resounding, "Yes!", and let me wrap up with a quick story to emphasize this point.

I work with a number of composers quite regularly, but I also spend a few days a week out on the road with a modern country artist. While traveling recently, I received a frantic call to track acoustic guitars on a dozen or so cues. The pieces needed to be completed within a few hours as they were going

straight to the mix engineer that night and onto the show the next morning. All I needed was my ProTools equipped laptop, the DGT 650, and my acoustic guitar. I found a quiet room at the venue, imported the files that were sent to me into my session, setup the DGT 650, and went to work. I turned the tracks in and promptly received a very happy and relieved phone call from the composer.

This setup allows me to travel with minimal gear and still attain a high

quality recording that rivals the quality of gear I have in my studio's signal chain. I've gotta hand it to the guys at Lewitt for leaving no stone unturned in the design of this unit and creating a very 'complete' recording package.

*Michael Elsner is a guitarist / songwriter / producer whose written for shows including American Idol, Amish Mafia, EXTRA, The Sing Off, and So You Think You Can Dance among many others.*  
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