

HYPERREAL AUDIO

SHORT MICROPHONE GUIDE

WHAT THIS IS

Below is a list of mics meant to help musicians make sense of studio riders and understand what's typically used on standard positions, particularly when recording rock music. It's split into three budget tiers, from expensive down to genuinely affordable. There are countless mics out there, and this list mainly covers the most common, well-proven ones. You don't need to find a studio that has everything from the "top tier." A lot depends on the material, the sound, the intended mix, the musician, and the engineer. A cheaper mic often suits a given job better than an expensive one. If you're unsure about a specific studio's mic collection, message the engineer ahead of time and ask them everything you need to know.

Top tier – the kind of microphones you'll find in the world's best studios.

Standard – the industry workhorses.

Budget – not "bad", still entirely capable.

DRUMS

KICK IN

- Top tier: AKG D12 VR, Audio-Technica AE2500
- Standard: Electro-Voice RE20, Shure Beta91A
- Budget: sE Electronics V Kick, Shure Beta 52A, Audix D6

KICK OUT

- Top tier: Neumann U47 FET, Telefunken M82
- Standard: Shure SM7B, Audio-Technica ATM25, AKG D12 VR, Electro-Voice RE20
- Budget: sE Electronics V Kick, Shure Beta 52A, Audix D6

SNARE TOP

- Top/Standard: Shure SM7B, Beyerdynamic M201
- Budget: Shure SM57, Shure Beta 56, Audix i5, Audio-Technica ATM650, sE Electronics V7

SNARE BOTTOM

- Top tier: Sennheiser MD441, Schoeps CMC6, Neumann KM184
- Standard: Beyerdynamic M201, AKG C451B
- Budget: Shure SM57, Sennheiser e614, sE Electronics sE8

TOMS

- Top tier: AKG C414, Josephson e22S, Audio-Technica AE3000
- Standard: Sennheiser MD421, Earthworks DM20
- Budget: Shure SM57, Sennheiser e604, sE Electronics V Beat

OVERHEADS

- Top tier: Coles 4038, Neumann U87
- Standard: AKG C414, Audio-Technica AT4050, Austrian Audio OC818
- Budget: Recording Tools MC-520, sE Electronics sE8, Rode NT5

HI-HAT

- Top tier: Beyerdynamic M160, Neumann KM184, AKG C451B
- Standard: AKG C214, Audio-Technica AT4041
- Budget: Shure SM57, Sennheiser e604, sE Electronics sE8

RIDE

- Top tier: Neumann KM184, AKG C451B
- Standard: Shure SM81, AKG C214
- Budget: Audio-Technica Pro37, sE Electronics sE8

SPOT CYMBAL MIKING (crashes, chinas, etc.)

- Top tier: DPA 4099, Neumann KM184
- Standard: Shure SM81, AKG C451B
- Budget: Sennheiser e604, sE Electronics sE8

ROOM

- Top tier: Coles 4038, AEA R84, Royer R-121
- Standard: AKG C414, Audio-Technica AT4050, Neumann TLM103
- Budget: Audio-Technica AT2020, Rode NT1

GUITARS (OVERDRIVEN / HIGH-GAIN)

Pairings: dynamic + condenser/ribbon

- Top tier: Shure SM7B, Beyerdynamic M201 + Royer R-121, AEA R84, Beyerdynamic M160
- Standard: Sennheiser MD421, Sennheiser e906 + sE Electronics Voodoo VR1, Golden Age Project R1
- Budget: Shure SM57, Audix i5 + Oktava Mk012

BASS (CABINET)

- Top tier: Neumann U47 FET, Telefunken M82
- Standard: Electro-Voice RE20
- Budget: sE Electronics V Kick, Shure Beta 52A

VOCALS

EXTREME VOCALS

- Top/Standard: Shure SM7B, Electro-Voice RE20, Beyerdynamic M88, Sennheiser MD421
- Budget: Shure SM57/SM58, Shure Beta57A, Audix OM7, Audix i5, Sennheiser e935

ROCK VOCALS

- Top tier: Neumann U87
- Standard: Shure SM7B, Electro-Voice RE-20, Beyerdynamic M88, AKG C414
- Budget: Shure SM57/SM58, Shure Beta57A, Sennheiser e935

BRIGHT POP VOCALS (female, airy)

- Top tier: Neumann U67, Sony C800G
- Standard: Audio-Technica AT4050, AKG C414, Neumann TLM103, Lewitt LCT 440
- Budget: Warm Audio WA-47, sE Electronics X1 S

MALE VOCALS (R'n'B, soul)

- Top tier: Neumann U47, Telefunken ELA M251, Sony C800G
- Standard: Warm Audio WA-251, AKG C414, Austrian Audio OC818, Neumann TLM103
- Budget: Warm Audio WA-47jr, sE Electronics X1 S

RAP / HIP-HOP VOCALS

- Top tier: Neumann U67, Telefunken U47, Sony C800G
- Standard: Audio-Technica AT4050, AKG C414, Neumann TLM103
- Budget: Audio-Technica AT2035, sE Electronics X1 S

GENTLE ACOUSTIC / FOLK VOCALS

- Top tier: Neumann M149, Telefunken ELA M251
- Standard: Audio-Technica AT4040, AKG C414, Neumann TLM103
- Budget: Warm Audio WA-47jr, sE Electronics X1 S, Rode NT1

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