Holophone H2 Pro Surroun Microphone
Eight-Capsule System Delivers Accurate Stereo Image

What will Canadian ingenuity and eight Danish transducers get us in 2013? The answer is "surround sound recording system: Holophone H2 Pro is the second incarnation of the company’s acclaimed surround recording microphone. The unit uses eight DPA 4050 capsules mounted in an incredibly light "head" (G, C, L, Ca, La) (center surround), B, VOC (back) and F (front left and right). The head is attached to a steel U-joint that swivels and locks via two hefty threaded knobs at the side. The 19-foot cable is a balance wire with a sturdy and flexible rubber stress-reliever at the head and terminates to eight labeled XLRs, which can handle 134 dB with an equivalent noise rating of 23 dB.

In use, the Holophone H2 in a 5.1 recording of a percussionist. I regularly do this session with free-format address card condenser mics set in an ITU A-proportions sub with a separate mic. The session is not the typical "live" setting. The drummer does five overdubs around the rig with various percussion, each to its own set of 5.1 or 5.2 tracks. For this test, I set up my usual array of mics, always with the center microphone above the center position from above on a large boom. Then, I moved the mics out of the natural distance to the edges (Ki/Bk) positions to match the angles on the Holophone. Each set of mics had its own head and each had a separate Pro Tools file at 88.2/24-bit resolution and were sent through the mic pre on a Control 24. Playbacks were ran on a Mac and fed to a pair of speaker and an MCR-6500 sub.

I go through this setup quite often and was struck by how easy and light the Holophone was to use and set up. The U-print is sturdy and easily adjustable for any desired orientation. The one thing I’d ask for is a bit more way through the mix, but I’ve always been happy with this, but I didn’t find the H2 to be overly loud. I had no idea how much I would enjoy playing the piano in the Control room. Considering the small size of the mic and floor space, it’s not only a great choice.

COMING SOON
The following anecdote sums up my Holophone experience the best. I set it up in the center of a large room, routed cables and brought the mic’s power up to a general level to see if everything was working. The sax player for the upcoming session was off in the corner noodling on a Yamaha grand piano while someone came into the control room looking astirruck and said, "You look like he’s playing the piano in the control room."

It is a remarkable tool for capturing the realism of any recording environment. The DPA capsules render a fantastically clean picture. The product’s fit and finish is excellent, and it is a breeze to set up and position. Yes, the $4,000 price tag is steep, but if you’re looking for a great solution for compact, discrete recording at up to 71, the Holophone H2 Pro is a great choice.


Kevin Becka in Mix’s technical editor.

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Field Test

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