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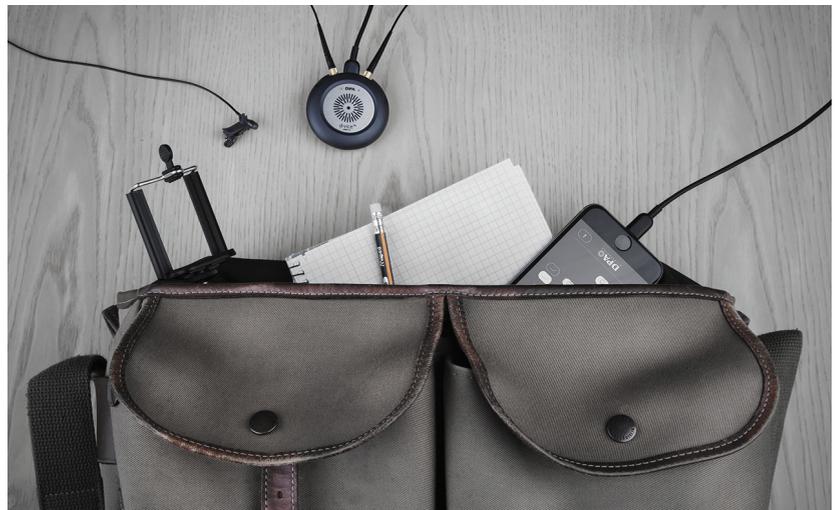
DPA D:VICE DIGITAL AUDIO INTERFACE

THIS UNIQUE LITTLE INTERFACE MAKES SENSE WHEN YOU NEED TO CAPTURE IMPECCABLE AUDIO FROM A STATIONARY SOURCE, WHEREVER THAT MAY BE.

REVIEWER / LOREN ALLDRIN

DPA Microphones was officially founded 25 years ago, but the company's roots date back to 1945 when it was initiated under the name of Brüel & Kjær (B&K). B&K made measurement microphones that were eventually adapted for pro audio applications. The original technology is still in use today under the DPA Microphones name. The company has an excellent reputation in the church, live theater, orchestral, TV and related markets—especially those applications where a mic should be heard and not seen.

DPA recently stepped into a new market with its d:vice Digital Audio Interface. The d:vice is meant to work with those tiny mics for recording on-the-go and on-location, with its preferred recording companion being the Apple iPhone or iPad. Drivers are also available for Apple and Windows-based computers; d:vice offers no Android support.



The d:vice interface keeps to the ultra-compact theme of many DPA mics. It is sturdy and small—just over two inches in diameter—and shaped much like a makeup compact (or a tiny flying saucer). Two

inputs work with any DPA mic featuring its MicroDot connector. You can get the d:vice with several mic configurations, including

FIRST LOOK: DPA D:VICE Digital Audio Interface



company: DPA Microphones
product: d:vice Digital Audio Interface
url: www.dpamicrophones.com

single and double lavalier, headset, headset with earpiece and lavalier/small-diaphragm condenser combo.

In addition to the two MicroDot connectors, the d:vice has a single Micro USB-B connection. On Apple and Windows-based computers, the d:vice functions like a no-frills stereo recording interface. In the case of either computer platform, the only controls are what the basic driver offers (i.e. level, sample rate, software monitoring on/off).

To really tap into all the d:vice can do, you have to install its app on an iPhone or iPad running iOS 10 or later. With the app installed, the d:vice reveals much more flexibility for recording applications. The app

offers large input level meters on your tablet or phone screen, something crucial for getting the cleanest-possible sound without clipping. The app also offers controls for recording modes, gain and high-pass filter, monitoring, setup presets and more.

We tested the d:vice with the d:screet 4060 Miniature Omnidirectional Miniature Microphone. The mic has a flat 20 Hz-20,000 Hz frequency response. Interchangeable caps give a treble boost to add clarity, with one cap offering 3 dB of boost and the other 10 dB. Depending on where the mic is attached, and what it's picking up, the generous 10 dB boost may be required to get the clarity needed. Available colors include black, white, beige and brown.

SUPERB SOUND, SIMPLY

There's nothing tricky about this recording interface—it captures two channels of audio. How that audio sounds is the real story, and d:vice does not disappoint. Its recordings are clear and uncolored, as would be expected with specs like these. The d:vice has 114 dB dynamic range, nearly unmeasurable distortion and 20 Hz-40 kHz frequency response at its highest sampling rate (96 kHz).

The simplicity of the d:vice carries over to the iOS app, which gets the job done with a minimum of fuss. Where things get a little too simple is on the computer. Not having an app or control panel for laptop use is a major oversight, one I hope DPA is working on now to rectify. Limiting d:vice's most important features to an iOS device makes it unsuitable for many recording situations where a laptop is the best tool for the job.

The d:screet 4060 mic sounds excellent, with the openness and clarity that you'd generally expect from a much larger mic.

DPA body-worn mics are being used more in film and TV production where a boom mic would normally get the call—they sound that good. (You're hearing this very mic all over the 2012 movie *Les Misérables*.) A higher noise floor is the inevitable side-effect of a tiny mic element, but you can work around that with careful gain settings.

Beyond lacking software, d:vice has a few other issues. The first is the shape and design of the d:vice itself. It's artsy and cool, and looks great on the table next to your latte. But what if you and your interviewee are standing? Where does d:vice go? In a pocket? Whose pocket? What about cables? The d:vice is a slippery little booger, and there's no graceful way to clip it or attach it to anything.

Finally, I question why DPA didn't give the d:vice a headphone output. The interface will usually be closer to the person you're recording than the iOS device or laptop is. There's plenty of room on the interface for an 1/8-inch jack, and it wouldn't even compromise the d:vice's minimalist aesthetic.

This unique little interface makes sense when you need to capture impeccable audio from a stationary source, wherever that may be. The d:vice excels at capturing your latest blog at your desk or a sit-down interview in someone's living room. Plug in a pair of mics to record a singer and her guitar, or a jazz ensemble in stereo. The d:vice gives you world-class recording quality, limited only by your imagination.

But this quality doesn't come cheap. The d:vice alone is \$650, and the least-expensive mic kit (lavalier) comes in at just over \$1,000. It's about quality over price: if you have the budget and an iOS device, you'll be hard-pressed to find a better-sounding (or smaller) recording interface than this. If you need more flexibility, or don't want to use an iPad or iPhone to record, you may need to look elsewhere.

WIN THIS!

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LOREN ALLDRIN is a regular contributor to Church Production Magazine.