

DPA D:SCREET NECKLACE MIC

Unique Wearable Transducer Features 4061 Capsule



The neck-worn SCO61-N terminates in a gold-plated microdot connector, 3-pin Lemo, mini-jack, TA4F mini-XLR, and other custom adapters.

The SCO61-N microphone from DPA, part of the company's body-worn series, includes the 4061 omnidirectional capsule and is available with various terminations: DPA's standard gold-plated micro-dot connector, 3-pin Lemo, mini-jack, TA4F mini-XLR and other custom adapters for all major wireless brands. It is best deployed with a wireless beltpack transmitter, though the XLR adapter means wired is an option.

Available in white, brown and black, at lengths of 18.3 or 20.9 inches, it can easily blend in with clothing, costumes or bare skin. The necklace cable material is flexible soft rubber, with an easy-to-attach/detach chrome clasp on the back of the loop for quick on and off.

The 4061 is an omnidirectional, pressure-gradient, pre-polarized condenser capsule, with a frequency range of 20 to 20k Hz, ± 2 dB, with a 10dB boost at 12 kHz. Nominal sensitivity is ± 3 dB at 1 kHz, with a S/N ratio (A-weighted) at a typical 68 dB. THD is less than 1 percent up to 123 dB SPL peak. The typical dynamic range is listed as 97 dB.

The SCO61-N is a straightforward piece of wearable technology that clients find to be fun and easy to get accustomed to. The de-

sign is a direct response to the difficulties that often occur during film and stage productions where unwanted sound can cause problems to crop up later during in post-production. With the mic positioned at the base of the neck of the speaker/actor—and out of harm's way—the result is clean, clear sound and far less time spent in post.

Talent can easily mount and adjust the necklace by themselves for the best fit and comfort. As on standard lavalier-style mics, the connector wire all but disappears down the back of the wearer's neck, out of sight and into a transmitter that can be situated in a concealed pocket or belt loop. The rubber support adds a degree of shock absorption, so participants in activities such as contact sports, running, dancing and other high-energy situations all benefit. This feature is also useful to storytellers and narrators who might like an alternative to over-the-ear mics or lapel lavs. The 4016 capsule is away from direct wind blasts to avoid plosives and other mouth noises, but it's close enough to pick up transients and direct sound accurately.

We tested the SCO61-N in many typical situations with voice-over announcers and actors and had great success. But the main trial was a bit unorthodox, more musical and much more demanding: a percussion concerto with a full symphony orchestra. In this case, the SCO61-N helped us solve a simple yet tricky problem: how to properly mike a large percussion kit that literally surrounded the performer.

The work was the Avner Dorman's percussion concerto "Frozen in Time," with soloist Kiril Angelov, performing with the Arto-sphere Festival Orchestra conducted by Maestro Corrado Rovaris. The soloist must play from memory, constantly moving in a ballet-like dance throughout the work, changing sticks, mallets and point of view continuously.

For the recording, we used our standard method of spaced overhead DPA 4006TL omnis for the main orchestral pickup and spot mics; however, a fast stage changeover time and other logistics limited our ability to put up the six or seven microphones that would normally be needed to cover 23 percussion instru-

TRYTHIS

For unusual sounds of your own, try having your favorite wind player or other instrumentalist wear it. It may not be perfect, but you'll have a lot of fun hearing instruments just as the performers hear them, and it might just perk up your collection of Found Sounds the next time you need something unusual. For extreme levels, try it hard-wired without a transmitter/receiver. You'll be amazed at the dynamic range.

ments, including a full set of concert marimbas, vibes, tuned bells, snare, tom-toms and kick drum.

We thought, “What if the performer actually were to wear the recording microphone, and we have it pick up the sound just as he hears it?” We only had time to test the idea at final dress rehearsal, then at the concert; soloist Angelov cheerfully took on the role of our beta tester. After hearing the isolated track, everyone was thrilled with the results.

Worn at the base of the neck, facing forward, the microphone seamlessly picked up everything as the performer heard it, allowing the recording to reveal the music up close and intimately. Transients were smooth and detailed, with no clipping or overloading.

Of course, with a typical dynamic range of 97 dB, the signal is only as good as the wireless system in use; we employed a Shure ULXD4D receiver with a ULX D1 Bodypack transmitter. With such a wide dynamic range from this array of percussion, we left plenty of gain and headroom at the transmitter and receiver, allowing a useable high-quality signal to blend with the rest of the mics on the orchestra, including our DPA 4006s as overheads. (See/hear online samples at mixonline.com.)

PRODUCT SUMMARY

COMPANY: DPA Microphones

PRODUCT: d:screet SCO61-N Necklace Mic

WEBSITE: dpamicrophones.com

PRICE: \$649.95

PROS: Easy setup and user friendly; compatible with virtually all wireless systems

CONS: Even the larger (5.3cm) size can be a bit tight for some male actors/performers when wearing dress shirts with collars and ties

In other testing and comparisons to several over-the-ear mics, lavs and standard SD and LD voiceover mics, the SCO61-N stood its ground, with a clear and crisp sound all its own, with only a touch of mid-low EQ needed here and there, depending on the speaker. Because it is an omnidirectional mic, there's little or no proximity effect, and we experienced none of the low-end rumble found in similar cardioid lavs and headset mics. In use for conferences and presentations, the SCO61-N was also easier to wear, EQ and amplify.

The DPA SCO61-N microphone is one of those great ideas that makes you wonder why someone didn't come up with it sooner: a

professional, high-quality omnidirectional miniature microphone that can be worn almost invisibly, or even as a fashion accessory, right at the base of the speaker's neck. Flexible enough even to record high-decibel percussion, it's a sound tech's dream. You won't always need a mic this unique, but when you do, it's a lifesaver! ■

Joe Hannigan is the owner of Weston Sound, where he provides audio and video location recording, mixing and editing.