

Lewitt LCT 440 Pure £279

The classic choc-ice condenser mic shape gets a new variant. **Robbie Stamp** puts it to work before it melts.

CONTACT WHO: JHS TEL: +44 (0)1132 865 381 WEB: www.lewitt-audio.com
KEY FEATURES POLAR PATTERN: cardioid CAPSULE DIAMETER: 25.4mm MAX SPL: 140dB
SPL DYNAMIC RANGE: 133 dB(A) DIMENSIONS: 138mm x 52mm x 36mm WEIGHT: 310g
ACCESSORIES: shockmount cradle, magnetic pop filter, foam windscreen, leatherette bag





THE PROS & CONS



Well balanced frequency response

Robust and simple design

High-quality bespoke pop filter and shockmount



It could be slightly more open in the upper-mids

No pad or low-cut controls

The Lewitt LCT 440 Pure is a neat C414-esque design which balances weight with an impressive robustness. It comes with a quality accessory set: bespoke shockmount and pop filter, foam windshield and leatherette bag. Right out of the box the 440 feels like quality, to the extent that it requires conscious effort to prevent transference of this feeling into the analysis of its sonics.

The LCT 440 is a simple condenser mic: fixed cardioid pattern and no pad or low-cut controls. This is unusual in the LCT range, with only the LCT 240 Pro being similarly switch-free. It can be beneficial to reduce the number of moving parts in a mic: less to go wrong, thus extending service life. The downsides are that not all preamps do have these controls, and that excessive input level or low frequency content presented to the preamp can cause distortion. Swings...roundabouts.

To counter the inevitable confirmation bias highlighted above, the 440 was tested against mics I know inside out. The quick version is this: it sounds great and responds very well to a wide range of sources without clouding or over emphasising areas of the frequency spectrum.

The longer version is as follows. On vocals, the mic presents a natural and rich sound without harshness in the sibilant upper-mids. The proximity effect seems controlled, allowing up-close work without bloating the low-mids. The pop filter is a necessity in this case, as the excellent low-end sensitivity makes plosives a problem. Good off-axis response (within the

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usual cardioid 'window') means singing or talking *across* the mic also helps mitigate this without loss of presence.

The perceived richness, and corresponding minimising of sibilance, makes the 440 a little darker than many when presented with acoustic instruments. Whether this is desirable or not will depend on the instrument. I have a dull acoustic that sounds best with some lift in the upper-mids/early-highs, and this needed an EQ boost with the 440. The well-balanced low end, meanwhile, meant the body of the guitar was captured naturally, free from boxiness. Bowed strings may well benefit from this characteristic, as can drum overheads bombarded with cymbals.

I generally avoid using condensers on guitar amps, so inevitably I try any review model out on one. The Lewitt 440 Pure is one that challenges my prejudice. Though the 'sibilance dip' identified above is noticeable in this role it is, again, not always a bad thing and isn't immediately obvious. For clean sounds, there's plenty of punch as well as clarity, and its happy getting right up to the grille. Distorted tones

really show up upper-frequency phase-shift notches inherent in condenser capsule response, and here the 440 behaves unusually well – I didn't get upset and want to swap it for a dynamic/ribbon combo). Respect.

All in all, the LCT 440 Pure is a great balance of simplicity, robust design and sonic performance. The output level is high, which is coupled with low self-noise, making it great for quiet sources. Despite being a single-pattern mic with no low-cut or pad controls, this is an impressively versatile mic, and it's very well priced indeed. Definitely a player to watch in a very crowded field. **FM**

FM VERDICT

8.9

A well rounded mic that'd be happy in most roles on stage or in the studio – especially for vocals and guitar amps