

Electro-Voice N/D967

This reissued classic lets you crank the stage monitors.

By Ed Ivey

For monitor engineers, paradise is a place where you will never again have to hear singers ask, "Can you turn me up some more in the monitors?" Cranking a vocalist in the monitors, especially on club systems that have little or no monitor EQ, is often a bid for trouble in the form of feedback. Of course, microphones perform differently in this regard, and the "right" mic can go a long way in solving stage-monitor headaches.

To that end, Electro-Voice has reintroduced its acclaimed N/D967 vocal microphone (\$406), long recognized by live-sound engineers as a good bet for maintaining robust vocal quality in high-SPL environments. When Electro-Voice discontinued production of the original N/D967 in 1999, the company soon heard about it. According to Electro-Voice spokesperson James Edlund, "We had four years of steady e-mails from engineers saying that no other microphone on the market had the same high-gain-before-feedback capabilities." Even when the mic was no longer available, demand continued to rise as the N/D967's reputation spread. In time, Electro-Voice felt compelled to reintroduce this legendary flat-topped mic.

NOW FEATURING

Though marketed as a specialized tool for concert (read: loud) stages, classic E-V sound and rugged construction make the N/D967 a tool worthy of consideration by any professional singer or engineer seeking optimum vocal sound, especially when feedback

Reintroduced due to popular demand, the "flat-top" Electro-Voice N/D967 is renowned for its superior feedback rejection—even on extremely loud stages.

rejection is a concern. The mic's high-gain-before-feedback characteristics are achieved by a combination of features: a tight supercardioid pickup pattern; a hot (high-output) neodymium-magnet element; a voice-focused, reduced-bandwidth frequency response (the low end starts rolling off at around 200 Hz and the high end at around 10 kHz); and a low-profile grille cage that allows the singer to get very close to the mic's element. This last feature alone

An EQ-altering "personality" switch on the side of the mic attenuates the low midrange.

accounts for another 4 to 6 dB of gain from the mic, significantly enhancing signal-to-noise ratio.

Other features of the N/D967 include a removable pop-filter assembly for easy cleaning, a rubberized "warm grip" handle for comfort, and a multistage internal shockmount that minimizes handling noise. In addition, an EQ-altering "personality" switch on the side of the microphone attenuates the low midrange (between 200 Hz and 2 kHz) by 3 dB or so, further denying feedback and helping to clarify muffled or "muddy" sounding vocals.

HERE COME OL' FLAT-TOP

I tested the N/D967 in a variety of live vocal settings and got very good to excellent results. One of the San Francisco clubs where I regularly gig features two side-fill monitors flown over each side of the stage—a setup that lets the drummer hear vocals perfectly but dooms front-of-stage singers to a muffled sound. The N/D967 made a huge difference, allowing me to turn up stage-monitor levels significantly as compared with the house mics.

In general, Electro-Voice dynamic stage mics are known for having a characteristic low-mid warmth—a trait typically helpful for "filling out" thin or reedy

voices. Though the 967 has some of that low-mid warmth going on, its rolled-off low end renders it less full sounding in the low mids than other mics in EV's N/DYM series. Still, the 967's low-mid warmth nicely enhanced my voice, both on loud stages as well as in quiet settings. At a private gig for which I also had to act as announcer, the 967 lent a nice "authority" to my voice. Engaging the mic's mid-attenuation switch reduced the warmth a bit,

making my voice sound more present. On certain other singers, however, the midrange cut robbed richness from their voices. In the end, the flat position worked best for most of the singers who tried the N/D967.

Another thing I discovered is that varying your distance from the mic's grille cage can alter the sound considerably, making the 967 a good pick for singers who like to "work" their mics. The 967's flat-top grille cage evidently helps in this regard.

Incidentally, I also tried the 967 on acoustic guitar (a duty vocal mics are often conscripted for in clubs) and was pleased to discover that the mic worked well and sounded very decent in this application, too. I was able to push the volume of the acoustic guitar higher than usual in the monitors. Of course, that's not to say the mic is incapable of feeding back. However, the 967's feedback rejection proved demonstrably better than several other handheld dynamics I compared it with.

GOOD MEDICINE

At just over \$400, the Electro-Voice N/D967 is pricier than the usual handheld dynamic. But for the discerning professional singer or front-of-house engineer who needs high monitor levels without the nuisance of feedback, this finely crafted microphone could be just what the doctor ordered. 🍎

■ Rating (out of 5): 4

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