

Product Review

DV MARK

DV Mark Little 250 GH

CMC Music | cmcmusic.com.au | Expect To Pay: \$895

The more of their products I review the more I'm fascinated by the self-contained bubble that Mark World is. Every time I find myself circling back to their website I'm greeted by the face of another player that Marco De Virgillis and co. insist are one of the biggest names in the game. Forgive my ignorance but before I reviewed their signature amps I'd never heard of players like Frank Gambale, Michael Angelo Batio or Greg Howe but I figure they must be going concerns if they are to have whole amp designs named for them. It reminds me of how much we limit our own horizons with specific subsets of interest and, while I might not be phased at all by fusion music or solid-state amps in my day-to-day life, there are people out there who absolutely froth over them. They have their own heroes, their own bands and their own specific image of what tonal purity looks like. Once again DV Mark has those erstwhile 'others' covered with the space conscious Little 250 GH.

For what it's worth, Greg Howe is an American session player and recording artist of some international renown. He has been, and remains, personnel of the touring bands behind Michael Jackson, Justin Timberlake and Lady Gaga to name a few, as well as recording a string of increasingly fusion focused solo albums under his own name. One thing that I've learnt about players whose tastes lie in

this particular area of the Venn diagram is that they like their amps to be one, or preferably both, of two things; lightweight and versatile. Time and time again this is where De Virgillis steps in. His Micro and Little lines of amps are far and away the smallest and easiest on the back I've ever played and not one of them skimps on power in any way, shape or form. The Little 250 GH is, as you can assume, a 250watt solid-state head in a package about half the size of your average toaster.

If versatility is what you're after then that is exactly what you get. The glory of the lack of vacuum tubes is that are essentially plugging into a clean slate. Two channels of clean slate as a matter of fact. Both rows have a simple yet particularly

malleable three stage EQ, input gain and output volume controls and plunge headlong into a deep wellspring of digital reverb that adds spatial awareness to proceedings. Without that last detail the whole affair was a little dry for my taste but as I said before, I don't exist in the same world as someone who would find this exactly what they are looking for. Essential inclusions like effects loop, -6db pad and footswitch channel selection abound and there is no stone unturned anywhere on the tiny chassis.

After all is said and done DV Mark's little units are nothing if not super powerful. They make a solemn promise that you won't miss out on juice when you plug one in and they absolutely over-deliver.

The Little 250 GH is, for me, a peek into a fascinating world of unmitigated cleans, creamy distortion sounds and intact spinal columns.

BY LUKE SHIELDS

HITS

- Tiny, mighty and as blank a slate as you'll find

MISSES

- Voicing that lacks a unique character unless you really know what you're doing



SAMSON

Q8X Dynamic Microphone

Electric Factory | elfa.com.au | Expect to Pay: \$169

Samson are well known for delivering quality audio products at a lower price than many similar options on the market and with the release of their new Q8X dynamic microphone, they have again hit the mark with the budget-conscious musician in mind. There are dozens of options if you're looking for a hand-held dynamic vocal mic for stage use, so it can be hard to sort through all the different possibilities and brand names that don't necessarily offer additional benefits.

Samson claims that their Q8X dynamic has a flat response with a slight lift at 8kHz. What my ears told me was that it seemed to be a little more pronounced in the lower mid-range, which isn't necessarily a bad thing. It basically makes vocals jump out, placing them right up in the front of the mix even before you do any EQ work. Sure, it could have had a little extra low end to it, and maybe it sounds a little too mid-heavy for some, but it certainly sounded alright considering the price-point. It's a super-cardioid capsule design, so it's a little more directional than many other vocal microphones, but will pick up sound from directly behind itself too. It offers great side rejection, so it will just depend on how your monitors are placed as to how it goes with feedback issues. In all, it's a good microphone that sounds like it is punching above its weight.

Construction-wise the Q8X feels extremely solid, and pulling it apart revealed a neodymium capsule housed in a comfortable support. It had a little movement to it, enough to reduce noise with some rough handling, but not too much that it would affect operation. The cage over the microphone, whilst rather light, still had a decent structure, so it should hold up with being dropped from time to time. The XLR connection at the base was pretty standard, with a Neutrick connection clipping in with only a little force, and offering no room to move once in place. So, it seems pretty tough, with a good overall weight, which should allow it to keep up with the rigours of live stage use.

BY ROB GEE

HITS

- Solid build
- Pronounced mid-range for vocals

MISSES

- Slight lack of low frequencies

