

Point Source Audio SERIES8

Over the past few years, Point Source Audio has gained a reputation for supplying tough, good-sounding miniature microphones in headset, earworn and lavalier styles. Now, with its new flagship SERIES8 line, the company is poised to take things up a notch — or two.

» Versatile and Flexible

Intended for performance vocals, the SERIES8 mics feature back electret condenser capsules in omni or cardioid patterns in beige or black. Another option is an omni capsule that's water/sweat/makeup-proof. The 2mm omni capsules are nearly invisible for a discreet, low-profile appearance. Other features include tough "Unbreakable Booms" that are bendable to 360 degrees and earworn models that are left or right wearable. The dual-ear headset model can also be adapted for left or right side use. Point Source also offers adapters that can convert any of its single-ear earworn mics into to dual-ear mount models.

All SERIES8 models ship with an interchangeable X-Connector (specified when you order) with a termination for popular wireless transmitters from AKG, Audio-Technica, Lectrosonics, MiPro, Sennheiser EW, Shure or Telex. Lemo-style connectors for Sennheiser SK or Zaxcom are also available. The X-Connector attaches to the 4-foot mic cable with a simple, secure twist. Additional X-Connectors are offered for users who need to switch between different brands of transmitters.

For this review, I checked out several SERIES8 models: earworn CO-8WS (waterproof omni, \$315); earworn CR-8S (standard cardioid, \$399); headset CO-8WD (waterproof omni, \$449); and the lavalier CO-8WL (waterproof omni, \$285). Stated prices are MAP and all were fitted for 4-pin Shure X-Connectors as well as an optional CON XLR converter for use in hardwire applications.

» Getting Physical

The mics ship in hinged cardboard boxes with magnetic closures. They're sturdy, but not quite the field-ready, so I repacked them into generic zippered bags when going out on gigs. The lavalier shares the same omni or cardioid capsule (your choice) as the headworn models and includes a swiveling mount for secure attachment to clothing or hidden in hats or wigs for theatrical use. All mics include an effective foam wind-screen.

The earworn models adjust for secure mounting and the flexible boom can be easily adjusted to suit. The boom length (between base of ear and capsule) is about 3.25 inches, which was fine for most people, but a bit short for performers with larger heads. The headset models offer a much wider range of adjustment and are quite secure, even with the most active performers. The headset earpieces swivel flat for storage and are released by a slight 1/4-inch tug to lock them in place. This procedure isn't obvious, so practice it once or twice before going out in the field. And that "unbreakable boom" isn't far from the truth. I couldn't believe how much torture these could take without a hitch.

» Ready to Perform

As mentioned earlier, the SERIES8 mics are designed for vocal performance. Models optimized for spoken word application are also offered, but the SERIES8 capsules are intended for wide, response/wide dynamic range use such as singing, which can present an exceptionally demanding source to any microphone, let alone a miniature transducer. The omni capsules in the SERIES8 line

can handle 148 dB SPLs, which is indeed a lot, but with the proximity of the mic placed within an inch or so of the mouth, seems achievable — at least with some of the vocalists I have occasion to work with. The cardioid versions clock in with a 135 dB max SPL rating still impressive nonetheless. In these instances, headroom is where it's at, and with the mics' low-self noise performance, dynamic range should never be a problem with the SERIES8 mics, particularly when used with a wireless rig.

Besides the obvious polar pattern and max SPL specs, the main difference in the cardioid and omni versions was evident both in overall frequency response and linearity of the bandwidth. The omni models have a stated 20 to 20k Hz response and were almost ruler flat in the critical 50 Hz to 10k Hz range. The cardioid capsule

(stated 160 to 12k Hz response) has a rising upper mid presence boost peaking about +7 dB between 3,500 Hz and 7k Hz. The net effect of the cardioid is similar to the response of a "typical" handheld vocal mic, which provides a nice "cut through the mix" edge that's ideal for many male vocalists. In contrast, the omni mics offer a smooth, natural palette that's fine as is, or ready to EQ to suit: The response is more like you'd encounter from a quality small-diaphragm mic, yet without the rising upper 10k to 12k Hz boost such mics often exhibit. With the omni's, you have a clean slate to tweak as you'd like, without being boxed into any existing response curve. I like that.

Overall, the SERIES8 are impressive, offering



Point Source Audio CO-8WD headset mic

Point Source Audio CO-8WS earworn mic

natural and clean sound, affordable pricing and versatile options that fit into nearly any production need. Keep these on your "A" list. **FOH**

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