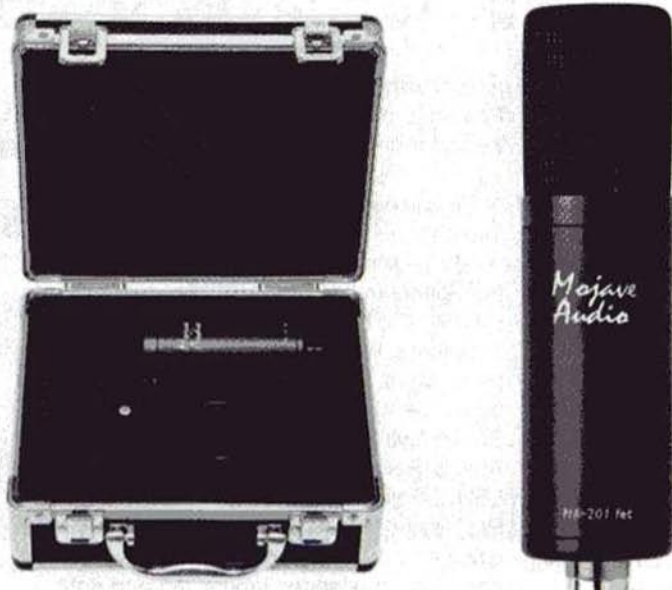


## Mojave Audio MA-201 FET Condenser Microphone

David Royer's latest effort, the Mojave Audio MA-201 FET microphone, is a graceful, accurate, and well-priced workhorse condenser for the professional studio.



From Mojave Audio and the mind of David Royer comes a new large-diaphragm condenser mic, the MA-201 FET. This is a phantom-powered, solid-state condenser mic with a fixed cardioid pattern, designed for instruments and vocals alike. It utilizes a 3-micron gold-sputtered capsule, Jensen transformer, military-grade FET, and low-noise resistors. For those looking to expand their mic closet without exceeding their budget, this is Mojave's most affordable effort to date, coming in at a list price of \$695.

### Features

The MA-201 is a fixed cardioid mic with no pads or roll-off switches. Thus, there are no switch positions to forget while you're in the control room. The front side of the mic is clearly marked with the "Mojave Audio" logo. The shock mount is an improvement on the old, standard, elas-

tic-band-style mount, with a threaded receiver in the bottom. The mic is threaded on the bottom for easy assembly with the shock mount, especially in direct comparison with a vintage-style tangle of elastic. Mojave protects the MA-201 with a custom 10x8.5x4.5-inch hard-shell case with foam cutouts.

### In Use

As luck would have it, Mojave provided a stereo pair for review. Right away, the MA-201s went into service for stereo miking a piano. I usually use a pair of Neumann M-582 omni mics for this task, and these Mojave's did not disappoint. The stereo imaging was excellent, and the frequency response suited the piano well, with a forward midrange and a subtle EQ rise in the upper frequencies.

Further, I used the pair wherever I normally use the M-582s, including stereo room, strings, and drum overheads as well as stereo rooms on choir sessions. For strings, the mics were placed nine feet high with a wide spacing above the section, about 20 feet apart. On the string session, I also compared the sound of the MA-201 pair to a Schoeps cardioid pair. Room miking revealed the wide cardioid pattern of the MA-201; it was nearly as open as my omnis. This proved extremely useful in my distant miking situations; as the open pattern provides minimal proximity effect, it also provides the lifelike low-end response of an omni. In contrast, the Schoeps were dry (comparatively low ambience) and silky on top, but lacked the low-end response of the Mojave 201 in this application.

On choir, the MA-201s were placed around seven feet high in a stereo pair in the center of the room with the singers in a semicircle. Again, the results were compared to the M-582s. I added no EQ during tracking with the MA-201s; in the mix, I added just a small high-frequency boost with excellent results. In comparison, the omni M-582s offer a similar polar pattern as

the Mojaves, but with a bit less midrange; it's more of what I call that "classic smiley face" EQ curve with somewhat softer transients.

Finally, I gave the MA-201s a go on the drum kit. As overheads, they really excelled in clarity and cymbal detail. They do pick up a little more room sound than some other cardioid choices, but that can easily be controlled by how close you mic the kit. Mojave recommends them for toms, so I gave them a shot. I compared them to another condenser and the standard Sennheiser MD421 dynamic. The beauty of the Mojave here (or in any high-SPL situation) is that there are no pads to worry about, and it doesn't seem to need any, either. The sound of the Mojave was the better choice of the two condensers with lots of attack, but I can't help favoring the well-known and rounder sound of the dynamic mic for toms with its tighter polar pattern for a nice proximity effect. I often mic the bottom of the toms and blend it in with top mic; as bottom mics, the Mojave would be an excellent choice.

### Summary

The Mojave MA-201 proved itself in a wide variety of situations. It is ideally suited for stereo sources and distant mic techniques, as the wide cardioid pattern and excellent transient response provides a truly lifelike representation of your source. It was also useful in close miking applications, exhibiting a mild proximity effect and allowing very close mic placement when needed without excessive proximity effect. At the MA-201's price point, add one — no, make that two — to your mic collection and add some realistic stereo images to your recordings.

## Fast Facts

### Applications

Commercial Studio; Project Studio; Location Recording

### Key Features

Cardioid pattern; 3-micron capsule; no pads or switches

### Price

\$695 list

### Contact

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www.mojaveaudio.com

## Product Points



▶ Open cardioid pattern; great for distant miking; solid build quality at good price point; high SPL handling capabilities



▶ No sexy proximity effect (see my first "Plus")

### Score

The MA201 is a great vehicle and tool for sound: a super handling, all-wheel-drive, power-drill of a microphone!



## ▶▶ SECOND OPINION:

# The MA-201 FET: An "underpriced audio gem"

by Russ Long

Dave Royer has yet to design a mic that doesn't catch my ear in a big way. As a big fan of the Mojave MA-100 and MA-200 tube mics, I was anxious to run the gamut with Mojave's first tubeless mic, the MA-201 FET. As I anticipated, it's rock-solid.

First up was to give the mic a go on vocals. I used the MA-201 to record a male vocal through the LaChapell Model 583s, the Empirical Labs Lil' FrEQ and the Tube Tech CL-1B; results were a large and punchy, yet extremely detailed, track. I used the same signal path to record female vocals and ended up with even better results. While the MA-200 is occasionally sibilant on female vocals, I found that the MA-201 FET to have a wonderful, open top end while remaining very smooth and natural. I put the mic to work on both electric and acoustic guitars and had great results in both instances.

The MA-201 works amazingly well with drums and percussion, too. I ran two MA-201s through a pair of Daking modules to record toms and had great results. They won-

derfully recorded drum overheads through the Manley Langevin Dual Vocal Combo. The MA-201 had a tendency to overload when I placed it in the kick drum, but placing it outside the kick (about six inches from the front head) yielded a fantastic sound. I also used the MA-201 on snare, hi-hat, and tambourine on various sessions and had good results in each case.

After spending several months with the MA-201 FET, I've found that during the microphone selection process, it is applicable to think of the MA-200 as a modern-day Neumann U 67 and the MA-201 as a modern day Neumann U 47 FET. As was true with the MA-200, my only real complaint with the MA-201 is its lack of selectable pickup patterns. That said, keeping it to a single pickup pattern keeps the price tag on this amazingly underpriced audio gem well within reach of even the most budget-conscious buyer. If you have a small project studio and can only afford one mic or if you are a large facility looking to add another color to your palate, this is the mic to buy.