

**voice·council**  
magazine

*insight for the emerging vocalist*



- [Home](#)
- [Vocal Health](#)
  - [Body](#)
  - [Soul](#)
- [Technique](#)
  - [Mastery](#)
  - [Coaches](#)
- [Gear](#)
- [Reviews](#)
  - [Latest Reviews](#)
  - [Live Microphones](#)
  - [Recording Microphones](#)
  - [Vocal Effects Units](#)
  - [Recording Equipment](#)
  - [Books and Accessories](#)
  - [Monitors and Earphones](#)
  - [PA Systems](#)
  - [Mobile Apps](#)
- [Videos](#)
  - [Singing Competition](#)
  - [Most Popular](#)
  - [Warming Up](#)
  - [Control Your Sound](#)
  - [Vocal Health](#)
  - [Performance Inspiration](#)
  - [Studio Singing](#)
  - [Technique](#)
  - [Coached Episodes](#)
  - [Singing and Life](#)
  - [The Vocal Business](#)
  - [Vocal Insight](#)
- [Getting Gigs](#)
  - [Getting Gigs](#)
  - [Events](#)
- [Artists](#)

- [Artists](#)
- [Emerging Artists](#)
- [Blogs](#)
  - [Doctor's Corner](#)
  - [Vocal Coach Q & A](#)
  - [Sonic Cuisine](#)
  - [Performance and Life](#)
  - [Songwriting](#)
  - [Probe](#)
  - [Did You Know?](#)
  - [Q with Craig](#)
  - [Wild Thoughts](#)
- [Forum](#)
- [About](#)
- 

July 29th, 2012 | by Chris Kennedy

## Famous Live Mics



**No two voices are the same and the same goes for microphones. Here we look at the choice of live microphone for some popular singers.**

**Frank Sinatra: [AKG C535 EB](#) (Custom gold version used in many concerts in his later years)**

*AKG's C535 EB is a hand-held live condenser microphone that was designed to create a studio style sound in a live setting. Like many studio microphones, it features switches for bass cut, bass roll off and attenuation for louder sources, in order to increase its versatility. It still remains popular today and has been used by artists such as James Taylor, Sting and Alison Krauss.*

**Michael Jackson: [Shure WBH54B Headset Mic](#) (This Is It)**

*This is the microphone that Michael Jackson used for the rehearsals for his This Is It concert. It is designed to provide great sound quality and reliability with minimal visibility in applications such as broadcast, theater, and touring.*

**Bruce Springsteen: [Audix OM3](#) (Most live performances since 1992)**

*Audix's OM3 is a dynamic microphone which was made popular because of its high rejection of feedback which made it a great choice for rock singers. Audix have since*

brought out the OM7 microphone which offers even better feedback rejection and has become popular amongst a many rock acts such as the Red Hot Chili Peppers.

“No two voices are the same and the same goes for microphones”

**Whitney Houston: Sennheiser SKM 5200 (Many live performances)**

This wireless hand-held mic is a particularly popular choice for female singers and has also been used by Beyonce, Rihanna and Cher. It supports a range of interchangeable capsules as well as long battery life to make sure there are no problems during a performance.

**Mariah Carey: Shure KSM9 (Adventures of Mimi tour)**

The Shure KSM9 is a live condenser microphone that has been designed primarily for vocals. It features a switchable polar pattern (allows users to switch between cardioid and super cardioid) and premium internal electronics and connectors. Note: For the full Mariah Carey look, try covering your mic with rhinestones/diamantes!

**Norah Jones: Neumann KMS104 (Most live performances)**

Neumann are renowned for their classic studio microphones and their move into the live microphone market has also proved successful, with many singers choosing to use their microphones to achieve a detailed and full vocal sound on stage. As this is a reasonably sensitive condenser microphone, it is particularly well suited to jazz and more acoustic styles where loud stage levels are not a concern.

**James Hetfield (Metallica): Audio-Technica AE5400 (Death Magnetic tour)**

This cardioid condenser microphone combines great sound quality with an ability of handling high SPL levels and good protection against plosives.

**Jack Johnson: Neumann KMS105 (Most festival appearances in 2010 including Glastonbury, Hurricane, and Kokua)**

This microphone is a popular choice amongst both male and female vocalists wanting studio-like vocals in a live setting. The KMS105 features a super-cardioid pattern whereas the KMS104 a cardioid pattern.

**Caleb Followill (Kings of Leon): Sennheiser 935 (Only by the Night tour)**

Available as both a wired or wireless microphone, Sennheiser's 935 is a top class cardioid dynamic microphone which allows smooth, detailed vocals whilst offering good rejection against feedback.

**Adele: Sennheiser SKM 2000-XP wireless with MMK 965-1 capsule (2012 Brit Awards & Grammy Awards performances)**

This wireless system from Sennheiser is designed so that a range of different microphone capsules can be used with the unit enabling you to pick the best one for your voice. In this instance the capsule used is the same one that is found on Sennheiser's e955 wired



From top left - AKG C535EB; Sennheiser SKM 5200; Neumann KMS-104; Sennheiser 935; Neumann KMS 105; Shure KSM9; Audio Technica AE5400.

*handheld condenser microphone.*



#### About The Author:

Chris Kennedy is the principle product reviewer for VoiceCouncil Magazine. He is also a singer-songwriter and composer, performing and writing in a range of styles from rock to jazz. Chris has released several albums as a solo artist and with his group The New Inventions. When he isn't performing live, Chris also works as a live sound engineer and writes and records film music in his studio. You can find more about him on his website: <http://www.chriskennedymusic.co.uk>

Rating: +7 (from 7 votes)

#### Share This Article:

Like

10

Tweet

5

g+1

1

2

#### Most Popular Articles:



**Honey & Lemon for Singers: Fact from Fiction**



**How to Chat to Your Audience without Sounding Fake**



**The Holy Grail of Vocal Recording Gear**

7 Comments   VoiceCouncil Magazine

 Login ▾

Sort by Newest ▾

Share  Favorite ★

Join the discussion...

**j453** • 7 months ago

today KOL uses Sennheiser MD 431, in the picture on top as well ;)  
but it is correct in the past ist was the e935

 |  • Reply • Share >**Linda M** • a year ago

k.d. Lang and Sting use the AKG 535 EB as well. It's an amazing microphone especially for the money!!!

 |  • Reply • Share >**Chuck Olson** • 2 years ago

Keep the articles coming like this.. most of us have someone famous that our voice at least partially matches. It at least gives a person a starting point for comparisons. Thanks & keep up the good work!

 |  • Reply • Share >**Voicecouncil\_com** • 2 years ago

Nice to see such a unique and interesting article. It'd be great to see a follow-up article featuring other mics used by these artists, eg Michael Jackson. I was told he sometimes used a Shure SM57 in the recording studio, I think for his Thriller album, but I could be wrong. Let us know! :)



 |  • Reply • Share >**Chris**  Voicecouncil\_com • 2 years ago

Hi, glad you liked the article. There's a part 2 coming very soon which focuses on studio mics used by these artists. -Chris

1  |  • Reply • Share >**Baze Sax**  Voicecouncil\_com • 2 years ago

I've read that the "Thriller" is recorded with Shure sm7b. Don't forget that these artists also had the best available processing, PA systems and the best soundmen in the world. Listen to Alicia Keys on Grammys 2005 with shure sm58 head. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v...>

## Follow VoiceCouncil Magazine

- **Like** 15,683 people like this. [Sign Up](#) to see what your friends like.
- [Follow](#)
-   [Subscribe](#) 3,929 subscribers
- [Subscribe for a chance to win a VoiceTone T1 Pedal this month](#)

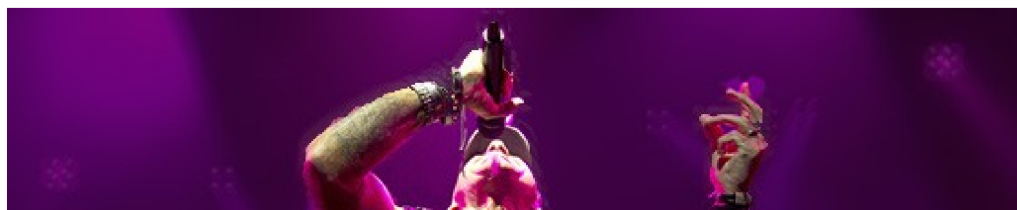


## Popular articles in this category

- [Mics for Live Performance](#)



- [The Holy Grail of Vocal Recording Gear](#)







- [Famous Studio Mics](#)



**Popular  
articles across  
the site**

- [Endless Phlegm!](#)

# voice·council

magazine

- [Review: The Boss VE-20 Stompbox](#)

VE-20: Vocal Performer



- [Review: Shure's Super 55](#)





- [What Happened to Julie Andrews' Voice?](#)

**voice·council**  
magazine

- [Subscribe](#)
- [About](#)
- [Forum](#)
- [TC-Helicon](#)
- [Email the Editor](#)
- [Legal](#)
- [Disclaimer](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Who is TC-Helicon?](#)