



once over

+6 dB with Input Attenuation activated; and DI gain from -4 to +44 dB, -14 dB with Input Attenuation activated. Maximum output level is +31 dBu, maximum input level: +25 dBu.

I used the P-SOLO on vocals (sung and spoken), acoustic guitars, guitar amps and percussion and each time the sound was full, detailed and honest. The P-SOLO shines as a direct instrument pre—

True Systems P-SOLO Microphone Preamp

BY PAUL VNUK JR.

In the March 2002 issue we reviewed the True Systems Precision 8 (8 channel mic pre), and the 2-channel P2 Analog was reviewed in our October 2003 issue. Now it's the P-SOLO's turn.

What it is

The P-SOLO is a high-end single-channel microphone/instrument preamp in a small desktop format. 6" tall, 3" wide, 6" deep, the P-SOLO weighs in at a whopping 5 pounds. It is quite rugged for its tiny size and looks sharp with its all-metal chassis in True Systems' standard red brushed aluminum.

According to True Systems, this preamp has the same circuitry (transformerless, Burr-Brown based output) and sound as the Precision 8 and the P2 Analog, and while it lacks some of their feature set, sonically it is in no way a "Precision-lite".

Layout

The P-SOLO's layout is simple. One the front panel are two pushbutton toggle switches with LEDs, one switch each for +48V phantom power and for an 80 Hz highpass filter. There are 4 multicolored signal/overload LEDs and a LED to indicate power-on.

There is a 1/4" front panel instrument input, and the front panel's dominant feature, the large silver volume knob, complete with a 10 dB pad (called Input Attenuation) that kicks in at the far left-rotated end of the knob's travel.

On the back, the P-SOLO has an XLR microphone input and two balanced outputs, XLR and 1/4" TRS. There is also a 3-prong AC jack for a detachable power cord, a voltage selector, and a power switch.

What it does

My many years of experience with True Systems preamps tells me that the P-SOLO sounds identical to its bigger brothers in every way: clear and detailed. The P-SOLO has practically no "sound" of its own; when comparing it to the likes of a Millennia Media HV-3 one would be hard-pressed to put into words what tiny sonic difference there may be.

The strength of the P-SOLO is how accurately and purely it allows the sound of the microphone and thus the source to be captured to tape or DAW. It stays out of the way, while providing a strong, robust signal with an almost imperceptible noise floor.

The P-SOLO worked great with my dynamic and condenser mics, and it had more than ample gain for my Royer R-121 ribbon mic. The gain structure allows interfacing with equipment of a wide range of sensitivity levels, thanks also to the 10 dB pad—here are the numbers: Mic input gain ranges from +16 to +64 dB,



I liked it on keyboards, bass, and even clean single coil electric guitar (don't laugh until you've tried it).

My only P-SOLO nitpicks are with the volume knob. I wish the Input Attenuation would have been implemented via a Gain switch as it was on the P2 Analog; on the P-SOLO it feels too much like (and could easily be mistaken for) the "Off" position, like you'd find on a car stereo. I would also have preferred the volume dial to be stepped, as I find it easy to grab in a hurry, but equally easy to get knocked or bumped in a studio session. A stepped pot would add to the price but make gain settings much more quickly reproducible.

Conclusions

The P-SOLO is a solidly built and sonically transparent mic pre with a stellar pedigree. Its size makes it convenient for both the home studio and remote rigs. True Systems has taken one of its high-quality precision mic pres and put it in a near-bulletproof package at a street price that even beginners can afford.

Price: \$749.99

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