Audio-Technia ATM355VF for Snarky Puppy



Known for their virtuosic performances and genre-blending sound, GRAMMY Award-winning jazz/fusion ensemble Snarky Puppy continues to push sonic boundaries both live and in the studio, relying on a number of mics from Audio-Technica to capture the true character and nuance of their instruments. In particular, the group and its engineers looked to the recently introduced ATM355VF compact cardioid condenser clip-on microphone to capture solo violin for their newest album, Somni.

The group’s engineers have found the ATM355VF to be a game-changer in clarity, reliability, and creative flexibility. Somni is a project that captures Snarky Puppy’s signature mix of daring composition, improvisation, and world-class musicianship, all while pushing technical boundaries in both stereo and immersive formats, with live recording sessions held over three nights at six sessions on January 16-18, 2025, in Utrecht, the Netherlands. Somni brings together Snarky Puppy and the Metropole Orkest, the renowned Netherlands-based hybrid ensemble, and Snarky Puppy bandleader Michael League was eager to once again join forces with conductor Jules Buckley and his 50-plus-member orchestra.

The ATM355VF was used specifically on violinist Zach Brock, capturing the instrument’s live acoustic tone alongside a separate direct signal from his pedal board. This provided longtime Snarky Puppy collaborator Nic Hard with flexible options for mixing the clean violin alongside electronic pedalboard signals. “With Zach, we used the new 355 as a supplement to his direct signal from the pedalboard,” Hard explains. “In one song, the acoustic mic added a beautiful detail that the DI alone couldn’t provide.”

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Engineered for professional live and studio use, the ATM355VF delivers transparent, balanced audio reproduction with the sensitivity and precision required for acoustic instruments like violins, violas and flutes. Its cardioid polar pattern provides exceptional isolation and feedback control, an essential advantage for Snarky Puppy’s dynamic stage setups, where multiple acoustic sources often share tight spaces.

“We were especially impressed with the sound of the ATM355VF, which we used for the first time during the recording process,” said Dirk Overeem, engineer for Metropole Orkest, who has collaborated closely with Snarky Puppy. “Its’ tone was noticeably richer and fuller compared to the PRO35, which still is a great mic for strings. The mounting system is simple, effective, and very stable; we only added a small layer of rubber tape to the contact points to protect the violin’s varnish. There was really no need to add any EQ, just a low-cut filter and a touch of compression. The ATM355VF captured the instrument’s tone so naturally that it sat perfectly in the mix right away.”

The ATM355VF features a high-SPL (up to 148.5dB) capsule and a lightweight, flexible gooseneck design that allows precise placement without introducing unwanted mechanical noise. The included AT8543 power module provides a switchable 80Hz low-cut filter to minimize low-frequency rumble and offers a locking 4-pin cW-type connector for secure wired use. For wireless flexibility, Audio-Technica also offers the ATM355VFcH, compatible with A-T’s cH-style wireless body-pack transmitters, as well as with select Shure and Sennheiser systems.

To accommodate various performance needs, the microphone supports interchangeable elements, including omnidirectional and hypercardioid capsules, enabling musicians to tailor pickup patterns for different acoustic environments. The included AT8491V violin mount and AT8491F flute mount ensure easy, secure attachment to a variety of instruments while preserving the instrument’s resonance and finish.

Overeem continued, “The ATM355VF allows the violinist to move freely without affecting the tone or introducing unwanted noise. For us, that kind of reliability and ease of use is crucial when you’re working with a full orchestra in a live recording setting. The 355 gave us the sound quality and control we needed without any unnecessary processing.” With its combination of advanced capsule design, rugged build, and versatile mounting options, the ATM355VF redefines what musicians and engineers can expect from a clip-on microphone.

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