Simon Todkill on the Austrian Audio OC818

Austrian Audio recently interviewed Simon Todkill, chief engineer at Miloco Studio in London, UK. In addition to their headquarter in London, the Miloco company manages bookings for around 170 studios all over the world and boasts that; ‘if a studio exists in the location you want, we will find it’. So, it’s no surprise that Miloco clients include: Beyoncé, Ed Sheeran, Emeli Sandé, George Ezra, Stormzy and Years

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& Years, to name only a few.

Simon Todkill is a busy man; he's not only chief engineer but also head of immersive audio, mix and recording engineer. "We call this the Electro Bank room, previously it was the residence of the Chemical Brothers. I came to the UK from my home in Australia and joined Miloco six years ago since when I've worked with all sorts of artists and musical styles ranging from currently; Guy Chambers, James Smith, Sasha Keable, Holly Humberstone, Frank Carter, The Horrors and recently I produced the Atmos mix for Florence and the Machine."

"Many of the classic microphones are from years gone by, some pass by and get forgotten, the 818 is different, it's competitive with the best, it has some unique features; I can put it on vocals and strings, I absolutely love it on piano, acoustic guitar and choirs. Everything I've put it on I love the result and don't want to touch it, and that's the same feeling I get when I use a U67 or U47 or any of those high-end microphones from years gone by, I want to use it on everything, I love the way it sounds. My genuine opinion [of the OC818] is it's the best modern microphone I've heard… since forever!"

Engineered and manufactured in Austria, the OC818 is Austrian Audio's premier, professional, large diaphragm microphone. Its high sensitivity, low self-noise and ability to handle everything from a whisper to extreme SPLs make it the most advanced microphone for studio, broadcast and live applications. As the unique ceramic capsule design is so consistent, any OC818 is match-paired with any other OC818, and when in cardioid mode, it can also be match-paired with any OC18, its smaller sibling.

The OC818 is the first fully analogue design featuring a Bluetooth remote control capability enabling adjustments to be made to polar patterns, pads and high-pass filters on the fly. Along with a number of processing apps: PolerPilot, PolarDesigner, AmbiCreator and StereoCreator, they all contribute to streamlining workflows and producing the best sonic results.

"I often use the [OC818's] dual outputs so I can tweak the polar patterns (with Polar Designer) later. Once the artists have left, I can tweak it and bring things in and out of focus, I love that," says Todkill. "The OC818 is great on drums, not just overheads. I love to do minimal miking on drums, some of my favourite drum sounds were from this mic in the Toy Shop studio upstairs here. I use them like a kick mic but placed a few feet back then use the Polar Designer to process it, using a simple two-mic setup sounds amazing! I use it on everything I can, particularly harmonically rich recordings where they have to have detail and clarity, it's my first choice, it's multi-pattern, small and easy to place, for example, if I want to put them on drums I can put them right above the drum and they won't get in the drummer's way, I also love the sound on vocals, it outshines several microphones seven times its price!"

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