

# DPA 4017

Representing something of a further departure in the ever widening product range of the Danish brand, DPA's short shotgun shoots from the hip in terms of performance. **JON THORNTON**



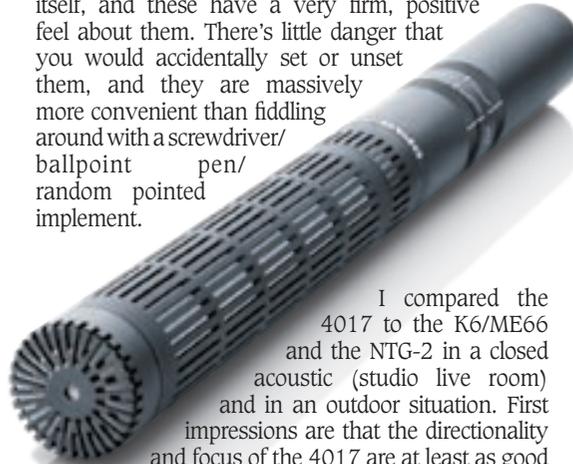
DPA's 4017 is the company's first excursion into the short shotgun market. Targeted at a variety of applications, including camera-mounted positions, fixed positions at sports facilities or strung on the end of a boom for TV, ENG or film sound duties, it's up against some firmly established competition in this area from the likes of Sennheiser, and also from some relatively new entrants, such as Schoeps and Røde. You can already guess that, being DPA, it hasn't chosen to compete on price, so what does it bring to the party to make it stand out from the crowd?

As with much in life, it's the little things that make the difference. In this case, though, it isn't size that matters so much as weight — especially when the microphone in question is sitting on the end of a fish-pole at maximum extension. With a body engineered out of aluminium, the 4017 weighs in at a featherweight 71g. It's quite diminutive too, when compared with the Sennheiser K6/ME66 combo and Røde NT2G used for comparison purposes, measuring only 210 mm in length.

Internally, the 4017 features a capsule that employs a 19mm diaphragm and a permanently polarised back-plate. Pickup pattern is super-cardioid, achieved by using an interference tube design. Unlike both the Sennheiser and the Rode, phantom power is the only powering option for the transformerless output stage. The mic ships in a familiar DPA plastic case, and comes complete with a fixed clip and a foam windshield. Although given the microphone's intended application, it seems a shame that you have to pay extra for a suspension mount — an absolute necessity when working it on a boom.

An internal, third-order high pass filter with a 50Hz roll-off is always in circuit to remove the worst of any subsonic noise, but the 4017 also features two

additional, switchable filters. The first of these is an additional high pass filter (300Hz at 6dB/octave) for dealing with wind or handling noise, or for taming the very marked proximity effect when booming in close. The second filter is a high frequency shelving boost (+4dB at 8kHz), which DPA claims can counter any HF attenuation caused by using third-party windshields/fluffies. Both of these filters are actuated by rotating rings on the body of the microphone itself, and these have a very firm, positive feel about them. There's little danger that you would accidentally set or unset them, and they are massively more convenient than fiddling around with a screwdriver/ ballpoint pen/ random pointed implement.



I compared the 4017 to the K6/ME66 and the NTG-2 in a closed acoustic (studio live room) and in an outdoor situation. First impressions are that the directionality and focus of the 4017 are at least as good as the other microphones — something I had wondered about given the comparatively shorter length of the interference tube. In the closed acoustic — not a shotgun microphone's ideal environment, particularly if there's a distinctive room tone — the 4017 also worked very well. It seemed to sound far less 'roomy' than the other two, with less noticeable comb filtering artefacts. Walking around the microphone revealed the reason why, as the off-axis response of the 4017 is remarkably smooth

sounding, and there also seemed to be much less noticeable rear lobe response. So much so, that DPA's suggestion that the 4017 would be equally at home in a studio or live sound application seems very fair.

The downside to this comes at the expense of a certain lack of fullness to the sound — particularly on voice work at more than about 3 feet away. While this might help in a small room, it hinders it a little when used outdoors, where both the Sennheiser and the Røde seem to pull more depth out of voices. In terms of other performance, there's little to choose from — all three microphones have nice healthy outputs, although the 4017 seemed just a touch noisier than the others for subjectively equivalent record levels.

And of course, there's the price. In this respect the DPA weighs in heavier than both of the other two — although at a similar level to other high-end alternatives. But what you get for this is a microphone that acts like a short shotgun in terms of directionality, but doesn't seem to sound like one in terms of off-axis problems. This alone makes it more flexible in application than its main competitors and its size and weight are sure to win it friends in the hearts and biceps of the location recording community. DPA's first entry to this category is a real contender. ■

**PROS** Compact size; light weight; very smooth off axis response; filter options and switches useful and easy to change.

**CONS** Expensive; no shockmount as standard; lacks a little LF weight with some voices at distance.

**Contact**

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