

# Latch Lake MicKing 2200

It's the little things that can really make a difference in a recording session. A well brewed cuppa, nicely sorted lighting — and a mic stand that actually stays where you set it. JON THORNTON

It is too easy to concentrate attention (and investment) on microphones and then attach them to something that is merely adequate. While a well-sorted tripod-type stand works well in many applications, there are some occasions where you realise that they just aren't up to the job (witness my own rigging adventures with AEA's monster 440 in the last issue V9.4).

Coming to the rescue is a selection of stands (although probably more properly referred to as 'stand systems') from American



manufacturer Latch Lake. With a history that started, somewhat bizarrely, with the manufacture of metal and glass guitar slides, the MicKing stands have been available since 2002, with newer additions to the range released in 2007.

The two main models are the MicKing 2200 and 3300, which differ chiefly in their overall size and reach. The original 3300 model, with three extending sections for the vertical mast and the boom, boasts a maximum horizontal reach of more than 10 feet, and a maximum height of nearly 20 feet. The 2200 supplied for the review is scaled down slightly. Here there are only two extending sections vertically and horizontally -- resulting in a horizontal reach of only (!) 7 feet and a maximum height of 14 feet.



Scaled down it might be but it's still a beast of a stand, and shares many of the same clever features as its larger sibling. For example, there's the weighted base, whose shape ensures that 90% of the weight is located at the outer rim, thus maximising stability with a small foot-print. And all of the stand adjustments (vertical mast height, boom extension, boom clutch) feature fold-over 'lever locks'. These can be adjusted for ultimate grip and tightness courtesy of spring-mounted thumbscrews, and work extremely well and effectively. A nickel-plated, slab-like counterweight can also be slid up and down the rear of the boom arm to compensate for extreme boom reach and/or heavy microphone loads.

All of this heavy duty engineering, together with the company laying claim to the world's strongest boom clutch, can

only lead to one thing. It positively encourages childishness and the creation of a range of experiments to gauge its ability to support small students as well as large microphones. And (students aside), it really is rock solid in pretty much any configuration you can think of. I'll admit that the relatively small size of the base sometimes makes it appear less stable than it actually is and when working near the stand's limits of extension some additional base weighting might be in order for peace of mind. But for those of nervous disposition (or working with less than perfectly flat surfaces), Latch Lake will sell you a 'BigFoot' variant featuring a slightly wider base.

Just being big, butch and ever so slightly over-engineered isn't the end of the story as there are some other neat features. The end of the boom features an additional clutch connected to a short 'Spin Grip' microphone mount. This additional axis of movement allows for some really accurate mic placement possibilities. The Spin Grip refers to the fact that the short stub will spin freely while the clutch is loosened, allowing it to be spun into the microphone clip/cage rather than the other way around (*That's really handy, Ed*). And there is also the possibility of attaching additional Xtra Booms to the vertical mast. These feature their own clutch and short boom, and are intended for multiple mic applications when using the MicKing for the main overhead pair on a drum-kit, for example. This is something you'll certainly want to try out particularly in a smaller room, simply because of the amount of space the MicKings take up themselves! While I didn't find it particularly easy to mic up an entire drum kit using just two stands and a bunch of Xtra Booms, I only needed to employ two additional stands to reach places the Xtra Booms couldn't.

In short, these stands are wonderfully engineered and have many neat and useful features. In a smaller recording room they would perhaps be a little too big and cumbersome but in any application that needs to position microphones at reasonable heights, or reliably set heavyweight microphones, they perform admirably. The only downside is the price — a pair is going to set you back the same amount as a decent large diaphragm capacitor microphone.

But you've got to balance this against the fact that they are absolutely bomb-proof. Well, fire-proof anyway. The distributor showed me a photograph of a studio in the USA that unfortunately burned down to the ground. And, you guessed it, the only thing left standing was a MicKing stand. It's a long-term investment but one that will certainly outlast the latest flavour of the month DAW. Heck, it'll probably outlast you... ■

## PROS

Rugged build; solid and stable at extreme reaches; neat design features; longevity.

## CONS

Size of base may mean extra weighting required in some situations; could be a little large for some rooms.

## Contact

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