

RØDE NTG-2

Shotgun users can be a picky bunch and when they find a mic they like they tend to stick with it. **NEIL HILLMAN** argues that it has to sound good but it helps if it's affordable.



RØDE MICROPHONES ARE a good example of steady progress, quietly and relatively quickly establishing a strong foothold in the market. Recently coming up-top from down-under, the Røde NT2A is very highly regarded with three other valve-models The Classic II, the K2 and the NTK in support. The company's range now includes an addition to its out-of-doors, on-board DVcam-microphone the VideoMic in the shotgun NTG-2 — a dual-powered, battery/phantom, directional condenser.

Sturdily built with the same aluminium interference tube and polar response as the slightly shorter NTG-1, the latter's 60mm-less diminutive size is achieved through the absence of the NTG-2's threaded-barrel battery compartment; the NTG-1 being phantom P48V-powered only (NTG-1 UK£137; NTG-2 £151 both + VAT). With a length of 278mm overall, there is a striking resemblance to what was the doyen of location shotguns: Sennheiser's 416; itself now

under some performance pressure by the introduction of Schoeps' new shotgun, the CMT. But while we may perhaps generously consider the performance comparable between the Schoeps, the Sennheiser and the Røde; the two European mics' prices are a hemisphere apart from the Røde. The NTG-2 is quite simply amazing value-for-money.

Primarily designed for the professional sound recordist working in film or video on location, the NTG-2 offers a balanced low-impedance output stage, powered by either a single AA battery or via P48 powering from a mixer. Yet at 160g it is light enough to be camcorder-mounted if necessary and unlikely to be overly fatiguing for operation at the end of a boom-pole. The NTG-2 comes with a range of bespoke accessories to enable the mic to be used sensibly on location: a dedicated suspension mount is available, as is a fluffy 'dead-cat' windshield and a boom-pole.

The NTG-2 sounds like a Røde though, funnily enough; and that's not all bad: it has less side

rejection than a 416, for instance, and less off-axis colouration is a boom-swingers' saviour in fast dialogue situations. But there are other subtle differences in this budget microphone when placed head to head with the ubiquitous 416: the Røde's bass response is lighter; the presence is less crisp yet it's still not as warm, suffering just a little harshness in the middle frequencies; the output level is lower and it has less distant 'suck'. But none of these traits amount to so much that you would dismiss this microphone out-of-hand.

Perhaps there really is no such thing as a free lunch; if something appears too good to be true, it almost certainly is; and audio engineering is certainly no exception. But the Røde NTG-2 makes a compelling case for feasting on the bargain buffet. With careful application and judicious use, its humble purchase price hugely belies its capabilities. A Schoeps CMT it's certainly not; but at something like a 10:1 purchase-price ratio and with the confidence of Røde's ten-year warranty, the decision over what to array around the new Foley pit starts to become a little clearer. And do you know what? That's cheered me right up, that has. ■

PROS

Unbeatable Røde value-for-money, backed up by the peace of mind of its recently introduced manufacturer's 10-year warranty.

CONS

While the Røde NTG-2 doesn't sound or feel 'budget', it's not leading-edge, and not unreasonably, it falls short of the huge improvement made to shotgun microphones by Schoeps and its CMT.

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