

Rycote InVision Studio Kit

Rycote's 'InVision' suspension systems have been around for a while and the company has been busy applying the same core technologies to an ever widening range of applications. **JON THORNTON**

As a brief recap, the InVision system employs a clever polymer called 'Hytrel' formed into a distinctive shape called a 'lyre'. The combination of this shape and the material allows the creation of an elastic suspension that remains firm and controlled in the up, down and side to side directions, but allows a great deal of compliance (and therefore suppression of low frequency noise/vibration) in the critical axis of movement of the microphone's diaphragm. The arrangement also allows the resonant frequency of the suspension itself to be much lower than other solutions, which means that isolation can be achieved right across the microphone's useable LF response. Add to that the fact that Hytrel is almost indestructible (bend it any which way you like and it springs back into shape) and remember that there's no more hunting around for bits of elastic and rethreading of cat's cradle type suspensions and you wonder why all suspensions aren't made like this.

Part of the reason is that the first round of InVision products were designed for stick type mics of differing girths and lengths — perhaps unsurprising given Rycote's provenance in a sector dominated by shotguns. Outside of location audio, most of us are likely to encounter a suspension mount mated to a large diaphragm capacitor mic. For us studio-bound mortals, help is at hand with the InVision Universal Studio Mount, or USM.

What you get here is an inner and outer ring made of suitably tough looking composite connected to each other via four Hytrel lyres. The outer ring incorporates a swivel mount for attaching to a mic stand, and also a neat little bendy clip for keeping cables under control. The Universal part of the name is explained by four long thumbscrews arranged around the perimeter of the inner ring that can be tightened to clamp a microphone of any shape to a maximum diameter of 55mm. Extremely soft rubber pads at the end of each of the threads ensure that no damage is done to the mic body.

As luck would have it, the first microphone I tried (a JZ Vintage 47, actually wouldn't fit — which

goes to show that form over function isn't always the way to go. But all of the usual suspects (414, Beyer, 4040/4050/4060, U87, U67, etc.) all fitted extremely snugly. An upper weight limit of 750g rules out some heavyweights that haven't already fallen foul of the size limit and you also have to take into account that the lyres are 'tuned' to afford best performance in the weight range 400-750g. For less porky large diaphragm capacitors, the USM-L is available, which is suitable for mics weighting up to 400g.

Available separately, or packaged with the USM or USM-L as the InVision Studio Kit, is Rycote's overdue take on the pop filter — somewhat predictably entitled the Universal Pop Filter. With a frame constructed from the same tough material as the USM, it clips neatly onto the outer ring of the USM, and tightens up with another thumbscrew. The frame itself is slightly oval in shape, and curved to follow the line of the outer ring and give a slight degree of 'wrap' around the microphone. The frame holds a foam type material — at this point you need to immediately put out of your mind any memories of those ghastly foam helmets that shipped with the 414. The foam in this case is thick (about 1cm) but of the open cell variety. It's easily removable for cleaning or replacement, and affords a very good degree of plosive and wind suppression without any detectable HF loss.

The whole package works extremely well, with the suspension able to suppress minor knocks to the stand and any other structure borne vibration — and as I've noted before with the InVision range, it seems to add definition and tightness to a microphone's low frequency response. Coupled with the pop filter, the whole kit looks tidy and quite compact. Perhaps my only reservation is that the spacing between pop filter and microphone diaphragm (and therefore between source and microphone) is pretty much predefined at about 10cm. While a sensible distance for maximum plosive suppression, there are occasions when you might want to work a vocalist a little bit closer. ■



PROS Tidy, compact and almost indestructible; suits a large range of microphones; extremely effective LF suppression; pop filter works very well and sounds transparent.

CONS Minimum working distance of 10cm if using pop filter; there are some microphones that just won't fit!

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