

MESANOVIC MODEL 2 & MODEL 2S ■
MERGING TECHNOLOGIES HAPI ■ BLUE LOLA

MESANOVIC MODEL 2 AND MODEL 2S PASSIVE RIBBON MICROPHONES



The Mesanovic Model 2S stereo ribbon microphone captures the sound of a Leslie cabinet during one of Russ Long's recent tracking sessions.

While cheap ribbon mics are a dime a dozen these days, there's a desperate need for more names to be added to the short list of quality ribbon microphones currently being manufactured—a list that is currently dominated by Royer and AEA models. Over the past three months, it has become clear to me that the Mesanovic Model 2 (\$999) and Model 2S (\$1,799) are undoubtedly worthy of being added to the list.

Deni Mesanovic founded Detroit-based Mesanovic Microphones in 2013. Having been consumed with music from an early age, first as a musician and later as a recording engineer, Deni began experimenting with ribbon microphone design while studying sound engineering at the University of Michigan. After graduating, there was already such a demand for his microphones, he decided to give Mesanovic Microphones his full-time attention.

Mesanovic builds his microphones by hand, utilizing uniquely sourced metals, magnets, pure aluminum ribbon and American-made transformers, all of notably high quality. Before leaving the factory, every microphone's performance is thoroughly tested and then personally evaluated by Deni in listening tests, ensuring consistency and, as I dis-

covered in this review, extremely high sonic quality.

Weighing 7.6 ounces, the Model 2 is 7.4 inches long with a diameter of 1.25 inches. The passive mic has a sleek matte black anodized finish with a silver grille. The heart of the mic is a 2-inch ribbon, 0.23-inch wide and 1.8 microns thick. The ribbon motor features an extremely short front-to-back path length as well as custom-designed resonator plates. The resonator plates produce a broad 3 dB boost at 12 kHz, creating a high-frequency response that extends beyond 20 kHz while retaining the classic ribbon midrange and larger than life low frequency response, flat down to 20 Hz. The mic's custom toroidal transformer provides extremely low distortion, low noise and impressive high frequency detail.

The Model 2S—the stereo version of the Model 2—weighs 12 ounces and is 11.6 inches long. Incorporating identical design features and components as the Model 2, it utilizes two matched ribbon motors with a fixed 90-degree offset, making it easy to utilize the mic in either a Blumlein or M-S stereo configuration. The microphone's uniform polar frequency response and excellent off-axis frequency response ensure exceptional phase-coherent stereo recordings.

Both models are covered by a lifetime warranty on parts and a free re-ribboning for the original owner within two years of purchase. They ship in a foam-lined plastic-molded case and include a shock-mount and protective pouch. The Model 2S also includes a 5-pin XLR female to dual 3-pin XLR male breakout cable.

Mesanovic recommends using the Model 2 and Model 2S in situations where you wouldn't typically reach for a ribbon mic. That being the case, I used the two microphones on virtually every sound source I recorded during the review period and I was consistently impressed with the results.

The mics are especially responsive with a smooth, natural sound, making them perfectly suited for recording vocals, acoustic instruments, guitar amps, brass, strings, drums and piano. Electric guitars record wonderfully through the Model 2 and the 140 dB maximum SPL ensures that extremely loud guitar cabinets won't distort the mic. On multiple occasions, I used the Model 2 along with the Retro OP-6 mic pre to record an electric guitar cabinet capturing tones ranging from natural and round to extremely over-driven; in every instance, the result was fantastic. The mic worked equally well recording acoustic guitar, violin, trumpet and mandolin (again with



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the OP-6). I used the mic along with the Gordon Model 3 mic preamp and Tube Tech CL-1B to record male and female vocals—again, with no EQ—and the result was inspiring. I've never heard audio recorded with a ribbon microphone that has such a rich, pristine, extended top end without utilizing EQ.

The Royer SF-12 has been my go-to drum overhead microphone for years and I was anxious to see how the Model 2S compared. While the SF-12 sounds fantastic, I always end up boosting the high end to create some sparkle on the drum kit. While the Model 2S had the same smooth, rich character and big bottom as the SF-12, it has the high frequency sparkle I want without having to add EQ. Actually, I found that I rarely used any EQ at all when recording with the Mesanovic mics.

I used the Model 2S to record the Leslie cabinet of a Hammond organ with wonderful results, placing the mic about two feet away from the rear of the cabinet, aimed at the horn. The stereo imaging was perfect and the low frequency was thick and rich. I typically use three mics when recording a Leslie, two on the top and one on the bottom, but the Model 2S captured the full range of the Leslie without any additional microphones. I also used the mic to record upright and grand pianos, and was extremely pleased with those results, too.

The Mesanovic Model 2 and Model 2S are beautifully designed world-class microphones that promise to provide a lifetime of service based on their especially high-grade build quality. Best of all, the Model 2 and Model 2S are reasonably priced for what they are. I suggest that Mesanovic products should receive top consideration from any studio or engineer in need of expanding a microphone locker.

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