

# VANGUARD V4 & VI

**Microphones from sunny California for any day of the week.**

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Every stage or studio sound master knows well that there are "never enough microphones". There may be situations when a microphone with a very specific, maybe even somewhat strange, sound fits into the project, because it can create an interesting sound. However, the microphones of the American company Vanguard can not be said to be "strange" in any way. It would be difficult for them to have made microphones for artists like Taylor Swift, Robert Plant or Herbie Hancock. Come today, take a look at two microphones, which at first glance, are design gems of this company ...

## **V4 - studio condenser microphone, or maybe a Pinot Noir glass of wine?**

This is not an invitation to an evening of sipping wine, but some sort of awkward transition to bring out the description of this microphone. The first thing that will definitely attract your attention is the special color of the microphone. I have seen the microphones in all sorts of different colors: black, blue, silver, yellow, champagne, but I have not seen a microphone with this Pinot Noir color. The dark red color of almost purple hue gives the microphone a particular elegance.

The microphone has a size of 184 mm, is constructed from brass, zinc, steel and aluminum, and is 46 mm diameter. The upper part of the microphone consists of a double-diaphragm, 1.34 "(34 mm) gold-plated, 3 µm thick Mylar capsule. The basket is made up of a single-piece frame and the capsule is covered by a simple, but a very strong wire grille (probably chrome-plated steel as well as the rest of the basket). Below the rim of the headbasket, a small three-position switch can be found on the front and the rear. The one on the front is used to select the directional characteristic. Our V4 has a omnidirectional, figure-8 and cardioid pattern (left). Below this switch there is a metal Vanguard logo - a stylized V in a winged wheel with a red center. This logo would not be amiss as the logo of a manufacturer of retro motorcycles.



### **In memoriam Marty Barry Druckman**

I was intrigued and the microphone was unscrewed. It has very precision-made electronics. The very use of the excellent WIMA and Nichicon-branded capacitors has been a marker for me that the manufacturer does not skimp on the quality of my product. Microphones undergo final assembly in sunny California and each piece is subjected to rigorous testing. Cryogenic processing of certain components further enhances the durability and sound of the microphone. I found a tiny inscription on the board inside the microphone: "In memories of Marty Barry Druckman", a successful sales manager and musician who worked for Brauner, SPL, or Focusrite. Not every business is forgotten immediately by its long-time merit. Every Vanguard microphone has a 5 year warranty.

The microphone has a frequency range of 20 Hz to 20 kHz, a maximum SPL pressure of 135 dB (145 dB when using a pad) with distortion of 0.5% THD @ 1000 Hz, an output impedance of 200  $\Omega$ , the electronic construction is Solid-State and the microphone weighs 500g . A robust massive all-metal shockmount is delivered to the microphone and has been performing seamlessly in the studio as well as in the field. The whole set (microphone + holder) is stored in an aluminum case. The microphone itself is then placed in a cushioned wooden box made of unfinished pine (the box really smells like wood).



### **In the field and in the studio**

I had the good fortune that the microphones landed at home moments before the CD orchestra and the children's choir. The general for the concert of Antonín Hradiel Christmas carols was to conduct. I have once had the honor of doing this work, so I knew what I was going to do. Although there are four singing

soloists - soprano, alto, tenor, bass - I had to make clear that for each pair of vocalists, one V4 will be used.

I immediately noticed that the V4 sound is balanced, it does not tend to over-emphasize the high frequency in female voices, as is the case with other microphones. At first I was determined to use figure-8 pattern, but after a few tests I finally chose a cardioid that captured both voices in front without any problems. The microphone has a soft, balanced sound that does not lose tiny details in the mix.

I was able to persuade myself in the recording studio about the ability to transmit details without highlighting undesirable frequencies. I turned to the acoustic guitar and violin. I was determined to replace the V4 with an active ribbon microphone, which I use abundantly when I record too harsh of a violin. But in the end it did not happen. It was enough to cut 5 kHz with the EQP-1 lamp equalizer and it was good.



To record the acoustic guitar, I used the V4 as the main center microphone and two V1s as ORTF with a cardioid capsule for better spatial instrument perception (see sample). The sound was full, but sparkling and smooth. I have to say that with a beautiful design and a very pleasant and balanced sound, including a perfect shockmount and a favorable price, the V4 microphone a very intriguing

option to me, because “there are not enough microphones”, as the classic engineers said.

### **V1 - pencil microphone with four interchangeable capsules**

Quite in the same vein of V4 quality, detail, color and materials, we've already seen another test microphone at a glance, the V1 pencil condenser. This microphone is stored in a relatively large wooden cushioned pine wood box. Inside the kit, the user first finds a condenser microphone preamp, on which one of the four microphone capsules with a different pickup characteristic can be screwed. What is available in the selection: omnidirectional, wide cardioid, cardioid, and hypercardioid capsules. This potential allows the sound engineer to have a wide range of options during the recording. Using these capsules, the microphone can be used both in the field and in studio. Microphones can be used, for example, as part of a spatial capture, whether in the A / B or ORTF system, or as spot microphones. In the studio, these microphones can be used to capture specific sources or, for example, as a part of the M / S technique, which shows a very convincing stereo image in good decoding.



In addition to the preamp and microphone capsules, there is a full-metal shockmount inside the set. The microphone inserts between its two arms, on

which strong bands are strung. They hold the microphone firmly, but allow it to move gently if the stand itself is shaken. The frequency range of this condenser microphone is 20 Hz - 20 kHz, the size of the caps is 0.87" / 22 mm and the membrane size is 0.78" / 16 mm, the membrane thickness is 4  $\mu\text{m}$ , the output impedance is 200  $\Omega$ , the microphone manages the maximum SPL pressure 136 dBA, distortion is 0.5% THD @ 1000 Hz, microphone 133 mm in length, 22 mm in diameter, weight with capsule 130 g.

I also used the V1 microphone when shooting a Christmas mass at the ORTF position. Their deployment took place without any problems. Normally in this position we use more expensive microphones of a small German family business, but we did not notice any quality loss with V1. Compared to our normal microphones, V1 has a slightly flatter and less bass sound. But listening is very pleasant.

Later, I was once again convinced that the Vanguard guys knew what they were doing. I shot solo violin and used V1 as the main microphone.

Violins tend to play harshly, and the resulting sound is unpleasant to the listener. I did not use either an equalizer or a compressor, only the UAD 610 solo tube preamp. The sound of the violin was pleasant to me even when it was picked up. However, if I want to round it up, I would certainly manage to use the appropriate software. I have already written about the common use of V4 and V1 when shooting an acoustic guitar.



**These microphones definitely do not ruin your bank account**

These are, freely translated, words from the manufacturer's website. One of Vanguard's manufacturing philosophies is, in addition to premium quality, the end price. The V4 slightly exceeds ten thousand crowns and V1 is similar. Being a microphone of this quality and accessories, these are a real win. I am convinced that the Vanguard microphones will serve you in any demanding shooting and will be honored alongside more expensive models.