

Condenser Microphone

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Abstract—For the application of accurate voice reproduction, a cost-effective condenser microphone design is considered. Analysis of theoretical characteristics such as sensitivity, dynamic range, and signal-to-noise ratio is presented. In conclusion, quantitative measurements from a working prototype are corroborated with the theoretical analysis and compared against desirable performance criteria.

Keywords—Capacitive, Condenser, Microphone.

I. INTRODUCTION

THE accurate transduction of sound into an electrical signal is naturally useful for conveying the human voice. People generally speak at 40 to 60 dB SPL and can hear sound from 20 Hz up to 20 kHz with especial sensitivity to the 1 to 4 kHz region.¹ For the application of accurate sound reproduction, the designer should strive for unity-gain response in these ranges, particularly in the 1 to 4 kHz range.

A variety of devices exist for transducing sound. Of commercially viable designs, condenser and dynamic microphones are the most common.² Fig. 1 plots the responses of a condenser microphone and a dynamic microphone. The condenser mic (in red) experiences less attenuation at the extremes and provides greater uniformity in between. It is not unusual for condenser mics to have an upper 20 kHz frequency limit compared to the typical 16 kHz limit experienced by dynamic mics.³ Additionally, the condenser microphone has notably less gain in the 1 to 4 kHz region people are most sensitive to, providing a more balanced response. Generalizing these results, condenser microphones are preferable for applications desiring accurate reproduction.

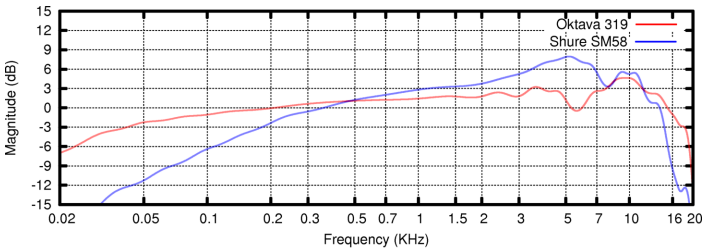


Fig. 1: Oktava MK-319 condenser microphone⁴ and Shure SM58 dynamic microphone⁵ (20 Hz to 20 kHz)

II. SENSOR STRUCTURE AND MEASUREMENT PRINCIPLE

The diaphragm portion of the condenser microphone has a cylindrical form-factor. Its vertical cross-section is depicted in Fig. 2. The diaphragm itself is a thin, tensioned membrane which is responsive to sound pressure in the target frequency

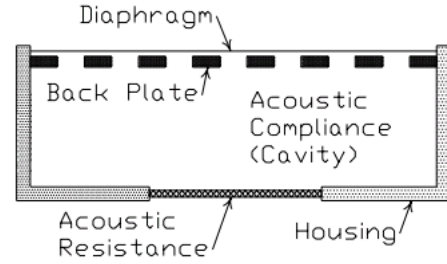


Fig. 2: Condenser microphone diaphragm system⁶

range. The back-plate is a rigid structure with distributed holes leading to an internal cavity. Between the membrane and the back-plate is the air-gap which forms the condenser dielectric. An acoustic resistance at the rear of the internal cavity serves as a normalizing vent, allowing the cavity to equalize to atmospheric pressure.

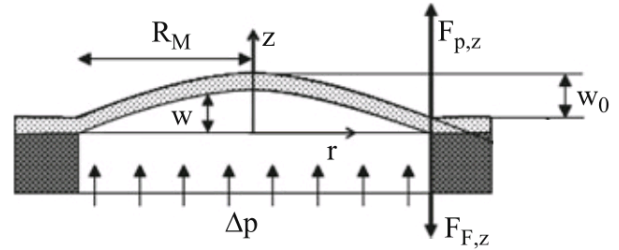


Fig. 3: Modeled parabolic membrane deflection owing to uniform sound pressure⁷

Symbol	Description
r	radius in cylindrical coordinates
R_M	membrane radius
w	deflection along z -axis at a particular radius
w_c	central (apex) deflection, equal to $w(r = 0)$
P_0	atmospheric pressure
Δp	change in pressure relative to P_0 caused by sound
$F_{p,z}$	force due to uniform pressure across membrane
$F_{f,z}$	force due to membrane tension and frame

Fig. 4: Symbols used in membrane deflection analysis

A. Membrane Deflection

When sound pressure impinges upon the membrane, it oscillates with the pressure according to its mechanical properties. Fig. 3 and Fig. 4 show modeled parabolic deflection and definitions for the symbolic parameters. The modeled parabolic deflection assumes sound pressure is uniformly distributed across the face of the membrane. This produces purely vertical membrane oscillation along the z -axis in cylindrical coordinates, with the greatest deflection w_c occurring at the center of the membrane at the point with the largest moment arm relative to the circumference.

The deflection at any radius r in cylindrical coordinates is described by⁷:

$$w(r) = w_c \left(1 - \frac{r^2}{R_M^2} \right) \quad (1)$$

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B. Subsection Heading Here

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III. CONCLUSION

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APPENDIX A

PROOF OF THE FIRST ZONKLAR EQUATION

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APPENDIX B

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