

Steve Marcantonio Shares His Thoughts on Working with Audio-Technica



GRAMMY Award-winning engineer/producer Steve Marcantonio's career has spanned over four decades, working with artists including John Lennon, Taylor Swift, Ronnie Dunn, Kiss, Heart, Reba McEntire, Steven Tyler, Keith Urban and many more. At the 58th Annual GRAMMY Awards, Steve Marcantonio took home a GRAMMY in the category of Best Compilation Soundtrack for Visual Media for his work on the Glen Campbell documentary I'll Be Me. And key to his success has been his go-to arsenal of tools, including microphones from Audio-Technica, a leading innovator in transducer technology for over 50 years.

Marcantonio "grew up" as an engineer at the famed Record Plant studios in New

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York City. Moving later in his career to Nashville, Marcantonio rapidly became a prominent engineer of choice on Music Row, working with Vince Gill, Reba McEntire, Alabama and Brooks & Dunn, to name a few. “I’m currently working on a Ronnie Dunn solo record. We’re tracking in Franklin [a Nashville suburb], at the famed Castle Recording Studios, and I’ve been using Audio-Technica mics all around the room, on drums, guitars, etc.,” stated Marcantonio. “A-T makes such a wide palette of microphones that are so versatile, they’ve become a ‘go-to’ choice for me. For example, I’ve been using the ATM450 Cardioid Condenser Instrument microphone on toms. It captures those drums exactly the way I want to hear them. I swear by it.”

Marcantonio has recently been using Audio-Technica’s 50 Series microphones on vocals and acoustic guitar. “I love the AT5047 Large-diaphragm Condenser. That microphone is a great acoustic guitar mic. I work often with Ilya Toshinsky, who is one of the top acoustic guitar players in town. He wants to buy one badly, because after we recorded with it, he just loved the way his guitar sounded. That microphone, besides being great on acoustics, sounds great on vocals. I have a sound booth here at my home studio (The Music House), where I use that on vocals, and it sounds great. Warm, punchy, bright, all of the adjectives used to describe a killer microphone. It’s really great. Speaking of recording acoustics, the AT4081 Ribbon Microphone has become one of my new favorites. I’ve been using it on acoustic and electric guitars. For acoustics, I place it right where the bridge meets the soundhole, about six inches away. I like to point it towards the higher strings and not the lower ones. Everyone claims to want that really big, thick acoustic sound, but generally when the guitar player is strumming it, and the part usually gets doubled, and there’s also piano and B3 on a song, the thickness gets sort of washed out, and you just get the sound of the strings. But with the AT4081, you can really achieve a full-bodied sound on acoustic. And proper placement of that mic avoids muddiness in the sound. I just roll off some low end on the EQ, and I usually use an Empirical Labs Distressor on it. That’s my acoustic sound. I use it all the time. And for room ambience for drums, I’ve been using the AT4080 Ribbon Microphone. It’s not very bright – just warm – and it works perfectly.”

Over the past year, Marcantonio has managed to stay busy during the pandemic, taking on numerous custom projects from a wide range of artists. “Even with the current COVID-19 situation, I’ve had the most fun in my career this past year, because I worked on music that was not influenced by anybody other than the people that wrote it and produced it. It has been for all the right reasons. I can’t even explain it, but my point is that during COVID, in the last year, I have done so many different projects and different kinds of music that were really rewarding artistically. It made me feel good about music again. And even though I’ve been doing this for so long, I now have a new energy about music, and the recording process — it’s still what makes me get up in the morning, and I feel so lucky to be able to say that.”

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