



Lauten Audio Eden

Valve Microphone

Lauten's flagship model is much more versatile than your average valve microphone.

NEIL ROGERS

Lauten Audio are a small, family-owned company who pride themselves on bringing new ideas to the microphone market. I've had the pleasure of reviewing some of their drum-focused models for *SOS* recently, but have never crossed paths with any of their mainstream large-diaphragm capacitor offerings — until now.

The Eden is the crown jewel of Lauten's flagship Signature series, and it's a large-diaphragm capacitor microphone. It's valve-based, and packs in some innovative sound-shaping features that aim to offer serious versatility in your recording sessions.

The Eden Project

The Eden is a substantial and impressive-looking mic that sits beautifully in its equally substantial shockmount. This mount has been designed so that you can leave it attached whilst safely storing it in its flightcase — indeed, Lauten intend that the mic is not removed from its mount at all, since doing so requires unscrewing a couple of hex bolts. There's a fair bit of shiny chrome on display and, in a nice touch, Lauten include a pair of white gloves to encourage careful handling of the mic when setting up or packing away. I had one client describe it as a 'bling' looking mic which could be a positive, depending on your particular taste!

Moving on from the cosmetics, plenty is going on under the hood with this multi-pattern tube mic. The designers describe the Eden's capsule as being one the largest available, at 38mm, and it is apparently tuned by hand to meet the high standards required by the design team. The microphone allows you to choose between cardioid, omnidirectional and figure-8 pickup patterns, with the selection switch found on the mic itself rather than the power supply, as is the norm.

The Eden houses an 'aged' EF806 valve, which is combined with a custom-wound output transformer to provide the warmth and colour typical of high-quality tube mics. Lauten love

to bring something fresh to the table with their mics, though, and so the Eden features two sound-shaping options, giving you the freedom to change the personality of your mic with the flick of a switch (or two).

Finding Your Voice

Located on the rear of the microphone is a 'Multi-Voicing' switch that allows you to choose between three different signal paths, each with its own unique frequency response. The options are F (Forward), N (Neutral) and G (Gentle), the idea being that you can tweak the response of the mic to help tame a harsh or spiky source, in the way a vintage mic might (Gentle mode), or have a brighter, more present-sounding mic for a modern pop-style vocal (Forward). The Neutral setting sits somewhere in between and is described as a good starting point for exploring what this mic can offer.

Additionally, we also have a filter section, which is intended to complement the Multi-Voice feature. Described as a "unique two-stage high-pass filter", it offers two settings intended to help with common problem areas when recording. Lauten describe the first setting as a 'Kick Shaper', and it introduces a very steep high-pass filter intended to remove excess boominess from close-miked kick drums. The 'Vocal Shaper' option is described as a smoother high-pass filter intended more for cleaning up vocal takes and helping to subtly shift the personality of the mic in conjunction with the Multi-Voice settings.

Vocal Point

The Eden is a hefty microphone and Lauten sensibly recommend using a heavy-duty weighted mic stand to ensure you don't get any unwanted drooping — or worse — of your mic mid-session. I found a good-quality standard-sized stand worked well in my studio.

My first studio test with the Eden was one of those frustrating one-day recording sessions where, despite my repeated advice and warnings, we ended up doing all the vocals in the last hour of the day. Oh, and the band also revealed to me that three different singers provided the lead vocal! Playing

Lauten Audio Eden

£3898

PROS

- At its core, a great-sounding tube microphone.
- Excellent build quality and accessories.
- The Forward setting is more than just a useful 'brighter' option.
- Useful filter settings to explore and learn.
- Handles high SPLs well for a tube mic.
- A good all-rounder.
- Can excel on certain voices.

CONS

- None.

SUMMARY

With its multiple polar patterns, Multi-Voice settings and filter options, the Eden LT-386 is a mic that can change its personality to suit your circumstances. Impressively, it manages to do this whilst always retaining the virtues you'd expect from a quality, classy sounding tube microphone.

it somewhat safe, I kept the Multi-Voice switch in its neutral position and left the filter section in its flat setting. Using the relatively neutral-sounding preamps on my Audient console and some very light 1176-style compression, I was struck by how smooth the first male vocalist sounded, with the Eden providing a pleasing 'blank canvas' capture of the singer. The next two singers in the same session were female vocalists with very different voices, and using the same settings, I was again more than pleased with the smooth, full-range sound captured. At this early stage, I couldn't get a clear sense of the mic's character other than that it was clearly a very capable, high-quality mic that seemed to handle some of the troublesome facets of vocal recording (like sibilance) with ease.

I used the Eden on a number of other singers over the review period and I began to get a sense of how this mic behaved in its different settings. The neutral option had a pleasing U47 feel to it, which is no bad thing at all, and I was also impressed with how the mic kept its sense of size and shape when used on a very loud punk rock singer. During a session with a female vocalist, I had a chance to experiment more with the Multi-Voice feature and I was impressed with how the Forward setting opened up

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"The Eden worked superbly, providing all the clarity and attack you need but without getting harsh."

» the top end of her voice. The singer also really liked this setting, and although she is aware that her voice can sometimes get a bit sibilant with brighter mics, there were no problems in that regard here — we were both taken with the more modern C800G-style vocal sound we were hearing. The same session provided an example to try the Gentle setting as well which, whilst less dramatic than Forward, did seem to roll off the top end in a pleasing way

A True All-Rounder?

It's clear that Lauten see the Eden as more than just a vocal mic, and after getting a feel for what the different voicings could offer I was keen to try it out on some instrument recordings. I often like to have an omni mic set up in the middle of my live room when I'm tracking bands, and I used the Eden on three or four different sessions in this role. I typically find myself rolling off the very high end a little here, and the Gentle setting seemed to be a great fit for this role. I also particularly liked this setting when using the Eden as a mono drum overhead. I've become a fan of using a high-quality valve mic in this role, paired with a pair of ribbon mics positioned left and right of the kit, and the Eden worked superbly, providing all the clarity and attack I needed but without getting harsh.

Staying on drums, I was curious to know how that Kick Shaper filter sounded, and after trying a few of my shorter mic stands, I was able to position the mic about 6-8 inches from the resonant head of a kick drum. I wouldn't typically put a valve mic in this setting as they can often find the excessive SPL a little too much, but while I did need to put a 15dB pad between the mic and my preamp, I was impressed with how the Eden handled itself. I could hear the mic's electronics beginning to saturate slightly but the low end remained full and

clear — which is just what I want to hear from an outside kick drum mic.

Finally, I also tried Eden on an acoustic guitar session where, as I suspected,

the Forward setting sounded excellent for a modern strummed acoustic part intended to sit in a busy mix.

Summing Up

I spent quite a long time with the Eden for this review, and this meant I got the chance to use it on at least 10 different singers at my studio. I've described some of my findings already, but the bottom line is that this is a vocal mic that always seems to work, whether quietly getting the job done or adding something a bit special — as was the case with at least one female singer. The Multi-Voice settings are meaningful additions, and flicking to the Forward setting in particular often felt like using a completely different microphone. This is important, I think, as the Eden sits at a price point where you have an awful lot of choice, and these features offer something other mics may not. What I also liked was that the combination of tone-shaping options allows you to continue to explore new ways of using the mic — it's nice to have equipment that you can continue to go on a learning curve with over time!

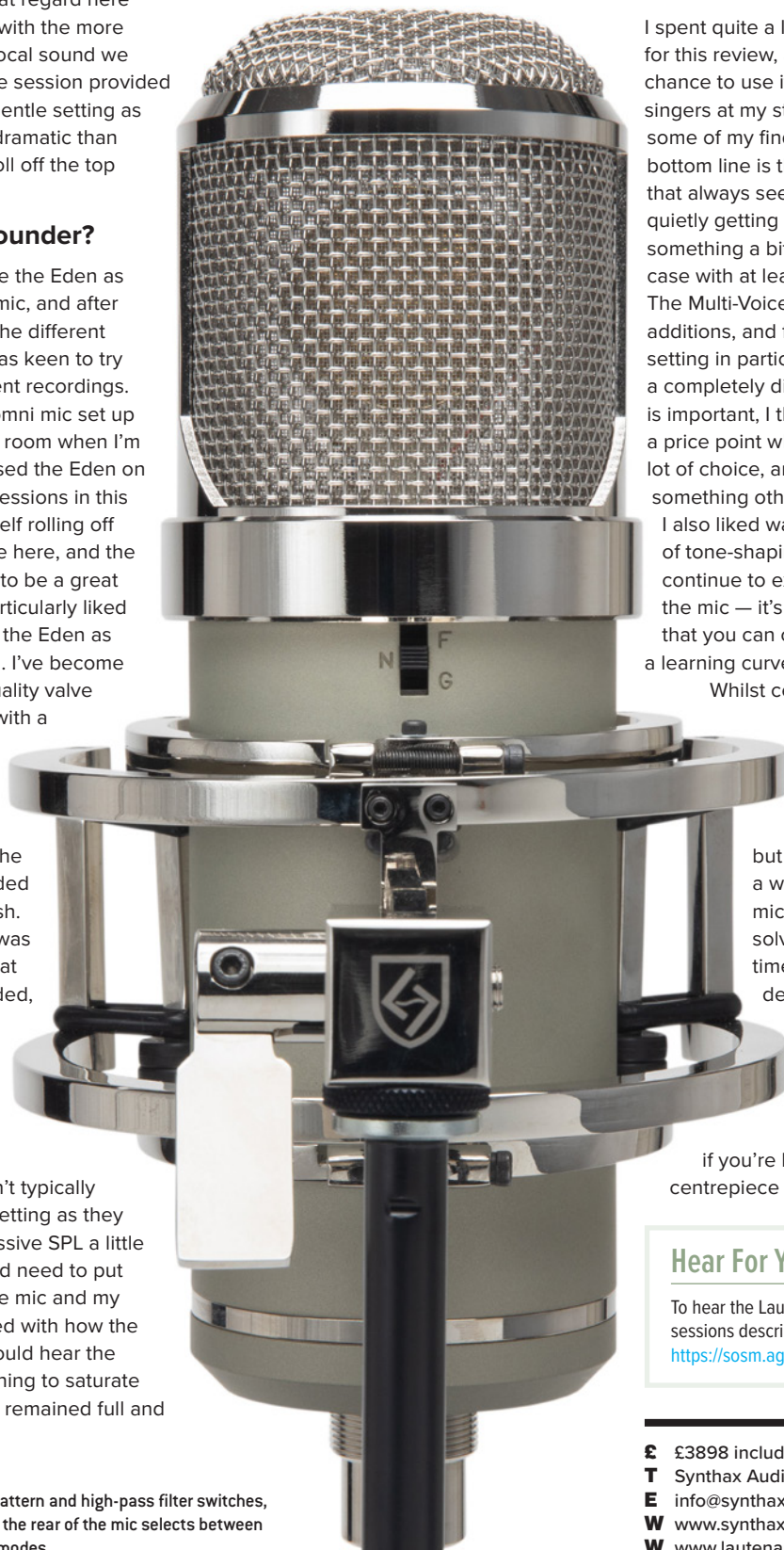
Whilst certainly not a criticism, the size and weight of the mic make it a little cumbersome for all-round instrument recordings, but this is nothing that a well-thought-out weighted mic stand choice wouldn't solve. Overall I enjoyed my time with the Eden a great deal and it added good value to my studio during a busy period. I would certainly recommend putting it on your list of options if you're looking for a versatile centrepiece mic for your studio. **///**

Hear For Yourself

To hear the Lauten Eden in action, on the sessions described in this review, visit <https://sosm.ag/lauten-eden>.

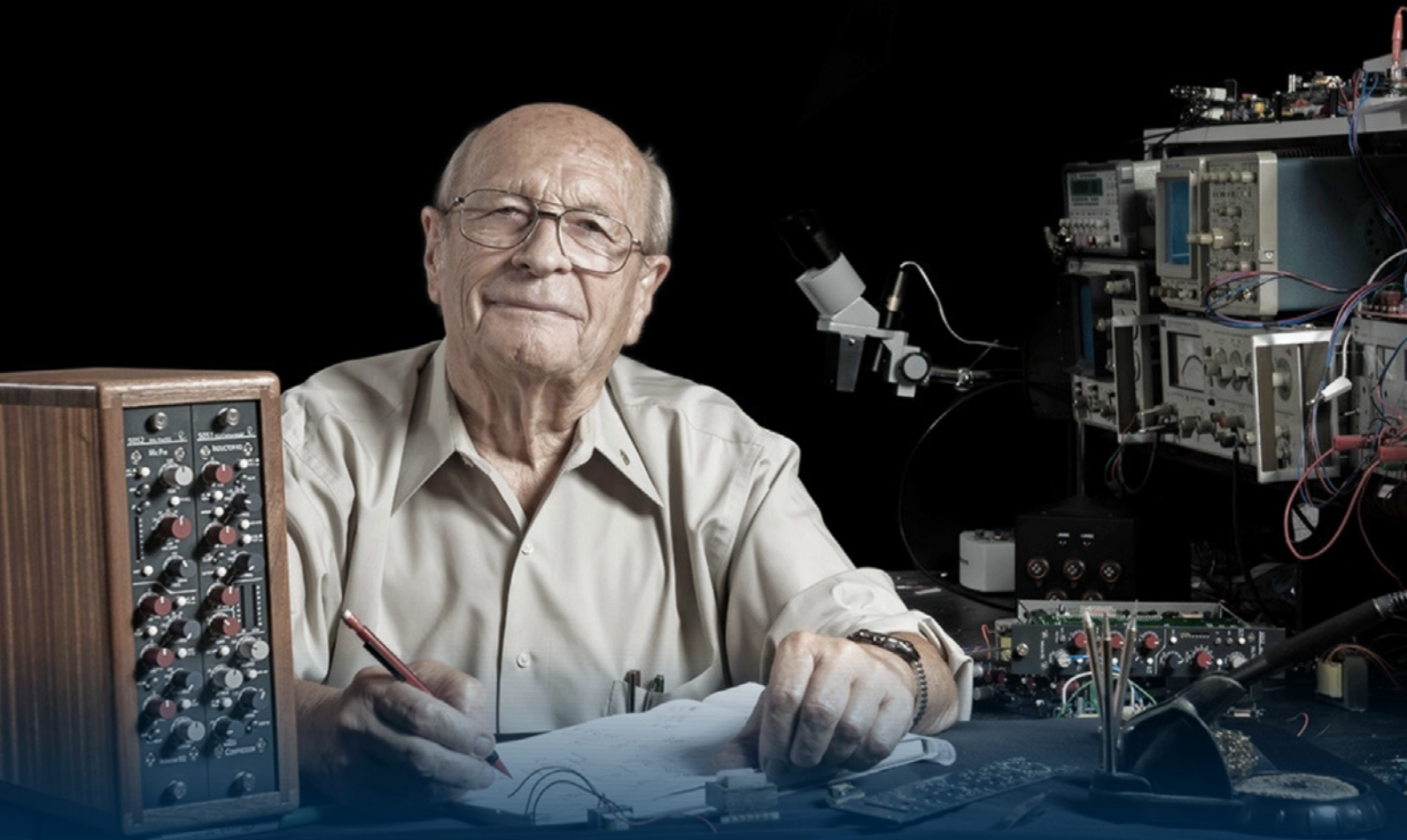
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■ In addition to the polar pattern and high-pass filter switches, a third 'Multi-Voice' switch on the rear of the mic selects between Forward, Neutral and Gentle modes.



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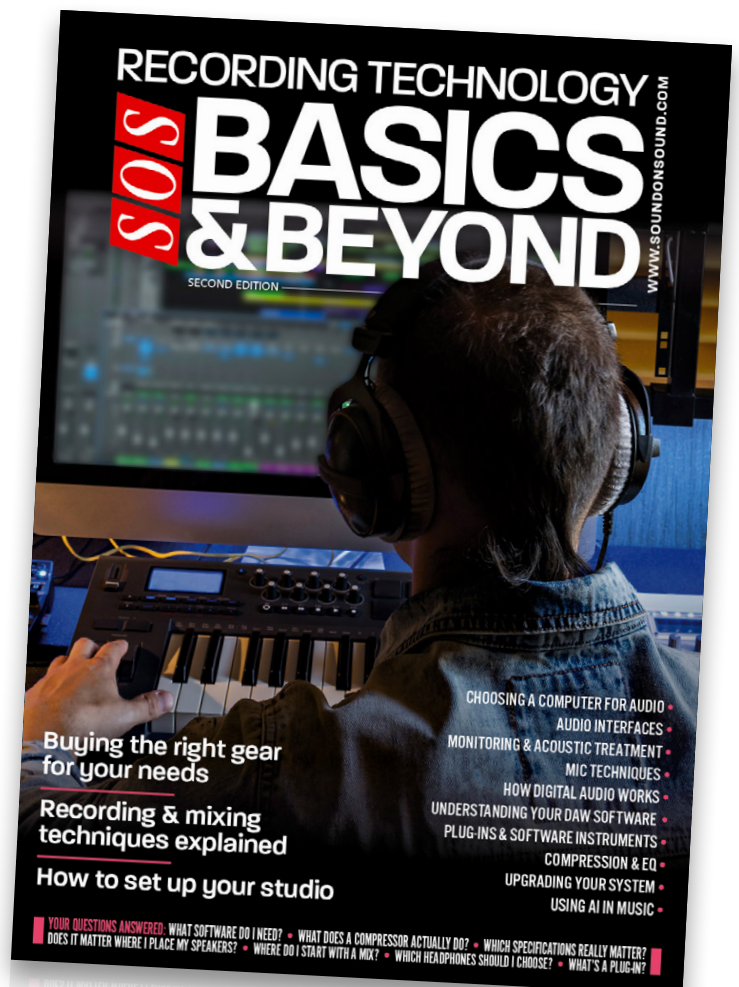
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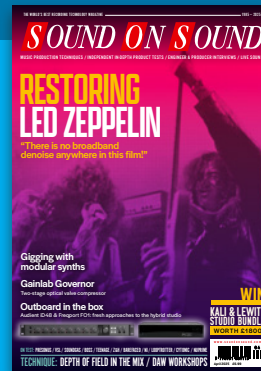
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