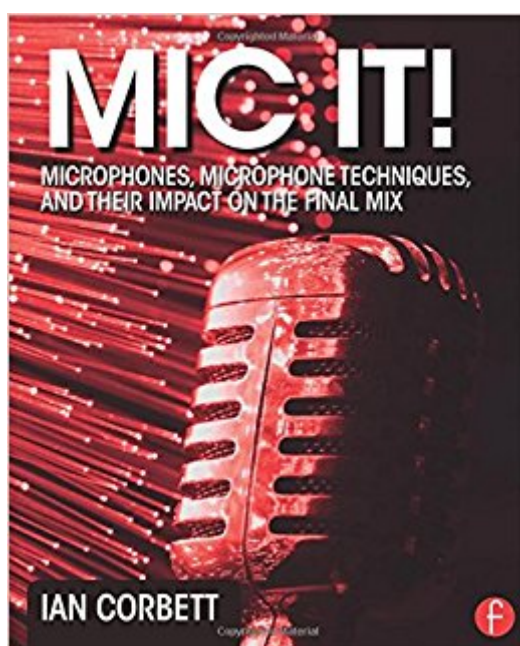


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# Mic It!: Microphones, Microphone Techniques, And Their Impact On The Final Mix



## Synopsis

Capture great sound in the first place, and spend less time "fixing it in the mix" with Ian Corbett's *Mic It! Microphones, Microphone Techniques, and Their Impact on the Final Mix*. With his expert guidance, you'll quickly understand essential audio concepts as they relate to microphones and mic techniques, and learn how to apply them to your recording situation. Whether you only ever buy one microphone, are equipping a studio on a budget, or have a vast selection of great mics to use, you'll learn to better use whatever tools you have. *Mic It!* gives you the background to design and discover your own solutions to record the best sound possible. The information in these pages will help you record great source tracks that can be easily developed into anything from ultra-clean mixes to huge, organic soundscapes. Beginning with essential audio theory, then discussing the desirable characteristics of good sound and the elements of a good stereo recording, the book covers microphones, mono and stereo mic techniques, the effect of the recording space or room, and large classical and jazz ensemble recording. A variety of mic techniques for vocals and instruments (both individual and groups) are presented, ranging from vital knowledge that no novice should be without, to advanced techniques that more experienced engineers can explore to benefit and vary the sound of their recordings. Corbett explains large room vs. layer-by-layer small-room recording situations, presents the best techniques for each, and shares typical production challenges and their resolutions. The book provides in depth information on how different mic techniques can be used, modified and fine-tuned to capture not only the best sound, but the best sound for the mix, as well as how to approach and set up the recording session, mixing, and avoid common recording and mixing mistakes.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Dr. Ian Corbett is the coordinator of the Audio Engineering Program, and Professor of Music Technology and Audio Engineering at Kansas City Kansas Community College. He also owns and operates "off-beat-open-hats â “ recording and sound reinforcement" which specializes in servicing the needs of jazz and classical ensembles in the Kansas City area. Since 2004, he has been a member of the Audio Engineering Society's Education Committee, and has mentored, presented, and served on panels at local, regional, national, and international AES and other professional events. Ian has also authored articles on audio recording related subjects for Sound On Sound magazine.

Not a bad book good read

I received a free item to review. Corbett doesn't say, "Here's the best way to record instrument X and leave it at that. By focusing first on how microphones function and how they're complemented by signal processing tools and the physical recording environment, he teaches you not only common practice mic techniques but, more importantly, gives you practical knowledge to feel in control of whatever recording situation you find yourself in. Whether recording your own music or collaborating with others, you'll feel confident to make your own technical decisions with the goal of satisfying anyone's artistic vision. What makes "Mic It" work so well in my opinion are the exercises and the audio examples. They're well-considered, well-executed, and they really encourage creativity and developing your own hearing discrimination. It's a cliché but it's the truth: the more you put into this material beyond simply reading it, the more you'll get out. For example, Corbett asks you to record identical sound sources using a variety of mics, positioned both close (within several inches) and further away (greater than a foot). Taking the time to do this, using whatever mic or collection of mics you have at your disposal, will teach you more about mic response, recording, and hearing than passively listening to the most sonically ideal demonstrations using the most impressive hi-end gear ever will. Many of the audio examples use identical or very similar performances emphasizing a particular variable: a mic technique, signal processing tool, recording environment, etc. Being able to A/B (and often A/B/C) these well-produced examples (many of considerable length) really gives your ears a chance to soak in subtle differences. The

discussion of EQ and filtering is every bit as technical as any mixing text. Corbett strongly favors EQ as a subtractive, corrective tool rather than an enhancing effect and sweetener. To paraphrase another terrific hands-on exercise: Record identical sound sources from varying mic distances resulting in some tracks exhibiting proximity effect. Within your DAW use EQ to counteract the effect and compare the results with those tracks that didn't exhibit it in the first place. Think you can predict the outcome? So did I until my ears delivered quite an unexpected surprise. The chapter on stereo imaging, including panning, depth and symmetry taught me some things I'd not come across in more specialized mixing books. Another slightly-off-the-beaten-path aspect of *Mic It* I enjoy is the musical orientation. Many music production books are either MIDI/Dance Music, generic Indie or metal oriented. Nothing against any of that but some of us come to recording with a different set of reference points. I would describe the author's orientation as contemporary jazz and melodic 70s-80s rock and pop genres influenced by jazz (some band excerpts reminded me of Supertramp). There's an emphasis on vocals, acoustic drums and non-synthesized instruments. And least you think *Mic It* might shortchange the bread and butter mic placement recipes you're searching for, relax, it's all here, and plenty of it. Every instrument group and vocals are presented along with realistic variants that make the book applicable to a wide range of musical contexts: Vocals include not just solo voice but small and larger groups, gang vocals, vocal with live instrument accompaniment. Pianos and keyboards include grand, upright, electronic, organ (w/Leslie) even accordion. Bass includes electric and upright. Orchestral strings and brass are covered along with instruments that are often overlooked and have their own idiosyncrasies: banjo, dobro, ukulele. In addition to the perennial discussion of the optimum number of mics to record drums, *Mic It* is one of the few books I've read that distinguishes between recording rock drums and acoustic jazz drums. When Corbett does discuss mic placement he goes deep and is full of surprises: I thought I knew everything there was to know about x/y mic pairing, but Corbett not only explains the psychoacoustic why of the technique but touches upon mic angling variations such as ORTF, NOS and DIN, developed by European radio and television engineers and he again provides recorded examples that take the concepts off the page and put them in your ears. Finally, there's an informative chapter of substantive interviews with professionals whose viewpoints mesh with Corbett's. Many authors of audio engineering books keep a certain technical distance from the artistic element. A smaller number skew the opposite way: they minimize the intricacies of gear and acoustics and take an "if it sounds good" approach. In my opinion both

perspectives “well done” have much to offer musicians looking to produce their own recordings as well as aspiring engineers whose function entails translating someone’s artistic viewpoint into effective recordings. After finishing *Mic It!* I felt ambivalent about the title “it’s a shame if people assume it’s just another recipe book of mic placement ideas. It’s far more than that and by the time I read it I understood why all those recipes evolved into common practice and I saw how to use them as jumping off points for experimentation. Yes, “whatever sounds good” may still be the mantra but understanding why and how to emphasize/de-emphasize various sound qualities can preserve time and inspiration. *Mic It!* is solidly technical yet Corbett never sounds as though he’s hiding behind it or looking to impress. There’s an overriding sense of musical passion in the book from someone well aware that the best gear and technical know how are only as good as the vision driving them.

It’s fine. No problems.

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