**DPA d:facto™ Front and Centre For James Blake’s Unique Vocal Chain**

*The ‘rock solid’ performance of the company’s d:facto™ Vocal Microphone has helped the award-winning singer transition his studio sound to the live stage.*

**Alleroed, Denmark. November 10th 2016:** The tight polar pattern of DPA’s d:facto™ Vocal Microphone is helping British singer-songwriter James Blake deliver crystal clear vocals in a live setting, with minimal interferences from extraneous ambient noise.

Front of House engineer Jamie Harley suggested trying a d:facto™ because he needed a microphone that could truly focus the sound of Blake’s vocals within the space of his instrumentation.

“We needed a great live mic that could clearly deliver James’ sound without too much unwanted ambience, especially as he does a lot of vocal looping on the fly,” Harley says. “The d:facto™ is solid as a rock with a tight polar pattern for on stage vocals, which allows our monitor engineer to achieve a fantastic, clean vocal sound for James and a superb sound all round. It is the perfect microphone for this kind of music, which has a lot of space around it for the vocal to sit in. It is also very solid and you really notice the difference between d:facto™ and some of the old faithfuls that we used to use.”

Integrating electronic music and sampling with soul-inflected vocals has become something of a trademark for James Blake. It is a style that has earned him numerous accolades, including a Mercury Music Prize for his 2013 album *Overgrown* and an Ivor Novello Award for his single *Retrograde*.

However, when an artist’s sound is as unique as Blake’s, transitioning from a studio to a live venue can be tricky, as James Harley explains:“The challenge is translating what James has in his head to the live venue. This requires some patience and communication between both of us and some open conversations about how the sounds translate to big rooms and big speakers. I think James changed his perspective on his sound for his most recent album and that meant creating perhaps a leaner, less processed mix.”

For Blake’s current tour, Harley is using an analogue desk - either a Midas Heritage or XL4. The mic pres on these desks are proving to be perfect for the job in hand and far more suitable than the 500 series high end studio mic pres he originally tried.

“With those, the detail in the very higher frequency spectrum became somewhat overwhelming, especially when James’ mic pre enhanced a lot of unwanted ambient stuff,” he explains.

For EQ and compression, he is using an insert of the Empirical Labs Lil Freq and a Distressor. For vocal effects he uses a Meris Mercury 7 as his main reverb because he likes its sense of body and character and its meatier sound. He also uses other processing effects for specific songs.

“James has two outputs from the stage for his vocal: one clean (Dry) and one effected (Wet) and he swaps between them depending on the song,” Harley says. “Most of the newer songs have Dry signals. The older songs like Limit and Lindisfarne require some heavy duty on stage vocal processing and come to me fully formed Wet. I tend to tune all FX EQs with top end taken out and body left in, which enhances the presence of the voice not the reverb. The d:facto™ Vocal Microphone has a great presence. The reverb then creates space.”

Both James Harley and James Blake have been delighted with the switch to d:facto™ and the microphone is now a key part of the current tour, which runs through to the New Year and takes in venues on both sides of the Atlantic.

“James is very happy with the situation - I think things only affect his performance when he’s not happy with what he’s hearing,” Harley says. “He’s an accomplished studio engineer/producer and knows exactly what he wants and how to achieve it. For my point of view, I’m very happy with the results and it makes my life much easier because I don’t have to worry about the performance of his mic.”

**-ends-**

**ABOUT DPA MICROPHONES:**

DPA Microphones is the leading Danish Professional Audio manufacturer of high-quality condenser microphone solutions for professional applications. DPA’s ultimate goal is to always provide its customers with the absolute finest possible microphone solutions for all its markets, which include live sound, installation, recording, theatre and broadcast. When it comes to the design process, DPA takes no shortcuts. Nor does the company compromise on its manufacturing process, which is done at the DPA factory in Denmark. As a result, DPA’s products are globally praised for their exceptional clarity and transparency, unparalleled specifications, supreme reliability and, above all, pure, uncolored and undistorted sound.

**For more information, please visit** [**www.dpamicrophones.com**](http://www.dpamicrophones.com)

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