



Beth Waters and the Neumann KMS 105

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Being a regional act without our own PA or sound engineer, our sound is at the mercy of the club system and it's operator. And as most musicians will know, that can vary a great deal from night to night. So we decided to take as much control of our sound as we possibly could. The Neumann KMS 105 was our obvious choice, having used the TLM 103 in the studio for basically every vocal track. However, since it had just come on the market, we had to settle for a different handheld condenser until we could track down a KMS 105 that was actually for sale. Apparently, the only 105's in San Francisco went directly to the new baseball stadium (apparently you can even hear the difference on AM radio, by listening to the Giants on KNBR).

When we were finally able to get our hands on the KMS 105, everything started to change. I could go through and list all of the great things about the mic (the incredible increase in sound quality over the typical dynamic mics, and even the usual handheld condensers, the great gain before feedback, the airiness, the fact that it's a perfect match for Beth's voice, etc.), but the most interesting difference we noticed had to do with the entire mix.

From the first show we played with the KMS 105, we've noticed a new respect and attention from live sound engineers. When we put it in their hand and ask if we can use our vocal mic, they see that logo and realize that we are a serious band, and we obviously care about how we sound. When they step behind the soundboard for the night, they have a mutual respect for us now. We're no longer seen as a weekend-warrior garageband doing it for the free beer. We've also heard comments from professional sound companies like "I've gotta have the boss pick up a couple of those," "You guys are obviously serious about your sound," and "It's nice when the band cares as much about how it sounds as the engineer." And what musician wouldn't? The musician should care more about what it sounds like than the engineer. This is our art.

Ironically enough, the night we first brought in the KMS 105 was the same night we were doing a 16 track, 24-bit recording of the show. The tracks came out so nice and so clean, it's our newest CD, Beth Waters - Live.

It's great having two mics and knowing you'll never need another vocal mic. We use the TLM 103 in the studio, and the KMS 105 on stage. Both are perfect on Beth's voice. Both will never leave our sight. Let's just call them carry on baggage.

Travis Ballstadt Guitarist, Beth Waters Band

