



Neumann Microphones — Enabling Me to be Truly Unplugged Worldwide

March 2000 by Bob Brozman - Recording artist, author, producer, world traveler

To those who don't know my music, I play "blues of the world," which includes Blues, Hawaiian, Caribbean, African, Indian, Okinawan, Gypsy Jazz, Greek, Indian Ocean Sega and Maloya Music. I specialize in ACOUSTIC and RESONATOR guitar, and slide guitar (both bottleneck and lap-style). In countless live shows, until recent years, I struggled with whatever house mics were available, usually a battered SM-57. Steadfastly avoiding the use of pickups, because I don't like their unnatural "too fast" response and sound, I had to develop very sensitive ears for equalization, and to learn to work well with sound technicians, in order to have loud enough sound to reach the large theatre and festival audiences in my usual work. This really prepared me to enjoy the luxury and power I have found since getting my KM 150.

Naturally, I've known about Neumann mics my entire career, as they are the industry standard found in studios all over the world. I've had a lot of experience using various new and vintage models on my many recordings. In fact, a German friend of mine went to East Germany just after the fall of the Berlin wall, specifically to go to studios buying vintage Neumanns: his collection now includes about 100 different models! I just didn't know that they were affordable enough and sufficiently durable to use in live shows. One day I had a chance to play a live concert through one, and that was IT! I had to have one. That experience was with a KM 84, but then a month later I had a chance to try a KM 150 live on stage, and found it to be yet again another degree higher in clarity, response, and tightness of pattern, so that is the mic I voted for with my wallet!

Because the resonator instruments give off two radically different sounds (emphasizing bass or hi-mids) depending on where you point the mic, I had already developed my technique of changing my position constantly during songs, to consciously alter the sound. The Neumann increased this capability for me five-fold! Obviously the Neumann has far greater depth, definition, and clarity than a typical stage mic, but it's the sensitivity of the Neumann and the great definition of the cardioid pattern that gives me a dramatically more creative tool to work with. I have gotten hundreds of queries at my website about how to amplify resonator guitars, and while pickups offer some utility, especially in difficult rooms or with small-club P.A. systems, the best way to get loud live concert sound that is also beautiful, is with a Neumann KM 150, with a little careful time spent at sound check.

I've spent many years developing my techniques of getting a fruitful AND enjoyable soundcheck, all over the world, in several languages (to soundcheck in any language, just learn the words for: please, thank you, more, less, monitor, front-of-house, and how to say numbers from 1 to 10, plus "hundred" & "thousand," and you are on your way!). After years of developing techniques for soundchecking, EQ, monitors, I began posting them on my website in mid-1999, as "Bob's Handy hints for Live Sound." This page at ▶ <http://www.bobbrozman.com/2Handyhints.htm> has been very popular, and in recent tours, I have discovered that sound technicians at the venues I perform in have been checking it out in advance of my arrival in order to prepare: it's become an inadvertent online tech rider!

Finally and perhaps, most importantly: I get an EQUAL NUMBER OF RAVE COMPLIMENTS FROM MUSICIANS AND NON-MUSICIANS ALIKE, SPECIFICALLY ABOUT THE CLEAR, CLEAN, AND STAGGERINGLY POWERFUL SOUND I GET AT MY SHOWS. The fact that nonprofessionals and just "regular folks" are making a point to tell me about the sound is really a positive comment about that wonderful mic. I have been using my first and last KM 150 continuously for 3 years under every possible climactic condition without one problem. By the way, it has survived a 4-foot drop to a hard floor once, at least. Not recommended at all, but what a relief I felt when I tested it afterwards! Thank you Neumann. You have made my working life easier, more effective, and I daresay, more successful!

Bob Brozman

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