



Awardwinning New Age group RASA uses Neumann mics

Hearts Of Space recording artist RASA has become the most celebrated new group in the New Age genre. With recent awards by Amazon.com for Best New Age CDs of the years 2000 and 2001, plus a Best CD for Yoga, and a recent award by New Age Voice Magazine for Best Vocal CD of the year, RASA has consistently impressed their audiences with their contemporary arrangements of Indian devotional songs.

Kim Waters' soulful vocal renditions of these ancient chants were recorded with a Neumann TLM103 on their first CD, Devotion, and with a Neumann M147 on their second release, Union. Producer/ multi-instrumentalist Hans Christian exclusively uses Neumann microphones on their recordings; another favorite besides the 147 and the 103 is a Neumann KM140. Whether recording tablas (favorite combo: KM140 on tablas and KM103 on the baja), cello, sarangi, or nyckelharpa (an M147 was used for all of them), one of these three models proved perfect for the job. Using these high quality mics proved the key for a satisfying recording and contributed to RASA's rich and sensual sound.

So, why did RASA choose Neumann mics in the first place? "These days, there are more mics to choose from than ever", says Hans Christian. "Companies coming out with low cost models that promise the same high quality as expensive German mics¹ for a fraction of the cost wouldn't get my business because you don't know what you are getting. I like the consistency of Neumann mics- they provide a great palette to choose from, and, by the way, they are a good investment, too".

While growing up in Germany, Hans started to record in local studios in Hanover and Hamburg in the 1970s. "We had mostly U47s and 67s as high end mics. I grew up with these mics and they became a revered icon of quality. When I moved to Hollywood in the 1980s and started to play in studios there, I found the same mic selection and application. There was an instant familiarity and it was clear to me that I would buy Neumann mics, should I ever start my own studio".

That dream was realized when Allemande Music opened its doors in San Francisco in 1989. Starting on a tight budget, the first mic purchased was the small diaphragm KM140, a mic that worked equally well on Hans' cello playing, percussion, and acoustic guitar. "I even liked using it for vocals- just added an extra thick foam screen to control the pops. It worked great" says Hans.

As Allemande Music grew, additional Neumanns were purchased to expand the palette. "The TLM103 is another great (and affordable) Neumann; it works so well as drum overheads, for vocals, on all kinds of stringed instruments, and also on piano. It is extremely reliable and it delivers a clean and musical sound. It also interacts well with tube preamps for coloration of sound".

The most recent acquisition for Allemande Music was the M147. "At first I couldn't get a reading on the mic. I couldn't find the sweet spot, felt overwhelmed by the sound". But it soon became clear that this precision device wanted to keep some air between the sound source and the diaphragm. "This mic works extremely well when you can keep it at a distance to the sound source. Even Kim's soft voice sounds best if the mic is 12 inches away and above her mouth. And my cello shines when the mic is a good 2-3 feet away and slightly off center". Combined with a clean solid state preamp this mic has delivered breathtaking results for Hans and for RASA.

Other Neumanns that get the thumb-up from Hans are the M149 ("a magnificent mic for vocals") and a KM100 with an omni capsule ("great for cello if the room is good, too"). As for the new line of Neumann stage mics, RASA is looking forward to a comparison with their current live vocal mic, a phantom powered AKG C535. "We might have to switch, now that Neumann is offering phantom powered stage mics", says Hans with a sigh.

