SPARK MINI MIC TECHNIQUES

The Bartlett Spark Mini Mic can capture the beautiful sounds, delicate nuances, and unique personalities of acoustic instruments. Listed below are suggestions for miking some instruments. Feel free to experiment to find a sound that you like.

Acoustic guitar, open-back banjo, resonator banjo, mandolin, fiddle, upright bass: See the application sheet that comes with the microphone.

Cello: On the body between the fingerboard and the bridge, or "floating" between the tailpiece and bridge (use the Spark Mic Clip) .

Gourd banjo: Inside. Turn down any excess bass with your mixer EQ.

Harp: Near a sound hole (for best gain before feedback) or in the middle of the sound board.

Lap dulcimer, dobro, bouzouki: About 1 inch from a sound hole. A placement close to the hole sounds warm or bassy; farther from the hole sounds thinner.

Hammered dulcimer: Near a sound hole (for best gain before feedback). Turn down excess bass with your mixer's EQ.

Accordion or concertina: Use two mics, one per side. Tape each cable so each mic hangs over the top in front of each side. An alternative is to rubber-band a Spark Mini Mic to each wrist.

Bodhran: Attached to the inner edge with tape or putty.

Sax: Attach the Spark Mic Clip to the top of the bell. Attach the other end of the clip to the Spark Mic cable next to the microphone. Place the mic about 4 inches above the bell to pick up the tone holes.

Recorder: Rubber-band the mic clip to the recorder. Mount the mic about 4 inches from the side of the recorder.

Flute: Tape the cable to the flute between the mouthpiece and first set of tone holes. Put the mic about 1-1/2 inches above the flute.

Bagpipe: Mike the chanter as described for the recorder above, and mike the pipes with the Spark Mini Mic on a mic stand.

Trumpet, trombone: The Spark Mini Mic is not recommended for these instruments because they can overload the mic, causing distortion.

Grand piano: Raise the lid on the long stick. Use putty or gaffer tape to attach one Spark Mini Mic onto the lid over the treble strings about 8 inches horizontally from the hammers, and another Spark Mini Mic over the bass strings about 2 feet horizontally from the hammers. The mics should divide the piano in thirds. If you have only one mic, attach it to the middle of the piano lid about 8 inches horizontally from the hammers. If the sound is bassy or boomy, turn down 100 Hz to 300 Hz a few dB.

Upright piano: Use putty or gaffer tape to attach two Spark Mini Mics to the sound board, halfway up and dividing the piano in thirds. Or remove the panel in front of the player, and tape two Spark Mini Mic cables to the top, with the mics hanging in front of the hammer area. The mics should divide the piano in thirds.

Vocal: For popular music recording, tape the Spark Mini Mic cable to a mic-stand boom. Place the mic about 6 inches from the mouth, at nose height to prevent breath pops.

Recording a musical ensemble: Use two mics for stereo. Tape two mics to two mic-stand booms, 2.5 feet apart. Or for sharper stereo imaging, mount each mic a few inches from the center of a 2-foot square (or larger) wood panel on opposite sides. Aim the edge of the panel at the ensemble. Start with the mics 12 feet away from the ensemble. Listen to the playback. If the sound is too dry or lacking hall ambience, move the mics a foot or two farther away and try again. If the sound is too distant or muddy, move the mics a foot or two closer and try again.