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REVIEW

BY PAUL VNUK JR.

DynaMount V1 and X1-R Robotic Microphone Mounts

The ultimate solution for mic positioning



I was introduced to the DynaMount crew at last January's Winter NAMM Show by Placid Audio's Mark Pirro (see our April 2016 interview). DynaMount makes motorized/robotic microphone mounts—in simple terms, these motorized contraptions mount to the top of a mic stand and allow you to move your microphones back and forth, side to side, and at various angles (depending on the chosen model), all from the comfort of your control room. The remote control is handled by an app on your computer, tablet or smart phone. Think of it as a motorized assistant that won't need a lunch break... sorry, interns!

I am guessing the skeptic in you may be thinking, "How lazy are you that you can't walk out into the tracking room and position a mic?" Sure, fine... but let's consider the common scenario faced by many studio owners like me, who don't have the luxury of interns or assistant engineers.

You set up the guitar amp, the guitarist has dialed in his tones, you position your mics in the usual spots, you walk back to the safety of the control room, the guitarist starts to play... and neither of you is happy with the sound. Thus begin multiple trips back and forth to the amp, making minute adjustments for phase and sound. How many times have you made one adjustment too many... and since there's no human Undo button, you psych yourself out and can't seem to ever get back to the magic spot you once had?

What if you could position your mic or mics at your usual starting point, and then adjust them precisely by increments of $1/16$ "

in position and 1° rotation, all from your chair? That's the point of the DynaMount systems, and while they are functionally simple, they house a complex set of electronics and features.

Mount up!

There are four models in the line and each with varied levels of movement. Each model is made up of one of two metal tracks with a tooth-style pulley system similar to what's inside a 3D printer. The single axis models only move side to side, dual axis models move right to left and front to back, and each version offers the additional choice of a fixed or rotating mic mount with a full 360 degree rotation.

I was sent the simplest version, the V1, which moves on a single axis with a $6\frac{1}{4}$ " throw/range of motion. It has an Axial Nudge Increment of $1/16$ ". I also received the top of the line X1-R. Axis one (front to back) offers a throw of $5\frac{1}{2}$ ", Axis two (side to side) is $6\frac{1}{4}$ ", and the mic as mentioned will rotate 360 degrees. (The other models are the V1-R, which adds rotation to the V1, and the X1, which has dual axes but no rotation.)

Each unit, while light, is a tad bulky and will require a good quality weighted mic stand. You will also want one that is adjustable to compensate for the added height of the DynaMount.

The V1 is 14.75 " x 4 " x 3.75 " and weighs 1.8 lbs. The X1-R is 14.75 " x 4 " x 3.75 " and weighs 4.2 lbs. Each model accommodates microphones weighing 5 lbs. or less when right side up or 2 lbs upside down or sideways. The DynaMounts can be hung upside down or angled on their side. In the latter case, when turned off, the mount will slide and skip on its track, but when powered on, it will return precisely to its calibrated position.

Each one is built exceptionally well, but note that all of the mechanics are exposed and on the delicate side. I would not recommend dropping them, and the folks at DynaMount recommend not adjusting or moving the mount on the tracks manually. Each one is powered by an included wall wart, and you will need an Internet connection for setup and wi-fi or USB for use.

Apps and setup

The DynaMount app is available for use with multiple platforms—Windows PCs and Macs, Android and iOS tablets and phones. Once installed, you can use a phone app at the same time as the one on your DAW for added flexibility.

Set up is handled by step-by-step instructions at DynaMount's web site, and you need to follow them to the letter! It's not complicated, but still must be followed in order. The DynaMount has its own internal Wi-Fi transmitter and its own IP address which is used during initial setup.

I downloaded, installed, and ran setup on the V1 DynaMount unit in about 7 minutes. The second one took longer—I got cocky and thought I could do it by memory, and skipped a crucial step twice! This is a time when all of you non-manual/instructions-reading folks like me will want to acquiesce and follow the instructions.

Be aware, initial mic setup with the DynaMount system is a bit more time-consuming than your standard mic setup. You will need decent, quality weighted stands with tight threading. You will need to be sure the stands will accommodate the height of the DynaMount *plus* your mic in relation to the speaker cone on your amp or any other source you choose to try the system with. If you are using a multiple mic setup, or a pair of DynaMounts, you will also need to be aware of their positioning to each other... you don't want to experience any mid-air microphone collisions!

I would suggest you experiment on your own time and not with a client waiting in the wings. Although this sounds complicated, most of it is common sense.

For single-mic use on a guitar amp, I would suggest starting with the mic moved all the way forward (X models) and aimed at the center of the cone, as close as possible in the grille. The reason is that the app starts with the mic visually represented in this position—you can even choose speaker size in the app. For a two-mic setup, you may need to forgo a bit of the graphic representation (which can be turned off) as it may not correspond to your optimum placement—since both DynaMounts probably can not be centered with the mic in the cone at the same time.

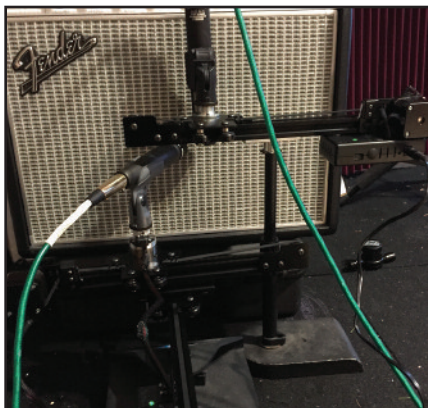
Once you are happy with placement, launch the app and it will ask/suggest you calibrate the DynaMount, which runs it through its full paces and rotations (rather like firing up an inkjet printer). This is a great time to check your positioning a second time and watch for obstructions, collisions, and cord entanglements.

The app is pretty straightforward and scales itself to your specific DynaMount in regard to axis and angles. You can flip between multiple DynaMounts and each one can have up to six nameable placements for instant one-touch recall.

In use

I tried both DynaMount models separately and side-by-side on a Marshall 4x12 cabinet, a vintage Fender

Vibrasonic with a 15" speaker, and a small 12" Fender Princeton reissue. I mounted the X1-R to a Primacoustic KickStand—a low-profile mic stand with a rubber recoil stabilizer on its underside. I mounted the V-1 to a generic yet nicely weighted mini boom mic stand that I usually use for guitar miking.



The only real issue I had was that some amps like the Princeton sit low and I could not get the DynaMount, the stand and the mic low enough. In those cases, I needed to place the amp on a stand.

The best thing I can say is, both units worked flawlessly and I loved having full remote control over mic placement that can be adjusted in degrees and inches. These

small adjustments can make a huge difference in sound, and I felt like I actually landed on better tones because it was so easy to further fine-tune my positioning beyond my initial setups. It's great for adding additional tonal options when layering takes as well. Overall it's similar to using a virtual microphone-equipped guitar amp emulation in your DAW... but with real mics!

My only caution is to remember that the DynaMount moves incrementally, one touch for one movement. If you quickly press the controls a dozen times, the DynaMount won't move any faster, and it won't stop until it's gone a dozen steps, which might overshoot your preferred placement. Patience is a virtue.

I know all of this may sound complicated and tweaky, but I prefer the word "detailed". Once positioned and dialed in, it really works great! Yes, for many this will be a luxury device, but if you like detailed, recallable placement options and dialing in the sweet spot in beautifully small increments, all from the comfort of the control room, check out the DynaMounts! ➡

Prices: V1 (as reviewed), \$299; V1-R, \$499; X1, \$549; X1-R (as reviewed), \$749

More from: DynaMount,
www.dynamount.com