

Reviews

## the t.bone SC 420 USB Desktop-Set review

Can this budget large capsule condenser deliver useable results?



(Image: © Thomann)

### MusicRadar Verdict ★★★★★

This desktop mic bundle includes all you need to get podcasting, and when used with care will deliver perfectly acceptable results, so if your budget is limited it's ideal

#### Pros

- + Full desktop podcasting bundle
- + Integrated USB audio interface
- + On-body mic mute button
- + Excellent value

#### Cons

- Broad pickup pattern with poor rear rejection
- No on-body level controls

### THE T.BONE SC 420 USB DESKTOP-SET: WHAT IS IT?

The t.bone SC 420 USB Desktop-Set is an entry-level, all-in-one bundle aimed at podcasters. Available in both black and silver versions, we have the black one here for review.

The package includes a large capsule cardioid condenser mic, low profile cradle, foam windscreen, pop shield, tabletop stand and USB cable, and comes in a compact flight case, which holds the components in two stacked foam trays.

Meanwhile, the bundled software includes Steinberg Cubase LE, so you also have a DAW to get started.

At £51 the components are clearly made to a pretty tight budget. Nevertheless, the black satin finish is consistent throughout and we had no problem screwing the stand parts together, adding the clip or installing the mic, so it's fair to say that the manufacturing quality is very good.

The hefty metal base even incorporates a thin foam layer to protect the table top, which is a nice touch. Once loaded up with the mic and pop shield, it all feels very stable, and although you can't adjust the mic height, which is a shame, you can tilt it and also rotate the mic within the cradle.

To put it all away you'll need to detach the stand base, cradle and mic, which we found easy enough, and once done, it all fits neatly back in its box.

The mic incorporates a USB type B socket on the bottom (note, there's no XLR connection). Meanwhile on the front side of the mic is a 3.5mm headphone output, with a soft style mute button just below the headstock.



(Image credit: Thomann)

### THE T.BONE SC 420 USB DESKTOP-SET: PERFORMANCE AND VERDICT

Once plugged up you'll find the button glows red and there's also a blue LED inside the headstock, so the whole package does look pretty good. The mute cuts the mic completely (output and headphones) but leaves your computer output active. In this state the red LED flashes making it very clear the mic is muted.

The SC 420 USB is plug-and-play and quotes 16-bit/48kHz operation, although on OS X we were also able to set it to 44.1kHz, which is handy.

Meanwhile, setting mic gain and output level depends on how your computer handles plug-and-play devices. Using OS X and Logic Pro for example, the mic gain is available on Logic's channel strip, as well as via the main OS X Audio/MIDI driver, while the output level follows the system setting.

Importantly, there are no on-body level controls, so it's important to understand how settings are made on your platform.



(Image credit: Thomann)

The SC 420 USB has a cardioid pickup pattern. We found this to be very broad, which means moving off-axis is not much of a problem. But on the downside rejection of extraneous room noises is not great, with the rear rejection limited to higher frequencies.

Sonically, the mic sounds quite bright and we also found it became quite sibilant when we got in very close.

That said, at a typical distance of about 10 to 15cm it delivers a reasonably balanced crisp sound with some nice proximity. What's more the dual-layer pop shield does a very good job of removing plosives.

Overall if you bear in mind the limitations raised, the SC 420 USB desktop set can deliver decent results and offers a lot for very little money.

**MusicRadar verdict:** This desktop mic bundle includes all you need to get podcasting, and when used with care will deliver perfectly acceptable results, so if your budget is limited it's ideal.

### THE T.BONE SC 420 USB DESKTOP-SET: SPECIFICATIONS



(Image credit: Thomann)

- **Pickup pattern:** Cardioid
- **Frequency response:** 30Hz to 18kHz
- **Sensitivity:** 25 mV/Pa
- **Maximum SPL:** 140dB (at 1kHz = 1% THD)
- **A to D conversion:** 16bit / 48kHz
- **Connectivity:** USB B port for plug-and-play connection to a computer
- **Additional features:** headphone output with direct monitoring, mute button
- **Accessories:** small flight case, shock mount, USB cable, foam windscreen, pop shield and tabletop stand
- **Size:** 186(l) x 54(d) mm
- **Bundled software:** Cubase LE with 23 VST audio effects; HALion Sonic SE 3; Groove Agent SE 5; Over 5 GB of sounds and loops
- **CONTACT:** [Thomann](#)