



THE ULTIMATE PODCAST PRODUCER'S KIT BAG



About the Author

Matthew McLean is Head of Audio Production at The Podcast Host. He's a podcaster, audio drama producer, and founder of the award-winning Audio Drama Production Podcast.

He's been making audio drama since 2011, from the post-apocalyptic series *Aftermath* to one-off epic, *Kraken Mare*. It was a steep learning curve, testing out infinite mics and recording setups, the best of which are now in his own kit bag.

When it comes to podcasting equipment, we always say that you should keep things as simple as you can, and never spend any more than you need to.

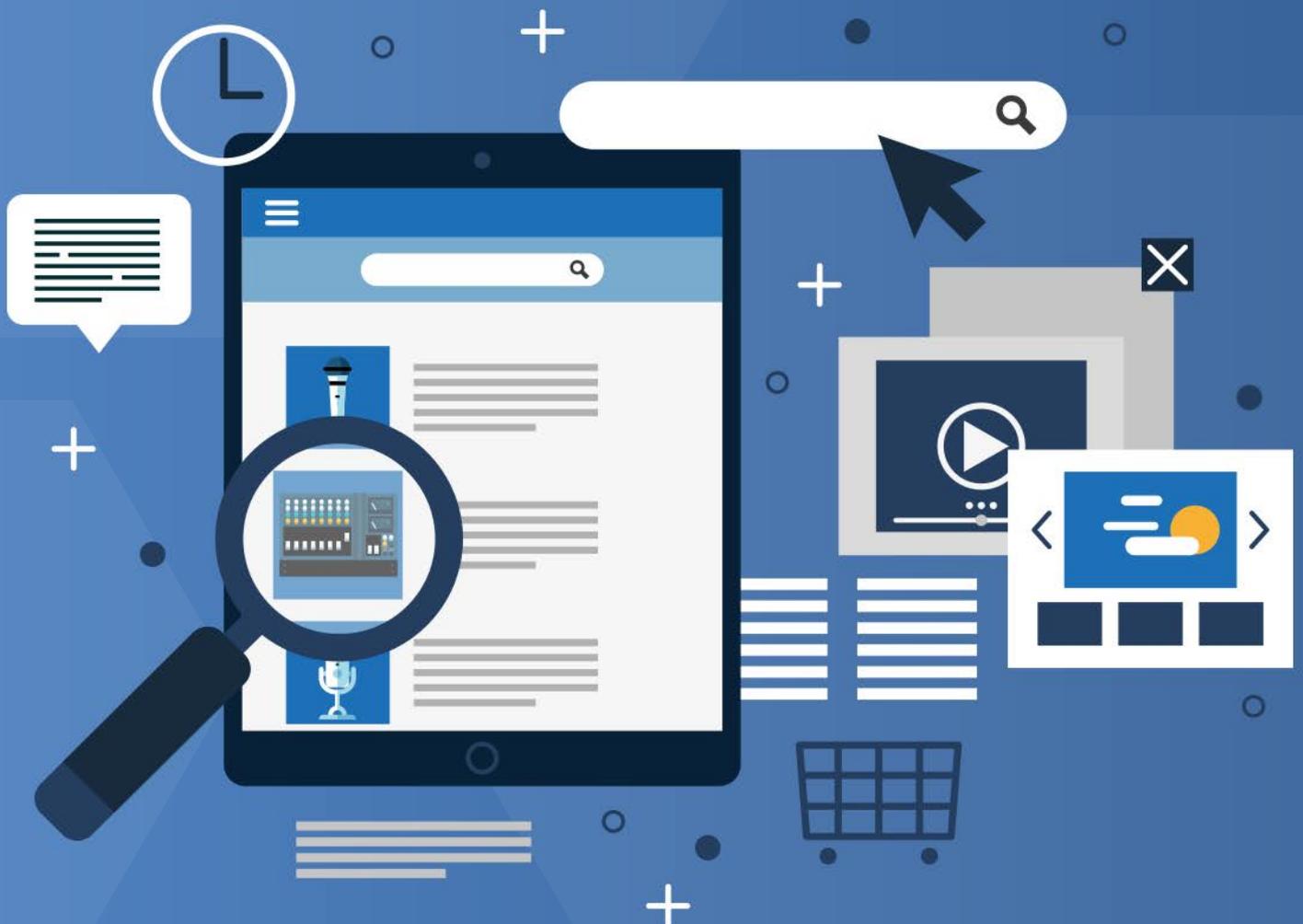
However, we, like many others in the medium, are massive equipment geeks. There's nothing better than setting up and trying out some brand new high-end audio gear. So, if money was no object, what would be the main players in our equipment arsenal here at The Podcast Host studio? Read on and find out...

HOW TO FIND THE EQUIPMENT

Podcast equipment is a funny one. Some of our favourites haven't changed in years, and others seem to change every day.

To make things easy, we've created a companion page on the website, including links to everything we've covered here. It'll also include the most up to date info on the kit, incase new versions come out, of even if we discover something's rubbish after all! It happens...

To see the full list and links to where you can find it all, go to:
www.ThePodcastHost.com/kitbaglinks



Samson Q2U

The 'All Rounder' Microphone

Price \$60/£60

First thing's first, I always like to keep a Samson Q2U (or two) within arms reach of my recordings. Even if money was no object, this is a really handy bit of kit to have around. It functions as both a USB and an XLR mic, and sounds great, despite the very low price tag. Out of all the podcasting kit on the market it's the thing I find myself recommending the most.



AKG C214

The Quality Vocal Mic

Price \$325/£290

I've been using a pair of these to record audio dramas for the past year, and they're excellent for capturing a vocal performance. They're ultra-sensitive so I tend to only use them in studio-level recording conditions, but if you get the environment right you're rewarded with pristine audio.



Zoom R16

Portable Recording Studio

Price \$400/£255

This isn't a piece of kit I own, but a few producers I respect thoroughly recommend it. It's a multitrack recorder, interface, and controller that allows you to record up to 8 track simultaneously. You can plug it into your computer and mix on your DAW with it, as opposed to using a mouse. It's extremely portable and would be great for setting up field recordings with multiple participants.



Zoom H6

The Quality Digital Recorder

Price \$350/£290

Going even more portable than the Zoom R16 now with another Zoom product - the H6. Zoom are famous for their premium quality digital recorders, and raised the bar with this latest model. This is an excellent option for recording sound effects and ambience with the X/Y stereo capture, or for plugging in multiple mics and using as a multitrack audio interface.



Focusrite Scarlett 18i8

The Quality USB Preamp

Price \$350/£275

This is a brilliant preamp to have handy for recording multiple mics straight into your computer. It's basically the big brother of Focusrite's immensely popular Scarlett 2i2, but with 2 extra XLR inputs. I set this up running into Adobe Audition to record 4 people at once. On top of being a great sounding, low-noise preamp, it's also very easy to use - even if you're a total beginner with audio gear.



Mogami Gold Studio

Premium XLR Cable

Price \$45/£40 (6 feet)

There's no use connecting a great interface with a top of the range mic using a low budget cable. A chain is only as strong as it's weakest link, and a bad cable can have a serious impact on your audio quality. This cable is literally gold (well, its pins are), and will actually work to cancel noise caused by signals and interference in your recording chain. Most professional studios will be cabled up with Mogami Gold.



KRK Rokit 5 G3

Studio Monitors

Price \$150/£120 each

KRK's Rokit studio monitor series comes highly recommended in the audio production world. I use the 5s, and so far these have been more than enough for my needs, but they do come in bigger and smaller sizes. I've traditionally mixed audio using headphones, which is great for subtle dialogue editing. But for the overall production, when you're looking to bring in multiple elements like music and sound effects whilst keeping consistent volume levels, then monitors are the way to go. I've been really impressed with my Rokits so far, and my productions have really benefited from using them.



Audio Technica ATH-M50X Premium Headphones

Price \$150/£120

You still want a great pair of headphones to compliment your monitors, and these are widely regarded as the best on the market. Robust, and with a fantastic sound clarity. The M50Xs also have the option of connecting to straight or coiled cables depending on the type of environment you're working in.



Shure VP88

Premium Versatile Condenser Mic

Price \$800/£650

Got to have a Shure model in the kitbag, and this is a really high end mic that you can use in a variety of scenarios. It has two condenser cartridges to create a stereo image of your sound source, and works just as well out in the field as it does in the studio. Can be used as a top-level handheld for single-mic interviews, or as an external mic on your digital camera.



Sanken CSS5

High Quality Shotgun

Price \$2300/£1800

If you want to pick one single sound out of a busy environment the best option is to point a shotgun mic at it. These mics were used in the recording of Audible Studios production of Locke & Key, and come highly recommended as a shotgun option for 'out and about' recordings. You can also switch its setting to 'wide' mode if you want to record sound effects or ambience on location.



Sennheiser EW 100-ENG G3

Excellent Wireless System

Price \$350/£275

Having some lavalier mics in your bag can come in really handy for flexibility, if you're recording someone who is moving around a fair bit, or for discretion if you're also recording video. What makes a lav mic even more flexible though is a wireless setup. This kit not only gets you up and running with a wireless lav (the Sennheiser ME 2), it also provides you with a transmitter to turn any XLR mic into a wireless option too.



Rode SmartLav +

The Smartphone Option

Price \$70/£45 each

Sometimes you just want the ability to do a quick interview on your phone, and Rode's SmartLav+ is the the sweet spot between flexibility, portability, and sound quality. Having two of these and a Rode SC6 splitter will take up no room at all in your pocket, and let you quickly set up a recording when those unplanned impromptu interview opportunities arise.



HosaTech YMM-261 Stereo Splitter

Price \$6/£4

A splitter will take two 3.5mm plugged mics and feed them into one recording. Conventional splitters treat this setup as one single mic, meaning there's no differentiation between either of them in the recording, even if you record on your device's stereo setting. The

HosaTech YMM-261 splitter lets you record your two mics into a genuine stereo recording, however. This means you can split both sides of the conversation in post-production and do some tweaking with the levels independently.



Rycote Lavalier Windjammer Lav Wind Protection

Price \$25/£15

It's very common for lavalier mics to be used outdoors, so wind protection can go a long way towards recording quality audio. Even the slightest of breezes can totally ruin your work. Rycote are masters of wind protection, and these little windjammers will pop over your mic heads quickly and easily, giving you much more freedom over where and when you can use your lavaliers.



Auphonix 6-inch Double Mesh Quality Pop Filter

Price \$19/£20

Attaching a pop filter to your mic stand before recording is essential. You can pick up a pop filter for next to nothing online, but cheap pop filters are often false economy. Their clamps tend to wear and loosen off, and their necks start to droop. It doesn't cost a fortune to get a decent pop filter, and this Auphonix model is good value for money. Aside from having a better build than its budget counterparts, it has a double layer of mesh which means more protection from plosives during the recording process.



Enjoytone EN-16

Furry Windjammer

Price \$14/£10

When you buy a mic it'll almost always come with its own foam cover. But you can reinforce those with a furry windjammer when you plan to do some of your recordings outdoors. The Enjoytone EN-16 is designed to cover the built in mics on a Zoom H5 or H6, but they have a range of sizes designed for other specific kit too. It's a wise move to keep a few furry windjammers in the kit bag at all time, and these will do a good job without breaking the bank



Cloudlifter CL-1

Dynamic Mic Gain Booster

Price \$150/£120

There are many instances where the use of a dynamic mic (like the SM58) is preferential to using a condenser mic. A dynamic will tend to perform better in less than ideal conditions because it offers more rejection of background noise. However, many preamps struggle to power dynamic mics properly, meaning you

need to turn the gain up pretty high, which then offsets all that noise rejection you were using it for in the first place. The Cloudlifter CL-1 is a little device that takes power from your main preamp or recorder and boosts it, before sending it on to your dynamic mic. The result is simple – a stronger and cleaner signal, without all that extra background noise.



Logitech C930 HD Webcam

Plug & Play Video Camera

Price \$95/£88

Video is a huge part of creating content nowadays, even for the audio podcaster. Whether you're filming interviews to double up your content output by putting it on Youtube, or recording promotional footage for a project, it's a good idea to have a High Definition USB camera at hand. The Logitech 930 is a great quality "plug and play" camera that'll let you create great looking videos either in-studio, or on the go.



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www.ThePodcastHost.com/kitbaglinks

If you want more information on any of this kit then we've created a resources page with links to each of them.

Some we've reviewed, and some are still on our to-do list. Most of the links on this page are affiliates, so if you want to bypass them, just do a quick Google search instead!