



## **Microphone Choices: The Children of Chicago and Evanston (This Time For Shure...)**

**“At The Harmonica Microphone Bench” with Fritz  
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As we've previously surveyed the chief mic sources from the era of “pre-hand-held” microphones, from among the dozens of manufacturers it's become apparent that the two major players from the harpster's point of view are Astatic and Shure. Having looked at three of the principal Astatic designs in our last Mic Bench entry and assessing them for SOUND and WORKABILITY, it seems only fair (and logical) to do the same for the corresponding Shure weaponry. And so we shall...

The term “Bullet mic” has become part of the harp player's lexicon, a generic descriptive phrase that's been applied to virtually every microphone with even a hint of the La Salle Headlamp Factor, and some that exhibit none of those Deco similarities at all. BUT, when it comes to the applicable Shure models, “Bullet” loses its quotation marks and becomes a legitimate title. Prominently displayed on packaging and promo material, I'd guess that more people recognize the Shure 520 as the Green Bullet than by its official numerical designation. It's been printed right there on the box for years...

Shure didn't invent the microphone or the “Bullet” style of design, but like Henry Ford and the automobile, they get much of the credit for popularizing them. Beginning with the Astatic/American-like 705A (the “Rocket”), Shure embarked on their own Bullet Train, bringing Deco-inspired communications microphones to the marketplace just about the time Judy Garland was singing “Somewhere Over the Rainbow” in THE WIZARD OF OZ. The 705A is an unusual Shure product in that it's their only Bullet example I can think of that has an integral tilting-head stand mount (like the Shure 55 Unidyne, which appeared in the same year), a press-fit hemispherical grill utilizing three machine screws to secure it, and a detachable cable with an Amphenol three-pin connector. Add four low profile Buck Rogers fins, and you've got the “Rocket”. In terms of SOUND and WORKABILITY, many would find the 705A is a better display piece than weapon. Although its crystal element would be capable (when healthy) of 30-10,000 cycles per second with an output in the neighborhood of -55db, its tall highly rounded grill, weight, and tilt-mount positioned just behind the grill make it somewhat problematic to handle when used for harp.

Shure soon followed with the 7A, which shared the 705A's Brush-licensed crystal element, but housed it in an almost minimalist nosecone design consisting of only a grill, a rear body “shell”, two 6-32 machine screws to hold them together, and another 6-32 to retain the now hardwired cable at the extreme rear of the mic. The 5/8"x27 threading for the mic's stand was now integral in the body's casting just forward of the output cable's opening, eliminating the parts and materials intensive tilting stand mount found on the 705A. The 7A and 705A were side by side in the Shure catalog, but at \$9.70 the 7A was five dollars cheaper than the 705A. Five dollars could buy a lot of groceries in 1939. Although the

model designation would last only one year, the design of the 7A would set the profile, standard, and style of the Shure Bullet mics for decades to come.

Next time, a closer look at the 7A's long line of successors and the wide wonderful world of Shure microphone elements will be our focus on the MIC BENCH...

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For pictures and descriptions of most of the microphones listed visit  
[http://www.harmonicamasterclass.com/vintage\\_collection.htm](http://www.harmonicamasterclass.com/vintage_collection.htm)

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