PreSonus
Studio 192 £769 PC MAC

You certainly get a lot of ins and outs with this mid-range USB 3.0 interface, but does versatility come at the expense of ease-of-use?

> PreSonus' Studio 192 USB 3.0 audio interface comes in two forms: the Studio 192 and the smaller Studio 192 Mobile (£549). It's the former we're looking at here, and the Studio 192 is a 1U rack-mountable unit that records and plays back at up to 24-bit/192kHz quality. It comes with the Universal Control software, used to control the hardware from your computer, set up ultra-low-latency mixes (both main and cue or foldback), and configure onboard effects. The free UC Surface iPad app allows you to do all the same things. Also included is PreSonus' Studio One Artist DAW, with integrated control of the Studio 192 preamps and foldback mix features.

On the front panel are two combi XLR/jack inputs capable of receiving mic, instrument and line level signals, while six further analogue combi inputs on the rear are mic and line level only. You also get two ADAT inputs (16 channels, reduced to eight for 192kHz) and stereo S/PDIF.

The outputs are similarly numerous, with the Main analogue stereo pair and eight more analogue lines all on balanced TRS jacks, alongside 16 ADAT optical outputs (reduced to eight at 192kHz), stereo S/PDIF, and Wordclock In and Out, for syncing external input devices, such as the PreSonus Digimax DP8.

A small control panel on the front lets you set input gains and activate phantom power, while a dedicated button (we'd prefer a momentary option and/or footswitch) engages the built-in

talkback microphone. Talkback level and mix routing are controllable in the Universal Control software, and you can use an external microphone instead if you prefer. Below that lot are a Dim/Mute switch and a Mono button for the monitoring signal at the Main Output.

In the centre of the front panel is a bank of eight eight-step LED input meters, each with a 48V indicator, and a stereo output meter. To the right is the Main Out volume pot, then a pair of headphone outputs, each of which can be assigned source signals independently.

The Universal Control software includes a speaker management system, enabling analogue outputs 1/2 and 3/4 to be used as additional monitoring sources to the Main Output. Three configurations are available to facilitate surround or subwoofer setups.

In the Studio
The complexity level of the Studio 192 balances well with its ease of use and satisfying elegance, and all that I/O and routing versatility should keep even the most demanding producer happy. The sound of the XMAX mic preamps is clean and quiet, and the digital control over them is ultra-smooth. The Fat Channel is a very efficient surgical processor for both tone and dynamics. It doesn't have any harmonic saturation element, so to that extent it's not truly 'fattening' and doesn't add much colour, but it gives you

excellent corrective tools.

There are a few niggles, though: you can't monitor Fat Channel effects without recording them, and you can't select speakers from the front page. Also, the decision to go with USB 3.0 over the far faster Thunderbolt may disappoint those after super-low latency when monitoring through their DAW (as opposed to just through the in-built Fat Channel), but we can understand PreSonus wanting to appeal to Windows users.

With Studio 192, PreSonus continue their tradition of manufacturing high-quality devices at admirably affordable prices. It's a compelling package that would sit well at the heart of any project studio or small professional facility. **cm**

Web www.presonus.com

Alternatively

Focusrite Scarlett 18i20
cm192 » 9/10 » £399
Only runs up to 96kHz, but it's cheaper than Studio 192

RME Fireface 802
N/A » N/A » £1119
USB 2.0 and Firewire, only four mic pres, and rather more expensive

Verdict

For Complete pro recording solution
Good-sounding, quiet mic preamps
Comprehensive I/O
Excellent hardware/software integration
Integrated speaker management system

Against Can't monitor effects without recording them
No speaker selection on the main page

A fantastic, feature-packed interface at a great price, the Studio 192 sounds as good as it looks and couldn't be easier to use

9/10

The Fat Channel

Each of the Studio 192's eight analogue inputs and the first eight ADAT inputs feature a virtual channel strip that can be called up in the Universal Control software, comprising expander/gate, compressor/limiter and fully parametric four-band EQ with high-pass filter. You can bypass each processor, and all the controls you'd expect are in place: Threshold, Range, Key Filter, Attack and Release for the Gate; Threshold, Ratio, Gain, Attack, Release (with Auto option) and Soft/Hard Knee for the

Compressor; and Frequency, Gain and Q on all four bands for the EQ, each with independent bypass. The EQ even has two 'slots', for A/B comparison.

It's all good stuff, the only drawback being that you can't monitor the Fat Channel without also recording it, which is rarely going to be ideal, particularly for vocals.

There are also two monitoring-only auxiliary busses, hosting programmable reverb and delay effects.