

# Euphonix MC Mix | £700

Euphonix enter the DAW controller market with the MC Mix. Will a big reputation help ensnare a new group of users? **Jono Buchanan** syncs his fades

## WHAT IS IT?

An Ethernet-based hardware controller from mixer giants Euphonix

## CONTACT

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## HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Logic integration is completely seamless
- 2 Well designed and very easy to use
- 3 Mackie Control extends application support

**E**uphonix, SSL and Neve are perhaps the biggest names associated with top-end mixing consoles, with all

three finding favour within the pro engineer community. Until recently, technology from these audio giants had been beyond the financial reach of many of us but products such as SSL's Alpha Channel have provided an opportunity for those of a more restricted wallet to get in on the action. Euphonix's NAMM-announced 'Artist Series' Control Surfaces now aim to do something similar, with prices competitive with established models from manufacturers such as Mackie and M-Audio. The MC Control surface will arrive shortly but available now is the MC Mix – a control surface

designed to seamlessly integrate into any Mac-based DAW environment.

## Ethernet-friendly protocol

As you can see from the photos, the MC Mix is an attractive, nicely proportioned control surface that should fit comfortably on your desk without completely cluttering your workspace. It covers roughly the same footprint as a 17" MacBook Pro and offers eight channel strips with a fader and 'soft' knob, alongside a host of additional selection and edit buttons per channel and global controls to let you select the various parameters of your mix – inserts, auxiliaries, pan controls and the like. The protocol which lets you operate the MC Mix is Euphonix's proprietary EuCon software,

which works via Ethernet, allowing vastly increased speeds and resolution over standard MIDI controllers – Euphonix boast that data flies at 250 times the speed of MIDI and with 80 times the resolution. Once installed, the EuCon software needs to be active and the Ethernet cable attached between the MC Mix and your computer before you boot the music application of your choice, though once again bear in mind that EuCon, and therefore the MC Mix, are currently only available for Mac OS X 10.4 or newer. Euphonix state that they've worked closely with Apple throughout the development of the MC Mix and this is clear to see if Logic is your host application – integration couldn't be smoother or more immediate. To ensure instant operation, you simply need to visit the Control Surfaces setup page to check that Channel Strip View Mode is set to Arrange. Integration also extends to the unit itself, which can be chained to a total of three other MC Mix units or to the forthcoming MC Control module via an Ethernet chain.

## Integrate, don't hesitate

Once you boot your DAW, the MC Mix springs into life. Whether you're starting a new session or opening an existing one, you'll immediately find settings snap to their correct values, with the motorised faders zipping to their relevant locations and pan values displayed and immediately tweakable





via the rotary dials. The key to operating the MC Mix is to familiarise yourself with the menu assignments and their roles and fortunately, this is child's play. Selecting a track comes first, with the yellow button to the side of each fader your route in here.

After that, you can select one of the Knob Set buttons on the left-hand side to allow you to edit or drive a particular channel's settings directly from the MC Mix. So, if you want to edit the parameters of a particular plug-in, select the relevant strip first and then press the Channel button. This will assign the channel's insert headers to the main display screen, so to adjust the settings of the one you want, simply press the knob beneath the plug-in's name. It will then open on your computer's monitor, so you can see it displayed, while its parameters will also then be spread across the MC Mix's own screen, with each parameter clearly named and adjustable via the knobs. To the left of the display, page left and right buttons light to show you the additional 'pages' of parameters so that, while only 8 parameters are displayed at once, arrowing from side

## Application Support

The MC Mix will support any Mac OS X 10.4 (or newer) host sequencer but the level of integration and the setup procedure varies, depending on which applications you use. Beyond the immediacy of Logic, the MC Mix also integrates with Cubase and Nuendo, once you've obtained an

activation code from Steinberg. It's then necessary to configure the EuCon software, with instructions on how to do this provided in the MC Mix's electronic manual. EuCon can also run as a hybrid Mackie Control surface, with the software containing a conversion algorithm, which bridges

EuCon with host sequencers such as Live, Digital Performer and Soundtrack Pro. Setting this up means launching System Preferences and then dragging the names of the applications you want to control into a EuCon list, before selecting Mackie Control as the control format. I tested the MC Mix with both Digital Performer 5 and Ableton Live 5 (via their own control surface setup procedures) and they both worked fine, though what can be achieved is, of course, no better or worse than rival Mackie Control-protocol surfaces.



## SPECS

**System Requirements:** Apple Macintosh G4 with a 1.25GHz or faster, OS X v10.4 or later, 10/100 Base-T Ethernet port, 1GB System RAM, 100MB of free hard disk space for full installation, CD-ROM/CD-RW or DVD-ROM drive required for software installation, Display with 1024x768 resolution or higher

**Connectors:** Ethernet Port  
Footswitch Jack

**Dimensions:** 420 x 238 x 30mm

**Weight:** 2.2kg

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to side to grab other settings is straightforward. Below this, you can adjust EQ settings for each channel via a dedicated button and even set up a new Channel EQ setting via the first dial, without having to revert to your mouse. Out of the box, MC Mix will control channels 1-8 of your software, but you can jump down either one channel (to control 2-9) or one bank (to control 9-16) via the Bank buttons on the

right-hand side. On the bright, clear display, you're constantly kept in touch with parameters and assignments, with the top row dedicated to displaying track names, ensuring you'll never get

immediately, as the integration is extremely fluent and versatile. If you're using any software other than Logic though, be aware that you might be forced into using the Mackie Control protocol and while this isn't so much of a limitation, nor does it make it unsuitable or unusable by any means, it simply means

that MC Mix can't out-perform its rivals. Switch it back to Logic though, and it does so – effortlessly. **FM**

lost. Labels in blue are 'shift' functions, accessed by holding either of the Shift keys located at the bottom left- or right-hand corner.

## Conclusion

In summary, this is a stream-lined, consummately capable control surface, which makes driving a session almost exclusively from the MC Mix incredibly straightforward and functional. The layout is attractive and intuitive and the bundled EuCon software is immediately responsive, even on super-involved production and mix projects. If Logic is your DAW of choice, I'd have no hesitation in recommending MC Mix to you

FutureMusic	VERDICT
BUILD	★★★★★
VALUE	★★★★★
EASE OF USE	★★★★★
VERSATILITY	★★★★★
RESULTS	★★★★★
Unbeatable when used in Logic and very useable for other DAWs too. A real quality product.	

## ALTERNATIVES



**Mackie Control Universal Pro**

£899

A great control surface from the guys who get most credit for inventing the whole concept. However, it's reliant on MIDI, so the resolution and speed don't quite reach the MC Mix's dizzying heights.

[mackie.com](http://mackie.com)



**M-Audio ProjectMix I/O**

£725

Another comprehensive control surface, laden with knobs and sliders. The ProjectMix is particularly worthy of note as it can be used as a driver for Pro Tools M-Powered, with seamless integration.

[m-audio.com](http://m-audio.com)