

# M-Audio ProFire 2626 | £420

Will a flagship M-Powered interface appeal to non-Pro Tools users too? *Jono Buchanan* investigates...

ProFire 2626. Boasting whopping amounts of I/O, high-quality preamps and its own flexible software application alongside support for M-Powered, on paper it looks like it might have enough to bring sweat to the brow of both its target market and its competitors. Paper's one thing, though...

### A quick tour

The ProFire is a 1U rack-mountable unit which manages to squeeze an awful lot of control onto its front and back panels. To start, at the back you'll find eight combi ports, which offer XLR or 1/4" line level input. The XLR inputs feature the same high-quality mic preamps as feature on M-Audio's award-winning Octane preamp, which is an impressive start.

Next to the inputs, 8 line outs feature in a 2 x 4 matrix which in turn sit next to the optional Optical connections. There's even room for a MIDI, S/PDIF and Word Clock breakout connector (the cable for which you'll



### WHAT IS IT?

M-Audio's new flagship FireWire audio interface with M-Powered capability

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### HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Quality Preamps
- 2 Flexible software routing
- 3 Lots of I/O



**W**hen Digidesign and M-Audio jointly announced their M-Powered collaboration, it was clear very quickly that a user-base financially frozen out of the market would finally get a chance to run Pro Tools. M-Powered continues to represent a cost-effective way to get your hands on this industry standard

software but with the lower cost of Digidesign's own M-Box range these days, one can only assume that M-Audio have had to stop and think about their own line of interfaces.

Continuing to support M-Powered is, of course, a priority but, to be competitive, audio interfaces need more tricks these days. Here then, is their new flagship FireWire interface, the

### A Software Brain

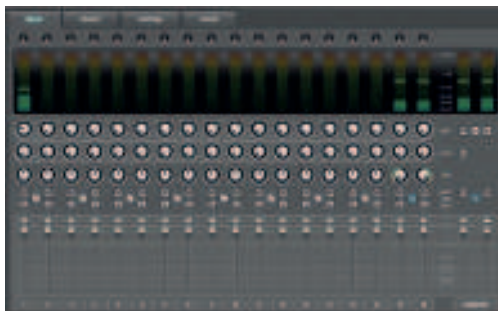
There are several software permutations for new ProFire 2626 owners, the complexities of which depend on whether you're intending to use M-Powered. If you are, you'll need Version 7.4, which may mean an upgrade (available from the M-Audio site).

There's an additional update which covers the 2626 which you'll need too, as well as an updated iLok authorisation.

Lastly, you'll have to run the 2626's own driver. None of this is painful and, once

complete, the 2626 duly sparks into life. A dedicated control panel is installed and

this really represents the 'brain' of the unit. It features four pages, the first of which is



a mixer, which you're free to configure. The Router page lets you make connections, with the many analogue and digital options assigned here.

A Settings page lets you get jiggy with parameters such as the Sample Rate and Sync Source selections, while the final page provides resources, such as the 2626's manual.

Changes can be made on the fly, even while a DAW host is up and running. Such flexibility really helps mark the 2626 as a pro unit.



