

# Steinberg UR28M | £380

**Bruce Aisher** tests the latest Steinberg interface, and decides if it deserves a place on his desktop

## WHAT IS IT?

A desktop USB 2.0 audio interface with on-board audio processing, monitor mix control functionality and Cubase-based software bundle.

## CONTACT

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## HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 On-board DSP processing
- 2 High level of integration with Cubase
- 3 Flexible input and output routing

**A**lthough best known for their Cubase and Nuendo DAW software, Steinberg have a history of releasing closely related hardware products. This has been brought largely in-house since Yamaha bought the company, and continues to bear fruit in the audio interface arena. The new UR28M is younger brother to the more sophisticated UR824, and unlike the CI1 and CI2+ interfaces from last year is USB 2.0 in nature (rather than the less efficient USB 1.1). It also adds the enticing prospect of on-board DSP, first seen in the well-regarded MR816CSX three years ago.

From the moment you open the box and take a peek at the front panel of the UR28M, it's clear that the Steinberg's intent was to focus on streamlines input management allied to comprehensive,

and hands-on, monitor selection capabilities. Will the results live up to this promise?

## UR the one

The UR28M feels sturdy from the start, with its half plastic, half metal

construction. Although a USB device, it requires the use of separate mains adaptor which, despite the units modest size, immediately places this sound card in the 'non-mobile' category. In fairness there is no allusion, on Steinberg's part, to the unit being 'mobile', and while it will fit in a small bag, the UR28M is most definitely a desktop device.

Having plugged-in the unit and installed the enclosed 'Tools' software, I booted up Cubase 6, and was up and running immediately. When used with Cubase 6 or the included, feature-trimmed, 'AI' variant, most of the 'under the hood' mix and routing functionality is incorporated into the standard workflow in a streamlined and efficient way. Of course, you get a full copy of Cubase AI6 with the interface, so out of the box you have a fully integrated DAW

## Channel Strip, REV-X and on-board DSP

Although the interface demonstrates decent enough low latency performance, the provision of on-board dynamics and reverb processing is a real boon when recording live sources. With the UR28M it's possible to playback a project using the largest

buffer setting and at the same time, set up an independent monitor mix with compression, EQ and reverb all perfectly in sync. REV-X is a very capable reverb plug-in. The interface offers good visual feedback related to the ten available editing parameters. The Sweet

Spot Morphing Channel Strip plug-in is at heart a three-band parametric EQ combined with a compressor. What makes things interesting is the Morph knob for tuning the 'Sweet Spot' (a series of five internal optimised preset settings) – good for getting quick results.



