

# Focusrite Scarlett 2i2 | £120

Focusrite return with a new collection of interfaces. *Jono Buchanan* meets the Scarlett 2i2...

### WHAT IS IT?

A new budget interface from Focusrite

### CONTACT

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### HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Compact yet rugged design
- 2 'Traffic-light' gain LEDs make input level setup intuitive
- 3 Two Focusrite pres of 'Saffire' quality

### SPECS

2 Focusrite pre-amps  
Up to 24-bit/96kHz audio resolution  
Rugged anodized aluminium construction  
USB 2 connectivity  
Bus-powered  
Traffic-light LED surrounds on inputs help monitor levels  
Monitor dials for speaker levels and headphones

#### System Requirements

**Mac:** OS X 10.6.5 Snow Leopard (32 and 64 bit) and above, including OS X 10.7 Lion

**PC:** Windows 7 (32 and 64 bit), or Windows XP SP3 (32 bit only)

#### For Scarlett Effects Suite:

**Mac:** Power PC G4/G5 or Intel, OS 10.4.11 or higher, 512 MB RAM, VST, Audio Unit or RTAS compatible host

**PC:** Windows XP or Vista (All Versions, XP users advised to use Windows XP2 or higher), Pentium III 600 MHz CPU or faster, 512 MB RAM, VST compatible host

Size:  
175 x 100 x 45mm

Weight:  
580g

**F**ocusrite have a well-earned reputation for building high-quality audio interfaces and mic preamps at

price-points to cater to users of all requirements and at a wide range of budget points. With its Saffire range of interfaces remaining popular but now a well-established brand, it's perhaps no surprise that a new, even more compact range has been released, by the name of Scarlett. Featuring bold styling, tank-like construction and, of course, the fabled Focusrite preamps, the question is, does it offer enough to pique the interest and requirements of a new audio interface generation?

### Burning red halos

The back panel is modestly furnished, with just the USB 2.0 connector and stereo line outputs. The main action is reserved for the front panel, where the two Focusrite preamps are presented with hybrid input ports.

These can take an XLR cable or a ¼" jack with a rocker switch below selecting between Mic and Instrument

inputs. There's also a 48V phantom power button which glows a bright red when activated which serves both inputs if you're connecting two microphones and a Direct Monitor button to feed input signals directly to the twin monitor options. These are a larger grey dial which controls volume to your speakers and a separately-driven headphone level dial, with its connector below.

An LED to the left of this glows to show USB connectivity and, like the majority of interfaces of this kind and size, bus-power is provided via the USB connector to ensure you don't need to be carrying an external power supply. The most intuitive indicators come as circular surrounds for the Gain dials which select levels for the inputs, with a traffic-light system of red (too loud), orange (getting close to overload) and green (good level) displays which bring the front panel to life. As this is an interface designed with mobile users in mind, such a clear and bright indication of levels will prove popular in low-lighting conditions and is such a

neat solution, it's a wonder all interface designers don't employ similar systems.

### Quality pres

Whereas many of its rivals have spent the last few years developing a reputation for the quality of its pres, Focusrite have no such problems, as such technology is the foundation on which its company was built. That doesn't make the quality of the input stage any less impressive here, however, with up to 24-bit, 96kHz recording specifications ensuring that the interface won't be the reason for any poor quality recordings.

The pres are the same design as those which feature on the Saffire series and they remain as clean as ever. Any sounds with your Scarlett-fronted projects can be enhanced further with the inclusion of the Scarlett suite of plugs which can be installed, along with a copy of Ableton Live 8 Lite from a DVD. This plug-in suite features Compressor, EQ, Gate and Reverb all of which offer useful parameters and are capable of some nice sound-shaping.

All in all, Scarlett is exactly what you'd expect from Focusrite – a great-sounding, well-designed interface which packs plenty of flexibility into its slender frame. A lack of digital I/O may prove a stumbling block for some but for such a modest price, this interface deserves to sell by the truck-load. **FM**

| FutureMusic | VERDICT |
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Scarlett offers quality audio and distinctive styling – a winning compact package.

