

# PreSonus Studio One 2 £332

PC MAC



This DAW made its v1 debut just three years ago, and expectations are understandably running high for version 2

> Released in early 2009, Studio One offered a genuine alternative to the reigning big hitters of the DAW world. Delivering a clean but familiar interface, plenty of bundled effects, decent integration with PreSonus FireStudio audio interfaces (including cue mix setup) and track-by-track timestretch, it essentially cherry-picked the best bits from established DAWs.

To recap, Studio One offers unlimited audio, MIDI and instrument tracks, and it's built around a 32/64-bit internal engine with automatic delay compensation. It comes in three variants - Artist, Producer and Professional - with the difference between them being their feature-sets and the amount of third-party content they grant access to (see [www.bit.ly/nmReDT](http://www.bit.ly/nmReDT)). Here, we're focusing on the top-end Professional package.

## All about the Melodyne

The biggest new feature in Studio One 2 is the integration of Celemony's mind-bending

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Melodyne audio editor. The integration is just as seamless as PreSonus claim, and if you're a heavy Melodyne user, this will be a godsend. The Professional version of Studio One 2 includes Melodyne Essential - the most basic, single-track version - as standard, but if you have a more advanced version installed, Studio One 2 automatically utilises that instead.

Complementing Studio One's integrated timestretching, the update includes transient detection and Audio Bend, which is PreSonus' take on the 'elastic audio' concept. This enables not only audio quantise to grid, but also the ability to extract a groove template from one audio clip and apply it to another. You can even apply quantise to multiple tracks simultaneously, with phase-coherent processing keeping the sound tight and true throughout.

The transient detection works well, while the Audio Bend tool (think Live's Warp Markers or Logic's Flex Time) enables manipulation of audio parts to the extent that you would expect from a modern DAW.

Version 1 featured multitake loop recording, and this now includes intuitive comping of single or multiple tracks. Expand your takes across a series of lanes, then simply highlight your desired sections and double-click to add them to the comp. Sections can be auditioned in solo, and

"It all adds up to a clean, elegant, self-contained system that sounds fabulous"

even with your edits consolidated, the original edit points remain accessible in the edit window.

Studio One 2 also gains a couple of familiar housekeeping features: Folders and the Track List. Very similar to its Pro Tools equivalent, the latter is a sort of arrangement overview, enabling quick project navigation and track hiding. Folders enable you to bundle tracks together for visual convenience (though not editing).

## Editor's choice

On the subject of editing, event-based processing in the form of individual insert racks for all arrange page events has been added, as has a freeze function called Track Transform. This allows instant switching between real-time-processed parts (audio and virtual instruments) and rendered audio, so you can claw back precious CPU cycles. Both features work brilliantly, and the ability to edit frozen or 'transformed' tracks as blocks of audio is a real boon.

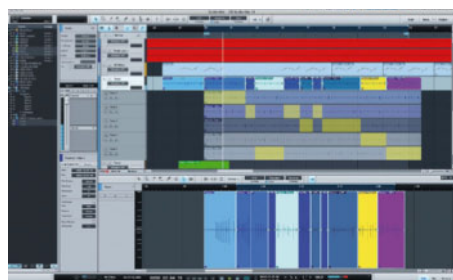
Studio One's roster of plug-ins has been enhanced. The effects now total 31 in number, with the most significant additions being: new amps, cabinets and stompboxes in the updated Ampire XT; a new convolution reverb (OpenAIR) and accompanying impulse response recorder (IR Maker); and a tone generator. Quality-wise, there's nothing to complain about – Studio One's effects are superb. We do hope that PreSonus will at some point add a decent soft synth to the heavily sample-based collection of bundled virtual instruments currently on offer, however.

In the Project page (Studio One Professional's mastering environment), options now include independent PQ markers and DDP export.

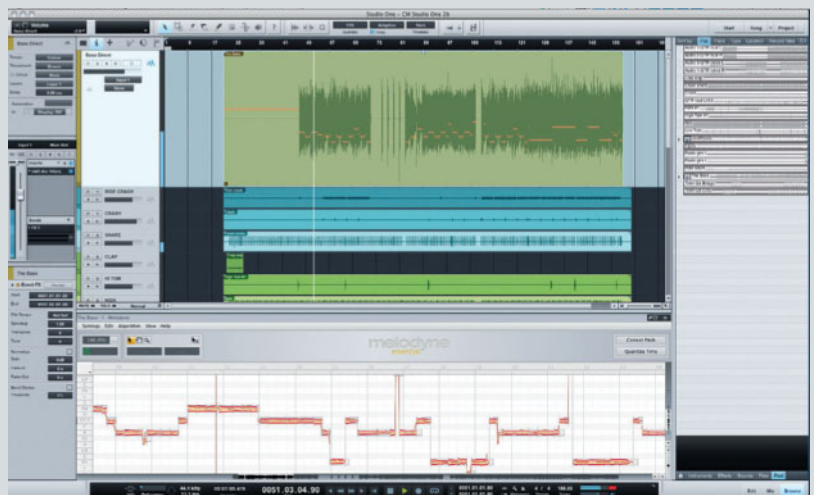
The bundled media content has been boosted to 20GB and re-jigged in terms of structure. It now includes loops from Vengeance-Sound and guitars from Nine Volt Audio, as well as NI's excellent Complete Elements library.

SoundCloud integration has been built into the Studio One browser, enabling uploading, downloading and previewing of audio.

Studio One was already big on ergonomics and workflow, and v2 builds on those foundations. Edit and mixer panels can now be detached and floated, and the mixer has a Narrow mode, providing quite a bit more layout flexibility.



The new multitake comping system makes it easy to create the perfect performance from multiple recordings



There's no need to manually capture or transfer your audio into Melodyne – it happens automatically

## Melodyne through and through

**Studio One 2 and Melodyne communicate using a system called Audio Random Access (ARA). This was developed by both PreSonus and Celemony to allow closer integration between the two applications, and it communicates information such as pitch, tempo and rhythm as well as the audio stream itself.**

**In use, this means that there's no need to capture or transfer your audio into Melodyne, as you would under any other DAW or the standalone version – Studio One does the work for you when you open a clip as a Melodyne edit. Melodyne works on individual audio events, so you can copy, move, shorten,**

**mute or delete your parts in the arrange page, and Melodyne will react accordingly. Furthermore, if you want to deactivate Melodyne for a particular event, you simply switch it off in the Event FX rack. With the Melodyne editor operating like the standard audio and MIDI editors, you also have the same 'in-pane' cursor playback controls; and it'll also follow any tempo and time signature changes.**

**The final thing to mention is that Melodyne's ability to detect notes and tempo in audio parts is fully integrated into Studio One 2, enabling you to easily and accurately convert audio to MIDI, via drag and drop.**

Finally, there's PreSonus' neat sidechain system, whereby any active sidechain calls up an auxiliary-style send control on all tracks.

## Growing pains

Inevitably for such a young DAW, there are a few omissions – a dedicated de-esser plug-in, for example. And although there's an excellent plug-in (Pipeline) included for patching in external hardware, there's no way to buss audio internally to audio track inputs.

Overall, Studio One 2 is an excellent update, and all the features described in this review work as well as described. For anyone getting started in recording and production, it all adds up to a clean, elegant, self-contained system that sounds fabulous and gives great workflow. Dragging established users away from their existing applications of choice is never going to be an easy task for PreSonus, but hopefully they can get Studio One 2 into the hands of enough audio trendsetters to earn it the exposure and take-up it deserves. **cm**

**Web** [www.presonus.com](http://www.presonus.com)  
**Contact** Source Distribution, 020 8962 5080  
**Info** Artist, £90; Producer, £165; upgrade from Professional v1, £125

## Alternatively

**Apple Logic Studio**  
**cm119 » 10/10 » £417**

Mac users get the most bang for their buck with Logic Studio

**Avid Pro Tools 10**  
**cm174 » 8/10 » £599**

Pro Tools' audio manipulation and multitake comping are top-notch

## Verdict

**For** Excellent Melodyne integration  
 Useful new comping feature  
 Refreshingly powerful yet simple to use  
 Good value for money  
 Excellent bundled effects

**Against** Instruments only average

A fantastic leap forward for this young DAW, though there's nothing wholly unique apart from Melodyne integration

9/10