

# PreSonus FireStudio | £519

If you're looking for an easy-to-use, expandable way of getting your band into your computer, this might just be it. **Daniel Griffiths** plugs in and presses record

## WHAT IS IT?

Multi in and out FireWire audio interface with optional remote-controlled unit

## CONTACT

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## HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Expandable and flexible
- 2 Easy to use
- 3 Great transparent sound

## SPECS

24-bit resolution up to 96k sample rate

26 simultaneous inputs and outputs

Eight Class-A mic preamps with trim control

Eight analogue line inputs, two instrument inputs

16 channels of optical ADAT I/O (eight channels via 96L dual SMIUX)

S/PDIF I/O and MIDI I/O

JetPLL jitter elimination technology

Zero latency DSP full-matrix mixer/router

PreSonus ProPak audio software suite with Cubase LE, Reason Adapted, Amplitube LE, BFD Lite, Drumagog LE

MSR remote available separately

**£139**

Size:

**483 x 44 x 160mm**

Weight:

**2.2kg**

**S**etting your 19-inch rack audio interface apart from the hoard is difficult. It's no secret that new audio

interfaces are passed around the FM test crew like hot potatoes – just how many times can you extol the virtues of a box that makes no noise? The PreSonus was in danger of suffering the same apathetic fate, if it wasn't for the fact that what it does, it does brilliantly well.

Its main sell is its inordinate number of ins and outs making it ideal for pro environments. As a buffer between a full-sized desk (with band attached) and a computer, it's hard to imagine a more transparent and easy-to-use unit. The rack unit itself is surprisingly tiny – 19 inches wide (of course) but only six inches deep. It's therefore eminently baggable and gigable. That said the unit requires

mains power despite its FireWire connection so you won't be recording in a field with this one.

The FireStudio is a complete 24-bit/96K recording system with eight Class-A PreSonus mic amps plus up to 16 channels of optical ADAT input and output. There's S/PDIF, BNC word clock and MIDI in and out too. And to co-ordinate the lot there's a 36 x 36 x 18 zero latency mixer/router application in the box too.

## PreSonus bonus

This bit of software, while simple, is a real bonus. It comes with Mac and PC versions and gives a vast bank of sliders and mix options to really go to work with the 1U ins and outs on the box itself. You can mix together audio from the computer's audio engine, and any of the mic-pres or inputs, grouping together pairs of sliders for stereo ins where necessary. And when you've got everything sounding perfect you can take a snapshot and save it to any one of nine locations.

Sound-wise I found the FS to be brilliantly transparent. Mics sounded

warm and in your face, while ins from keyboards came through sparkling and unfettered. The on-board gain controls coped with anything I threw at it, new or old. The FS comes into its own when teamed with a DAW and I set it up and got it working in Logic within minutes – literally my first attempt – with all the ins and outs visible within the program's mixer.

And I was able to try it with the MSR remote unit too. This add-on, paper-back-sized box links to the FS via an ethernet lead (supplied) and gives you full control of the box and even a pair of headphone outs. For switching between monitors, dimming the output or setting overall volume levels the MSR lets you put the FS rack and associated spaghetti out of reach while you enjoy fingertip control from your chair. The dedicated 5.1 switches make soloing and mixing for surround a doddle and the built-in talkback feature is welcome for bigger installs. The FS and MSR might seem like overkill for small studios but the added luxury of its quality and facilities make it worth the extra. If you need a flexible workhorse for recording bands, you can be confident that the FS has everything you need and more. **FM**

## FutureMusic VERDICT

### BUILD



### VALUE



### EASE OF USE



### VERSATILITY



### RESULTS



**Record up to 26 tracks simultaneously. If you need the ins and outs, this has got the lot.**

