

Yamaha 01V96i Digital Mixer | £1,979

Yamaha's digital mixers continue to prove popular. Can USB interfacing be the i-cing on the cake for their latest upgrade? **Jono Buchanan** finds out

WHAT IS IT?

The latest version of Yamaha's popular 01V96 digital mixer, now with USB 2.0 audio interfacing

CONTACT

Who: Yamaha UK
Tel: +44 (0)844 811 1116
Web: www.yamaha-proaudio.com

HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Full USB 2.0 audio interfacing
- 2 Pre-loaded effects engines
- 3 Work in Layers

As has been said countless times before in these pages, the passing of time can be cruel for many of the

products released into the music tech world. Fourteen years ago, when Yamaha first unleashed a line of digital mixers, the DAW-centred recording studio was still finding its feet, while the idea of running an entire mix, complete with automation, effects plug-ins and software instruments, was still a pipe-dream for most. Back then, 'external' digital mixing consoles

provided a valuable service and, despite relatively high prices, proved popular as the centrepiece of many a semi-pro and pro studio.

This was perhaps most true of Yamaha's 01V console, which managed to combine flexibility, compactness and, at the time of release, rarely-rivalled audio quality. In the intervening period, countless technologies have risen and subsequently fallen but the fact that this desk, a couple of revisions later, remains in circulation, is testament

to its staying power. With a new letter in its name – the 21st century-friendly 'i' – Yamaha have clearly decided it needs a tweak to keep it relevant. So what's new?

Good connections

This is a 40-channel digital mixing console capable of recording resolutions up to 96kHz at 24-bit. Along the bottom edge of the upper surface are 16 100mm motorised faders, with 'toggle access' to two layers of 16 input channels. There are eight auxiliaries and eight mix busses while the desk also features a master output fader and the potential for four internal effects engines.

In terms of physical connections, inputs are connected towards the back edge of the upper panel, with high-quality microphone pres available on the first 12 channels alongside balanced line inputs and dedicated inserts too. Channels 13-14 and 15-16 provide stereo inputs, while phantom power can be switched on in blocks of four channels for the microphone ins.

Round the back there are monitor left/right outputs, Omni outs (1-4), main XLR stereo outputs, word clock in/out ports, Coaxial I/O, MIDI In, Out and





Thru ports and a USB 2.0 connector, of which more shortly. Be aware that despite the proliferation of buttons on the upper surface, the O1V96i remains a console which requires regular menu-diving to set up and operate. Unlike analogue consoles with dedicated EQs, auxes and pan controls, all of these options and more are accessed here via software.

Interfacing station

The principle new feature is, at last, full USB 2.0 audio interfacing. While the previous incarnation of the console also featured a USB port, this was purely for firmware update and data transfer purposes so, while it's a little late to the party as concerns some of its rivals, the 01V96i rights this wrong with 16 channels of simultaneous audio recording/playback at sample rates up to 96kHz at 24-bit. Despite the growing

Effects Ready

The O1V96i comes loaded with high-quality effects engines ready for you to apply in the studio or in live situations. Four effects types are included: Channel Strip, Master Strip, Vintage Stomp and Reverb. Channel Strip offers tone and dynamics control on a per-channel basis, offering emulations

of classic '70s outboard gear. Master Strip allows for tape-based simulations with reel-to-reel options including classic Ampex and Studer clones. Vintage Stomp provides guitar-oriented Phaser effects with plenty of retro character here to boot, while the Reverbs are based on Yamaha's

'REV-X' algorithm to provide Hall, Room and Plate spaces which glisten with quality and character. Effects are matched to the sample resolution you specify, so the only compromise is that, at higher resolutions, the number of effects available simultaneously drops.

Better still, the Remote Layer opens up further flexibility, allowing you to control external DAWs using the console as a remote surface, so whether you want the desk to run the whole mix or act as a front-end for your DAW, your options are covered. Working the other way

observer, this principle update might seem a bit stingy in an age where we expect new versions to be 'reinvent the wheel' affairs. The truth remains that the Q1V96 was always a fantastically reliable, solid performer, so there was no need for such flamboyance to entice

a new crowd; you either like the idea of a digital desk or you don't. If you do, there's no doubt that this new feature will be welcome and, alongside

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number of Thunderbolt devices, not to mention FireWire, USB 2.0 remains a popular standard and while, for instance, Apple's line of MacBook computers have seen FireWire 400 come and go, USB remains an ever-present, so while Yamaha's choice of connection port might not seem the sexiest, it's more than capable for the purposes of this desk.

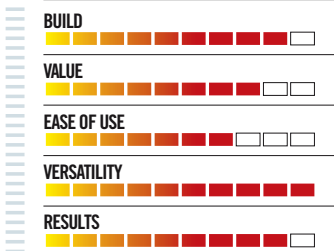
On the subject of connecting to the outside world, the software heart of the 01V96i allows you to work in Layers, with the first controlling inputs 1-16, the second 17-32, while the Master Layer brings auxiliary and buss control to the faders, allowing you to drive effects and groups in the same way that you would each individual channel.

around, you can also use your computer to control many of the 01V96i's features once you've installed the included Studio Manager software. This in turn runs an Editor program which lets you dump and recall scene memories and effects settings alongside other features. Once installed, the software also provides GUI control over the onboard effects – read more about this in the *Effects Ready* box.

Built to last

The inclusion of USB interfacing is welcome and entirely appropriate for a desk of the 01V96i's pedigree but will it be enough to encourage you to part with your hard-earned? To the outside

clean, great-sounding audio capability, flexible routing and high-quality internal effects processing, this desk remains a great performer. **FM**

FutureMusic **VERDICT**

If you like the idea of a compact-format digital desk, the 01V concept remains a winner.

SPECS

Mixing channels: 32
Mono + 4 Stereo
Groups: 8
Auxiliaries: 8
Main Output: Stereo
Input channel functions: Gate, Attenuator, 4-band PEQ, 2x Compressor, Delay, Pan
Output channel functions: Attenuator, 4-band PEQ, Compressor, Delay
On-board processors: 4x SPX multi effectors

I/O
Mic inputs: 12
Phantom power: +48V
 DC; On/Off per 4 channels
Line inputs: 2x Stereo,
 2x 2tr in
AD converter: 24-bit;
 128-time over sampling
Line outputs: Stereo
 output, Monitor output,
 4x Omni output
DA converter: 24-bit;
 128-time over sampling
Digital I/O: ADAT
 (8-in/8-out), 2tr in/out
Expansion slots:
 Mini-VGDAI (16-in/16-out)
 Control and others
 To Host (USB), MIDI, Word
 clock I/O

Dimensions:
436 x 548 x 148mm
Weight:
14kg

ALTERNATIVES



Presonus Studio Live Desks

from £1.799

Probably Yamaha's main competitor. The most basic model contains FireWire audio interfacing – and you can control it from an iPad!

www.presonus.com



Allen & Heath
GS-R24

£4.629

With 24 inputs/preamps and a choice of analogue or FireWire connectivity, this is a pro option.

www.allen-heath.com