

Allen & Heath Qu-16 Live Mixer | £2,159

Allen & Heath's Qu-16 is packed with all the latest performance needs. **Tim Oliver** goes onboard

WHAT IS IT?

A compact live digital mixer with touch-screen editing

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Digital touch-screen editing
- 2 Direct to disk multi-track recording
- 3 Remote mixing via iPad

The project live console market is currently seeing a wave of affordable innovations. The Behringer X32, released last

year, incorporated an astonishingly rich feature list for its price. Now Allen & Heath's Qu-16 is taking it on.

The Qu-16 has evolved from a condensing of their GLD and iLive series of professional flexible digital mixers and is housed in a very compact and rack-mountable console surface. It's solidly built, with a sleek modernist profile, and for a digital mixer there is a welcome population of knobs amongst the buttons on its upper half giving it a hands-on feel. Below that are 17 long-throw moving faders that are assignable

to all sorts of tasks including the setting of the onboard stereo graphic EQs.

The ins and outs

With 16 mono mic/line channels and a further three stereo line inputs this is clearly aimed at the small gig world. Two of the stereo inputs are balanced jacks, the third is a mini-jack input for visiting MP3 players. That's it as far as inputs go; there are no external effects loops and there are no physical inserts. All effects are onboard, of which there are four available, two as auxiliary busses and two as insert effects. There are four mono and three stereo mix outputs for independent monitor feeds as well as a main output for the Front of

House send. A very attractive feature of this desk is the wealth of expandability options including remote on-stage personal monitoring systems and remote audio connections using the proprietary dSnake output on the back panel (see *Expanding on the Qu-16*).

Each input features four-band parametric EQ with additional High Pass Filter, compression and gating, while the mix outputs each have compression and graphic EQs.

The pros and cons

The control surface is laid out in an intuitive way and if you already have a grasp of the orthodox MO for digital desks, a quick glance to find the Select buttons and a few taps on the touch-screen will see you up and running in no time. The tactile 'analogue channel' knobs bring a reassuring feel and an alternative operational mode for the selected input channel.

The sound of the desk is, not surprisingly for Allen & Heath, of high quality with newly designed preamps based on their GLD series. There is one drawback, however – you can't name channels. Okay, you can write them on a strip of masking tape below the faders but what happens when you're on stage with your remote iPad controller app



