Presonus FaderPort 8 £509

A compact, mechanised and yet somehow affordable DAW controller has landed from the US. **Jon Musgrave** takes a ride

CONTACT WHO: Source Distribution **TEL:** 020 8962 5080 **WEB:** www.sourcedistribution.co.uk
KEY FEATURES Eight 100mm touch-sensitive motorised faders, eight parameter/scribble strip LCD displays, Windows & OS X compatible, Footswitch input for hands free start/stop, Native support for Studio One (v3.2.2 or later), Class compliant Mackie Control and HUI support, Studio One Artist included

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Compact design
that won't dominate
your desktop

**Native use
with Studio One
is excellent**

Good build quality

**Full-sized 100mm
motorised touch
sensitive faders**

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There's no getting
around the fact
that MCU and
HUI feels like a
let down compared
to Studio One

**Maximum parameter
control limitations in
native mode may
limit its use with
virtual instruments**

This compact table-top DAW controller includes native integration with Studio One (v3.3.2 and later) and supports both Mackie Control and HUI protocols for use with many top DAWs. It can also work in tandem with the original FaderPort, should you have one of those.

At about a foot square and just over a couple of inches deep, it won't eat into your table top space, and it's also compact enough to sit on your lap. Just bear in mind it's not USB powered, so it's always trailing a USB and DC power lead. The layout is dominated by eight 100mm motorised touch-sensitive faders and a plethora of multicoloured rubberised backlit buttons. At the top of each strip, you'll find a context-specific parameter and scribble strip LCD display.

Functionality is clearly delineated across sections, with the Shift key adding a second function to over half of the buttons. On the right-hand side, automation and transport controls sit above and below the session navigator, whose push button encoder knob and

cursor buttons follow one of eight modes, including Zoom, Scroll, Bank, Marker, and Master, which attaches main fader control to the rotary encoder. Select Shift, and the same mode buttons trigger your keyboard function keys (F1 to F8).

Looking at the fader section, Faderport 8's faders work in one of four modes handling fader level (Track) as well as further parameters (Edit Plugins, Sends and Pan). This means you have to switch modes quite a bit, but it feels like a reasonable compromise, with the LCD display keeping you abreast of what's happening. On the upside, you get dedicated Mute and Solo buttons for each strip, global Solo and Mute Clear buttons, and a rather nifty button, Bypass, which bypasses all plugins on a track.

If you really want to see Faderport 8 at its best, you'll have to fire it up with Studio One (a free copy of Studio One Artist comes bundled). Here the subtleties of its design bear fruit, with the multicoloured backlit buttons following the DAW colours, and decent (and easily editable)

plugin control of up to eight variable and eight on/off parameters.

So, any gripes? I did have a couple of hangs (easily resolved by rebooting the FP8), and in Logic Pro X a few details need ironing out (some of which we're told will be addressed in the next firmware update). Overall though, FaderPort 8 is a decent, compact and affordable controller for MCU or HUI users, while alongside Studio One it really flies, delivering without a doubt one of the best DAW/controller combinations I've tried. **FM**

FM VERDICT

8.7

A good, compact DAW controller at a reasonable price, but to really see it shine you'll want to pair it with PreSonus' Studio One