



# Best audio interfaces under £200

It's our budget studio special so it's time to round up the best audio interfaces that won't break the bank for recording into your Mac, PC and even your phone...

**If you want to buy a great budget interface for less than £200, you might be quite surprised at the quality of the models you can get.** We've got the best audio interfaces under £200 from big audio hitters including SSL, Audient and Focusrite in this buyer's guide. And pretty much all the interfaces in our roundup offer exceptional sonic quality considering their relatively low prices.

With a budget of £200 you can now also expect to get decent additional features as well as that great sound quality. Indeed most of the

interfaces in this buyer's guide go well beyond the very basic connectivity you get just by spending double digits. Those cheaper interfaces will offer you one or two inputs and outputs to allow you to record voice and instrument into your DAW and play the results out to some decent speakers. Up the budget to £200 as we have here and you can expect extras like decent software bundles, better input quality (for better recordings), and extra inputs to allow you to record more than one instrument or voice simultaneously.

We've listed all of the main specifications, like audio recording quality and the number of ins and outs, but we've also detailed some of the software bundle highlights as this could be an equally important factor to consider in your buying decision.

You can skip to the bottom if you want to know more about interface options and how we test audio interfaces, but before we get into the detail of each interface individually, let's break down some of the things to look out for when starting your search....

# Buyer's Advice

## Do you actually need an audio interface?

If you're a musician who wants to make great quality recordings and listen back to them on decent speakers, then you really need an audio interface. They allow you to record any audio into your computer or smart device. You can capture anything, from strumming guitars and your singing through to a complete band or orchestra. Once recorded, you can then mix that audio into a song in your DAW and hear the results back through pro-grade speakers.

## How many inputs and outputs do I need?

When choosing the best audio interface for your studio, the first thing you need to work out is the number and type of inputs and outputs you need. If you only want to plug in one microphone or instrument at a time - if you're a solo producer who generates most of their sounds inside the computer, this is probably you - just one or two inputs will be plenty. If this is the case then most of the interfaces featured in this Best Audio Interface For Under £200 will suffice. However, if you want to record a live band, you'll need to think about more inputs. Multiple outputs can also be useful if you want to set up separate headphone mixes (if you're a DJ, for example) or send audio elsewhere for further processing.

## What types of inputs and outputs do I need?

On most audio interfaces you'll typically find both XLR and 1/4-inch inputs, often combined into combo connectors so that you can plug mics, guitars, synths and the

like into the same input. Many interfaces also offer a phantom power option, which is required if you want to use certain mics.

Some audio interfaces also have MIDI I/O on them, which could save you from having to buy a separate interface for external MIDI gear. If you only intend to use a MIDI keyboard, though, remember that this could plug into one of your computer's other USB ports, so MIDI I/O might not be an essential requirement.

## How to connect your audio interface

Most audio interfaces connect to your computer by USB or Thunderbolt or by using a Lightning adaptor with iOS devices. The cable required for connectivity usually ships with the interface but not always with Thunderbolt 3 and Lightning, so do check what you get in the box.

Most interfaces are class-compliant, so will work out of the box - just plug them in and start using them straight away. Some come with extra software that you'll need to access some of their more detailed functions and routing. Many, especially mobile interfaces, are bus-powered so you don't have to plug a mains power supply into them.

Specs always include the numbers of audio inputs (as XLR or 1/4-inch jack or a combination of the two) and audio outputs. Inputs indicate the number of instruments or microphones you can connect up to record simultaneously. Check the interface has a phantom power option if you want to connect up a condenser mic which requires external power. The number of

outputs refers to the number of connections available to your studio speakers or other hardware boxes, including outboard effects.

## What is low-latency recording exactly?

You'll find that most contemporary audio interfaces offer a low-latency recording option, which means you can stay in time with your project when adding more tracks. Some interfaces also promise latency levels that are low enough to use effect plugins in 'real-time' on the input as you record, while others have their own DSP processing built in.

## What should I be expecting to pay for an audio interface?

The best audio interface for you will at least partly come down to price. This buyers guide is for those with a budget of \$/£200 and as you can see, you get some great interfaces for that outlay. If your budget is less than \$/£100, we also recommend reading our guide focused specifically on the best budget audio interfaces if you have less to spend.

Interfaces are serious pieces of kit that should keep the audio signal quality high throughout the recording process, but you needn't pay serious money for them. If you are an in-the-box producer, you might only need one input at any one time to record, plus a couple of outputs to your speakers. Even a singer/guitarist can get away with just two inputs, and a decent 1 or 2-input/2-output audio interface only costs from around \$/£50 up to \$/£200. Add more inputs and better quality preamps on these - which will give you a better quality audio recording - and you could pay anything from \$/£200 to \$/£700 for a medium-sized interface capable of recording all of the outputs from a band, for example. Pro grade interfaces with fast connectivity, the ability to power software (see Universal Audio)

and digital inputs and outputs can tip into four figures - sometimes up to \$/£2,000 - but you might not need any or all of the extras they offer. Many interfaces support an array of digital ins and outs like ADAT and S/PDIF, for example, two digital standards you only need to take into consideration if you have other audio gear with these inputs and outputs included.

## What are the most popular audio interface brands?

There are many companies making audio interfaces but some brands that score consistently well in our reviews in terms of build quality, features and value are Apogee, Audient, Focusrite, Native Instruments, Steinberg, SSL and Universal Audio.

## How do we test audio interfaces on review?

Audio interfaces are essentially devices designed to record audio into your computer DAW, and play it back out. The key factors when testing them are how easily they do this and the level of audio quality they are capable of delivering while doing so.

Many audio interfaces are 'plug 'n' play' so will be picked up by your computer and DAW when you first connect them. Your DAW should then list the interface's physical inputs and outputs, often as selectable options on its input / output channels.

Sound quality is determined by an interface's A-D/D-A converters, sample rates and frequencies quoted in their specs (24-bit/96kHz, for example).

We test for sound quality by recording several sources via the interface's mic and line inputs, and judging the playback quality against that expected from the specs. We also compare the same material recorded with our reference audio interfaces that we use on a daily basis.

Some audio interfaces come with extra bespoke software that lets you select input and output configurations and might also add other routing options or even effects. How easy this extra software is to use is also an important factor.

We also consider latency when testing interfaces. This is the time it takes for audio to go into and out of your computer DAW via the audio interface. If this is slow, the latency figure is high so can result in a delay between you playing a note and then hearing it. This is obviously not practical if you are recording some playing and attempting to be in time with your DAW playback.





# Audient

## Evo 4 & 8 £89 to £144

**CONNECTIVITY:** USB 2.0 | **AUDIO RESOLUTION:** 24-bit/96kHz | **ANALOGUE INPUTS:** 2 x XLR-1/4" combo (mic/line); 4 x for EVO 8 | **ANALOGUE OUTPUTS:** 2 x 1/4" TRS, headphone (2 on EVO8) | **DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY:** None | **MIDI I/O:** No | **SOFTWARE BUNDLE HIGHLIGHTS:** Steinberg Cubase, Cubasis LE and Retrologue, GForce M-tron Select plus a course, Loopcloud subscription, effects and more

The compact Evo range was launched at the NAMM Show back in 2020 to much acclaim.

You'll find two combi mic/line inputs around the back of EVO 4, and one instrument level input at the front for connecting guitar or bass (which then overrides the first input around the back). The more expensive EVO 8 doubles the inputs to four.

Two speaker outs complete the connections and a central main dial controls the level of that output plus a number of other levels determined

largely by which buttons on the top of the panel you press, these being 1 and 2 (for the input levels), and output (bottom right) plus a final button that means the dial adjusts the mix between the input and DAW. Using the headphone socket means the main dial controls this level. EVO 8 allows two people to monitor with headphones.

The one-dial solution is beautifully implemented and designed to help make both EVO 4 and 8 clever, compact desktop solutions that sounds great...

**audient.com**



### Verdict

**For** Great, clean sound  
Single dial makes it simple to operate  
You'll like the Monitor Mix solution  
Sturdy build

**Against** No angled front

Two of the very best compact audio interfaces around

**9/10**





## Audient iD4 MkII £127

**CONNECTIVITY:** USB 2.0 | **AUDIO RESOLUTION:** 24-bit/96kHz | **ANALOGUE INPUTS:** 2 | **ANALOGUE OUTPUTS:** 2 | **DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY:** None | **MIDI I/O:** No | **SOFTWARE BUNDLE HIGHLIGHTS:** Steinberg Cubase, Cubasis LE and Retrologue, GForce M-tron Select plus a course, Loopcloud subscription, effects and more

The iD4 MkII is, on the face of it, a simple two-input/two-output offering a mic preamp, complete with phantom power for using condenser mics. There's also an instrument level DI for plugging in your guitar or bass, plus a smart scroll wheel enabling you to tweak settings in your software. On top of this, there's a main output for your speakers and dual headphone outputs.

The whole thing is powered via USB-C and, with Apple's camera connection kit, it can also work with an iPhone/iPad. However, for us, the studio devilry is in the detail: Audient has really thought about everything with value and usability in mind, making what is a budget solution feel anything but inexpensive in use. The Audient iD4 MkII is one of the best USB audio interfaces we've tried and also features a very decent software bundle.

**audient.com**



### Verdict

**For** Great value for money

Excellent preamp

Well thought-out

**Against** MIDI I/O would have been very welcome

High quality interface from the purveyor of pro studio consoles

**10/10**

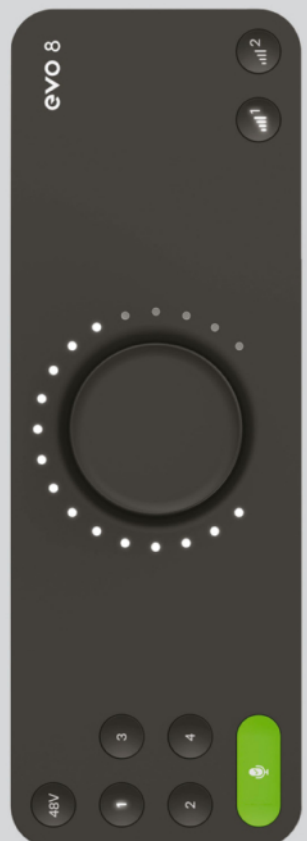
## Computer Music choice

The Presonus Studio 24c won out in our Budget Audio Interface buyers guide and is still one of the best low-priced option here. It offers superb sound quality and comes with a well-stocked bundle of software audio tools.

However, now we've upped the budget to £200, we can get some additional sonic clout and connectivity from some of the biggest names in music production. SSL makes arguably the best mixing desks used in studios the world over. Its SSL 2 interface offers some of the sonic quality from these desks for silly money.

Audient too has made some excellent studio desks and has similarly delivered some of their flavour in its interface range. Our favourite, though, is the EVO 8 which offers an amazing amount of connectivity for the price. Universal Audio has made some great audio gear over the years too and its Volt range delivers some of that expertise at a great price.

Finally, in what is a very crowded part of the interface market, Focusrite delivers some of the best connectivity with its Scarlett 4i4 3rd Gen, right at the top end of our budget range.







# Solid State Logic

## SSL 2 £169

**CONNECTIVITY:** USB-C | **AUDIO RESOLUTION:** 24-bit/192kHz | **ANALOGUE INPUTS:** 2 | **ANALOGUE OUTPUTS:** 2 | **DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY:** None | **MIDI I/O:** Yes | **SOFTWARE BUNDLE HIGHLIGHTS:** SSL Production Pack software bundle which has a huge range of titles by SSL and others including Vocalstrip 2 & Drumstrip

The SSL 2 is the cheaper of two compact audio interfaces from console legends Solid State Logic. Both offer the forward and more aggressive sound from the company's 4000 E console as a switchable 'Legacy 4k' enhancement.

The 2 lacks a second headphone output and extra phono outs found on the 2+, so not much less if you are just wanting that legendary sound for your instrument recordings. Other than that you get a 2-in/2-out set-up, MIDI in/out and a +48v option to connect both dynamic and condenser mics.

SSL 2 delivers crystal clear recording with that subtle 4k enhancement should you wish. Its monitor output is right up

there with interfaces that cost twice as much, better in fact. It also features one of the best software bundles. Overall it's a cracking interface with that sprinkling of extra SSL dust.



The 'Solid State Logic' name and sound from a piece of gear costing '£180'? Somebody pinch us, this isn't happening...

**[solidstatellogic.com](http://solidstatellogic.com)**

### Verdict

**For** Lovely build quality

Great sound

Optional SSL console sound

**Against** The 2+ offers quite a bit extra for not much outlay

A compact and sturdy interface delivering an expensive SSL sound for silly money

**9/10**



# Universal Audio

## Volt 1&2 £105 & £144

**CONNECTIVITY:** USB-C | **AUDIO RESOLUTION:** 24-bit/192kHz | **ANALOGUE INPUTS:** 1/2 | **ANALOGUE OUTPUTS:** 2 | **DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY:** None | **MIDI I/O:** Yes | **SOFTWARE BUNDLE HIGHLIGHTS:** Marshall Plexi Classic Amplifier, Live 11 Lite, Melodyne Essential and Ampeg SVT-VR bass amp

Universal Audio used to focus on the high-end market with interfaces that boasted both a quality signal flow and also acted as hosts and accelerators for the company's very well regarded plugin range.

That changed with the Volt range, a set of four units that eschew the plugin hosting in favour of value and more standard features. The more expensive 176 and 276 fall just outside of our price cap but the Volt 1 & 2 offer most of what they deliver, with the exception of their extra 1176-style compression.

Both Volts 1 and 2 are plug-and-play USB-C interfaces that offer UA's excellent

preamps on their combi inputs, with one input available on the Volt 1 and two on the Volt 2. These offer a great vintage tube sound on your inputs, giving recordings a richness rarely heard in this price range.

The Volt interface range is a radical departure for UA, offering an affordable taste of the brand's key ingredients. They're incompatible with plugins from the UAD store but they absolutely deserve to shake up the budget interface market with a great design, a plug-and-play workflow and hard-to-beat audio conversion.

[uaudio.com](http://uaudio.com)



### Verdict

**For** VeUA quality at an affordable price. Intuitive with an easy to use, plug-and-play design  
Great design

**Against** No scope for expansion beyond the limited I/O

Lovely hi-end sound from a pair of low-priced interfaces

9/10





# Focusrite Scarlett 4i4 3rd Gen £188

**CONNECTIVITY:** USB-C | **AUDIO RESOLUTION:** 24-bit/192kHz | **ANALOGUE INPUTS:** 4 | **ANALOGUE OUTPUTS:** 4 | **DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY:** None | **MIDI I/O:** Yes | **SOFTWARE BUNDLE HIGHLIGHTS:** Ableton Live Lite, Focusrite Plugin Collective, Antares Hitmaker Expansion and more

Focusrite's Scarlett USB interfaces have traditionally combined excellent sonics and audio flexibility at affordable price points, and the third generation units keep up the good work.

All of the units in the range have been upgraded with improved preamps (up to 56dB gain), balanced connectivity throughout, and the inclusion of Focusrite's ISA transformer preamp emulation option (delivering Air - see below for more on this).

On the bus-powered Scarlett 4i4 you get two mic/line/instrument inputs with gain, two line-level TRS inputs and four TRS outputs.

The 4i4 supports Focusrite's Control application, which means that a number of settings can only be made in the software. The app also handles low-latency monitoring.

In practice the sonics are neutral and the drivers reliable. The Air option tilts the frequency response towards high frequencies, and this can be great for taming undesirable proximity or adding high frequency lift. It works particularly well on vocals.

With a decent software bundle included, this is a solid upgrade and a great, affordable audio interface...  
**focusrite.com**



## Verdict

**For** New, improved preamp design  
'Air' transformer stage emulation  
MIDI I/O is useful

**Against** Four combination inputs would be great

A competitively-priced interface with plenty of connectivity

9/10





## Native Instruments Komplete Audio 2 £99

**CONNECTIVITY:** USB 2 | **AUDIO RESOLUTION:** 24-bit/192kHz | **ANALOGUE INPUTS:** 2 | **DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY:** None | **MIDI I/O:** No | **SOFTWARE BUNDLE HIGHLIGHTS:** Ableton Live 11 Lite, NI effects, Mompote Start, Maschine Essentials and Monark

Komplete Audio 2 has a two-input, two-output design with two identical mic/line/instrument inputs. Connections are on space-saving combi XLRs with individual selector switches to help select between line and instrument. 48V phantom power, in the meantime, is engaged globally, via a single switch.

In addition to the inputs, the front panel includes a hardware monitoring balance knob (Input/Host) and headphone output with independent control.

Main output level is controlled from a large output level knob on the top panel. Here you'll also find the input meters, alongside phantom and USB indicators. Round the back you've got the USB B connector, a pair of balanced outputs on TRS 1/4-

inch jacks and a Kensington Security slot.

Komplete Audio 2 makes our best audio interface list because in action its performance is as slick as its looks. Though the features are basic, it does its job admirably. And when you consider the excellent software bundle too, it's excellent value.

**native-instruments.com**

### Verdict

**For** Super compact  
Very slick and stylishly designed  
Decent five-part input metering

**Against** No scaling on the controls

Compact and slick 2x2 audio interface at a competitive price

**9/10**



## IK Multimedia iRig Pro Duo I/O £180

**CONNECTIVITY:** USB 2, Lightning, USB OTG | **AUDIO RESOLUTION:** 24-bit/48kHz | **ANALOGUE INPUTS:** 2 | **ANALOGUE OUTPUTS:** 2 | **DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY:** None | **MIDI I/O:** Yes | **SOFTWARE BUNDLE HIGHLIGHTS:** AmpliTube CS (both desktop and iOS versions), Steinberg Cubasis LE plus two choices of IK software

The follow-up to the original iRig Pro Duo, the I/O offers two analogue combo inputs so that you can connect and simultaneously record your favoured combination of instruments and mics.

These inputs come with updated Class-A preamps, adjustable gain and phantom power. There's MIDI I/O, too, along with two balanced 1/4-inch outputs and a headphone output.

You can engage the direct monitor switch for latency-free monitoring of the incoming signal, and the iRig Pro Duo I/O comes with a USB-C cable for easy compatibility with modern devices (Lightning and USB-A cables are supplied, too). There are new dedicated PC drivers as well, and it all comes in a package with a refreshed, rubberised finish.

The iRig Pro Duo I/O can be bus-powered or run on two AA batteries. It ships with a large bundle of software, which includes two bonus IK titles of your choice.

It's compatible with iOS, Android, PC and Mac, so it could be just the thing if you need to record on the move and in your studio.

**ikmultimedia.com**

### Verdict

**For** Completely portable  
Works with mobile devices  
Record two channels simultaneously

**Against** There are better options if you don't need portability

One of the best compact audio interfaces – a portable powerhouse

**9/10**



# PreSonus Studio 24c £124

**CONNECTIVITY:** USB-C | **AUDIO RESOLUTION:** 24-bit/192kHz | **ANALOGUE INPUTS:** 2 | **ANALOGUE OUTPUTS:** 2 | **DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY:** None | **MIDI I/O:** Yes | **SOFTWARE BUNDLE HIGHLIGHTS:** PreSonus Studio One Artist and Studio Magic Software Suite, Ableton® Live Lite

There are audio interfaces that aim to support specific musical disciplines like, for example, guitarists (check out our best guitar audio interfaces guide for more of that).

And then there are jack-of-all-trades, which try to do a bit of everything, from speech to music. The PreSonus Studio 24c is firmly in the latter camp, offering consistently exceptional quality regardless of what you're trying to record or produce.

We particularly like the included Universal Control software, which enables the interface to 'loop back' on itself virtually.

This provides great flexibility for routing audio between different applications without requiring extra cables, making it ideal for streamers and musicians alike. Build quality is solid, and the MIDI connectivity to the back of the unit is a great touch.

[presonus.com](https://www.presonus.com)



**For** MIDI I/O  
Superb value for money

**Against** Not much to fault here

A good interface for streamers, and a great one for musicians

**10/10**





# Arturia

## MiniFuse 2 £119

**CONNECTIVITY:** USB-C | **AUDIO RESOLUTION:** 24-bit/192kHz | **ANALOGUE INPUTS:** 2 | **ANALOGUE OUTPUTS:** 2 | **DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY:** USB hub | **MIDI I/O:** Yes | **SOFTWARE BUNDLE HIGHLIGHTS:** Great list of titles including Arturia FX, Ableton Live Lite, Auto-Tune Unlimited and Native Instruments Guitar Rig 6 LE

MiniFuse is French company Arturia's compact interface range and we have the mid-sized MiniFuse 2 on test here. It has its own Control Centre software and also has one of the best bundles of software of all the interface here. You get access to Arturia titles (naturally) alongside Ableton Live Lite and Auto-Tune Unlimited.

The MiniFuse 2 sounds pretty good, with nice clean main outputs and plenty of volume from the headphones. The instrument inputs also sound great and it's good to see two identical mic/line/instrument inputs. But it's the overall functionality that wins through, with plenty of backlit buttons and illuminated controls so it's obvious what's going on.

MiniFuse 2 is a feature-rich device with extras that you don't always get at this price. Factor in the impressive software bundle, generous five-year warranty and a choice of colours and you have a pretty decent package for the money.

**arturia.com**

### Verdict

**For** Compact with small footprint  
Solid sonics  
Extensive and useful software bundle

**Against** USB hub only suitable for low usage devices

Plenty of features, incredibly intuitive to use and with a good software bundle, plus it looks and sounds great

**9/10**







# Steinberg

## UR22C £125

**CONNECTIVITY:** USB-C | **AUDIO RESOLUTION:** 32-bit/192kHz | **ANALOGUE INPUTS:** 2 | **ANALOGUE OUTPUTS:** 2 | **DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY:** None | **MIDI I/O:** Yes | **SOFTWARE BUNDLE HIGHLIGHTS:** Steinberg Plus includes Groove Agent SE, HALion Sonic SE, Anima and Retrologue instruments

Steinberg really pimped up its UR range of audio interfaces, introducing USB 3.0 models for PC, Mac and iOS. The UR22C, on test here is the most affordable of the bunch. It offers USB Type-C connectivity (or USB 3.1 Gen 1 SuperSpeed, to give it its official title) and operates at 32-bit/192kHz audio resolution. There's MIDI I/O, too, as well as DSP that provides zero-latency effects that can be used when monitoring. These can be accessed via the dspMixFx mixer.

Unsurprisingly, the UR22C is a 2-in/2-out audio interface. You get a couple of balanced Neutrik combo inputs, each of which sports a Yamaha D-PRE mic preamp, and two balanced line outputs.

With its rugged metal casing, the UR22C is the best audio interface for you if you want something that can be slung in a backpack without fear. It also includes a good bundle of software called Steinberg Plus which includes apps, sounds and loops.

[steinberg.net](http://steinberg.net)

### Verdict

**For** Built to last  
Yamaha preamps  
Built-in DSP processing

**Against** Requires another power source to work with iOS

A rugged 2-in/2-out audio interface with great Yamaha preamps and a good bundle of software

9/10



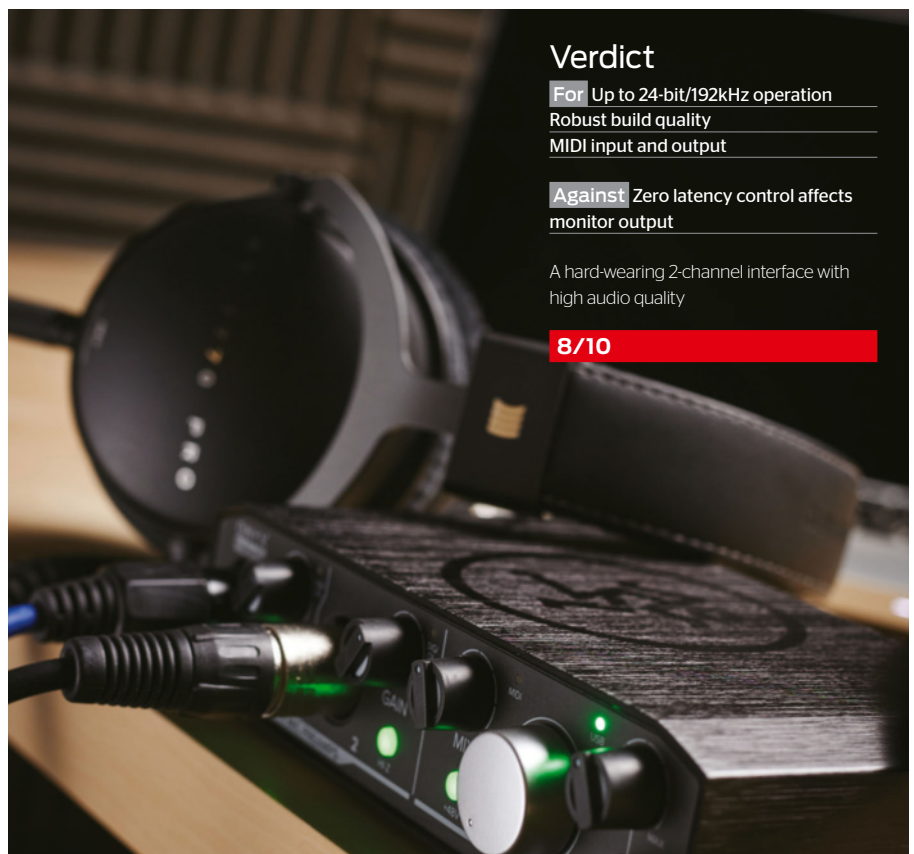
# Mackie

## Onyx Producer 2.2 £119

**CONNECTIVITY:** USB 2 | **AUDIO RESOLUTION:** 24-bit/192kHz | **ANALOGUE INPUTS:** 2 | **ANALOGUE OUTPUTS:** 2 | **DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY:** None | **MIDI I/O:** Yes | **SOFTWARE BUNDLE HIGHLIGHTS:** Traction Waveform OEM DAW and DAW Essentials plugin collection

With high-quality Onyx mic pres, balanced analogue connectivity and operation up to 24-bit/192kHz, the bus-powered Onyx Producer 2.2 audio interface is more than capable of getting clean signals in and out of your DAW. There are two identical mic/line inputs with combination XLR/jack connectors. Each has a manual green backlit switch to select a Hi Z instrument, and there's a global backlit switch for 48V phantom power.

Input signals can be monitored with zero latency using the Input/DAW Mix knob, and rounding off the front panel are a large Monitor level knob and headphone output with level knob. Round the back you'll find a pair of 1/4-inch jacks for the monitor output, and also a pair of MIDI connectors (In and Out), which is very handy. Throw in the robust metal case and you've got a compact workhorse device that should last for years. You also get a DAW, Traction, in the box and an Essentials plugin collection. **cm**  
**mackie.com**



### Verdict

**For** Up to 24-bit/192kHz operation  
Robust build quality  
MIDI input and output

**Against** Zero latency control affects monitor output

A hard-wearing 2-channel interface with high audio quality

**8/10**