

Black Lion Audio Revolution 2x2



A desktop audio interface that's diminutive in size and capacity, but high on build quality and component specifications, the Revolution 2x2 is built with low SNR in mind. The company describes the design as 'modded out of the box' due to its choice of components — an analogue circuit design using Nichicon, Vishay and Wima capacitors — being the choices it's often asked to use for modifications and upgrades. In terms of connectivity, two-in-two-out bus-powered 24-bit, 192kHz USB C interface offers two combo inputs, individually switchable to Hi-Z instrument level if needed, with optional phantom power. There are stereo ¼" monitor outs with a large volume control, as well as stereo SPDIF I/O and direct monitoring to the headphone out via a mix balance control with a mono summing option and its own volume control. It's unlikely to be those specs that draw you to this unit, though, as they're fairly standard for a unit aimed at small studio or mobile recording applications. In truth, you're more likely to pick this unit because you're drawn to Black Lion's reputation for sonic quality. Those component choices price the Revolution 2x2 at something of a premium to other options of a similar vein, but — again — that extra financial outlay is likely not so significant to put anyone off who is seeking what Black Lion has to offer in terms of build.

www.blacklionaudio.com

Focusrite ISA 828 mkII and RedNet MP8R



The ISA 828 MkII incorporates eight of Focusrite's mic preamps, with Lundahl LL1538 transformers on every input. Each channel has the option of mic or line inputs (with discrete inputs for each, so they can all be connected simultaneously and are switchable from the front panel), while inputs 1-4 also feature Hi-Z instrument inputs on the front panel for easy access. Each mic pre has variable input impedance, including an 'ISA 110' setting, which replicates the impedance of the original Focusrite mic pre, and the high-pass filter has a fixed 75Hz frequency and 18dB / octave roll-off. The front panel offers per-channel six-segment LED metering, while the back panel provides DB-25 connection for their switchable Insert points. The optional ISA ADN8 analogue-to-digital expansion card provides eight Dante, ADAT and AES3 outputs at



sampling rates of up to 24-bit, 192kHz. For a remotely controllable Dante option, the RedNet MP8R is a 1U, eight-channel mic pre and A-D interface for any Dante audio-over-IP network.

www.focusrite.com

Burl Audio Mothership 80



The Mothership concept builds Burl's brilliant two-channel B2 Bombers, created to bring the qualities appreciated in analogue tape recordings to A-D/D-A conversion. The company doesn't characterise this process as one of colouration, though, instead describing it as a signal path that does not sterilise. The various cards the B80 Mothership utilises all contain Class A circuitry and proprietary transformers in the pursuit of creating a perfectly tailored input and output for its conversion processing. In design, Mothership unit is a highly configurable 4U monster, that can offer up to 80 analogue channel capability via 10 card slots that can each take various 4- and 8- channel A-D/D-A cards as required, all with Class A, discrete electronics without any integrated circuits or capacitors in the signal path. For mic pre provision, a Mothership fully-loaded with Burl's B4 cards would deliver a whopping 40 input channels; or you could sacrifice some of those inputs for monitoring or other A-D or D-A options. Master output format is also configurable, with Pro Tools Digi-link, MADi, Dante and SoundGrid options. A favourite tool of this issue's interviewee Vance Powell, the Mothership concept is also available as a 16-channel option.

burlaudio.com

Grace Design m108



An eight channel remote control pre-amp and A-D converter, the m108 builds on the reputation of the now-discontinued Grace Designs m802 — but brings the specs up-to-date, thanks to what the company says is its biggest R&D effort ever. Its eight mic pres offer a gain range of -6 to 69dB, with selectable Ribbon mic mode and Hi-Z options on channel 1 and 2. The inputs are twinned with eight channels of 192kHz ADC output via AES, ADAT (four channel SMUX) or USB Class 2 to provide direct connection to a computer and DAW.

The front of the unit offers a wide viewing angle OLED display for all metering, system parameters and setup menus with control via a rotary encoder and dedicated push-buttons for 48V phantom power, phase reverse, channel grouping and meter peak clear — all of which can be assigned on a channel-specific basis. There is also a combo RS 485/422 serial/MIDI ports for control from existing m802 RCU or Pro Tools. Alternatively, Grace's Control app for Mac and Windows is able to oversee up to 12 m108 units — so, potentially, a capacity of 96 channels — over Ethernet. For less demanding applications, single units can be controlled via web browser from any device on the same network — including mobile devices such as tablets or mobile phones. An optional expansion slot can provide Audinate/DANTE network audio connection via an additional card.

www.gracedesign.com