

Tascam US-2400

Brad Watts reacquaints himself with 25 motorised faders in the mix position.

I'm sure quite a few people will be kicking themselves when they see Tascam's US-2400 control surface, either because they want one and can't afford one, or because they've just spent similar money on another controller from another manufacturer. Damn technology! It's always so . . . so much better than the last piece of technology!

So what's so good about the US-2400? Well as you'll obviously surmise from the pictures, the US-2400 controller has 25 faders ladies and gentlemen. Yep that's right, 25 of them . . . like you'd find on a mixing console for example. There are 24 channel faders and next to those is, you guessed it, a master fader! Another example of a feature you'd expect to find on an analogue console. Heady stuff when you consider



that until now a controller setup offering that many motorised faders would have set you back close to six grand. The immediate competition that comes to mind is the Mackie Control combined with two eight channel side carriages – marketed in such a way that, if 16 or 24 faders blow out the budget, you can 'get away' with eight. That's not to say eight faders aren't enough for someone driving an editing and mixing system. Eight will certainly do the job (combined with bank switching) but 24 faders spread out in front of you really takes a lot of guesswork out of pulling up a mix quickly. The US-2400 *does* negate the space saved by a cut down eight-channel controller, but I'd wager many studios – now they've decided to leave the land of analogue consoles behind – would be very keen to have that 'loads o' faders' feel back in the mix position.

Build quality is the same standard seen in Tascam's recent FW1884 interface and control surface. These products are the result of a partnership between Tascam and Frontier Design Group. Personally I thought the affiliation produced a great result with the FW1884. The control surface for this unit was uncluttered and simple to navigate with an emphasis on the staples: faders, rotary encoders and a trademark solid

transport section. The US-2400 follows this same ethic with an uncluttered surface layout designed for large hands – no SMPTE displays or LEDs flashing at you. A jog/shuttle wheel and joystick surround panner complete the line-up.

Connection to the host DAW is via the ubiquitous serial bus USB (1.1) and the only operating systems supported are OS 10.2.8+ and Windows XP. Installation for both systems is exactly the same – plug it in, do not restart your computer, go ahead and use the control surface. Each channel strip offers a 100mm, 10-bit resolution, touch sensitive motorised fader, a rotary pot surrounded with LEDs, a solo, mute and select button. The LED surrounds actually function as level meters when required – a nice touch when it comes to seeing what's coming up on which fader immediately. The unit follows all the control surface 'standards' available today including Native mode, HUI, Mackie and Logic Control plus specialised setups for both Sonar and Digital Performer. Plus the manual goes into precise detail on how to set each system up correctly. Good work Tascam. Once you're up and running, the US-2400 can address up to 192 tracks courtesy of its bank switch buttons – only, with this system you're swapping banks of 24.

I had no trouble arcing the unit up in ProTools 6.4.1 (where it appears as three distinct HUIs), Logic 6.4.3 and Digital Performer 4. The surround joystick is a slight anomaly, however, as neither the HUI nor the Mackie Control protocols support a surround panner. In these situations the joystick transmits generic Midi information to port four of the unit's USB connection. Should you want surround panning control on a TDM ProTools system for example, you'd use the Digidesign supplied JL Cooper MCS Panner personality file.

Obviously the US-2400 is nowhere near as large as a typical analogue board. It's light enough to actually be moved in and out of position according to usage – separating the compositional and editing stages of a project from the actual mixing. The board functions perfectly, as they say, 'straight out of the box'. That's how I used the US-2400, and thoroughly enjoyed it.



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