

The AudioBox 1818VSL interface includes the AudioBox VSL mixer application.



## PreSonus AudioBox 1818VSL

Integrated software/  
hardware audio  
interface for stage  
or studio

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### SUMMARY

**STRENGTHS:** Cost-effective. Combines a sophisticated virtual mixer with interfacing capabilities. Stage/studio friendly. Fat Channel effects strip. All-metal enclosure. XMAX preamps live up to their rep.

**LIMITATIONS:** Single headphone out. Digital outputs don't have Fat Channel effects. Can't enable per-channel phantom power.

**\$629 MSRP,  
\$500 street**  
presonus.com

ADDING DSP to an interface isn't new, but the AudioBox 1818VSL does so in a uniquely PreSonus way by essentially cross-breeding a computer interface with a StudioLive mixer.

**The Interface** This solidly built, 1U USB 2.0 interface provides two mic/instrument ins, six mic/line ins, ADAT, and co-ax S/PDIF. Individually assignable outputs include eight line outs, ADAT, and coax S/PDIF; the S/PDIF out can mirror the Main mix. The ADAT I/O offers eight channels at 44.1/48kHz and four at 88.2/96kHz (The unit tops out at 96kHz.) Additional outs include two monitor outs and a single headphone out; both have level controls, as do all inputs.

Phantom power is enabled in two groups of four (1-4 and 5-8). There's also 5-pin MIDI I/O, and word clock sync out. The power supply is a global (100-240V) "line lump" type.

**The Software** The AudioBox VSL (Virtual StudioLive) cross-platform software offers a virtualized "Fat Channel" effects suite (identical to the StudioLive 16.0.2 mixer version) for the analog and digital ins, as well as all audio outs. The effects roster includes lowcut filter, phase reverse, compressor with separate limiting option, and 3-band EQ. Upper and lower EQ bands are switchable from peak to shelf; the middle band offers a Q switch (high or low). You'll also find mono delay, stereo delay, and reverb effects that can insert into two effects slots for the four stereo analog outs.

The software's GUI looks like the VSL app for StudioLive mixers—it's essentially a complete virtual mixer that controls the 1818VSL interface. The software incorporates different views, pages, sends, plenty of presets (or make

your own), and stores "scenes" that take a snapshot of the mixer settings. A free app allows for iPad wireless remote control.

**Sound, Studio, and Stage** Features mean nothing without sound quality; the AudioBox's XMAX Class A, all-discrete preamps with 30V rails are getting widespread recognition for their excellent quality (just search "XMAX" on forums), and the Fat Channel effects are equally favored by users.

PreSonus claims "virtually latency-free monitoring," and while this may get the skeptics' attention, it's true. (Line 6 did something similar with ToneDirect monitoring.) As a result, there are three main applications. One is using the outs for cue mixes and monitoring with effects, which will make many musicians happy—especially the temperamental vocalists who want reverb, compression, and EQ in their cans.

Another application is live performance with laptop-based acts. You can process inputs on the way in to your DAW, and process outs going to the house; with the VSL mixer app and your DAW's mixer, you don't need external processors, mixers, or preamps. (Note that the 1818VSL comes bundled with Studio One Artist.)

The third application is recording with effects. Being able to apply limiting for live recordings is invaluable, but the effects are good enough that if you want to record with, say, compression on the bass, you won't have to recreate the sound while mixing.

So here's the bottom line: Couple the quality interfacing with the mixing, live monitoring, presets, and even great documentation, and you have quite the deal—especially at this unexpectedly low price. ■