



PreSonus AudioBox 22VSL

TESTED BY MICHAEL ROSS

THERE ARE A LOT OF AUDIO interface/DAW bundles out there for home-recording buffs, but the PreSonus AudioBox 22VSL differentiates itself by offering Virtual StudioLive—a drag-and-drop software solution for monitoring and tracking processed and dry signals without audible latency. Scores of DAWs include effects plug-ins, of course, but PreSonus' VSL significantly minimizes latency, therefore making it far more comfortable for guitarists to simultaneously monitor with reverb, delay, compression, or EQ. VSL includes handy presets optimized for vocals, guitar, bass, and drums, and you can also create custom presets.

On the hardware side, the two-channel AudioBox's front panel features five sturdy knobs that control individual input levels (channel 1 and channel 2), a master volume (Main), a headphone level output (it goes to "11"), and a Mix knob that determines the blend of the direct and computer playback (this can be your DAW, iTunes, VSL, and any app hooked into the driver). Two front-panel mic/instrument inputs offer global phantom power. The rear panel houses USB, 1/4" headphone, and L/R speaker outputs, as well as the increasingly rare MIDI In and Out. Other features include the same Class A preamps used in PreSonus' StudioLive mixers, and a metal housing that's solid enough for

rugged remote-recording gigs. The bus power from my laptop ran the AudioBox and all software with no glitches.

The 22VSL works with a variety of DAWs, and was instantly recognized by my choice—Ableton Live. While recording an amp, I was able to crank the headphones loud enough to override the volume of my Orange Tiny Terror, which hid any minor timing discrepancies between the amp sound in the room and the VSL monitoring. The 22VSL captured all the distinctive character of my guitar and amp, and the VSL reverb let me add air without having to use the CPU-hungry effects in my DAW.

Of course, AudioBox comes loaded with its own DAW software—PreSonus' Studio One Artist. I initially blanched at having to learn yet another recording system, so imagine my delight at finding Studio One extremely intuitive. I recorded a full tune, using the included drum and bass samples, and some keyboard parts from Studio One's instrument plug-ins. I also tracked my guitar sounds through a version of PreSonus' Ampire XT amp, speaker, and effects modeling plug-in, and all without having to crack the manual! Specifically designed to work in conjunction with AudioBox, Studio One produced audibly less latency than the already low latency experienced while using Live. Given

its features, price, gig toughness, portability, and audio quality, the AudioBox 22VSL is an excellent choice for recording at home, at your rehearsal space, at gigs, and even out in the wide-open spaces.

SPECIFICATIONS

CONTACT	PreSonus; (225) 216-7887 presonus.com,
MODEL	AudioBox 22VSL
PRICE	\$249 retail/\$199 street
SYSTEM	Mac, OS X 10.6 Snow
REQUIREMENTS	Leopard or later (32- and 64-bit), Intel Core i Solo 1.5GHz processor, 1GB RAM; Windows, Windows XP, Vista, and 7 (32- and 64-bit), Intel Pentium 4 1.6GHz or AMD Athlon 64 3000+ processor, 1GB RAM.
RESOLUTION	24-bit/96kHz
NOISE	0.005% (Mic), 0.006% (Instrument)
DYNAMIC RANGE	114dB
KUDOS	Great sound. Low latency. Rugged build. VSL and Studio One Artist software included.
CONCERNS	None.