

Sound Creations, Inc.

The latest news and reviews of music technology.

PreSonus AudioBox 22VSL (<http://www.praisetracks.com/tech/permalink/presonus-audiobox-22vsl/>)

Like

Send

Be the first of your friends to like this.

Feb 2, 03:26 PM

PreSonus™ **STANDING OUT IN A CROWDED FIELD**

There is definitely not a lack of devices to get your computer, laptop and now even iPhones and iPads connected to the world of audio around you. That being said it makes it all the more important to find the right piece of gear for the job at hand. PreSonus has been making interfaces for some time and since being introduced to them I am already finding they have done their homework.

The **AudioBox 22VSL** is a two in two out USB 2.0 audio interface supporting both Mac and PC. When I first opened the shipping box I was struck by how everything was so very well thought out as far as the packaging and the included software, manuals, etc. There was just such an initial feeling of confidence. That feeling continued as I unwrapped the AudioBox. This thing is solid, plain and simple. They even joke on the website about running a truck over it and [having a video to demonstrate \(http://vimeo.com/14279177\)](#) ...classic. You will appreciate the build quality if you do location audio or finding yourself on the road a lot. It also will not be wasted on the home studio as your audio interface is the primary link to your audio workstation.

CONNECTIONS, AUDIOBOX HAS EM'



[/audiobox22vsl-a.jpg](#)

(<http://www.praisetracks.com/images/presonus>

(Click image to enlarge)

You can plug your mic or instrument directly into the AudioBox. The front panel sports two balanced main input connectors that allow you to use either XLR or 1/4 inch connectors. These multi use connectors are really fantastic as they allow the

most flexible input options keeping things nice and compact. The AudioBox 22VSL is equipped with PreSonus' fantastic XMAX Class A solid state preamps (an improvement over the original AudioBox). These are the same preamps found in PreSonus' line of mixer products.

The rear panel features two 1/4 inch balanced outputs. You also have connections for MIDI In and Out. Since the AudioBox 22VSL is a USB device you have the USB to computer connector on the rear panel as well. PreSonus has done a great job of design here putting things in logical and well thought out positions.



[/audiobox22vsl-back.jpg](#)

<http://www.praisetracks.com/images/presonus>

(Click image to enlarge)

The AudioBox 22VSL is powered through the USB connection. This is a great for those working with a mobile setup, who wants more wall warts to deal with. Again PreSonus comes through with making the workflow as convenient as possible.

To finish things off you also have a 1/4 inch headphone output for monitoring. The output is very clean with ample power to accommodate whatever headphone or in ear monitors you have available.

CONTROLS UP FRONT



[/audiobox22vsl-front.jpg](#)

<http://www.praisetracks.com/images/presonus>

(Click image to enlarge)

The AudioBox 22VSL provides the user lots of control right on the front panel of the interface *(click image to enlarge)*. You have controls for the mic/instrument input gain , main output level, headphone output level and a mixer control. The mixer control allows you to listen to the output of your computer's audio program as well as hearing what is coming through the AudioBox front inputs.

A lot of times when working with computer audio you have what is called "*latency*." This is the time it takes for the audio to go into the interface, to the computer, through your recording software and back out of the interface to your speakers or headphones so you can hear the result.

The AudioBox 22VSL allows you monitor your input as you are recording. PreSonus has made several breakthroughs in hardware and software. They have drastically reduced overall latency (under 4ms) making it undetectable. You will especially appreciate this when tracking vocals. The 22VSL also has some amazing tricks up its sleeve we will get to shortly.

Rounding out the front panel you have a 48v Phantom power switch (who can miss that blue LED) to enable you to use higher quality condenser microphones. Having the switch allows you to turn off the additional power to the input jacks to prevent damage to devices that might not use it. You are provided with clipping indicator LEDs to give you a visual cue helping to prevent overdriving the input channel.

VSL (Three Powerful Letters)

You may be asking what is all this VSL stuff being thrown around. Audio companies have a tendency to add letters, numbers and other crazy types of naming conventions to hype a product or feature. In this case the addition is no hype.

VSL stands for **V**irtual **S**tudio**L**ive. This equips the AudioBox 22VSL with the same digital effects and control as its PreSonus StudioLive 16.0.2 digital mixer. This is an incredible advance providing lots of power and flexibility when recording in the studio or mixing live projects.

You access the effects and controls through the included AudioBox VSL control panel. Here you have settings for each channel and control over the onboard effects. The VSL control panel software consists of the following components:

Software Mixer

The mixer is set up as a 4x2. This means that there are two inputs while providing four outputs (two serving the inputs and two as software returns for the effects busses). This configuration gives you a lot of power when working with your DAW.



<http://www.praisetracks.com/images/presonus>

[/Audiobox 22VSL Control Panel.png](#)

(click to enlarge image)

The Fat Channel Section from the StudioLive 16.0.2 Mixer

This is presented here in software and amazingly powerful. This includes a high-pass filter, compressor, limiter, downward expander, and three-band semi-parametric EQ. You also are provided with two stereo effects busses that give you access to Reverb and Delay when monitoring the inputs. Although not taken from the StudioLive console they are very similar in design. These come in very handy when live tracking.



<http://www.praisetracks.com/images/presonus>

/Audiobox 22VSL FX View.png

(click to enlarge image)

I need to be able to hear some ambiance or "space" as it impacts how I interpret a particular track. Recording vocals has an emotional element connected to it. A particular artist can really be affected depending on how they hear their voice coming back through their headphone monitors. That feeling can either inspire or exasperate the artists and can be the difference between an inspiring or a just so so take.

One thing to note is that while you can use the Fat Channel for recording to your DAW, the Reverb and Delay are exclusively for monitoring. You are given the option to include or bypass the Fat Channel when recording to your DAW (they think of everything).

The Browser

This is a very cool feature. You have a list of channel and effects presets presented to you on the right side of the control panel interface. When you want to change to a different preset setting for a channel or an effect you simply just "drag and drop" the preset onto a channel and you are done. Many interfaces have effects but they are tied to hardware. The beauty of the AudioBox 22VSL is that since these tasks are performed in software it gives you a greater level of power and flexibility.



(http://www.praisetracks.com/images/presonus/Audiobox_22VSL_Setup.png)

(click to enlarge image)

ROUNDING OUT THE PACKAGE

You are provided with the driver and control software for the device. This gives you the basic software needed for your computer to be able to communicate properly with the AudioBox 22VSL as well as including the powerful Virtual StudioLive console for gaining access to the onboard effects and mixing controls. The software as I mentioned earlier is Mac and Windows compatible and supports 32 and 64 bit platforms.

The AudioBox 22VSL also includes a generous software package to get you started. You are provided with a copy of PreSonus' own Studio One Artist DAW package. This is a great start if you do not have a recording software package you are already using. This gives you unlimited track counts as well as a great collection of effects, loops and virtual instruments totaling over four gigs of content to get you started. You also have the option of upgrading to Studio One Producer or Professional giving you more effects and resources. [You can see a list of feature comparisons for each version here. \(http://studioone.presonus.com/what-are-the-versions\)](http://studioone.presonus.com/what-are-the-versions)

JACK OF ALL TRADES

Well in my time using the AudioBox 22VSL I have called it into action for several different applications that I will touch on here. You might have some totally out of the box application and I can say with confidence the AudioBox 22VSL is more than up to the task.

STUDIO BASED DAW

For most of my work I have been using the AudioBox 22VSL in my studio DAW setup. Currently running Windows 7 64 bit I had no trouble getting things running smoothly. I have been a long time Cakewalk SONAR user and the drivers function seamlessly. I also have been working some with the newer version of Studio One which of course works flawlessly with the

AudioBox 22VSL. One thing to note is that the AudioBox can record up to 24 bit 96khz audio (Another improvement over the original AudioBox which could only do 24bit/48khz).

I have not had any issues in performance running the AudioBox 22VSL for any of my audio tasks. Whether it is using the DAW of choice or for basic Windows 7 audio functions the AudioBox 22VSL is a top performer. I also use it along with other audio editing software Sound Forge, iZotope RX2, etc. and in each instance the AudioBox 22VSL did not disappoint.

RUNNING WITH THE NETBOOK

In my various projects I have tried finding portable solutions for common tasks you might run into when faced with various situations when traveling. One in particular is using a Lenovo S10 netbook as an on the go virtual instrument device.

The AudioBox 22VSL is a perfect fit here as it not only provides the great audio functionality but also onboard MIDI IN and OUT. This is great to have as it allows you to have the one device handling multiple tasks. It is also a great plus as especially with a netbook you are limited to the number of open USB ports available. Having to only use one is great as you have an extra free port to plug in other devices such as USB flash drives, external hard drives, etc. It also helps in the overall performance as you eliminate dealing with multiple devices drivers and such which could lead to conflict and on a netbook you want to eek out all the performance you can.

The AudioBox 22VSL is USB 2.0 (The original AudioBox was only USB 1.0) compatible which takes it a step above many USB interfaces on the market today. This feature allows the AudioBox to communicate at much faster speeds to the host computer which makes a huge difference in performance when moving lots of data.

I experienced acceptable performance using the AudioBox ASIO interface by using the [Asio4All driver \(http://www.asio4all.com\)](http://www.asio4all.com). This particularly allowed me to get some extra performance out of Windows. In fact I have been running the Windows 8 preview edition on the netbook and things seem to be working great.

For my testing here I used [Modartt Pianoteq \(http://www.pianoteq.com\)](http://www.pianoteq.com) as my virtual piano of choice on the netbook. This particular instrument gives you performance focused settings to get the maximum efficiency when using computers with slower CPUs. This is especially the case with the netbook as it uses the power efficient but the not so blazing fast first generation Atom processor. Remember netbooks were not initially meant for high powered audio production but I love the challenge of seeing just how far I can push things. That being said the AudioBox 22VSL did not let me down as it brought its power and stability complimenting the netbook setup.

HAVE IPAD WILL TRAVEL

The iPad has been making a lot of waves (*no pun intended*) in the audio production and performance world. I thought why not see how the AudioBox 22VSL would perform with the iPad so here we go.

First the iPad has no native USB connection so how do you get started? Well the secret is locked up in the Camera

Connection Kit accessory. This plugs into the dock connector at the bottom of the iPad providing you with a class compliant USB port.

One thing you have to remember when trying to get this to work is that you must have a "powered" USB hub to connect the AudioBox 22VSL to the iPad. The reason is that the iPad does not have the adequate capacity to power the AudioBox natively so you must have the powered hub in order for the iPad to be able to see it and function properly with it. I used one of the Belkin powered USB hubs found at my local Best Buy. Once you have all the pieces in place connect the AudioBox 22VSL into powered USB hub then into the camera connection kit and finally connect to the iPad you are ready to go.

Since this setup is USB class compliant the iPad will recognize not only the inputs and outputs but also the MIDI in and out as well which is powerful. I have tried a couple of audio recording programs with the iPad using this setup and it really works well. Two of my go to Apps are Multitrack DAW (<http://www.harmonicdog.com>) (<http://www.harmonicdog.com>) and Garageband.

Multitrack DAW will allow you to record mono and stereo tracks from the AudioBox 22VSL's inputs. You could record two separate instruments (for instance a guitarist and vocalist on two separate tracks or you could capture a stereo pair which would be useful when recording a live event or instrument where the stereo image is important to the final project.

This is possibly the ultimate portable recording setup. The only potential drawback is having to power the USB hub to get it to work but really that is not a deal breaker as you get the high quality and versatility of the AudioBox 22VSL's XMAX preamps, live input monitoring and MIDI functionality, a great on the go system.

In the spirit of adventure (and a small disclaimer) this application is not an officially endorsed by PreSonus. You can find all of their system requirements on the PreSonus website and AudioBox documentation. That being said, if it works then go for it with their blessing, just do not call tech support if something goes wrong.

QUALITY ABOVE ALL

One thing I have to stop and say here is that the sound quality of the AudioBox 22VSL is outstanding. From input to output I experienced a very clean signal flow. The built in mic preamps are especially welcome as I do not have to rely on running things through a separate mixer then into the AudioBox 22VSL. I can go directly into the interface and expect the highest quality in the resulting audio whether coming from my vocal mic or from my instrument or console source.

The VSL technology is really amazing as you have a lot of in the box flexibility that certainly comes in handy when recording vocals and tracking live. The included software bundle is great for the first time user or even for the seasoned professional. The inclusion of Studio One Artist allows you to get a possible new perspective when looking at other DAW and recording packages. New ideas are always welcome if they help to improve and inspire.

PRESONUS IS COMING, PRESONUS IS HERE

Over just a short period of time PreSonus has established itself as a major force in computer audio production. From its digital mixer line, computer interfaces and with their flagship DAW Studio One powerful DAW software they have a strong vision for the future.

The AudioBox 22VSL has found a nice home in my workflow at the home base and on the road. It proved very powerful and reliable no matter what I threw at it. PreSonus definitely has a winner here as it combines so much power in a very cost effective package. If you are looking for all around value and performance in a portable interface you should definitely check out the PreSonus AudioBox 22VSL.

You can find the AudioBox 22VSL for around \$199.00 at most retailers. You can also find out more information on the AudioBox 22VSL and Studio One by [visiting the PreSonus website \(http://www.presonus.com\)](http://www.presonus.com).

By [Simeon Amburgey \(http://www.praisetracks.com/\)](http://www.praisetracks.com/)

Tagged: [reviews \(http://www.praisetracks.com/tech/tag/reviews/\)](http://www.praisetracks.com/tech/tag/reviews/), [PreSonus \(http://www.praisetracks.com/tech/tag/presonus/\)](http://www.praisetracks.com/tech/tag/presonus/), [iPad \(http://www.praisetracks.com/tech/tag/ipad/\)](http://www.praisetracks.com/tech/tag/ipad/), [netbook \(http://www.praisetracks.com/tech/tag/netbook/\)](http://www.praisetracks.com/tech/tag/netbook/), [Pianoteq \(http://www.praisetracks.com/tech/tag/pianoteq/\)](http://www.praisetracks.com/tech/tag/pianoteq/), [AudioBox \(http://www.praisetracks.com/tech/tag/audiobox/\)](http://www.praisetracks.com/tech/tag/audiobox/)

Last updated: Feb 2, 09:21 PM

[« Previous post \(http://www.praisetracks.com/tech/permalink/wave-arts-dialog-vocal-production-plugin/\)](http://www.praisetracks.com/tech/permalink/wave-arts-dialog-vocal-production-plugin/)

Comments

No comments yet...