

# Yamaha 01V96i

**A new digital mixer is quite a rare occurrence these days; the fact it's a Yamaha encourages ROB JAMES.**

I have owned two Yamaha digital mixers, an 03D and an 02R96 that I still have. The learning curve was steep but familiarity bred content but I always had the impression that some of the switches were a bit fragile. However, I was recently involved in a film festival awards event and the PA mixer was one of the 01V96i's relatives — a powered version — which looked like an elephant had stood on it, despite which it worked perfectly. Since the bombshell introduction of the 02R in 1995, which created a completely new market segment, Yamaha has steadily improved the breed. Following the very sensible dictum of 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it', the latest consoles, including the 01V96i, would be immediately recognisable and usable to anyone who has ever encountered any of their predecessors. It is a testimony to just how prescient and 'right' the original designs were that so little has changed.

The Promix 01 with 60mm faders shared the limelight with the seminal 02R and this was followed by 01V with a lot of improvements and then came the 01V96 with 100mm faders and 96kHz sampling capability. The 01V96VCM added Virtual Circuitry Modelling effects and the 01V96i replaces that and builds on the foundations with a number of sonic improvements and 16 I-O channels direct to a DAW. The colour has also changed from a deep blue to a more sombre charcoal/black.

The headlines are 32 mono and two stereo input channels, 8 groups, 8 auxes and a stereo main output. Of the 16 analogue inputs 12 have Mic preamps with phantom power switched in blocks of four channels using small sliding switches on the rear panel. Just like the 02R96 there are four SPX multi-effects, which reduce to two at higher sampling rates. The VCM effects include 'Channel Strip' with five models aimed at recreating the sound and characteristics of classic compressors and EQs from the 70s. 'Vintage Stomp' provides three classic sounding phasers; 'Open Deck' employs VCM technology to emulate the analogue circuitry and tape characteristics that give open-reel tape recorders their supposedly unique sound. The VCM reverbs employ the 'Rev-X' algorithms first seen in Yamaha's SPX2000 Digital Multi Effects Processor. High-end Yamaha reverbs have always been desirable and it seems that some of that

goodness has trickled down into the 01V96i.

The surface follows the family pattern. A central screen, data input wheel, cursor keys and lots of buttons in various sections. If you know any 0 series console it will all be pretty familiar. If not, then the learning curve is worth it. Snapshot automation is available with 99 scene memories. Dynamic automation is only possible via MIDI and a sequencer/DAW and the faders are not touch-sensitive.

As with other 0 series consoles the channel equalisers are four-band parametrics, with switchable Type I or Type II EQ algorithms, and delay. At first I missed having low and high pass filters in addition to the four bands but I've grown accustomed to it. Type 1 is clean and forensic and has been criticised for being just too clinical. I like it. Type 2 has a lot more character, just don't look at what it does on pure tone. As an aside, you should see what my favourite classic analogue Neve EQ does on tone... or maybe you shouldn't. It sounds good though. As ever, it's horses for courses. One irritation is the lack of a quick way of zeroing parameters, e.g. EQ gain. On the 02R96 this is easily accomplished. All channel processors, except for channel delay, come with a raft of presets organised in libraries, which can be used as they are or modified as desired. User presets can be saved and recalled. All the channel functions except gating are also available on all the output buses.

In keeping with the 'live' theme a good number of the inputs are on the surface rather than hidden

around the back. The 12 improved mic pres are much cleaner than the old ones and on the digital front 8-channel Toslink optical ADAT is standard along with coaxial 2-track inputs.

Analogue outputs include the main stereo output, stereo monitor outputs, a stereo 2-track output and four Omni outputs and a headphone output. The 12 analogue mic channels also have unbalanced TRS insert jacks. Digital outputs are coaxial 2-track and 8-channel Toslink optical ADAT for digital output. If you need more, a single slot accepts optional mini YGDAI expansion cards. Yamaha offers interface cards ranging from traditional analogue and standard digital audio formats to cards that handle third-party proprietary network protocols.

A MADI interface and HD-SDI de-embedder/embedders are particularly worthy of note. Yamaha has most of the bases covered, making the 01V96i a good proposition for interfacing in almost any situation. If one isn't enough it is now possible to cascade a second mixer when necessary.

The 01V96i is now blessed with USB 2.0 connectivity, not just for MIDI but also for 16 channels of I-O to and from a DAW. Multitrack recording and playback is possible. Sources can be direct outs, buses or auxes. For anyone who does not already have a suitable DAW the 01V96i is supplied with the latest version of Cubase AI for Windows or Mac.

All inputs and outputs can be patched anywhere sensible. The 16 motorised channel faders are switchable between four layers, Inputs 1 – 16, Inputs 17 – 32, Masters and Remote. Apart from controlling a DAW the Remote layer can also be used as an assignable custom layer to combine control for any of the channels into a single layer, apart from the Stereo Out.

While you can set up the console from the surface the Studio Manager application is invaluable. Now in Version 2, Studio Manager makes setting up the console a much more pleasurable task and enables you to save or load data to and from the PC or Mac. It also functions as a remote control with graphic representations of the console.

For anyone in the market for an affordable, small assignable digital console this Yamaha must be way up the list of possibles. The 01V96i is ideally suited to live work with recording and will also work well in video edit suites. The sonics are much improved, throw in the USB 2 DAW connectivity and Yamaha has another winner on its hands. ■



**PROS** Direct 16 I-O USB connection to computer; improved mic pres; wide variety of optional interfaces.

**CONS** No quick way of zeroing EQ parameters etc; only two FX processors at high sampling rates.

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