



Alesis I/O26

Firewire Audio Interface For Mac & PC

Alesis know a thing or two about digital recording, but what can they bring to the busy world of audio interfaces? Quite a lot, as it happens...

John Walden

For recording musicians setting up a computer-based studio, the problem of finding a high-quality audio interface is pretty much a thing of the past. The difficult thing now is deciding which one of the many products, each with their own combination of features, best suits your needs and budget. Alesis have recently added to this problem with the I/O series of Firewire-based audio/MIDI interfaces. The I/O2 and I/O14 (described briefly in the 'Keeping It In The Family' box) are the baby brothers to the

I/O26 reviewed here and, while the amount of connectivity provided increases through the range, the units obviously share some common technology and design elements.

In summary, the I/O26 offers 26 inputs (eight analogue, 16 ADAT and two via S/PDIF) and eight simultaneous outputs (all analogue, while the S/PDIF output can be assigned to replicate any of the analogue output pairs). Sample rates of up to 192kHz are supported, all at 24-bit. All eight analogue inputs feature switchable phantom power, and two headphone outputs and MIDI In and Out are also featured. More uniquely, the I/O26 also includes dedicated turntable inputs and insert

points on every analogue input. Aside from the driver and mixer software (described below), *Cubase LE* is also included in the price and would make a perfectly respectable starting point for those taking their first steps in computer-based recording. So if you are currently struggling to make a choice between the large number of multi-channel audio interfaces that are now available, have Alesis made that choice easier or more difficult with the I/O26?

The Brick Outhouse

Aside from the unit itself, the I/O26 box includes a printed manual, a software/driver installation CD, a Firewire lead and a power supply. When using the I/O26 with a four-pin Firewire port (for example, on a laptop), an external power source is required, but with a six-pin Firewire port the I/O26 is fully bus-powered.