

Sound Devices
MixPre-3M
£582

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Sound Devices MixPre Series

Sound Devices MixPre series offers high quality integrated multichannel recording and simultaneous USB interfacing in what they call a 'Portable DAWless studio'. The MixPre-3M and MixPre-6M are also astonishingly compact and can be battery powered. Let's see which comes out on top

Sound Devices MixPre-3M

1 At just under 500 grams Sound Devices' palm-sized interface is a feature rich, 2-in-1 device that provides compact multitrack field recording and simultaneous 5-in 2-out USB DAW interfacing at 24-bit and up to 96kHz. Much like its more powerful sibling (the MixPre-10M), the 'M' indicates that this is for musicians rather than film and location recordists. However, the MixPre-3M still benefits from location style battery powering (4xAAA), as well as USB and external PSU, and comes in a rugged, stand-mountable case. Internal storage comes via data card (SD/SDHC/SDXC) and you can transfer recorded files to computer via USB-C.

You get three XLR mic/line inputs which incorporate Sound Devices' super-clean Kashmir discreet mic pres (all have individually selectable phantom power) and a stereo auxiliary input on mini jack. Outputs are main stereo and headphone (both on minijack). Alas there are no 1/4" jack inputs, however, the auxiliary minijack can handle high impedance (100kOhm) sources. Routing is via a flexible digital patchbay accessed using the sunlight viewable IPS LCD touchscreen, and the patchbay also doubles as an input mixer. It's one input per track and inputs include mic, line, DAW USB output and L/R mix bus. You get 12 record/overdub tracks in total and you can record three tracks at a time. The 1.6" touchscreen couples with a push button data knob on the side, and much of the functionality is software driven. This is where you set up the headphone mixes as well as route signals, select phantom, arm tracks and add monitoring effects (these are

reverb and Air). Nevertheless, the main transport controls (play, stop and record) are specific backlit front panel buttons. In practice, the MixPre-3M is simple to set up and we think delivers impeccable audio fidelity. It also captures performances with an immediacy often lacking in a DAW whilst retaining full USB interfacing capabilities.

VERDICT 9.2

Sound Devices MixPre-6M

2 The MixPre-6M shares most aspects of the 3M's functionality as mentioned above and performs to the same impressive standards. Even so, it does have some differences: firstly, you have four XLR mic/line inputs and this time they use combination XLR/jack connectors, which is welcome. As for tracking, you can record six tracks simultaneously, maximum track count remains 12 and USB IO improves with 8-in and 4-out. Understandably the 6M is slightly larger and heavier (a little over half a kilo); what's more that extra front panel space means they've squeezed in a 'shortcut' button. Even so it's still super compact and in use the MixPre-6M is pretty much identical to the MixPre-3M (and MixPre-10M for that matter).

The price difference is roughly £250, which is a lot, and although we like having the extra input and more flexible combi connectors, one has to question whether the price difference is justified. Even so, the quality and capabilities of the MixPre-6M still make it a good choice for serious musicians looking for its particular feature set.

VERDICT 9.0

2 Sound Devices MixPre-6M
£834

FM VERDICT



Both units are robust, beautifully executed and supremely compact, but our desire for the best features means that the MixPre-6M comes out on top. However, we just can't get over that price difference, so it's value for money that wins through with the MixPre-3M taking the crown