

# Focusrite Clarett+ 2Pre £440

Want to upscale your interface? Jon Musgrave could have just the thing

**CONTACT** WHO: Focusrite **WEB:** focusrite.com **KEY FEATURES** **INPUTS:** 2 mic/line/instrument, 8 ADAT **OUTPUTS:** 4 balanced line, 1 headphone **INPUT GAIN RANGE:** 57dB (mic/line/instrument) **DYNAMIC RANGE INPUTS:** 118dB (mic/line) 116dB (instrument) **DYNAMIC RANGE OUTPUTS:** 124dB **DIMENSIONS:** 210 x 161 x 55mm **WEIGHT:** 1.11kg





## THE PROS & CONS



Crystal clear mic preamps with plenty of headroom

Air transformer input emulation

Useful JFET instrument inputs

Low latency monitoring and additional features via the PC/Mac software and iOS app



Bus powering requires a 15W USB-C connection

Control software won't be appealing to everyone

I spend plenty of time testing budget audio devices and the quality is often very good. Even so, as your listening becomes more discerning you'll probably outgrow your entry-level device and want something more revealing. Clarett are Focusrite's premium studio grade USB interfaces and with only three devices to choose from, offer a more focused product line than Focusrite's entry-level Scarlett. All three operate at up to 24-bit/192kHz, include MIDI I/O and additional connectivity via ADAT interface. They also have a decent bundle of software including Focusrite's Red 2 and Red 3 plugins and Plugin Alliance's bx\_console Focusrite SC. Their recent update to Clarett+, as you might expect from an audiophile device, focuses on improving the performance rather than expanding that feature set.

The Clarett+ 2Pre I have for review is the smallest of the three and has two mic pres with front mounted combination mic/line/instrument inputs with gain controls and individual self-illuminating phantom power switches. There's also an Air LED indicator for the optional ISA transformer input emulation. Next to these you'll find the main Monitor output level and a single headphone output with level control. Round the back are four balanced outputs on ¼" TRS jacks, MIDI I/O and the aforementioned

ADAT optical input. This delivers a total I/O of 10-in/4-out and coupling the 2Pre with Focusrite's own Clarett OctoPre would deliver a pretty compelling 10 mic input Air enabled tracking setup.

Clarett+ 2Pre is a USB 2.0 compatible device and connection is via a USB-C port on the back. This supports USB-C bus powering, but you'll need a USB-C equipped device that provides 15W rather than 7.5W. If that's not an option you can use the included PSU and you'll find both USB-C and USB-A terminated cables in the box.

### Control software

The 2Pre works in conjunction with the Focusrite Control software and some functionality including selecting the instrument input is only accessible via this software. This won't please everyone, but it's extremely easy to use and setting up your low latency monitoring is pretty self-explanatory. The software also provides some great extra features, including choosing which output pairs, if any, are actually controlled by the hardware Monitor knob. Rather usefully, Focusrite Control is also available as a slightly simplified iOS app, so you can control levels, including your low latency monitoring mix from your phone.

Clarett+ has new, improved independent A-D and D-A converters, slightly better noise figures

throughout and improved dynamic range. It's tough to judge this without A/B ing the unit with the previous generation. Nevertheless, the mic inputs are silky smooth and have plenty of headroom, and the outputs crystal clear and suitably noise free. If you want to add some life to your input, the Air option does just that, and although this is software controlled, you'll hear the welcoming sound of a relay switching the circuit inside the unit. Also excellent are the two JFET instrument inputs. These sound substantially better than a regular instrument input and clip in a nice fuzzy way if you push them hard.

Overall, the Clarett+ 2Pre is a reasonably simple interface with some very handy features, that offers subtle yet welcome improvements over its predecessor. **FM**

## FM VERDICT

# 9.1

The latest generation of these excellent interfaces delivers handy software control alongside rock solid audio performance