

RødeCaster Pro II

£699

If you produce podcasts, this will make your life much easier. **Jon Musgrave** fires up this latest task-specific workstation

KEY FEATURES **FREQ RANGE:** 20Hz to 20kHz **PREAMP GAIN:** 0-76dB **I/O:** 4 x combo mic, instrument, line; 2 x balanced line, 4 x headphone 1/4" jack **BIT DEPTH:** 24bit **SAMPLE RATE:** 48kHz **STORAGE:** microSDHC, SDXC, USB-C **USB INTERFACE 1:** 1x 2in/16out, 1x 2in/2out with mix minus **USB INTERFACE 2:** 1x 2in/2out with mix minus **POWER:** 30W via USB-C (15V, 2A)



Bundling a specific podcasting toolset into a single production workstation has proved very successful for Røde.

However, with similar products now available from Tascam and others, Røde have decided to step things up a gear, and the result is the RødeCaster Pro II. The unit combines multiple input sources (mic/line, Bluetooth and USB) with onboard processing and pad sound effect triggering to create a stereo 'show' output mix. Main stereo and constituent multichannel streams can be recorded to onboard Micro SD, attached USB storage, and via USB interfacing. It includes four physical inputs, stereo monitor outputs and four headphone outputs, with one headphone output dedicated to the host. The desktop-style unit can also be mounted using the bottom 1/4" mic stand thread or 100mm x 100mm vesa mount.

So what's new? First up, the Pro II is more compact and slightly lighter than the original Pro, and has six physical faders (the Pro has eight). That said, the faders can be assigned to any audio source and are joined by three virtual channels, upticking the input channel count to nine. So all told, it's more flexible. What's more, a fantastic new 5.5" angled haptic touchscreen with a push/turn rotary encoder keeps things tactile. On the sonic front, new Revolution preamps offer more gain, less noise and are paired with XLR/Jack combi inputs. Pro II also has eight pads with eight banks and dedicated bank navigation buttons. The pads trigger onboard sound effects including a handy master output expletive bleeper, but can also apply a choice of voice effects, robot for example, to the four physical inputs. These are assignable and editable within the software.

RødeCaster Pro II includes significantly upgraded USB connectivity and has three USB-C connectors. One is for power, one supports full multitrack streams (2in/16out and 2in/2out) and one supports stereo (2in/2out). This lets you use multiple software apps on different drivers or even smart phones, further enhancing the Pro II's broadcast hub functionality. Underlying this is a new quad-core audio engine. This also drives the



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onboard Apex processing which includes channel level preset processing, advanced processing (high pass filter, de-esser, noise gate, compressor, 3-band EQ, exciter and pan) and the master output compeller and master output delay.

Software options can be set onboard or via the Røde Central app. These include broadcast-style fader-up monitor muting for mic input faders and headphone sensitivity. From a production perspective, significant options include pre or post fader multitrack recording with an effects bypass option, and different settings for onboard SD and USB streams. Main stereo USB output options include mix minus or customisable mix. Further software settings include metering type, haptic behaviour, display brightness and colour settings.

One gripe is being limited to 24-bit/48kHz operation; if you were hoping the Pro II could double as a high res audio interface, it's a no. Still, overall it's a deceptively flexible, powerful device, and the more I dug in, the more impressed I was. **FM**

FM VERDICT

8.8

Røde gives the all-in-one podcast production centre a big upgrade, delivering a higher quality, slicker and yet smaller device

THE PROS & CONS



Better quality and more flexible input and preamp configuration

Fantastic angled haptic touchscreen

Two USB audio connections and multiple drivers for flexible connectivity

More compact footprint

Good choice of storage options



Limited to 24-bit 48kHz operation