

Focusrite Scarlett 4th Gen Interfaces from £140

Focusrite's most popular interfaces have received a welcome update. **Jon Musgrave** sizes up the new Scarletts

CONTACT WHO: Focusrite **WEB:** focusrite.com **KEY FEATURES** ALL UNITS: Up to 24-bit/192kHz **INPUT CONNECTIONS:** Solo: 1 jack, 1 XLR, 2i2: 2 jack, 2 XLR, 4i4: 2 XLR/jack combi, 2 jack **OUTPUT CONNECTIONS:** Solo: 2 jack, 2i2: 2 jack, 4i4: 4 jack **USB:** USB-C **POWER:** USB with additional USB-C power inputs for 2i2 and 4i4 **SIZE:** Solo: 142 x 96 x 45mm, 2i2: 179 x 116 x 46mm, 4i4: 179 x 129 x 60mm **WEIGHT:** Solo: 365g, 2i2: 586g, 4i4: 814g **PRICING:** Solo: £140, 2i2: £200, 4i4: £275



Focusrite's long-established, highly popular Scarlett USB interfaces are available in many shapes and sizes, offering everything from simple 2-in/2-out to the full-on multi-channel 18i20. The process of moving to the 4th Generation devices is now well and truly underway and for review I have the new Solo, 2i2 and 4i4.

These are direct replacements for their respective 3rd gen devices. The Solo includes two inputs (one mic XLR and one line/instrument jack) and two outputs, and the 2i2 is also two I/O but with two mic preamps (two XLR and two line/instrument connectors). The 4i4 has four inputs (two mic XLR and two line/instrument), four outputs and MIDI in/out. All three have a single headphone output with dedicated level control (this is an upgrade for the Solo) and all offer up to 24-bit/192kHz operation. USB connection is via USB-C but is compatible with regular USB 2.0, and the 2i2 and 4i4 include an extra USB-C power socket. All three interfaces can be USB-powered, but the 4i4 in particular needs a hefty 1.5A supply and thus includes an external PSU for those not using a USB-C equipped computer.

Seeing Scarlett

The interfaces retain the same red metal casework and functional shape of the 3rd gen, although the case sizes and feature layouts have been modified somewhat. For example, the 2i2 and 4i4 both have channel selectors and shared buttons, with encoder-style gain knobs, all of which feels slicker in use. For minimal latency input monitoring the Solo includes a single function Direct button, and the 2i2 a dual function Direct button, with mono and panned options. The 4i4 has no hardware option but has three software cue mixes, accessible via Focusrite Control 2.

The 4th gen Scarletts include technical improvements across all interfaces with 120dB dynamic range RedNet A/D converters, a new improved headphone amp, better implementation of knob halo indicators with output metering for the 2i2 and 4i4, and a reworked Air



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mode. This now has two stages of enhancement – presence or presence with harmonic drive. I found the latter was ideal for livening up vanilla DI electric guitar or bass. The only downside is the Solo unit can only apply Air to the mic input and not the instrument input.

Extra features

There are some further new features that are specific to the 2i2 and 4i4. The reworked preamps have an impressive 69dB of gain, which I found to be ideal for low output mics such as ribbons.

The 2i2 and 4i4 preamps also include optional auto gain and clip safe. The former monitors the input for ten seconds, setting the gain accordingly, and also includes a dual channel option. The latter applies real-time changes to the gain setting to avoid clipping. I found that both worked well, although the clip safe option works best with properly set initial gain levels, as it has the

potential to make big gain changes in real time.

Although they might look similar at first glance, the new Scarletts could definitely be called slicker interfaces, with better specs and more options. I am inevitably drawn towards the great new features on the 2i2 and 4i4 but, in all honesty, all three are worthy upgrades and highly recommended. **FM**

FM VERDICT

9.0

Great upgrades to a popular range. The new features particularly in the 2i2 and 4i4 will help improve your productivity and recordings

THE PROS & CONS



Up to 24-bit/192kHz operation on all three of the interfaces

Very handy auto gain and clip safe options on 2i2 and 4i4

Improved Air enhancer feature

Better RedNet convertors

Slicker front panel with soft button selectors



Best new features are reserved for 2i2 and 4i4