Rack Mount Digital Mixers Small but Mighty

By GeorgePetersen

One of the hottest trends today is the move toward compact digital consoles. Perfect for small footprint installs, portable gigs or anywhere where you want to travel light, these offer a blend of power, DSP punch — and in many cases, expandability to meet future needs. Yet at the same time, packing everything into a 19-inch rack chassis provides a lot of options, whether used tabletop or loaded into a road case. And with the availability of WiFi tablet or iPad mixing, the engineer doesn't have to be tied down into a single location and can walk the room to check mixes and/or system response anywhere in the venue. Within this growing market, we found plenty of choices to consider and here are but of a few of what's available.

Allen & Heath Qu Pac

Input Channels/Local Pre's: 38/16
Remote I/O: Any dSNAKE stagebox
Max Sampling Rate: 48 kHz
Main Outs: 12 XLR outs
EQ, Type: PEQ's on channels; GEQ's on outs
Onboard Effects: Effects from iLive FX Library
Footprint: 19 x 7 inches
Network Interfacing: dSNAKE plus QuPad wi-fi iOS control.
Notes: Onboard touchscreen control; Qu-Drive for 18-channel recording to USB; full monitor mixes via iPhone app or ME hardware monitor mixers
Price: $1,499/street

allen-heath.com

Avid VENUE S3L-X

Input Channels/Local Pre's: 64/2
Remote I/O: Stage 16
Max Sampling Rate: 48 kHz
Main Outs: 8, expandable to 32
Aux Sends: 24 (including variable groups)
EQ, Type: Full Avid VENUE complement
Onboard Effects: Includes suite of 20+ plug-ins
Footprint: 28 x 14 inch mix controller, plus 2U E3 DSP engine
Network Interfacing: Ethernet AVB
Notes: Full Pro Tools integration
Price: $17,995/retail with Stage 16

avid.com

Behringer X32 Rack

Input Channels/Local Pre's: 40/16
Remote I/O: S16 16-channel digital snake option
Max Sampling Rate: 48 kHz
Main Outs: 8 XLR
EQ, Type: PEQ's on channels; GEQ's on outs
Onboard Effects: Virtual FX rack with 8 slots
Footprint 5.25 x 19 inches
Network Interfacing: Control via Ethernet or iOS app; dual AES50 ports.
Notes: UltraNet connectivity for Behringer P16 Personal Monitoring
Price: $1,199/street

behringer.com

Cadac CDC four

Input Channels/Local Pre's: 56/16
Remote I/O: CDC I/O 3216
Max Sampling Rate: 96 kHz
Main Outs: L/R + mono XLR
EQ, Type: PEQ's on channels; GEQ's on outs
Onboard Effects: Six stereo 96kHz effects
Footprint: 19 x 22.5-inches
Network Interfacing: MADI optional
Notes: TabMix app for iPad control
Price: $5,625/street

cadac-sound.com

Crest Audio Tactus

Input Channels/Local Pre's: 64/8
Remote I/O: Tactus Stage 32x16
Max Sampling Rate: 96 kHz
Main Outs: 4 XLR
EQ, Type: PEQ's on channels; GEQ's on outs
Onboard Effects: Wave SoundGrid
Footprint/Weight: 2U Tactus FOH, plus touch screen
Network Interfacing: Gigabit Ethernet to Waves SoundGrid protocol
Notes: Based around eMotion LV1 software mixing platform
Price: TBA

peaveycommercialaudio.com

DiGiCo SD11

Input Channels/Local Pre's: 32/16
Remote I/O: D-Rack 32/8; up to 56 via MADI
Max Sampling Rate: 96 kHz
Main Outs: 8 XLR (assignable); plus AES pair
EQ, Type: PEQ's on channels; GEQ's on outs
Onboard Effects: 4 onboard, plus optional WavesGrid
Footprint: 19 x 22.7 inches
Network Interfacing: MADI/RJ-45 Cat-5E/Optocore option
Notes: Other versions include the DSP-expanded SD11i and broadcast-specific SD11B.
Price: $11,000/retail

digico.biz

Line 6 StageScape M20d

Input Channels/Local Pre's: 20/12
Remote I/O: None
Max Sampling Rate: 48 kHz
Main Outs: 2 XLR
EQ, Type: PEQ's on channels; GEQ's on outs
Onboard Effects: 4 FX engines with 100 programs
Footprint: 16 x 13 inches
Network Interfacing: Remote iPad mixing; L6 LINK multi-channel digital networking for integrating L6 LINK-enabled speakers
Notes: Touchscreen mixing; direct multitrack recording to SD card, USB or to Mac/PC
Price: $1,499/street

line6.com

Mackie DL32R

Input Channels/Local Pre's: 36/32
Remote I/O: None
Max Sampling Rate: 48 kHz
Main Outs: 14 XLR plus AES
EQ, Type: PEQ's on channels; GEQ's on outs
Onboard Effects: 3 stereo effects engines
Footprint: 19 x 17.5 inches
Network Interfacing: Ethernet port; Dante optional
Notes: No control surface; requires iOS device for mixing; direct recording to USB hard drive or Mac/PC
Price: $1,999/street

mackie.com

Midas M32R

Input Channels/Local Pre's: 32/16
Remote I/O: DL16 stagebox
Max Sampling Rate: 96 kHz
Main Outs: 2 XLR mains
EQ, Type: PEQ's on channels; GEQ's on outs
Onboard Effects: 8 stereo effects engines
Footprint: 19 x 24.3 inches
Network Interfacing: AES50 ports; Midas Supermac; MADI and Dante options; M32 iPad/Android mix app.
Notes: 32-channel direct record/play to Mac or PC.
Price: $2,999/street

midasconsoles.com

PreSonus StudioLive RM32AI

Input Channels/Local Pre's: 32/32
Remote I/O: No
Max Sampling Rate: 96 kHz
Main Outs: 3, plus 16 assignable outs
EQ, Type: PEQ's on channels; GEQ's on outs
Onboard Effects:
Footprint: 19 x 10.5 inches
Network Interfacing: Ethernet; FireWire s800; Dante and AVB optional
Notes: No control surface; requires network or WiFi router for iPad app or Mac/PC control; FireWire 800 interface for recording.
Price: $1,999/street

presonus.com

QSC TouchMix-16

Input Channels/Local Pre's: 20/16
Remote I/O: No
Max Sampling Rate: 48 kHz
Main Outs: 2 XLR
EQ, Type: PEQ's on channels; GEQ's on outs
Onboard Effects: 4 effects engines with 24 programs
Footprint: 14.2 x 11.5-inches
Network Interfacing: USB 3.0, plus iPad control via WiFi
Notes: Direct recording of all inputs plus stereo mix direct to USB hard drive; rack mount kit is optional.
Price: $1,299/street

qsc.com

Roland M-200i V-Mixer

Input Channels/Local Pre's: 32/16
Remote I/O: S-1608 Digital Snake
Max Sampling Rate: 48 kHz
Main Outs: 2, plus 10 assignable outs
EQ, Type: PEQ's on channels; GEQ's on outs
Onboard Effects: 4 effects engines, including Roland "Vintage Effects"
Footprint: 19 x 19 inches
Network Interfacing: REAC and Ethernet ports, plus WiFi iPad mixing
Notes: Access to full family of REAC options, for up to 40 inputs and M-48 personal monitoring systems.
Price: $2,495/street

proav.roland.com

Soundcraft Ui16

Input Channels/Local Pre's: 16/12
Remote I/O: None
Max Sampling Rate: 48 kHz
Main Outs: 2 XLR
EQ, Type: PEQ's on channels; GEQ's on outs
Onboard Effects: Lexicon, dbx and DigiTech effects plus RTA
Footprint: 19 x 5 inches
Network Interfacing: Integrated WiFi for iOS/Android tablets, Mac or PC
Notes: No control surface — requires iPad or tablet control via free app.
Price: $549/street

soundcraft.com

Yamaha QL1

Input Channels/Local Pre's: 32/16
Remote I/O: Full line of R-Series stageboxes
Max Sampling Rate: 48 kHz
Main Outs: 8 assignable XLR outs, plus AES outs
EQ, Type: PEQ's on channels; GEQ's on outs
Onboard Effects: Yamaha REV-X reverb; Rupert Neve 5033 EQ/5043 comp, plus VCM analog emulations.
Footprint: 18.4 x 22 inches
Network Interfacing: Ethernet and Dante ports; WiFi iPad mix app
Notes: Dugan automixing and direct recording to Nuendo offered.
Price: $8,499/retail

yamahaproaudio.com