

Tascam Mixcast 4

£579

If you make podcasts and want to streamline the process, **Jon Musgrave** could have just the device you need

CONTACT WEB: tascam.eu **KEY FEATURES** **MIC INPUT:** XLR/TRS combo sockets **MIC GAIN:** 66.5dB **LINE INPUTS:** pair 1/4" TRS jacks, 1/8" stereo minijack **HEADPHONES:** 1/4" stereo jacks, 1/8" TRRS front panel **LINE OUTPUTS:** 1/4" TRS jack, 1/8" stereo minijack **USB:** Type-C connector, USB 2.0 **SD:** SD, SDHC, SDXC Recording: WAV at 24-bit, 48kHz **SIZE:** 375 x 267 x 71mm **WEIGHT:** 2.55kg



Podcasting clearly creates its own demands and a dedicated device certainly makes sense. With Røde's Rodecaster and Zoom's PodTrak already making waves, portastudio kings Tascam have now entered the fray. Mixcast 4 is an SD-based multiple input, multiple output multitrack recorder with USB interfacing. It lets you balance and record the audio of your podcast as either a stereo mix or in multitrack format. This can then be transferred via USB to various devices (Mac, PC and iOS with Android to be added soon) and Tascam's Podcast Editor software used to edit and export your final show (WAV, MP3, MP4).

Mixcast 4 has plenty of physical controls and faders, a menu-driven touchscreen, and eight trigger pads for firing audio and effects. It works as a standalone device, and although quite heavy, it's compact enough to stick in a backpack. That said, some aspects, like importing sound files to pads, do require the software editor.

Connectivity is definitely one of Mixcast 4's strong points. There are four phantom-powered mic inputs (the first four faders), and one stereo line input on either 1/4" TRS jacks or minijack. Meanwhile, the outputs include four headphones (headphone 1 is paralleled to a front mounted minijack), and the main stereo output. USB interfacing provides 14-out/2-in communication, with the faders routed to individual USB streams. The final three stereo faders carry a Bluetooth input, USB input from the connected USB device and audio from the trigger pads.

Each channel has Mute and non-destructive Solo, with fader 1 also including Talkback. This routes to headphones 2-4 and works even with channel 1 muted. Channel-specific processing is accessed via touchscreen. You'll find de-essing and noise suppression on all channels, with 2-band EQ, exciter and compressor on the mic channels. Mic channels also have an assignable effect – reverb or voice pitch changer. Finally, Mic 1 has a dedicated ducking processor. There's also a global Auto Mixer setting, which helps manage levels across all four mics.

Mixcast 4 is clearly packed with features, but still I found both the hardware and Podcast Editor software



Packed with features but still intuitive

intuitive. For example, you can use the front-mounted TRRS headphone as a mic source by assigning it to mic input 1. So, your mic-equipped headphones can also provide a talkback mic. Brilliant. Also, each trigger pad has six selectable playback modes (one shot, latching and so on), so you can tailor how they behave. This is vital for making the most of the trigger pad concept.

There are limitations. Mixcast 4 only operates at 24-bit / 48kHz, although you can export in 16-bit and at 44.1kHz. Also, editing parameters via touchscreen isn't very immediate, particularly if you've got a bunch of gate thresholds to set up. Finally, although the mic inputs sound fine, they're not designed to compete with a dedicated audiophile interface.

Overall Mixcast 4 is a very accomplished device, which will let you spend more time on the content of your podcast rather than fretting over the technical aspects. **FM**

FM VERDICT

9.0

Tascam's portable recording knowhow captured in a podcast-specific device. If you're in that game, it's definitely worth a look

THE PROS & CONS



Compact and robust

Plenty of connectivity

Multitrack and stereo operation modes

Well equipped Podcast Editor software available

Well integrated talkback mic



Certain features only accessible via Podcast Editor