

Tascam is up to the task

The Portacapture X8 brings advanced audio technology to indie filmmakers. That's why it's an award-winner



Genuinely game-changing tech doesn't often come to the world of audio recording. Something that doesn't just satisfy trained audiophiles, but makes a real difference to the working lives of filmmakers.

The introduction of 32-bit float technology is that breakthrough. And it means the range of sound that can be captured is so wide, you don't really need to set audio levels. It's a significant leap forward for audio, and the recorder that's popularised this tech at an affordable price is the Tascam Portacapture X8.

The innovative yet simple Tascam is a high-resolution, multitrack handheld recorder – and the clear winner in the audio recorder/adaptor category of our Pro Moviemaker Gear of the Year Awards, voted for by thousands of working pros.

Tascam's Portacapture X8 can record up to six audio inputs, with two stereo – that's eight tracks. And the recorder can be set to 32-bit float so the range of sounds recorded is huge – far wider than in conventional 24-bit recorders.

Audio levels can then be adjusted up or down in post to give distortion-free sound with no clipping, as 32-bit float records a huge dynamic range of 1528dB.

For one-person shooters, it takes the risk out of recording audio. Just plug in the mic and press record for excellent results.

The Portacapture X8 has six audio inputs. It comes with two detachable

condenser mics on the top, which can be removed so you can use the standard 3.5mm inputs that sit underneath. Each side has a pair of XLR inputs that support phantom power, and these have 1/4in input jacks in the centre for inputting a signal that way, too. There is also a separate 3.5mm EXT IN input on the side.

The X8 also houses a 3.5mm output, so you can send the mixed signal out to record in your camera. Plus, there's a headphone socket for monitoring and a built-in small speaker. A USB-C socket allows you to power it or plug into a PC.

This 32-bit float function is available in WAV at up to 192kHz, but the recorder can also be set as a standard 16- or 24-bit recorder in WAV or MP3. You can also record a 24-bit WAV and 32-bit float file simultaneously with dual recording.

The X8 has an easy-to-use colour touchscreen. Its launcher monitor possesses quick settings for recording common sources like music and podcasts, plus ASMR for very quiet sounds. For pro use, select manual and take full control. You can set which audio inputs go to which tracks and change levels. Either do this via the touchscreen or the bottom dial.

An optional Bluetooth dongle goes into a dedicated socket and turns your smartphone into a fully featured remote, with an interface that mirrors the X8 itself. The dongle also enables the Portacapture X8 to wirelessly sync with Atomos Connect

“For one-person shooters, it takes risk out of capturing audio – just press record”

devices, AtomX Sync or Ultrasync Blue timecode adapters.

Sync via timecode helps in editing by aligning files on a time basis. Employed as the master timecode device, the Atomos Ultrasync Blue is an easy-to-use, low-cost, wireless timecode adapter that can synchronise any compatible camera with the Portacapture X8 using Atomos AirGlu connectivity. The wireless Bluetooth transmission works for up to six devices.

This set-up can be expanded with the addition of the Atomos Ultrasync One, which functions either as a transmitter timecode server or a receiver client device. Using the Ultrasync One as the source, a sophisticated camera system can receive a direct timecode feed while the Ultrasync One wirelessly sends timecode to the Ultrasync Blue, which can then feed the Tascam along with other devices.

When using either the Atomos Shogun Connect, Ninja V or Ninja V+ to record and monitor, the AtomX Sync synchronises with the Ultrasync One, too.

With all this, the Tascam Portacapture X8 offers amazing value and makes it far easier to capture stunning sound. **MM**

TASCAM

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USER-FRIENDLY The Tascam Portacapture X8 is a joy, thanks to its simple user interface (above right) and excellent smartphone app (above left), which replicates the main screen for easy remote deployment