# API 2448

The American console maker and 500 Series inventor has a new mid-price mixer.
GEORGE SHILLING twiddles the knobs and delivers his verdict

A new desk from API is always big news. The legendary console company has been around for 50 years but still utilises technology from its early days, whilst carefully and cleverly innovating to maintain a loyal following and convert new customers to the fold.

The 2448 retains many features and functions from its siblings. With similar 8-bus architecture, it is closest in concept to the 1608, or more accurately the updated 1608-II which added new features, in particular the addition of Final TouchTM automation as an option, with SMPTE and MIDI Timecode synchronisation and automation of faders, mutes and inserts. The 2448 also offers Final Touch as an option, with a bright and clear touch screen in the fader panel (and an HDMI socket for mirroring on a larger display). Automation data is stored on a supplied SD card, and there is also a USB slot above the screen for backing up

dataconnecting an external keyboard and mouse. A USB-B socket on the console rear is for connection to a DAW to enable HUI interface; the faders can then be set up to control DAW channel faders.
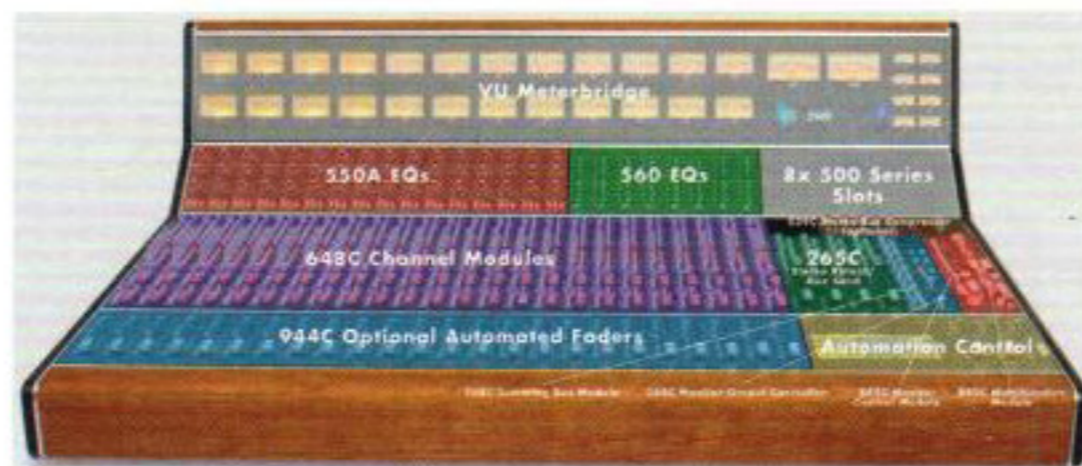

The 2448 is available in 24, 32 or 48 40 channel sizes. Perhaps the most important difference from the 1608 is in-line configuration, with the bonus of two signal paths on each channel. Including the Returns this allows for 56 line inputs at mix-down on the 24 channel version. As well as the aforementioned eight

summing buses, there are eight Aux sends and four stereo Returns – these have full size (automated) faders. I tested the 24 channel model on demo in SX Pro's smart new studio. The Final Touch-equipped faders are incredibly smooth and responsive, their motors silent and lightning-quick. A lovely feature is that touching a fader brings up a big clear level display on the touch-screen, also showing its level relative to its previous position. And you can simultaneously touch and see levels of up to three faders.

The meter-bridge looks very smart with its swathe of high quality classic-style VU meters. There are meters for each channel, a large pair of main Program meters, and eight smaller VUs on the right, with comprehensive options to view Large or Small inputs, Direct output, Summing bus masters, Aux sends and the Returns using various configuration buttons. The main stereo meters can also display pairs of Aux sends, or the L/R signals of each of the

three 6-track (surround) External inputs. There are indicators for the power rails, and an built-in Talkback mic. You can also plug in an external talkback mic on the back.

At the top of each channel is a banked 500 Series slot which as standard is populated with the ever-wonderful 550A EQs in the first 16, followed by eight 560 graphic EQs in channels 17-24. Of course you can configure this section with your own choice of API EQ and the price will be adjusted accordingly. On the right of these slots (above the centre section) are a further eight 'Return 500' slots. These can be inserted in pairs in the four stereo Returns, but are also provided with individual TRS connectors for input and output on the rear panel, so you can alternatively use them as a bonus 'lunchbox'.
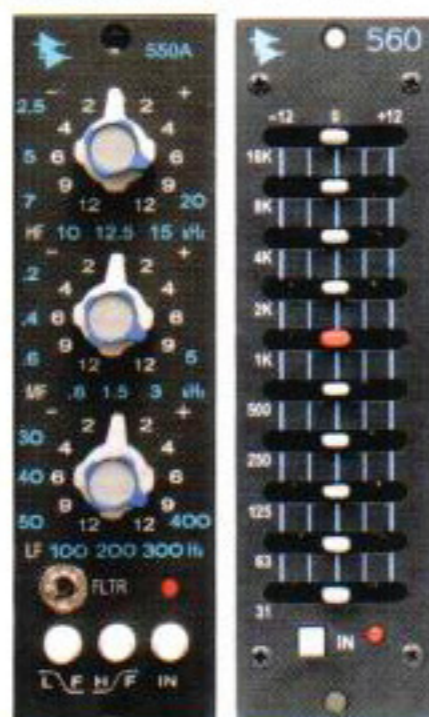
Channel modules

The flat surface of the desk contains new 648C channel modules which place the input section more conventionally at the top (unlike the upside-down 1608 arrangement). All buttons illuminate helpfully when switched down. The preamp includes the usual 48v phantom and Pad buttons alongside the Gain knob, and an Alt Line selector which lets you double up the line inputs. Below this are the eight Summing Bus routing switches, with separate Pan and Program buttons for both Large and Small faders, making operation and configuration very straightforward.

Working downwards, there are the Aux sends next, with 7/8 at the top. Each pair of sends has a Pre-fade button and dual-concentric knobs. 7/8 and 5/6 are stereo with Level and Pan and one On button per pair, while 1/2 and 3/4 are individual level controls and On buttons. 7/8 additionally includes a To Bus button which optionally routes these to Summing Buses 1-4 — useful in particular for surround configurations. Below the sends is the Small Fader section, which defaults to the Mic input (or Alt Line when selected). The fader itself is actually a potentiometer, with a Pan knob adjacent. In the centre section there is a global 0dB bypass for the Small Fader, setting them all to unity to enable easy DAW summing and recall. Pressing the Bus button routes the small fader to the routing matrix (instead of the large fader). There is a Filter button (-3dB at 50Hz, 12dB/octave), and Aux 5-8 allows these sends to be fed from here instead of the large fader.

Large Solo and Mute buttons are accompanied by [Solo] Safe, polarity flip, Insert and EQ SM buttons, the latter switching the EQ into this path. The Large Fader section defaults to the main Line input, but there is a Flip button to swap the paths. The Line input has a -6dB pad for those pesky loud DAW outputs, and here you can select to feed the Direct Output

with the Small Fader signal. And again there are Solo, Safe, Mute, polarity, and Insert buttons. Below the channel strips are the very responsive faders which are accompanied by a raft of LEDs for the automation system, and a sprinkling of coloured momentary buttons for individual selection of auto modes and functions on each fader.

The centre section includes space at the top for the excellent optional 529C Stereo Bus Compressor which includes most of the features of the much-loved 2500 compressor. The Aux send and Summing Bus masters include Solo buttons and other useful routing tricks, particularly helpful for surround use. You can select External inputs for the sends, and individually insert Talkback.

The four stereo Returns are effectively equipped with two Inserts, one being the Return 500 slots. There is a useful Mono button on each Return. And they each have an Aux In button which directly routes the corresponding pair of Aux Sends to their input, replacing their main Return input or 500 slot output. Returns can be assigned to Summing Bus 7/8 or stereo Program.

There are dedicated surround monitoring features including six On buttons for 5.1 speakers, and separate Left and Right trims and Insert buttons for stereo Program. Control Room source can be fed from the Aux sends or one of three external 5.1 inputs, as well as main Program. There's a multi-frequency oscillator, and a threshold setting for the Peak LEDs which are on every input. The monitoring includes switching for three sets of speakers (main has surround outputs, Alt 1 and 2 are stereo), and there is variable Dim (which goes up to 0dB attenuation) and a Mono button. Solo is PFL by default; there is a master solo section with a level knob and here you can switch to AFL or SIP, and there's a nice big Solo Clear button. There are separate T/B buttons for Bus and Aux (with separate level knobs) or T/B All, (that can be controlled from an external location via the rear talkback remote connector), and a Headphone On button with level knob for the socket hidden underneath the armrest; this follows Control Room monitoring level knob, and is affected by Dim and Mono buttons (but not Cut).

Final Touch automation

Below the centre section in the fader panel, the bright touch screen sits below the Returns faders. On the far right of the fader panel are G1 and G2 which are effectively VCA faders — you can freely group faders but these are useful as assignable masters — and then the main stereo

Program master which is attenuation only, with 0dB at the top. It is worth noting that Final Touch can be added at a later date as an upgrade to a 2448 that is initially supplied without automation.

Like the 1608, all connections are on the rear panel, many in the form of TRS jack sockets, with main inputs on XLR sockets, while Alt Line inputs and Direct Outputs are provided on DB-25 connectors..

I have been using API consoles and outboard processors since the early 1990s when I encountered the 1970s consoles at RAK studios in London. Thus far all new developments have maintained the sonic integrity of the company's heritage products, and the 2448 is no exception. It cleverly brings together the beautiful sounding EQs and processing without any audio degradation, retaining that familiar magical clarity and musicality.
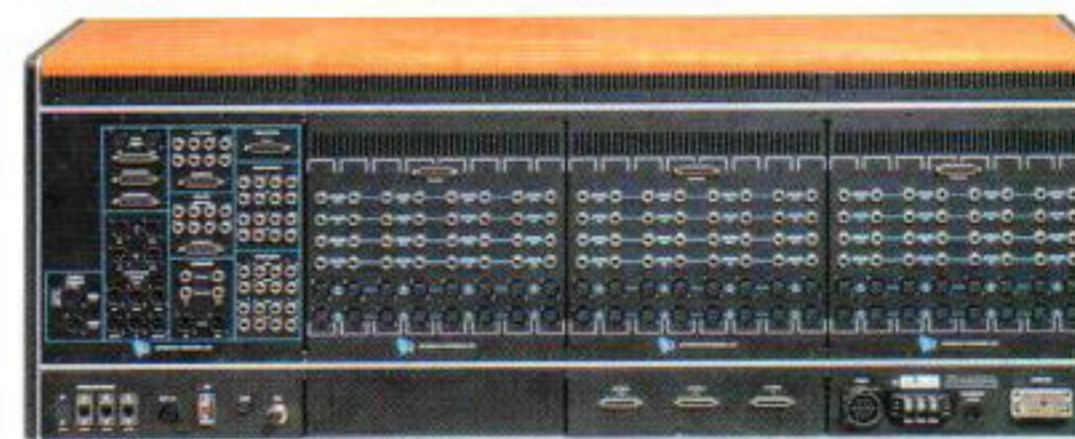
The slightly larger overall size compared with a 1608 adds a bit of gravitas, but everything is within reach and sensibly arranged. Wooden panels below the faders and above the meter bridge add charm. The knobs feel reassuringly solid, there's plenty of space to get your fingers around them, and the faders are beautiful, smooth and responsive. The base configuration 24-channel console is £72,000 (ex VAT), or $86,400. This feels like everything you would expect and want from an API console. ®

resolution/VERDICT

PROS Wonderful API sonics, in-line architecture for customers who need something more than a 1608, great Final Touch automation system, clever routing options enable surround mixing possibilities.

CONS No sweepable high/low-pass filters, no channel recall, no automation of Small faders.

EXTRAS The 2448 is currently on demo in the UK at SX Pro www.sxpro.co.uk