



# Xvive More You

## USB Audio Interface

Xvive's ingenious modular interface puts foldback in the hands of the performers.

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The Xvive More You is one of those rare finds: an audio interface with a unique feature. It has the uncommon ability to expand and daisy-chain itself into a whole band's worth of personal monitoring and recording. While the name may make it feel playful and toy-like, the reality of the system is far from it, and the more you get into it, the more problems it appears to solve.

The More You is about collaboration, and it manages to remove a lot of the stress and chaos you often find around recording and rehearsing with other people. It's perfect for ad hoc situations or home

and project studios that don't have much hard-wired in.

### DAW Recording Scenario

Typically, when you want to record with a few musicians into a DAW, you'll have one audio interface that everyone has to go through. There will be lots of cables dragging about the place, you'll be fighting over headphone sockets, and only one person can really see what's going on. It tends to feel fraught and fussy and can be more about getting things to work than making music together.

The More You system releases that tension by pushing the audio interface out into your room. Starting with the two-in/

two-out Hub, you chain together up to eight More You Hubs, or the simpler two-channel 2X units, so that everyone has one. Your guitarist, bassist and vocalist all have their own connections, right next to them, in a little box, with a pair of inputs, controls and headphone sockets. The main Hub

### Xvive More You

#### PROS

- Brilliantly expandable recording system.
- Gives each musician their own connections and monitoring.
- Reduces cable clutter in multi-musician settings.
- A complete rehearsal monitoring system.

#### CONS

- You'll need an extra power supply.
- No loopback driver.
- Currently no remote mixing.

#### SUMMARY

The More You system could radically simplify the recording and rehearsing of bands or other scenarios involving multiple musicians. It removes the drama and replaces it with solid connections and happy players.





is still the primary interface handling all the input gains and level control, but you can use the Mix knobs on your own box to blend your input with the mix locally in your headphones, which is really all a musician is interested in. The other knobs add reverb per channel, again locally. The brilliant thing is that neither of these affects the mix or what anyone else hears. So, your singer can drown themselves in reverb, and the guitarist can make their monitoring all about them, and no-one else has to care.

As for the actual recording, the Hub supports up to 24 inputs; two of its own on the front with combi XLR connections and an ADAT port on the back for eight additional inputs. The remaining 14 inputs can come from any combination of Hubs or 2X boxes.

The boxes connect via a regular XLR cable plugged into a digital port that carries power and multiple channels of digital audio. They daisy-chain from one box to another rather than spanning out from a single box, which can massively reduce clutter and tangles. With a maximum cable length of 25 feet you can occupy quite a large space.

The system works like a shared bus, so no additional latency is added when you connect another box. Audio arrives at each 2X box within one sample cycle, and if they're all set to direct monitoring, then there will be no appreciable latency. Like any audio interface, if you want to monitor through the DAW, which you can choose to do with any input, then there will be the usual round-trip latency. Still, I had it



■ You can daisy-chain up to eight More You Hubs or 2X expanders using the XLR ports on the back of each unit.

working down to a couple of milliseconds without any trouble.

There's no software mixer or routing app to pull up; it's all done on the hardware. This means that whether you have a computer connected is largely irrelevant because the mixing and monitoring is the same either way. The only slight disappointment is the lack of any loopback driver for bringing the output of other software into the DAW, which has become a very common scenario.

### Using The Hub

The Hub is a solid and chunky desktop box with two XLR/jack combi inputs, stereo line outs, a headphone out, a display, and a friendly bunch of roomy knobs set on top. It ticks all the right boxes with audio up to 24-bit/96kHz, MIDI I/O and an ADAT port for eight additional inputs. It's weighty, covered in rubberised protection, and has an integrated mic stand mount hidden behind a panel on the side.

The top section of the Hub contains everything you need to control the entire system. You have a little screen, two clickable encoders and a handful of buttons. The top encoder switches between Gain mode and Mix mode, and selects which channel you wish to control.

The bottom encoder changes the value. For every input, the Hub can offer up to 60dB of gain, phantom power, polarity inversion, a high-pass filter, a Hi-Z switch for instruments, and direct monitoring.

Any connected boxes appear as a pair of channels on the Hub display. These are usefully colour-coded so you always know you're adjusting the right input. Then you simply go from musician to musician, setting the gain for their instruments and microphones. You can also use the very welcome Autogain feature. Just get everyone to play, and with the tap of an encoder, the Hub will do a decent job of setting the gain up for you. It's the sort of feature that blasts through all the difficulties of getting lively, creative people to set things up when they just want to play some music.

In Mix mode, you use the encoders to set the monitoring levels and panning for each of the inputs. This is the mix that everyone will hear in their headphones and against which they can balance their own input signal on their own box.

The last button on the Hub is the monitor switch. When the switch is lit blue it is sending the whole headphone mix, including playback from the DAW, to the stereo output on the back of the Hub.

When lit red it is sending only the output of the DAW. The headphone mix remains unaffected.

## 2X Expanders

The 2X boxes are the same size and shape as the Hub but with some very key differences. The 2X has no outputs other than the headphones and no USB port for computer connection or power. All of the audio data is streamed directly to the Hub and power comes down the same cable. Otherwise, you have the same two inputs, mix and reverb knobs, a big headphones control and an intriguingly large Talk button.

The Talk button is a talkback circuit designed to let you communicate with the other musicians via a little microphone recessed into the front panel. Just push the button and everyone can hear you ask for more cowbell. It's a very useful feature; however, it's so noisy and loud that it's more likely to be used to abuse your fellow band members.

The 2X is not an audio interface in its own right and can only operate connected to a Hub and so you'd buy them with the express purpose of expanding your system. Xvive have two larger expansions coming soon, called the 4X and 8X, which probably need no further explanation. One rather neat feature is that each Hub can also act as a 2X box. So, if all your musician friends owned a Hub for their own systems, they could bring them along to a session and plug them all in together without anyone having to fork out for an expander. In this mode, they operate simply as a two-in interface and lose the ADAT input and mixing ability. However, Xvive told me they are working on firmware that will allow anyone with a Hub to create their own local monitoring mix while the primary Hub handles the gain and overall mixing to output.

## Power

None of the Xvive units came with a power supply or USB cable, and this threw up some unexpected problems because the power requirements are very specific. When you plug your Hub into your computer, you get a readout that tells you how many expanders it can support. On my slightly ageing desktop computer with regular USB-A ports, the Hub reported that it couldn't support any 2X units at all, leaving me sitting here with two expanders and a spare Hub and no way of using them.

When I moved to my Surface Pro 9, which has USB-C connections, the

Hub gleefully told me it would support a single 2X unit. So at least I could test out the concept. To support more units, you have to provide extra power, which you can do via a second USB-C port on the back labelled 'power'. However, nothing I possessed in my home or studio could summon up enough power to convince the Hub that it could support more than one 2X. It turns out that what you need, ideally, is a 65W USB-C supply like the one that comes with a MacBook Pro. Xvive explain all this in detail on the website and in the manual, but it is slightly frustrating to have to buy a whole power supply just to use the system as intended.

## Rehearsal Scenario

Once I had everything powered up and got the system to work in the relative calm of my studio, it was time to introduce it to the chaos of other people. Xvive gave me a few of these boxes, and so I took them to a band rehearsal. I had it all set up, plugged in, attached to mic stands and ready to go before the bassist returned with a sandwich from the shop up the road. There was no computer involved this time, but everything worked in exactly the same way. When we were all ready, I hit Autogain to set the levels and we were off.

As a band, we're used to playing with in-ear monitoring via a Soundcraft Ui24R system controlled by an iPad app. It works, but it's always a faff. The iPad never seems to be charged, no-one can remember the login for the mixer, the personal in-ear monitoring boxes are always running out of battery or getting trodden on, and there are cables absolutely everywhere. In comparison, the More You system was a refreshingly smooth, tidy and competent experience. With the Hub clipped on to my mic stand, I could get to all the controls, set up the general mix and then adjust my own level via my own interface, all with my guitar hanging around my neck. The others did the same without any fuss or mess, and no-one had to ask for any adjustments. It was an absolute breeze.

## Conclusions

Xvive have really dug into the challenges of playing and recording together and come up with an elegant and robust solution. While expandable interfaces are not entirely new, the way the More You system does it is pretty unique and solves more problems than simply offering additional channels. The forthcoming 4X and 8X units look really useful and will let you do things like wire in your tower of synthesizers via a single box with a single cable. And if you wanted to go off and do some music on your laptop, or drop round a friend's for a jam, then you just need to take the perfectly portable Hub.

The technology is solid, and the ease of setup and the practicalities of use as a monitoring system made for some very happy bandmates, and that in itself makes it a winner. If you're in a band or often have people round to record, then the More You system is definitely something to be reckoned with. **///**