

**WORLD  
EXCLUSIVE  
REVIEW!****CDJ-1000 Mk3  
SINGLE CD PLAYER****PRICE: £799**

**THE** latest incarnation of the CDJ plays MP3s and, as you'd expect from Pioneer, it's compatible with practically every type of CD and file bit-rate too. Usually with MP3 playback the master tempo feature range is restricted, but here it works down to -70%, which far exceeds the capabilities of other existing players.

There are dedicated buttons to scroll through folders and hundreds of tracks can be scanned through quickly using the new fast search feature (spinning the jog wheel and holding down skip/folder/track).

The memory card-slot has been upgraded to take SD cards as well as MMC, and there are loads of improvements to the functionality. As Sanjeev points out, "The memory card is the most underused function of the deck by professional DJs, but it's wicked. Before, when you had a loop dead-on and were really happy with it, it was possible to save it, but you couldn't quick-return to it using the hot cues." Now, the CDJ-1000 can save loops on the hot cue buttons too, which are also stored to the memory card. Up to 100 points in total can be saved for each disc.

Another massive improvement is the speed at which the CDJ reads discs. CDs are literally ready to play in a second or two, and wave data can be stored on the memory cards, which allows this info to be displayed even faster next time.

**PIONEER DJM-800  
FOUR-CHANNEL CLUB MIXER****PRICE: £999 INFORMATION: WWW.DJSOUNDS.COM CONTACT: 01753 789789****GUEST REVIEWERS**

We invited guest reviewers - top DJ/producer **OMID 16B** (right) and **SANJEEV BHARDWAJ**, sound engineer from London club Fabric - to give the latest mixer and CD deck from Pioneer a proper workout (using Fabric's legendary soundsystem) to see how these new models compare to their illustrious predecessors.



**THE** new DJM-800 mixer is pushing all the right buttons with our reviewers, but that's not just down to its familiarity and simplicity.

"Even your bog standard clubs have Pioneer mixers," comments Omid. "They've gone down that route because it's become a standard, but now to keep that position with the new 800, it's going to be down to the sound quality and new features."

Well for starters, the 800 is a completely digital mixer. It's based on the same technology and

schematics of the bigger DJM-1000 and features 24-bit/96kHz inputs on every channel and a digital output too.

Aside from the careful attention to perfecting the sound quality, the 'beat' effects section has been bolstered with more effects and a much better screen. As Omid points out, "It's not a calculator anymore. You can actually see what's going on."

**MIDI**

The DJM-800 has a MIDI out port and can send

MIDI clock according to the BPM engine. It also has start/stop for external sequencers. "It's like having a complete controller now," observes Omid. "For someone who's just going to use two audio sources such as CDs, you can have two fader channels just for MIDI. And the best part of it is that these faders are tight. Some MIDI controllers feel a bit slow, but these are almost the same as playing audio; the response time is so quick."

"I take my laptop with me and a controller at the moment, but now I know I can just turn up and plug my soundcard into a spare channel on the mixer, and plug the MIDI into my soundcard. Then I've got everything I need to add live stuff to my set, all controlled from one central mixer. Every 800's MIDI mapping is the same, so you just set everything up at home, turn up to the gig and boom, you're laughing."

"There's no MIDI controller on the market at the moment that will give you DJ control and feel like this does."

**EQ**

The 800's EQ is identical in spec to the older 600, but by no means sounds the same. "I always felt that the 600 was a very convenient mixer, but the EQ always suffered," says Omid. "The 800 has improved by a massive margin. You can crank it right up now. They've got their



# 154T-SCAN



The jog dial has been subtly improved too. The dial now has a non-slip metal finish and the display has been raised inside making it brighter and clearer to view. Button real-estate has increased with a whole new dial to control the tension of the jog wheel. It can improve the feel for better scratching performance on its loosest setting or make the dial tighter for accurate beatmatching adjustments. The last few tweaks include double resolution in the track view display, which has increased in width too. This makes the track view much easier to interpret. Kindly helping confused/wrecked DJs save face, the player will now pick up from where it left off if the DJ accidentally pops the wrong CD out in the mix. And on top of all this, we can't forget to mention the new silver pitch slider, along with the gold-plated audio outputs for good measure.

## NEW FEATURES

- » MMC and SD cards
- » Double resolution track view
- » Metallic non-slip jog wheel
- » Raised inner jog wheel display
- » MP3 playback

frequencies right - the way they are separated is better for the way people are mixing nowadays. "If you push the bass up full to give it that extra energy, there's no distorting, it just gives the mix that extra bit of bottom. All those DJs that used to crank things up in the past can get away with it now because Pioneer have almost catered for the fact that DJs are doing that. All the EQ knobs and faders feel much better, much tighter; you know they're not going to come off when you're playing. "The mid has drastically improved too. I don't know exactly what frequency it's working on, but when you kill it, it just goes."

## EFFECTS

With the 800 there's never a boring moment. There are enough on-board sonic toys for a DJ to constantly be working out what to use next. "But you've really got to work it to get it right," explains Omid. "There are effects that you could bore the crowd with if you use them a lot. Saying that, there are four colour effects and all the beat effects here, so you can be quite varied throughout the night." The 600's effects have been preserved, but they now sound much better. There's also a new beat roll effect (and reverse roll), which is like a sampled loop, plus a reverse delay which can add a twist at the press of a button. There's also a phaser, chorus and robot, which is great for vocals. There have been some slight changes to the routing of effects, as Omid notices. "Before, when you pulled the channel faders down, the volume of the effect would reduce too. If you wanted to hear just the delay of a snare without the track, you'd have the effects set to the master, but that effect would also be on the track mixing in, which spoil the mix." The filter is a massive asset and there's also a 'sweep' effect to play with which gives a notch and a band-pass filter. There's no doubt the 800 has very flexible tone control for each individual channel, and the 'harmonic' effect can step in to automatically adjust the key to the nearest whole note, while the parameter dial can scroll through notes up and down. But

as Omid points out, it should be used sparingly.

"You don't want to push it too far up or down as it starts to play with the sound quality a bit too much; I'd say between ten and two o'clock on the dial, unless you are using it as an effect. A nice way around this is to change the two tracks at once."

## FADERS

The new faders are a vast improvement on those on the 600. "The crossfader and all the faders are excellent. The last ones felt a bit loose after a while, but these are proper," enthuses Omid. There's also fader start on each channel and on the crossfader so the mixer can be used to trigger the cue point on the CDs. Again, all the fader buttons are really fixed on tight and DJs looking to get into rotary mixers can replace the whole fader area for a rotary option.

## SOUND QUALITY

With the help from Sanjeev, we ran XLRs straight from the back of the mixers to the rig with flat EQ. The results were very surprising. "The bass seems to be more defined than Allen & Heath's Xone:92," notes Sanjeev. "There's more punchiness in the lower mids." But Sanj was still not too impressed with the level meters, saying, "I still can't get over it, the new one is better, but it should just have one red light." "In Italy, every club that plays electro has the [600] mixer all the way in the red," reports Omid. "Every kid is slamming the mixer to the top and it sounds awful." Sanjeev interrupts with an insight into some unspecified guest DJs at Fabric. "You should see some of the so-called professionals we have down here! People are virtually chucking up from the amount of bass and they are still pumping it." He's also concerned that "the booth monitor should have a bass and treble control too. Engineers do their best to EQ for certain people, but other clubs don't have the same control we do.

"We've ended up buying a 600 and a 500 because DJs request them. We don't like the sound quality though and we always put it through another mixer and it's usually an Allen & Heath. Whereas now, with this 800 and also the 1000, it's a different thing. The sound is actually there; I like the fatness - there's no distortion."

## CONCLUSION

On reflection, the DJM-800 is a big jump from what the 600 provided, but for not much more money. To have the same capabilities before, a DJ would need to have bought a DJM-600 (£600), four decent filters (£1000+), a Pioneer EFX-1000 (£650), a MIDI controller (£250+), and even that lot still wouldn't have the amazing sound of the 800, with digital ins, harmonic mixing and more. "Let's be honest, this is going to be cropping up in a lot of clubs very soon. Especially with the way things are changing with Ableton," speculates Omid. "Pioneer are putting a step forward and saying, 'We know everyone is going to move onto things like Ableton soon', so let's just face it, things are moving forward really quickly." This mixer is a statement of that intent.

## INFO

- » 24-bit/96kHz sound » Four-channels with digital in » Cross/fader curve control » Sound colour effects: sweep, harmonic, filter, bit-crush » Beat effects: delay, echo, reverse delay, pan, trans, filter, flanger, phaser, reverb, robot, chorus, roll, reverse roll » Send/return (jack) » Auto/tap BPM with MIDI clock and start/stop » Fluorescent display » Fader start and crossfader assign » Three-band EQ (-26/+9dB) » Five line inputs and three phono » Two mic inputs (XLR/jack) with two-band EQ » Split/stereo cue, plus effects monitor » More than 63 MIDI controls » Master out with attenuator (XLR/RCA) » Booth with Mic defeat (Jack) » Record (RCA) » Digital out S/PDIF @ 48/96kHz

## VERDICT

### PROS

- » Great value for money
- » Sounds better than the best analogue mixers at that price
- » Future-proofed with MIDI and diverse effects

### CONS

- » No three-band master isolator
- » No booth tone control

VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USER FRIENDLY	★★★★★
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★★
BUILD QUALITY	★★★★★
OVERALL	★★★★★

