# Pioneer DJM-900 Nexus £1,600

Pioneer's new mixer aims to sync the booth into a fury of effects. *Chris Barker* networks the Nexus

#### WHAT IS IT?

Four channel DJ mixer with Pioneer Pro DJ Link technology, MIDI, and USB audio interface

#### CONTACT

**Who:** Pioneer **Tel:** +44 (0)1753 789 789 **Web:** pioneerdj.com

#### HIGHLIGHTS

1 Pro DJ link LAN port

2 brand new colour effects 3 X-Pad touch control for hen Pioneer launched their flagship DJM-2000 mixer, it seemed to be the

perfect compliment to their top-of-theline CDJs, offering masses of connectivity, effects and control. But, it also seemed to be a mixer that split the DJ community and was too much of a leap forward from what had become the club standard, the DJM-800. Here at FM we loved the DJM-2000 and its overflowing amount of features, but it didn't find its way in to the hearts of as many DJs and clubs as Pioneer probably hoped. Here then is where their new DJM-900 Nexus steps in. Built in a similar shell to the DJM-800, the Nexus packs in some of the same behind-the-scenes brains as the DJM-2000 with Pro link Ethernet support and a full audio interface and USB connection. Although the 900 only sports a single Ethernet port, using

a LAN hub multiple CDJ-2000s can be connected and will make sure any tempo grid information from Pioneer's Rekordbox software is also read perfectly by the mixer, keeping all the effects in sync with the CDJ's tempo.

For example, adjust the pitch of the CDJ and providing the quantise button on the Nexus is enabled, the tempo information on the mixer's screen will change with it, all perfectly in time.

#### **Effect tricks**

The whole mixer is packed with these small, but important improvements and additions. While remaining very familiar in layout and feel, inside it's worlds away from the beloved DJM-800. There's new colour effects too, bringing the new total from four to six including a noise oscillator, reverb, dub echo and a gate/comp effect.

First up is the noise oscillator, whose brilliance comes from the ability to assign this to a separate channel (even if it's not playing back audio) and have the option for sweeps and build effects at your leisure. While the space



effect creates its own version of the dramatic build and pause to huge effect, with gorgeously glossy reverb tails continuing long after the signal is cut, if desired. The dub echo is reminiscent of an old tape delay effect with timing controls of the speed of the delay while the gate/comp effects mimic a hard-sidechained gate and is fantastic for tightening up mixes when blending a particularly chaotic or overly percussive outro with a minimal intro.

The right of the mixer also sports beat effects with Reverb, Spiral, Slip Roll, Melodic and MIDI LFO all new additions. Spiral is probably the most interesting of these, being a type of pitched delay while melodic lets you snatch a beat of audio and then transpose that samples' pitch like you would if you were playing it over a keyboard – fantastically creative when playing with acapellas or sparse musical moments. Possibly the most exciting feature of all these effects is the new ability to control them using the touch sensitive X-Pad – see the X-Pad box for more on this.

#### Future proof

Another development of the DJM-900 Nexus is the Traktor certification, enabling access to all four decks using the built in 24-bit/96kHZ interface in Traktor, all via a single USB cable. There's also timecode compatibility,



#### The X-Pad

This simple but effective touch-strip enables single finger control and triggering of effects.

Slide your finger to the left to increase the rapidity of rolls or the speed of a flanger and so on. This makes ultra fast triggering a breeze and clever trills and fills feel natural and tight and it's

not long before you become accustomed to it. It also enables dual control of LFOs when using the Filter, Phase and Flanger sweeps.

The usual beat button and rotary dial controls one of the LFOs while a second LFO's speed can be controlled via the X-Pad. Wobbly!



that can be grown into by CD jocks and laptop jocks alike.

Although, it's a bit of a pain having to upgrade the firmware every now and again - especially as it's done via LAN cable. Let's just hope that clubs and venues keep the firmware up to date, because unlike the CDJ-2000, it's not something that can always be done before your set.

the effects and what is actually required by most DJs is outstanding. Combining the colour effects with the beat effects meant I was constantly discovering new tricks and tweaks when mixing. The USB connection made integration with Traktor extremely simple. Aside from all the creative improvements, this mixer also sounds better than the DJM-800 and has all

> the same pristine imaging as the flagship DJM-2000 mixer.

It's fair to say there are more advanced mixers in this price range and there'll always

be mixers that suit specific DJ needs, but Pioneer's replacement for their omnipresent DJM-800 will undoubtedly be on the majority of tech riders before the end of 2011. FM

## Combining the colour effects with the beat effects meant I was constantly discovering new tricks

meaning DJs no longer need to take their timecode interface to use Traktor Scratch with timecode CDs or vinyl, EQ has also been tweaked with the usual -26dB cuts now also selectable as an isolator EQ similar to the one on the DJM-1000 mixers, so complete kills can be enabled on all three bands when turned fully anti-clockwise.

At the time of going to press, Pioneer also updated the Firmware of the DJM-900, which is something that is going to get some getting used to. It adds extended tweaks to the effects section, but more importantly the update proved that the life of this mixer should be substantial with Pioneer responding to updates, tweaks and suggestions in the same way they have with the CDJ-2000 and it is a mixer

There are plenty of things that I'd like to have seen on the mixer. I've always thought that individual effect mute buttons next to the colour FX rotaries would be useful as would simple EQ or tone controls on the booth monitor and headphone outputs, but this certainly wouldn't deter me from making this my mixer of choice.

#### Nexus episode

The DJM-900 Nexus is without a shadow of a doubt a brilliant mixer and is designed in such a way that most of its power is disguised behind a friendly and familiar interface, which is quick to learn. Dig deeper and combine the CDJ-2000s Pro DJ Link integration and you have an exceptionally creative, mix environment. The attention to detail on

FutureMusic BUILD EASE OF USE VERSATILITY RESULTS Easy to use and packed full of

future-proof features. A perfect balance in the DJ booth.

#### **SPECS**

Screen 10cm bright dot matrix display

MIDI/HID Control 61 fully assignable MIDI controls

#### Channels: 4

Sampling Rate / Depth: 96kHz / 24-bit

#### Outputs

Master Output (XLR) Master Output (RCA) Booth Output (1/4-inch iack)

Rec Out (RCA)

Digital Out (Coaxial) S/PDIF Digital Out (RCA)

Send (1/4-inch Jack)

### Inputs

4 x CD/LINE Input (RCA)

2 x PHONO (RCA)

4 x S/PDIF (RCA)

Digital LAN Input (Pioneer Link)

MIC Input (1/4-inch jack) MIC Input (XLR/Jack

RETURN (1/4-inch jack) Dimensions

331 x 409 x 108mm

Weight 7.1kg

#### **ALTERNATIVES**



Allen & Heath Xone:DB4

#### £1.900

Four DSPs, multiple matrix inputs, USB, configurable EQ and filter options make this one hell of a creative mixer Expect a review in next issue's FM.



Rane Sixty-eight £2 100

Aimed slightly more towards Ableton DJs, this high-end mixer sports two HSR inputs for DI hot-switching with ease! If you fancy the Serato and Ableton's The Bridge, then this might be for you.

rane.com