



DETAILS

PRICE
£140

CONTACT
Web: www.behringer.com

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Audio inputs:
Microphone input (XLR)
Frequency response:
10Hz - 29kHz (-3dB)
Max. input level:
-25dBu @ 35dB Gain
Signal-to-noise ratio: 110dB
Distortion (THD+N): 0.01%

Audio outputs:
Master Out (RCA)
Signal-to-noise ratio: 101dB
Max. output level +18dBu
Phones Out

Digital processing:
Converter: 24-Bit
Sample rate: 44.1kHz
Signal-to-noise ratio:
A/D: 100dB, D/A: 100dB

System specifications:
Distortion (THD) 0.01%
Frequency response 15 Hz -
21 kHz, +0/-3 dB
Weight: 2.0kg
Dimensions:
330 x 100 x 300mm

Behringer DeeJay BCD2000

Marc '01' scratches more than just the surface of Behringer's DeeJay BCD2000 controller...

I T SEEMS LIKE almost a year since Behringer first announced its intention to produce an all-in-one soundcard and MIDI controller package designed especially for the digital DJ. The long waiting time has built up much anticipation for many prospective buyers, and with an initial price of £140, you have to wonder if Behringer have got more than the price right...

What's in the box?

On paper, the B-CONTROL DeeJay BCD2000 seems like an attractive proposition. As a sound card, it offers four outputs organised as a stereo (RCA) pair

for master out, and a second pair (single 1/4") for headphone monitoring (plenty of gain and two monitoring modes). Additionally, there's an XLR mic input (dynamic only) and two pairs of stereo RCA inputs with preamps for hooking up turntables. Strangely, only one channel switches to Line levels for CD players and such.

All the ins and outs are located on the rear of the unit along with the USB connection for the computer, and an essential figure-eight power inlet.

One quick note – the BCD2000 isn't designed to operate as a standalone mixer for CDs and decks, because all the audio streams are mixed in software.

In Use

Most of us will be looking at the BCD2000 as a performance tool to replace the mouse or other MIDI controllers, and bring back some of the hands-on fun of vinyl mixing, so it's important to know how it feels and also how it responds to the touch.

The top panel layout has been organised to operate like twin decks and a mixer.

There are pitch sliders, pitch-bend buttons, volume faders, channel gain, play/pause and cue controls. Also supplied are a trio of EQ and kill switches, rotating platters and a short cross-fader, all housed in a blue plastic shell. Both the volume faders and the



Phonos mean the 2000 will fit easily into any DJ set-up, although the unbalanced outputs surely add to the average sound quality...

cross-fader have very light travel, and since it's quite a compact set-up care has to be taken to avoid accidentally knocking them.

The pitch-faders have more resistance, with centre-notches at 0%, so you won't get as fine a resolution on an analogue deck, because MIDI CC has only 127 steps. The rest of the buttons and rotaries are identical to the rest of the B-Control range – functional, but with a rather cheap feel.

Probably the most exciting features are the dinky 'Platters' (or jog wheels) that are made of a rubbery plastic that grips well, thanks to the flutes. The outer rim is not supported, so don't rest any weight on it or the shaft will bend and end up wonky.

The bundled B-DJ (virtual DJ) software is pre-configured to work with the controller and it assigns several key functions to the platter, replicating its real-world equivalent. It felt very natural, using it to cue up tracks, rotating it to scrub through the audio in real time, faster or slow, forwards and backwards – just like vinyl. During playback it works as a pitch-bender; a quick spin clockwise speeds things up and vice-versa.

Hitting the Scratch button primes the platter for its new role; a second touch begins the scratching simulation. It seems to work quite well at first, with the audio responding quickly to the change in speed or direction. Once the platter stops spinning

(I couldn't make it freewheel more than half a turn), it resumes normal playback. Upon close inspection there's a tiny gap in the sound-stream as the software works out its next move.

While being fairly basic, B-DJ does have some strengths. Its ability to guess the correct BPM for looping was very accurate, and there's a host of useful configuration options, including pitch bend range, cross-fader curve and MIDI assignments.

To add some extra fun, it can also load several Direct X effects per deck – parameters can't be altered in real-time, just switched on or off.

And importantly, it didn't crash or glitch throughout many hours of constant use.

The Sonics

If you're looking for the catch, then here it is: sound quality. In a side-by-side comparison with my Echo Indigo, the BCD2000 lacks a lot of sonic fidelity and focus. This is especially emphasised when using the 3-band EQ. The mid range is vastly dominant, dipping in steeply around 250Hz and popping up around 7kHz.

Cutting or boosting this has way more effect on the sound than the other two bands. I found it lacked the finesse required to be a usable blending tool because the slightest turn of the rotary resulted in way too much attenuation. Boosting made the sound 'boxy' where I'd have liked

it to have 'bite', while the treble seems to add sibilance instead of air or clarity.

The three kill switches operate on the same frequency divisions, and they really do kill – when they're all activated, the sound completely disappears.

In Summary

Overall, with a latency as low as 4ms, the whole set-up responds rather well.

It works straight out of the box, it gives you all the standard DJ tools, it's light, portable and very cheap. If your priorities are fun and convenience, you'll love this for sure.

But if you have high expectations about the sound quality of your mixer and EQ, this won't keep you satisfied. After the initial buzz of playing with the controls, the reality of the poor, 'phasey' sound and honking mid range EQ enter the equation and you begin to feel the sting of compromise. Ultimately this might be the best solution, as one can easily use the BCD for its control surface, and use a different, high-quality sound card to achieve sonic excellence. But that defeats the point. It's a shame, as I'm sure I'm not alone in saying that I'd prefer to pay more to have my cake and enjoy the taste too. **FM**

Thinking Outside the Box

ALMOST EVERY BUTTON and controller on the unit transmits MIDI CCs or Note On/Off data. This makes it a cinch to use with any other virtual DJ programs so you're not limited to using the bundled B-DJ software.

However, configuring the jog wheel to scratch in other programs won't be so obvious. For example, Traktor asks for two separate MIDI CCs to assign to forward and reverse scratch movements, but the BCD2000's jog wheel only transmits one CC.

Using the soundcard with Ableton, I was able to utilise all four outputs individually or as two stereo pairs. It allowed me to exploit the Cue function to check out samples and loops in the headphone output before bringing them into the mix – which was routed to the main outs (1+2). I also assigned the cross-fader, EQ's and kills rather conveniently. As an alternative MIDI control surface it's a nice break from the standard row of knobs.

ALTERNATIVES



ALLEN AND HEATH XONE 3D £TBA

The professionals' choice with a price to match, if you can get your hands on one. Hybrid USB soundcard and high-spec analogue mixer with multi-band filters, MIDI control surface with built in Clock and LFOs

www.xone.co.uk

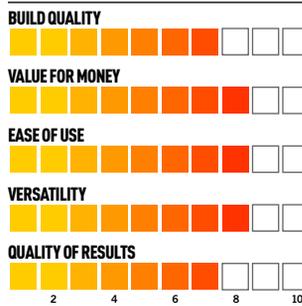


HERCULES DJ CONSOLE MK2 £180

Similar spec to the BCD2000, portable, USB 1.1 buss powered soundcard and MIDI controller. Twin platters, EQ, deck inputs and scratch functions. The version 2 incarnation addresses some of the shortcomings of the original. Windows XP only

www.hercules.com

VERDICT BCD2000



Instant fun, works without a hitch, but won't suit the Pro DJ (unless you're Frankie Wilde)