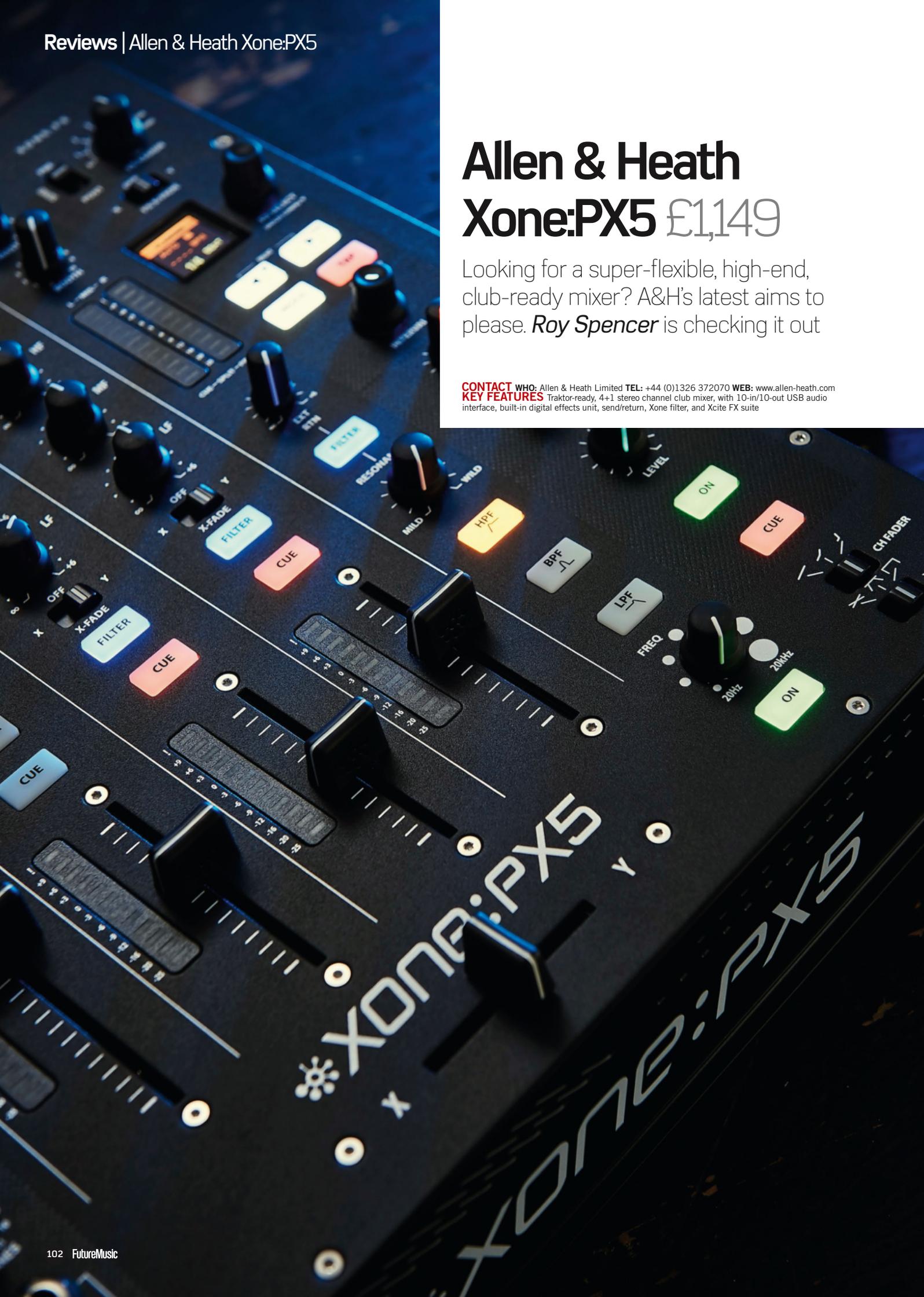


Allen & Heath Xone:PX5 £1,149

Looking for a super-flexible, high-end, club-ready mixer? A&H's latest aims to please. *Roy Spencer* is checking it out

CONTACT WHO: Allen & Heath Limited **TEL:** +44 (0)1326 372070 **WEB:** www.allen-heath.com
KEY FEATURES Traktor-ready, 4+1 stereo channel club mixer, with 10-in/10-out USB audio interface, built-in digital effects unit, send/return, Xone filter, and Xcite FX suite



Pioneer's DJM range of mixers are everywhere, and always have been. Perhaps they just appeared in spots around the globe, years ago, and people felt compelled to build DJ booths around them. Their ubiquity clearly riles the suits at Allen & Heath, who think it's come time to dethrone king-of-the-club mixers like the 850 and 900 Nexus. Their dog in the fight? Enter the Xone:PX5.

It's a serious-looking machine. The grills on the side and front look ready to snort hot air like a bull, while the matt black finish and bold white lettering give the unit a utilitarian, no-nonsense façade.

It may be mean on the outside, but inside beats a warmer heart, like meeting a club doorman who keeps budgies on the side. Once you're pumping music through this beast, the sound coming out is rich and warm, with filtering and FX that'll give you goosebumps.

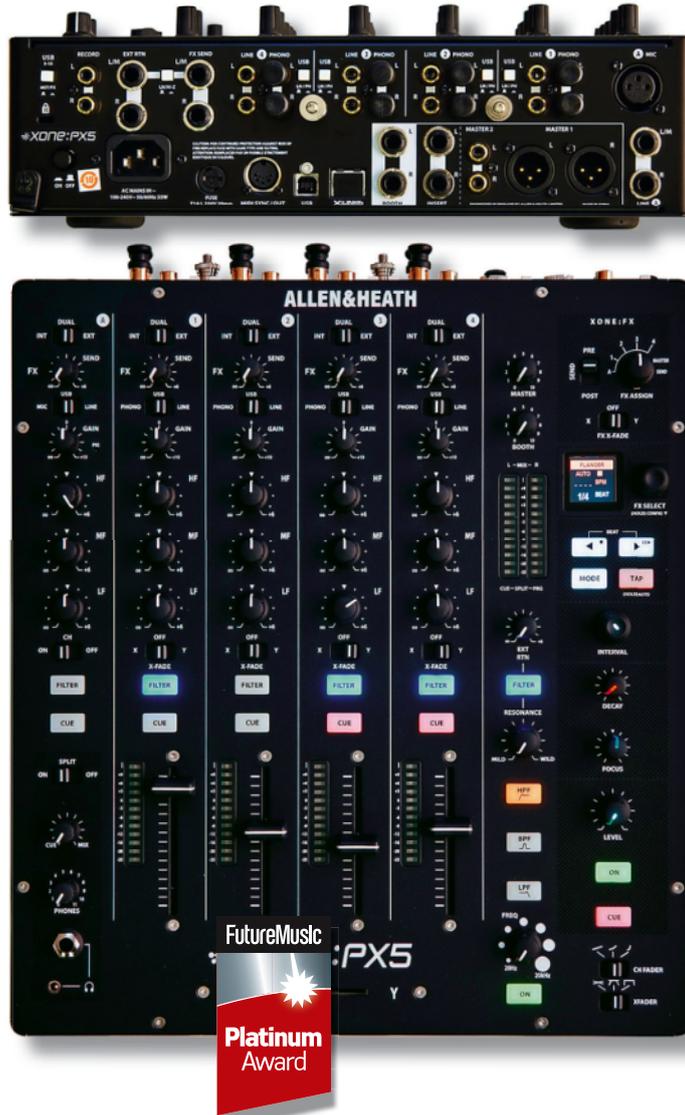
The controls have a nice spacing to them, too. No mean feat as there's 39 buttons and switches, five faders, and seven rotary controls to contend with. The faceplate real estate is taken up with four line faders, a crossfader, three-band EQs, FX module, and a fifth channel with a mic/aux input and EQs. While the much-loved, never bettered, Xone VCO filter is present and correct, but two might have been nice, right?

The crossfader? It's not built for scratching, as the cut-in is performance-sappingly wide. However, it's Innofader compatible, so a quick add-on and you're up and cutting with the best of 'em.

In the mix the channel faders don't disappoint, though, and have terrific fluidity and resistance, enabling meticulous blends. Like all the buttery smooth knobs, the rotary pots on the EQs have a satisfying 12 o'clock dimple, so judging merciless frequency kills is nice and intuitive.

For FX, the Xone:Xcite suite is icing on the cake. The digital panel over on the top right offers up the classic workhorse settings that everyone likes to overindulge in, and a nice constrained bank of other useful delays, resonators, and reverbs.

Round the back you have the full complement of sends and returns, too, and enough ins and outs to light up the face of even the sourest



THE PROS & CONS



That signature Allen & Heath warmth and build

Super playable Xcite FX suite

High-quality sound card supporting Traktor



Just the one VCO filter

Scratch-unfriendly crossfader out-the-box

Serato not built in

With few minor quibbles and many plus points, the PX5 achieves what it set out to do

soundman. Add to that the X:Link input, Line/Hi-Z input switch, a single USB port for full Traktor integration, a MIDI sync/out port to link external units to the machine's super-tight MIDI clock engine, and you have a shockingly flexible mixer right here. An extra USB in would have been cool, though, for easy DJ changeovers...

With few minor quibbles and many plus points, the PX5 achieves what it set out to do – take a shot at the title, and launch itself as a serious contender for the next industry-standard 4+1 channel high performance club mixer. Stunning work. **FM**

FM VERDICT

9.1

Allen & Heath builds on its Xone legacy with its new flagship 4+1 channel mixer, and holds its own against Pioneer's DJM series