

## SOUNDCRAFT UREI 1605 TECH

Large pan-pots offer precise control

Auxiliary section with front-panel connections

Every channel feature packed

A dedicated booth section gives all you'd expect and more

# THE INCREDIBLE HULK

This is a behemoth of a club mixer, but is size everything?

## SPECS

**PRICE**  
£795

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### TECH

- ★ Seven channels
- ★ Dedicated master and booth sections
- ★ Three-band EQ per channel
- ★ Three-colour stereo LED meter with split
- ★ Assignable crossfader
- ★ Adjustable crossfader curve
- ★ Auxiliary send and receive
- ★ LED peak/signal indicator per channel

Urei is a classic name in audio gear and Soundcraft have a respected heritage in British studio mixing history, so when you see a range of pro DJ mixers with both the Urei and Soundcraft logos you know you are getting many decades worth of fine analogue manufacturing experience. Enter the Soundcraft Urei 1605. This hulk is a club mixer, offering seven full channels designed in the big bold style the Urei name deserves. And with such a proud history, this mixer has a lot to live up to. Let's see what it's made of...

With one exception, each channel has an XLR microphone pre-amp, one switch-able phono/line input (each with a turntable ground) and another line-in – fantastic attention to detail. Each channel also boasts trim, an assignable crossfader/master switch, a bright signal/beat/peak indicator and auxiliary send (pre or post fader – so you can run a signal through external effects without playing the original signal). The channel faders are nice and long but don't feel as solid as you'd expect from an Urei. Finally, the best part of every channel is the

gorgeous EQ. Each of the three bands offers 100% kill and sounds really musical. And because of the 1605's sheer size there's plenty of space for some fun two-handed filter action. The most interesting thing, though, is that the zero position of each is at about two o'clock. The rationale is that you need finer control over cut than boost, and once you're used to it, it makes for far more expressive knob twiddling.

Our one gripe, and it's a big one, is that without a click at zero it's difficult in low-lighting to tell whether or not you have put the knob back to zero. Imagine some poor DJ rocking up to a club, the previous DJ running off without explaining the mixer, and the diligent new DJ turning all the rotaries to the centre without realising he was EQing out about 6dBs across the board! Not ideal.

### MISFIT

Back to that misfit channel (Channel 1) that has a few key differences intended for use as an announcement channel. First, it's routed directly to the master output, which

works with the second difference. There's the option on the back panel to disengage the mic signal from the booth/monitoring section, so as to avoid feedback. For similar reasons there is a channel ON switch, unique to Channel 1, which must be pressed to activate the channel and an additional input on the back allowing you to plug in a 1/4in jack equipped mic. Finally, the EQ section is a much more conventional +/- 12dB affair, with centrally positioned (and clicking) zero values, although we think this is a little stingy!

### IN FADE

The centrally placed crossfader is nice and loose but, like the channel faders, feels a little delicate and, with a large front panel to remove, could be a chore to switch. There's also a nice crossfader control, offering fluid curve changing from smooth to scratch-ready. The monitoring section is another one of the 1605's little oddities. It's very comprehensive, offering split ear mode (with a left/right flip button) or fade preview from cue to master with the mix knob.



# TECH SOUNDCRAFT UREI 1605



It also goes loud and has a dedicated old style tone control, allowing darker or brighter sound through the phones. But then things get weird! It has two sockets – 1/4in regular and 1/8in mini-jack (the former is brightly lit from within by a blue LED). This is fantastic if you've forgotten your adapter, but is less great if you insert your 1/4in into the angled and recessed jack buried underneath the front panel. Why? First, it means your cable is pointing up, putting extra strain on it and generally getting in the way. Second, it's buried so deep and tight that we actually needed a pair of thin tipped pliers to get it out!

## IN THE BOOTH

Next, there's the booth section, which is actually wicked. In addition to level, it offers a 'left, right or stereo' switch, so you need not bombard both ears while monitoring. It has very nice sounding independent high and low EQ controls, so that you can add weight or brightness and remove rumble or shrillness according to your tastes and the characteristics of the booth.

There's also a handy DIM button, which drops the level instantly. The meter section is also pretty good. It would have been nice to have level indicators for each channel, but instead there is a nice light blue and (if you're not careful) red stereo LED meter. By pressing split, it can also be used to monitor the cue channel against the master output.

## GUEST FX

The next section is AUX, offering front panel stereo RCA sends and returns (allowing visiting DJs to easily plug in their favourite external FX unit) and large

independent output and input level controls. The return is assignable to the crossfader or master (and headphone monitoring) and even has a handy on/off switch to avoid confusion.

The output section has a balance control, is headphone assignable and even features a mono switch to drive mono systems without damaging relative levels too much and a high pass filter providing sharp cut below 63Hz to combat any rumble. Outputs are duplicated across XLR outputs and RCA for both booth and master, and there is even a 1/4in jack for the mono output.

Finally, for all club sound engineers out there, the side panels of the mixer can be switched to make them 19in rack-mountable and the back panel connectors can be repositioned to underneath the console for in-counter installation.

## IN USE

Enough tech specs! In use, we have to say we absolutely loved this mixer. It's not perfect and there are a few niggling issues we haven't even mentioned – such as a few slightly badly attached EQ knobs which were too stiff until removed and replaced more carefully. And it has a curious habit of sending the master output signal to the headphones even when nothing – including the master output – is assigned (fortunately this is disengaged when any of the CUE assign buttons are engaged).

In conclusion, it's only fair to say that opinions are mixed on this one. Numerous top DJs have passed through the review studio while this monster sat taking up half the desk, so we've had a good mix of

opinion and despite initial scepticism, every DJ that actually tried it out loved it despite its flaws.

## FINAL WORD

It might not be the best club mixer in the world and time will tell whether it is rugged enough to withstand sustained use. It may have some truly baffling quirks that complicate use and could easily lead to embarrassment and confusion. But it sounds great, offers a huge number of channels and pre-amps and it just makes you want to mix. Who can ask for more than that in a mixer? ★

## VERDICT SCORES OUT OF 5

BUILD QUALITY	3.5
SOUND QUALITY	5.0
EASE OF USE	4.5
FEATURES	4.5
VALUE FOR MONEY	4.0

## HYPE

Incredibly well featured and huge, the 1605 is a joy to mix with.

## GRIPE

Surprisingly, even with the Urei and Soundcraft pedigree behind it, there are some slight questions over the sturdiness and build quality of the 1605.

**A few niggles and sturdiness concerns can't steal the thunder of this amazingly satisfying-to-use mixer.**

TECH VERDICT (OUT OF 5)

**4.5**

## GEEK SPEAK

- ★ Seven phono/line, seven line, seven XLR mic and one jack mic inputs
- ★ Pre- or post-fader auxiliary send
- ★ 100% cut, +6dB gain per EQ band
- ★ 1/4" and mini-jack headphone jacks
- ★ Split ear/preview fade monitoring
- ★ Dimensions: 87.6(H) x 440(W) x 400 (D)
- ★ Weight: 8.7kgs
- ★ Mono output summing selection
- ★ -12dB booth dimming switch