

## UREI 1601S

Price: £500 RRP plus VAT/  
 UREI 1601 £430 RRP plus VAT  
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# UREI 1601S

Looking every bit as desirable as their reborn 1620 audiophile mixer, will UREI's new 2-channel mixers wow the industry in the same way? DJ Lurch reveals all...

**W**hen UREI re-entered the DJ market earlier this year, the fact they were planning to release a new pair of battle mixers got slightly lost in the fanfare surrounding the re-birth of the 1620 rotary mixer. However, these mixers' time under the spotlight has now arrived and if we're talking widespread appeal then they have arguably got a lot more going for them than the 1620; and besides, for the average DJ, they are certainly a much more realistic purchase!

As mentioned, there are two new UREI 2-channel mixers: the 1601 and 1601S - from which you may have deduced that they are somewhat similar. Identical, in fact, save for the sampler on the 1601S, and this is the model we'll be taking a closer look at. As soon as you lift the 1601S from its box you sense that this is a serious piece of kit. It's built like a tank, is impeccably finished and oozes 21st Century style. If first impressions count, then this mixer scores top marks; immediately forcing you to plug it in and get your hands on it.

In general, the feel of the mixer is lovely. There's a fair bit going on, but it's a big board and the layout is roomy so using the 1601S is very comfortable. The only issue some DJs might have is with the position of the sampler (if you do value extra room around the left up fader over a sampler, then the 1601 will suit you better), but to be honest its position doesn't hinder fader use, and it's better off there than at the top of the mixer.

In short, the sampler is fantastic. It's not the only sampler onboard a battle mixer, but it's by far the most advanced, and most importantly produces high quality results every time, unlike some samplers where there's an audible difference in quality between sample and regular playback. There are two sample banks, which can be used simultaneously, and a footswitch input for recording and playback, while in operation it's not dissimilar to using a Cycloops. For at the touch of a button, using the in-built BPM engine, it instantly loops to beat (up to 32 beats), and your sample can be played back as either a loop, one-shot or in reverse. Samples can be taken from either the master output, meaning you could sample sounds that have been put through an effects module using the mixer's Send & Return loop, or cue (via the monitor crossfader), providing the possibility of taking samples from records without actually playing them.

Samples can then be played back on either of the main two channels, with their level being determined by a smooth and tight short-throw fader, which give a great handle over the mix. More than that, though, they also have a CD-style fader-start function, so when you're in one-shot mode simply moving the fader will trigger the sample, while if left open it will continue to loop. I found this a more natural way of getting my samples into the mix and it also enables you to chop between them a lot more effectively than by punching buttons. As well as its

creative ends, the sampler can also be used to simply loop a beat or groove far and beyond what might be pressed to vinyl or CD, which is useful for scratch routines or if you want to extend a certain beat or break if you're running out of time when beat-mixing.

Unlike the resistance offered by the faders on the sampler the main channel and crossfaders are very quick. All of them are weighted equally and feel very robust when used vigorously, though you have to watch for bounce back as they are quite light, too. All come with reverse and curve control, tidied out of the way on the front panel, the crossfader with a continuous curve on a rotary while the upfaders have a three stage control on a switch. I noted that the sharp curves took one segment of the fader scale (3mm) to fully come in. In the heat of the mix, though, you'd barely notice it.

## IT'S SO EXCITED...

Also situated on the front panel are the monitor controls which include a very effective EQ dial for tailoring the headphone output and back-lit 3.5mm and 6mm headphone sockets. The 1601S also comes with high quality LED level meters on each channel and the master output, so matching levels is easy and accurate. Completing the monitor section is the monitor crossfader which, as pointed out earlier, also doubles as the cue source for the sampler, and like all the faders (including those on the sampler) is user replaceable.

It's thumbs up so far, but the features don't stop there: as well as a flexible Send & Return with flash and lock trigger control, top panel combi mic input with two-band EQ, daisy-chain connections, high pass filter on the booth output (to prevent turntable rumble) and a peachy full-cut three-band EQ, the 1601S also comes with an exciter. This clever tool has a range dial that determines which frequencies are excited, plus there's a mix ratio control that governs how much of the 'excited' signal is added to the mix. This can be used to add life to dull or quiet vinyl pressings as well as accentuate scratches. For example, if you're scratching a snare, by using the frequency dial you can boost its specific frequency to make it more prominent in the mix. Not only that, but by experimenting with both frequency and ratio dials you can use the exciter as a filter, and sweep through the added audio to great effect. One other neat feature is the output protection limiter, which will prevent the output of the mixer ever clipping, no matter how high the controls are turned up. Club engineers will love this!

Overall, there is very little you can fault this mixer on. It's well built, thoughtfully designed, sounds great, and is a lot of fun to use. The price is a pleasant surprise too, as I initially thought it would hit the streets for at least a hundred pounds more. So, as well as being a high quality product, the UREI 1601S is also very good value and without doubt will appeal to a wide range of DJs, and not just turntablists. **IDJ**



The 1601S is a sturdy, versatile and well designed piece of kit

## FEATURES

- Two channels with phono and line input
- Trim control and input clip LED
- Three-band EQ on each channel
- Mic channel with two-band EQ
- Curve control and reverse on all faders
- Master output with mono/stereo switching
- Booth output with 80Hz HPF
- Input/output level metering
- Send & return loop
- Exciter with frequency and mix controls
- 24bit/96kHz two bank sampler with footswitch option
- Auto-beat looping up to 32 beats
- Loop, one-shot and reverse play
- Monitor with master/cue switching
- Monitor crossfader and EQ

## VERDICT

A spectacular mixer that firmly re-establishes UREI as a key player in the DJ market

★★★★★

## ALTERNATIVES

There are a handful of other mixers available with onboard samplers, including Tascam and Pioneer's four-channel units, but it's the VESTAX PMC-05 PRO SL that provides the closest two-channel alternative to the 1601S, though this only has a single bank 24-second sampler. Alternatives to the straight 1601 are more numerous and include the RANE TT541 and ECLER HAK 360.