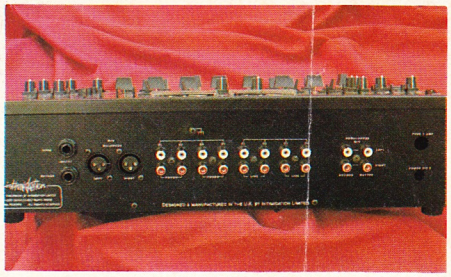
DJ magazine

technoscan

equipment review



Steven Carroll of Intimidation Ltd has designed the Challenger 1 mixer, a new mixer made to cater for the ever broadening needs of DJs. Gordon Knott couldn't wait to get his hands on it.

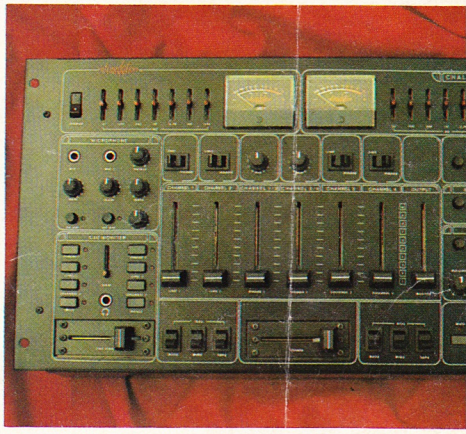
"This design is in the right direction, with every toy, to please all DJs. In the right hands it could be a devastating tool, that's why we use one." Justin Berkmann, Ministry Of Sound.

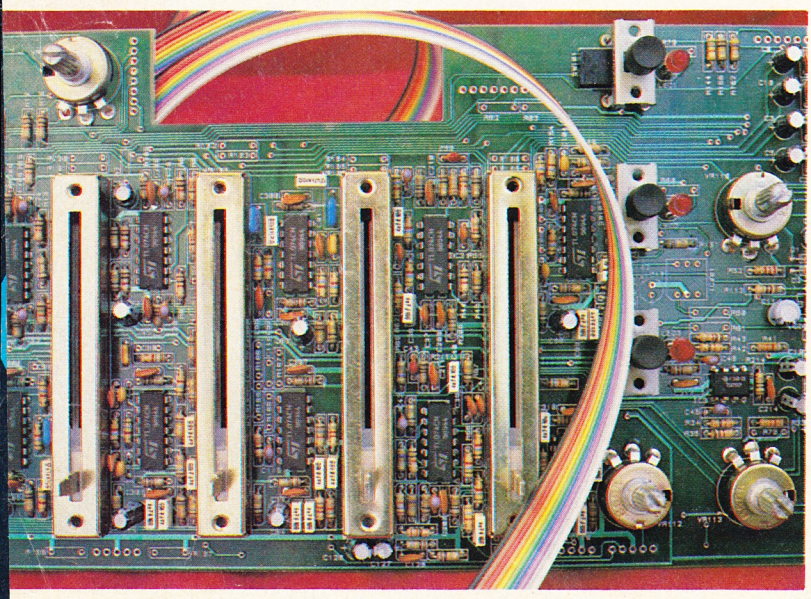
When playing with a new piece of equipment gives you a better buzz than drinking a dozen cappucinos you know it must be something special.

It's taken Steven Carroll of Intimidation Ltd over two years to develop and manufacture Challenger 1, which is a new mixer designed to cater to the ever broadening needs of the DJ, which in this case allows inputs for samplers, digital delays, etc as well as the standard features required of a mixer. Measuring 47cm wide by 27cm deep this is no lightweight. There is room for eight music inputs, two microphone inputs with their own bass, treble, pan and gain controls and two output facilities which both have their own Visual Display Units to check output levels. Just below the mic panel is the Headphone/Cue Monitor with a very loud gain control and the choice to select any channel you may need when cueing.

Both the Headphone and main Crossfader (6 cm length) are removable and hence easily replaceable. The main Channel and Master Volume faders (7 cm) are set in the centre with Line/Phono switches above. In between these are the Pan controls which can take the sound from one set of speakers to another or while using two records, for example, it's possible to have a vocal coming from one side and an instrumental out of the other side. At the top of the unit are a set of 7 equalisers on each side, meaning Channels 1 and 3 use the left and Channels 2 and 4 use the right. There is a bypass button to give the user a choice of whether to use the equalisers or not.

And now come the really fun features...! On the right hand side is a Slaughter Chamber which basically does that to the music you may be playing, in fact it sounds more like transforming but you have control over the speed.





Technically they call it a staggered signal but it means you can breakdown a vocal or instrumental break in a tune to great effect. Just below on the sloping panel is an Echo Chamber which gives up to 1.2 seconds delay and repeat. I tried out a couple of Augustus Pablo tunes and it felt like I was remixing the tracks. Especially if using them in conjunction with one of the other gem-like features on the Challenger... the Kill switches. As the name implies the bass, mid and top can be individually taken out from the song and if you've ever been on or near a dancefloor when a DJ uses this technique then you'll know that it has a formidable effect. It also aids the mixing process if, for example, bass lines are clashing and you need to take one out. There is a set of Kill switches available for each set of Channels (eg 1 & 3 and 2 & 4).

Finally on the technical front there is a set of 5 buttons under the Chambers which allow the user to assign use of the special effects to any Channel or to the Microphones.

Well I started messing with Steve Hurley's 'Jack Your Body' which was perfect for testing the dub effects with all the handclaps, breakdowns and basslines and went on to remix Depthcharge in a mighty drum and bass style! Although the features are nothing new to reggae sound systems they are something to be used further on house/techno dancefloors as it seems the most change a DJ can make to the sound of a record is by resetting the equaliser each time he/she requires the bass or treble to drop out.

I could go on, and indeed I did go on as the equipment inspired me to grab more tunes and rediscover or rework their sounds. In a live situation I would say know your records even better than before as time runs out very quickly when you're occupied with sound effects instead of cueing the next record up. And then again there's no point overkilling the features either as the crowd will get bored with you dropping the bass out every two minutes. I should also add the Headphone gain and Equaliser switches are illuminated, as are the VDU panels and there are lights by the side of the feature buttons. Cappucinos or technology- it's your choice.

Retail price approximately £899. Details from Intimidation Ltd on 081 698 9305.

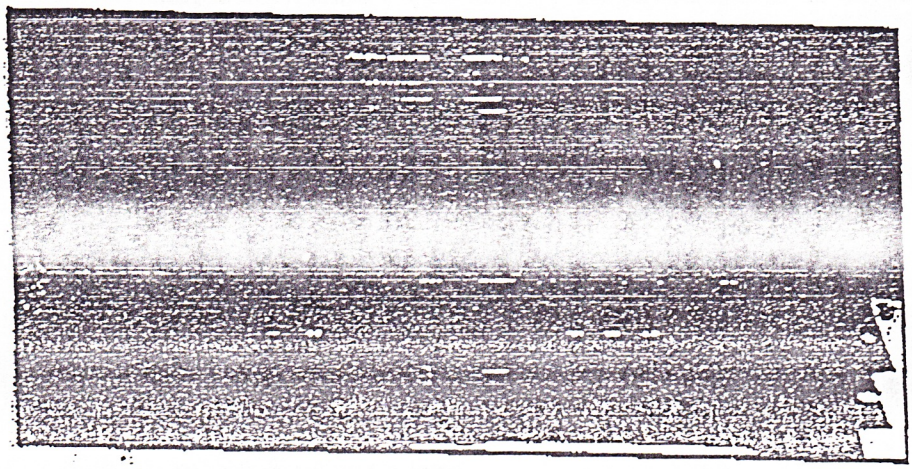
Thanks to DJ's Wildchild and Matt Rice.

The Scoop

. . . LIKE LAMBS TO THE SLAUGHTER?

CHALLENGER BY INTIMIDATION

One glance at the owner's manual and you know this is no ordinary DJ mixer. Bloody knives, in full color, frame a photo of the Challenger I face plate with the



curious line ". . . like lambs to the slaughter." The work surface is bank-upon-bank of controls, knobs and sliders with labels such as "Kill Switch" and "Slaughter Chamber." Features we normally find on the left, are on the right. This should be interesting.

The Challenger I, by Intimidation, comes from the United Kingdom and therefore, we assume, its design is inspired by the style of U.K. jocks. Strip away all the special features, and it does basically what all DJ mixers do, combine several inputs to a single stereo output. But that's boring, let's talk about the fun stuff.

In many major clubs, jocks are building extra bottom into the mix by taking just the bass from one track and mixing it in over the midrange and high-end of another track. This takes some clever equalization unless you have a Challenger I. Two sets of Kill Switches (one for channels 1 & 3, the other for channels 2 & 4) separate the bass, midrange and treble frequencies with filters. The DJ can knock out all but the bass on any music track just by killing the mid-range and treble.

Another feature unique to this mixer is the Slaughter Chamber which causes the signal to be momentarily interrupted or "staggered." This effect is also known as "tremolo" if you are familiar with guitar amps and keyboards. The speed of the stagger is adjustable and the effect can be assigned to any of the four channels.

A high quality digital echo is standard and can be used in conjunction with the Slaughter Chamber to create even more strange and innovative effects.

"Pan Controls" allow the balance point of a signal to be placed anywhere in the room from left speaker to right. When used in conjunction with the kill switches, to cut out bass and trebles, the apparent position of the vocal can be "floated" back and forth across the venue.

As the basics go, there is a total of eight music inputs controlled by four phono/line switches. The crossfader is selectable and a field-replaceable spare is provided free of charge. Two sets of balanced and two sets of unbalanced outputs are provided. Two of the old style, big bright, readable VU meters are placed top center. There's left and right EQ and each slider has a tiny red diode that makes the face plate look like a tiny airstrip when the room lights are off.

The microphone input and control bank is separate from the main mix sliders. Two microphone inputs have separate gain, bass and treble adjustments with pan control. The knobs that control the microphone levels must be pushed in to make adjustments so once it's set, the mic gain cannot be accidentally changed. The set up for the microphone inputs is particularly nice and something we'd like to see offered on other mixers, however we'd prefer the mic inputs be on the back of the unit, not the top.

Finally, the headphone monitoring section offers about all the options and choices any DJ would ever need, plus it's LOUD!

The suggested retail prices of the Challenger I by Intimidation is just over $2,000. A less expensive model with many of the same features is due out sometime this spring. For additional information on Challenger I by Intimidation, contact the U.S distributor, Meteor Light and Sound, 8000 Madison Pike, Madison, AL 53758. 205•772•9626.

Intimidating...

By Amy Wright, Circulation Manageress, Disco Mirror (and sometime local radio DJ)

There can't be much left to say about the Challenger I. The two years spent developing the Challenger have paid off as not only have the reviews been positive but the demand has been high, with units being snapped up as soon as they come off the production line. Intimidation have looked beyond the usual requirements of a mixer and have produced a machine which can make the most ham-fisted, box bedroom DJ sound creative.

Bordering on the above category myself, I began to wonder what I had let myself in for when the Challenger I arrived at our offices, apprehension which soon disappeared when, fully connected, I began to play, and play I did, seriously of course.

So what makes this mixer so different ? The first thing I noticed were the sets of kill switches, which enable the user to separate the bass midrange and treble frequencies, a particularly useful control for mixing records with conflicting basslines or just for creating different effects once mixed.

The innovative will love the slaughter chamber - by staggering the signal the result gives a startling effect with amazing ease, and with the added ability to pause the playback this cannot fail to impress both the user and the audience - my goldfish was stunned.

My personal favourite was the pan control feature, this enables the sound from one deck to come out of both speakers whilst the sound from the other deck is limited to one. When used with the kill switches this produces another brilliant effect.

Another feature which I found very useful was the monitoring system, a cross-fader allows immediate monitoring of either channel, great if you can't make up your mind.

Altogether the Intimidation Challenger I is a gem, it's combination of highly original features, together with it's logical layout make it a totally comprehensive piece of equipment.

At just under £1000, it may be out of reach for many, but Intimidation have a new baby. It will debut at the Musik Messe in Frankfurt and will include three new features as well as the kill switches from the Challenger I, while the price has been kept down to approximately £350. If the new mixer is anywhere near as versatile as the original, it will be well worth the money. Watch this space for more details.

Thanks are also due to Soundivision for their help in this adventure.

Contact Intimidation on 081 698 9305.



Constella expand range

Constella are due to release new and upgraded units to their high quality Pro Range. Although this range may not be quite so well known in England it is big in Europe and the World, with new distributors being regularly established.

Among these is the company's first 0-10v controllable effects for which a DMX converter will be introduced soon. This includes a compact colour changer with nine colours and white or 9 x 9 colours and white together with a colour changing single plane scanner.

These effects can be linked and operated by adopting the first unit in a chain as the master. Alternatively, all units can be controlled independently if patched into any dimmable 0-10v controller. The initial light source will be a 250W halogen reflector lamp with other lamp sources being made available when developed.

Other units being introduced will be improved versions of the Quattro Star and Quattro Dancer which will offer more light output and more colours. The Quattro Dancer will also be offered as a controllable unit.

Another DMX controllable effect will be launched later this year. This unit will provide colour and gobo change facilities. It will scan in both X and Y axis, is dimmable and will have a strobe function. Keep your eyes open for the Mickey smoke machine as well which promises to provide good value for money.

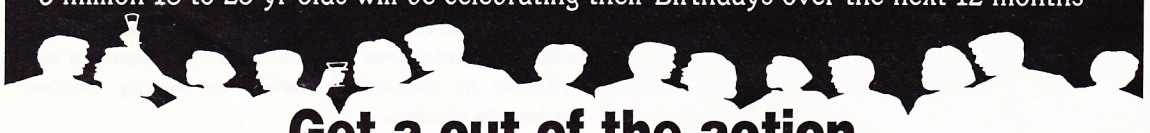
Contact Constella on (0533) 340536.

Nikkodo push the CD-Graphic

Nikkodo (UK) Ltd have announced the launch of their new CD-Graphic and Laser Disc range of Karaoke software. The range comprises 18 CD-G discs and 17 laser discs, each with 12 tracks. This long-awaited addition to the Nikkodo range seems set to enhance the company's position within the software marketplace. While both ranges are important to Nikkodo, the emphasis is to be placed on promoting the CD-G software into a growing CD Graphic market. With interest from both the commercial and consumer markets in the CG-G format, the demand for quality software has seen a steady growth. This increase has been brought about by the availability of new CD-G players such as the CD-G1 'Ninja' also from Nikkodo.

For more information, contact Nikkodo on 071 499 7706

3 million 18 to 25 yr olds will be celebrating their Birthdays over the next 12 months



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