

# B.P.M

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# ALLEN&HEATH XONE:DB4

For the past 2 years at the DJ Mag Tech Awards, held in Birmingham NEC, during the BPM show, the top award for the Ultimate Club Mixer had gone to the same product, the XONE:DB4 from Allen&Heath. Soon, the DJ Tech Awards will take place again, and the question on everyone's lips is will Allen&Heath bag the "Triple Crown" with their DB4?



## Ultimate Club Mixer Award 2011 & 2012

A few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to speak with Greg Ibbotson from the XONE office in Cornwall. He said, "On papers it looks like the award is coming back to Cornwall again. There's no other product in the market that is equivalent to the DB4. Now that the V.2 firmware is out, the DB4 is years ahead of it's nearest competitor... if there's any." Greg also quickly commented that it is what they predicted, however, things may change at the last minute as there could be other brands coming out with new products nearer to the awards show. Apart from that, the XONE marketing team is very active in putting the product in all the right places. Checking out the XONE blog shows the DB4 in heavy usage and I was told that once again, the XONE:DB4 will be featured in majority of the clubs in Ibiza this summer.

## Here are some features of the DB4 which puts it way above the rest:

**QUAD FX CORE:** The heart of the Xone:DB4 is the powerful Quad FX Core DSP engine, enabling each channel to have its own FX bank and BPM detection system, which automatically adjusts all time-related FX and loops to the tempo of the music. There are 5 studio quality FX types optimised for DJ use - delays, reverbs, modulators, resonators and damage - plus each FX type has a patch library of different effect variations. Each FX bank has a dedicated expression control and a rotary pot to set the wet/dry level, whilst further tweaking can be performed using the global controllers in the FX master section.



Razaq in the XONE office with the Award for the DB4

**X:LINK:** X:LINK uses a standard RJ45 connector and distributes power and data allowing connection to X:LINK compatible devices, saving USB ports on your computer.

**LOOPER:** Each channel has a built-in looper, with selectable loop length from 1/16 beat to 4 bars. DB4 will always record the full 4 bars, so the loop can be expanded or shrunk at will.

**FILTERS:** DB4 comes equipped with the Xone dual filter system.

**SOURCE SELECT:** Each music channel can select any of the available stereo music sources: Analog Line 1-4 (switchable to Phono on 2-3), Digital 1-4 or USB 1-4.

**EQ/FILTER:** Each music channel has a 3-band EQ that can be configured as standard asymmetric EQ (+6/-26dB), Isolator (+6dB/OFF with a 24dB/octave slope), or reconfigured as a High-Pass/Low-Pass filter system with adjustable resonance. EQ knob pointers change colour to show which type of equalization is active.

**MIC/LINE INPUT:** The Mic/Line input has 2-band EQ, gain, cue and mix level. This can also be routed to channel 1 for adding FX.

**INTEGRAL SOUND CARD:** A built-in, high quality (24-bit / 96kHz), multi-channel, fully patchable USB2 soundcard allows replay and recording from audio software for 4 stereo sends and 4 stereo returns.

**USB:** User-defined settings such as meter mode, BPM range, USB audio routing scheme and display brightness can be saved to a USB key for recall on another DB4.



**MIDI CONTROL:** All controls (except Mic and Phones level) send MIDI data and the mixer can double up as a MIDI controller via the MIDI shift button, allowing the Loop and FX selection controls to send MIDI data without changing the mixer settings.

**OUTPUT PATCHBAY:** Booth, record and phones - source selectable and level trim. Booth and main - phase and level trim controls.

**HIGH VISIBILITY DISPLAY:** The OLED display is clearly visible, even in bright sunlight, and displays channel FX selection and current BPM, as well as being an easy interface for the Menu setup functions.

**LIGHTWEIGHT CHASSIS:** DB4's lightweight aluminium chassis is designed to make touring with the console easy.



If all those features are not enough for the DJ that you are, the DB4 is now reloaded with the V.2 firmware. It is now equipped with more FX, configurable FX routing on each channel, selections of FX pre or post fader, remote control of the Looper functions when paired with the K2 via X:Link, patchable routing options for use of FX in music production and midi control, and many more. Apart from that, there are already mapping files available for the DB4 to work with TRAKTOR software. Looking at the reviews, you'll find various comments and suggestions on how the DB4 is best used. If you read carefully and understand all those reviews, everyone seems to be talking about the same issue. That issue is... pushing the boundaries of creativity. The technology in the XONE DB series can be intimidating to the normal DJ, however, when technology is learned and understood, it can be a powerful tool for the user. "Creativity" is the middle name for DJs, apart from the ability to beat-match, that is the root of the art of DJ-ing. The ability to create seamless mix, mash-ups, remixes and interesting sets are the epitome of a good and successful DJ. Gone were days of just beat-matching 2 tracks and dropping Flange or Filter effects during breakdowns. Now, every good DJ are familiar with sampling, looping and creating soundscapes. The DB4 is one mixer that lets you push all that creativity to the limit.

Now that we all know how great the technology inside the XONE DB4 is, it puzzles me why it is still not the best selling mixer in the world?

Majority of DJs still prefer the ever-reliable and simple Pioneer DJM900 or the 800s. I had to post this question to some DJs and here are some of their answers:

*"the DB4 are too expensive"*  
*"you can use the Pioneer mixers with your eyes closed"*  
*"the DB4 is too complicated"*  
*"The music I play are mostly Top 40s and popular EDMs. The DB4 would be overkill."*  
*"Why do I need 52 FX? I use only Echo and Flanger. What the hell is FX routing?"*  
*"Too much button on the DB4. And the EQ knobs are small."*  
*"Never heard of it."*

However, one of the most interesting quotes I heard about the DB4 would be, "It is not fair to compare the DJMs to the DB4. They are two different products. One is made for DJs, and the latter is made for smarter DJs." Just like the MAC vs. PC and iPhone vs. Samsung debates, it is the same with DJ mixers and other products. Everyone has their choices depending on personal preferences, knowledge and taste. Nobody is wrong or right at any point, but what matters most is what the user can do with each product. Some DJs would prefer neither as they are more comfortable with brands like Rane, Denon, Vestax and even Reloop. As for me, I'm making arrangements to make a trip to BPM 2013 and hangout with the XONE crew again. I was there when they won the award first time in 2011, it would be nice to be there again and witness the festivities.

For more info visit [www.allen-heath.com/UK/products/pages/productslisting.aspx?catid=XoneSeries](http://www.allen-heath.com/UK/products/pages/productslisting.aspx?catid=XoneSeries)