

DJ Times – MIX! Review (July Issue)

By Wesley Bryant-King

The team at Stanton has been serving the DJ market for years with a line of innovative products that includes some very unique takes on digital DJ controllers, along with “old skool” vinyl turntables, CD decks, and mixers. And now, Stanton has partnered up with one of the most well known names in DJ and music education to create Scratch DJ Academy MIX! software. MIX! Is designed to make it easy to create high quality, digital versions of the old fashioned mix tapes many of us used to make in the old days. Competitive with products such as the venerable MixMeister, it’s a great tool for people new to the concept of beat-matching and mixing to get up-to-speed on applicable terminology and techniques, without getting overwhelmed by the minutia involved in DJ mixing “by hand,” or having to practice for months to develop the chops.

Using MIX! begins with bringing music into the MIX! library. The integrated ID3 editor makes it easy to keep the library and its tracks clean and organized. MIX! identifies the BPM of the track—and importantly, it’s key as well. Creating a mix is largely a matter of drag-and-drop, using MIX!’s timeline view. The overlap lengths of mixes can be easily adjusted as desired.

Newbies will appreciate that when you bring a song into the mix, the software automatically suggests other tracks whose keys and tempo are most compatible, helping ensure harmonic and beat compatibility, and introduce these important concepts for aspiring DJs who may later move to more conventional DJ applications.

I particularly liked the fact that the software integrates mixing and DJ’ing hints and tips, drawn from the curriculum of Scratch DJ Academy, and their acclaimed DJ instructors.

Using MIX!, I was able to put together some effective mixes almost immediately. The only thing I found wanting was that no tools were provided to adjust the mix curves; you can adjust the length, but not the levels of each track during the crossover. The provided “Scratch FX,” which can be applied to overlaps, also didn’t seem that useful or practical—at least not for the types of music I customarily work with.

I did find the BPM detection and key identification algorithms to be quite accurate, and I really liked the great drag-and-drop support, making it fast and easy to bring-in individual tracks to the MIX! library—or even entire folders of tracks.

Once you get a mix set-up to your liking—which you can preview to your heart’s content—a simple click of a button renders-out the completed mix in perfect form, ready to play, drop onto your iPod or iPhone, etc.

If you’re a working DJ who already uses pro DJ software, you might look to Stanton MIX! as a quick, easy tool for testing song-to-song mix compatibility with that pile of new music you just got, without spending a bunch of time on the effort. But even if you’re just someone who wants to knock-out some effective mixes for your next party or aerobics class, Stanton’s new Scratch DJ Academy MIX! may be just the ticket.