

The Mixer

In it's most basic form, a mixer is a device for combining or "mixing" the audio signal from two different audio sources into one. Although mixers have been used in recording studios for decades, DJ mixers first gained popularity in the 1970's. As DJ'ing has evolved, mixers designed specifically for the turntablist, (such as the Vestax PMC-05 Pro III shown below) have become available. Professional scratch mixers use high quality components (such as smooth, crackle free VCA faders) whilst incorporating specialist features (such as curve adjustment), and are laid out to allow quick location of the mixers controls for unhindered execution of scratch techniques

Gain/Trim
A separate volume control for each channel that overrides the current level set with the up faders to fine tune the overall channel loudness.

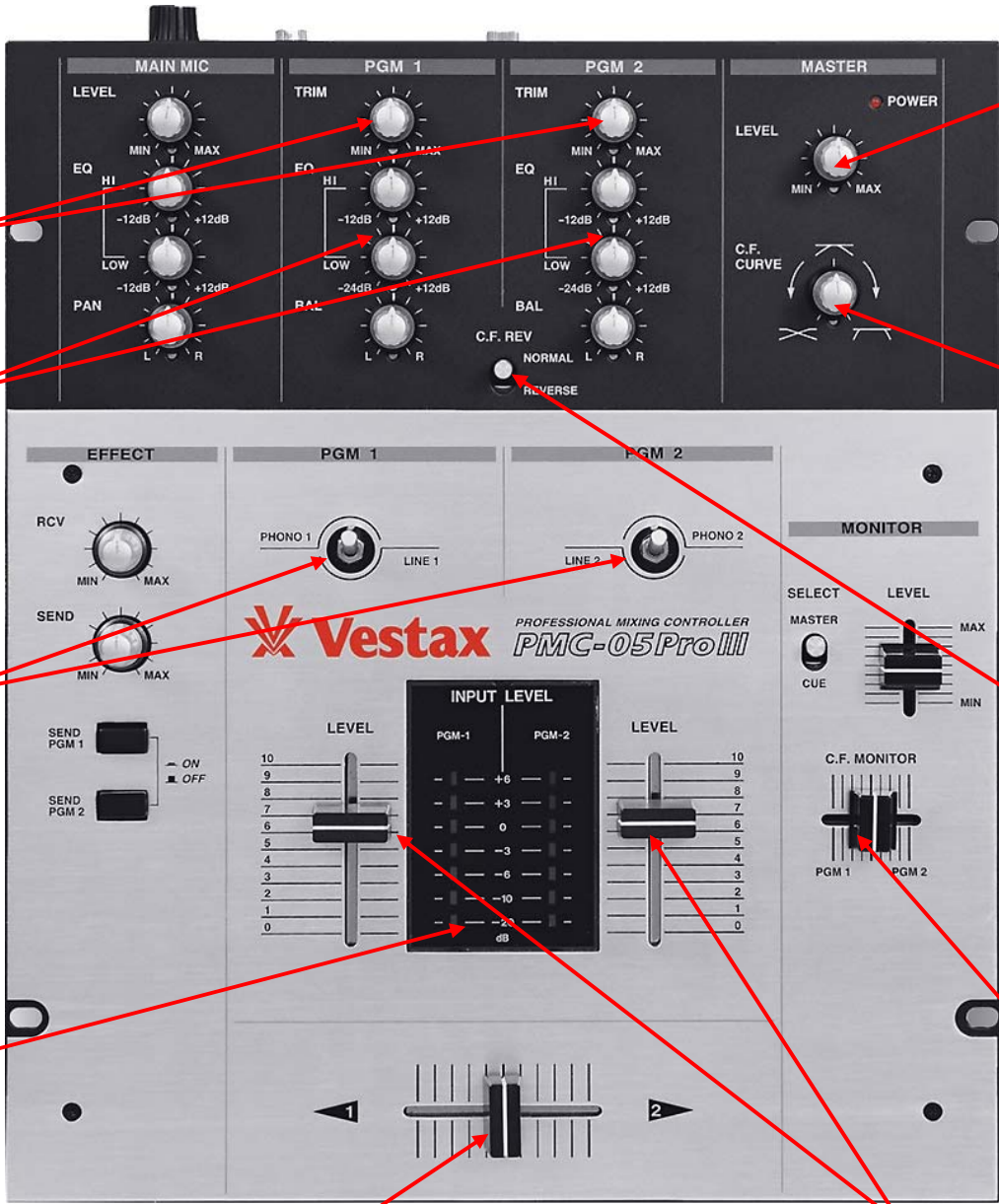
EQ
Generally split into three bands (low, middle and high), to raise and lower specific frequency ranges in the sound e.g. Bass, Mid range and Treble.

Line Out Switches
These switch the input on the respective channel from phono (turntable) to Line In (CD etc.), but can also be utilized to execute techniques such as the transformer scratch.

VU Meters
Visually display the volume levels of each channel.

Cross fader
Switches the output of the mixer from the left channel (far left) to the right channel (far right). If the fader is positioned in the middle then both channels can be heard.

Up/line faders
Controls the amount of signal for channels going through the crossfader for each of the two channels. This is increased by pushing the respective fader upwards and decreased by pulling it downwards.



Master Volume
Controls the master output volume level of the mixer.

Curve Adjust
Changes the 'slope' i.e. the speed the volume increases from silent to full as the crossfader moves away from the edge. A sharp slope gives a quick increase in sound from silent to full volume in a small movement of the crossfader, whereas a slow or gradual slope gives a smoother fade in over a longer movement of the fader.

Hamster Switch
Reverses the direction of the cross fader. Usually the cross fader outputs the right channel when pushed far right, and the left channel when pushed far left. The Hamster switch reverses this configuration to allow simpler execution of certain scratches such as the crab.

Cue Monitor
Allows the DJ to monitor the left, right and/or both audio channels in the headphones for cueing.