

# JDK Audio

## 8MX2

Eight-channel  
preamp/mixer with  
multiple applications

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### SUMMARY

**STRENGTHS:** Flexible and versatile. +24dB headroom. Packs a lot of functionality into a 1U space. Oozes quality. Built-in limiter for each channel.

**LIMITATIONS:** Input jacks aren't combo types. Cooling fan is always on.

**\$3,195 MSRP,  
\$2,715.75 street**  
jdkaudio.com

LOTS OF companies advertise “Swiss Army knife” products, but the 8MX2 (which boasts API lineage) has no problem claiming that title. Although it's a 1U rack mount, which implies some kind of permanent home, you might not want to screw in those screws just yet—for reasons we'll get into shortly.

**Overview** The 8MX2 has eight XLR inputs (not combo jacks) for the mic preamps, which are the same design as the ATI preamps in the Paragon and Paragon II sound reinforcement consoles. (In fact, the 8MX2 is a re-branded ATI unit.) The preamps offer up to 65dB of gain, 41-step detented controls for repeatability, individual ground lifts, and a built-in limiter. Their outs mix down to 1/4" stereo TRS outs, with additional TRS connectors for stereo monitor out or 2-track return. DB-25 connectors handle I/O for eight individual channel outs, or for eight channel returns (e.g., for analog summing), while two DB-9 connectors provide master in/slave out options for cascading units. The fused power supply uses an IEC-type cord, and is switchable between 115V and 230V.

Each channel has two concentric controls. One control pair sets gain and limiter threshold, while the other controls mix level and pan. Individual buttons for each channel select +48V phantom power, phase, return status (either the channel output or return feeds the mix control and pan), and cue. Enabling cue enables feeds to multiple cue busses—pre-limiter, post-limiter, and channel return. A Mix button assigns the channel output to the mix bus (or de-assigns if you want to mute, or use only the direct out).

The output monitor section has stereo 10-step LED meters that indicate level or amount of gain reduction, headphone jack (high

impedance headphones only) with monitor level, and a concentric control for main level and balance. Additional buttons determine whether the monitor section listens to the returns or the cues, and if the cues, which cue busses.

As to construction, the housing is all-metal, and the level of quality is self-evident. Just be aware of the concentric pots sticking up from the front panel—you don't want them to bump into anything.

**Applications** For live recording, a quality submixer with this many inputs and preamps has obvious uses—and the built-in limiters are a great addition, providing you don't hit them too hard. Sure, many audio interfaces have limiters or compressors, but they're usually post-converter. Having limiters before hitting the A/D converters is far more important. When miking drums with multiple mics, having direct outs to send to a main mixer, or being able to premix, is handy.

Broadcast and remote uses are obvious, but also, if you like analog summing for your digital stems, the 8MX2 provides that as well. Small live performance ensembles can combine electric instruments and mics, while sending a stereo feed for monitoring and direct outs to front of house. The 8MX2 could also serve as an overachieving keyboard mixer, although you'll need 1/4" to XLR adapters as the input jacks aren't combo types.

**Conclusions** The 8MX2 is a classy piece of gear. While not exactly cheap, in terms of value you get a lot in return and the sound quality is a big factor; it's clean, but without being sterile. If you want a no-compromise rack mixer for stage and studio, that pretty much defines the 8MX2. ■