

Dangerous Music Source Portable Monitor Controller

By Joe Mullen



Over unity. It is said that it can't be achieved; that we can never get out more than what we put in. Having run a mix through the Dangerous Source, though, I'm tempted to think the opposite is true. The folks at Dangerous Music are end users just like you and I who have a philosophy of "audio integrity: non-negotiable." They don't design to a price-point or have their products made 6,000 miles away. All of their products are made "without compromise" resulting in the best equipment and the best results. I am well aware of Dangerous Music's reputation and am honoured to be reviewing the company's award-winning monitor controller.

Let's get into the ins and outs of this beauty. There is a stereo analog input which runs through two 1/4-in./XLR combo jacks, a stereo 1/8-in. analog, which is perfect for plugging in your iPod, an AES/SPDIF in on an additional combo jack, an AES/SPDIF through on a male XLR jack, a stereo analog out on two male XLRs, a secondary speaker out on two 1/4-in. jacks, a stereo line out on two additional 1/4-in. jacks, a USB connection, and two headphone jacks on the front panel – both 1/4-in. with enough gain to blow your eardrums! I used this box to record vocals and my vocalists loved it because I could really crank up the mix for him.

So the Source has a healthy amount of inputs. Now, what can we do with them? First off, you can monitor any combination of inputs from either section. Either set of speakers can be selected or you can even select both. This was great for me.

I was using both speaker outs at the

same time. When I'm writing riffs, I like to turn things up pretty loud. I get some drums programmed, loop them, and see what happens. It was really nice to be able to set up another amp and be able to switch from regular working mode with just two monitors to my inspiration mode, adding in my two (now relocated) living room big box speakers at the flick of a switch. It was also really nice to be able to link to the Source via USB – a direct digital connection to the Dangerous converters. These are just some of the cool things you can do with this box. I strongly recommend trying one out to see how it can fit into your musical workflow.

As with all Dangerous Music products, this one is built to last a lifetime. The portable, rack-mountable box itself is made of solid metal. The six 1/4-in. jacks seem heavy-duty and the two pots on the front are sturdy and outstandingly smooth.

I had a mix I'd been working on for a while and wanted to hear if the Source would change my perspective on it. From the second I listened to the mix through the Source, it was as if, after staring at a painting for hours on-end, all of the sudden I could finally see what it was all about. This may sound a little ridiculous, but it actually happened this way. My room is very dead; it has a ton of 4-in. rock board bass traps in the corners and on the walls so I hear almost 100 per cent directly from my monitors. I think this is why I was able to notice what a drastic sonic difference the Source made.

The mix had room to breathe; the Source really does restore the headroom that is so lacking in today's standard

home studio interfaces. You get more punch, a clearer stereo image, a ton more detail, and headroom that seems to go on forever. This is not your typical monitor controller. The Dangerous Source changes how you hear your work in a big way and reveals the information you need to create a truly informed and inspired mix.

One specific feature worth mentioning is the on-the-fly switching performance. The 10 selection switches on the front panel each have their own relay. This gives the unit that much more of an analog feel; you hear the relay click and it feels like you are actually switching something. When you have multiple sources plugged in and switch between them, there is no undesired noise. I have used other monitor controllers and small pops or some lag aren't uncommon. This switching is 100 per cent transparent. They also give the user great feedback as the buttons themselves light up.

As musicians and audio engineers, we strive to capture the magic, the essence of an idea. This is a process where there must be no compromise – part of the philosophy that the folks at Dangerous Music embody. Dangerous Music has introduced a product that does in fact prove you can get more out than what you put in. Over unity is reality.

Manufacturer's Comment

The Dangerous Source ships as a portable desktop unit but is designed for the desktop or the studio rack. Source fits perfectly under a 13-in. laptop in its desktop configuration, or can be rack-mounted for the studio with the alternate 1 RU faceplate. The faceplate is available directly from Dangerous Music and is user installable.

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Joe Mullen is the founder of JoeDown Studios and the drummer of Ontario-based melodic metal band Odium. He is currently on tour supporting Odium's second release, *Burning the Bridges to Nowhere*, and has a solid recording schedule when the band is off the road.