

## Korg NC-Q1 £299

Can noise cancelling headphones help you hear yourself in the DJ booth? **Jon Musgrave** sizes up this new smart design from Korg

**CONTACT** WHO: Korg UK **WEB:** korg.com **KEY FEATURES** TYPE: Dynamic closed back, 10Hz to 25kHz, 41mm PEEK film diaphragm, Bluetooth v5.0 SBC, AAC, aptX, aptX Low Latency, aptX HD, USB 2.0 charging, approx. 3.5 hours for full charge 35 hrs plugged in, 24 hrs Bluetooth, 12 hrs Bluetooth with noise cancellation. Handsfree support, Google/Siri compatible





In a club, you're often battling to hear your cue source and it's easy to turn your headphones up to ear-damaging levels. However, Korg could have a solution with their latest noise-cancelling smart headphones. Designed to handle noisy environments, the NC-Q1 uses both active and passive noise cancelling to help isolate you from your surroundings. On the active side, there are microphones both outside and inside the earcups. These employ feedback and feedforward technology to auto-adjust wide-ranging frequency suppression and as mentioned can handle loud environments, which is something many regular noise cancelling designs struggle with. On the passive side the closed back design is assisted by adaptable viscoelastic memory foam ear cushions, an insulating headband and isolating frame. And, I have to say, when I first put these cans on they were both very comfortable and provided impressive relief from the surrounding ambient noise.

The NC-Q1 can be used powered down as a straightforward pair of passive headphones and with mini jack inputs on the underside of both earcups you can choose which side to connect the cable, which is handy. With a reasonably flat sonic profile and quality drivers, they do sound really good. Construction is also excellent and replacement earpads are available if they become worn.

Powering on the NC-Q1 activates the smart features. The power button, plus volume control and further buttons, are on the underside of the right earcup. Charging meanwhile is via Micro USB on the underside of the left earcup. The NC-Q1 works either hardwired or via Bluetooth and, in addition to the green power indicator, a blue/red LED provides visual feedback of the Bluetooth state. Dialogue assistance is available via the headphones themselves.

The main noise cancelling feature is simple to activate and works well. It doesn't completely remove ambient sounds, but is particularly good at curtailing lower frequencies and rumble, which is ideal in a club environment. There's also an additional Attenuation option for very loud environments. However, noise cancellation is only half the story as you can also monitor the surrounding ambient sound. This works in a split



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headphone or whole headphone format and includes a dedicated level control and six EQ profiles so you can tailor the balance between left and right earcups. The ambient noise monitoring is activated by tapping the side of the right earcup, which is a nice idea, although I found this did require a degree of skill to execute consistently. Nevertheless, being able to monitor your surroundings and your track together is a major feature, offering a real alternative to keeping one earcup off.

As mentioned, the NC-Q1 includes Bluetooth connectivity, so you get many of the typical Bluetooth features including track start/stop and hands free. The NC-Q1 also supports low latency Bluetooth. Nevertheless, for time-critical DJing you'll probably want to avoid latency altogether and stick to the wired connection.

Overall, the NC-Q1 delivers excellent DJ-specific functions and sounds fantastic. Yes the controls can be a bit fiddly to use, but stick with it and you'll get a fresh and workable approach for monitoring in the booth and other noisy environments. **FM**

### FM VERDICT

# 8.8

**They look good, sound great and are packed with some brilliant features to help make your DJ life simpler and safer for hearing**

### THE PROS & CONS



Effective noise cancellation even in noisy environments

**Ambient sound monitoring**

Great sound

**Comfortable fit and solid construction**

Bluetooth support



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