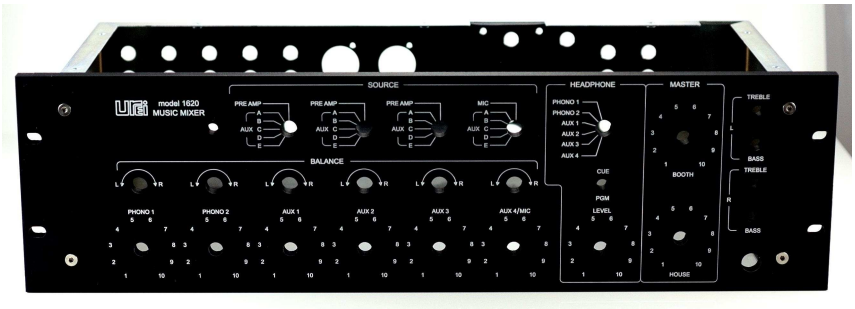
ISONOE®

‘Remanufactured’ UREi 1620

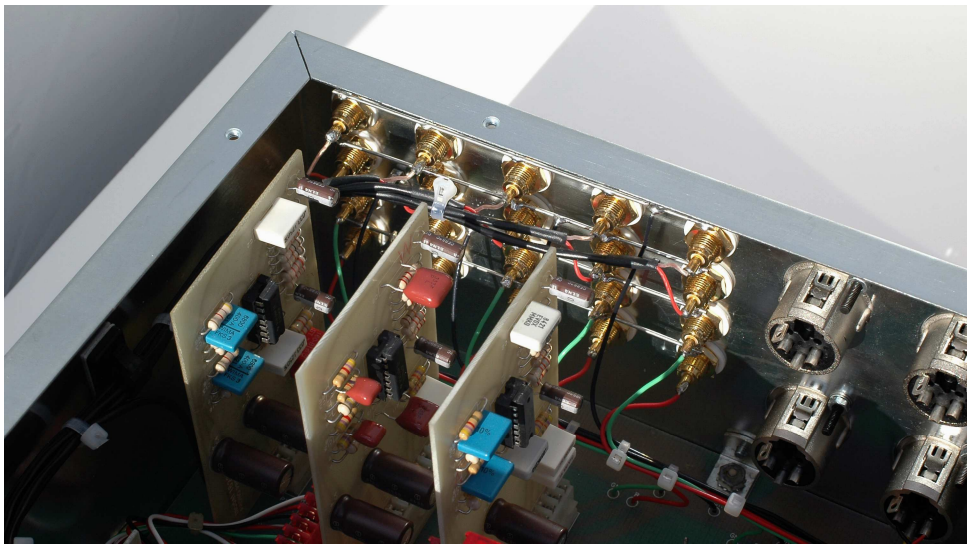
With the company’s reputation growing, a customer in France approached us for the purpose of totally remanufacturing a UREi 1620. The draft was that ‘no stone should be left unturned’ – wherever an improvement could be made, it should be, regardless of cost. Whilst the fundamental design of the 1620 remains good, the time from inception to manufacture was short (Richard Long needed these mixers for installations and reportedly gave Harman two months), therefore room for improvement was left in several areas.

The original tin-plated RCA sockets tend to tarnish badly and often snap when tight, modern RCA plugs are inserted. In the case of later 1620s with gold-plated RCAs, these tend to be even more fragile (one nightclub owner even remarked that breaking RCA sockets had become such a worry she had an actual nightmare about it! Suffice to say, her club purchased the second Isonoe remanufactured 1620). The only solution to this was to design an entirely new chassis, with chassis-mount, hand-wired RCA sockets. CAD drawings were made and a respected British company was employed for the fabrication:



As with all iterations of UREi 1620, the power supply implementation leaves a lot to be desired, so the Isonoe LRPS external power supply was employed – connecting to the new chassis via an IP67 military-style locking connector.

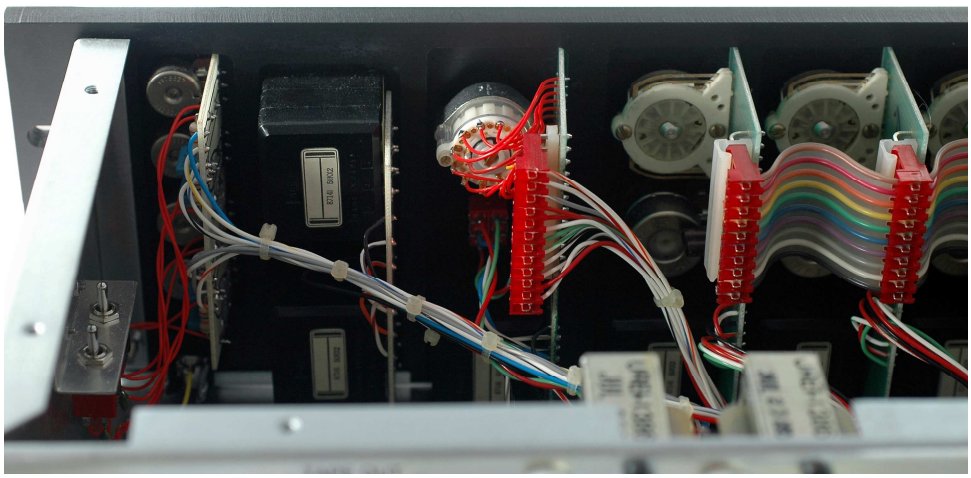
The mixture of chassis-mount and fragile PCB-mount sockets on the original 1620 meant that the grounding scheme left much for improvement. The newly-designed case enabled a true 'star ground' configuration to be implemented, with ground returns being carried via 50-amp solid copper wire, ensuring an ultimate low impedance path. Rather than reuse the original ribbon cable, a brand new wiring loom was made, replacing the ribbon with Mogami OFC cabling:



After this photo was taken, the preamp cards were fitted with precision 1% tolerance polypropylene foil / film RIAA capacitors.

The original silk-screened front panel on this 1620 had, as with most original 1620s, worn beyond legibility. It was suggested to the client that an engraved panel could be made – engraving being far more labour-intensive and expensive, but far more durable and aesthetically appealing. The decision was made to employ a machinist to fabricate a totally new panel from 10mm thick alloy, offering greater EMI shielding and preventing the 'warped' appearance seen in some original 3mm punched-sheet panels. The result gives the mixer an unparalleled feel and aesthetic:

The headphone cue select switch was replaced with an ELMA type, famous for their use in EMI and Neve consoles. Tone bypass switches were added via a custom-made bracket. All additional was wiring performed with silver-plated / PTFE-insulated type, in keeping with its original use in the 1620:



Prior to its despatch to the client in France, the 1620 was auditioned by a listening panel in an acoustically-treated room. All present agreed that it was without doubt the finest 1620 they'd heard. Its performance in terms of measurement is about as good as the design will permit. If you know about a 1620 with a higher specification, we'd like to know about it!

This example was made for a client in Hawaii: