

1 Interview with Andrew Scheps

2 It's difficult to discuss the state of the current platinum-selling pop/rock sonic sphere without...

3 *The Gearspace.com Community*

4 *It's difficult to discuss the state of the current platinum-selling pop/rock sonic sphere without Andrew Scheps' name being raised at some point. A 3-time Grammy® winner, Andrew joined us in 2019 for a few weeks shortly after a permanent relocation to the UK to talk about the secrets behind the sounds of such notable artists as Lady Gaga, Metallica, Adele, Weezer, Lana Del Ray, Green Day, Hozier, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Johnny Cash, Andrew W.K., Kid Rock, Bon Jovi, Black Sabbath, Jake Bugg, AFI, Jay-Z, Beyoncé, Linkin Park and more. Andrew was a bucket-list Q&A guest we had been waiting for a long time, and it was absolutely worth it - read on!*



6 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#)What are your go to plugins or top 10 plugins except **Omni Channel?** - *DeNto*

7 I suppose a quick and very incomplete list of plugins I like would be (in no particular order) [SansAmp](#) or [PSA1000](#), [Altiverb](#), [CLA-76](#), [Puigtec](#), [D-Verb](#), Lo-Fi, [Cooper Time Cube](#), the new [Valhalla Delay](#), [FabFilter Timeless 2](#), [Ozone](#) Imager, McDSP Filters (any of them), [Speakerphone](#), EQ3, [Phoenix II](#), [Massey DRT](#)...

8 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#)Could you tell me about the bit rate you're currently using on your mix sessions? 32bit or 24? Can you elaborate why you prefer one or another? - *jakelorenz*

9 I mix the session at whatever sample rate it comes to me and print the

mixes right back into the session. I feel like the sonic hit of mixing at a lower sample rate is nothing compared to doing sample rate conversion on every bit of audio in the session. I also don't have a workflow where I am printing to a second computer. I will always print 24 bit, and sometimes I print the Main Mixes 32 bit because there are a couple of mastering engineers I work with who ask for it.

10 One thing I've started doing in the last few years is never sending out mixes for clients to check as mp3s. I always send 44.1/16 bit. This can be tricky if you think they might steal and use the mixes without paying, but from a sonic point of view it just takes away the possibility of something being transcoded (converted from one lossy format to another) when they listen. This can happen if you send a lossy format reference file and they listen to it in a browser window (like from a Dropbox link).

11 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) **What kind of preparation “grunt work” (either by you or trusted assistants) happens to the files you get, before you get to properly mix? - *Andychamp***

12 I do all of my own mix prep, all the way from ordering tracks and color coding. If I'm getting files bounced out from another DAW I will definitely check for mono/stereo sources and split the files accordingly.

13 Using HPFs and things like that are just part of my general mixing process. I feel like if you treat doing anything sonically as just a mix prep stage, you're not listening in context and you might actually be messing stuff up. If things need HPFs or resonances tamed, it will be obvious as you mix and it will just be part of the process.

14 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) **Have you ever mixed orchestra material and come up with good parallel compression approaches? - *Paulwr***

15 I use the exact same template no matter what I am mixing. That said, the big thing for me about parallel compression is that you are constantly fighting the tradeoff between natural space and things interacting. I use a bit less of the parallel processing when mixing more organic sounding music which is why I have VCAs so I can really quickly back off the returns and see where I want to end up. It can be a very tricky balancing act.

16



17 **[hide] - [top]Which reverbs do you use predominantly? - Kodebode**

18 I use all of the above! I love [Altiverb](#), [H-Verb](#), [D-Verb](#), basically anything with 'verb' in the name. I really don't have a preference.

19 **[hide] - [top]I read that you use "print track" in the PT session. Is there a reason that you are including that and not using the offline bouncing? - Blaine Misner**

20 I'd say that about half the time the first version of a mix that I print to send to the artist is printed in real time just so I can make sure I'm happy with it. After that absolutely everything is bounced offline.

21 Having the print track allows me to keep the rough or a previous revision of a mix on the track while I'm working, and simply by switching input I can go between the mix running live and the reference. I hate doing mix tweaks and not being able to A/B them.

22 **[hide] - [top]Before moving ITB you used to use a parallel bass treatment with a [Transient Designer](#). I picked that one up from you and love it, but I noticed you ditched that ITB and always have been curious why as it seems you're now running nothing for the bass in parallel at all. - JSchlomo**

23 I just never found anything I liked on the bass as a parallel chain. Back then I almost never put the bass into the rear buss (explained elsewhere) and now I almost always do, so there is parallel compression on the bass in the box, it's just shared with other instruments.

24 **[hide] - [top]I want to know what advice you would have for the DIY musician producer who lives away from big cities, hasn't had opportunity to attend revered audio engineering and production**

schools etc and does not know a lot of people within the industry?

25 Where would you focus your time most? Building a repertoire of skills and experience? Writing and crafting my own songs to gain attention and in turn, work?

26 - *joebeesley*

27 This is really difficult to answer. One good thing is that with the online learning resources available now you can find things out and watch people work that you would never have had access to 10 years ago. Nothing will help you get better more than practice, so working on your own music or finding people to collaborate with is by far the best thing you can do. The more you can focus on what you're hearing and what you want to hear, and the less you focus on what tools you're using (or wish you owned) the better.

28 One thing I'll say, and it might sound a bit brutal but isn't meant in any mean way whatsoever, is that if you can't find the motivation to even switch the computer on, then maybe it's best to keep it as a hobby and try to enjoy it instead of trying to make it a career. As you point out there is a lot of cynicism about making a living in the music industry and that's because it is actually really hard. You're constantly looking for the next job and as I've said in other posts there's never a "right" answer, so you can never fully learn how to do it and you're never done trying to get better. Much better to enjoy music and working on music as a hobby than to decide you want it to be a career and hating it!

29 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) **Do you feel the same way about guitar amp sims, sample libraries and softsynths as you do about analog vs digital mixing outboard? -mikoo69**

30 Just to clarify, for me mixing in the box is great no matter how well or badly or digitally or analoguely (is that a word?) it's recorded.

31 Now on to the real question. I think in general I would say that it's hard to really reproduce a lot of the traditional acoustic instruments with synths. Not because they won't sound right, but because it's almost impossible to get all of the expression that you can get out of the physical instrument. Strangely this even applies to pianos. I used to think that piano was piano, but the more I'm around good musicians the more I hear wildly different tones coming from the same piano with different players. If you want a sonic example of how varied a piano can be, there is a set of amazing solo piano performances by Keith Jarrett and on (I think) the Sun Bear concert there is one very long passage where he is playing a single note on the piano. The difference in tone and expression he can get out of one note I think would be impossible with a sample library, but only because of the interface you use to play the samples.

32 As far as amp sims, I think a lot of them are really pretty great. Both Failure and Deftones have made records without using real amps, so who am I to argue! The good thing about them is that they get rid of the variables of how good your room and mics are, the bad thing is that they get rid of the variables of how good your room and mics are... I think it's easier to mess with things with real amps, but that doesn't mean you can't do great work without them.

33 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) **In your years as a mixing engineer I wonder how "negative" feedback has affected your workflow? -Unkewl**

34 That's a pretty huge question really. I think, as with a lot of people who do what we do, I'm very insecure about my mixing. When I finally get a mix to the point where I'm ready to send it to the artist, there's a lot of angst involved. I generally don't like anything I do, and I'm sure nobody else will like it either. The adrenaline rush when I hit send on the email with the link to the mix is not all a good one!

35 Then come the mix notes. By definition any changes anybody wants to a mix means that you didn't do it the way they wanted it, which can easily be classified as a failure. What I've tried to do over the years (and have only lately become even slightly successful at it) is to not take things too personally. It's hard because you've gotten the mix to a point where you think it would ready to go out into the world, but the reality is that it's impossible to hear through other people's ears, and there is no "right" way to mix and there certainly is no such thing as a "perfect" mix.

36 So, soul searching aside, I think that the feedback can actually help you grow as a mixer (or musician or producer or anything really). What you're always trying to do is to figure out what the artist is going for and make it happen. Sometimes the comments are super specific about sonics (everybody has some mixing experience now) and in a way that makes things easy because you can treat it like a to-do list and just tick things off. What I prefer to do though is try and figure out what the problem they're having is and find my own way to solve it. If they ask me to turn something up I'll usually eq, distort and/or pan it. If they ask me to eq something I'll turn it up or down. That makes me really focus on listening to the changes instead of just doing things because they're on the list.

37 When you talk about a client not recognizing the perspective I bring, that really points to the heart of what's so difficult about mixing. The first thing I'd say you have to remember is that it isn't your record. Period. Your job is to help them finish their record, so you really need to help them realize their vision, not yours. The other thing is that mixing is a weird job creatively because you have to be able to apply your creativity to an almost infinitely varied pool of music and artists, so you are constantly having to change your creative vision to match the circumstances you are in. One of

the ways I try to define mixing is using technology to solve creative problems. The real trick is that the creative problems you're trying to solve aren't even yours, you have to figure out what the creative problems the artist is having and solve those as well as yours.

38 As far as it informs future mixing, I learn things on every mix! It could be how a rough mix treats something, how I made the chorus explode when there's no help from the arrangement or performance, finally finding a reverb that works on drums, anything really. I'm constantly evolving, dissatisfied and hopefully getting better.

39 And after all that I'm not even sure I answered your question...



41 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#)Do you use any tape machine simulator plug ins ? - *Bleep*

42 As with everything there is no right or wrong way to use any of this stuff, but in general I would say that I probably wouldn't use them parallel. I don't use them very often, but I do like a bit of [Phoenix](#) on vocals to thicken them up. [Satin](#) is another nice one, you can play with azimuth, head bump etc to really mess up the sound. The [Kramer](#) and [J37](#) are also cool, though I think I've probably used them more for slap echos than tape saturation.

43 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#)I imagine that the specs for your DAW rig may already be published somewhere. Could you please point me to them? - *SPatrick*

44 At the moment I am mixing on an iMac Pro. Until the iMac Pro came out I was using a succession of MacBook Pros, culminating in a 2016 15" 2.9GHz i7. I tried the 2018 models but the big problem with the laptops (and the reason I'm on an iMac) is the thermal throttling. When the computer is cold the performance is amazing, but working at 88.2 or 96kHz with processor hungry plugins it's cold for about 3 seconds and then starts to heat up very very fast. When that happens the processor is throttled down and the playback errors start. It's really frustrating as I would love to have a more portable solution. I was tempted to try the new Mac Mini, but I'm pretty sure it isn't as powerful as the iMac Pro and I would miss the processor overhead. I'm really hoping the new Mac Pro will be the ticket (and be small enough to carry easily on a plane.

45 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) I have an IMac Pro that is fairly new and use Logic. It seems that often , I'm looking at the meters on any given plugin, and what I'm seeing on there doesn't match up with what I'm hearing. I've tried switching buffer sizes, but it happens sometimes regardless of that change. I'd just like to see the meters reading at the appropriate time. It's important to be able to know that I'm not seeing something that hasn't yet happened with my audio . Do you ever experience these problems since you've gone ITB ? - *Johnscalio*

46 Welcome to the world of computers. Basically you're seeing the effects of delay compensation in the mixer. You're seeing when the sound is playing back from the track, not when it finally reached the output that you're listening to. Pro Tools is pretty good about compensating the meters so in most parts of the GUI you actually see what you're hearing (though not always). Plugin windows are definitely a place where the compensation isn't always perfect. The real trick is how the DAW handles writing automation. Pro Tools is great at putting the moves you write in time with the audio you were hearing when you wrote them, but it's actually impossible to hear the moves as you make them if you are (for instance) riding volume on a source audio track and there's a long delay in your mixer. By the time you hear the bit you want to automate it's already played back a while ago on the fader you're riding.

47 I get playback errors just like everybody else. There are a few plugins that I love that are really processor heavy, including Elevate, which is the limiter I use on every mix. Because of that I had to move from a Macbook Pro to an iMac Pro and I'm really hoping Apple's upcoming Mac Pro will be small and portable and powerful as hell!

48 Keep in mind that if you're watching a video, we've edited out all the playback errors! To be fair I don't get a ton of them, but they definitely still happen. I had one this morning while tracking a vocal. Not ideal!

49 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) How would you advise helping bass notes to retain definition within a busy mix without having to increase eq more than is desirable? - *Dontsimon*

50 Bass is a tough one. There are three different ways I can think of to tackle it:

51 1) Parallel compression. By using parallel compression you can even out the response of the notes, and when it's more consistent it should be easier to find a static level where you can actually hear what's going on. I have the bass in the rear buss shared parallel compression for exactly that reason, but there's no reason not to have a dedicated one just for bass.

52 2) Split it up. I've seen other mixers (notably Ryan Hewitt) have two faders

for the bass, the low end and the mids. That way he can compress the mids or do whatever without affecting the low end. I personally don't do this because I haven't really wrapped my head around how I would want to split them up, but it certainly works for Ryan!

53 3) Distortion/saturation. I use [SansAmp](#), or the [PSA1000](#) on almost every mix on bass. It's a great way to be able to balance the frequencies (there are basically four bands) as well as add distortion or light saturation if I want it. By definition the saturation will be on the harmonics, so in the mids, and also by definition, distortion acts as a compressor, evening out the performance. You don't need a lot of it, just a little will really help it to poke out.

54 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) **How should I know when i.e Vocal is too dark, or too bright or has some other problems without using reference? - Creedchub**

55 Things like the perfect kick drum, or how bright or dark a vocal should be aren't things that I think you can define. When you're starting out I think it's a great idea to use references just to make sure you're not doing something crazy, but you can't try to copy the reference, it just won't make any sense. What works in one mix very likely won't work in another mix. Every time I hit play I am listening to what I've got and trying to identify things I don't like yet. Usually when I come back to a mix after some time away from it (could be an hour, could be a few days, whatever) that is when it's easiest to hear if I've really messed something up in terms of how bright the vocal is or something like that. But that's only in the context of that mix, not compared to some universal standard of vocal brightness. It's easy for me to say all this because I've been mixing for so long so I hear things in a way that helps me to stay consistent and I don't usually take a mix to a place that won't work and I have to start over. I do have to work really hard to make most mixes happen though. But the hard work is to make me like it, not to make it the same as the reference.

56 I hope some of this helps...

57 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) **I was wondering if you might offer what you think are your top three tips to achieve the same soundstage in the box as you used to with outboard and Large Format - jml designs**

58 Hmmm, well first of all I think I need to re-frame the question. I really don't think there is a difference in the inherent soundstage no matter what you are mixing on. There are plenty of things I can think of from when I mixed on a console that made things more difficult for me. One of the things that

was a revelation when I moved into the box was how much easier it was to place things in the stereo field and really have them stay there. As always, whatever sounds better to you is better, but for me I don't think using analog gear gives you any advantage on the size of your mix.

59 But to address what I do to try and make mixes big and wide, the first thing is the most obvious. Panning. When I was on the console I basically used LCR panning 90% of the time because of how the panning worked on my Neve. Now that I'm in the box I pan all over the place. I really find that I can find room for things just by picking a spot in the stereo field. I also use stereo widening tools all the time. I have a stereo widener on the mix buss itself, as well as loving plugins like S1, [StageOne](#), and [Ozone](#) Imager for taking individual elements and putting them slightly outside the speakers.

60 Another key element to increasing the size of the mix is not to focus only on width, but depth as well. In other threads I've talked about using reverb and delays to push things forwards and backwards. This will make room for things as well as making the mix sound much bigger.

61 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#)**Your MWTM bio mentions “jazz trumpet” - do you still find time to play? Any other instruments? - Arthur Stone**

62 Trumpet is one of those instruments where if you don't play almost every day you can't even pretend. I used to get it out every once in a while on a project but it's been years. The way I describe myself as a musician is that Pro Tools and I play all kinds of instruments. I would never subject other humans to being in the room while I play, but I've played lots of instruments on lots of records.

63 An incomplete list would be trumpet, Flugelhorn, bass (electric and upright), guitar, sitar, surbahar, harmonium, B-3, piano, wurli, rhodes, simple string/keyboard arrangements, and lots and lots of modular synth. I sit and sit and sit and figure out the part and then record it (usually in pieces) and then 5 minutes later I couldn't tell you what I had played.

64 I sometimes think there would be nothing better than to be able to play something well enough to even just jam with friends, but alas it doesn't seem to be in my makeup. Maybe one day I'll finally get a drum kit and then I can suck at that too!

65 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#)**Apart from growing a badass beard, that is. - ChayaFFM**

66 The beard is a given. Really, for mixing, the only advice worth giving is that the only thing that matters is what comes out of the speakers. That covers all of the things I could say about not working in solo, keep perspective, focus on the music blah blah blah.

67 The only other important thing is that while working on music is an

obsession for most of us, never lose sight of the rest of your life. Way too easy to convince yourself that tweaking a mix is more important than a child's birthday...

68 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) **Do you have a set amount you either start with or stay at on the limiter? (4db, 6db? etc) or do you set it once you have a working balance and keep moving? Or do you push into the limiter set at 0 and thus are getting into the mix buss at a higher level? If you were to remove the limiter, does the Mix buss Aux immediately go into clipping? - ohgee**

69 The limiter is always set to a threshold of -.2dB so it's just there to catch the peaks. I never set it at all, it's all about how much level goes in.

70 Yup, since all it's limiting is what's over -.2 it will immediately clip if I take it out.

71 [Newfangled Audio's Elevate](#) takes care of intersample peaks.

72 Yes, I have a master fader on the stereo buss called Mix Buss which feeds all my mix processing including the limiter. I use that in conjunction with all my various VCAs to change the gain structure throughout the signal flow of the mix.

73 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) **We went to school together @ U of M during a very magical time. So many talented folks! And Ken Pohlmann was brilliant.**

74 I'm now working in film scoring and trailers. My question is (especially w trailers) how to approach choosing and carving out sounds to make room for everything in the final mix? For example, a typical hybrid orchestral trailer will have orch percussion, thuds, whacks, impacts, risers, sub booms, maybe rock drum kit, some sound design, orch brass, gtrs, pianos, strings, choirs, etc...you get the idea. And the soundstage that it gets mixed down to includes dialog and tons of Soundesign from the editors.

75 I've noticed sometimes at the end the percussion, drums, rhythms will end up sounding tiny and thin from some combination of too much layering, compressing, or limiting. The problem is many of the sounds are already so full sounding on their own. How does one go about making all these instruments blend together without crowding the sound field and how does one approach something like this to make room for them in the sound field ? Thanks!

76 Mark

77 - Themusicguy

78 Hey Mark, it was a magical time at U of M indeed!

79 There's no one answer to this, but to beat a dead horse, I find that the shared parallel compression I use is the key to having multiple elements that seem to occupy the same space all be able to be heard. The more they can interact without crushing the mix the easier it will be to hear all of the individual elements.

80 The other thing is just to try and separate things as much as you can, both in the frequencies they take up and in the spaces they live in. Using a few different reverbs can help things separate, as well as using saturation, delays, filtering etc. Also, counterintuitively, the smaller a sound is in terms of the space it takes up, the easier it is to hear. I mentioned in another post about making strings filtered and maybe even a little distorted to get them to cut through a dense rock track, and the same goes here. Not everything can be big, so it's just a matter of trying to find the elements of each sound that make it sound big and trying to not only limit that sound to those characteristics but to keep other sounds out of the way.

81 Not my most coherent thought, but I can't figure out how to say it better.

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83 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) I am still looking for a reasonable substitute for my "RCA [BA6A](#) Limiter" ITB for mobile mixing. I always used the hardware unit as a parallel compressor for tracks that required fatness and warmth.
- *Frankie01*

84 [BA6As](#) are awesome, and old, and all sound really different. I tried to buy a companion to mine for years and never found one that sounded anything like it. The reason I'm saying this is that yours probably doesn't sound like anybody else's so if you're really trying to replicate it it probably won't happen. That said, Acoustica Audio did a [BA6A](#) plugin with Greg Wells

called [ElRey](#), and it's very cool.

85 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) **Do you feel like you could mix something in the box even though it just went through an average mic and a budget Interface on the way in? What would you do differently? More saturation to "emulate" the behaviour of the driven - *Mihi DDL***

86 It's a myth that everything I work on is well recorded, that really just isn't the case. I'm very fortunate to work on some records that sound great when they come to me, but a huge percentage of records are tracked in much less than ideal circumstances by people who aren't engineers. It's just a fact of making records these days.

87 So the good news is that since I often have less than perfect tracks I can give you some thoughts on how to deal with them!

88 Reverb and room simulators are your friend. Using [TrueVerb](#), or [UAD Oceanway](#) or any room/mic simulator on drum overheads, bass and guitar tracks (especially acoustics) can get you closer to feeling like the instruments were recorded in a decent room. It takes a lot of experimentation and every song is different but they are really useful tools in the right circumstances.

89 When I use kick and snare samples it is always to reinforce the original recording. What that means is I don't need to ever hunt for the "perfect" sample that's appropriate for the song, I just have a few samples that give me different things. Attack, low end, length, whatever. They will work on 99% of the tracks I work on without making every song sound the same.

90 Again, the rear buss. For me this just makes everything sound more energetic and exciting, which makes it less obvious how compromised the recording is.

91 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) **Any advice on how to make the guitars sound wide, alive, with good depth? - *3rdstone***

92 For me the biggest key to excitement on electric guitars is the rear buss. Having them share parallel compression with the rest of the elements in the mix really makes them come to life. Also, low end on certain tracks ([Omnichannel](#) thump or something like that) can sound like cabinet thump in the room and help give some weight. It can also make them take up too much space.

93 While treating the individual tracks, here are some general thoughts:

94 1) I often add midrange around 1.4kHz, because this is where the notes live. This will make it easier to hear the actual parts and not just the distortion.

- 95 2) Sometimes cleaning up the tone will give you more life. The more distorted, by definition, the more compressed.
- 96 3) Not doubling can also give you a much more heavy sound. The instinct is that the more guitars there are the heavier it will be, but sometimes all it does is smear the performance and turn them into a slab of guitar with no definition.
- 97 4) Lastly, and I know this is obvious but you can never say it enough, don't work on the guitars in solo to make them sound 'great'. What sounds great in solo has nothing to do with what will work with the rest of the band.
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98 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) **I'm curious about your approach to de-essing vocals. Do you de-ess after compressing? - Petesie2**

99 I De-ess all the time. My basic rule of thumb is to de-ess at the very beginning of the chain where the dynamics in the vocal are the greatest. In theory this should give a de-esser the best chance of working since there will be a greater contrast between the sibilance and the rest of the vocal. In practice though I quite often end up with a second de-esser right at the end of the chain.

100 For plosives I use either audiosuite or clip fx to apply a high pass filter. Any other more static approach is too invasive sonically.

101 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) **When on [Headphones](#), what are you plugging those Sony's into? - Karloff70**

102 In my studio I use my [Apollo Twin](#) as the headphone amp. I've really gotten used to it. There are times when I switch to my HD Native card for overdubbing and then I run SPDIF optical from the [HD I/O](#) to the Apollo and still use the twin for the headphone amp.

103 When traveling I usually have the twin with me because I need UAD chips anyway, but in a real crunch I'll use whatever I can get (though the built-in headphone outputs on the Macbooks don't sound great) but I try and remember to bring my Audioquest Dragonfly).

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[\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#)I've heard that you sometimes mix on [Headphones](#). Is it better to mix on [Headphones](#) than to mix in an untreated room with average monitors? - *Rockshamrover*

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I do mix in [Headphones](#) quite a lot. It started because I was travelling a lot and needed to keep working. Then when we first moved to the UK I didn't have an ideal place to set up my speakers so I mixed a lot on [Headphones](#) and then checked everything on speakers before sending it out. The more time I've spent on [Headphones](#), the fewer changes there are when I switch to the speakers. I use [Sony MDR-7506 Headphones](#), but I think it's because I'm just used to them and they also sound like the [Tannoy SRM-10B](#) speakers I mix on. They are bright but relatively flat.

107

I wouldn't recommend mixing on [Headphones](#) for everyone, but it is a great way to take control of your acoustic environment . You're basically wearing your studio on your head and it sounds exactly the same no matter where you go!

108

I never use frequency response correction software or any crosstalk functions. I think for me I just hear the extra processing, even though it might make it more like an acoustic environment. But remember, there are no right answers to things like this, and the whole point is to have a listening environment where you can be creative and your mixes translate to whatever system somebody might listen to your mix in.

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[\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#)I wanted to ask you how you deal with overhead tracks that might have a copious amount of snare drum in the capture - but perhaps that snare drum capture is negatively impacting/working against the close mic'ed snare signal. How do you reconcile the two? - *valjean24601*

110

Wow, that's a tough one. There are lots of things to try, but it's impossible to know what might work. I think I would start by trying some sidechain

processing on the overheads. First would just be compressing keying off the snare mic. This will effectively duck the OHs whenever the snare hits so it should get out of the way of the close mic. The problem with this is that if it's a section with a lot of cymbals you'll probably hear it pumping. The next step would be keying a de-esser so that you are only taking out certain frequencies when the snare hits. You could probably suck out midrange, leaving the top alone so you don't hear it affecting the cymbals. I'm sure you've already tried these but it's the best I can come up with.

111 A last resort would be to add samples for the crashes and then blend them in so you can turn the overheads down, but that could also sound terrible.

112 This is why, unless I'm working with a phenomenal drummer in a great room I use the overhead mics as cymbal mics, not trying to capture the whole kit.

113 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#)Noticed your Wikipedia lists you as mixing Nicole Atkins' "Neptune City" which has a great sound; not sure how much of it you did but generally more curious on your philosophy for mixing strings into more dense pop/rock mixes. - *david bowies mom*

114 The key to getting anything to pop out in a dense mix is actually to make it small so it doesn't take up too much room. I talked about this in the context of background vocals but it definitely goes for strings too. The first impulse is to try and make the strings sound great, but that usually means they will take up a ton of room in a mix, and if the mix is dense a lot of that "great" sound will be covered up by other things and the strings will sound bad in context. I will very often filter and distort the strings a bit. Focusing on the midrange will help you find a spot for them. Reverbs can also help move them "back" in the mix.

115 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#)What kinds of things would you still most every time grab with a non parallel 'clamp straight over the source' comp? Any thoughts about this would be interesting. - *Karloff70*

116 I'd say that 90% of my parallel processing is done with sends. Mostly because that way I can send multiple sources to the same parallel compressor.

117 I will sometimes compress drum overheads and rooms, vocals, pianos and other things with insert compression. Since having the [Omnichannel](#) I will try compression on an insert much more often just because it's there and available in the plugin window. It certainly doesn't always stay on though.

118 Your question seems to imply that there is something sub par with plugin compressors, but I would say that the trade off comes whether using plugins or hardware. Whenever you compress something there is the

tradeoff between the natural, dynamic uncompressed version and the compressed version.

119 One time I use multis of tracks is when building special effects (infinite reverb on the tail of a word, long delays in part of a song, etc). I find it much easier to experiment and get it right when I make a copy of the audio track and put the effects right on the insert. This allows me to use audio editing to get the shape just right instead of send automation. Much more flexible and easier to experiment.

120 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) Does phase get messed up with ITB parallel "mults"? If so, how to deal with it? - Jules

121 Pro Tools delay compensation works great when you use sends and auxes. Obviously with multed tracks the DAW doesn't know what you're doing. Another reason to use sends!



123 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) Have you replaced any part of your mixing template with the [Omni Channel](#)? - Mrmot

124 My template is always changing, but at a glacial pace. There are definitely a few [Omni Channels](#) in there but I never go looking to replace things, it just changes when I get sick of something or need something new.

125 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) I am going to attend Audio Engineering school (CRAS) and I'm wondering if you have any advice. - Astrolabesoul

126 Just learn everything you can while you have the opportunity! Learn the fundamentals so you really understand what's going on. That way you know there isn't any magic or voodoo, and you can be (mostly) in control of any session.

127 Also, pay attention to any music business classes they have. I didn't when I
was in school and still regret it.

128

129 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) I wondered if you could share with us what plugins (and
settings) you typically use on your mix bus? - *Hiccup*

130 Less and less all the time, and it does change. I'm not going to bother with
settings, but at the moment my template comes up with the following on
the mix buss.

131 [Plugin Alliance Black Box](#) Analog [HG-2](#): Just a tiny bit of saturation, mix is at
50% and this is staying on less and less lately.

132 Brainworx [bx_digital V3](#): Tiny bit of stereo widening, and a bit of high shelf
boost on the sides. I will often make use of the Bass Shift, but it defaults to
off.

133 Pultec style eq (usually [Puigtec](#)) adding very broad boosts at 100Hz and
10kHz.

134 [Newfangled Audio Elevate](#) Limiter: Keeping the red lights off.

135 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) Do you use any processing on submixes (drums, bass,
synths, guitars, vocals etc.)? - *the_mixer*

136 Not usually, and almost never on entire groups of instruments except
possibly the drum kit. It all changes for each mix.

137 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) Will we ever see a Scheps 81 Plugin? Your [Scheps 73](#)
Plugin is my go to as far as ITB Neve goes, I love the Layout, On/Off
Switches for each band, I/O faders and VU meter. Since the [Scheps 73](#)
came out I've been dreaming of having a Scheps 81, and a Scheps 84
too, mostly for the LPF and the extra mid band on the [1081](#), but also
for the different Neve Preamp flavors, is there a chance that this will
ever happen? - *Amazing Machines*

138 No specific plans at the moment, but it's an interesting idea. I suppose it's a
tradeoff between how much work it takes to model something (a lot!) and
how much people want the variations (who knows?).

139 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) I was wondering what your starting reverb/delay
template plugins/algorithms are and what your philosophy is for
adding ambience on sources - are you a specialized reverb/delay guy
per source or more of a general space for everything with something

else when called for? Ditto for delays. - *superwack*

140 I am really really bad at reverb. I'm not kidding. I love the way some mixers use reverbs and sometimes I will get a session to mix where they have really honed the sounds of the instruments with individual reverbs. Unfortunately I'm just not that guy. My template has five reverbs in it, 2 for vocals (an [Altiverb](#) plate and [D-Verb](#)); one for drums (a small room that I almost never use), and two short ambient reverbs to add a little length to the snare and the toms (these get used about half the time, and sometimes only in choruses).

141 I will quite often hear a reverb sound in my head, spend a chunk of time trying to get it, and then give up.

142 Delays are a little easier for me. I use [BBD Delay](#) (free with Pro Tools subscription) in my template for vocal slap, and then I will build longer delays for individual mixes as needed using [H-Delay](#), [Fabfilter Timeless](#), [Echoboy](#), etc.

143 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) **Wondering if there are times when you feel it all seems formulaic and routine and, if so, where do you draw inspiration for a fresh direction or what mixes do you reference when you want a challenging target? - *bash***

144 I try to listen to as much music as I can, and usually not from the genres that I work in (I listen to a lot of classical, jazz and reggae). That said, when I've been mixing all day the last thing I usually want to do is listen to more music, so I don't listen as much as I'd like.
At the moment there are three English tracks from the early 70s that I think sound absolutely amazing:
Patto - "The Man"
Roy Harper - "Stormcock" (the whole album)
Pink Floyd - "Fearless"

145 I definitely don't use these as targets since I'd never get anywhere close and that would be depressing, but more as inspiration as to what things can sound and feel like.

146 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) **Your Mix With the Masters and Puremix videos are fantastic and have really elevated my mixes. I have a few questions about your mixbus, specifically your limiter. Are you still using the Fabfilter and Sonnox, or have you found something new? I'm assuming your mixes go to mastering post limiting, what is the usual RMS before mastering?**

147 Lastly, how often do your mixes bypass mastering all together and go straight to the record?

148 - Marchhare

149 Since it came out I'm using the [Newfangled Audio Elevate](#) Limiter. It's a 26 band limiter with transient reconstruction. Basically it's the most transparent limiter I've found.

150 Quite often my mixes will go through mastering as a flat transfer, possibly with a small level adjustment for context on the record. As far as RMS I have no idea but I'm sure it's way too much most of the time...

151 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) **Is there something you are looking forward to seeing in plugin format? - Chrisdmcc**

152 There are a couple of pieces of gear that I love that I wouldn't mind seeing plugins of, but I don't miss anything in particular. I really like it when there is something completely new or mind blowing like [Gullfoss](#), [Regroover](#), [iZotope RX](#) etc. Things that process audio in ways I hadn't thought of or thought possible. I'm pretty much all set for eqs and compressors and reverbs etc.

153 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) **I work with clients who have most of the time musical references (like a song or record) which the artist wants a bit to sound like. So the question is, how would you deal with these kinds of workflows? Would you study the references and interpret them? But maybe even more important: how do you take care of the "global" amount of highs / lows and so on in your mix? - pass-out**

154 References can be really difficult. The first problem is that usually the music you're mixing is different to the music that's in the reference, and also it's hard to know exactly what they want you to emulate in the reference. Is it the vocal effects, the roominess of the drums, the aggressiveness of the guitars? Usually they don't even know for sure, they just like it.

155 As far as tonal balance, I've just gotten used to how much top and bottom I like and usually end up in the same sort of place. As I mentioned in another thread though, there are times when I'll roll all of the top off of a mix because it feels better to me that way. An easy way to get in the ballpark is to have a broad eq (I use a pultec style one) on your mix buss. That keeps you from having to add the same thing to all of the individual channels and gives your mix a head start sonically.

156 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) **Curious about what goes on under the hood of your [Waves Particles](#) plugin. I use it in most mixes and love how it can turbo charge most things that I put it on. - Jagman18**

157 It's actually really complicated under the hood, which is why we built the

plugin in the first place. To recreate all of it would take about 12 auxes, each with some processing on them. The main impetus for making the plugin was to give you access to complicated processing and routing without having to figure out how to do it yourself. Each chain has a lot going on, but they also all interact (Sub and Air feed Bite and Thick).

158 Basically, Sub and Air are harmonic synthesizers/generators and Thick and Bite are parallel compressors. There's more to it than that but really that's all you need to know.

159 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) I have been Re-watching all of your online interviews and lectures lately. However, I can't seem to find the one where you explained your rear buss & glanced over the idea of recreating "Analog summing" ITB. I would Love if you could go into detail about both. - *KingShane518*

160 There are a few videos where I talk about the "rear buss", but basically it's a parallel compressor for everything in the mix except the drums. It helps glue the instruments and vocals together and make them interact. Typically it's a multi-mono [1176](#) plugin with a low ratio, slow attack and fast release. I have no idea how much it's compressing, sometimes a lot, sometimes almost nothing. The key is that the sends to it are at 0 and post fader, so basically you are making a copy of your mix (minus drums), compressing it and then blending it back in with the uncompressed tracks. It doesn't have anything to do with summing, it's just glue.

161 It's called the rear buss because I started doing it when I was still mixing on my [NEVE 8068](#) console (which is a quad console), so I had a stereo buss feeding the speakers and a second stereo buss that was meant for the rear speakers in a quad setup.

162



48k to cut the takes together (just big arrangement type edits to get the best from all the tracking, no editing of performances). The band tracked live, but a lot of stuff got replaced by the time the record was finished. As far as specifics on mics etc, I don't know but I do know it was a Tama Bell Brass snare that had a very very small sweet spot for tuning.

170 The main thing is that it all starts with a ridiculously great band playing great songs, which is absolutely what that record is.

171 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) **Hi Andrew, do you ever do rearrangements of the tracks during mixing (e.g., dropping parts of the tracks, moving bg vocals around, etc.) and if yes, how much change do you allow yourself to do? - random musician**

172 I generally try to just mix what's there. I feel like that's the job, and the artist and producer (if there is one) has signed off on the arrangement before sending it to be mixed. It is also a very different head space for me to be assessing the arrangement as opposed to mixing.

173 That said there are plenty of times when I will hear something in a different way, either by muting or adding parts. Unless I get to the point where I'm convinced my changes will make a huge impact I will tend to ignore the impulse to change things like that. If I do decide I should do it, I will always let the artist know what I've done and why I've done it.

174 Quick (probably obvious) tip. There is a huge difference between saying to the artist "your song sucked until I did blah blah" and "your song was so amazing that it inspired me and I couldn't help thinking it would be even better if it did blah blah". Exactly the same information, but conveyed in completely different ways. One of these is likely to get your idea vetoed, one isn't...

175 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) **Hi Andrew, what plugins do you use if you want to add distortion to your tracks (a little or a lot of)? How do you manage harshness that often seeps in together with the distortion? - random musician**

176 I know these answers will start to sound like an ad for [Omnichannel](#), but I spent two years getting it to sound the way I want, and we spent a LOT of time on the saturation.

177 So, with that said, I use the saturation on the [Omnichannel](#) a lot. I also love the [SansAmp](#), both the version that comes with Pro Tools and the new Nembrini Audio version. I used to use Lo-Fi a lot, but part of the reason we spent so much time on the [Omnichannel](#) saturation was to get what I liked from LO-Fi without any of the stuff I didn't like. Sometimes I'll go more the tape saturation route and then Satin, [Phoenix](#) and any of the tape machine

emulation plugins could work. I don't do it that often though and I usually just try a bunch until I start to get the sound I'm hearing in my head. When things get harsh I either back off the distortion or just eq it. No real tricks there.

178 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) **What techniques do you use for carving out space in a dense mix? Do you ever do things like sidechaining vocals to a dynamic eq (like [TDR Nova](#) or even more specialized plugins like [TrackSpacer](#)) on guitars, synths, etc.? - random musician**

179 I don't do too much side-chaining. Every once in a while I'll use an external key on the [Omnichannel](#) De-esser, which I suppose is a bit like [TrackSpacer](#). I'm not familiar with [TDR Nova](#). The main way I try to get separation is eq, distortion and reverb/delay. The main idea is to make less important things small by eq-ing/compressing/distorting (decreasing dynamic range while increasing harmonics) etc.

180 For instance, I will almost always make background vocals much smaller sounding than lead vocals, but denser. Filtering, distorting, slap delays, reverb, that sort of thing. All of those techniques push the sound further "back" in the mix, leaving room for dryer, more in your face elements. Think about how your brain processes sound to decide how far away things are and use that to your advantage to create depth, which will allow for more space in a mix. It does seem counterintuitive that the more audio information you add to an element in your mix the smaller and further away it can sound, but it really does work that way.

181 Another thing that helps me is the shared parallel compression I use. All of the elements in the mix are interacting quite a bit which helps things be heard. Again, counter-intuitive, but to my ears it makes a huge difference.

182 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) **At what point do you feel a mix is done? I know there's always one more thing that can be tweaked, but when do you feel it's okay to let go? Also how much do you leave for mastering in terms of EQ? - ClassyTouch**

183 This question has a different answer depending on if you are mixing for yourself or for other people, but the basic premise is the same. I'll talk about it in terms of mixing for other people and you'll get the idea.

184 A mix is done when you can send it to a client with an email that just says "here's the mix". If you feel you have to write anything else to explain anything about the mix, then those are things that you need to take care of before you send it. That could be things you are struggling with because of the arrangement or recording, it could be things you haven't quite gotten to work in the mix yet, whatever. Basically, you have to imagine them hitting

play and listening and that's it.

185 As far as there being one more thing that can be tweaked, I'm not really sure about that. One of the most important things for a mixer is perspective. This allows you to hear the mix the way a first time listener would, which is the only way to really know if a mix is working. The first thing about that perspective is that you won't still be obsessing on the last thing you were working on (you'll hear the song, not the snare drum), but more importantly, if possible, you won't remember what the last thing you were working on was. Once you can get to this point with a mix, you will really only respond to how the mix is working, and unless something sticks out to you as not working, you won't have anything left to tweak. It's easier said than done, but it's definitely something to strive for. For me, the way I try to do this is never work on a mix longer than I'm actually being productive. As soon as I feel burned out or like I'm not sure what I should do next I close the session and either work on another mix or take a break. That way I can't get bogged down in the details.

186 To the last part of your question, I don't purposefully leave anything for mastering. I'm not saying my mixes don't need mastering sometimes, but I'm always trying to make my mixes sound like I think they should, not like how they should unmastered. This can be dangerous, especially when you're starting out since some processing can't be undone, but it's the ultimate goal of any mixer really. What this means in practice for me is that there isn't what some people call a listening copy of the mix that gets sent to the band and producer that's different from what gets sent to mastering. Again, when you're starting out this can be a dangerous way to work, but it works for me.

187 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) **I've been really digging the new Hozier album! Fantastic job...There's a few things that stand out. One being the saturated/distorted vocal. The s's are always super under control. Is that distortion you're doing, and if so, what are you using for that? The other is the guitar sound and the reverbs. Any insight into your choices for those awesome guitar sounds/vocals would be awesome!**
- Evdoggydog

188 Thanks for the kind words! Andrew is a really special singer and guitar player, and to be honest a lot of his sound comes from him. As far as specific reverbs go, a lot of them are in the recordings but sometimes I will add to enhance what's there. He works really hard to get things the way he wants them as he goes, and that goes for his vocals as well as the guitars. Most of the reverbs he uses are dense and dark so I will usually add brighter but more subtle reverbs and delays to try and create space.

189 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) **What do you think are the most important elements of a**

good recording studio besides great acoustics? Also would you use it for recording some random weird diy gear that you see for the first time or would you rather use the well known standard stuff (like [LA2A](#) or [STA-Level](#) for vocal tracking, etc..)? - gila

190 I think that most of the things a recording studio should have are pretty obvious. As you say, it starts with the acoustics of the recording room, then goes to the microphones and preamps. I think the next most important thing would be the audio interface (assuming you're recording to a computer). It's great to treat all your recordings in the analog domain on the way in, but I think money is better spent on decent converters than compromising on the audio interface to buy compressors or other gear.

191 One thing that I would put very high up the list is a decent headphone system. Too often I'm recording at a studio with good gear in a good room, but the band can't really hear what's going on because of a cheap headphone system that sounds terrible. This will kill creativity and basically make the session a lot less enjoyable for the musicians.

192 As far as experimentation goes, I'm actually pretty traditional and safe for the most part. I love to get recommendations from people who work at the studio for things I might not have tried, but left to my own devices I would be very happy to record using mics, preamps and compressors that I've used before. It acts as a safety blanket, but for me it also gives me a known benchmark so I know immediately if something isn't working properly or might not be the best choice in a particular situation. If I don't know what something is supposed to sound like then it's hard to know if it's broken.

193 **[\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#)Curious if you consciously have different approaches for louder/denser mixes (Green Day, Jay-Z, etc.) and less aggressive/more organic styles (Adele, Lana Del Rey), or if you just dig in like any other mix and use your instincts as you go? - david bowies mom**

194 I definitely don't have anything specific I do for a mix depending on the genre. Every once in a while there is something that I feel needs to get special respect in terms of it's genre (like the Ziggy Marley song "Fly Rasta") but 99% of the time I'm just trying to make it be what I hear in my head.

195 There are some consistencies to what I hear in my head though. I'm almost always trying to make the drums (or what's acting like drums) sound like they're coming out of a PA (impact wise). The vocal needs to rule, even if it's buried. I want to be able to hear what's going on and be excited by transitions between sections, dynamics in a performance etc.

196 An example would be that I was mixing Green Day and Tinariwen at pretty much the same time, and I remember thinking that the approach to the way I wanted the rhythm to feel on both records was pretty much the same, even though they are obviously completely different sounding. The

low end of the kick drum or djembe or whatever needed to thump me in the chest and be exciting.

197 But this is all just trying to put words to things that are vague concepts I react to in real time.

198 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) There is quite a bit of discussion here and elsewhere on the subject of prioritizing monitor quality or [Acoustic Treatment](#). I wonder if you could wade in with some advice for new and aspiring engineers without the resources to attack both aspects adequately, but looking to improve their monitoring situation. - *Murky Waters*

199 It's a bit of a chicken and egg situation. The best speakers in the world won't sound good in a bad environment, and vice versa. The good thing is that for mixing, acoustics aren't as tricky as they are for recording. As far as I'm concerned I just want it to be like a dead living room in a house so I can hear the speakers. I'm not really looking for the acoustics to add to the listening experience, but rather to get out of the way. I suppose one thing to think about is that you can tweak, and chip away at acoustic problems but every speaker purchase is a one time deal. Not really an answer, but I'm not sure there is one.

200 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) Hi Andrew, what's your primary audio interface right now, on the go and in the studio, and how did you print your mixes, are you using PT's bounce to disk (offline/realtime) or just record your mixes back into Pro Tools? - *Rizki*

201 I go back and forth between an [Avid HD-IO](#) (on an HD Native card) and an [Apollo X8P](#) to drive the speakers (just depending on where I am and what's convenient) and I almost always drive my [Headphones](#) with a UAD Twin.

202 I usually record the first revision of a mix in real time to a track, just to make sure I get the very end of the effects tails on a mix etc. From then on I bounce offline. Sometimes I offline bounce the first mix too...

203 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) I would love to know what it was like to work with John Frusciante? My feelings about him are that he almost transcends music, as if you can feel a little piece of his soul in every note. Did you get the sense that he was a special talent when working with him (not to mention Flea and Chad. Such an amazing trio). - *Neofolk*

204 I won't say too much as I don't really like talking about specific people, but John is a ridiculously talented guy with as much drive and creativity as I've seen in anyone. I learned a ton just being in the room with him.

205 And I would make that trio a quartet! It's hard to imagine a better front

man than AK!

206 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) **Andrew, what are your favorite or go-to plugins for vocal processing? - *Sedf3fa***

207 Hmm, it's hard to say really, but in general I would say if I'm going to directly compress a vocal it would be with an [1176](#) style compressor and Neve style EQ is usually my favourite, but at this point I would use the [Omnichannel](#) just because I tweaked the bands to be the best of all worlds. I don't have anything I would do differently for male or female vocals.

208 The biggest thing about vocals is that they vary as much or more than any other instrument you'll ever deal with, so it's good to have general tools you're familiar with and will most likely work on any vocal, rather than trying to be too specific.

209 Also, a big part of my template is parallel compression and there is some for the vocals, including an all-buttons-in [1176](#) and a chain with a couple of pultecs sandwiching an [LA2A](#). These not only thicken and smooth dynamics, but they also can really change the character of a vocal. I also have some effects (micro-pitch slap and slap delay) that are more for thickening than discrete effects.

210 You really need to play around and find things that work for you.

211 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) **I live in a town where most of the studios know each other very well. We at some point have shared a space together, or worked on projects together. I think (or at least in my mind) there is a rule. I don't go after their clients and they extend me the same courtesy.**

212 Recently, I had a band come in that has been working with a good friend of mine for many years on mixes. They asked if I would be interested in working with them on a new project. I'm very intrigued because the music is something I connect with personally. I could serve the music in a good way, but do I talk to my friend first? Gain a band, lose a friend? Even if he is cool with it, is he really cool with it? Chalk it up as business? Either way... there seems to be an elephant in the room that needs to be addressed.

213 I know you deal with this sort of thing in the industry. What is your take on handling my situation?

214 - *Scorpiowoman*

215 Well, I hate to give advice in a situation I don't really know everything about, but my basic take is that as long as everybody knows what's going on then it should be ok. The first thing is that the band is obviously questioning your friends' mixes and is probably going to try someone else whether it's

you or a third party. If they are upfront with your friend then you can at least talk to them about it. If you think your friendship can't take the strain of the situation then you could always decline.

216 The reality of these things though is that this happens all the time to absolutely everybody who has ever worked on records. This includes the Beatles cheating on George Martin with Phil Spector!

217 I can't think of a single band I've worked with where I've done every album since I started working with them, it's just not realistic in most situations. Bands evolve, a mixer's tastes change etc. It could be that you will try a couple of mixes and they will miss what your friend does and go back. As long as everybody acts like grownups and doesn't burn bridges then it seems like an ok thing to try.

218 The only thing I know for sure is that there is indeed an elephant in the room and it should definitely be addressed! But then again I don't know anything!!!!

219 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) **What are your thoughts on headroom within the DAW in general during a mix? - ELI-173**

220 Well, this one is bound to be a bit controversial, but I don't think about it at all in terms of any sort of specific starting level/headroom. That's a very simplistic answer, but basically, mixing 100% inside Pro Tools I'm working in a floating point mixer and I can adjust level anywhere in the signal path, from the source tracks all the way through to the final input to my stereo buss chain, and I don't have to worry about headroom/clipping etc.

221 Now in practice, I do a lot of adjustments at different points in the chain to get the sound I'm looking for out of dynamics processors, saturation and any other level dependent processing, but I'm never looking to be at a "correct" level, just the one that sounds right to my ears.

222 While mixing I use clip gain (a lot) to change level right at the source (for processing, but also for mix moves); channel faders and VCAs to control individual and groups of tracks; Aux tracks to control and process grouped audio on the way to the mix buss (sometimes, not on everything); and master faders to reach inside the Pro Tools mixer and adjust the level of the internal busses on their way in and/or out of processing. I know this isn't a specific way to think about gain and headroom, but it's really the way I work.

223 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) **I am curious if you use or have chosen to use any low-end or even free stuff (in the case of software, e.g. plugins). That you'd admit to anyway - bill5**

224 That's an interesting question. I don't think about price when deciding what to use, there's no way to say that just because something is more expensive it's "better". That said, I'll randomly add to this thread as I think of some of the less expensive stuff I use.

225 For now, here's a random list:

226 [Sony MDR-7506 Headphones](#) - I use them all the time and love them! As [Headphones](#) go they're really cheap

227 Lo-Fi - I don't use this as much since developing the [Omnichannel](#) saturation, but I used to use it all the time. Free with Pro Tools

228 [SansAmp](#) - another free one with Pro Tools that's amazing. Nembrini audio has a great [SansAmp](#) plugin ([PSA1000](#)) that's only \$29 for the rest of the month

229 [D-Verb](#) - another free one with Pro Tools

230 More as I think of it...

231 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) **Do tracks you've mixed consistently have a certain frequency band added back in mastering? How do you deal with this? - Dom & Roland**

232 I think my mixes are probably the opposite, pretty bright. I love highs and lows. There have been a few mixes lately where I've controlled the top end more than I usually do. In one case I even low-pass filtered the mix buss at 12kHz because anything above that just distracted me and made it sound messy. But on the whole I like bright things (like a Magpie).

233 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) **Could you please...**

a) give us a quick rundown of the current mix template that you're using as a starting point?

b) describe your thought process and strategy behind the choices you've made when setting up the template? - Copilco

234 My template is pretty standard I think. Basically it has all of my parallel stuff (compression as well as some basic effects), VCAs, my stereo processing and print track. The idea is that I import it into the session I'm sent to mix. Other than a couple of auxes for drums and vocals, none of the processing is used across the audio tracks directly, it's all accessed by sends that I add to the audio tracks after I've imported my template into the song I'm mixing.

235 In case that doesn't make sense, my mix prep process is to take the original session I'm sent, get the tracks in the order that I like and coloured the way I like and then I import all of the tracks from my template. This not only

imports all of the parallel processing but also named sends to access them. Then I just have to assign outputs and add some sends and I can start mixing. Processing that goes on the inserts of the audio tracks themselves is always different and I do it from scratch on every mix. That said, I have started to take advantage of Pro Tools' track presets more and more and save and recall cool chains that way.

236 As far as how the template came into being and how it evolves, it started life trying to emulate the parts of mixing on the console and outboard gear that I thought I would want to recreate and has just grown from there. As with anything, if I use the same processing for a while I'll start to get tired of it. When that happens I open the template and make changes. Sometimes I create something for a particular mix or album and think it might be useful on something else so I add it to the template. The template usually gets updated around once a month.

237 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) Have you used any kind of control surface since you moved to solely ITB mixing? If so, can you share a bit about what you use and why? - *Retrovertigo*

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239 When I first moved into the box I used a Frontier Designs [alphatrack](#). It's a one fader USB controller. The great thing about it is that it is buss powered so you don't need an extra power supply. I still own two of them and sometimes bring one with me when I travel.

240 A few years ago I got a [Pro Tools Dock](#) which is awesome, especially with an iPad running Pro Tools control. And a couple of years ago when I was mixing a live Motorpsycho album as well as a live Iggy Pop DVD I wanted to have more faders to be able to mix large chunks of the show like I was mixing the PA, so I got an S3, which has been great on the projects that I want multiple

faders on.

241 All that said, for a good percentage of my mixes I never turn the control surfaces on, I just get on with it with clip gain or quick rides with the trackball.

242 [\[hide\]](#) - [\[top\]](#) I was curious if you have completely adapted to mixing 100% in the box...or if you do still use some outboard gear during mixing? Having seen the [Waves Scheps Omni Channel](#) Plug-in it makes me wonder if that's your go-to for every channel! I appreciate any insight you can provide. - *Unheard Vision*

243 Hey there, thanks for the question! (Note to self: don't write this at the top of every answer).
I've been mixing 100% in the box for years now. The last record I mixed that used any outboard gear was Ziggy Marley "Fly Rasta" which still had a few pieces on about half the songs; and the first Hozier record was the first fully in the box record I did. Since then, nothing but computers and plugins!

244 As far as my go-to plugin, you're right about [Omnichannel](#). We spent a long time developing it and really got it to where I love how it works and how it sounds. My template has all kinds of stuff in it (as I'm sure we'll talk about) but I'd say 90% of the time or more, when I need an insert on an audio track I use [Omnichannel](#).

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..Vorhandensein digitaler Fe

..spezifische Klangresultate