**Signal to Noise Episode 233**

**Live Holiday Special**

*Note: This is an automatically generated transcript, so there might be mistakes--if you have any notes or feedback on it, please send them to us at signal2noise@prosoundweb.com so we can improve the transcripts for those who use them!*

**Andy Leviss:** You’re listening to Signal to Noise, part of the ProSoundWeb podcast network, proudly brought to you this week by the following sponsors:

Allen & Heath, introducing their new CQ series, a trio of compact digital mixers for musicians, bands, audio engineers, home producers, small venues, and installers that puts ease of use and speed of setup at the heart of the user experience.

Rational Acoustics, makers of Smaart, the industry leading acoustical test and measurement software. Rational Acoustics, rational people, smart products.

RCF, who has just unveiled their new TT+ Audio brand, including the high performance GTX series line arrays and the GTS29 subwoofer. Be sure to check it out at rcf-usa.com. That's rcf-usa.com.

**Andy Leviss:** Howdy everybody! Give me one second to hang in there while I get us going live to Facebook, too, and then we'll properly start this thing. So, uh, thi this is a live episode of Signal to Noise slash Live Sound Bootcamp, uh, pro Sound Web Podcast Network holiday special, brought to you by our live, uh, that by our, see, there's a, there's a blooper already and you guys get to watch it live.

**Ryan O John:** And we're not editing this. This is in.

**Andy Leviss:** Nope. This is in, this is in , um, brought, brought to you by our Signal to Noise sponsors, uh, rational Acoustics, RCF, and Allen & Heath.

**Music:** *“Break Free” by Mike Green*

**Andy Leviss:** I probably should have warned everybody I was doing that...

**Ryan O John:** Yeah, well, if there was a jingle, it would have gone right there.

**Andy Leviss:** That's louder than it ought to have been. Note to self.... Hey everybody, welcome. Uh, so we've got a big black window where Sean should be. Uh, I'm your, uh, co-host, Andy Leviss. Uh, with us today from Live Sound Bootcamp, we've got Ryan O "not O'John" John, Joe Santarpia, and Brendan. Is it "Drayper" or "Dreeper"?

**Brendan Dreaper:** It's "Drayper".

**Andy Leviss:** Dreaper from Live Sound Bootcamp, and we may or may not have one or both of the team from Church Sound joining us.

There's a little bit of a schedule confusion going on right now, so yeah, we'll see if they join in. But we've got the bonus Joe that we didn't think we were going to have today, so we're kind of ready to rock. So how's everybody doing?

**Ryan O John:** Excellent.

**Joe Santarpia:** Great. Yeah.

**Ryan O John:** You know, the problem with having this many people on the thing is that everyone's like, oh, I'm going to politely wait for someone else to answer, and then we all answer at the same time.

**Andy Leviss:** Yeah, and also we got to figure out how to get the duplicate Sean out of here.

**Ryan O John:** no, no, no, we can leave, we can leave Clone Sean in there. And for anyone who can't see this, there is two Sean's and we are

**Andy Leviss:** I know you'll have to tell us in the chat if you can

**Sean Walker:** Double your pleasure, double your fun, fellas. That's what I'm talking

**Andy Leviss:** But, um, yeah, so, yeah, so Sean and I were kind of trying to figure out what to do for, you know, a fun episode of the podcast. And we were, and Sean was like, "We're a podcast network, right? We should like kind of, you know, use that network and like introduce people who don't know the other shows to the other shows."

So I ran with that and growing up on holiday specials, I figured, well, it's the holidays, that's as good an excuse for a dumb work party as any. So why don't we do a dumb work party and invite everybody alive. So here we are. Uh, so I guess we'll get things started. Well, since we haven't played this game on Signal to Noise in a while.

And we've actually got cameras going today, so we can do it today. I'm going to do a round of, what's the coolest thing in arm's reach? And I'm going to put folks on the spot to do it, so we're not all sitting here trying to figure out who to talk, so...Ryan, you're up.

**Ryan O John:** Damn it. You even warned me that this was going to happen and I still, and I still didn't do this. Okay.

**Andy Leviss:** Of course Ryan's going to win, Árni! [laughs]

**Ryan O John:** the, the, no, the, the problem here is that there's coolest and there's functional, right? There's a lot of really, really functional things in this room that are right within arm's reach. And then there's cool stuff.

**Andy Leviss:** I'll give you one of each, because it's one less question I have to think to ask when we run out of other stuff to talk

**Ryan O John:** for functional, I'm going to go with shielding tape. And this is literally just tape that is, you know, made of, uh, uh, material that is for audio shielding. I use this all the time. For functional, but for, for no good reason, not many people have, a calibrator. I don't get why front of house engineers don't have calibrators.

I go to so many shows and SEs don't even have them.

**Andy Leviss:** Because you can't get them anywhere right now...they're frickin' made of unobtainium!

**Ryan O John:** Yeah, fair enough. Fair enough. But, I don't know,

I've, I've had this thing for, I've had this thing for years and like, I go to so many shows and. The ses don't have these, so I'm like asking questions like, oh, well, yeah. Is is the meter actually metering correctly?

'cause it seems like it's off sometimes. Like I'll go out to a gig and, and they'll be metering it at 96, and I'm like, we're definitely at a hundred, dude. Usually it's the other way around. Usually they're metering hot, but every once in a while it's the other around. So now I bring this everywhere, um, calibrator

**Sean Walker:** So that when you're ripping, you can be like, no, no, I'm not that hot. Recalibrate. See, now we're all good. Tricks, tricks of the pros, dude.

**Ryan O John:** Yep. Who's next? Joe? Joe, what do you

**Andy Leviss:** Joe's next up.

**Joe Santarpia:** Alright, uh, I got this little DX Reface keyboard

**Ryan O John:** Oh, hell yeah

**Joe Santarpia:** Uh, yeah, it's a fun one, I don't know. Little, portable, battery powered, you know. Uh, take it on the plane, be one of those guys.

**Ryan O John:** Have you, have you actually taken that on the plane?

**Joe Santarpia:** I mean, yeah, but like, not, I'm not the guy, like, at the, on the tray table, like, making beats, but.

**Ryan O John:** Why not?

**Andy Leviss:** now I'm just disappointed

**Ryan O John:** Yeah, don't even put, don't even put headphones on, just turn the speaker

**Sean Walker:** ka

**Joe Santarpia:** speakers, that's the other cool thing, and they like, they sound okay. It's, it's stereo, and like, they're, they're pretty good. I don't know. It's a fun little, fun little piece.

**Ryan O John:** I'm into

**Andy Leviss:** well, well why don't we wrap up the, the Live Sound Bootcamp folks. Brendan, you're up.

**Brendan Dreaper:** Uh, I guess

**Joe Santarpia:** Yeah, what do you got in that cave?

**Brendan Dreaper:** not that cool, but I got one of these little cable testers right here. I've been using it a lot lately and, uh, yeah, it's great.

**Andy Leviss:** That's, that's the one that always like, tears my soul a little bit. 'cause that's the only version of that you can buy anymore. But I've had the, the Blue Ebtech one that they stole that from since back in the day. And that was the Behring..., that was the one that like, they made it so cheap that like Ebtech was like, "We can't even afford to make it anymore, we're just gonna stop."

**Sean Walker:** dude, I got the Amazon special that does like 9, 000

**Andy Leviss:** But it

**Brendan Dreaper:** one of those someone,

**Andy Leviss:** of gear.

**Brendan Dreaper:** this is one of those someone lent it to me and then they never asked for it back and I don't know who they were or where they went. So now it's mine. Ha

**Ryan O John:** or where they went. It sounds so final.

**Andy Leviss:** wow. That just got dark.

**Ryan O John:** Yeah.

**Sean Walker:** Sean number two,

**Ryan O John:** right, Sean number two.

**Sean Walker:** thing I got with an

**Ryan O John:** Sean number

**Sean Walker:** a present I got from Andy, King Ding Dong Funko Pop Culture Box. apparently I'm the King Ding Dong and I didn't even realize

**Andy Leviss:** Right on. Yep.

**Sean Walker:** You know those things you don't realize the shit you say until

**Andy Leviss:** Dude, you're the one who kept calling yourself a

**Sean Walker:** didn't really, as I said, ding dong so much until Andy was like, bro,

**Brendan Dreaper:** ha

**Sean Walker:** a, here's a birthday present for you.

And I was like, what the fuck is that? He was like, well, I don't know if you know this, but you pretty much say ding dong every other fucking sentence. It's either fuck or ding dong. Those are the only two things you know how to say. I was like, oh shit.

**Ryan O John:** It sounds like someone in the chat got a sound bullet for Christmas and I am jealous. That's it. Period. There's nothing more to it. Just jealous. So Andy, what do you got?

**Andy Leviss:** I got, I'm actually gonna do two, because one of them is in the price point that it qualifies possibly as a Dammit Andy, and one of

**Sean Walker:** all qualify as dammit

**Andy Leviss:** So, the one that potentially qualifies as a Dammit I mean, they're both going to be damn inandies, but one's like a

**Sean Walker:** Well, I got Amazon ready. Would hit me.

**Andy Leviss:** one. So, yeah, so the first one is a Lewitt NTP50, which is an XLR to Shure wireless capsule adapter that is not comically long, because Shure makes one for news reporters that is like ridiculous.

It literally looks like a wireless transmitter with an XLR coming out of the bottom of it. Functional, ugly as sin. I could not hand that to somebody to stand downstage center on it. This on the other end, it's a little chonky because it's like the diameter of, of a Shure capsule at the top, but it's real handy for that, ah, we can't fit one wireless, but we got the capsule we want only in wireless or just as a backup.

And I bought it to see, oh yeah, go

**Ryan O John:** for that, for that, you take a wireless capsule, screw it onto that, and then you get an XLR output from it.

**Sean Walker:** How much, how much?

**Brendan Dreaper:** That is

**Ryan O John:** I didn't know they made those.

**Andy Leviss:** uh, it's about 150, so it's a mild DamnitAndy. So for, for if there's any folks who are coming to us from the Livestream Bootcamp side and don't, haven't listened to Signal to Noise lately, in the Discord particularly, it's uh, yep, it's, it, DamnitAndy is the

**Ryan O John:** with these capsules that are sitting on my floor.

**Andy Leviss:** Yeah, I tend to be

**Sean Walker:** be? Between you and Ryan, I'm gonna be fucking broke by the end of the

**Andy Leviss:** I did, right, uh, we, we, we got three days to make it happen, Ryan.

**Joe Santarpia:** a great stocking stuffer.

**Andy Leviss:** but yeah, no, this was a cool, I, it was one of those, I, I thought it would be a useful thing and I wanted it for testing some stuff and then I saw the Shure one and then saw a photo of it to scale with a hand and was like, I, no. And I posted to the Signature Noise Discord, why doesn't somebody make one of these normal size?

And somebody else was like, I think that's what the Lewitt is. And they don't, they don't tell you it works with Shure. They tell you it works with ours and many other brands of capsules. And their capsules work with Shure. So you have to do the math because I think they'd get in trouble. But some of the Shure folks know about it.

And some of the Shure folks at trade show floors like AS, like to when you tell them about it, be like, Oh, show that to so and so. He's, he's gonna like facepalm over that. And that's the guy that's like, yeah, no, I know. I know we need to make one too, but they make one and it works.

**Ryan O John:** So can you phantom power capsules through that too?

**Andy Leviss:** Uh,

**Ryan O John:** Almost all the

**Andy Leviss:** it, I mean, it, yeah, it does, it requires, yeah, it requires phantom and it's providing the same phantom, the, the, yeah, it works with dynamic and condenser capsules. It literally emulates the wireless transmitter.

**Ryan O John:** Alright, I guess, I guess now I have shit to buy. Okay.

**Andy Leviss:** I feel like, I feel like getting you to buy something is a, is a life accomplishment here. Uh, yeah, but it's the Lewitt MTP 50.

**Sean Walker:** accomplishment? Look behind him. Nobody had to try that hard to get him to buy shit, dude. He was just like, you know what, dawg? Gimme!

**Andy Leviss:** that's what I'm saying. The fact that there's something left that he does, there's the fact that there's something left that I could

**Sean Walker:** same gas problem the rest of us do.

**Ryan O John:** All you have to do, all you have to do is go, go, This piece of audio thing seems interesting. And then I will own it. That's it.

**Andy Leviss:** fair.

**Ryan O John:** I might only own it for a week. I'll buy it, be like, Meh, not for me, and then resell it. But still, I want to try everything.

**Andy Leviss:** yeah, so the cheap one I'm going to throw out, which is like a 10 or 15 ish dollar one, in fact, I can tell you exactly how much because I had the tab open so I can link it in the chat. Yeah, it's like 10. 99 is, I went to, for my system tuning rig, I went to the Mipro wireless transmitters recently, which charge off USB C.

And there's four of them, and wrangling charging for four of those has been such a hassle. And then I was like, and this was another, why doesn't somebody make that? Let me search Amazon and see if somebody makes that. And it's a cable that's got a USB A on one end, and fans out to four USB C charging ports on the other end, and a cable.

And it's 10. 99, and it was on Amazon, and I have like one in every box and bag now, they come in a couple different lengths, and if you've got like any multiple to like, sound bullets, you know, charge off USB C, phones, all the things, it's really handy to have around, and I link to it in the chat now.

**Ryan O John:** Yeah, that's pretty awesome. I could use that in my life, honestly.

**Andy Leviss:** Yeah, um, Arnie asked if there's a price limit for Dam Andy. I'm like, well, low limit, I don't, I think there's a low limit somewhere, but I don't know where. Sean's like, nope, it's all Dam Andy. Uh, and then, oh, and then David's blaming me for getting a Nanuk 935,

**Sean Walker:** between you and Ryan, I had to get a new warehouse,

**Andy Leviss:** oh yeah, there's some talk

**Sean Walker:** it's at right now. was like, oh, it's time for a warehouse upgrade because

**Andy Leviss:** Hey, that gave us a solid episode a few weeks ago, so, it paid off for

**Sean Walker:** more gear.

**Ryan O John:** Alright, so, I'm gonna ask you the important question, right? This year is about to be over, right? What was the gig you did this year that made you the most proud of, you know, of your position or whatever it is? And I'm going to start with you, Andy.

**Andy Leviss:** Ooh, um, like, I mean. I'm trying to think how to break down a gig because since July I, I started what I thought was going to be like two months as sort of the de facto house A1 at the new Perlman Arts Center down by World Trade Center in New York. And it's been going straight till, you know, at least three days ago and we'll see what the new year brings.

So I can sort of count that as one but sort of not because we're doing all sorts of different shows. And there were, there were two things that stood out there in particular performances. One was Arturo Farrell and the Afro Cuban Jazz Orchestra. With, uh, I'm forgetting David's last name, Israeli guitarist, who's frickin awesome, Mahani Teve on piano, and Common, rapping, with all of those musicians in like the 50 piece Afro Cuban Jazz Orchestra, playing the samples for Bee, live.

And that was the moment of like, I'm just like, what, my life is wild right now, like this is not a place I thought I'd be three hours ago. Um, that was pretty cool. And then the same venue, we just did, uh, a series of four Christmas shows. And the very last one was Andy Karl and Art Faye, which if you're a Broadway person, you may know them.

Or if you watch Law Order SVU, Andy Karl was on there for a season or two. But for the finale, they brought Mother Christmas Herself, Darlene Love Up. to do Christmas Baby, Please Come Home with them and their band. And that was the last thing I mixed for 2023. And I'm totally cool not doing anything else for the next few days and ending the year on that.

**Brendan Dreaper:** you, can

**Ryan O John:** of listening to it as well?

**Andy Leviss:** Yeah, it was, it was some of that. Um, and like, particularly like, particularly the, the Arturo Fowl and Common one, like that show, it was the opening series of shows in a brand new venue. Like it was particularly cool, like being Being asked to like mix in this brand new like fairly high profile venue and series and it's one of those like coming into it Like, large jazz bands like that are not the core of what I've typically done, and, uh, Arturo came to me after, at the break in between rehearsal and shows, and I was like, hey, we didn't get a chance to meet because I was up in the mez, but I'm, you know, I'm Andy on the front of House Mixer, you know, we talked over Talkback Mike, just wanted to check in, and he's like, you know, my tour manager is out on the house, and normally he's like, back there as a console giving like, tons of notes, and I'm getting worried like, oh shit, am I about to get a ton of notes here, like, what's the deal, and he's like, I'm like, cause I didn't, I didn't see him at all.

Was I missing notes? I should have been taking, he's like, nah, he didn't have to go up there at once. You were nailing it. It sounded awesome. Keep doing what you're doing.

**Ryan O John:** Be glad it was that versus it's so bad that he can't even give you

**Andy Leviss:** yeah, like I'm not even going to try. Although to, to, to their credit, that was, that day was a big lesson. And particularly with a band like that, just staying out of the way, letting them do their thing and not working too hard.

Cause like those cats know what they're doing. And as long as you keep your eye open and make sure the soul is there and with a jazz band, you barely even have to do that. Cause those, those fuckers know how to work a mic.

**Ryan O John:** Right, right. That's awesome.

**Andy Leviss:** yeah, that was, that was pretty wild.

**Brendan Dreaper:** you,

**Ryan O John:** That's awesome. Brendan, how about you?

**Brendan Dreaper:** oh, of the whole

**Ryan O John:** gig of the whole year? Yeah, what's your gig of the whole year that you are like the most proud of?

**Brendan Dreaper:** this tour with this artist Tanuki chan, um, she was opening for, um, Melody Martinez, who's this singer who was on, um, on The Voice. And, uh, we got to do like, like, uh, half stadium shows and giant amphitheaters and stuff like that from like, two to eight thousand people.

Uh, the one that stands out is in, um, Seattle, like on the side of the Seahawks Stadium, that venue there. I forget what it's called, but Yes, WAMU Amphitheater. And I was like, just so happy with my mix at that venue. And it's like a very quiet singer type of situation. So we went through a ton of stuff like building up to that and just like being there, being happy with the mix and seeing the response from like the people in the crowd, you know, they did the whole like lights in the air kind of thing.

And it was just a beautiful experience.

**Sean Walker:** Dude, killer.

**Ryan O John:** That's awesome, man. Like, I can even see it in your face when you describe it. That's awesome, man.

**Brendan Dreaper:** Uh, there's

**Ryan O John:** you guys gonna do any

**Brendan Dreaper:** right now. She's done touring for the album. But there's a one off that I might do. in Washington in February and then there is a one off in LA at um, I forget where it's at, but in March I think. I will let you, I'll

**Sean Walker:** Washington. I'll come check you

**Ryan O John:** me know. I'll come. I'll come and stand over your shoulder. I'll come and stand over

**Brendan Dreaper:** crazy because we did those shows and then we did like her headlining like tour, tour at the end of the year for secondary markets and we were playing like to 50 to 100 people.

So that was, that was a fun,

**Ryan O John:** Oh my god, vastly different, right?

**Brendan Dreaper:** But uh, yeah, it,

**Joe Santarpia:** Hey, hey, how is mixing them? Is it, is it tough? Is it a quiet vocal?

**Brendan Dreaper:** a really quiet vocal, so. Um, uh,

**Joe Santarpia:** mic you, what mic you ripping on that?

**Brendan Dreaper:** we're doing the,

**Ryan O John:** Oh, you want to get

**Brendan Dreaper:** using the M 80,

**Joe Santarpia:** I, you know, just while we're here.

**Brendan Dreaper:** and it, it did it for me in those venues. Um, I tried to get her to go to the M 81, but she had tried the M 80, and she was just comfortable with it, so we just rolled with that, but uh.

Yeah, wired.

**Ryan O John:** And is that

**Brendan Dreaper:** because we didn't we didn't want to like hassle with wireless stuff But we did build a whole like in ear rig. I think we talked about on the podcast, but we were able to use Melanie's like DiGiCo, Quantum and their monitor desk as well. So we kind of developed a whole rig for that to like not have a monitor engineer because we couldn't afford it.

And then we refined that monitor rig for the next tour, which was like, you know, M32, split, analog split and like all that stuff. So that was also uh,

**Ryan O John:** You know, since, since, since you've obviously jumped between both of those, do you find that there's a huge audible difference between what you guys have built on the M32 between, you know, when you're using this

**Brendan Dreaper:** I mean, honestly, I didn't like have a lot of time to like listen to the mixes, like they're in your mixes. Like, I just made sure they were good, and, but I didn't spend a lot, yeah, they were happy with

**Ryan O John:** And they were happy with either,

**Brendan Dreaper:** I didn't have to, like, troubleshoot it too much. But their, their, their main thing was being able to control their mixes, um, so they were more happy with that, with the M32 situation, because they could all do it from their phones, and on the Quantum, you could only do it from one iPad, so I had to, like, hand that to the drummer, and then he had to, you know, do it for everybody else.

**Sean Walker:** It's amazing how much convenience matters, huh?

**Brendan Dreaper:** Yeah, yeah, totally.

**Joe Santarpia:** Yeah.

**Ryan O John:** I mean, you know, to that same point, basically any desk I had in my house was my favorite desk, period.

**Brendan Dreaper:** Mm

**Ryan O John:** know, because you spend all the time to learn it, get it in, and like get all the ins and outs, and it's like, it's awesome. All right, Sean, same question for you. Um, the gig of 2023 that you are most proud of?

**Brendan Dreaper:** Hell yeah. Hell yeah.

**Sean Walker:** Yeah, dude. My kids are six and nine and they put on a Christmas play. My wife owns a learning center here and they just did this little, like 40 minute long play. It was so fun, dude. It was so awesome. Just something they made up. They just made up like a Christmas, like a Christmas play. My wife wrote the play and they went and did it. And I called Andy. I was like, yo dude, how do I play? And he was like, I don't know. Yeah,

**Andy Leviss:** not tell me the steak, you did not tell me there was a marriage at stake here.

**Sean Walker:** right. No, no, no marriage at stake, but it was all good. And, uh, that was the best one. The second best one that was actually like a bigger show, whatever that anybody else besides me would care about is we got 4th of July here in Seattle at Gasworks Park, which is like 50, 000 people in a 26 acre park.

That's like right on the water. And so the view is killer and they shoot fireworks off from the barge in the middle of the lake. And so we did, we did the audio for all of that. And that was pretty sweet this year. It was a lot of fun and a fun challenge. Uh, we had

**Joe Santarpia:** out there?

**Sean Walker:** uh, some would say, PA salad. We had a just pile of L Acoustics Kera and RCF HDL 26 and everything else in between to make it all happen.

50, 000 people is a lot of people to cover with sound.

**Brendan Dreaper:** And the music

**Sean Walker:** rented everything that was in town, including everything in our warehouse, and went and hung it all over the place, and it was zoo, and it was awesome. And the client was stoked, so ultimately it wins.

**Andy Leviss:** So is that a green based salad or a mayo based

**Sean Walker:** It was a sweat based salad. It was hot, bro. July in Seattle is hot.

**Ryan O John:** Joe, what were you about to

**Brendan Dreaper:** Oh, I was going to ask, is the music happening when the fireworks are going off and are they like close together? So that

**Sean Walker:** Totally. It's all timed together. Yeah, so it was like, background music all day, and then there's a band playing on a, like a small mobile stage in the beer garden, and then there's Uh, you know, like a timed fireworks show for what seems like 11 seconds after being there for days of loading and stuff, you know what I mean?

And, uh, just like, you know, music, fireworks, music, fireworks, music, fireworks, done. Into silence, and everyone's like, I guess we'll go then? Like, I don't know, I can't

**Ryan O John:** remember Boston used to do that, and I used to go, it was like right over the river in town, and um, depending on where you were along the river, right, they'd pipe the music down the river, there's speakers all over the, all over the thing, and then they had a little outdoor amphitheater on the river where the symphony would play in real time to the fireworks, right?

But depending on where you were, the fireworks were either in time with the music, or really, really out of time with the music, because of the distance to the firework. And it's like, it was really frustrating, there were certain places where it was like, it was amazing, they'd hit like the downbeat of the music and the firework would blow up at exactly that time and it felt awesome, and then there were other times where it just was so jarring that it was almost unpleasant to listen to.

**Joe Santarpia:** Oh, that's so funny.

**Ryan O John:** It's cool though, it's really cool.

**Andy Leviss:** Yeah, that used to be right by,

**Sean Walker:** gonna say, ours is a little lucky cause it all like radiates from a center point, right, in this thing, it all fires outwards, which is, which makes it cool, rather than having to go down a long run, it's long throws but it's like a bunch of hangs of PA on ST 25s on genie towers or whatever, you know what I mean, so they're all firing outwards from the center to cover this big area of people which makes it so much easier than having a ton of delay times down the bank of a river.

**Ryan O John:** Yeah. Yeah, that must have been a bit of a nightmare to set up. Joe, um, I didn't ask you yet, right?

**Joe Santarpia:** No, no. Uh, yeah, that's, it's a tough one. Uh, I was incredibly lucky this year. Uh, but, um, I, I think the one that sticks out, it was literally one show. Uh, I got to fill in mixing, uh, front house for Jimmy E World,

**Ryan O John:** Oh, hell

**Joe Santarpia:** off festival. It was, it was so sick. Just like, you know, they've been, they've been a band and like doing it since

**Sean Walker:** inner kid's doing a touchdown dance at that point.

**Joe Santarpia:** or before, you know. Yeah, you know, and like, I don't know. Yeah, getting, getting to like mix those songs and like, you know, they're super pros. They

**Ryan O John:** And you're a fan, right?

**Joe Santarpia:** yeah, yeah, totally. You know, like, um, totally. Yeah. Um, so yeah, no, no, that's probably the one

**Ryan O John:** That's awesome, man. That's awesome. When, when was that?

**Joe Santarpia:** that was in, uh, that was in like October,

**Ryan O John:** So you've had two months of, of, of stuff that has been less good than that. That was your peak of the year in October.

**Joe Santarpia:** right. Yeah, yeah, I guess so. Yeah. Um, Yeah, I don't know.

**Ryan O John:** Nice. Are you going to do any more with them? I mean, I imagine at this point, you know the camp pretty well, right?

**Joe Santarpia:** Uh, uh, kind of. It was, uh, it was, it was a fill in scenario. I know they're normal guys, like, super, super awesome. Like, uh, I don't know. I've just, if you pull up any other video, you know, live videos, even on YouTube, you can

**Ryan O John:** Always sounds great. Yeah.

**Joe Santarpia:** it's like, it's psycho. Um, I can't, I can't recall his name at the moment, but yeah. Yeah, but, um, yeah, if they, if they knew what was best for them, they would definitely keep him and not hire me again. So,

**Ryan O John:** You shouldn't say that out loud.

**Sean Walker:** it's not good for your resume.

**Joe Santarpia:** yeah, right, right, right.

**Ryan O John:** that, that's, that's awesome, man.

**Joe Santarpia:** What about you, man?

**Ryan O John:** It's, it's funny, man. 12 months is a lot, a lot of a year, right? Like, I don't remember what gigs I was doing in January.

**Joe Santarpia:** Right.

**Ryan O John:** was just trying to think through it though, like, like, I think the easy answer for me is the Danny Elfman show, which is crazy, but I actually think the, the right answer for me is when I did Coachella with Labyrinth. And it's because the show had never been done before, and we like built everything from scratch in a rehearsal space. Then we go out to Coachella and it's, you know, kind of a high profile event, right? And we're like, is this gonna work? And it's the first time the L Acoustics L1 or L2 PA, L1, right? Is the name, name of the new L Acoustics

**Joe Santarpia:** The, the like three boxes in one kind

**Sean Walker:** The banana.

**Joe Santarpia:** I think, I think so. Yeah.

**Ryan O John:** L2. I think it's L2. The banana. But it was the first time that was being deployed. And last time I did Coachella was 2013, which was also the first time Anya was being deployed. So I, I've, I seem to keep going to Coachella for the first time a PA is being used. Yeah. And last time, it went between being really awesome and really terrible, because they changed a ton of stuff between Weekend 1 and Weekend 2 and didn't tell anyone.

They thought they were improving the system, but everyone had already built. the show into the system, you know what I mean? Um, this time it was, it went really, really, really well. It was an amazing show and uh, it was complicated, like it was horns, it was choir, it was, you know, drums, it was like all this other stuff and it was like, it was, it was, yeah, it was, it was fun and it was hard, which was awesome. So yeah, I think that's my one, my one for the year and that was March, so it's been downhill since March.

**Joe Santarpia:** Give me, give me like a ballpark on inputs for that.

**Ryan O John:** I think that was only like 60 something. It wasn't actually crazy. Uh, I mean, it's no 178 input Elfman gig, you know? Um,

**Joe Santarpia:** I wish I could've come to one of those shows. I, I would've

**Sean Walker:** over your shoulder, critique you harshly, you

**Ryan O John:** doing it again.

**Joe Santarpia:** Yeah.

**Ryan O John:** We're doing it again. Uh, in fact, it's gonna be crazy, uh, the show we're doing in April is a huge metal festival in Las Vegas. The headliners are like, I think, yeah, Alice in Chains, Slipknot, uh, I don't know, a couple others. And we're headlining one of the stages, which is Elfman. So it's like, it's a little crazy because it's like a bunch of really heavy metal bands.

And then Danny's solo stuff is kind of industrial metal. Then he's got his Oingo Boingo stuff, which is 70s rock and roll, and then there's all the film stuff, including Nightmare Before Christmas. So it's like, I get this vibe that it's gonna be like the band's favorite, but not necessarily the fan's favorite, you know what I mean?

**Joe Santarpia:** Hmm. Mm

**Ryan O John:** feel like Front of House is gonna be absolutely packed with all the other bands from the

**Sean Walker:** No pressure though, no pressure. All the engineers, all the management,

**Ryan O John:** will be fun. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Andy Leviss:** Yeah,

**Joe Santarpia:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Ryan O John:** The first time I did the Elfman Show, Trent Reznor was sitting over here, and Atticus Ross is sitting over here, and Tim Burton is like four seats over, over that way, and I'm like, What the fuck, man? How can I do

**Andy Leviss:** keep mixing. Just keep mixing. Just keep mixing.

**Ryan O John:** Well, plus, I didn't know it was coming down the lines at that time, so like, the whole thing was just like sweat dripping down your face, and you're like, oh my god, is this gonna work? It was the same kind of thing of, is this gonna work at all? You know?

**Andy Leviss:** Oh, man.

**Ryan O John:** uh Yeah, so what about 24? What do you got that you're looking forward to?

**Sean Walker:** 24.

**Andy Leviss:** go.

**Sean Walker:** we have a bunch of big corporate shows on the horizon that I'm stoked about. Just a bunch of convention center ballroom stuff that's gonna be super fun, dude. Yeah! Just cause it's, you know, a challenge and keeps the bills paid, keeps the, uh, you know, kids fed, that sort of thing. And then we've got one client that is doing, for them, bigger rock shows, you know what I mean?

Where they went from like, they're working their way up from like, clubs to multiple clubs to outside mobile stages and now they're doing bigger stages and they're, it's super fun to ride that, ride that ride with them and get to do some, some names that we've now heard of rather than names we haven't heard of, you know what I mean? So that's, that's super fun. We're stoked for that every year. I think one of you guys did. I was here not too long ago doing an act, right? Somebody did King, Gizzard, Lizard, Wizard thing or something.

**Brendan Dreaper:** see

**Joe Santarpia:** yeah, oh wait, where

**Sean Walker:** You were,

**Joe Santarpia:** Remind me where?

**Sean Walker:** no, you were at the,

**Joe Santarpia:** Oh, at the Paramount?

**Sean Walker:** right? Doing that. That's, yeah, dude, that's somebody else's venue,

**Joe Santarpia:** Rimlinger Farms? Were you out

**Sean Walker:** far from that.

**Joe Santarpia:** Oh

**Sean Walker:** I think that was, that's a pretty cool show, but they're, all our shows are kind of about that size ish or whatever. The ones we're talking about right now.

And that's, that's super fun, dude. That's kind

**Joe Santarpia:** yeah, yeah,

**Sean Walker:** I don't, I don't live in arenas like some of these other fancy pants people do, but

**Joe Santarpia:** Right, right. Wait, so did you come up to one of the shows and get rained on?

**Sean Walker:** with a show about that same size. I was trying to describe the size of the show.

**Andy Leviss:** He's like, you some bitch, did you come judge and not say hi?

**Joe Santarpia:** Yeah,

**Sean Walker:** I'd have come

**Joe Santarpia:** I was gonna say.

**Sean Walker:** said some stupid shit. You know, I'm not

**Joe Santarpia:** come on. Yeah, yeah, um, I think, I mean, I think we're back next year. Hang on, let me,

**Sean Walker:** I'll bring beer.

**Joe Santarpia:** at the schedule. Yeah,

**Ryan O John:** Yeah, see, nobody actually wants me to come to the show, cause, I, I don't actually stand behind people and judge harshly. I don't do that. Everyone thinks I do. What I do do is come up behind you and make feedback sounds. I'll just stand behind you and go eeeeee, and I'll watch you freak out and try and find it on a

**Sean Walker:** You son of a bitch.

**Andy Leviss:** every summer,

**Ryan O John:** I've done that a couple times.

**Andy Leviss:** in my Facebook memories comes up the, the time like 10 or 11 years ago that I did outdoor theater in Connecticut and in Greenwich, spent a solid week every night trying to figure out whether it was a feedback squeal or an 18 wheeler trying to brake on the highway down the road. And it was like 50 50 odds any day, because it was, the system design was, was batshit. It was one of those, I sketched it out on a napkin once for Bob McCarthy, and it was like, what would you have done in this situation, and he's like, cried and walked away.

**Ryan O John:** Yeah.

**Sean Walker:** Oh, that's funny.

**Andy Leviss:** It was, it was theatre basically in the round in a park with a long, Shakespeare, with a long stage in the shape of basically a cross, but like, the long part of the cross was like 100 feet, and they would have scenes with one actor on one end and one on the other that kind of had to image so you knew where to look.

But they didn't have the budget to do any sort of suspension tension web for speakers. So it was all a mix of JF 200s and Community CPL 27s on truss towers behind

**Sean Walker:** earning a living. That's what that is. You earned your day rate that day, bro.

**Ryan O John:** Interesting.

**Andy Leviss:** doing delay matrixing into that, mixing on a DM 2000.

**Joe Santarpia:** Interesting.

**Ryan O John:** rotary

**Sean Walker:** carpal tunnel from that. You were just like,

**Andy Leviss:** I do miss that knob

**Sean Walker:** control, trying to get it going.

**Andy Leviss:** Why not? Because if you hit it hard enough, you just go WEEEEE and let it spin for a while. gotta catch it in time to

**Sean Walker:** Nope. Too late. Going around the horn.

**Ryan O John:** Amazing.

**Andy Leviss:** in the chat, Aram, Aram's in the chat saying that Bode Kurtales are the worst feedback fakeout.

**Ryan O John:** I don't know what that is, I assume it's a bird?

**Andy Leviss:** It's actually the name of my acoustic Nine Inch Nails cover band.

**Ryan O John:** Alright Joe, 2024, what are you looking forward to?

**Joe Santarpia:** Still some stuff up in the air, um, but definitely they can get stuff. Um, South America in March, I think it's their first time there. They've

**Ryan O John:** Oh, you're gonna have fun. You've been, have you been before?

**Joe Santarpia:** Yeah. A bunch of

**Ryan O John:** Okay, so you know how much fun it is to go to South America.

**Joe Santarpia:** yeah, it's, I mean, the, the people are like the, the fans, they're just like next level enthusiastic.

**Ryan O John:** yeah, and, and the sound companies are next level in that most of their stuff is cracked

**Sean Walker:** Did you run into the same snake labeled the same way, like two years in a row from the same company where it was like, channel, whatever was still bad from last year, was that you telling me about, somebody was telling me about that. I don't remember whose story that was, but

**Joe Santarpia:** we've,

**Sean Walker:** somebody was like, yeah, dude, we were there and it was the same snake that still hadn't been fixed a year later.

And I was like, Oh no, dude. Oh no.

**Andy Leviss:** I've definitely not snakes, but I've definitely gotten gear from the same company, like Two, two years apart on the same gig or like six months apart on different gigs for the company. They're like, that's my handwriting telling you the problem that's still broken on it.

**Joe Santarpia:** yeah, yeah,

**Andy Leviss:** I'm not going to name the New York area rental shop, but there's one that was notorious for like folks got in the habit of they would open the piece of broken gear up, put a label, I'm broken, fix me inside it.

So that when it would come back to them, they could be like, you did not even open

**Joe Santarpia:** You didn't even,

**Andy Leviss:** there.

**Joe Santarpia:** Jesus, yeah, it's, it's been, uh, it's been interesting out there with, with vendors in general. I've definitely had some fun in the last couple of years, again, won't mention any names, but uh,

**Sean Walker:** got copper anus to make everything better. Right? Yeah.

**Joe Santarpia:** yeah, yeah, whatever,

**Ryan O John:** Somehow, though, the shows just always go really well. Even when everything is fucked up, leading right up until the downbeat of that first note. Like, there's still noises and lines, and it's still a mess. And then the band starts

**Sean Walker:** Is that because the audience is so loud that you can't hear the

**Ryan O John:** Every single time I'm in South America.

Probably, yeah. Yeah, exactly. Yeah, probably. Alright, Brendan,

**Joe Santarpia:** unless you're Brennan and got a quiet vocal. Yeah.

**Brendan Dreaper:** You know, it's funny.

**Ryan O John:** And then your quiet vocal

**Brendan Dreaper:** could hear the fans that were supposed to blow the fog for the headliner in the vocal mic. Just like, just the low noise of the

**Joe Santarpia:** Oh

**Brendan Dreaper:** it was fun.

**Ryan O John:** Alright, alright, since we're talking about this again now, I need to know, what are your tricks for making a quiet vocal

**Brendan Dreaper:** I feel like we've discussed this before. Um,

**Ryan O John:** Probably, but not with all these

**Brendan Dreaper:** on stage.

**Andy Leviss:** I'm going to say, I remember this episode

**Sean Walker:** feel like a basic bitch like Ryan asking you that question.

**Brendan Dreaper:** again.

**Sean Walker:** Because my answer is not fancy.

**Brendan Dreaper:** Position of the vocalist. Position of them on

**Ryan O John:** fancy is okay!

**Andy Leviss:** Yeah, not fancy is better sometimes.

**Ryan O John:** Okay, so position of the vocal is what, just getting them away from loud sources? what, did you

**Brendan Dreaper:** we did for a while, but then I found it better actually to have her center. And that way she's farther away from the PA hangs, even if the drummer's behind her. And then put,

**Joe Santarpia:** You don't want to pan the vocal to one side? Sorry.

**Brendan Dreaper:** but I mean, this is, you know, someone who's stationary the whole show. So luckily with that, yeah, uh,

**Ryan O John:** That definitely helps, yeah. So what, you'd ring out the vocal and all that? Interesting.

**Brendan Dreaper:** if they had monitors, especially for the small venues, I'd flip them all forwards and use them as front fills. So that,

**Ryan O John:** Interesting. Yeah,

**Brendan Dreaper:** well, yeah, I can keep it lower in the PA, and then I can, the people in the very front, who, in all these small venues, like, would never fucking hear the vocal out of the PA, because they're all the way up front, and they're literally behind the speakers, or, or they're not getting hit at all, they're getting monitor right in their face, and I would put that on a matrix and just do, like, vocal group to that, and maybe a little guitar too.

Um, so, Yeah, that was, that was a big

**Joe Santarpia:** Hell yeah, dude.

**Brendan Dreaper:** especially in the smaller venues.

**Ryan O John:** Not bad. Nice, man. Yeah, sorry, I just

**Brendan Dreaper:** Cymbal Shields 2 helped a little bit. But, uh, yeah, um, yeah.

**Joe Santarpia:** Pull out all the stops.

**Andy Leviss:** and we're getting some, um, I, since there will be folks listening on the feed, we're getting a couple of suggestions and questions in the chat that was, so Steven asked about what about moving the drummer off to the side instead of the singer.

**Brendan Dreaper:** we, it kind of depended on the stage. Like, what

**Sean Walker:** depends on the size of the venue.

**Andy Leviss:** Yep, and then, and, and Andre is saying quiet vocal, he's suggesting, uh, B7 as close to the mouth as possible,

**Sean Walker:** 50

**Andy Leviss:** 54, which I think you, I think you mean a 50, 45? Yep. Uh, in ears, and, and, and that for what it's worth, Andre is anti panning. Yep. Yep. I think,

**Brendan Dreaper:** I'm not anti

**Andy Leviss:** think we

**Brendan Dreaper:** I'm not anti panning if they're moving around. But, uh, the 5054, remind me what that is

**Sean Walker:** 45 is the,

**Joe Santarpia:** Put me on

**Andy Leviss:** Or the 5045.

**Sean Walker:** basically PSE,

**Ryan O John:** yeah,

**Brendan Dreaper:** I tried, like, plug in versions of the PSE, but honestly, the snare drum was louder than her vocal, so it, like, didn't work.

**Andy Leviss:** Yeah. Like in theory, there's particularly the Neve one or the Yamaha emulation of it is supposed to be keyed

**Brendan Dreaper:** Yeah, I mean, like, what is the decibel rate? Like, is there, does it have to be a certain? Level below it? Like, I'd

**Sean Walker:** You have to beat the 5045 like a rented gong with level or it won't work properly. So on quiet vocals, it's just unhappy.

**Andy Leviss:** Well, there's the, yeah,

**Sean Walker:** that's the only solution. Like,

**Brendan Dreaper:** Arnie's saying, isn't the snare always, but like, yeah, it's louder in your ears, but like, not in the microphone itself. Like, the waveform and the decibel level of the snare drum hitting the vocal mic was 12 dB hotter than her loudest vocalization.

**Joe Santarpia:** Yeah.

**Andy Leviss:** and, and, Snaps is thrown out, like, what if, what if we, what if, could we try doing something like, like Ryan's, like, you know, double patch trigger thing he does for TOMS but for PSE to have one copy of it?

**Joe Santarpia:** That's

**Andy Leviss:** with a, well, it does, I don't think it has a sidechain input,

**Ryan O John:** it doesn't, it doesn't.

**Andy Leviss:** yeah, that's the,

**Ryan O John:** so, so, to, to the point of this whole question, uh, conversation though, the 5045 though, of people, really, really good engineers, swear by this piece of kit, right? They say this is the end all be all for, you know, cleaning up vocals, and I don't find it very useful. Period.

I've owned them, I've used them, I've tried it, right? And I realize that this is, yeah, it is a bit of a hot take, because there are guys doing some of the best sounding, biggest shows in the world, and it sounds good, and it works for them, and they swear by it. So, I kind of just want to get a quick roundtable.

Give me a thumbs up or a thumbs down if a 50 45 works for you. Yes?

**Andy Leviss:** yes, with qualifiers, and we've

**Brendan Dreaper:** I don't know, never used it.

**Ryan O John:** Joe? Yes? No? Sideways? Both sideways thumbs? Alright.

**Joe Santarpia:** have the 500 series, like, it's, it's great. Like you said, for a quiet vocal, it honestly is like, it's kind of more of a pain, um, than it's worth. I don't know.

**Andy Leviss:** Yeah, it's not,

**Joe Santarpia:** don't know.

**Andy Leviss:** yeah, it's not gonna, it's not gonna give you gain that's not there. It's gonna, it can turn down background noise to an extent, it can't turn up the vocals. And even there, while they are very adamant that it's not a gate or an expander, it's an expander. So, you know, it's a very, it's a, it's a very particular expander, and

**Joe Santarpia:** Yeah. It works

**Andy Leviss:** smarts on the sidechain.

**Joe Santarpia:** Yeah.

**Andy Leviss:** yeah, it's the easiest expander to set I've ever used, um, and I know when we talked about it on Discord, what I said, particularly for like talking head stuff, I tend to use two pieces. I use that and some sort of smarter denoiser, so whether it's a Cedar DNS, the Yamaha Dance, or if I don't have either of those, I'll use like Live Professor or VST Rack Pro with, um, uh, Isotope Voice Denoise, which is, I was stunned to learn is zero latency.

And, like, use, and I'm tending to use those on, I'll typically use the 5045 on the input channel to kind of clean it up there, and because in that, in that situation I'm often using the 5045, um, and I think we said this in a couple episodes ago when Pete was on, to bring that last little bit of gain out of stuff is what I'm using the 5045 for, which is why I need it on the channel, and then I'll typically put the denoise on the vocal bus.

Or on the lav bus if it's a corporate event, because that's going to pull the background noise down. Now I haven't tried it. There is a music mode for it. So I haven't tried it on music yet, and to see how it does, like picking vocals out of drums and other things, but I'm curious too.

**Joe Santarpia:** Have, uh, have any of y'all, um, messed with any of that, like, those, like, AI sites where you can isolate, uh, you know, uh, different tracks, like from just from a stereo, uh, two track or whatever?

**Ryan O John:** Oh yeah, yeah,

**Joe Santarpia:** Have you played with those at all?

**Ryan O John:** Yeah, I mean, not really that related to live stuff, but yeah. Right now

**Andy Leviss:** if that stuff gets up to the point that like it could be zero latency or close to it, that would be astounding.

**Joe Santarpia:** it's kind of, it's kind of what I'm saying, like that would, you know, that's kind of maybe where that type of tech, you know, where it would be useful, you know, where we might actually be able to like,

**Ryan O John:** No, no, no, sorry, sorry, go ahead, go ahead.

**Joe Santarpia:** no, no, I was, that was, that was it,

**Ryan O John:** Yeah, the Isotope tool for music rebalance, that's probably the best one I've ever heard, right? And in that you can just take just vocals, or just bass, or just drums, and it's like, it's stunning for it,

**Andy Leviss:** yeah. And the Dialog Isolate, which is just another version of that pack, it's slightly different, it's like that's, we've saved a couple of podcast episodes with that

**Sean Walker:** Not we.

**Andy Leviss:** Like, we had one guest who was on a laptop, collectively, royally, um, uh, but yeah, we had one guest who was like, not only on like a laptop speaker in their hotel room on tour, but like, occasionally typing away, like, I don't know if making notes, doing like a copy of the Mona Lisa with a Sharpie on a hotel note, like there was the whole time and like typing underneath speaking, I was like, I'm not getting rid of it.

And like for shits, I ran it and it takes like 20 minutes to run on like an hour recording. It is amazing.

**Ryan O John:** So, the thing that's blowing my mind right now is the Waves Clarity VX. It is stunning to me how good that thing is. The problem is, it's 40 milliseconds of latency. Um, and I'm trying to figure out if I can, like, kind of build a live professor package or something like that that can run it less than that.

Because I would take latency. I mean, half the time I'm in Arena PA, I can get away with that kind of thing. Um, and I would take that if I can get it as clean as that thing would

**Brendan Dreaper:** What does it do?

**Sean Walker:** What does that do? I haven't, I've seen it, but I haven't used it. Okay.

**Ryan O John:** it, it, it's basically a dno, it's a, it's a dno, but in, in like the demo video, right? There's some guy speaking and then someone turns on a blender right next to him.

It's like, it's right here, and he's chatting into his mic. And then you take the DNO or you know, the clarity VX knob or whatever and turn it up, and all you hear is vocal and the, the blender's gone. Someone else is doing a similar demo with like a, like a leaf blower in the background, and it sounds stupid.

It sounds really stupid. And then he turns it up and like mind you, the vocal sounds. Kind of a little bit weird, a little bit like digitally. Look at how much it took away. It's okay that it sounds a little bit digitally if it took away all that. Now, put it on a normal stage. Yeah, to be honest, now it

**Sean Walker:** You got one less plugin to do, right?

**Ryan O John:** that people want to hear.

**Joe Santarpia:** it's it that's that's a good way to describe it though The like once you really start cranking it like the artifacts

**Sean Walker:** It's a feature, not a bug. It's pre tuned, bro.

**Joe Santarpia:** Yeah,

**Ryan O John:** it is. Kinda.

**Joe Santarpia:** of cool. Honestly Yeah,

**Ryan O John:** almost sounds like you've taken, taken like a vocal or something and pitched it down like, like, like three semitones and that kind of like a little bit of distorty stuff that you hear when you do that, that's what it sounds like when you go to extreme. But you should never have to go to extreme if you're doing all the other stuff to take care of, you know, cleaning up your stage a bit.

Yeah, yeah, yeah, I mean you're making a face like, because sometimes, yeah, you do. Yeah,

**Joe Santarpia:** just like I had a did like a studio thing a couple months ago and They just did like a scratch vocal just like in the control room but like With not with headphones with like the speakers on pretty loud and like I want to you know Of course being like a really great take and we were like fuck like there's all this noise Also, it was like there was some crazy ground buzz.

It was like just awful and um, and and then like Also the sound like the sound for the record is like distorted vocal. So it's like great. It's all fucked up There's all this noise in the background and I put that shit on it with the PSE 2 like Various stages of it and like it's kind of kind of works man.

It's it's kind of working. I don't know Impressive. Yeah,

**Ryan O John:** yeah, I want to figure out if there's a way to use that live.

**Andy Leviss:** yeah,

**Ryan O John:** go

**Andy Leviss:** the chat, Cookie mentioned that we should look into, and I'm trying to remember if this was on an older episode of Signal to Noise or somewhere else. The Drew's signal chain for, for Billy, um, and mentions that what he thinks he remembers is that Drew uses like the Waves Feedback Axe to kind of help the vocal cut through.

So we might have to, might have to go back and look and see what he's doing there. Cause yeah, that, that's certainly an artist that I can think of as being like a very quiet and laid back

**Ryan O John:** Yeah, I mean, FeedbackX is gonna help you with making sure there's no feedback from the PA. It's not gonna help you with the crowd bleeding her mic. I mean, you should listen to her in your mix. It's 80 percent crowd, 20 percent her, and 10 percent band, like, blended in. It's But that said, she likes hearing the crowd.

So, even with that, there are crowd mics pumped into her in ear mix, but if you cue her vocal only, it is so much crowd. Um, interestingly, it kind of works in the context of the show, because pumping crowd back through the PA gives the show energy. It really does. It makes the crowd respond even more when you've got more crowd sound in the

**Andy Leviss:** dude, I, I have a story about that, but finish your thought and then we'll come back to my

**Ryan O John:** No, no, no, no, but, so, you know, X Feedback can help for preventing feedback from the rig, but it can't help you prevent, um You know, kind of the, the must of lack of clarity of having crowd coming through and all that other stuff.

**Andy Leviss:** so it'll

**Ryan O John:** can help you with the feedbacks.

**Andy Leviss:** gonna help you reduce the noise.

**Ryan O John:** exactly. And to be honest, most of what I want to do is reduce the extra noise rather than

**Sean Walker:** So you're just asking people to like, stop talking during the show so they can be quieter in there. What do you

**Ryan O John:** Yeah, shut the fuck up. I only do shows in Japan. I only do shows in Japan.

**Joe Santarpia:** Please shut up.

**Andy Leviss:** Yeah, so I did, I was doing an off Broadway musical about Celia Cruz years ago, and we, the, I was mixing it, the original sound designer had actually been on tour with Celia, and like, had mixed these shows, and was like, for all the concert stuff, I've got the recording of the actual crowd, and we're going to pump it through the surrounds, and it's going to be And it sounded like we were trying to goose the audience into applauding, and it didn't, it wasn't working, and for various other reasons, another sound designer came in to fix stuff, and one of the things he did was get rid of that, but then we hung a pair of shotguns, just like we would for in ears for audience response, and cross fed them to the other side of the house, just in the surrounds, and for certain concert numbers in the show, I just, in with all my vocal and band DCAs, I had a, uh, an ovation DCA, and I could literally just ride that up, and I could literally, like, track with the fader, the audience standing up out of their seat as the applause grew.

And it was, it was beautiful and so much fun. I haven't done that in a long time, but it's, it's a lot of fun in the right situation.

**Ryan O John:** that's cool. That actually reminds me of a funny trick we, we do when we're testing microphones to see like what, what does and doesn't work with an artist. We take the recording of the crowd and run it through wedges and just blast it. So we take the crowd mics and just blast them back into wedges because that is what the crowd is going to be doing facing the stage.

And then we go through different mic choices to see what works, what's cleaner and all that with like a crowd sound blasting through the wedges at like 100 db. It is so unpleasant to be in front of. But it's the same as what it's like on

**Sean Walker:** that you love? What are they? Spill the beans. Come on.

**Ryan O John:** Um, oh man, it's, it's tough because it's different for every artist depending on like where you're going to be. If you're going to be in small clubs, you need something different than when you're going to be on a stadium stage and all that. So, often I'll find things that work really well for rejection of all this other stuff, but then they don't actually sound that great on the vocal.

That's usually what it is. Usually the rejection's really good, but then the vocal itself is kind of okay. When the vocal sounds amazing, it's also picking up the whole drum kit, and all the crowd, and all that shit, you know? So it's, it's a tough balance, like I think, um, mic technique of the performer themselves also matters a huge amount, you know?

If you stick it on a stand and it's going to stay on a stand, you can get away with almost anything. But if they're going to hold it, there's a vast different number of ways that they can hold it and each different mic is going to do different things when you hold it different ways, you know?

**Andy Leviss:** Ryan, Arnie's asking if you tried the SR314 from Earthris. I know you tried the 317. Have you tried the 14?

**Ryan O John:** I haven't tried the 14 because every time I've pulled it out, uh, my vocalist has gone, this looks

**Brendan Dreaper:** Heheheheheh.

**Ryan O John:** I don't want it.

**Brendan Dreaper:** Mm.

**Ryan O John:** It's heavy. It, it actually offsets the weight of the mic really weirdly, in like a nose heavy way. Like I, I understand why someone wouldn't want it. Um, I really want to try it 'cause it would be cool.

But it's too, it's too unique looking. It's, it's so odd looking that many people are just kind of turned off by it. Mm-Hmm.

**Andy Leviss:** because talking about off axis bleed, I was thinking about too, you and I have both used the, the, 3117 or the 117 lately, um,

**Ryan O John:** actually think that mic sounds amazing. If you put it on a stand, it really does. It sounds natural. It's got space around it. But then the moment you cup it, it sounds worse than a 58

**Andy Leviss:** Holy 300, Batman.

**Ryan O John:** Yeah, it's, it's like, unusable. And I was like, the artist we were testing this for, this was for Labyrinth, I was like, he's gonna cup the mic, period.

Like, I, I'm, I know this is gonna happen, it's gonna be part of the show. It's probably gonna be half the show, if not two thirds of the show. So it needs to sound better cupped than not cupped, you know? Yeah, I

**Andy Leviss:** Yeah, which I've, I've, speaking of cupping, I've heard but haven't used that the KSM 11 is borderline magical for cupping. Have any of you Used it yet?

**Ryan O John:** actually just went through a, a shootout where we had an 11, a 9, an 8, a, a, 4018, a 4018LV, a V7, 58 of course, um, the 11 takes cupping really well. Does not seem to sound very different. Um, it does bleed more when you cup it. When you cup it, it picks up more from behind it. And as I said, we do this thing where we play audience sound through the wedges.

And I, I measure it, so I literally take measurements of this stuff and then we grab it and go, what is this, what does the audience come through now, and the audience came through more when you cup it, but the vocal itself still sounds good, so it worked pretty well.

**Andy Leviss:** That's, that's kind of an impressive accomplishment too, cause like, understanding the physics of how and why the pattern opens up, the fact that they can do that and the tonality doesn't go to

**Sean Walker:** it sound,

**Andy Leviss:** impressive.

**Sean Walker:** does it sound dope?

**Ryan O John:** Yeah, it's, it's, sorry, go ahead. It does sound good, yeah. It does sound really good.

**Sean Walker:** Sounds like a pretty good balance on a, sorry,

**Andy Leviss:** Um, and Andre's, Andre's,

**Sean Walker:** Part

**Andy Leviss:** oh, Andre was just asking if folks find hypercards or cards generally better for cupping.

**Ryan O John:** that's kind of hard to answer because it depends on the microphone itself, because it being hypercardioid requires that the backside of the capsule is usually open, or the secondary capsule that's on the back is open, and the moment you cover it up, it's no longer hypercardioid. Um, I mean it's the same for cardioids, but it tends to have, in my experience, it tends to have more of an effect on more directional mics.

When you cover up the back, they become super, they basically become omni. Um, so, the pattern gets completely messed up the moment you cup, cup. Not necessarily the tonality, and that's kind of unique to each microphone. Some mics are better with the tonality side than they are with, um, than, than others are.

But the pattern side always seems to get kind of messed up the moment you cup it.

**Joe Santarpia:** You ever try I tried, uh, this mic for the first time and did a show with it and really liked it and I want to know what you guys think. This, uh, the DPA de facto? Ever tried that, Mike? Got

**Ryan O John:** Yeah, yeah, the, the 4018 is the de facto, right?

**Andy Leviss:** Yeah. Yeah, they're, I think both the 4018 and the LV, I think, are technically both the div, both the fact, yeah, but,

**Joe Santarpia:** it. Okay.

**Andy Leviss:** no, love them.

**Ryan O John:** um, yeah, it, it sounds, yeah, okay, so the, the 4018 and the 4018 VL. Are both DeFacto mics, right? Um, DeFacto, I don't know how you'd word this, it's like the sub brand, if you will, for those types of mics. Yeah, product line. Um, and that's what I'm using on James Arthur right now. We went through a ton of different mics and it just sounded fantastic.

It sounds almost exactly the same as his studio recordings, which are on a U87 through a 1073 into a CL 1B into an LA 2A. And I'm like, I have the same sound live, which is insane.

**Joe Santarpia:** did you find it for like rejection? Cause that was one thing I wasn't able to get a real handle on.

**Ryan O John:** Um, so the, the VL is a slightly tighter pattern. The V is a wider pattern. I found them notably different. Um, and when, when we, when we were, we, we test this out with the artist actually singing into it and stuff like that, see what they like in their ears. And then after they're done with that, we kind of have them pick like, like a top two or three.

And then after they're done with that, they go off and do lunch, and then, you know, we as engineers will sit and figure out what is actually happening in this, like talking to it on axis, talking to it at 90 degrees, talking to it at 180 degrees, and, you know, put tone, measure it, see what happens, cup it, do all those things.

So, once the artist is already like, I'm cool with the sound of these things, then we go through and kind of do a little bit of an analysis on like, what it actually means for us and our ability to mix. And then from there, we'll go, cool, we're gonna try this. So then when we do the next little chunk of rehearsals or something like that, um, we are now using the mic that we have chosen.

And if, for some reason, it still isn't working right, we might swap it out again. But, in theory, the artist is happy because they've kind of picked their top three or whatever, and then they left it up to us as engineers to go, which ones will be the most effective for us, like, to deliver the best show. So back to the de facto question, the V sounded great, the VL actually had a tighter pattern where I was picking up way less drums.

And the drums in this rehearsal were probably about, I don't know, 12 feet away from the mic, with the mic basically pointed straight at it. Not because it should have been, but because he just kept putting it that way.

**Sean Walker:** But you said they were

**Ryan O John:** But it worked, it worked pretty well. No, tonally almost exactly the same. Actually

**Andy Leviss:** it's just, it's just a, yeah, the V has a little bit of a presence boost, and the L is linear, so it doesn't have the presence boost.

**Ryan O John:** actually, so actually, to your point, Sean, of tonally, on axis, tonally, they are damn close to the same. When you're talking into them at 180 degrees, the V, uh, you hear a lot of 1kHz come through. The VL, it's a really even drop off. So it actually sounds pretty even. Um, even though I think technically maybe it's like a, or maybe it's the other way around.

Whatever it was, the VL had a kind of flatter ish frequency response way off axis. Which meant the drums and the other things that were bleeding

**Sean Walker:** like that 2012 thing you showed me the other day where

**Ryan O John:** Whereas when we use the

**Sean Walker:** it around, it was just, it sounded like quite a version of the same thing.

**Ryan O John:** right, right. It's exactly that. Like, to me, a really high end mic, off axis, yes, it's quieter, but it still sounds good. The frequency response is still even. kind of, the, the worst mics, in my opinion, and this is, this is, you know, unique to this scenario, there's like certain things, it's for, for certain scenarios or whatever, but in general, if off axis, the frequency response is like really different from the on axis frequency response.

It's usually not something I like, because now, off axis, I don't know, the snare drum that's bleeding in from the side sounds super honky, and I can't cut that out, because if I cut that out, now it takes it out of the actual vocal or whatever that's in front of it. So, ideally, the off axis is really close, you know?

**Andy Leviss:** Yeah, it's interesting, because I'm the nerd, I'm sitting here like looking at the charts right now, and it's really, like the V, like the 140 degree off axis, it's like a V cut around like, probably like 1K2 ish, 1K3 ish, and the VL, it's more of a steep U. It just, it doesn't cut quite as far out in the mids.

And they're like, the directionality is super, yeah, and the directionality is where, because it's like, it's, you don't really notice in the pollers that they publish the directionality changing until you get to 16k, where, like in 16k, the L narrows up all of a sudden. Which sounds like exactly what you were hearing.

**Ryan O John:** Yeah, yeah, I think so. But, that's the stuff that's kinda hard to see in a lot of these mic charts, right? Because in these mic charts, they show a polar pattern, right? That picture that you're used to seeing, that 360 degree thing. Each of the different colors is a different frequency range. But that's not really telling you the whole story.

I almost wish it was like a chart that showed a probe here, this is the frequency response, a probe here, this is the frequency response, a

**Andy Leviss:** so that's the, the props I'm going to give to DPA now as I just pulled up on their website. They're showing you a zero, a 30, a 60, a 90, and a 140 frequency trace, which is like, yeah, I wish everybody did that.

**Ryan O John:** Right. Which, which most people don't do. So I love that they do that. It's a lot easier to read. Yeah.

**Andy Leviss:** Um, and then we're getting folks in the chat asking, asking about, uh, thoughts on, on any of the sE mics.

If

**Ryan O John:** I love most of them.

**Brendan Dreaper:** This one just died on me in the middle of the show.

**Andy Leviss:** I've, I've not, I keep,

**Brendan Dreaper:** I don't know what's up

**Ryan O John:** Oh no!

**Andy Leviss:** I keep, I keep wanting to try the V7. I actually, on the, you can't quite see blurred out in the background. I've got the V kick and the BLE right now that I was trying out the last week on. Drums and I'm my only bummer is that I didn't have enough time because these were all one day one off things To try the different settings on the same drum So, um, I mean if there's anybody out there listening in the chat in New York, that's got time with a drum kit and a console I'll bring the mic so we can play the next week or two because I got some time off

**Brendan Dreaper:** I like the,

**Ryan O John:** You should, you should. Um, I, I'm a huge fan of the V7s and stuff. Um, my issue with them is that the, uh, grill in here gets wet after about an hour and a half of using it, and it starts dropping off all the top end. So you need to clean these things out, um, halfway through the show. Every show. Um,

**Andy Leviss:** I've heard this a couple times

**Ryan O John:** so yeah, in general, I love them, but I find that their tonality changes as you continue to use them.

I've, I've discovered that cleaning out the whole filter thing, um, which comes with two, it comes with a black one and a red one, um, if you clean that out, you end up

**Brendan Dreaper:** I like the V beats a lot, on toms, especially. Just like, you can just throw those up, do nothing to them, and a lot of times it just sounds fucking great. It

**Andy Leviss:** I love 40. 99s, I don't I don't trust drummers near them.

**Ryan O John:** Oh, uh, oh man. The Tommy est Toms, I like that, that's good.

**Andy Leviss:** Every once in a while I say something so dumb it comes back around the circle and becomes smart again. Um. Alright, see, now we're going in the chat down the drum, like, uh, Andre's saying he's SEs on every gig, uh, also my Beta 91, favorite snare mics, the M201, or the 441 if there's space. I was going to say, I actually was going to ask, Ryan, do we want to circle back and talk, because I know at one point this summer you and I had, I say independently, that's because half of my drum pack came from you, but the other stuff I filled in, I feel like we landed in very similar places on drum mics.

But I know you've been like with various artists and touring around, I'm curious where you're landing these days. And particularly I'd love because I've yet to find a kick drum, mic or combo I'm entirely happy with. So I'm curious what folks here like for kick drum if we want to get real nerdy and particular about it.

**Ryan O John:** man, so, what's interesting is that typically I do a M201 snare top, right, and I actually like an M88 on snare bottom. Um, M88s are hard to get from rental houses. They tend not to have it. Um, so since I was rehearsing in UK, they didn't have one. Uh, 4099 is amazing on a snare bottom. It's really, really nice.

It's so tiny. It clips on. It's beautiful. Love that. Um, no. Yeah, it's just great on

**Andy Leviss:** cello solo?

**Ryan O John:** Well, yeah, yeah. If you're doing a cello solo, you need one of these. Hold on.

**Andy Leviss:** Tee that one right up for you, Ryan.

**Ryan O John:** There it is. You need the Erland. This thing,

**Brendan Dreaper:** looks kind of boxy.

**Ryan O John:** Yes, this is just sitting on the floor right next to me. Sounds boxy.

**Andy Leviss:** Dude, I'm not the one who recommended it, I just remembered the, I remembered that conversation from the last Elfman gig.

**Ryan O John:** Oh man, no, that thing, that thing is absolutely amazing. Um, no, so, so actually, when we were rehearsing this James Arthur thing, right, uh, we put a 201 on the snare, and he's hitting it, sounds great, um, but as I built the whole mix around the drum kit and all that, I wanted more punch out of the snare. Like, I, I just, I wasn't getting it to, to kind of hit with impact.

I like it when a kick drum hits you in the gut and a snare drum hits you kind of in the chest. Like, they, you feel them both. But in a slightly different way, and I spent, I don't know, half of one whole day's rehearsal just being like, I don't like my snare sound. I mean, that said, I sit at home here and I spend two weeks going, I don't like the snare sound.

Yeah, yeah, exactly.

**Andy Leviss:** So, and Ryan, on 4099 on snare bottom, Arnie's just asking, do you clip it to the rim or on the snare stand, or how are you, how are you

**Ryan O John:** I, I don't clip anything to the drum ever, um, because if that snare gets swapped out mid show, which it will at some point, I don't want the mics to go with it. So um, even the snare top mic, it's a claw that's clipped to the snare basket. And then it reaches around so you can take the snare drum off, and same with the bottom mic, it's clipped onto the stand, and then kind of reaches underneath it.

**Andy Leviss:** So, and if you're doing that with a 4099, are you using the DPA mount for that, or are you just using the stand mount on like an actual claw?

**Ryan O John:** Um, how did we do it?

**Andy Leviss:** Or did you just say, make that mic go there and somebody figured it out?

**Ryan O John:** I think it was one of the, uh, the trumpet clips, you know the ones with like the little three round balls, and we put it on the base of the basket, and just kind of reached it. Down. It seemed to work pretty well.

**Andy Leviss:** Right on. That's, I, yeah, I would not have thought of using that mount there. Now that's getting filed away.

**Ryan O John:** well, they gave us, they just gave us this, this assortment of microphones, which I'm not actually sure where they came from because they weren't actually all the mics on the list. They just brought a bunch of stuff. And I was like, this is fun for me because now we can try all this stuff. And with the DPAs, they gave us like the saxophone mount, the trumpet mount, the cello, they gave all of them.

Um, so whatever this company was, they were just like, we don't know what you're using it for either. So do whatever you want with it. Um, anyways, yeah, but yeah, 201 on snare tap, like, I spent half a day being like, this just doesn't feel right. We swapped it for a 57 and I was like, well, that's everything I needed from that snare drum.

And that was it. I was like, this is great. Period. Done. So, um,

**Joe Santarpia:** Old faithful.

**Ryan O John:** yeah, I know, it's like, I spend all this time talking about all these high end mics and this and that, and sometimes you just go back to other stuff and you're like, this actually works better, period. I mean, I'm fortunate in this scenario that like, we actually had enough rehearsal time that I could try different mics.

You know, the band would go off to lunch or whatever and we'd just swap out a mic and be like, is this better? And you know, have the drum tech hit it a couple times and be like, I think it's better. And then the band would come back from lunch, and we'd be playing, and I'm like, this works better for me.

And since I have everything recorded virtual, I can actually go back and compare it, and I go, this is actually unequivocally better.

**Joe Santarpia:** Right, right. You can actually A B it.

**Andy Leviss:** Ooh, Arnie, Arnie just made a, a great suggestion for the 4099 snare bottom, which is the, the universal, the Velcro clip one that you use for flutes. I forgot about that. Yeah, no, that's, and, and also Arnie says that, uh, he keeps preaching the gravity vary arm.

**Ryan O John:** I don't know what that is.

**Andy Leviss:** I think

**Ryan O John:** What does the gravity vary on?

**Andy Leviss:** I'd want to say it's like a cheaper version of a Magic Arm.

**Ryan O John:** No, alright. Uh, it's just this big, I mean, it's what it sounds like. It is a magic arm that clamps onto stuff, and you can put mics on the end of it. Yeah.

**Joe Santarpia:** I got one for you.

**Ryan O John:** Oh, do you? You have one right there?

**Joe Santarpia:** I don't, I don't, this isn't, maybe not that brand, but this

**Ryan O John:** But it's the short version of the same thing, yeah.

**Joe Santarpia:** it's, it's a, yeah,

**Andy Leviss:** Ooh, the Vari Arm is

**Brendan Dreaper:** a mini

**Andy Leviss:** yeah, although looking at the Vari Arm, it's definitely, it's got like a mount that it looks like it would be really nice for getting compactly around a drum stand, I'm digging that.

**Joe Santarpia:** Yeah.

**Ryan O John:** No, that's,

**Joe Santarpia:** It like, uh, the one, sorry, the one, um, the one thing kind of like tightens all the joints, like this. This tightens this arm as well as this and this. It's,

**Ryan O John:** So you kind of get it in position, and then just turn it once.

**Joe Santarpia:** And then just turn it once.

**Ryan O John:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, and they don't seem to sag, they just stay, which is really

**Joe Santarpia:** Yeah. Yeah. It's like, uh, it's meant for camera, I believe.

**Ryan O John:** Yeah, I believe it.

**Joe Santarpia:** And then just the little, you know, then the attachment that has the threading for the mic.

**Ryan O John:** Yeah, I'm a jerk, during our rehearsals I had that for my talkback microphone.

**Joe Santarpia:** Ooh,

**Ryan O John:** I was like, this is great, just put it on the long

**Joe Santarpia:** like your smart mic, you know, just, or, or you're just like,

**Andy Leviss:** and then we, we actually got a question in the chat of what's everybody's favorite, uh, podium or lectern mic for corporate or church

**Brendan Dreaper:** leans way back, like SM

**Ryan O John:** starts with an S? Um, no, that's, no, not Shure. Sheps, there's, there's an amazing Sheps podium mic. Um, and they make two versions of it, they make a hypercardioid I always put both of them right next to each other. So you can fade between which one for what, you know, if you've got one person, use the hyper.

It'll be nice and tight right in front of them. The moment there's two people there, you switch to the cardioid. Um, I can't remember the model number though. I don't know, Andy, do you know this?

**Andy Leviss:** Uh, no, I know which one, I know when I see it. Oh, and let me let Sean back in. And Sean's back with us, I think. Yep. Here he comes. Um, nah, I can't. Um, and then, yeah, I was gonna say, like, the, the Earthworks goosenecks are pretty solid. Um, and then the, the DPA actually makes a various lengths of goosenecks and I've been, I've been intrigued to try some of those. With, um, the some, I forget, I don't know if it was in the Discord for Signal and Noise, or where somebody recently suggested, um, basically putting your normal long goosenecks out as decoys that you never use except in an emergency, because everybody will grab them and mess with them.

And putting a little mini shotgun, like, the go to used to be the AKG 747, or like maybe even like one of the DPAs with the really, really short goosenecks down at the bottom. So you're still, that's what you're using that they're not going to go near. A little bit tighter pattern. And then, and then, yeah, the gooseneck, they can sit there and adjust all the time.

Because if you don't put the gooseneck there, they're gonna touch that little mic. But if you put the gooseneck there, they won't even notice the short one.

**Ryan O John:** Yeah, that makes sense. That's actually pretty, pretty sneaky. I like that. Um, I

**Andy Leviss:** Rob's saying the Shep's CCM it might be.

**Ryan O John:** the CCM41 and CCM22. So you've got, they've got a bunch of different versions of cardioid too that are really wide or like narrow cardioid and then super cardioid and all that.

So yeah, if you can get a couple of those next to each other. And they, I think they even have a stand that has, like, both stands in one, or both clips in one stand. So you can place them next to each other, then you can use, you know, the fader to kind of get a tighter or wider sound depending on what's necessary.

**Andy Leviss:** yeah, I think it's the, I'm, I'm trying to pull it up now. I know exactly what you're talking about. Yeah, there's the R2C double version support. There's a couple of them that support like two capsules. Yeah, because they're used in so much broadcast stuff.

**Ryan O John:** yeah. But yeah, those things, I, I, I love the sound of them, but they, you know, they do pick up shit. So, I, I also use a Cedar after it if I can, or, or, in, in my world I'm using a UA rack that's running CVOX, which is Cedar.

**Andy Leviss:** Yep.

**Ryan O John:** Um, I mean, heck, even this rack behind me, there's a pair of them down there at the bottom that all they're doing is running a bunch of Cedar on a bunch of the open microphones on this show. It's sneaky, I know.

**Joe Santarpia:** Sneaky snake.

**Ryan O John:** Alright, so, so,

**Andy Leviss:** on the,

**Ryan O John:** Andy, you had asked a question about kick drum microphones. What is it you're not happy about?

**Andy Leviss:** I don't know, I don't know if it's that I'm not happy or that I'm just constantly like, I get my, I've gotten my snare sound close enough that it's no longer my snare sounds like shit and it's now, I think like the, the one I've been happiest with so far, cause I got a couple demos lately that I've got the two SEs right now to demo.

And I, this summer in June, I did a show that I demoed the 4055. And right now that's my leading contender, only because DPA's whole thing with that was we're gonna give you everything, and you can, and it'll, and we designed it to take whatever EQ you want. Because particularly since I've been in lots of like one offs where I don't know what, I don't necessarily know what drum's gonna come in, and I only have half an idea of what genre, but then there's also the possibility that halfway through the show they're gonna switch genres for two songs, and if I put a D6 in there I might be fucked.

You know, like a D6 is great when you need a D6. When you don't need a D6, it is not great.

**Joe Santarpia:** Yeah, totally.

**Andy Leviss:** Um, and I know, like, we were talking in the Discord recently, like, I had said, you know, I had, like, a rental package that somebody else spec'd show up with a D1 12 and was Really unhappy, switch it out for a 52 and life got a lot easier.

And, uh, sorry, Andy Peters. I'm, I'm using his face, he's known to Facebook, uh, Andy Peters. Um, and he, he put on his historian hat and said, the problem with people hating a D112. is that a D112 was never designed to be used outside the mic. The 52 is the first mic he says that was designed historically to be used outside or like just in the hole and that a D112 will only sound the way it's supposed to when you insert all the way into the center almost right

**Joe Santarpia:** going to say, yeah, I was just going to say that's like, that's the move.

**Sean Walker:** That is a kick

**Joe Santarpia:** usable then, you

**Andy Leviss:** Yeah, so I gotta try that next time.

**Joe Santarpia:** Yeah.

**Sean Walker:** I've been, uh, on a similar quest and the D12VR has, has done pretty well for me. I've liked that a lot.

**Joe Santarpia:** Yeah.

**Andy Leviss:** that was the

**Joe Santarpia:** the new,

**Andy Leviss:** that's, that's the thing that fell across my radar because you can like change the EQ just by like throwing

**Sean Walker:** on it. It sounds good by itself, and then you've got a couple options. It's, uh, man, I'm in such a, like, double edged sword, like, personally, because the engineer in me, and the business owner in me, need two very fucking different things in our mic packages, right? The small sound company, or mid sound company, or whatever size sound company I got, I need more 52s than you can throw in a fucking truck.

Like, I need all of them. Everyone at Shure makes, I need all those.

**Ryan O John:** Yeah.

**Sean Walker:** NerdEngineeringMe wants all the DPAs and all the cool shit that I can, that I can get, right? So we've got just shelves and shelves and shelves of 57s and 58s and 52s and that kind of stuff But I got this one pack that I'm, this one Andy John pack that I'm making between the two of you fucking fucks.

That's got This, that's got the Earthworks DM20s for Toms, 4099s And, uh, the D12 VR in it for kick out, which I really like. It doesn't quite have the same rear rejection. Yeah, my man. It doesn't have the same rear rejection as a 52. Like a 52 has a lot of good rejection. It's really stable on a small stage.

Um, the VR is not quite as stable, but it's just, just fine, you know, and, uh, sounds kind of like the drum on kick out. And I get all the click from the in. I'm also one of those crazy fuckers. That EQs everything and so my all my drums look like smiley faces. Anyway, doesn't matter what the mic is I'm still gonna like get rid of all that shit.

Anyway, so the Fact that it's a little more natural sounding mic out of the box doesn't bother me I'm carving it up like it's Swiss cheese anyway, you know?

**Ryan O John:** So the thing that I find interesting about kick drum mics is For the most part, they're all kind of the same, right? Like they're all kind of the same in that, you know, they're all reasonably large diaphragm, they're all kind of going through some, some basic stuff, but when you EQ the snot out of them.

You can usually kind of get about the same thing out of all of them, right? And I do the same as you, Sean. I EQ the hell out of stuff. If, uh, one thing I hated about, uh, having an Avid, um, desk was that anyone who's standing behind me can see the extreme EQs that I have. On every channel, they'll be like, you have minus 16 db

**Andy Leviss:** the debate I got on the RIVAGE

**Brendan Dreaper:** I've seen yours,

**Sean Walker:** but bro,

**Ryan O John:** want people to

**Sean Walker:** EQ goes to minus 16 for a fricking reason. Like get some bro. Like, yeah, yeah,

**Ryan O John:** no, no. I, oh, I agree with you. I mean, hell, dude, I, I remember being on analog desks. I'd be like, oh yeah, kick in. It's a 91. Cool. We're gonna go to 400. We're gonna take it all the way out. And that's just what you're gonna do. You're gonna go

**Sean Walker:** And I'm going to flip the little switch that has the little dip in it. So I can get rid of that too. Like all the dip out of it. See ya.

**Ryan O John:** Oh, well, yeah. The dip switch didn't exist when I was using analog at the time. But, um, but what I've noticed is that certain mics you eq, the snot out of. And they sound pretty good. Other mics you EQ the snot out of, and they sound like you've EQ'd the snot out of them, right? And if you look at these on a, on a trace of what's happening, right?

Like, all these kick drum mics, for the most part, uh, not all of them, many of them are kind of pre EQ'd, and that's what makes them a kick drum mic. And if you look at the trace when you send pink in front of that mic, and put the mic in front of it, you'll see that some of them have pre EQ where the phase response is pretty decent.

Some of them have pre EQ where the phase response looks really crazy. And those are the ones where, when I EQ the snot out of them, they actually sound kind of hollow, or like, like, honestly, sound like a metal kick drum, which actually works for that genre. But it doesn't work if I want it to be like more punchy in that 90Hz range like, like, like, like R& B style or like alt rock.

But the ones that are like more linear in their phase response, they take that crazy EQ I apply, and they don't do that hollow sound, instead they feel kind of punchy and big. But they are heavily EQ'd, um, yeah, it's one of those things worth just kind of like playing with at some point. If you have these mics out and you've got some source where you can just put pink in front of it, just look at

**Sean Walker:** Are there a couple that you like specifically? Like, there's obviously there's one or two that are like your go tos, but are there a few? Are you like, they all, these fit in that category of can work? Yes. Can EQ? Yes. Can all fit the bill if I need them to, if I don't have my top choice.

**Ryan O John:** mean, a 52 is always going to work, right? Fine. It'll work. Um, I love that 4055, that new DPA that they put out. I fucking hate what it costs,

**Andy Leviss:** Mm hmm.

**Ryan O John:** but I love

**Andy Leviss:** That's why I keep searching because in June I found that and and was like and I could probably get it for dealer if I ask a couple friends nice But that's still not cheap, but I

**Sean Walker:** tell you as a DPA dealer, dealer's not cheap.

**Andy Leviss:** you want a mic that'll take EQ

**Sean Walker:** somehow make it cheap.

**Ryan O John:** Even at dealer, it's still not cheap. Um, but, but also, you know, I I, I, I'm the guy who owns the weird mics. I don't own 50 twos. I don't own 50 sevens because I will always be able to get those from the sound company. But the other weird stuff I make sure I own because then I can show up and, you know, blah, blah, blah. Um,

**Andy Leviss:** my

**Ryan O John:** that 40 55 is fantastic. Sorry, go ahead Andy.

**Andy Leviss:** Oh, no, I was gonna say that was my One of my Black Friday purchases for myself was a little grey Nanuk case with a shoulder strap just for my drum mic set, because it's the one thing at this point I'll always bring, because 3DM20s, the 201, the 88, because you sold me on that on bottom, and as usual, you're not wrong.

Um, the SR25s.

**Ryan O John:** are the

**Sean Walker:** I got one. I

**Ryan O John:** kid every day.

**Andy Leviss:** Oh, I had a bassist with that the other day, uh, Toshi Regan's bassist, uh, Frank,

**Ryan O John:** The Rupert, Neve di, the rn di these things will mess with you. Yeah, see, Joe's got one sitting right next to him too. There you

**Joe Santarpia:** road worn.

**Sean Walker:** one for years, same with the D12 VR and the, and the 201s. I've owned them for years for doing like studio stuff or whatever. I never even thought about bringing it live. I tried the Neve live on bass and I was like, man, it's just kind of squishy.

And I needed to like kick a little more ass. I don't know. It's just a little kind of squishy. And then you were saying like, dude, these will change your life. How do you not have these? And I was like, what, what do you mean? It'll change my life. Like, what do you, what, what kind of like weird are you talking about?

And I put it on acoustic guitar and I was like, Oh dog. It just took all the like, oh dog. Yeah. It's like, oh, all the shit I like about this guitar is just not, it's not there anymore. Like, I just, I love this, you know,

**Andy Leviss:** So, and for, for aid mics, a couple folks in the chat are throwing out the Bayer, uh, TGD71.

**Joe Santarpia:** Hot take, hate it,

**Ryan O John:** Do ya? How come?

**Joe Santarpia:** I've done one gig with it and maybe it was just that kick drum, but like, it was kind of what you said, like, uh, very beach ball y and then, and then like the more I EQ'd it, just like the worse it got. Like I'd pull it out and just be like, it would just sound like nothing.

I don't know. I mean, it might, it might've just been the drum, but it sucks cause I love the way they look. I love how they're like so small and like kinda, I don't know. All black and stealthy looking, but um, I just, I just couldn't get it. It was also like I was doing ears, so it was like direct inject straight into my brain of that and uh, just, I just couldn't, I just fought it the whole time.

**Brendan Dreaper:** Hmm.

**Ryan O John:** What's funny though is that, um, you know, back to the whole kick drum thing, you can make any mic work kind of anywhere, but like, what I've found is that if the drum is good, anything is going to sound awesome in it.

**Andy Leviss:** Mm hmm.

**Brendan Dreaper:** Hmm.

**Ryan O John:** And so, yeah, yeah, yeah, that's kind of it, right? But then it also comes to, okay, we keep putting two mics in a kick drum, right?

Inside and

**Andy Leviss:** to be my next question.

**Ryan O John:** So the question is always like, what's the purpose of putting two mics in a kick drum, right? Like, for me, it's because it's easier for me to control the tonal balance of it with faders and automation, right? So if I've got a ballad song, I want it to feel softer. So I might use more of the out mic, and we'll put it in air quotes because it's not actually outside of kick drum for me anymore.

Now it's inside and mounted. And, uh, if I need it to be more aggressive, use more of the inside mic. And that's because I EQ them tonally to be more

**Sean Walker:** whoa, whoa, whoa. Backup, brakes, reverse.

**Andy Leviss:** with the

**Ryan O John:** Uh

**Sean Walker:** It's mounted, your out mic is mounted in your drum. Where's your fucking in mic, bro? Is it a trigger? They're both in the drum. You just got two of them motherfuckers hanging

**Ryan O John:** no, no, no. So now, now, now I've got a 91 on the quote unquote floor of the drum inside it, and then I've got a Kelly Shumount inside the drum, and I've got a D6 inside it as well. So they

**Andy Leviss:** was going to say, so is it basically dynamic and

**Ryan O John:** aligned. Yeah. And, and the 91, you know, there's, there's a presence boost on that, right?

A bunch of top end, right? So that is kind of like the clicky present. Yeah, yeah. Nuh uh. That's the clicky present sounding thing. And the punch on it is in the 90 Hertz range, right? Like that kind of like R& B, alt rock, like it comes through main PA. The D6 though, is super scooped as a microphone. The presence peak is something in like the five plus K range.

And the sub boost is like 60 and below. So it's almost like that 91 is all the mid range, and the D6 is like the full scoop of the extended frequency range. So, I kinda use it that way, where if I want it to feel a little bit like more, I don't know, alt rock modern, er, not modern, but like alt rock R& B ish, I'll push the 91 a bit.

If I want it to feel super modern and produced, I push the D6 a bit and kinda pull them back. Um, so I use the two mics as two tonal characteristics that I can do with faders to change them from a song to song basis rather than grabbing EQs and, you know, taking top end off because now we're in a ballad and I've got a fucking metal sounding kick drum, like, that, that's annoying.

**Sean Walker:** Damn it, Ryan.

**Ryan O John:** I don't know, Joe, you do the same thing?

**Joe Santarpia:** No, like exactly the same thing. Maybe I, maybe the way you described it there at the end, I kind of treat it the opposite. Like the end is kind of the super in your face, more produced sound, you know? And then, and then. You know, the, the out is the, uh, more natural sound and like all the, all the processing kind of, um, is in line with that, you know, like the in is gated harder, even though it's kind of in physics, that kind of like makes less sense, but it's gated harder.

It's compressed harder. It's, it's almost acting like it's almost, you know, like. The concept of parallel compression you're kind of like skirting that line, you know, like a super extreme smiley EQ and yeah And then like the attack, you know, you said 5k I'd say more like 3 or something like that and more of like a 3k guy.

Yeah, 3k beef That's what I like to call it

**Andy Leviss:** So,

**Joe Santarpia:** But yeah

**Andy Leviss:** so a couple questions and comments coming from the chat. Uh, Arnie's saying Ryan, uh, I, I think is half joking and half asking if you could just get, use the 4055 and double patch it to two different channels, EQ differently.

**Ryan O John:** I used to do that actually, uh, I used to take a 91 and double patch it to two channels. Um, just so I had these two kind of tonal flavors. And I think back then I actually used one for all the top end and the other for all the bottom end, and I don't, it worked okay. Um, I don't do that now. Um, I don't, I don't, I don't really know.

I mean, maybe you can get away with getting the same kind of tonality that way, but I do find that when using the 91 inside and something else outside, or if that quote unquote out mic is inside, I find that gating from that 91 always seems to work better. Using that as the key for your gate for everything related to the kick drum seems to work really, really well.

Even better than putting a D6 inside the kick drum, still the 91 somehow gates cleaner. than that D6 does. So, I use that inside mic as the key for everything related to kick drum. Same for snare, like, you know, even if this is snare top and bottom, my bottom snare mic is keyed from my top mic's gate, you know, or rather my bottom snare's gate is keyed from my top mic.

You know,

**Andy Leviss:** And then, and then the other question that came in the chat, which actually Cookie asked and, and George answered and, uh, and basically the answer that I think Ryan and I both would get, cause this was a goddammit Ryan for me that cost me money this year. Which is about the, uh, the AT, like the A2500 or the 250DE, and I, if I can dare to answer, I think for both of us, it's that, uh, no likey on kick drum, really likey on guitar amp.

**Ryan O John:** yes, yeah, same, yeah, the AE2500, I mean, theoretically they made it as a kick mic, right, because there's a condenser and a dynamic in the same shell, they are perfectly aligned in space, so that they're, you know, aligned in phase and time and all that. Theoretically, they should be great for a kick drum, if your goal is to have a condenser and a dynamic.

But, I don't actually think that that's my goal. I think my goal isn't actually related to it being a condenser and a dynamic, it's related to these tonal differences between those two mics. And I find that on the AE2500 or the ATM250DE, which is like the cheaper version of the same thing, both capsules sound really, really similar.

**Joe Santarpia:** Hey, there he is

**Ryan O John:** There it is.

**Andy Leviss:** Yep. That's the, so for those following at home, that's the 2500.

**Joe Santarpia:** Hmm

**Ryan O John:** just a slightly shorter body. But I find that both of those capsules sound almost the same. They're not actually vastly different, whereas like a 91 and a D6 sound really different. So, I don't know, um, you know, anytime you apply EQ to two mics on the same source, You're creating phase problems, right?

Because EQs mess with phase response. I remember Brendan, you and I like went through this weird exercise ages ago in Zoolabs, the studio there, where we were like, yeah, when you put that high pass on, look at what comes out. And you looked at it and like, like, I think it was 80 hertz was fully inverted in polarity because of the phase shift. But yeah, so if you've got two mics that are almost exactly the same, that are in exactly the same place, if you put different EQs on them, they're going to have a weird phase relationship with each other. Um, yeah, it can get kind of odd. Whereas I find that happens less when it's two different mics that are already in different places in space.

Like, they seem to have less of a weird interaction when you start EQing them differently.

**Sean Walker:** Word. No,

**Ryan O John:** I don't know if you have any, any thoughts

**Sean Walker:** no. I love the rabbit hole, cause I get smarter every time and I need all the help I can get, bro.

**Andy Leviss:** I was gonna say the tip I'll throw out for the folks on the Yamaha RIVAGE, and I don't know if it's made into the DM7 or not, is the interface plugin that came in V6. It is magic for like kick drums or for like DI versus mic on a guitar. That's become my new favorite tone on anything double mic'd.

**Ryan O John:** So what is that like phase rotation, like a, like

**Andy Leviss:** It is delay and phase, basically you drop it in on the channel that you're gonna need to delay and you sidechain it off the other channel. It'll capture the two waves. It's got an auto or a manual to both time align them and then if you do need to go further you can do the polarity in it and it does have all passes.

Although they don't really explain what the various options on the Allpass do, you just kinda gotta fuck with it and see what they do. But like 10, just the delay gets it pretty close. But it's instead of sitting there trying to dial in by delay, you just drop it in while they're hitting the kick a couple times, hit capture, captures the waveforms, you hit align, and poof, they're lined up.

**Brendan Dreaper:** that's

**Ryan O John:** That's awesome, yeah, it's like the in phase plug in or the auto

**Andy Leviss:** but having it built in on the console is so nice.

**Ryan O John:** yeah, yeah. Someone in the chat just asked, or Stephen asked, does anyone else do their kick EQ and dynamics on the group instead of the individual channels? Um, Brendan, tell me, you're raising your hand.

**Brendan Dreaper:** I do that a lot of times, especially for like speed, and like also to have less phase stuff happening. I'll

**Ryan O John:** Joe, Joe, you raised your hand too.

**Brendan Dreaper:** Yeah.

**Joe Santarpia:** Yeah, yeah, definitely. Like, uh, there'll, there might be a little on the channel, but, um, I'm trying to kind of EQ less lately too. And I find that that's an easy, that's like a step in that direction too. You know, you like,

**Ryan O John:** I keep telling myself I'm trying to EQ less, and then

**Sean Walker:** junkie dog. I can't

**Ryan O John:** front of this, I look at it and I'm like, what the fuck have I

**Sean Walker:** another hit of EQ dog. I'll insert a EQ's on EQ's if I can. Like, I'll put a Pultec on a kick in. If I can. With the channel. Like, gimme. All of it. I'm good. I'm good.

**Joe Santarpia:** No, but just. Just like, you know, put them, you know, bust the two mics to the same, you know, mono group, like, start with preamp, like, you know, blend it, like, okay, that sounds good, then like, what's up with delay, like, start sweeping that around, use that comb filtering to your advantage, get that, you know, you're like, you're kind of VQing it in a way that way, and then, and then, kind of like, fine tune it on the group, if something's really fucked, then like, go to the channel, you know?

To

**Ryan O John:** I have to make an assumption about what all you guys are saying there though, and that's that dynamics on a group, you might do compression, but gating,

**Sean Walker:** Channels with the gate and EQ for me. Dynamics on the group.

**Brendan Dreaper:** yeah,

**Sean Walker:** for drums, for drums.

**Ryan O John:** Okay. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Makes sense. And I kind of do the same. So it's like, yeah, gate on the kick in, gate on the kick out.

I'll have EQ on the kick in and kick out, that is stuff that makes it fit the tonality I want from it. But then compression or whatnot happens on the group, and actual overall kick tonality stuff. happens on the group. So it's

**Joe Santarpia:** that saturation or whatever.

**Ryan O John:** yeah, so it's like if I've gotten the sound out of a 91 that I like, cool.

I've got the sound out of a D6 that I like, cool. Now I can use the faders to kind of like change the, the blend of those two to change overall tonality. But on that kick group, if I'm like, you know what, there's just a bit too much buck 80 in this. I'm going to take it out there. You know what, I need a little bit more top end today.

I'm going to add a little bit of 5k there because I don't want to fuck with the relationship. between the two inside mics anymore and I want to now be able to use these inside mics to kind of shift the tonality in, in, in the way of a 91 or in the way of a 96, uh, D6, later if you will. But the overall tonality happens on that kick group.

Same for snares, um, snare group, same thing.

**Joe Santarpia:** sure. Yeah.

**Andy Leviss:** George was just asking if, uh, saying that he used to do the same with snare group, but doesn't as much because of the potential bleed of hat and not wanting so much high end boost on the bottom mic, as far as EQ goes.

**Ryan O John:** You know that's, that's an interesting thing, uh, with, with all you guys, what do you feel in general, like we're gonna just wide swath here, Your blend is of snare top and snare bottom. Andy, what are you at, usually?

**Andy Leviss:** in, in terms of placement or,

**Ryan O John:** no, no, in terms of actual level that you put out through a PA, your blend of snare top to snare bottom.

**Andy Leviss:** man, it's, I've been, cause I, I've, I think like you said, I have been a snare top only for a long time. I never quite.

**Ryan O John:** hmm.

**Andy Leviss:** Got into bottom until you turned me on to the 88 and It's been varying per song but like fairly equal for me depending on the tone it Yeah Other than like, you know Like I'll definitely push the top if it's if it's like lots of side stick action going on or like rim action going on But yeah, I'd say I've been ending up equal, or maybe even leaning a little more heavily on the bottom

**Sean Walker:** Gross.

**Ryan O John:** Interesting. Joe?

**Joe Santarpia:** 40, typically, you know,

**Ryan O John:** Typically leaning top.

**Joe Santarpia:** yeah. Yeah. Maybe 60, 40 top.

**Brendan Dreaper:** yeah. I was gonna land on 6040 to the top, too.

**Ryan O John:** Okay.

**Sean Walker:** I need, in my, in my mix, I need the level of both microphones. So they're pretty, they're pretty close. For me, I, I am gaining those up till they're basically just not clipping. Like, Minus, maybe minus 10 from the top, you know, depending on what desk you're on, like minus 10, minus six, something, just banging away at those fucking snare drum microphones.

And then this snare top, I'm sorry, snare bottom is 6dB quieter than the snare top. Exactly. And that works for me almost every time. So just like kicks and snares in my particular mix are just like drums slam you in my world. You know what I'm saying? Like just banging away and snare bottom is 6dB quieter than snare top.

**Andy Leviss:** In Soviet

**Sean Walker:** Say what?

**Andy Leviss:** Oh,

**Sean Walker:** Yeah, yeah. Totally, dude.

**Andy Leviss:** drums slams you.

**Sean Walker:** Totally.

**Ryan O John:** Interesting. Okay. Sorry, this thing just finished doing its conversion of 128 tracks for two and a half hours from 48k to 96. And it, what, what did that take? Three hours? Four hours? Um, but so, sorry, the reason I was asking is because someone in this chat here just mentioned about bumping top end on the, uh, snare bottom mic.

Um, George mentioned this about the snare group. And the reason I kind of asked here is because I take top end away from snare bottom.

**Andy Leviss:** Well, George was saying that he doesn't want as much high end boost on the bottom mic.

**Ryan O John:** okay,

**Andy Leviss:** he no longer EQs the snares as a group.

**Ryan O John:** gotcha, gotcha, okay. Yeah, see, I actually take away a lot of top end from the snare bottom mic. I want a lot of meat of the snare drum sound from

**Andy Leviss:** think that's what I need to do more of and why I've been leaning heavier on the bottom mic than I expected combined with lately I've had a couple of real hard hidden snares.

**Ryan O John:** Yeah. I mean, that, that said, there was probably years where I was like 80, 90 percent snare top and I was always like, what the fuck are you doing with the snare bottom? It sounds like shit. I don't want it. And I basically didn't use it.

**Andy Leviss:** and we've got a couple, a couple questions if we can, if we can translate our

**Sean Walker:** Yeah. Minus six on the snare bottom relative to the top. And then snare bleed in the hi hat? I don't give one flying fuck about snare bleed in the hi hat. You're not gonna get the snare out of any microphone on the stage. It's the loudest thing on the stage. Make sure the hi hat mic is in polarity with the snare mic and turn that shit up.

And make sure they all sound good and let it rip.

**Joe Santarpia:** Hell yeah.

**Brendan Dreaper:** hat

**Sean Walker:** the most hit instrument on stage. It's literally the most hit instrument on

**Andy Leviss:** which Instagram account was it the other day that was,

**Brendan Dreaper:** necessary. It's the most necessary instrument.

**Andy Leviss:** that's, yeah, what was the Instagram account the other day that I think I posted the memes in, uh, in the Signal to Noise Discord that was like, who, who even turns their hi hat up, mic up, and I'm like,

**Sean Walker:** the most hit instrument on stage,

**Ryan O John:** I do. A

**Sean Walker:** It's got to be clear and awesome. Use a good

**Andy Leviss:** Oh, I, I, I went, I went, I went, I went weirdly vintage bear for my hi hat mic lately, because Ryan turned, again, Ryan turned me on to Dynamic on the hi hat for that meet, which did solve a lot of the fights I always had with hi hat mics. And I had one day that I actually, I was like, look, failing anything else, I don't have another 201, just put a 57 on it.

And I had somebody else on the show come around behind, yeah, and somebody came back behind me and took that off and was like, what the fuck is this? Put a KM184 on there. So I went out and I was gonna do a 201, or then I ended up getting, uh, an M420, which is basically a shorter 201 with a little less low end and a slight presence peak that I got, like, used from Germany for like, you know, 150 or something, and like, I like, it's, it gets that sound of that meat you want, but it also looks like a condenser, so it shuts people up.

**Brendan Dreaper:** The hat is like the vocalist of the drum set. So I feel like putting a 57 or a 58

**Andy Leviss:** the episode right there,

**Brendan Dreaper:** you know.

**Ryan O John:** I love it. I love it.

**Brendan Dreaper:** There you

**Ryan O John:** Yeah, I find every time I put like kind of one of those hi def y type mics, you know, like a 184 or something on a hi hat, it's like, great, yeah, there's a lot of 10k and shit that's there, but 10k is not what's gonna make that hat cut in a PA. It might on a

**Joe Santarpia:** of ugly.

**Ryan O John:** and it's, yeah, it's kind of ugly.

It doesn't work because now I got 10k of everything else as well, and I can't clean it up as well. But like that, that, I don't know, 700 to 1. 5k, that like chunky midrange, if you can get that to poke through, your overheads pick up the rest of the kind of sizzliness from it, so that's what makes it actually cut and

**Sean Walker:** Dude, that was the hardest thing for me. When I like the difference between making records and doing live sound. Cause I came from making records was not making everything so fucking pretty doing live sound. Like you can. But like you said, you don't need all that top end coming out of a PA, most PAs won't even produce it, so you just got all this extra energy that you're blamming into something, you're totally right, dude. You're totally right.

**Ryan O John:** And to be honest, I'll leave the 10k so that I have some space for vocals to have that little bit of top up there. Make the vocal feel real present, you know? The more other shit I put up there, the less there is for the vocal.

**Andy Leviss:** And Kez is throwing out the A2300 on hi hats. Which, looking at the response, that

**Ryan O John:** the one that looks kinda like a 414?

**Andy Leviss:** no, it's a, it's a dynamic, it looks like a mini RE 20, kind of.

**Ryan O John:** Oh, don't know it.

**Sean Walker:** it looks cool, and that's half the battle. As long as it looks cool, done. You're already winning. just gotta look cooler than the next guy, dude.

**Ryan O John:** That,

**Andy Leviss:** yeah, well, I'm like, now I want to look, because it, from what, from what I'm remembering, looking at the frequency response, it looks pretty close to the 420, which, while arguably more expensive, definitely more replaceable than the 420.

**Ryan O John:** very

**Andy Leviss:** I might have to, I might have to check that out, as a backup, if and when my 420 dies.

**Sean Walker:** overheads. I gotta, I gotta know. I, I'm an old I'm an old studio guy. I measure my fucking overheads out from the snare top. I get my nerd on. I cannot deal. Like, snare top is in phase with the overheads. Overheads are picking up a lot more drum kit than just high passed to however high that filter will go.

And I I can't get over it. It's just ingrained in me. Whether it's right or wrong, I don't care. I'll put it out for the world to hear. That shit's low pa or high passed at like 80 to 125, maybe. And I'm getting all the drums, the low end of the toms are in there. The all the stage bleed and everything washed that comes with it.

It's fine. Where are you guys at on overheads? And I like pretty overheads, like DPA 4011s, KM 84s. My personal favorite for cheap, well, I'm gonna say cheap carefully, but for inexpensive mics that just slay is the AKG C451B. You can get them brand new still, clear and bright and killin And if one gets hit by a drumstick, you're not crying like it's DPA money, you know what I mean? Uh,

**Andy Leviss:** Yeah,

**Ryan O John:** And you can get the little 90 degree

**Sean Walker:** On the old ones you can, the new ones you can't. The new ones are Are you can on the new ones? Or are they fixed? I thought they were

**Ryan O John:** Ah, it's

**Sean Walker:** but the new ones don't have the

**Ryan O John:** on adapter. Right.

**Sean Walker:** The old 451s have the screw in capsule. The new Bs,

**Ryan O John:** Oh,

**Sean Walker:** get, they got harmonized.

They're all one pencil now, but they're cost effective and they sound killer. They're killer. They're like 300 bucks used on reverb. So you can just, like, get a pair for the same price as you'd buy a pair of SM81s, and they SMOKE 81s, clarity wise.

**Andy Leviss:** yeah, and, and

**Brendan Dreaper:** How about the,

**Andy Leviss:** in a, in a vote on the inexpensive side and, um, uh, for the SE7, which I've heard lots of folks

**Ryan O John:** I really like 'em. I have a bunch. Um,

**Brendan Dreaper:** I like those,

**Ryan O John:** the se eights, they're both

**Andy Leviss:** And then Yeah, and then, and then Coogie also asked the, asked a question, which is what I was going to get to in my answer to Sean's thing, which is what about underheads?

Which is a, uh, yeah, which, that's the thing we were talking about in, in the Discord the other day, that both with that and answering Sean's question about overheads is, my answer at least is, what is your goal? Are you treating the drum as a collection of 12 different instruments, or are you treating it as a An instrument made up of 12 pieces.

Because if you're doing the latter, which is what I think is the right answer, yeah, we start with the overhead, see what I get, and everything else is filling

**Sean Walker:** am trying to capture the whole drum kit.

**Andy Leviss:** But yeah, if you're trying to do something, like, heavily produced, and you want that, like, you're trying to produce each sound of each drum, like, crazy, then I can see a case for an overhead particula or an underhead, particularly on a loud stage.

But even then, I'm

**Sean Walker:** Yeah, my question was, how do you guys do it?

**Joe Santarpia:** Uh, I've been, this is, this is kind of a new, just a new thing lately. I've been kind of fucking with

**Sean Walker:** Alright. Yeah,

**Ryan O John:** Ooh. I'm into it.

**Brendan Dreaper:** hmm.

**Joe Santarpia:** know, being less aggressive with the high pass, man, like, I don't know if you can get away with it. It kind of works. I, uh, I was doing ears for this artist and the, the drummer's a studio guy.

And he. He fucking, he will not let you high pass the overheads at all. I high pass him at like 80 hertz. I just came in. I was like, Oh, start there. Like, what's up? And like the second he hit the kid, he's like, do you high pass the overheads? I was like, yeah, a little. And he's like, take it off. It's like, okay.

And like, it sounded great. And same thing with like acoustics and stuff like that. Like in the ears, like he was like, don't fucking high pass it. Like you can carve a little bit of the like overwhelming low end, but don't fucking high pass it. And it just sounds so. Much more natural and, and nice. I don't know.

Like,

**Ryan O John:** Yeah, I agree with you. I agree with you a million percent. Um, high pass on overheads for me is a hundred percent related to PA.

**Joe Santarpia:** Mm

**Ryan O John:** So if, if I've got an SL series and it's not kicking off a bunch of low end back towards the stage, my high pass might be a hundred hertz,

**Sean Walker:** Oh,

**Ryan O John:** And I'm going to get a great sounding drum kit. If, if I've got K1 or I don't know, pick, pick another PA that is non cardioid, any of them, right? Um, the back pressure off that PA that is in that like 180 to 240 range makes my drum kit sound a mess. And that's from guitars and other stuff. To the point that I have to take that high pass and put it up to, I don't know, at least 280.

Um, otherwise I just have a messy sounding drum kit because I have all this like extra low mid information that is out of time and just really messy. Um, so, so sadly, it's not ideal, and I used to use Earthworks QTC40s as my overheads because to me, they sounded like a drum kit, measured from the center of the snare and everything so that they would be a beautiful stereo image.

And those things go all the way down to what, 4 hertz or something like that? And it sounds amazing, unless you've got a PA that's got a bunch of back pressure. Now when you cue up your overheads, you hear this like, rooty thing in them, and you need that to go away. Because if that's still in there when you start to do things like compression and all this other stuff, like through the many stages, uh, your, your whole mix just gets messy.

And suddenly your drums take up way more mix than they should. Your drums take up, like, space where guitars should be, and all these other things, you know what I

**Sean Walker:** Guilty as charged, your honor.

**Andy Leviss:** So, George has another contender for quote of the episode, I can never make underheads sound like music.

**Ryan O John:** I, I agree with that. I agree with

**Joe Santarpia:** Yeah,

**Andy Leviss:** totally.

**Joe Santarpia:** good.

**Brendan Dreaper:** Uh, guys I had to, I think I gotta call it for myself, I gotta go

**Sean Walker:** Oh yeah, Doug.

**Brendan Dreaper:** the baby right now. But

**Ryan O John:** Brennan, enjoy being a dad and a happy new year cause I probably won't talk with you before then, man.

**Andy Leviss:** Happy New Year, good to, good to put a face with the, with the voice now.

**Brendan Dreaper:** oh yeah, yeah, same on your end, great to, great to hang with you guys.

**Andy Leviss:** Same, take care

**Joe Santarpia:** you, Brendan. Microsecond? Micro. Parallelly

**Ryan O John:** So, we've gone down

**Andy Leviss:** Brendan dude, huh guys?

**Ryan O John:** So, we've gone down the rabbit hole. Should we back out?

**Andy Leviss:** yeah, I mean, I mean, we didn't all answer Sean's question, but I think we got enough answers to it. And I think we all kind of nodded along that we're pretty

**Sean Walker:** Overhead. George wants to know about overhead compression.

**Andy Leviss:** oh, and then we did get a question.

**Sean Walker:** if I compress, yes, fast attack, but I don't very often compress the overheads. All

**Ryan O John:** I can tell you the settings right now, right in front of me.

**Andy Leviss:** Well, first of all, which expensive compressor do we need?

**Ryan O John:** compressor on the desk.

**Sean Walker:** Mm

**Andy Leviss:** right,

**Ryan O John:** Ratio 2 to 1. Uh, 100, I guess, nanoseconds?

**Sean Walker:** Micro,

**Ryan O John:** U. S. is U. S. is microseconds, microseconds. Microseconds attack, so basically the fastest it'll go, and a hundred millisecond release. The idea is to take the snare drum down in the overhead and only that.

And that allows you to get away with having this parallel compressed sounding snare drum because your overheads have this gnarly compressed snare without you having to do a lot of parallel compression. So you kind of get that like parallelly compressy sound

**Andy Leviss:** nice.

**Ryan O John:** without actually having to do, you know, crazy routing.

But also that means, you know, you can turn up your overheads a little bit more without making a total mess of your snare sound and

**Sean Walker:** So that, uh, um, I'm the same and I got there. Because I came up in the studio on an SSL 4060 4G and that is fast attack, fast release on the SSL compressor on that desk. You just pull it up, and that's what I'm doing over here if you're kidding.

**Ryan O John:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Sean Walker:** does exactly what you said, where like the snare just gets mushed down in those overheads, and boom, done.

And to be honest, I'll let out the only secret I've got, because I don't have any secrets. Almost all of my compressor attack and release times that I put into a digital desk came from the analog counterpart of something. So, my bus compressor on my 2 bus came from the SSL 2 bus compressor. It's either 10 milliseconds attack or 30.

And it's a hundred milliseconds release in unless I've got an SSL in which case I kind of like the auto too, but I don't have a like 173, 7459 or 9759 or really it's like it's a hundred or it's 200 like you were on an SSL bus compressor, right? Same with channel compressors, same with like. 1176 style compressors, like there is a setting, either either works or does not, I'm not fussing with the whole frickin thing to like twist knobs everywhere to try to make it like, insert compressor, get gain right, no, yes, no, I'm out, next subject, I gotta do something else.

And I know a lot of, sorry go ahead, I know a lot of people go way down the rabbit hole about like, well do I want it to be one second? Or two seconds or 1. 235 seconds. Or, you know what I mean? Like it's, it's either this is working or that's working or it's not working. And I got to move on to something else.

I don't have time to sit around and hang out and figure out whether I want a one millisecond or two millisecond attack, you know,

**Ryan O John:** Well, the tough thing is that, in the most real of ways, a single compressor setting does not work for every single song. Period. You know, so it's like, you gotta find the thing that's gonna work for your whole set, because you're not gonna change your compressor setting for each fucking song. But the ballads might need a different feel

**Joe Santarpia:** What do you mean, Mr. Snapshot?

**Ryan O John:** and

**Sean Walker:** Wait. Oh my God. Is that it?

**Ryan O John:** many do I

**Sean Walker:** Snapshot now? It's done. It's

**Joe Santarpia:** 700 for one

**Sean Walker:** Mr. Snapshot,

**Joe Santarpia:** Oh yeah,

**Sean Walker:** changing, changing in my phone,

**Ryan O John:** I just

**Sean Walker:** John is now

**Andy Leviss:** bootcamp before?

**Ryan O John:** I just started building this and I'm already at

**Joe Santarpia:** How many? Okay, how many, that's, uh, how many sub, uh, you know, sub, how many, that's 36

**Ryan O John:** has, the first, the first song has 16 snapshots in it.

**Joe Santarpia:** Okay, all

**Ryan O John:** The first

**Joe Santarpia:** 36

**Sean Walker:** The first song you're just going,

**Joe Santarpia:** got it.

**Sean Walker:** are you on time code?

**Ryan O John:** no, what it is, is that like, you know, for the intro, snare gates need to be off. And then the moment it goes full band, snare gates need to come back on. That's two snapshots, plus the parent snapshots. And then, you know, there's a moment where the

**Joe Santarpia:** you can't just squeeze the compressor attack time in there? Is it gonna get all this other shit

**Ryan O John:** I mean, you can, you can, um, anyways, yeah. But with all that stuff, like attack release times, it's all kind of like, somewhat unique to, you know, the given song. But at the same time, like You cannot customize absolutely everything for every song. It's actually impractical. So you find the thing that works the best for most of the time, and then you find your weird hacks to make it work for the rest of the time.

You know what I mean?

**Joe Santarpia:** Minimal

**Sean Walker:** And I, I agree with you a hundred percent. What I'm saying is that I picked mine based on what specific compressors attack and release times are not just an arbitrary number. You know what I mean? So like a three, 10 millisecond attack, and then it's got its auto kind of release thing, or you can change the release.

So if I'm trying to do something like that, we're on a guitar group or whatever, I would use a 10 millisecond attack, 100 millisecond release. If I don't have that emulation, if I'm using a stock plugin or something, is what I was trying to say. You know.

**Ryan O John:** and, and kind of to Andre's point that with, with the question he is asking about, you know, the stock setting for an Allen Heath, when SSL designed these compressors, they picked, you know, the five values that are the most useful and the most US musical. And in doing that, like, the kind of default positions, and same with plugins, the default positions for a lot of these plugins should be really usable because they are some of the most common settings that get used.

So the stock settings on a compressor on a desk, and I know this

**Sean Walker:** You did what?

**Ryan O John:** desk and we did this, should be some, yeah exactly, should be something where you can just turn it on and it is generally usable for

**Sean Walker:** you say that most people like or think desks sound good based on the stock presets of things like instantiate compressor sounds dope or does not sound dope and they don't dig deep enough to find out if the desk really does or does not sound good.

**Ryan O John:** don't put it on people as if they don't dig deep enough, they never have the time to dig deep enough. Right? You know, it's, it's, it's a function of like, like time and quality, right? You want to be able to turn something on and have it sound good. And if you do that on one platform and you just press one button and it sounds good, that platform is unequivocally better for you than when you go to another platform and you turn something on and it takes you five minutes to make that thing

**Sean Walker:** You're right. I overspoke.

**Ryan O John:** if it could sound better.

**Joe Santarpia:** that might be, that might be one of the fatal flaws of the Midas Pro Series compressor. Is that it's like, defaulted, if I'm not mistaken, it's like, it's, it's like a really fast attack time or something like that. And, you know, I've heard many people, they're like, oh, the desk is great, but the effects are shit, you know, this or that.

And it's like, well, the compressor is like, it's actually okay, it's just the default setting is garbage. You know, you, you have to twist like three knobs to get it to be like somewhat usable, you know.

**Ryan O John:** absolutely. And to that point, like, on my studio system, and even in like Waves stuff, I've changed all the default settings for almost every plugin that I regularly use. Because you can! You can like, find a spot where this thing sounds good, and you can save it as a preset that gets loaded as the default.

Um, and if you have the time and you've got a rig where you can do this, Do that. Find, find the sound that you like in certain things, like, like, okay, and make that the default. That also means that when you instantiate that plugin, it should do the thing that your brain is telling you that that plugin does immediately.

You know what I mean? That sound that you've already decided that this is what I like out of this thing. Which, kind of to Sean's point, then means when you turn this thing on, it does what you

**Sean Walker:** I do. That's what I love

**Ryan O John:** You know what I mean?

**Sean Walker:** Insert sounds warm, gooey, and big, and just lovely. You know what I mean? You don't have to fuss with it a bunch. Whereas if you have like, like a, like something that is cool, but takes more fussing, like a fab filter or whatever, where you're like, I can do anything with this, but I must do anything with it to make it happen.

Whereas insert crusty old 33609

**Ryan O John:** Right.

**Sean Walker:** kick ass yes, or does not kick ass no. You know, move on with your life, right?

**Ryan O John:** Yeah, I mean, you know, the Chris Lord Alge way of mixing is that his hardware,

**Sean Walker:** know I went to Mix of the Masters with him and got to pick his brain about that in person. And it's mostly for recall, but also cause he found the sweet spot and just lets it ride. You know what I mean?

**Ryan O John:** And you can do that with every plugin too, because every plugin also has a similar type of sweet spot. For the most part, my hardware does not change. I mean, this rack does, this 500 Series one, because I take it with me on different gigs. Everything else stays exactly the same all the time, because recall is easier, and all these pieces of kit are kind of like set in a setting I like, so that the moment they're inserted, it should sound like I expect it

**Sean Walker:** a tool for a job and its job is to just make the sound it makes, which is why you've got it rather than just the channel compressor or whatever. Right.

**Ryan O John:** Right, and if you need more compression, well, turn up what's going into it. If you

**Sean Walker:** Cause yours are mostly on buses, right? So you can just drive harder into the bus or not.

**Ryan O John:** Yeah, pretty much, pretty much only on buses, yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

**Andy Leviss:** Yeah, and Sean, you and I were talking like an episode or two ago likewise about like the, the Neve, like the 5043 portico, like that, like I've never used it, not on the default setting. Like those defaults are chef kiss for vocals.

**Sean Walker:** Yeah. Thousand

**Ryan O John:** What's unfortunate is that, with very few exceptions, most reverbs on desks or in plugins

**Sean Walker:** million percent. If every one of them came out sounding like a 480 plate, or a,

**Joe Santarpia:** FabFilter.

**Ryan O John:** Except

**Sean Walker:** could all just come out sounding like a 480 plate at two seconds. Or, sounded like a Bercasti, we all just buy every plug in they want, they buy them all. I buy them all. 100 bucks a piece, I'll buy them

**Ryan O John:** Yeah, yeah, exactly. Like, Bricastis? Great presets. 480s, 224s, great presets. The FabFilter Pro R, great presets. Even that iZotope

**Sean Walker:** that Pro R sounds dope.

**Ryan O John:** really good. Valhalla, great presets.

**Joe Santarpia:** I love Brar.

**Ryan O John:** Um, but the stuff that's in desks?

**Sean Walker:** man, didn't you design a desk? Why didn't you sort that out? Come on, dawg!

**Ryan O John:** cause of the presets.

**Andy Leviss:** That's, I've been,

**Joe Santarpia:** true.

**Andy Leviss:** I've been, I've been so spoiled on the, on the refash lately with like nearly unlimited precocity to the point that like I'm using the precocity for like my insert on a DI now.

**Ryan O John:** Oh God.

**Joe Santarpia:** Oh, for acoustic. Is that Ryan's

**Andy Leviss:** Yep. Yep. Yep. Yep. And like, I'd be, I'd been, I'd been using like the

**Ryan O John:** but I'm using, I'm doing the same thing, but I'm using the seventh heaven plugin and I'm inserting that on, on acoustics on this system.

**Andy Leviss:** Well, the, which preset, cause that's the one thing that drives me nuts about the, the Y7 emulation is that it doesn't have the ambience preset,

**Ryan O John:** those are the good ones.

**Andy Leviss:** I was gonna say, cause is that the, is that the one you're using for that? Because I know that's kind of designed for that like, close mic, give it space.

**Ryan O John:** I believe so. Yeah. I believe it's one of the ambience of ambience two presets. I'll send you the preset. Well, it'll be a preset in seventh heaven, but

**Andy Leviss:** Yeah, well, I've got 7th Heaven. It's just like, on the house gig, I try to stay in console as much as I can, because it

**Sean Walker:** Oh, so you're saying that the Bercasti that's in the Ravage doesn't have the preset you want, but the 7th Heaven does, whether it's the 69 version or the 300 version, both have the preset. Is that what you're saying?

**Ryan O John:** Yeah. The, the presets in seventh heaven are the same on the, the, the expensive

**Andy Leviss:** Yeah, it's the other, it's the thing, it's the thing like, like tempo

**Ryan O John:** the ducking and the tempo syn yeah, but, but I don't actually use any of that, even though I have the pro version, I don't use any of the features that are pro only.

**Sean Walker:** Sounds like I don't have 300 bucks going out the door right this second and it's only going to be 69. Yeah, dude, way better.

**Ryan O John:** Much better, right?

**Sean Walker:** Every time I talk to you guys, it costs me 500 fucking dollars. It's almost like a 1 900 number.

**Andy Leviss:** I gave you a 10. 99 thing at the start of the episode.

**Sean Walker:** should. Call Sweetwater and be like, Yo, man!

**Joe Santarpia:** Yeah.

**Sean Walker:** Give me that money!

**Andy Leviss:** Yeah, Amazon, uh, Amazon referral links for the win,

**Sean Walker:** totally.

**Ryan O John:** Exactly.

**Andy Leviss:** Uh, this might be a good question to wrap it up as we're coming around in two hours. Is Andre asked if there's any like, if any of us have our own default setting to like, or could we define like our signature sound, or is there a signature sound?

**Ryan O John:** Joe, you answer that one first.

**Joe Santarpia:** Uh, fuck man. I try, you know, try to kind of get close to what people are expecting to hear from the artist, which is usually the record. And obviously there's massive differences between live and the record, but if you can kind of tie it together somehow, um. Whether it's the melody, or the way the drums hit you, or a vocal effect or something.

Try to get one or two of those qualities in the live mix, and usually the rest can kind of work itself out that way. I don't know if that's a signature sound, but that's just maybe kind of the approach or something.

**Ryan O John:** I think that makes sense.

**Joe Santarpia:** Does that make sense? Okay.

**Ryan O John:** When, when people hear your show, do you, have you ever been told by anyone that they can tell that it's your show?

**Joe Santarpia:** Maybe that's my face.

**Ryan O John:** They're like, it's, it's, it sucks. This is definitely a Joe

**Joe Santarpia:** Oh god, it's, it's him. Oh shit. We gotta go.

**Ryan O John:** People I know have told me that. They're like, oh, I can tell that was your mix. And it's usually because I make the snare too fucking loud.

**Joe Santarpia:** Ah.

**Ryan O John:** I don't think it's too loud. I love it. I like it loud, but

**Sean Walker:** Just ever so quieter than the lead vocal. Just like, just a little quietly vocal and it's almost loud enough.

**Ryan O John:** yeah,

**Andy Leviss:** I can't name names. They're definitely in the Broadway sound design community. They're definitely designers that you could drop somebody blindfolded into their show and you know exactly which of three or four designers it is. I've even had, I had one, one designer who, who, uh, is at this point mostly retired.

I don't want to phrase it that way because I'm trying, I'm trying to cloak who I'm talking about and in the way making it sound like I'm talking about somebody totally different. But there's a, a, there was a designer years ago that I had, a company manager is like, I don't know audio at all. And if I'm dropped into a theater and so and so's show within about three bars, I know it's that person's show.

**Ryan O John:** And what is it about it that, that makes it kind of the signature of them? Is it, is it just general balance or is it like tonality? Is

**Andy Leviss:** In that case it was, it's Tonale, in that case it was taking the old school Meyer honk and leaning into it.

**Sean Walker:** totally gross. Totally gross.

**Joe Santarpia:** Oh, fun.

**Andy Leviss:** So anybody from the theater, from the Broadway community knows exactly who I'm talking about right

**Sean Walker:** for a signature sound, I don't know that I would say that I have a signature sound. I work not, I don't work directly for artists as often as some of the other people, so I can't like, I don't get to hone those skills as much. I would say that the things that I think about while doing this are Whatever the artist is that's playing, and they're often festivals for me, so they're coming through like, you know, 10, 000 a day or something stupid, right?

But whoever's name is on the marquee is the most important input in the whole freaking thing, right? So if it's some person's name, that person's instrument or vocal or whatever, is the jam for that mix. And whether I've heard the show or not, it's pretty easy to be like, Oh, Bob Smith and the so and so and Bob Smith singing lead vocals.

Well, the lead vocals can be important on this show, right? Also, I feel like if I've got my kick snare and lead vocal and bass guitar happening. The rest of it can kind of figure itself out and get, get feathered in as they need to. But asses are shaking. People are dancing and singing along and, and the, the whole thing's happening and people are happy.

Right? Can't hear the vocal drums are, drums are slamming, got enough bass? Nobody's really like, man, I think that guitar is too db too quiet or too db too hot, or, you know what I mean? They're like, there are guitars playing and it is louder for solo or not like my. My error, my margin of error is way bigger than somebody like Ryan's who has a very small margin of error because you basically got to make it like a thousand percent smoke and every night otherwise like get on a plane right isn't that that's where you're at yeah yeah

**Ryan O John:** pretty much. Yeah.

**Sean Walker:** I don't I don't have that kind of pressure like does sound good enough rad dude good work you know what I mean

**Ryan O John:** Yeah. Yeah. But the other thing is that

**Sean Walker:** yeah I got no time

**Ryan O John:** and, and to the point of someone's question to the point of someone's question in the chat, You know, uh, as soon as I get asked to do a gig, I ask, what's the last setlist they did? And I just put that on my, you know, iTunes. And I listen to that non stop until I'm at the gig.

So that could be, you know, a week, it could be, you know, three weeks. And all I'm doing is getting the vibe for what it is they're trying to deliver emotionally. And if you can figure that out, the rest comes together, right? And as you said, kick, bass, snare, right? That is the foundation. That is the musical foundation that makes someone feel something.

Then the vocal is gonna be a huge amount of the emotional delivery, right? The rest of the elements you stick around that are gonna be unique to each song, right? And I can do that because I've spent, you know, weeks or whatever listening to that record and I know exactly how they decided to mix that record.

Whereas, you know, if you're doing this artist for the first time on a festival, you can't choose to do that the same way, you know what I

**Sean Walker:** Absolutely, but I'm in a position where I can choose those inputs, I can choose the microphones for those inputs, so I, I favor microphones on those inputs that I like and work in many spaces, you know what I mean? And so that I know that whatever comes down the pike, whether it's metal, rap, jazz, hip hop, whatever, I can, I can make something happen with those inputs that will be.

Let's call it acceptable. You know what I mean? Cause everybody listening is like, oh, I'm XU or I'll do this. Everybody's got their own opinions about what is good, right? We haven't agreed on a good guitar tone in 50 fricking years. But, like, prioritizing what's important with the time you've got is really, is the important thing, I think.

And with you having a bunch of time, you're like, I'm gonna get every detail nailed to perfection on this. Cause I got time to do it. Whereas others of us, like, I think Joe has to work fast and some other people have to like, maybe not have as much time. You got to focus on what you can and the important things and then fuss with the little things later.

Right?

**Ryan O John:** Yeah. Yeah. I mean, so, ages ago, I did this show for a band that nobody knew at the time, the 1975, it was their first ever show. They were playing at the Bowery, and um, yeah, well at the time, it was their record release show for their first record. And the producer of the record was doing monitors for them.

I actually got called because, like, everything was going really, really poorly. Turns out, it's just that he didn't know how to use the console really well, but he knew exactly what he wanted to do with the sound. So I just showed up, helped him out, and just ended up hanging out watching a show, basically.

And, um, I ended up hanging out with, like, Manny Marroquin till, like, 3 in the morning that night. And the dude absolutely schooled me on some really, really basic stuff. And,

**Sean Walker:** get my pencil. I want to go to school.

**Ryan O John:** one of the, no, no, no, one of the things he said was, there's two things that like were like huge eye openers for me that, that evening.

Um, one was, when you hum a song to yourself, your brain can only handle a certain number of elements at a given time, right? So actually do this right now. So like, think of a song you love. Hum the intro to yourself. Okay, cool, now move to the verse. Cool, now move to the chorus. Right? And as you're humming it, you're usually going between one element, then another element, then back to one, then back to another.

Because that's what you do when you hum. Because you can't hum multiple parts at a time. But what that tells you is, effectively, your brain can really only handle three things to pay attention to during any section of music. Right? And so, whenever I do this exercise, I think of like Sledgehammer, Peter Gabriel.

Right? And the intro, it's like horns. Spinnin in the dark. And that's going between horns, kick snare, and then bass, which fills in that little gap. Then you get to the verse, and it's

So it's vocal, bass, kick, snare again, right? And then you get to the chorus and it changes again because it becomes horns again. But the gist of this is that if your arrangement stays the same over and over again from verse to pre chorus to chorus to bridge to whatever, find the things that are the hooks for you mentally when you listen to it, change the mix to follow those hooks so that people know that you just went from a verse to a pre chorus.

And then feel that you just went from a pre chorus to a chorus by changing what people are paying attention to because these are the things they can hum along to. Really, really quite cool, especially if you just got like a five piece band playing the same instruments all the time. As you kind of dynamically move things up and down, it feels like you're moving along in the song.

That was a pretty cool thing to kind of figure out. The other thing he

**Sean Walker:** No, I was just going to say, literally repeat what you just said. Cause that is so life changing important to people that haven't thought about that before. That fricking

**Andy Leviss:** drive it home.

**Ryan O John:** I don't

**Andy Leviss:** no, summarize it, drive it home.

**Ryan O John:** But yeah, the gist there is basically your brain can only handle like three elements at a time. So you as a mixer get to pick the three elements that they are listening to and focusing on during the intro. And then you get to pick the three elements that they are listening to and focusing on during the verse.

And then the pre chorus and the chorus. And if you keep them the same all the time, you're not giving a listener a cue that you've moved on to something different. Um, so either that happens in the arrangement musically, or it happens when you as a mixer take this and present this to the audience. So you can control the flow of that as it goes from, you know, verse to pre chorus to chorus to bridge, etc.

by changing these elements that listeners focus to. And when you go and listen to the record of the band, learn what those three elements were that they decided were the important ones for all those different bits, and then try and

**Sean Walker:** And now we're all A list mix engineers like Ryan. Cause we can do the same thing.

**Joe Santarpia:** Ayy!

**Ryan O John:** can! Everyone can do that. The other thing that was rad, and I changed the way I build my ProTools sessions when I do studio records now because of this, was um, mixing in priority order, right? So, when you have silence, right, you have the infinite sonic space, if you will, to fill up, right? And if you decide, my priority for my mix is gonna be kick, snare, bass, then vocal, and then everything else is less important than that, Then pull up the kick and snare first, right, and when you pull up that first thing, you have the entire sonic landscape to use.

When you pull up the second element, you have now used some of that sonic landscape, and you cannot use that space again, right, otherwise you're just masking. So now you have less space. Make this thing fit into that less space. Then you pull the next thing in. Now you have less space. Make this fit into that less space.

Now when you get down to like the last couple things, like I don't know, like playback shakers or some shit. Yeah, there's barely any space for it, but that's okay because you decided it wasn't important or was less important than other stuff. And this then means, you know, you're not mixing in solo. You're never soloing up guitars and going, I'm going to make these sound like the biggest guitars in the world.

And then unmute it into the mix, because that doesn't work. So you build the entire mix from the most important thing to the least important thing, without ever muting stuff. Then you know how much space there is left for that thing to fit in. And then you find the way to fit that into that space. Does that make sense?

**Sean Walker:** dude.

**Andy Leviss:** Mm hmm.

**Joe Santarpia:** 100%. Yeah.

**Ryan O John:** Joe, I feel like you have opinions on that.

**Joe Santarpia:** No, no, it's, uh, it's, uh, it's just the parallels with making a record, you know, um, it's, it's exactly what it is, and, uh, yeah, yeah, it's something every engineer kind of has to understand and work with to really, to build a complete mix, you know, you're not just You're not just presenting audio to customers.

There's, there's art there, you know, it's art to, to be, um, I don't know, played with, I guess, if you want to,

**Sean Walker:** Totally.

**Joe Santarpia:** don't know, it's the, it's the philosophy of it all, you know. While you're doing it, while we're getting into all this technical shit, like it's like the, the overwatching kind of, um, I don't know, headier part of it, but it's important

**Ryan O John:** Yeah, fair

**Joe Santarpia:** and it makes, and it makes it fun.

**Ryan O John:** Yeah, I mean, fair enough. You can talk about, like, kick mics and compressors and shit all day, but, like, there's a musicality to this and you need to present something to an audience that makes them feel something. It's not just about hearing a good kick drum sound or a snare drum sound.

Sorry, go ahead, Joe.

**Joe Santarpia:** sure. I was just gonna say, none of that technical shit matters if it's not like trying to achieve a purpose. You know, a lot of people, uh, kind of forget that sometimes, that there's a purpose behind all these moves you're making. You don't just throw, you know, you don't just throw an EQ on for no reason, you heard that it was missing something, or there was too much of something, um, it ties it all together with purpose. I'm trying to make this bigger or smaller, you know.

**Ryan O John:** Yeah, I get that, man. Sorry, I'm typing an answer into the chat.

**Andy Leviss:** Yeah, I think we are. Yeah. Yeah.

**Ryan O John:** go. nice, man. Well, any other questions you kind of want to throw in?

**Andy Leviss:** I mean, I feel like that's a solid, like, I don't want to just, I'm losing my words. I don't want to distract folks from, like, that solid, like, tip to go out on. That seems like a great way to end the episode and end the year, but if anybody else has, I don't want to

**Sean Walker:** And that's the pod, cue the music.

**Andy Leviss:** either.

**Ryan O John:** Yeah, exactly, exactly. Yep,

**Andy Leviss:** You know, I'm realizing now I should have, I should have reached out to Mike and had him do, like, a Jingle Bells mashup of, uh, of, uh, Break Free for the holiday episode. But yeah, it's been great hanging with y'all. I'm sorry due to all scheduling, you know, kerfuffle that the Shure Sound folks weren't able to join us.

I know Samantha was away until yesterday and James, I think his wife either just had or is about to have a baby, so totally. Yeah, free pass on that, James, and, uh, either congratulations or eminent congratulations. Um, yeah, awesome hanging with Ryan and Brendan and Joe, it was a last minute surprise you popping in was awesome.

**Joe Santarpia:** Hey, yeah, really nice to meet you guys. Thanks for having me on.

**Sean Walker:** Yeah, I think, I think two hours and 17 minutes is my limit too. Let's bail out of here. I love you guys. Kiss and hugs, but let's

**Joe Santarpia:** Yeah.

**Sean Walker:** Yeah. Right.

**Joe Santarpia:** Yeah. I gotta pee. Yeah

**Andy Leviss:** Yeah. Thanks, everybody, for hanging in the chat. We're gonna wrap this up and, uh, for those who, if you had the connection drop or, uh, for those listening at home, we'll post it in the feed tomorrow. Um, which, uh, for the folks listening for the first time in the feed tomorrow, this is going to be a weird Space Ballsy moment right now.

But, uh, thanks for hanging. Thanks to Rational Acoustics, RCF and Allen and Heath for keeping the

**Sean Walker:** Or the actual lights on for me because I use all those

**Andy Leviss:** uh, we'll catch you on the

**Sean Walker:** my children. Yeah.

**Ryan O John:** Me too, kind of. Not, not, no

**Sean Walker:** Yeah. Yeah. But you got this one gas guzzling child that's

**Andy Leviss:** got the pups who have been,

**Sean Walker:** Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah,

**Ryan O John:** This, this, this pile of gear here, yeah, yeah.

**Andy Leviss:** was gonna say, I'm actually realizing that I've not heard the dogs in two hours, which concerns me.

**Sean Walker:** All right. Cool.

**Andy Leviss:** I'm going to check and

**Sean Walker:** Good night, y'all.

**Andy Leviss:** break free.

**Joe Santarpia:** Take care you guys. Yeah. See ya

â€‹

**Music:** *“Break Free” by Mike Green*