



PRO TOOLS TIPS THAT COULD SAVE YOUR LIFE

TAL HERZBERG (Black Eyed Peas, NELLY, Johnny Lang, CHRISTINA AGUILERA, Counting Crows), the Pro Tools guru of all mankind, between crafting genius and throwing us out of his place, gave us some must-do tips. Ignore at your own peril.

38. ASSET MANAGEMENT: When I talk about data management I'm really talking about asset management. This includes track and playlist management, clear labeling of all production elements, disk management, and data backup. Consider this Engineering 101. If your assets are damaged or non-retrievable it doesn't matter if you're the world's greatest sound engineer or mixer, you're failing the very tedious and initial mission of data retrievability.

39. BASIC PROPER BACKUP PROCEDURES ARE: Always keep AT LEAST one (preferably TWO). And an additional Running Copy of the main data drive (updated daily using backup software).

40. THE RIGHT STORAGE MEDIUM? Acceptable storage mediums include cloned drives, data tape, and CD/DVD.

41. COMPING: When we're dealing with comping (creating composite performances from multiple takes), we live and die by our ability to seamlessly crossfade between audio segments that we are cutting between. Pro Tools offers a wide pallet of crossfade forms, and knowing how to choose the right crossfade for a given cut between two takes dictates the seamlessness of the transition. When I'm comping between multiple vocal takes, I'll use one kind of crossfade between vowels and a different kind between consonants. Other examples are: Use wider and longer crossfades when dealing with low frequency instruments such as bass and keyboard pads, versus short crossfades when dealing with percussive instruments such as drums and percussions.

EASY STREET & HOW TO FIND IT

JIMMY DOUGLASS

(Timbaland, THE NEPTUNES, Mary J. Blige, MISSY ELLIOT, Justin Timberlake) gives you highly detailed directions, scribbled on the back of a napkin, to the avenues of ease.



42. SIMPLE MICS, SIMPLE MIKING TECHNIQUES, MINIMAL EQ, AND COMPRESSION. And if you must marry the effects you love on something, go back and record it on a separate track because where its ends up being mixed may not have the plug-in or gear you used to get it.

43. GETTING THE BEST PIANO SOUND IN THE WORLD: Start with two U87s and go through the Neve pre amps on the board. Put each mic through an 1176 and a Pultec EQP1A. Run back and forth to move the mics around the various holes in the piano to see what kind of sound's coming out of the top and bottom. I get the optimum sound near one of the holes. This is my roll n' roll sound that I really like. I use the 1176s and just do basic compression going in. For the EQ I use something I picked up from the British guys a while ago... on the top mic I add a little bottom, at around 60 to 100 cycles. On the bottom mic I cut the low end and add a little top end... about 7 to 10k. This gives me a psycho acoustic illusion because the low end is now bright and present whereas the high mic is now a little warmer and richer, not brittle, so it smoothes the high lo, left right thing. I play with the compression on both sides to see which one I need. And that's what I do if I have time to really play around with the piano and get an amazing sound. I would also set up two U47s in the room. Place them far away left and right room, and then super compress those as well. When possible put them on separate tracks, and blend them later to taste at the mix.

GETTING IT ON



IT'S MARVIN GAYE TIME. THEY'RE LOOKING AT YOU. YOU'RE LOOKING AT THEM. SOMEONE'S GOING TO BREAK FIRST. SINCE IT'S YOUR JOB, WHY NOT MAKE THAT YOU, WISEGUY?
YEAH, YEAH: START IT UP.

44. DELAYING TACTICS FOR THE DIRECT APPROACH.

Taking a direct and miked signal from the same source? Don't forget that the miked signal will be delayed a bit, because sound had to travel through the air to hit it. Remembering that one-foot delays sound by about 1 millisecond, nudge the direct sound a little bit late to compensate.

45. REVERB DIFFUSION: GOOD FOR DRUMS. Percussion sounds get along best with reverb if the diffusion setting is relatively high. Otherwise, you'll hear discrete echoes that can give the dreaded "marbles bouncing on a metal plate" sound.

46. TIME SURE FLIES WHEN YOU INTERNALIZE. If your synthesizer or digital keyboard part isn't sitting well in the mix, use the instruments' internal EQ or effects to help shape the sound to suit the other tracks.

47. HYPE THAT VOCAL PERFORMANCE. When you feel a singer is really starting to hit a groove and that the next take might be the one, bump up the volume in the singer's headphones a tiny bit — like one dB. This will hype the sound just a tiny bit, and might bring out an even better performance.

48. WARMING UP THE OLD STUFF. Run any vintage keyboard or any sampled vintage keyboard through a tube amp such as a Fender Twin or through a tube preamp before going to tape. This will add warmth to digital samples and will make a real vintage keyboard part sound more musical.

49.

THE RIGHT METER FOR THE RIGHT JOB. If

your metering has a choice between average and peak settings, use peak when recording drums, percussion, acoustic guitar, or anything with strong transients. These instruments have a relatively low average signal level, but high peaks that can distort if you're not careful.

