



ELLIOT SCHEINER:

ELLIOT SCHEINER HAS MIXED SOME OF THE GREATEST albums of the last quarter century, including discs by Steely Dan, the Eagles, Fleetwood Mac, Sting, John Fogerty, Van Morrison, and Bruce Hornsby. And now he's mixing some of them all over again.

Scheiner is one of the forward-thinking engineers leading the charge toward 5.1 DVD (DVDA), the medium likely to replace the CD as more and more listeners consume music via home theater systems. Most of Scheiner's current work consists of reworking classic albums for the new surround-sound format. "I'm having a great time," says the four-time Grammy winner. "DVD audio is a whole new frontier. It's the Wild West."

Scheiner's biggest challenge is reconfiguring the albums without compromising their spirit. Whenever possible, Scheiner believes, every effort should be made to recruit the original engineers to participate in crafting the new versions. "For example," he says, "Atlantic is talking about remixing a classic Led Zeppelin album, and I believe the starting point should be to research if the original engineer is still making records, because using him or her for the surround version would come closest to what the album sounded like when it was first released."

Of course, Scheiner seeks the participation of the artists as well. "Take Moondance, which I'm working on right now," he says. "Van Morrison didn't really understand DVDA, so I sent him a bunch of mixes while he was in London and found him a place to listen to them. Once he heard them, he was totally cool with it. The labels are very respectful of the artists, and I'm there to help in any way I can."

Like most engineers, Scheiner has logged countless hours on Yamaha NS10 reference monitors, but he recently switched allegiance after mixing a PBS special on set of Yamaha MSP10s. "The NS10s are good workhorses," he says. "But with surround sound, you need something a little

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less fatiguing. The MSP10s are pretty, powered speakers. You just put them up, and they sound wonderful. And when an artist comes in to hear a mix, it sounds pleasant for them too. I can cart a set of MSP10s around if I need to, but since they're available all over now, I plan to keep a set at Presence Studios in Connecticut, plus sets in L.A. and New York City that I can have trucked to wherever I'm working."

When Scheiner used the MSP10s for his 5.1 version of the Eagles' Hotel California, he was impressed by how they allowed him to make confident comparisons between his work and the original mix. "When I put up the surround mix, I knew I was going in the right direction with the MSP10s. Nothing seemed unbalanced, which is probably the most important aspect. And the MSP10s, being powered, have lots of low end. In fact, many of the engineers doing 5.1 mixing feel that a subwoofer isn't even necessary."

Scheiner believes the transition from CD to DVDA will take several years. "When CDs first became available," he says, "35 percent of the buyers accepted the format and 65 held out, but then those numbers reversed. Once the surround format is introduced via a major marketing push, the CD market will quickly become very small. All kinds of artists are already starting to mix in 5.1—Missy Elliott, R.E.M., Stone Temple Pilots, Natalie Merchant, Metallica, the Corrs."

In the meantime, there are approximately 14 million surround system users. Yamaha and other companies manufacture DVDA players, and General Motors already offers a DVDA surround system as a Cadillac option. Eventually, says Scheiner, surround systems will be standard in most cars, and that's the point at which the change will be unstoppable. Why? "Because," says Scheiner, "kids spend an enormous amount of time in cars."

MIXING THE FUTURE

