
Headphones for accuracy

Posted by dubathonic - 2010/11/18 12:08

I know there have been a few previous posts regarding headphones and gear, but none seems to address this specific issue -- please bear with me if I've missed that one crucial thread :blush:

A lot of the precious time I have to explore and compose, I am forced to listen to my MD through headphones rather than my studio monitors. This week, for the Nth time, I spent a few hours developing a pattern through my 'phones, fine-tuning it carefully until it sounded fantastic...only to get home and run it through the monitors to find it utterly stale, flat, imbalanced and uninspiring.

Needless to say, this is an experience I don't want to repeat. :angry:

I have to believe there are ways of finding a set of headphones that will provide my ears with a close version of what I will hear through speakers -- in other words, what the "real" finished version will sound like.

So two questions:

-Yes, everyone has a different studio setup; not everyone uses the Yamaha HS80M's I use. But if you were once in my shoes generally, how did you approach and solve this problem?

-At the risk of starting an endless thread on "da best damn 'phones on da planet" :laugh: , which ones would you recommend? I'm willing to spend a few hundred dollars if necessary, just want what I hear to be what you get ;)

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Re:Headphones for accuracy

Posted by chrisnaked - 2010/11/18 12:47

I think the Sony MDR CD900ST will give you the kind of response you're looking for.

Of course, they're a Sony product so they'll only last about a year or so...

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Re:Headphones for accuracy

Posted by tIB - 2010/11/18 14:11

My usual tip is allessandro ms1... use these all the time. If you need closed back I've also heard good thing about beyerdynamics dt770.

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Re:Headphones for accuracy

Posted by previewlounge - 2010/11/18 16:23

before discounting and perhaps erasing the previously fantastic patterns as not "all that", try listening thru a club sound system or at least with a quality sub-woofer. headphones (costly or cheap) often allow perception of a world of frequencies that some studio monitors don't reveal without a sub.

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Re:Headphones for accuracy

Posted by RubixGroove - 2010/11/19 04:47

Yo Dubby!

I fight the headphone fight by NOT using expensive headphones.

Personally, "real" headphones throw me WAY off of track. They always sound so good & sweet upfront that I don't hear the fact I really should hit that bass drum with more 1-band EQ, little things like that. Those are the little things that add a

LOT or remove a LOT from your track's overall sound.

As sad as it might seem to some of y'all here, I am very adamant about using my Samson HP10's. They are \$20 headphones sold at most mass-consumer music stores. Actually, on 'black friday', Sam Ash is selling THREE PAIRS FOR \$30. Darned good deal, specially if you record other people/other bands as a living....

You'll get a feel for mixing wearing the headphones you choose, and you'll compensate automatically without even knowing it. By the time you throw your mix on a friend's system or even in your car, everything is right where it should be! I can't say I strongly recommend these cans, but they work very well for me.

I fight against headphones by not giving in and buying rowdy ones.
My strategy hasn't ever effected me in a bad way (yet) so I'll keep up with it!

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Re:Headphones for accuracy

Posted by Kelay - 2010/11/19 05:16

I used a Sennheiser HD25, and I very often or all the time had the same feeling of horror as you listen to my track on monitors. I just purchased a DT990Pro from beyerdynamic. And I'm very happy with that, although there is still something to do when I listen on monitors.

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Re:Headphones for accuracy

Posted by CloakvsDagger - 2010/11/19 05:34

I use old K 240:s,and they sound good but my mixes tend to sound very different in my sound system. Though I am not using monitors but good B & W speakers. But i guess as someone here ealier mentioned that without a sub the sound that is heard differs between headphones to speaker.

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Re:Headphones for accuracy

Posted by previewlounge - 2010/11/19 10:15

RubixGroove wrote:

I fight the headphone

nice one!

i deconstructed my pair of senny hd370's.

how so?

by removing the felt and disconnecting the right headphone with scissors.

why?

seemed like a good idea at the time, and is very convenient when performing live.
(the dj who i work with reacted to this behaviour as tho it was almost sacrilege, heh.)

also, i do not work with a sub, even tho owning one. seems like a distraction.

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Re:Headphones for accuracy

Posted by RubixGroove - 2010/11/19 11:19

^^

If I owned a sub I'd be in trouble... pretty sure I'd rattle the house down.

Admitted bass whore.

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Re:Headphones for accuracy

Posted by shadowdancer - 2010/11/23 03:34

I've been using these for the past two years:

http://www.akg.com/site/products/powerslave,id,1064,pid,1064,nodeid,2,_language,EN.html

They seem pretty transparent to me. Certainly more so than the HD25s, which colour the lows and his to a ridiculous extent. Not too pricey, either. I'd probably go for some Beyerdynamics next...

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Re:Headphones for accuracy

Posted by thay bran - 2010/11/23 03:51

Try the Grado igrado. Very impressive sound, slightly uncomfy depending on cranium

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Re:Headphones for accuracy

Posted by helloimmmarr - 2010/11/23 04:03

yeah I'm a big advocate for the AKG 271's as well.

I use those as my reference headphones when I can't use my monitors (when its too late since I'm in a apartment).

My monitors are KRK 6's.

For the most part they work really well when going between both... I don't find a huge difference when referring to my monitors, or my headphones.. I never get that shock treatment your talking about..

BUT... and I put a but there.. because... I think it's really important to check lots of different scenarios when your mastering your final tracks.

Just cause it's sounds awesome in your referencing headphones and your monitors, doesn't mean it's gonna sound awesome on stock apple earbuds.

And really... if your trying to get your music out there, the majority of people are going to listen to it on consumer headphones or earbuds... and sometimes there is a big difference, so it's always good to listen to it everywhere and take notes.

If I'm mastering my final track, I do work on it, put it on my ipod, listen to it in the car, on a home stereo, everywhere, to see the difference, and try to filter out bad frequencies to make it sound it's best on all platforms.

But if your looking for headphones, I highly recommend the AKG's.

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Re:Headphones for accuracy

Posted by ReasonableLogic - 2010/11/23 04:20

Can't go wrong with akg stuff. I recommend the 240s. They have a character of being flat and neutral which is what you need in a production set-up.

The trick isn't the headphones or monitor set-up, it's you being accustomed to how they sound and you knowing your system. Also keep a pair of standard ipod headphones around to compare your mixes since they're trash, but they're the most neutral headphones, and translate well for real world purposes.

Exp: send wav mix file to semi modern ipod, with the eq off, listen at medium to low volumes, and a minute or two at full blast to make sure there's no distortion or it doesn't sound muddled. Try to see if you could spot your pans, depth or subtle effect nuances, that the average listener won't catch etc etc. If you could, and your ok with the sound of the mix on all your systems, proceed to mastering or w/e it is you do after mixing

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Re:Headphones for accuracy

Posted by Daim - 2010/11/23 04:40

Hi, I got the K271 and the K701. Both very good but in my opinion the 701 deliver more detail and a much better bass response. When I was using the 271 i often had problems with the upper bass frequencies being to loud when listening through speakers later.. but maybe that's just me.

Another difference is that the 271 are turned off when u take them off while the 701 have to be turned off externally (by soundcard/mixer) which is really annoying when you are used to the 271.

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Re:Headphones for accuracy

Posted by teacherofstalker - 2010/11/23 07:30

dubathonic wrote:

I spent a few hours developing a pattern through my 'phones, fine-tuning it carefully until it sounded fantastic...only to get home and run it through the monitors to find it utterly stale, flat, imbalanced and uninspiring.

If I'm not mistaken, listening through headphones is *not* the way to go when it comes to mixing. Regardless, one builds their experience on various audio systems and eventually knows what to expect, so what you encountered can only be a good thing.

I got a pair of Sennheiser HD650. The very best there is. If you absolutely positively got to hear every frequency in the mix... accept no substitutes.. :gangsta:

Seriously though, give them a go, they're good.

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Re:Headphones for accuracy

Posted by mistakem - 2010/11/23 07:48

I can vouch for AKG 240's...

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Re:Headphones for accuracy

Posted by ipassenger - 2010/11/23 18:22

I like my AKG K141 mk2s. :)

Get quite a difference from my monitors but then they're crap so if it sounds good on both I know I am in the right ball park. Then check it on the iphone and in-ear sennheisers and I know if there is something that needs fixing or not.

:)

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Re:Headphones for accuracy

Posted by Boelie - 2010/11/23 18:27

never want to part with my AKG701's

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Re:Headphones for accuracy

Posted by tIB - 2010/11/23 19:01

they bran wrote:

Try the Grado igrado. Very impressive sound, slightly uncomfy depending on cranium

I wouldnt... Id go for the sr60/sr80 over these in a heartbeat.

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Re:Headphones for accuracy

Posted by dubathonic - 2010/11/24 01:32

Thanks for all the helpful advice guys :)

The trick isn't the headphones or monitor set-up, it's you being accustomed to how they sound and you knowing your system.

I don't doubt this is true...the work of many hours over many days in the studio. Probably a whole other discussion could center on how people have approached this.

If I'm not mistaken, listening through headphones is *not* the way to go when it comes to mixing.

Again absolutely true, no argument here. I think the key issue I am trying to address is: Can you find headphones that deliver a reasonable facsimile of what you hear through your monitors, so that when you get back to your studio, you need to make minor adjustments only, not start over? :blink:

Looking forward to checking out a number of the specific headphone sets mentioned above ;)

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