

## Making the Mix Room: Mark Needham — The Ballroom, Hollywood

June 1, 2014 by [David Weiss](#)

If [Mark Needham](#) is experiencing downtime, it's strictly self-imposed.

Few mixers keep busier than Needham, whose talents seem always to be in demand. His discography of platinum artists span decades, and they tell the story of his success better than anything: [American Authors](#), [Blondie](#), [Fleetwood Mac](#), [Imagine Dragons](#), [The Killers](#), [Pink](#), [Train](#), and many, many more.

As you'll see below, one of ways he keeps ahead is by taking frequent breaks to keep his ears fresh – but it must be hard to tear himself away from his work. After all, Needham's mix HQ is a Hollywood haunt called [The Ballroom](#), and it's an inspirational place: a stunning view, dual Ravens, and 10' ceilings to start.

Wanna be like Mark? It may take some practice, but until then you can put this mega mix room on your vision board.



A sound view: The Ballroom (All photos: Pauline and Mark Needham)

**Mixer Name:** Mark Needham

**Website:** [markneedham.com](http://markneedham.com)

**Location:** Hollywood, CA

**Mix Philosophy:** I've mixed and recorded a lot of different styles of music, and also worked in analog for 25+ years. Over the years, I feel all of those things combined effect my approach to how I mix a song. I literally listen to a song and see where it takes me.

#### Clients/Credits:

- The Airborne Toxic Event (mixed track ' Hell and Back' for the "Dallas Buyers Club" movie soundtrack)
- American Authors (released in 3/2014)
- Blondie
- Cake
- Chris Isaak
- Dolly Parton (released May 2014)
- Elton John w/Patti LaBelle
- Fleetwood Mac (recorded tracks March/April 2014 for their fourth coming album)
- Imagine Dragons (track 'It's Time' won a BMI Pop Award 5/2014 & album ' Night Visions' won the Billboard Top Rock Album award 5/2014)
- The Killers
- My Chemical Romance
- Neon Trees
- Pink
- Shakira
- Sick Puppies
- Train
- Currently working on – [listed on my homepage, under "current mixing projects"](#)

#### Key Personnel:

- Will Brierre, who now has his own mix room at our studio, and has worked with me for 10 years
- Ben O'Neill who is currently my assistant mix engineer
- Andrew Brightman, my manager who plays a big role in our production projects

**Mix Room Hunters:** I'm always on the lookout for a room that I love the "vibe" of and sound in. I found my current studio, [The Ballroom](#), about 10 years ago, it's an old mansion in Hollywood located in

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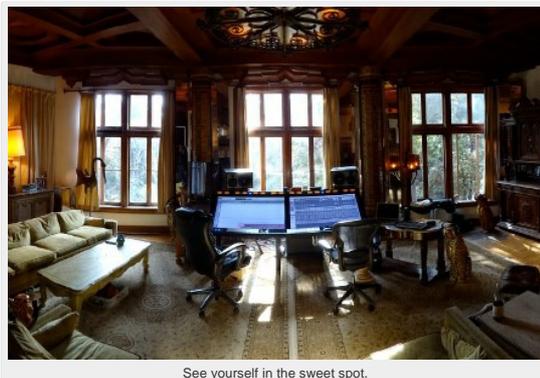
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I was looking for at least three large rooms with natural light and an irregular shape with high ceilings. When I saw this property, it was perfect! Its three stories, each level with two large rooms, three smaller rooms and a kitchen, all of it sitting on about 1/2 of an acre.



See yourself in the sweet spot.

**Sound/Design:** The two mix rooms in The Ballroom are hexagonal in shape with 10 foot very diffused ceilings, and are about 35' wide x 20' deep. In both rooms, it was just a matter of building back wall bass traps, some strategically placed pieces of furniture and some wall treatments.

We're mixing in **Pro Tools**, with **Lavry Engineering Blue converters** going to an **SPL Neos** summing mixer, with **Lavry Gold converters** for the stereo bus.

We're also using **ATC 25's** with an ATC sub for the monitors.

Choice Pieces: I have a dual **Slate Pro Audio Raven MTX** console, along with an **AVID S6** as a tactile surface. I also use an **Antelope Audio** clock and **Audeze headphones** with a **SPL Phonitor** amplifier.

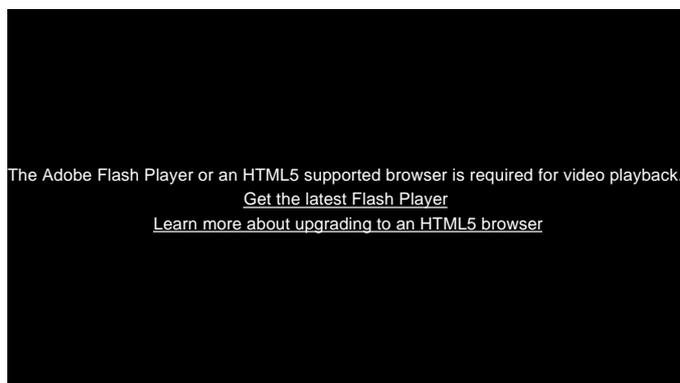
My "secret weapon" would be my three custom Dolby stressors that I use a lot. I also have/use frequently two **UAD OCTO** cards with all the UAD plug-ins.



He's got the gear.

**Tune Up:** When I'm satisfied with what the room sounds like, I leave it alone. Then, the sound of the room remains consistent over time.

**For Example:** Song that I mixed: "It's Time," by Imagine Dragons:



On this song, it was important to keep the low end "big" but in check, as there are a lot of elements that play in that same range. There were also a lot of tracks for this song, so finding the right placement for everything was important.

I used **Little Labs "Voice of God"** on the stumps and, a **UAD Precision** multi-band, precision master EQ, precision buss compressor with a filter set at 90 and a 2:1 ratio, stereo expander and an **Ampex ATR 124** at 15 ips with the transformer setting on, on the stereo bus channel.

There were 190+ tracks for this song, so I'll just limit my answer to the stereo bus channel.

**So You Want To Be A Better Mixer:** Take "ear-breaks" and/or move to another song if you feel like you aren't making progress. Giving yourself a fresh perspective is very important (at least it is to me)!

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Why else would Hoby Darling uproot his family and leave a dream job leading Nike's most progressive division to join a [nike flex experience rn](#) struggling niche consumer electronics company in Utah? Hoby is no stranger to takeovers and was instrumental in driving Volcom's sale to PPR in 2011. His wingman on that deal was none other than Douglas Collier, former CFO of Volcom, who left the company shortly after the acquisition by PPR, at about the same time that Hoby joined Nike. Charm Your Personality With Cheap Nike Air Jordan Fusion Shoes. Jordan shoes are the favorites of many people. For many years you have probably needed these pairs to look stylish and fashionable.

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