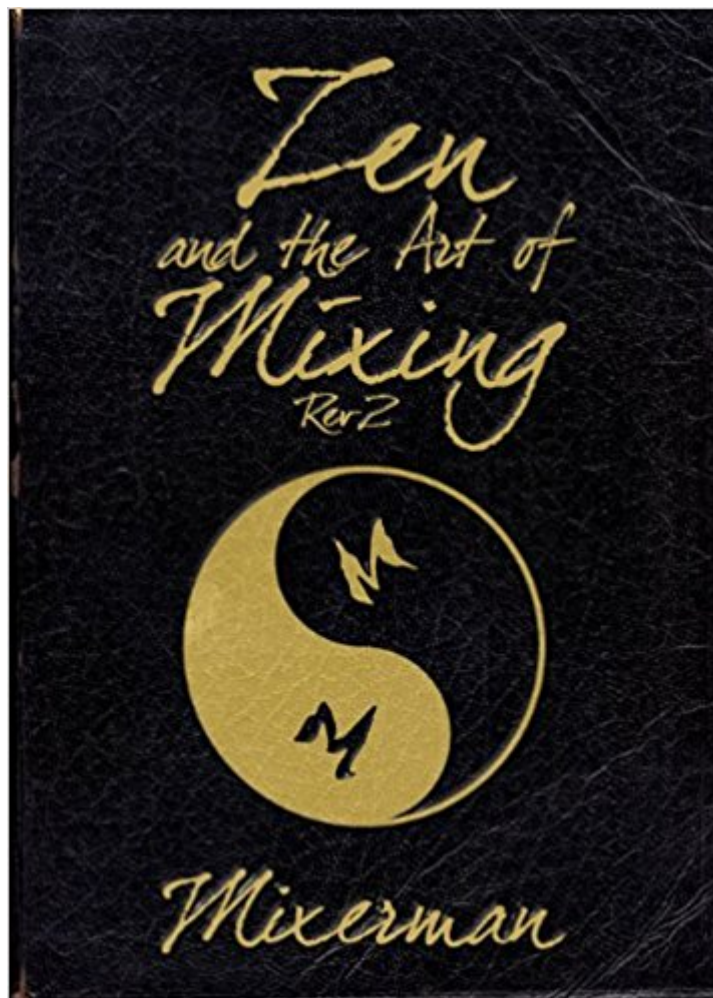


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# Zen And The Art Of Mixing: REV2



## Synopsis

(Technical Reference). In his first book, *The Daily Adventures of Mixerman*, the author detailed the frustrating and often hilarious goings-on during the process of recording a major-label band. Musicians, engineers, and producers laughed and cried at the crazy goings-on they'd never imagined or recognized all too well. Now in his REV 2, fully updated edition of *Zen and the Art of Mixing*, Mixerman turns his razor-sharp gaze to the art of mixing and gives followers and the uninitiated reason to hope if not for logic and civility in the recording studio then at least for a good sounding record. With a firm commitment to art over technology and to maintaining a grasp of each, Mixerman outlines his own approach to recording success, based on his years mixing records in all genres of music for all kinds of artists, often under trying circumstances. As he states in his introduction to the new volume, "Even if you're not a professional mixer, even if you're a musician trying to mix your own work or a studio owner in a smaller market, you have your own set of pressures to deal with while you're mixing. Regardless of what those pressures are, it's important to identify and recognize them, if for no other reason than so you can learn to completely ignore them." But how? "That's where the Zen comes in."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"I rarely say 'just go buy this' but in this case it is beyond a no-brainer . . . Beyond being an essential reference tool that I keep on my desk, this book is an entertaining and fun read on its own. From the highest level professional to the newbie hobbyist, this book is the best guide to making music out of recordings. I could fill the rest of the magazine with praise for the individual chapters, but you get the idea. Just buy it and thank me later." --Just Jazz Guitar, February 2015

"Finally, a book that teaches the Art of great mixing, not the pseudoscience. At long f\*#@ing last."

-Ken Scott (The Beatles, Pink Floyd, David Bowie, Elton John) Here, in a replica of this recently exhumed tome (miraculously preserved within the chassis of a Sound Tools rig at the bottom of The La Brea Tarpits), we present Mixerman's philosophies on the art of mixing. Well known for his hilarious recording exploits in The Daily Adventures of Mixerman, the author now provides his tactical reasoning without the colored lens of absurdist big-label disasters. In this work, Mixerman distills a successful mixing career's worth of lessons and realizations into understandable and sensible terms for both enthusiastic musician and professional technician alike. As Mixerman points out, "If you change how you think about mixing, you'll be well on your way to learning how to mix." I never thought anybody could write a meaningful book about mixing but Mixerman has done exactly that. I learned early-on that great recording engineering and mixing is largely a matter of keeping your mind out of the way and here is one man's brilliant approach to accomplishing precisely that.

-Bob Olhsson (Stevie Wonder, Jackson Five) "Without belaboring the technical, he encompasses the creative, spiritual, practical, and business aspects in a simple and entertaining read. This will surely be a huge help to budding mixers and interested music consumers alike!"

-Ron Saint Germain (U2, Mick Jagger, 311, Whitney Houston) "Dough head. You gave away the farm."

-Aardvark, cohost of The Mixerman Radio Show. (Alan Parsons, Johnny Reed)

--This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is the 2nd one of Mixerman's books I've read, and I can testify that there's a lot of good info here. But I think you have to really see the context of where he's coming from. Is he opinionated? Yes, very - and he'll tell you the same. He's also someone who does this for a living and does it well. I feel these books are geared a little more for those considering mixing professionally. So if you're a home recordist who basically does this stuff for fun (like me), keep that in mind. Don't let some of the ideas scare you off. Keep it in proper context. Sure, when you're in a pro environment, a \$4000+ SSL compressor is a great tool to have in your arsenal. And if you're a hobbyist with deep pockets, hey - go for it. But you can apply the same basic theory with a vst plug. This is really a marriage of art and science. There's no recipe book, and there's no "right" way. But there are some ideas that he shares that can certainly help make your job easier if you apply them. He's a good writer - he writes like he talks. And the Kindle version features links to videos that illustrate certain points better. If you get some bit of info out of a book that gives you one of those aha moments, to me, that's worth far more than the price of admission. I've received many from MM's books.

This is not your usual textbook-style, technique and theory book. Whereas most mixing books focus on the analytical, left-side of the brain, *Zen and the Art of Mixing* focuses on the "big picture".

**Quick foreword:** I received this book the first day of release (pre-ordered) and I just finished it. Why did it take so long you wonder? Well, this is one of those rare books where every page is oozing with insights and wisdom! I wanted to take my time so I wouldn't miss anything. That's not to say his writing is archaic or requires you to solve puzzles to understand. In fact, it's quite the opposite! Mixerman's writing style is just as personable and enjoyable as his first book, *The Daily Adventures of Mixerman*. And just like the first book, *Zen and the Art of Mixing* continues to impart the elevating experience of making you feel as if you're actually IN it.

**Background:** I started recording and mixing in 1999. My first gig, like many others, was recording my band's first album. I was the most technically savvy person in our group so I asserted myself into the position of engineer. I was immediately hooked! The group has dissolved since then, and many other groups along the way, but engineering has only grown and matured. Before I knew it, I was on the forums regularly, trying to find guidance on this elusive and all-encompassing musical path. I've read plenty of books, threads - watched countless tutorials - carefully invested in quality gear - and spent endless hours in front of my DAW. There have been many milestones in my journey... those "ah-HA!" moments where you find yourself propelled into a higher plane of engineering art--when a concept or principle suddenly "clicks" and you're forever changed from that point forward. *Zen and the Art of Mixing* will set a new milestone in your craft. I whole-heartedly recommend this book to not only engineers, but also artists, producers, and the less common music listener who is interested in what lies behind the curtain of a musical production.

**Review:** So much is covered in this relatively small book, it's quite astounding actually. From a Utilitarian point-of-view, it is very effective and efficient. I can easily take this book with me wherever I go. And I do. I won't discuss every topic in the book, but I will mention one particular area of confusion that has been clarified for me. (of many)

**Workflow.** Mixerman carefully lays out his workflow in mixing for all to see in Chapter 3 - *The Mechanics*. This is uncut, uncensored, and VERY eye-opening. At least it was for me as I'm very compulsive and tend to work more effectively when I have a lay of the land. Mixerman goes from the beginning of a mix, to the end, in order. Oh, and how lovely it feels to find some order in this madness we call mixing. A lot of the workflow, I'm already quite familiar with, but as fragmented pieces. After reading *The Mechanics*, I am no longer fragmented and there is a sense of clarity and calm in my approach to mixing. Zen indeed.

For example, the first part of a new mix, *Discovery and Framing*. *Discovery* is the initial step of purely gathering information. *Framing* is the following step of constructing a rough

mix, keeping in mind, the fine-tuning will come later. In other words, the logic is that, in order to make detailed/specific mixing decisions, one has to at least have an foundational rough mix. How many times in our youthful engineering days have we opened up a brand new mix, and prematurely dove into nitty gritty minutia of things, only to find ourselves revisiting those fine-level mixing decisions over and over again? A great recipe for exaggerating the already deterring effect of chasing one's tail. Oh how I wish someone would have pointed out this obvious step as plainly as MM does, because it IS a step... but for some reason, I hadn't given it much thought. What I mean is, I was already doing my own discovery and framing in my workflow, but I didn't consciously recognize it. In other words, knowing the step explicitly has given me the ability to consciously maximize my own initial discovery and framing phase. Less tail chasing!

Below are the sections in The Mechanics--you can get an idea of the workflow order.

Discovery and Framing Phase  
Coherency  
Drums  
Bass  
Monitoring Levels  
Bring in the Parts!  
Underdubbing  
Parts  
Electric Guitar  
Acoustic Guitar  
Piano and Keyboards  
Percussion  
Science Experiments  
Referencing Other Mixes  
Rough Mixes  
Make the Mix Sing, Pop, and Gel  
Automation  
The Vocal  
Compression  
Finding Compromise  
The Payoff  
Refining and Enhancing  
Finishing Your Mix  
Mix Notes  
Printing the Mix  
Saying Goodbye Is Hard to Do  
Conclusion: Zen and the Art of Mixing has set a new standard for mixing books. I will proudly say, it has unlocked, organized, and affirmed my mixing potential. What I hope to communicate in this review is... there really is NO book on mixing quite like this one. I'm not referring solely to the "big picture" perspective MM takes, but more importantly, his genuine and unabashed writing style that captures his 20+ years of mixing professionally AND his "take no prisoners" attitude in regards to his mixing beliefs. In other words, where other authors may tip-toe around, dryly/technically explain, or even entirely omit certain topics, Mixerman fiercely discusses every taboo or controversial topic and actually picks a side, explains his reasons, and even invites you to join him. For example, MM discusses the benefits to summing analog(OTB), and how digital summing is essentially "broken". I fully agree with him on this from my recent experiences mixing with a summing box. I have to say, it is so refreshing to read something so "real" and "unadulterated", especially in a field that is dominated by scientific measurements/specs/numbers/data. Finally, I have yet to disagree outright with anything Mixerman discusses and that may or may not change down the road(as MM even said for himself) as I grow in my craft, but right now, I'm enjoying the next level of mixing that has been ignited by MM's writings. And MM encourages his readers who do disagree to engage him in the forums for some healthy debates. :) Zen and the Art of Mixing should have a spot on every mixing engineer's bookshelf. In practical terms, no other purchase will come close to improving your mixes for under \$20, so buy it

NOW.

This book was recommended to me by the guy that we hired to mix our past four albums. What I noticed and appreciated within the first few pages was the honesty. Mixerman doesn't claim to have all the answers. He simply shares from his experience. And his experience speaks quite loudly. Secondly, I say this book is philosophical because it doesn't tell you what EQ settings to use, for example, but instead it focuses on what matters, namely the song itself, and helps equip the reader to make the track the best it can be, making the song 'sing' (as he puts it). Finally, this book is comprehensive in that it deals with most (I am guessing) of what happens in the life of a mixer, from dealing with clients, to mix gear, to mixing techniques. I heartily recommend.

I invested in basic digital recording gear for my home computer. I know how to use it but don't really know how to make the result sound professional / to my particular liking. Youtube videos and forums threads were confusing the mess out of me. I read this book over a two week period during my busy schedule. The author easily tuned me into his personality and seems like a great guy. I feel like I learned ALOT from reading this book and it has boosted my overall confidence in working with music production in my home. I've already started reading another book on the subject but I really enjoyed this one. I'd recommend it to a friend and also to anyone unsure if the book is worth reading. It is absolutely worth adding to the collection.

I love this author.

I should begin my review by stating that I am not a professional mixer. I have a humble setup with Logic 9 an Apogee Duet and an Axiom Pro 25 controller. I make my own songs and arrangements. I know they are not that good right now but the author himself mixed for years before his mixes got better. His early attempts at mixing all sounded so familiar to me. Some of what's in this book will apply to you, some won't (at least right now), but I thought it was a good read. I got some great advice and a firm appreciation for the art and skill involved. It actually was a relief to learn that I will be at this a good while before any of my mixes (or songs for that matter) approach anything professional. Reading this book felt like hanging out in the booth with the author in between sessions just receiving advice. Not a lot of technical jargon, just good solid advice. I interned at a studio many years ago and didn't learn anything near this useful. Keep at it Mix aggressively Always be serving the song and the arrangement

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