

Book Review

Reviewed by Daniel A. Walzer

QUERY SHEET

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There are no Editor Queries for this paper.

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Pensado, *Pensado's Place*
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Pensado, D. (Producer). (2011–present). *Pensado’s place* [Video Podcast]. Retrieved from <http://www.pensadosplace.tv>. Varies, 4–7 minutes per episode.

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Dave Pensado’s free video podcast, *Pensado’s Place*, explores contemporary audio engineering, music production, and entertainment business trends through interviews, mixing tutorials, equipment reviews, and product demonstrations. Pensado’s professional audio experience and discography include mixing credits with major label artists Elton John, Michael Jackson, and Kelly Clarkson (Pensado, 2015a). Pensado received a 2008 Grammy Award for Best Contemporary R&B Album for his mixing work on Mary J. Blige’s *Growing Pains* (Blige, 2007; The Recording Academy, 2015). Herb Trawick, Pensado’s co-host, executive producer, friend, and manager adds a respected industry take to the podcast honed through his many years in the music business. Pensado and Trawick host the live-streamed show each Wednesday from Los Angeles (Pensado, 2015d). As one of the few high-quality video podcasts about audio production, *Pensado’s Place* rejects ostentatious sets, preferring an informal, almost conversational backdrop that underscores the music, and those persons mixing and creating it.

Pensado’s Place began in 2011 and has more than 200 available episodes (Pensado, 2015b, 2015e). The podcast features interviews with an impressive range of audio engineers, music manufacturers, product developers, songwriters, and industry representatives. Special highlights include interviews with Rupert Neve, Jaycen Joshua, Steven Slate, and Tony Maserati among others (Pensado, 2015b).

Pensado’s Place accentuates the important work of women in the audio industry including interviews with Skywalker Sound’s Leslie Ann Jones and producer/engineer Sylvia Massy—each sharing their unique perspectives on the music business (Pensado, 2015b). Participating in a range of music industry panels and outreach efforts, Leslie Ann Jones draws on her years of professional experience, accessible personality, technological expertise, and impeccable credentials and offers balanced insights that encourage women to enter the traditionally male-dominated field of audio engineering (Pensado, 2013). Jones is the Director of the Recording and Film Scoring division at Skywalker Sound, the expansive production facility and ranch originally founded by filmmaker George Lucas (Pensado, 2013). Jones’ accolades include hundreds of credits as a sound engineer and mixer on film and game soundtracks, album projects, and a 2010 Grammy award (Skywalker Sound, 2015).

During Pensado’s interview with Sylvia Massy, his admiration for Massy’s talent and body of work becomes apparent; Massy spent many years as Pensado’s assistant before establishing an international reputation as a competent, innovative producer

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with the likes of Johnny Cash and other rock acts (Pensado, 2014). Moreover, 40
 Pensado's 2012 interview with hip-hop producer Marcella Araica brings to light
 the tremendous perseverance, technical and creative groundwork, and multifaceted
 production skills female audio engineers must acquire to achieve respect in a
 male-dominated industry (Pensado, 2012). This interview offers a contemporary
 perspective on gender issues in the audio industry as Araica speaks frankly about 45
 her successful collaborations with icons Missy Elliot, Timbaland, and Britney Spears
 (Pensado, 2012).

Pensado's Place shines with these types of interviews as viewers receive an
 authentic glimpse of underrepresented topics often neglected by the commercial
 music industry. Indeed, *Pensado's Place* addresses these gender issues in an 50
 accessible and relevant way by asking good, perceptive questions and by addressing
 equally popular mixing topics with female guests to enhance the show's broad
 appeal with mainstream audio fans. Although Pensado and Trawick are not afraid
 to ask challenging questions, their general approach with guests sways towards
 conversational and good-natured. In addition to his audio and music production 55
 expertise, Pensado's warm and low-key interview style brings humanity and a
 self-deprecating perspective to the often complex and highly subjective world of
 audio mixing. Trawick's affable yet focused demeanor helps keep the show running
 smoothly and offers a genial counterpart to Pensado's easygoing personality.

Each interview is highly conversational, interactive and often unscripted, giving 60
 viewers an intimate look into every aspect of commercial music production. Many
 episodes contain a question and answer segment where viewers ask the guest and
 co-hosts audio-related questions. It seems that *Pensado's Place* has built a diverse
 and loyal audience with wide-ranging experience in music production and the
 entertainment business based on the types of questions asked each week on the 65
 show and through social media.

Pensado's Place regularly features a segment called "Into the Lair" that offers free
 mixing tutorials, product reviews, microphone demonstrations, and more interviews
 with engineers and producers (Pensado, 2015c). Pensado's crew shoots these seg- 70
 ments from the host's personal studio, and regularly includes demonstrations of mix-
 ing techniques from recent album projects. Here, Pensado's teaching spirit excels;
 he offers straightforward, perceptive mixing advice for audio hobbyists and semi-
 professionals to improve their own projects without sounding elitist or academic.
 "Into the Lair's" mixing guidance primarily focuses on techniques found in commer- 75
 cial music, which seems appropriate considering Pensado's expertise and audience
 demographic. However, future episodes could undoubtedly explore a wider range
 of artistic styles and include guest lecturers from other styles of music production.

Pensado's willingness to share his audio knowledge adds credibility to the pod-
 cast, as viewers receive insightful suggestions designed to help them improve their
 work. The music and audio industries, long seen as unforgiving and cutthroat enter- 80
 prises, receive an honest yet considerate treatment through Pensado and Trawick's
 production approach. Aligning the podcast with audio-equipment manufacturers
 through corporate sponsorship expands the available resources to make the show
 a profitable venture. How those growing corporate relationships might influence

programming decisions and audio instruction is worthy of future exploration by music business and mass media scholars. 85

Pensado's Place offers a valuable forum for musicians, engineers, and producers to share, learn, and grow in audio production and creative entrepreneurship. Several online community forums and websites increase the show's impact by giving Pensado's large and diverse audience a place to network and exchange ideas beyond the weekly show. Although a wider range of musical styles and guests, particularly those underrepresented in the mainstream entertainment industry, would further expand the show's reach, *Pensado's Place* is a significant resource for recording enthusiasts everywhere. 90

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