

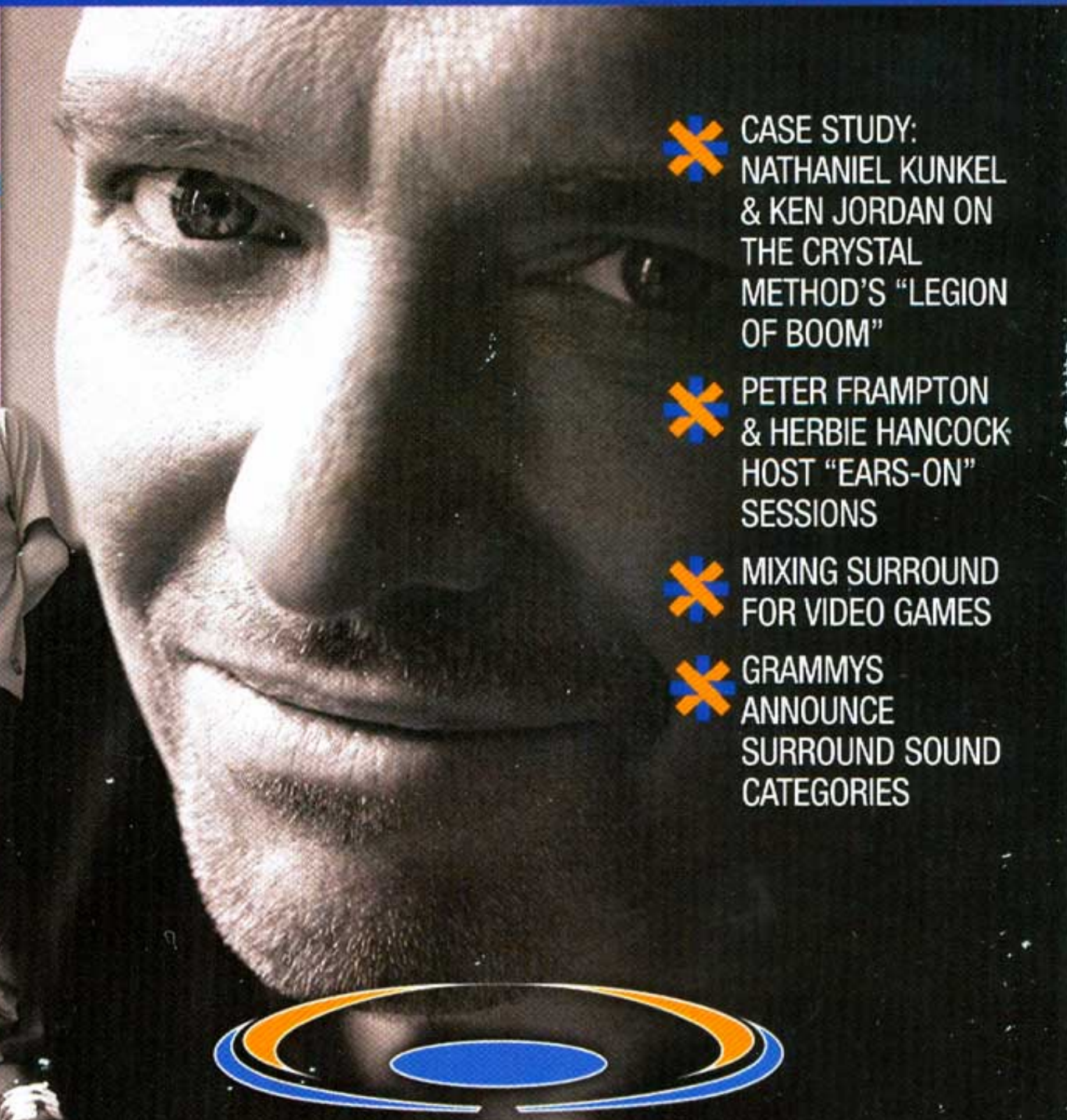
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- ✘ CASE STUDY: NATHANIEL KUNKEL & KEN JORDAN ON THE CRYSTAL METHOD'S "LEGION OF BOOM"
- ✘ PETER FRAMPTON & HERBIE HANCOCK HOST "EARS-ON" SESSIONS
- ✘ MIXING SURROUND FOR VIDEO GAMES
- ✘ GRAMMYS ANNOUNCE SURROUND SOUND CATEGORIES



## SURROUND 2004

### preview

August 31-September 1, 2004  
Renaissance Hollywood Hotel

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BY LISA ROY

**NATHANIEL KUNKEL TAKES THE CRYSTAL METHOD INTO A NEW SONIC DIMENSION WITH THE MULTICHANNEL VERSION OF THEIR *LEGION OF BOOM*.**



Kunkel photo by Justine Brandy

# METHODMAN

Nathaniel Kunkel is one of the busiest mixers working in surround sound music today. His multichannel credits include discs from a wide variety of artists, including James Taylor, Insane Clown Posse, Sheila Nicholls, Graham Nash, David Crosby, Chris Botti, and Sting. He has won numerous GRAMMYS and Surround Music Awards, and runs his own production company called Studio Without Walls, which is aptly named, as it features racks of equipment that allow Kunkel to record and mix nearly anywhere. Here, he discusses his wall-less studio, his surround techniques, and his most recent project with The Crystal Method.

**SP:** You have become one of the leading 5.1 mix engineers. How long have you been mixing in 5.1 and how many mixes do you have under your belt?

**Nathaniel Kunkel:** My first surround mix was Lyle Lovett's *Dr. T and The Women* soundtrack for Robert Altman. I guess I have mixed about 10 or 15 titles since then.

You've mixed surround in some very interesting places — tell us about a few of the different places you've set up Studio Without Walls to mix 5.1 and in particular where did you mix *Legion of Boom*?

I have mixed in hotels, guest rooms, living rooms, one-room apartments, soundstages, empty trucks, various garages, and, once, on a porch. I do most of my mixing in my garage though. That's where I mixed TCM. But you see, if the client wants to be around, then my garage is a bit small for anything but approvals. I also can't record at home. So I move around a lot. If the artist is more comfortable at their home, then I want to work there. I can overcome the obstacles of being on location way easier than I can overcome an artist that isn't comfortable in a studio. I also have a secure down-

load site for my clients, so from stereo to 7.1, they can approve their mixes anywhere they have a system and an Internet connection. SWW [Studio Without Walls] is really quite cool. When I am deciding where I want to make a record, whether there is a studio [at that location] is no longer a factor. I just need a room that I like to be in.

**Describe your surround setup for *Legion of Boom*.**

It was no different than normal. I mix from Digidesign's Pro Tools, on a Sony DMX-R100 digital console. All my processing is either TC Electronic, GML, or Empirical Labs, and I monitor with the new JBL LSR series speakers.

**What was your approach for The Crystal Method's 5.1 mixes, as this was your first surround electronica project?**

The type of music I mix doesn't really change my approach to surround mixing much. I listen to the stereo mix, then I put up the multitrack, and try to make the mix achieve the emotional goal of the song — excitement, passion, anger, sadness, sex — whatever I predominantly feel when I listen to the stereo mix, I try to realize and enhance in the surround. That sound's pretty touchy feely, eh?

**This was the first surround experience for Ken and Scott [the members of The Crystal Method — see sidebar], did they have any concerns, and were they present during the mixes?**



## CLEAR ON CRYSTAL: WHO ARE THESE GUYS?

The Crystal Method is a true partnership between its two founding members: **Ken Jordan**(right) and **Scott Kirkland**. It is evident that each man brings to the table unique creative talents. Scott pegs himself as the writer and performer of the two and credits his partner with impeccable engineering and producing skills. Ken concurs adding that Scott has picked up great studio skills in the past few years himself. They both take an active role in the production, combining to make one of electronic music's most dynamic duos.



Not really. Ken was the first to come over and listen, and he was great. He had a couple of comments, which made the mixes better.

**At the recent Grammy Surround Alliance Tour, George Massenburg selected your Crystal Method surround mix is the best representa-**

**tion of how surround should sound. What is your opinion/formula/idea of what surround should be?**

I am so glad you asked this question. In my opinion, there should be no preconceived ideas about what a surround mix ought to be. For God's sake, please do something I have never heard. I need to steal some new ideas....

*Find out more by visiting [www.studiowithoutwalls.com](http://www.studiowithoutwalls.com)*

## SURROUND 2004 PREVIEW

Want to know more? Nathaniel Kunkel and Ken Jordan will be presenting a case study of the making of *Legion of Boom* at the Surround 2004 conference.

**Grace Design** proudly presents the **m906** high fidelity 5.1 surround monitoring system- a powerful new tool designed to significantly improve the sonic performance and efficiency of any audio production environment, especially those centered around high-definition digital audio workstations.

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