



# Home Studio Makeover

By Ara Ajizian, Musician's Friend Managing Editor

**M**ulti-platinum producer, engineer, and artist Alan Parsons has certainly had a storied career. When your first gig is at Abbey Road Studios serving as assistant engineer on The Beatles' *Abbey Road* album, you've got to be destined for greatness. And although he still performs and produces, these days his interest has turned toward educating the next generation of studiophiles, as evidenced by his DVD tutorial series *The Art and Science of Sound Recording*. "Anybody with a laptop can now make a record," says Parsons. "But you know, the man in the street can lack the experience and the knowledge, so that's, in a way, my new role in life—to give advice."

Musician's Friend community member Adam Fazel is a testament to Alan Parsons' view of the home recordist not necessarily having the knowledge of how to produce high-quality recordings. "I don't come from a musical background per se," says Fazel. "I didn't go to school for composition or any of that. I just have a passion for it, and I didn't let my lack of knowledge hinder that passion."

At the core of Adam's passion is a love for storytelling, which originally manifested itself in the form of short films he would make with his cousins as a kid. Now 23, Fazel got into composing and producing music during college as an extension of his film work and studies. He explains, "Music can tell the story when the visuals can't. It can act as a voiceless narration that talks to the audience and gives them emotional cues. That's how I naturally fell into doing music."

We wanted to connect Alan with one of our customers in order to bring an established veteran into *your* world, and after listening to a pile of demos from Musician's Friend customers he singled out a recording made at Adam's modest home studio in Los Angeles and decided to pay him a visit. "Adam did an incredible job with the equipment he has, but everybody can improve their setup by spending a bit of money," said Parsons. For the self-described "starving artist"

Fazel, budget is certainly a limitation, so we decided to help him out with \$5,000 to implement Alan's suggestions.

## The Big Day

We arrived at Adam's modest three-bedroom apartment early on the day of the shoot to get everything ready. The usually boisterous, energetic Fazel was slightly subdued as the reality of what was about to happen finally set in. "I'm really excited to have Alan Parsons come to my home studio and tell me how I can improve it. Even a phone conversation would have been enough, but for him to come from Abbey Road, and working with Pink Floyd, to my house? It blows my mind!"

By the time we got the call that Alan Parsons had arrived, Adam's exuberance was back in full force. "What do I say when I open the door? Can I give him a hug?" Finally there was a knock at the door, and the two were soon exchanging pleasantries. Parsons, though a tall, imposing figure, was precisely the English gentleman you've heard he is, and Fazel was immediately at ease. Then came the time to get down to business.

## Talkin' Shop

The two made their way back to Adam's bedroom studio as his roommates curiously peeked around the corner at the tall Englishman in their tiny apartment. Parsons had seen pictures of the space, but being there in person allowed him to take full stock of the situation. One thing was readily apparent to him. "The first thing I noticed ... is that you don't have any speakers," Parsons noted. "I know, I have to use the laptop speakers or these," Fazel replied, motioning toward the Sennheiser headphones on his desk.

Parsons chuckled, "Well that might be the first thing on the shopping list yeah?" They both erupted into laughter, and the ice was fully broken. Quickly the two sank into the subject at hand, with Parsons asking Adam detailed questions about his gear, his techniques, and his craft.

One of the most impressive things about Fazel was how at ease he was speaking

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-Alan Parsons