

GEAR & GADGETS

The Best Headphones According to Top Record Producers

6 platinum selling music pros and the headphones they most ardently recommend—from brands like Sennheiser, Audio Technica and (surprise) Apple

By Rae Witte

Oct. 22, 2019 3:09 pm ET

Sennheiser HD600



Bernie Grundman, mastering engineer on Michael Jackson's 'Thriller' album: "General consensus among our engineers is that the **Sennheiser HD600** (\$400, [sennheiser.com](https://www.sennheiser.com)) is the least hyped, most accurate and pleasing to listen to, especially with an aftermarket cable and proper amp. It's not the most expensive pair by a long shot, either. Speakers are nearly always superior to headphones for working with audio, but, the HD600 is my best bet."

Audio Technica M50xs

Alex Tumay, engineer on Childish Gambino's Grammy-winning 'This is America': "I stick to my pair of **Audio Technica M50xs** (\$149, [audio-technica.com](https://www.audio-technica.com)) for casual

listening. I can walk the dog and check mixes at the same time and still have a reliable



reference. In studio, I have my Audeze LCDX [pair], and recently, I copped these insane in-ears from 64audio. Both really help you get lost in a different world and create your own room wherever you are while being detailed enough.”

Focal Clear

Emily Lazar, first woman to win Best Engineered Album Grammy for Beck’s ‘Colors’: “I favor HiFi brands because I get so much more of the intimate information, less distortion and a more enjoyable experience. While working, I like the **Focal Clear** (\$1,500, focal.com) and the Grado PS 2000e. But I have the most fun listening to vinyl on a vintage pair of Stax electrostatic ear speakers paired with their amp—I especially like that the brand doesn’t actually call them headphones.”



Beats By Dre Pro

Dot Da Genius, producer of Kid Cudi’s “Day ‘N’ Nite”: “When I’m listening to music more critically, I use Audio Technica’s M50x, but when I want it loud, I listen on **Beats By Dre Pro** over-ear headphones (\$400, beatsbydre.com) because I really like the low-end response. My daughter uses Apple earbuds with

the cord. She’d lose AirPods way too easily, and

[the earbuds are] a great way for me to listen to how others will hear the music I make.”



beyerdynamic DT 770 Pro

Melo-X, sound designer for Beyonce's 'Formation' and her and Jay-Z's 'On the Run' tours: "When working at home, I love the **beyerdynamic DT 770 Pro** (\$179, beyerdynamic.com). Their straight-up clean sound is great. When I'm mixing on the go, they give me a good idea of what the project will sound like across different listening devices—headphones, Bluetooth, Sonos, festival speakers. The padding is soft, nice for long overnight projects."

Apple earbuds

Michael Uzowuru, co-writer and co-producer of Frank Ocean's 'Nights': "I use **Apple earbuds** (\$29, apple.com) for everything—the ones with the cord. They're comfortable, the sound is good, and they don't overcompensate for one frequency or the other. They're also the headphones I use to make music. They give me a true representation of what most others are using to listen, so might as well use them, too. Simplicity and function, personified."



The Wall Street Journal is not compensated by retailers listed in its articles as outlets for products. Listed retailers

frequently are not the sole retail outlets.

MORE IN GEAR & GADGETS

- **📱 Huawei to Begin Selling Folding Smartphone After Monthslong Delay October 23, 2019**
 - **🔭 A Smarter Way to Look at the Stars October 18, 2019**
 - **🎬 How Oscar Winner Chris Cooper Memorizes His Lines October 17, 2019**
 - **🎮 Vintage Arcade Cabinets Can Cost Thousands. Build a Replica for \$249. October 16, 2019**
 - **📺 Streaming Is Killing Physical Media. Here's Why You Won't Miss It. October 11, 2019**
-

Copyright © 2019 Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved

This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. To order presentation-ready copies for distribution to your colleagues, clients or customers visit <https://www.djreprints.com>.