



Pablo Boothroyd on Mixing for McCartney by Daniel Keller

The man who asked, tongue firmly in cheek, if we'd still need him when he's sixty-four is now only a few years shy of that milestone. True, that first band of his was a tough act to follow, but it's fair to say that he's managed to do alright for himself. His "Back in the U.S." tour has been one of the highest grossing in history, and the upcoming European leg promises to be equally well-attended.

Pablo "Pab" Boothroyd has been driving the mix for Sir Paul since 1987, as well as stints with AC/DC, Eurhythmics, and Cast, to name a few. OTWS caught up with him between the U.S. and European tours, and he had high praise for both the musicians and the microphones.

ON TOUR WITH SHURE: You're running two Midas XL4 desks—96 channels in all. That's quite a bit to keep track of.

PABLO "PAB" BOOTHROYD: We do run lots of channels, because there's so much going on and so much switching of instruments and all. Paul's got about 20 channels himself, and when he moves to piano, either Rusty (Anderson) or Brian (Ray) move over to bass. And we've been recording all the shows in surround, so there are several channels of KSM32 for audience and ambient mics, as well. But the mix itself is pretty straightforward, without a lot of effects. We run the vocals through Avalon AD-2044 Opto-Compressors, and everything else through a

rack of dbx 160 SL compressors. I use a pair of TC Electronics M-5000's for reverbs, and a TC D-2 delay for some depth, and that's pretty much it.

OTWS: Paul's philosophy is to keep things pretty basic, then?

"A '58, to me, is a vocal reference for live rock and roll."

—Pablo Boothroyd

PAB: Paul's very much a live rock and roller; he's got a kind of old-school perspective. A lot of the songs evoke a period; you want to get that sound and feel, with a bit of rawness to it. This is really one of the best bands Paul's ever toured with, all fantastic players. Abe (Laboriel, Jr) is such a colorful drummer—he's practically a show all his own. The music just falls into place very naturally, and of course good players make my job a lot easier.

OTWS: The Beta 58A* seems to be your vocal mic of choice.

PAB: We've got Beta 58A heads for everyone except Abe, who uses a Beta 57A* on a boom. A '58, to me, is a vocal reference for live rock and roll. Whether it's Annie Lennox, or Brian Johnson from AC/DC, or Paul, I've always had pleasing results no matter what the singer's dynamic range. All the vocals and guitars are U4D wireless systems.

OTWS: What about the backline?

PAB: We use KSM32s on all the cabinets, and I add an SM57 on Paul's Vox amp for that classic tone. The kits all Shure as well. I mic the cymbals with SM98s, on-axis from underneath, and sum those to a stereo pair; that gives me better separation and helps eliminate the phasing sound you get when the cymbals move.

OTWS: Your approach seems to be almost that of a preservationist, to present the songs as close to the original as possible.

PAB: People have an attachment to these songs, and it's my job to reproduce it faithfully and keep things in perspective. The audience needs to hear the vocals; they need to hear that guitar or keyboard hook—that's their bridge to the song.

OTWS: And Shure's sound helps you achieve that?

PAB: Shure microphones have been around for so long, they give me a consistency I can depend on. They help me reproduce the original sound because they ARE the original sound.