

DVD Rewind: Musical Mixing Revealed

Different, detailed approaches to the beat

By Dan Walsh

Whether you divide your time between weddings on the weekends and late-night club escapades during the week, or you are simply curious about the possibilities of DJing, the two DVDs featured below are both worth viewing—especially if you want to increase your mixing skills.

In the wake of the immensely popular book/vinyl combination of the same name, Berklee Press and Numark Industries have released *Turntable Technique: The Art of the DJ* on DVD and VHS (both \$24.95). The two-hour video version features the author, Berklee professor and producer Stephen Webber, demonstrating scratching and beat-mixing techniques on Numark equipment.

His focus is on “making music” with the turntable, so he breaks down scratching into its basic building blocks, then puts them back together, leading the viewer tenderly toward greater skill levels. He is the consummate “cool professor” as he gently takes the language that DJs use for beat concepts and translates it into musical terminology, all the while reinforcing the idea of the turntable as a viable musical instrument. (As only a Berklee prof could, at one point he points out the similarities between how a DJ divides a basic scratch with a “tear” and how a violinist uses a bow.) He even proposes a standard musical notation for scratching.

Along with the key concepts, the video is loaded with detailed tips and tricks that DJs would normally learn only through long experience: simple things like why you need a light touch on the record or how to keep your fingers moist for a good grip.

To get the most out of this video, you'd probably want to get the book and record to go with it. If you have the book/vinyl combo already, the video adds the visuals that could really make the difference in your learning. And by the way, don't bother with the VHS. Get yourself a DVD player already! You'll thank yourself when all you have to do is punch a button to bring up that one particular demonstration in the middle of the video that you want to review.

For more info or to purchase the video, go to www.berkleepress.com. (The site features a sample of the content, along with the option to access the entire video as an online stream.)

