

HEAR, DON'T LOOK

A Short Dive Into My Method

Kenzo Productions

Hear, Don't Look teaches musicians to trust their ears before their eyes, so they can make better musical decisions with confidence.

Here's the principle underneath everything I teach: the more you rely on your eyes, the less you train your ears.

I never learned music by watching. No sheet music, no meters, no waveforms, no piano roll. Everything I know, I learned by listening — because listening was never optional for me, it was the only way in. That's not the point of this method. It's just how I found it.

The actual point is this: most musicians, sighted or not, never train their ears on purpose. They lean on a meter instead of listening for the level. They watch a piano roll instead of listening for the note. They check a waveform instead of listening for the beat. None of that makes them bad musicians. It just means their ears have never had to do the work on their own, so that skill never gets built.

This isn't a method against tools, and it isn't a story about being blind. It's a method for anyone who wants to hear more than they currently do — because that skill, once it's trained, changes how you play, how you produce, and how confidently you trust your own judgement.

The method is built on four pillars:

1. Ear Challenges
2. Eye Habits, Called Out
3. Busting Myths
4. Build Your Ears

Eye Habits, Called Out

Most of us have been taught to trust our eyes before our ears, so quietly that it barely feels like a choice anymore. Here are a few habits worth noticing in yourself, honestly.

“Watch the gain knob.” A phrase said constantly, without anyone noticing it's an instruction to look, not listen. I've never watched a knob in my life. I set levels by what I hear changing, nothing else — and it works.

“Check that curve.” An EQ decision made by eye before it's confirmed by ear. The curve on screen can look wrong and sound right, or look perfect and sound thin. The screen doesn't know. Only listening does.

“Let me find my sheet music.” A pause before playing, to go find a visual instruction for something the ear could learn directly. I've learned complex pieces without ever reading one, by listening until I understood them from the inside.

“Just eyeball the levels.” Genuinely common advice. I can't eyeball anything. Every level I've ever set has had to actually be heard, which, if anything, has made the decision more accurate, not less.

WORTH SITTING WITH

None of these habits are wrong on their own. Tools are useful. But if the ear only ever confirms what the eye already decided, the ear never actually gets trained. That's the habit worth noticing.

Proof: An Ear Challenge

Philosophy is easy to agree with and forget by lunchtime. So here's something you can actually try, right now, to feel the difference rather than just read about it.

The challenge: identify major or minor by feeling, not theory.

Play any chord on a piano, guitar, or your DAW — it doesn't matter which instrument. Before you think about which notes are in it, before you check anything visually, just sit with how it feels for two full seconds.

A major chord tends to feel bright, settled, confident. A minor chord tends to feel heavier, more unresolved, more emotional. You already know this feeling — you've heard it in thousands of songs. The challenge isn't learning something new. It's trusting that you already know it, without reaching for a chart to confirm it.

Now play five more chords, one at a time, and call each one major or minor purely off the feeling, before you check. Most people get this right far more often than they expect — because the ear already understood it. It just wasn't used to being trusted first.

WHY THIS MATTERS

This is the whole method in miniature. The skill was already there. It just wasn't given the chance to lead. Every pillar of Hear, Don't Look is built on that same idea, applied to bigger and harder listening problems.

Busting a Myth

The myth: “A mix isn’t finished until the meters are in the green.”

This is one of the most repeated pieces of production advice there is, and it's treated like a rule rather than what it actually is — a rough visual guideline that can be completely wrong.

Here's the problem with it: a meter tells you a number. It doesn't tell you whether a mix actually sounds good. You can build a mix that reads perfectly on every meter and still sounds thin, cluttered, or lifeless. You can also build a mix that reads slightly outside the “correct” range and sounds full, clear, and genuinely finished.

The meter can't hear balance. It can't hear whether a vocal is sitting right in the track. It can't hear whether the low end feels good or just feels loud. It only measures level, and level is one small piece of what actually makes a mix work.

The real test was never the meter. It's whether the mix sounds right when you actually listen to it, on real speakers or headphones, with real attention. If it sounds right and the meter disagrees, trust what you heard. The meter is a tool for confirming a decision your ears already made — not the thing that should be making the decision for you.

Build Your Ears

One real exercise, worth doing today, not just reading about.

THE 60 SECOND CHORD CHALLENGE

Set a timer for 60 seconds. Play a chord, guess major or minor by feeling alone, check if you're right, then play another. See how many you can get through, and how many you get right, before the minute's up. Do this daily for a week. You will notice the guessing turn into knowing.

What's Next

This was a short dive, built from the four pillars behind everything I teach: proving what trained ears can do, calling out the visual habits that get in the way, busting the myths built on those habits, and giving you real, repeatable ways to train your own ears until listening becomes automatic.

If this shifted even slightly how you think about your next session at the piano or in your DAW, that's the method working. The courses, challenges and lessons that come next all build directly on this — the same principle, applied deeper, every time.

**The more you rely on your eyes, the less you train your ears.
Start training them.**

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