



# COMPOSER SVEN FAULCONER OUTFITS NEW STUDIO WITH ATC SCM45A THREE-WAY NEARFIELD



LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA – AUGUST 2018: With decades of productivity still ahead of him, film composer Sven Faulconer has earned the attention of Hollywood’s decision-makers. His credits include complete scores for *Blood Father*, the Netflix produced *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, National Geographic’s documentary *Into the Okavango*, *Wanderland* and the IMAX adventure *We, the Marines*, among many others, along with a raft of synth programming and additional score credits for blockbusters like *The Hunger Games*, *Nightcrawler*, and *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*. Born and raised in Belgium,

Faulconer currently resides in Los Angeles, where he studied and worked under veteran composer and mentor James Newton Howard (*Hunger Games*, *The Sixth Sense*, *The Dark Knight*). Having recently relishing the joy (and enduring the pain!) of building out a new personal composing studio that will see him through the next phase of his career, Faulconer decided to stick with ATC active monitors.

He and Howard jumped to ATC SCM100ASL Pro and SCM50ASL Pro monitors at JNH Studios in 2013 and have been revelling in their ability to create mixes that unfailingly translate ever since.

“I am a composer, not an engineer, but like most composers these days, competent engineering is a necessary skill that I’ve worked hard to learn,” Faulconer said. “For session recording and final mixes, I collaborate with engineers like Shawn Murphy, Matt Ward, and Bruce Botnick, but so much of my synth work is really engineered by me at the time of creation. Because of that, a lot of what’s relevant to audio engineering is relevant to me too, including accurate monitoring.”

Faulconer started as Howard’s second assistant eight years ago and moved up to his first assistant six years ago, which necessitated overseeing a lot of session work, as well as writing additional music and co-composing. “At Shawn’s urging, we switched to ATC monitors years ago at JNH Studios, and it was a great improvement,” Faulconer said. “I’ve written in a lot of different spaces on a lot of different monitors, and it’s always frustrating to get something sounding good on one set of monitors only to discover that things sound out of balance on another set of monitors. That’s especially stressful for a film composer, because the next playback might be for the director. So, translation is key, and that’s where the ATCs excel. Honestly, I’d say it’s a little harder to get a mix sounding good on ATCs, but once it does, it will always sound fantastic on any other balanced system. That’s obviously a better outcome than being lulled into a false sense that the mix is okay only to discover later that it isn’t.”

Faulconer’s new studio was only recently completed, and he’s using ATC SCM45A three-way nearfields for the all-important left-center-right loudspeakers in its new system. Although he’ll mainly compose in the studio, it will also be used for some mixing and recording. Bill Learned at Vintage King secured the ATCs for Faulconer. “I still have a lot of collaborations going on with James and other composers, so I’m excited to have the same ATC honesty that I’ve come to rely on at JNH Studios in the past. They’re really an indispensable tool.”

Because he worked on his ATC while still building out the studio, he has an A/B experience between an untreated and treated space. “We made a big effort to treat the space acoustically” he said. “We gave the walls much more mass to keep the outside sounds outside and the inside sounds inside and the walls, ceiling and cloud

were treated entirely with acoustic materials and fabric. All told, I was surprised to discover that I need to monitor about 20dB louder in the treated space, which tells me I was mixing with 20dB of reflections in the old, untreated space. The ATCs sounded great in the untreated space and led me to mixes that translate, but the clarity and balanced frequency response are even more obvious now in the treated studio.” One of the first projects Faulconer finished in his new studio was a National Geographic documentary called Into the Okavango and he’s currently working on Aquaman for Remote Control-based composer Rupert Gregson-Williams.