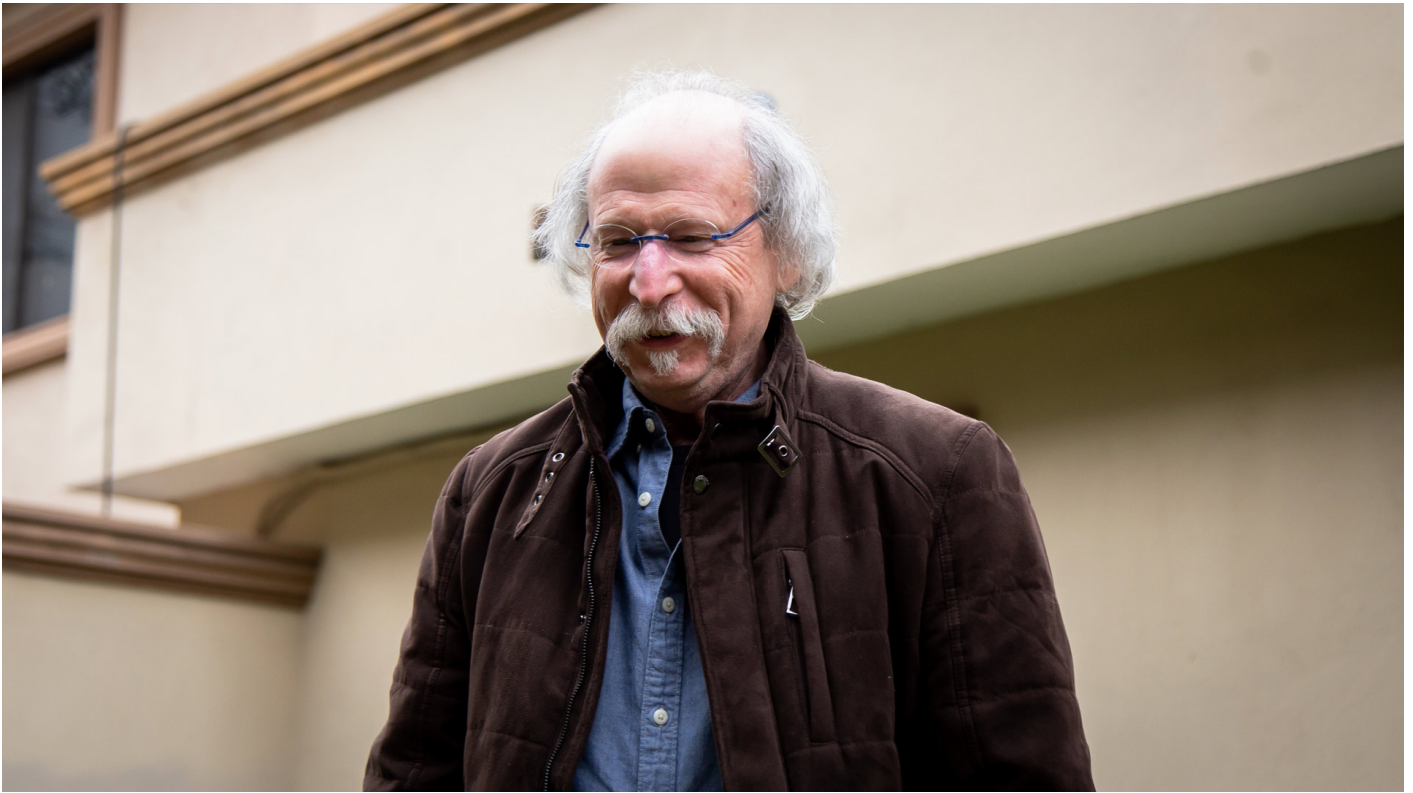


The winner of 6 Grammy Awards who is now a Tec Distinguished Professor



*“Sharing and patience, that’s teaching. Be patient so that young people can **discover their creativity**, envision their horizons, and **feel boundless**. The first rule is that there are no rules.”*

This is how recording and mastering engineer [Allan Tucker](#), a **multi-award-winner** with **more than 50 years** as a **music professional**, sees his role as a **distinguished professor** at [Tec de Monterrey](#).

He is also **president** of the **Music Production and Technology** program at the School of Humanities and Education. Additionally, he led the design of blocks and units for the **Tec21 Model** program.

He has mastered more than **3,500 albums**. Tucker's work has been nominated for Grammy awards **26 times, winning on 6 occasions**. He also runs his own studio, [TuckerSound at Foothill Digital](#) in New York and in Monterrey, Mexico.

Also an adjunct professor at **New York University**, he has put his talent to records by **Metallica, KISS, Earth Wind & Fire, Gonzalo Rubalcaba, John Coltrane, Joe Henderson**, among other artists.



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From the mastering studio to the classroom

Prior to 2010, Tucker devoted himself entirely to his recording and mastering studio, which he had started 20 years earlier in New York. That year, he was given the opportunity to **become a professor**.

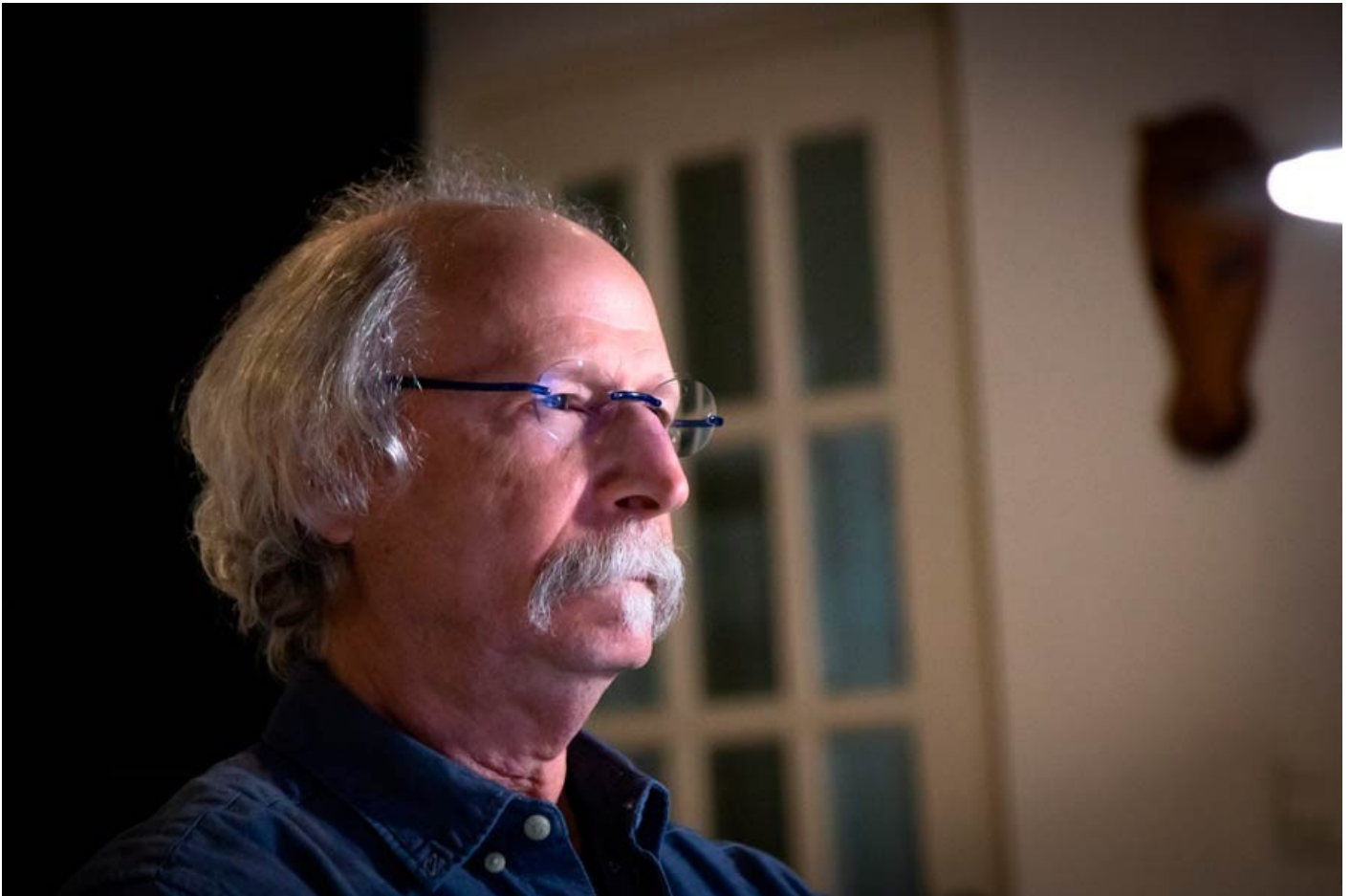
*“I got a call from **New York University**, and they asked me if I wanted to go work with them to create a new course. I said, ‘Sure! It sounds strange, but I think I can do that,’”* the professor recalled.

When he asked about the curriculum, the answer they gave him was, *“Why don’t you try to **teach what you’ve done in your career?**”*

Inspired by his experiences throughout his career, Allan set to work to create a **mastering course** that could be taught over **15 weeks**.

*“It was my specialty at that time. It’s the last step, after recording and mixing those recordings, they’re **professionally mastered** to prepare them for the **market**,”* he said.

That was the first time Tucker **gained a taste for being a professor and sharing his knowledge** with a new generation of engineers.



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Working alongside him was like being in a master class

Allan has set himself apart with his particular style of work and his way of **explaining his progress** on projects to his clients, **as if he were teaching them.**

*“Over the years, all of my clients have said they like working with me because I give them context about the changes I make and **help them understand the purpose and emotion behind a project.**”*

*“You need to understand not only the project but also how it fits for the world and for what the market wants. It’s making sure those sounds don’t just sound good but **that they’re what the audience wants to hear,**” he explained.*

Tucker took advantage of the recording, mixing, and mastering sessions to share what he knew and felt about music.

*“I was told that **having a session with me** was like being in a **master class.** So, I always felt that **teaching** had to be **the next logical step in my career,**” he added.*

“You need to not only understand the project but also how it fits for the world and for what the market wants.”



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From his passion for music as a child to signing with a Beatles representative

Allan had fun playing with a record player as a child until his father came home one day with a big music player, a **stereo with buttons and equalizers**.

*“I’d never heard a stereo, so I’d sit in front of this new equipment and press the buttons. **I was fascinated by how the sound changed and moved.** I found a love for music without any problem,”* he recalled.

That interest awakened the desire in Tucker to devote himself to music. First, **he learned to play the flute, then the clarinet and guitar**. There was even a time when he wanted to become a **singer**.

*“**I wanted to be a professional singer-songwriter.** I had a partner I sang with in college, and we were quite successful.*

*“We even signed a recording contract with a great manager, who turned out to be **The Beatles’** representative in the United States.”*

The engineer who fell in love with music mastering

Allan says that at that time he went to a studio in Manhattan to **record three songs**.

*“I’d never been to a studio, but when I was focused on doing the vocals, I saw the engineer through the glass, and I realized he wasn’t being very creative. I thought, ‘**I can do this,**’” he said.*

Allan still remembers the feeling of seeing that audio engineer in the Manhattan studio who he thought looked like a **“robot”** that just pushed **buttons and followed orders**.

*“Anyone can be a robot. **It isn’t enough to know how the console or the software works.** It has to be **customized** because anyone can roll the tape. You’re not going to have a career that way.”*

Two years later, Allan finished his arts degree at the **City University of New York**, and he found an opportunity to work as an assistant engineer at **Bell Sound Studios**.

*“To not be a robot, you need to become a **critical listener**. My mantra is **‘Never just listen, but listen with attitude.’**”*

*“Listening is fundamental because that **comes with self-confidence,**” he added.*

“My mastering class is about listening critically to help sound find its destination and its goals for the market.”



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The students who invited him to be the ‘spiritual leader’ in music at the Tec

In 2014, **three professors from Tec de Monterrey became Tucker's students**. They were taking their master's degree courses at New York University. One of them, a degree program director, **invited him to collaborate with the Tec**.

*"It all started as a joke, and then the invitation became reality. By October of that year, I was at the Tec giving a two-week **seminar** and a **master class**. That became a common occurrence over the next three years.*

*"In 2017, I was asked, 'Would you like to become our spiritual leader and teach **full-time** for a year and **lead the program**?' It was a great invitation, and I accepted."*

Almost five years after that invitation, Allan collaborated in the **design of the Music Production and Technology program for the Tec21 Model**, of which he is now the president.

The **Tec21 Model** is based on **challenge-based learning** with flexibility, **inspiring professors**, and a memorable student experience.

Eventually, the professor moved to Monterrey, Mexico, where **he built a replica of the studio he had in Manhattan**. He continues to do **mastering work** for clients there and work as a professor.

*"That's been my grand trajectory. I started as a musician, then I became an engineer, a successful engineer who taught at New York University, and then I became a **professor at the Tec sharing my knowledge of recording techniques**," he added.*

The challenge is to develop students' critical ear and creativity

Tucker feels that **engineers shouldn't print their personality on a piece of music** because producers, artists, and musicians have put their energies into it, and engineers have a **responsibility not to ruin it**.

*"Students ask me, 'How do I make this a success?' You need to respond honestly and use the tools available to **push the music in the direction you think it should go**.*

*"**You have to respect and support the music**. When students go to work for someone, they're going to be hired if they're the right fit, because that person likes what they're doing with music. That's the **confidence factor**," he added.*



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Being a musical “spiritual guide” who inspires his students

Just like when he was young and had the support of mentors who helped him discover his potential as an engineer, Allan today hopes to become a **“spiritual guide” who inspires his students.**

*“What I want for my students is that they’re able to **acquire a skill set** broad enough that they can **make their way through** when a door opens for them.*

*“I try to teach them that **they have to devote themselves to the work and give the client a reason** to call them back,” he added.*

In the classes he teaches and final projects he participates in as a mentor, Tucker relies a lot on **storytelling** with real stories about **his own learning curve.**

*“I love teaching all of that in my mastering class because **it’s about listening critically to help the sound find its destination** and goals in the market.*

*“**We take apart and examine songs** in the market or songs that I worked on in my career, always **with the purpose of developing their skills,**” Tucker said.*

Allan said he was pleased to be able to work with young engineers or aspiring engineers at institutions such as the Tec and New York University.

*“At first, I found it very difficult, but once I finally made it, **the experience has been fantastic at both institutions.***

*“It’s gratifying to see how students are there to listen and learn it all, watching them be **able to do magical things**,” he said.*

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