

KBJ RECORDS



Where Your Music is Our #1 Priority

Mixing Tips The Professionals Don't Want You To Know About

Mixing for Best Results

Getting the best results out of music mastering starts with the recording session. Most musicians record their music in their very own home studios. Contrary to belief, it is more than possible to achieve a professional recording out of a home studio, but mastering will be needed. For those of you who think that music mastering is an unnecessary expense in your production budget, think again. If professional musicians whom use thousands of dollars worth of equipment while recording are still sending their music off to be mastered, then how can you compete with them without mastering your music.

Music Mastering can work wonders for your music, but you have to do your part. The better your music sounds before the mastering engineer gets your music, the better your music will sound after it has been mastered. Below you will find 5 tips that will help you better prepare your music for maximum results out of mastering.

5 Tips to better prepare your music for maximum results out of mastering.

- **High Sample Rate:** (before you start recording)
 - Sample Rate refers to the amount of Hz that a song is formatted in. CDs can only read 44.100Hz so most recording programs automatically record your music in this sample rate. However, you can manually raise the sample rate in your recording programs if your hardware can support the higher rate. The higher the sample rate, the better the quality of your music. Sample rates usually range from 44.100 to 192.000 Hz. Remember the higher the sample rate, the harder it is on your computer so don't get carried away with it. I recommend a good 48.000Hz sample rate. You should set your sample rate before you start recording a song. A higher sample rate will not only create a higher quality recording but you will receive better results out of the mastering process. Remember you can burn a song with a sample rate higher than 44.100Hz to a CD but it will not play in a CD player. If you are going to get the song mastered, do not convert it to a lower sample rate for CD play, instead burn it to a disc in the sample rate that it was recorded in, and give it to the mastering engineer. This will give better results out of the mastering process.

- **Tracking Correctly:** (during the recording process)

- Many producers make the mistake of recording their instrumentals, mixing them down to one stereo wave, and then giving them to an artist so that vocals can be added. This is a common mistake that greatly reduces the quality of mastering. In order to track a song correctly you should record all of your tracks separately (including the instrumental) and should not mix any of them down to one stereo wave until you have completely mixed the entire song and are ready to add it to CD or give it to a mastering engineer.

- **No Compression:** (during the mixing process)

◦ **You may add minor compression to some separate tracks in the mix but this should be done in moderation by someone experienced in compression.**

- When mixing a song some producers get caught up in trying to make the song sound perfect. Although it is wise to make the song sound as great as possible before mastering begins, one must remember not to get carried away with it. A producer's main concern should be with the EQ of the song. Do not try to obtain perfection through compression. Nothing hurts mastering results worse than a song that has already been compressed. There should be no compression added to a song before mastering. You may add minor compression to some separate tracks in the mix but this should be done in moderation by someone experienced in compression. Never compress the overall stereo wave or master track. Remember, do not try to achieve loudness in the song during the mixing process. True loudness cannot be achieved except through compression. It is the mastering engineer's responsibility to get your song up to the correct loudness.

- **Distortion:** (during the mixing process)

- As discussed in the above section, many producer's try to achieve loudness in the song when mixing. Some producer's end up mixing the song too loud. When this is done some tracks end up distorting. Remember, just because you can't hear the distortion does not mean that it is not there. The mastering process tends to make your songs louder. As a result, distortion may be heard more clearly after the mastering process which is why it is very important for you to look over your mix and make sure that none of the track meters are distorting or clipping the red. If any of them are, turn them down so that they will not clip. Occasionally this may cause you to have to remix the song so it is good practice to stay on top of this while mixing the song the first time around. The master track should also be free of distortion and clipping.

- **Overall Volume:**

- The overall volume of your song, after you have mixed it down to one stereo wave should reach no higher than -3db. The mastering engineer will need to have a little headroom to work with while mastering your song. If your song is too much louder than -3db it becomes harder for him/her to master your song perfectly without distortion. You can achieve this volume by simply adjusting the volume of the master track during the mix.