

# KBJ RECORDS



Where Your Music is Our #1 Priority

## TOP SECRET MIXING TECHNIQUES



### Top Secret Mixing Techniques

This report is not recommended for beginning producers. Many of the techniques outlined in this report are advanced mixing techniques.

There are many techniques that are involved in the art of mixing music. We all know that high quality software and equipment is a must have when it comes to creating an exceptional mix. We also know that controlling the volume on various tracks and panning some audio to the left or right are useful techniques, however the purpose of this report is not to report the common techniques that everyone is using but to report the secret techniques that people aren't telling you about. We do this for you because your music is truly our #1 priority.

### Signal Altering

- When it comes to mixing, much of the time the only thing separating an average producer from a professional one is his/her knowledge of signal altering. Signal Altering is when a producer alters different audio signals within a track. One of the most powerful ways to alter a signal is to change its frequency. When you change the frequency of audio you change the way it sounds. Changing the frequency of audio can cause that audio to be heard with more clarity or less clarity than the rest of the audio in the mix. For example, raising the frequency of an audio by 1000hz will cause that audio to be heard with more clarity to the listener. The use of this technique allows producers to increase or lessen the clarity of some audios in the mix without necessarily increasing that audio's volume. I would not recommend altering the frequency of all of the tracks in the mix because some tracks will sound fine in the frequency that they were recorded in. (The **"ME Spectralizer"**, by **Steinberg** is a plug-in that can help you with this technique.)

## Stereo Imaging

- Stereo Imaging is another very important technique used by professional producers world-wide. Another way to increase the warmth, clarity, and presence of an audio is to increase its stereo image. When you increase the stereo image of a track, you increase the presence that the audio has in the stereo wave. In other words, increasing the stereo image of an audio file will make that audio heard in a more stereo way. Not to be confused with panning, stereo imaging increases the presence and strength that the audio has in all regions of the stereo wave, whereas panning deals with spreading a mono audio signal linearly to the right or left speaker. If used with panning, stereo imaging can be a powerful tool when increasing the presence of certain instruments within a mix. (The **“SI Imager”** by **Waves** is a plug-in that can help you with this technique.)

## Drive Increase

- As stated in the earlier report, “Mixing Tips They Don't Want You To Know About” compression is something that should not be done during the mixing process unless done in moderation by a professional, but there is another way to increase the volume, strength and clarity of audio without being an expert in compression. You can increase the drive of the audio signal. When you increase the drive of an audio signal, you are increasing the power of the signal that is pushing the audio into your software. Increasing the drive of the audio will increase the volume to levels that are impossible to reach by increasing the volume alone. When increasing the drive of an audio file it would be wise to do it with a plug-in that increases drive while also keeping the audio from distorting. The Steinberg Magneto plug-in can accomplish this task. I would not recommend that you use this technique on all of the tracks in the mix because some tracks will not need a drive increase. (The **“Magneto”** by **Steinberg** is a plug-in that can help you with this technique.)

## Adding Punch

- Adding punch to audio is not really a top secret technique but since so many people are not adding it to their mixes, we decided to include it in this report. When you add punch to an audio file you increase the power, velocity, and clarity of that audio. The audio will hit the speakers “hard” which is why the effect is usually called “puncher” in most software programs. The puncher is very important to drum tracks. In home studios, producers find it hard to reproduce that commercial drum punch quality that is present in most popular music. It becomes even more impossible to achieve without the use of an MPC drum machine. Regardless if you are producing your drums with a MPC or not, it is imperative that you use the puncher on all of your drum tracks to ensure that you are getting the biggest bang out of your drums. Don't get carried away with it! The puncher has a habit of adding too much punch to some audio signals. (Most software programs possess some type of puncher plug-in.)

## **The Mixing Procedure**

- Believe it or not, there is a procedure to the mixing process. When mixing a song, you do not adjust the volume levels in your console while all of the tracks are playing. You should mute all of the tracks and solo the individual track that you are planning to mix. Once you are satisfied with the volume of one track, you should solo another track, adjust its volume and so on. There is also an order that most professional producers follow when mixing a song. The order is outlined below:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> EQ your bass drum tracks
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> EQ your bass guitar line or bass line tracks
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> EQ your snare tracks
  - 4<sup>th</sup> EQ your hi hat tracks
  - 5<sup>th</sup> EQ your piano, strings, or sub melody tracks
  - 6<sup>th</sup> EQ your main melody track.
- Be sure that none of your meters in the mix are clipping the red, (reading above 0.0db) for this means that distortion is present. Distortion will ruin your mix. Remember, just because you cannot hear the distortion in your system does not mean that it is not there. When your song gets played in larger speaker systems, the distortion may be heard more clearly. Secondly, if you are planning to have your songs mastered you definitely will not want distortion because it is impossible to remove distortion and the mastering engineer will not be able to obtain maximum results.

There are many techniques that are involved in the art of mixing music. Here, we have only highlighted a few of the most popular secrets used in the professional mixing world. KBJ Records will continue to provide you with valuable information throughout your musical career.

If you are reading this report, it is highly recommended that you read our earlier report, “Mixing Tips They Don't Want You To Know About”. We want you to get a full understanding of the mixing process. If you have not read our earlier report, just click the link below to download.