

# Z .. M A S T E R I N G

Mastering for digital, CD, vinyl and tape releases. Please read carefully this short step-by-step guide (or download it in PDF).

## How to prepare your tracks

- .wav or .aiff, 24 bits, 44.1KHz or higher, no dither when bouncing.
- Highest peaks hitting around -6dBFS.
- No clipping is really a must. In the case of clipped track, let it as it is ; don't try to fix it by putting a limiter on it, turning down the master bus to -6dBFS and bouncing again.
- No limiter on the master bus. Anyway you will not need one if your highest peaks are around -6dBFS.
- If possible, no overcooked compression and equalization on the master bus.
- If possible, let a second of silence or two before and after a track.
- Don't fade in/out. I will do it for you. If you need a specific timing, just let me know.

## Tools

All the mastering process is done In-The-Box. The following VST plugins are the ones I most commonly use :

- EQs : TDR VOS SlicEQ GE, DMQ Equilibrium, BX Digital V2
- Compressors : Ozone, Klanghelm MJUC, TDR Kotelnikov GE
- Limiters/Clippers : AOM Invisible Limiter, Vladg L6, Kclip
- Others : Sknote Soundbrigade, U-he Satin, T-Racks, SPL Transient Designer

## Process

It starts pretty simple : you send me a link to your prepared material, which is stored on a FTP, a service like Wetransfer, or Dropbox. I download it and quickly analyse the files.

Feel free to join references tracks and/or your own home-master versions. This will help me to know better what kind of sound you are looking for. Be sure you carefully prepared your tracks for mastering (see "How to prepare a file for mastering").

### 1. Pre-mastering jobs

It can happen that I have to prepare your files if those are not well suited for the mastering process. 2 cases here :

- Simple files preparation (if required). If the files you send me are not encoded in a regular .wav or .aiff 24bit format and/or don't have enough headroom (but the material isn't clipped and heavily compressed/limited), then I will have to prepare those files before working on them. This is a 1€ per track extra. I will email you before doing it so you are aware of it and give me permission to proceed.
- Declipping and transients recovery (if required). If the files you send me are not encoded in a regular .wav or .aiff 24bit format and the material is already clipped, compressed/limited to death, then I can try to restore this material (\*). This is 5€ per track extra. I will email you before starting the mastering process, so you are aware of it and give me permission to proceed.

*\* : If a track is not totally squashed, it is possible to restore a bit of dynamic by re-creating artificial transients. The result of such a method will not sound as pristine as working with clean and well prepared 24 bits files, although it will not clip anymore and it will not sound as digitally harsh as before the declipping process.*

### 2. Mastering

I then start working on the master per se. I usually need a few days to a full week. Mostly because I hate to rush such things !

### 3. Files checking and feedback

Once finished with the mastering process :

- I send you mp3 files so you can check if everything is satisfying.
- If you want me to modify something (it sometimes happen, no shame about this !), I work

on it again . Then I send you a second batch of mp3 files.

- If you still want more work on it, then it is charged 2,50€ more per track.

#### 4. Post-mastering jobs

I can perform some other tasks for you. Those are of course optionals :

- Snippets. If you'd like me to create short snippets (typically 2 or 3 minutes) to tease your release on social networks, it will cost you 1€ more per snippet. Let me know where I should cut and what kind of fades (in and out) you'd like.
- CD projects. I can complete and finalize your CD project by creating a DDP 2.0 image, filling ISRC codes, etc. Please contact me for details.
- Restoration job. For more in-depth restoration processing of your tracks, please tell me the full story per email.
- Stems mastering. This can be a very powerful mastering technique if you are not absolutely sure about your mix balance. Please contact me for details.

#### 5. At last...

You will receive the final wave 16 bits files (and the other products you ordered) upon reception of your payment.

## Prices

Mastering :

- 12,50€ per track
- 10€ per track for netlabels
- Stems mastering : please contact me

Others :

- 2,50€ for working more than 2 times on the same track (see "Process")
- 1€ per snippet
- 20€ per DDP 2.0 image of your CD project (including ISRC codes, CD-Text, etc.)
- 1€ per track for simple preparation processing

- 5€ per track for declipping / transient recovery processing
- Any particular request : please contact me

## Payment informations

Both payment methods are accepted :

- Paypal
- IBAN bank wire

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