

Optimal preparation for Vinyl Mastering Session

We have created a list of helpful steps that you can follow, in order to ensure the best sounding Vinyl Master. There are specific points that we suggest that you follow, this will help us with the handling of your Master. (For Vinyl Masters please follow 4 & 8.)

1. LABEL THE MEDIA – Please take your time to label your media with the accurate and definite information, and that all letters/numbers are legible. Please avoid writing the incorrect label information as this will delay the mastering process. Please do not use label stickers on the media, this is important, when using stickers it can disturb the rotation balance of the CD. Stickers used as labels on CD, affect the import of the CD, and read errors will occur. Please label the CD with a CD ink pen with the following information: Artist, Title of Album, Phone Number, Date, and if there is more than one CD, then please number each CD. (Example: CHILL MIX CD 1 OF 3) Please write the Technical Specs of the CD – Sample rate (44,1 kHz, 96 kHz, etc), Bit rate (16 Bit or 24 Bit), and Data Format (wav, aiff, SDII, interleaved, split stereo).

2. SAMPLE RATE – Over the last years, digital converters have reached a much higher quality. In order to comply with the highest standards, we suggest that you use the highest possible Sample rate and Bit rate (24 Bit, 96 kHz). We strongly request that you do not do a Sample rate Conversion.

3. COMPRESSING AND LIMITING THE ENTIRE MIX – Please do not compress or limit your mix. For an example with the 'Finalizer' or computer based plug ins. When you do these applications yourself, you are risking the chance of damaging, or corrupting your sound, and also leaving the Mastering Engineer with fewer options to get the maximum potential out of your recordings. The same applies for Stereo expander, Bass enhancer, and other sound manipulation of the stereo sum. Avoid digital Distortion from, i.e.: compression, clipping, or limiting, because the distortion can increase during the mastering process.

4. SPECIFIC RULES FOR VINYL MASTERING

STEREO IMAGE – When submitting tracks/songs please note that it is not possible to transfer/cut material to vinyl when the stereo image has been over/extremely expanded. The bass region on the track setting should be in mono for best results. Also note that the bass must be clean, we suggest that you do not add effects to the bass, i.e. Chorus, Flanger. We are able to work with material that is over expanded, and also music that may contain bass effects on it, however if we need to narrow/edit the stereo image, this will result in a lower bass impact. Please note that special attention should be placed on this procedure in order to gain the best results.

EXCESS SIBILANCE – High levels in the high frequency range will sound distorted when pressed on vinyl. Typically, vocal signals like "F", "S", "Shh" or "T" are most problematic, as are shrill and loud Hihats. The best solution is de-essing vocals during the mixdown and keeping high frequency signals on a reasonably low level.

TRACK ARRANGEMENT – Please note that when making your vinyl track list, we highly suggest that you put your favourite or most important tracks first. For example, A1 and B1 should be the tracks you want featured with the best sound quality. The reasoning for this is that the first tracks on the vinyl will sound better due to the RPM

it works at. The sounds of the outer region of the vinyl will contain more dynamics and impact than the inner region of the vinyl.

BASS HEAVY MUSIC FOR VINYL MASTERING – Bass heavy material (tracks, songs, etc) will need more space on a vinyl compared to music that is not bass heavy. This will result in a time length reduction.

5. **FORMAT** – You can send us your material in every standard and current format: CD ROM (ISO-9660, Mac or Hybrid), Audio CD, DVD, or DAT. Also in every standard data format (WAV, AIFF, SDII). Please note that a data CD is better than an audio CD. You can also upload your tracks to our FTP server, and we will give you an individual server access that is password protected.

6. **TRACKLISTING** – Prior to the mastering process, we ask you to have a prepared tracklisting to ensure a timely return of your final project. We are able to change the order by request; however, when mastering the final product, it is best to have an exact tracklisting. For Vinyl Mixes please list the split up of tracks for SIDE A and SIDE B.

7. **TRACK SET UP** – Please leave blank space at the start and at the end of each track. The minimum is one second at the start/end. Please be advised that it is important that you leave a few seconds free at the start/end. Music that has been cut in edit programs with no free space can create unwanted sounds, ie: pops, cracks, clicks. It's also possible to use the space to erase eventual hissing or humming out of the recordings, ie with the noise print process.

8. **MAXIMUM TIME LENGTH FOR VINYL** – The following chart will give you an overview for optimal time length that should be followed for all Vinyl Mastering. Specific time lengths should be followed to ensure the highest quality vinyl master. If you go over the time length, this could result in sound quality reduction and peak level reduction. This applies to bass heavy music like Drum&Bass, Hiphop, House, Techno and Dance. Please follow the suggested times for the best quality vinyl pressing.

		Maximum Time Length	Optimal Time Length
12" 33 1/3 RPM	Normal Level	24 Minutes	16 – 18 Minutes
	High Level (Bass heavy club track, Dance Music)	12 Minutes	8 – 10 Minutes
12" 45 RPM	Normal Level	12 Minutes	10 Minutes
	High Level (Bass heavy club track, Dance Music)	9 Minutes	6 – 8 Minutes

9. **BACKUPS** – You must give us explicit orders to archive your original recordings. We will hold the original recordings for 2 months; after this time period, we will destroy the original CD and delete the project from the hard drive. Please be advised that you must request this at the time of order either via email or contract sheet. You should always make a back up of your original work, as stated we will only keep the

original recording you send us for a limited amount of time. With this in mind, please make a safety copy of every form of media you send us. If possible you should make 2 original copies instead of copying it, due to quality loss for every copy you make. Also digital copies can have affects on the master recording, so it is best to make 2 original data disks, one that will be kept by you, and also one will be sent to us. Please note also that digital errors can be hard for the Mastering Engineer to fix. Please assure that all accurate data is sent to us.

10. ASK US QUESTIONS – Please don't hesitate to ask us any type of question you may have concerning preparation procedures, mastering questions, anything that you need more information on, we are here to assist you with all your mastering needs. Our Mastering Engineers can help explain the work process to you, and answer any questions you may have about the Mastering you are requesting.

11. HELPFUL HINTS – Frequent Questions we ask you concerning a mastering order.

How long is the material you are sending us, amount of titles, full play length?

Which format are you sending? CDROM, WAV, AIFF, DVD, SDII, DAT?

Is it a live recording or software based recording you are sending us?

Will anyone be joining the Mastering Session (manager, artist, etc)?

Who is the person we can contact if we have questions regarding the mastering, and also a contact person to approve the final master?

12. THANK YOU – If you follow these instructions this will allow us to perform in the most ideal work conditions to ensure you an amazing sound quality master.