



Preparing Your Mixes for Mastering

**Joe Lambert, Jeff Lipton, Sarah Register,
Trevor Sadler,
and Garrett Haines as the Beaver**

BACKGROUND

- The following presentation was prepared for **TAPE OP CON 2005**, held in New Orleans, LA, USA
- This served as part one of a duo, being the intro to the **MODERN MASTERING** panel hosted by Greg Calbi
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Meet these Fockers

- Sarah Register
- Trevor Sadler
- Joe Lambert
- Jeff Lipton
- Garrett Haines



Where are we going?

- i. Terms - speaking the same language
- ii. Do this - top ten things you should do
- iii. We don't read minds - communication
- iv. Stems - how they can help or hurt
- v. No! - top ten things you should avoid
- vi. Questions from the audience - ask now



Terms

Let's speak the same language!



Terms

Master

- a) The keeper of Jedi secrets
- b) What you paid \$85 for on Bourbon Street last night
- c) What you do when you mix your tracks
- d) A word that has no meaning without context



Terms

Part

- a) What you audition for at community theatre
- b) A hair style
- c) The drummer from Rush
- d) A term for the final master product



Terms

REF

- a) The official at a basketball game
- b) A type of sofa at Ikea
- c) REM's first choice for a band name
- d) A reference CD



Terms

PMCD

- a) A communicable disease
- b) A hot rap group from Jersey
- c) A new flavor of Nyquil
- d) The Pre Mastered Compact Disc



Terms

Stems

- a) Along with seeds, the only thing in your pocket
- b) A 1950's term for a woman's legs
- c) A new bladder control device
- d) Something Joe will explain later



Terms

Dither

- a) A musical instrument from the middle east
- b) A temper tantrum taken by the lead singer
- c) A small mammal indigenous to New Zealand
- d) A process that linearizes digital audio by adding a random noise signal



Terms

Word Length

- a) A limit Tape Op puts on it's writers
- b) Dirty locker room language
- c) A hot band on iTunes
- d) The resolution of the digital sample. (Also called bit depth, bit rate or bit resolution).



Terms

Sample Rate

- a) How many times you can hit the hoers d'oeuvre tray in an hour
- b) What a mastering engineer charges to do one song
- c) A license fee you must pay Harry Fox to use a snippet of music on your CD
- d) The number of digital samples recorded per second

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Terms

Payment

- a) **Something you must give your mastering engineer to get your final CD**
- b) **Something you should give your mastering engineer to get your final CD**
- c) **Something you really ought to give your mastering engineer to get your final CD**
- d) **Something you pretty please ought to give your mastering engineer to get your final CD**



Do This!

- 1) **Label everything (& double check yourself)**
- 2) **Provide all master production information**
- 3) **Have your track listing decided upon in advance, and track specific notes/edits/etc. ready to turn in with your sources**
- 4) **Provide sonic targets or examples**
- 5) **Mix to more than one source (using analog and having a digital copy), or have backups of your mix**



Do This!

- 6) Provide alternative mix options (vox up/down, gtr up/down...), if applicable
- 7) Provide a mix you feel confident in, as opposed to a mix you feel matches up in volume to your favorite CDs
- 8) Listen to every second of your mixes before you send them for mastering, and be thinking of it as an 'album' (or 12", or ...)
- 9) Determine who is calling the shots and giving directions



Do This!

**10) Wait until you receive your final master
before scheduling a CD release party**



Communication

- **Timeline**
- **Format of your mixes**
- **Expectations**



Stems - WTF?

- What are they?
- Why would you use them?
- Advantages and Disadvantages
- Suggestions
- Closing



Avoid like the plague

- 1) **Mix bus clipping**
- 2) **Mixes that are over compressed**
- 3) **Kick/Snare drum not punching through the mix**
- 4) **Muddy lower mid range**
- 5) **Cymbals that are too crunchy, grainy, and in your face**



Avoid like the plague

- 6) Vocals that are too buried and hard to hear in the mix
- 7) Mixes sound like they're covered by a cardboard box
- 8) Sending your only copy of a mix
- 9) Converting or truncating your files
- 10) Doing your fades at home*

***most of the time**



Questions

Don't be shy

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Contacts

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- Trevor Sadler www.mastermindproductions.net
- Joe Lambert www.joelambertmastering.com
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END

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