

HIGHWOOD AUDIO

PROFESSIONAL MASTERING, BERLIN

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How to prepare stereo mixes for mastering

- File Format:** High quality formats like **WAV, AIF, AIFF or BWF**.
If possible, no compressed audio, like MP3 or AAC.
- Sample Rate:** **44.1/48/88.2/96 khz**. We recommend to keep the sample rate of your production. Do not apply Up- or Downsampling.
- Bit Depth:** 16-bit, 24-bit, **32-bit (float)** or **64-bit (float)**.
We recommend to use 32 or 64-bit floating point not dithered.
- Dithering:** **24-bit dithered** or **32/64-bit (float) not dithered**.
- Sound Format:** **Stereo**, interleaved.
- Song Naming Structure:** Song#_Artist_Single/Album_Track_BitDepth_SampleRate_Date
Examples:
01_TheBoxGuys_FloorMovement_PumpIt_32_441_March08
02_TheBoxGuys_FloorMovement_JustDance_24_96_July14
03_TheBoxGuys_FloorMovement_BackThen_32_882_Nov21
- Delivery:** Deliver mixes via WEB-upload at **www.highwoodaudio.com**
by wetransfer.com or via USB-stick or USB-hard drive.

To increase quality of mixes:

- Master Channel:** **Bypass any limiter** or loudness maximizer on the final stereo output channel. Also, **avoid digital clipping** (0.0 dB_{FS} peaks). This causes digital distortion, loss of dynamics and transients. Do not edit stereo balance, spread or phase. If you're not sure about a fade-in or fade-out, leave that to us, we'll make it right.
- Headroom:** Maximum **peak levels around -3.0 dB_{FS} or lower**. Keep your digital levels always a few dB below -0.0 dB_{FS} to avoid clipping and to leave headroom for Mastering.
- Bus Compression:** Apply bus compression only, if it's **not for loudness** and not for higher levels.
- Before Mixdown:** Before bouncing, **mark a much larger region** than your track actually is, so that you capture the first milliseconds at the beginning and all the reverb/delay tail at the end.
- After Mixdown:** **Do not Normalize** to 0.0 dB_{FS} or to -3.0 dB_{FS} your tracks once the mixdown is complete. **Do not apply digital rework** like Sample Rate Conversion or any kind of Pre-Mastering to your mixdown. **Check your mixdown** with an audio editor: <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>. (Watch out for the red lights)
- Mixing advice:** To achieve a great sounding master, start with a great mix.
- Any questions?** Please give us a call! Studioline: 0049 – 30 – 41765040.