



ROADMAP TO A GREAT MASTER

1. EXPORTING THE PRE-MASTER

- my preferred pre-master format is a **32bit floating point** wave file, read why below
(Of course I will accept standard integer 24bit wave files as well)
- especially on the latter make sure that **no clipping** has occurred on the mix bus during the export
- please name your provided **file names** in this **simple and clean** scheme:
 - *01 Artist Name - Song Name*
 - *02 Artist Name - Song Name*
 - *03 Artist Name - Song Name*
- if you can, please supply **tempo and key of each song** in a separate document
- **mix bus processing** and **dynamic control** on your mix bus **can stay**, but I recommend to avoid too strong compression/limiting on the mix bus

A 32bit floating point format will not require dithering for the export and it will remain in the same “architectural structure” as it has been within the mixing software. In fact, many DAWs will grey out dithering options for this kind of export. Nonetheless, I will accept standard integer 24bit Wave files, but these should not have any clipping in them. Clipping in integer files formats is “baked in” forever and its damage can not be fully repaired. You could say it’s “set in digital stone”. In floating point file formats, clipping has not been “baked in” and can be repaired.

That’s not the only reason for why I like a floating point pre-master. Another big one is a matter of principle. While you could debate about requirements of dithering all day long, there is no question that my mastering software will turn an integer audio file back into a floating point file, as soon as I start processing it.

That poses the legitimate question: Why not staying within the floating point format until after the mastering? And since my mastering workflow can handle that format without any issues, my answer is a clear “yes, we should stay in 32bit floating point”.



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2. ONLY A FINISHED MIX IS FIT FOR MASTERING

I completely understand that the mix bus is often a significant part of the specific sound of a mix. I suggest you leave your mix bus processing engaged when you export a file for mastering. If you still carry doubts about your otherwise finished mix, contact your mastering person, contact me and let's try to figure out together if there is a potential problem or not.

I will take the finished file that you love and approve, and work with that, rather than getting a file that has its complete mix bus processing switched off, but isn't your mix any more. The mix bus processing is part of the creative decision for a mix.



Devil's Avocado: A mix can potentially be too compressed for mastering to do any kind of work with it. I really recommend not to "over-do" the compression & limiting part. Too much of that can potentially tie my hands behind my back when it leaves me no room for my operation.

Please shy away from sending a mix to mastering which you haven't declared a finished mix first. "Okay this is done, off to mastering now!" That's what you need to be thinking about your mix. Mastering on an unfinished mix will most likely turn out to become a waste of time and money. If I master something which you don't even know if it's finished or not, then how would you know if the master is really final? And that can turn into a long period of back and forth of revision → mix correction → revision → mix correction → revision → etc.

If you need help with finishing a mix, that can certainly be done through a mix consultation or through professional help for mixing. But sending something to mastering which you know would be unfinished, won't ever make much sense.



If you finish something and still have a little doubt, that's a different story. Let me know this and I can pay extra attention to that specific area and we can talk about it too.



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3. REFERENCE SONGS

In order for me to understand what you expect from your future master, it can make absolute sense to provide a reference song. A reference song will give mastering engineers insight into your thought process and will help us to understand where we are supposed to go with what we have been provided. After all, besides being suitingly loud, competitive and fit for certain mediums/platforms, a master has to put a smile on the artist's & producer's faces.

Providing a reference song can not only help to figure out the sonic adjustments, but it can also give an idea of what loudness you prefer.



I should not overemphasize this part. If you can't provide a reference song, that's not going to be the end of the world! Communication is key on the road to a great master.

4. FILE SUBMISSION

When your files are ready, please send them to **anti.logic@gmx.de** via www.wetransfer.com or send a link for a direct download to the same email address. That could be a **Dropbox Link**, a **Google Drive Link**, anything does not require a registration on the platform to access the download.



Please don't send folder invitations. Those can be confusing and are not always practical.



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5. MASTERING AND REVISIONS

1. **Turnover time** for a first version of the Master is usually 2-3 days. From there it's vital to stay focussed on the project and figure out quickly whether or not adjustments on the master are necessary. This has got to be in everybody's interest. My **revisions** are a free part of the service, if the feedback arrives within a reasonably short amount of time, preferably 2-3 workdays. If that process gets dragged out over weeks, then I will have to charge extra for that.
2. If I encounter anything that I can't correct or that hinders me from making the best result possible, I will suggest a **mix correction**. Again, if that correction is accepted and happens within a reasonably short amount of time, my mastering revision will be a free part of the service.
3. Should a first version of a master ever be completely unsatisfactory, the project can be cancelled at that point with a **money back guarantee**. That has not happened yet in over 10 years but I'm offering because it is fairplay.

Thank you for spending the time to read through this document. I hope that a lot of your questions have been answered at this point. If not, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me and we can go through whatever you want to know about my mastering.

info@antilogic.de

Sincerely,

Robert

– Founder and mastering engineer at Anti Logic Mastering, Berlin/Germany