

Mix Smart

Pro Audio Tips for Your Multitrack Mix

Alexander U. Case



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Dedication

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For my brother Charles, the avid concertgoer, omnivorous record listener, passionate guitar player, and resourceful recordist whose rock-star success in his day job has never interfered with instilling a love of music in the next generation. How cool is that?

Contents

vii

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	xvii
PREFACE	xix
CHAPTER 1 The Mix Mindset	1
1.1 Musical Balance	1
1.1.1 The Mix Arrangement	1
1.1.2 Level	3
1.1.3 Panning	5
Stability	5
Audibility	5
Sound stage	7
Equal opportunity panning	8
1.1.4 Mute	8
1.2 Mental Balance	9
1.3 Mix Smart	11
1.3.1 Creative Vision with Technical Expertise	12
1.3.2 Production Motivations	14
CHAPTER 2 Approaching Your First Mix	15
2.1 Mix Room Setup	15
2.2 Mixer Setup	18
2.2.1 Global Effects	18
2.2.2 Special Effects	19
2.2.3 Specific Effects	21
2.2.4 Hearing Effects	21
Solo	21
Looping	22
2.3 A Basic Mix Approach	22
2.3.1 Balance	22
2.3.2 Drums	25
2.3.3 Bass	27
2.3.4 Rhythm Guitars	28
2.3.5 Samples and Loops	29
2.3.6 Lead Vocal	30

2.3.7 Background Vocals	31
2.3.8 Lead Guitar	31
2.3.9 The Whole Mix	32
2.4 Summary.....	33
CHAPTER 3 Equalization	35
3.1 Tools for Spectral Modification.....	36
3.1.1 Parametric EQ.....	36
Frequency select	36
Cut/Boost	36
Q	37
3.1.2 Multiband EQ	37
3.1.3 Semiparametric EQ.....	38
3.1.4 Program EQ.....	40
3.1.5 Graphic EQ	40
3.1.6 Which Is Best?.....	41
3.1.7 Shelving EQ.....	42
3.1.8 Filters	43
3.2 Technique	44
3.2.1 Non-EQ Equalization.....	44
3.2.2 Patching and Plugging In	46
3.2.3 Boost, Search, and Set	46
3.2.4 Anticipate	46
3.2.5 Improve.....	47
3.3 Mix Strategies: EQ	48
3.3.1 Fix	48
Rumble	49
Hum and Buzz.....	50
Pops and Wind	51
Proximity	52
Hiss	52
General Fixes	53
3.3.2 Fit	54
Complementary Cuts and Boosts	54
Seizing the Spectral Opportunity	57
3.3.3 Feature	57
Voice	59
Snare Drum	60
Kick/Bass Drum.....	60
Electric Guitar	62

Acoustic Guitar	64
Electric Bass Guitar.....	64
Piano	65
3.4 Summary.....	66
CHAPTER 4 Distortion	67
4.1 Distortion of Amplitude.....	67
4.1.1 Harmonic Distortion	69
Hard clipping.....	70
Soft clipping.....	72
4.1.2 Intermodulation Distortion	73
4.2 Distortion Devices	74
4.3 Mix Strategies: Distortion.....	75
4.3.1 The Fix.....	76
Prevention.....	76
Camouflage.....	76
4.3.2 The Fit	77
Allocating Spectrum	77
Contrast.....	77
4.3.3 The Feature.....	77
Instinctive Appeal.....	78
Getting Noticed	78
Exceeding expectations.....	79
4.4 Summary.....	79
CHAPTER 5 Compression and Limiting.....	81
5.1 Narrowing Dynamic Range	82
5.2 Patching and Parameters.....	83
5.2.1 Patching and Plugging In	83
Insert.....	83
Parallel compression	83
5.2.2 Threshold	84
5.2.3 Ratio.....	84
5.2.4 Attack	85
5.2.5 Release.....	86
5.2.6 Makeup Gain	86
5.2.7 Options and Features.....	86
Auto	86
Knee	87
Look ahead	88

5.2.8 Caution	88
Numerical nonsense	89
Parameter interdependence	89
Program dependence	89
Pumping and breathing	90
5.2.9 User Interface	91
Parameter shortcomings	91
Multiband compressors	92
Envelope manipulators	93
5.3 Technologies	93
5.3.1 Tube Compressors	94
5.3.2 Optical Compressors	94
5.3.3 FET and VCA Compressors	95
5.3.4 PWM Compressors	95
5.3.5 Digital Compressors	95
5.4 Mix Strategies: Compression and Limiting	97
5.4.1 The Fix	97
Safety compression	97
Peak limiting	98
Overcome noise	99
De-essing	100
5.4.2 The Fit	102
Loudness	102
Improve intelligibility and articulation	105
Smooth performance	106
Reshaping amplitude envelope	108
5.4.3 The Feature	110
Ambience and artifacts	110
Timbre	111
Distortion	112
5.5 Learning to Hear Compression	113
5.5.1 A Learned Skill	113
5.5.2 Imitation	115
5.5.3 Multiple Personalities	116
5.6 Summary	116
CHAPTER 6 Expansion and Gating	119
6.1 Increasing Dynamic Range	119
6.2 Patching and Parameters	121

6.2.1 Patching and Plugging In	121
Insert.....	122
Parallel expansion	122
6.2.2 Threshold	122
6.2.3 Slope	123
6.2.4 Attack	124
6.2.5 Release, Fade, or Decay.....	124
6.2.6 Hold.....	125
6.2.7 Range.....	126
6.3 Mix Strategies: Expansion and Gating.....	126
6.3.1 The Fix.....	126
Expansion	126
Noise gating.....	127
6.3.2 The Fit	129
Gating through editing.....	129
Gating.....	130
Keyed gating.....	131
Reshaping amplitude envelope.....	135
Ducking	135
6.3.3 The Feature.....	137
Ambience and artifacts.....	137
Timbre	137
Envelope following.....	137
Tremolo.....	138
6.4 Summary.....	140
CHAPTER 7 Delay	141
7.1 Parameters	142
7.1.1 Basic Controls.....	142
Delay time.....	143
Regeneration.....	143
Low-pass filter.....	144
Polarity reverse	144
7.1.2 Modulation.....	144
7.1.3 Delay Time	148
Long delay.....	148
Short delay.....	149
Constructive and destructive interference	149
Comb filter	153
Medium delay.....	156

7.2 Mix Strategies: Delay	156
7.2.1 The Fix.....	156
To comb filter, or not to comb filter, that is the mix move	156
7.2.2 The Fit	160
Groove	160
Support.....	161
7.2.3 The Feature.....	161
Echo	161
Tuning by ear	164
Tuning through math	164
Musical delay time.....	165
Slap.....	170
Emphasis	172
Flanger	173
Double-tracking.....	175
Chorus	177
7.3 Summary.....	177
CHAPTER 8 Pitch Shift	179
8.1 Parameters	180
8.2 Mix Strategies: Pitch Shifting	182
8.2.1 The Fix.....	182
Pitch Correction	182
8.2.2 The Fit	184
Spreader	184
Thickener.....	185
Layers.....	186
8.2.3 The Feature.....	186
Leslie.....	186
Big shift	187
Harmony, counterpoint, and dissonance.....	188
Stop tape	189
Start tape	189
The perfection aesthetic	189
Quantized pitch	190
8.3 Summary.....	191

CHAPTER 9 Reverb	193
9.1 Patching and Parameters	194
9.1.1 Patching and Plugging In	194
9.1.2 Reverb Time (RT_{60})	195
9.1.3 Bass Ratio (BR)	195
9.1.4 Predelay	196
9.1.5 Reference Values	196
9.2 Devices	198
9.2.1 Room Tracks	198
9.2.2 Chambers	198
9.2.3 Springs	201
9.2.4 Plates	201
9.2.5 Digital Reverb	202
9.3 Mix Strategies: Reverb	203
9.3.1 The Fix	203
Close microphone compensation	203
The clean ending	204
9.3.2 The Fit	204
Spatial contrasts	204
Distance	205
Width.....	206
Duration.....	207
Ensemble	207
9.3.3 The Feature	208
Liveness.....	209
Simulating a space	210
Fabricating a space	211
Timbre through reverb.....	212
Texture through reverb.....	213
Scene change	214
Extreme reverb.....	214
Feature the reverb	215
Gated reverb	215
Reverse reverb	217
Regenerative reverb	219
Dynamic reverberant systems	220
9.4 Summary	222

CHAPTER 10 Future-Proof Mix Skills	223
10.1 Strategies, Not Recipes	223
10.2 Lifelong Learning	224
10.2.1 Capability versus Ability.....	225
10.2.2 Artistic Maturity.....	226
10.2.3 Technical Mastery	226
10.3 The Case Credo	227
10.3.1 Honor the Art	227
10.3.2 Stay Balanced	227
10.3.3 Attention: Front and Center	228
10.3.4 Look Both Ways Before You Mix the Track.....	228
10.3.5 Get Louder, Without the Fader.....	229
10.3.6 Contrasts Communicate Clearly.....	229
10.3.7 Change Is Emphasis	229
10.3.8 Perfection Is a Cruel Distraction	230
10.3.9 Limits Are Opportunities	230
10.3.10 None of the Above	231
APPENDIX A: Plugging In.....	233
A.1 Parallel Processing.....	233
A.2 Serial Processing	233
A.3 Effects Sends.....	235
A.3.1 Prefader Sends	236
A.3.2 Postfader Sends.....	237
A.4 Inserts.....	238
A.5 Hybrid Parallel Effects	238
A.5.1 Insert Send Only	239
A.5.2 Prefader Effects Send.....	240
A.6 Latency.....	240
A.7 Computer Resources	241
A.8 Offline Processing	242
APPENDIX B: Audio Signals	243
B.1 Medium	243
B.2 Amplitude versus Time	244
B.2.1 Amplitude Confusions.....	245
B.2.2 Time Implications	246
B.3 Amplitude versus Distance	247
B.4 Amplitude versus Frequency	248

B.5 Complex Waves	250
B.5.1 Square Waves	251
B.5.2 Sawtooth Waves	252
B.5.3 Triangle Waves	255
B.6 Decibel	255
B.6.1 Logarithm	257
B.6.2 Ratios	259
B.6.3 References	263
B.6.4 Zero Decibels	265
B.6.5 Negative Decibels	265
B.7 Dynamic Range	266
APPENDIX C: Mix Automation	269
C.1 Unautomated Mixing	269
C.2 Automated Mixing	270
C.2.1 Faders and Cuts Automation	270
Alternative signal path	271
Automated send	272
MIDI equivalents.....	272
Automated comps.....	272
Printed mix moves	274
C.2.2 Everything Automation	274
C.2.3 Snapshot Automation	275
C.3 Mix Modes	275
C.3.1 Write or Read	275
C.3.2 Write: Absolute or Relative	276
C.4 Automation Strategies	278
C.4.1 Balance	278
C.4.2 Effects	278
C.4.3 Cuts	278
C.4.4 Rides	279
C.4.5 Tweaks and Special Effects	279
C.5 Playing the Mixer	280
C.5.1 Practice	280
C.5.2 User Interface	280
Moving faders.....	281
VCA faders	282
Software faders	283

- C.6 Advice and Warnings284
 - C.6.1 Master the Gear.....284
 - C.6.2 Not Too Soon284
 - C.6.3 Save Often.....285
- C.7 Summary285

- APPENDIX D: Listening List.....287
 - D.1 Reference Recordings.....287
 - D.2 Mix Icons.....288
 - D.3 Selected Discography289

- INDEX295





THE FIT

Multitrack mixing offers something of a jigsaw puzzle. Some number of audio components must be made to fit together so that they make sense to a listener wearing ear buds on the train, streaming through traffic in the car, holding down the couch watching TV, clicking about on their laptop, or relaxing with popcorn in a surround-sound cinema. Squeezing more than 100 tracks of audio into a few loudspeakers, frankly, is doomed from the start. We dedicate careful thought, critical listening, and countless signal processes to getting the tracks to fit in and around each other, falling into place as a greater-than-the-sum-of-its-parts whole.

THE FEATURE

With the tactics of fixing and fitting implemented, we then get to the more expressive part of the mixing craft: we massage mangle, decorate, deteriorate, emphasize, synthesize, and in all ways refine the sounds for artistic impact. We use our mixing studio to feature any aspect of any signal that we think benefits the production.

Along the way, we flag four notable moments:

	The loudspeaker icon flags moments in the text when having an actual listen would be helpful. It indicates that you might want to take the book with you to the studio and find similar examples in your projects.
	The play button encourages you to do exactly that. Go to the studio and try out these specific session suggestions.
	Of course the whole book is a tip. Your author has made sure of it. But small moments of insight in which a memorable take-away thought has been offered are flagged by this lightbulb.
	History repeats itself—in world events, and in our own mixes. This exclamation point tries to warn us so that we learn from past mistakes (hopefully the mistakes of others).

Alex U. Case
Portsmouth, New Hampshire, 2011