

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?

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
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