

Prepping a Recording Project File for Mixing

I want a professional to mix my song(s). How do I prepare the materials to make the process the most cost-effective (cheap) and have the highest quality outcome?

If your recording project is digital and computer-based already, then here are the most important steps in the process:

- Leave all the files in the bit depth and sampling rate that you recorded in. Don't upsample or downsample.
- Complete all your edits.
- Name all of the tracks something clear and specific. Here's some examples: Snare Top, Hi-hat, Overhead Left, Guitar Amp Ribbon, Guitar Amp 57, Guitar Direct. If the files aren't named something specific we will have to spend time figuring that out instead of mixing.
- Bounce (or render or export) each track to a complete single audio file. If the track is mono, bounce it mono, if it's stereo, bounce it stereo. Some people call this consolidating the audio or bouncing to a new track.
- If there are essential effects like an echo delay for instance, the bounce the echo to another separate track. We would rather have more than less tracks. Names like Guitar Echo, Vocal Flange, etc are all good.
- If there are software synths, these tracks should be rendered to audio.
- Export all the tracks with all the faders set to zero or unity, with no panning, with no EQ, with no effects (e.g. compression, limiting, reverb, delay, flange, etc) and with no final fades.
- You should have a folder of audio files that all start in the same place. Depending on your DAW they might all be the same size, or they might not.
- Documentation. If you want the lead guitar on the right and the rhythm on the left, say so. Want the hi-hats on the left (drummer's perspective)? Write it all down. Use descriptions like "aggressive drums," "live-sounding," "smooth, shimmering guitar," and even better, "address 's' problem in lead vocal."
- Stick the whole thing in a Zip folder and send it via a file transfer service like YouSendIt or the like. If worse comes to worse, you can bundle a DVD and mail it.

Questions? Get in touch by phone at (781) 710 4521