

What to Expect

We typically start sessions at 10:00 a.m. Generally speaking, it takes anywhere from fifteen minutes to an hour to eq a track. This depends upon several factors; the quality and consistency of the mixes, the arrangements (denser arrangements can be more difficult), consistency of the format, and whether the mixes are whole passes or in pieces.

At the start of the session we like to familiarize ourselves with the project, listening to a little of each track. If your project is coming in on analog tape, it is helpful to have a CDR reference of your mixes which we can listen to at this stage.

After familiarizing ourselves with your project, we like to know if there are any special considerations with regard to mastering that you may have. Many producers trust us with their projects because they like our input and particular aesthetic. If you have a specific aesthetic that you would like applied to your mixes, this would be the time to communicate it.

Once we have familiarized ourselves with your project and have a good idea of where we are headed, we will spend a few minutes building the signal path that will maximize the sonic potential of your project and help facilitate the target aesthetic. This may involve evaluating different cables, preamplifiers, converters, or playback devices. After evaluating the mixes we usually have a good idea of what will work best, but it is always prudent to take the time to check a few of the available options at this stage. The correct signal path can sometimes help get us closer to our target aesthetic without 'turning knobs', and the less processing that we have to do, the better.

At this point we will evaluate each mix and apply any equalization, compression, or limiting if necessary. This is done on a song by song basis. Sometimes we may evaluate alternate mixes during this stage (vocal up or down for example). Subsequent to any processing, each track will be transferred, in real-time, into our workstation/editor. During the transfer we may elect to do manual fades (if necessary). When equalizing each subsequent track, we will typically reference back to any previously equalized tracks for volume and tonal reference.

After all of the tracks have been processed and transferred into the workstation, we will edit the beginnings and endings of each track, place them into the correct sequence (if not transferred in sequence,) and set the gaps for the spaces between the songs. The editing of long fades and radio edits will occur during this part of the process.

The last part of the editing process involves entering the start and stop ID's (PQ codes) for the master and reference. In addition, if there are ISRC codes or Mode 2 (bar code / UPC) information it will be entered at this point.

Once all of the editing is taken care of, we will run your reference copy on to a CDR, make any additional desired copies and make a safety backup (to 8mm Exabyte computer tape) of your project. If your project is an enhanced project, we would marry the data portion at this stage.

At this point you take the reference with you and give it a listen. We always recommend listening to your final reference on multiple playback systems in various environments. The reason for this being that you want to get a real-world perspective on the project and avoid the danger of only listening back in the same room that it was mixed (unless it is a stellar acoustical environment) in case that we may have had to equalize any mix-room coloration out of your final mixes.

Once you have given your mixes a listen and approve of the mastering we will run your production master(s). We usually run the masters the evening of the day that you approve. If any changes are necessary we will make them in the evening, run you a new reference and ship that reference out for your approval the next day. If you want to attend the 'changes' session, we generally schedule these sessions on Fridays.

After the production master has been run, we will ship your master via overnight delivery to your record company or

desired duplicating facility. We do not like to ship over weekends but will do so if specifically asked.