

## **FAQs**

FAQ No.1.

### **What format do we need to bring to the mastering studio?**

24-bit WAV files, are the standard format to present at mastering. At Crystal Mastering, we prefer these burnt onto a DVD-R. Unfortunately thumb drives and the like require virus checks, which can take time.

If possible, we also like the files to be labeled in the following manner -

#### **01. This is it 24/44.**

This tells us that the song called, 'This is it', is the first track on the album. It also lets us now that the bit resolution is 24 bit and that the sampling rate used is 44.1kHz.

FAQ No.2.

### **Listen carefully to Your Mix-downs**

Always listen to your mix from the beginning to the end, before sending it to mastering. Make sure everything is playing correctly, that the beginning and end are intact, and that there are no clicks, pops or mutes in the audio.

FAQ No.3.

### **Normalizing**

Do not use any kind of normalizing on your mix-down. It's simply not necessary, and some applications can actually degrade the audio with this process.

FAQ No.4 .

### **Do I need to limit the stereo mix before mastering?**

Avoid putting on any limiter or 'finalizer' plug in on the stereo buss. Your mastering engineer will take care of the final volume at the appropriate stage in your mastering session. *Creative* compression on the stereo buss is fine, just don't use compression for the sake of raising the overall level of the track.

FAQ No.5.

**My song titles don't show up on iTunes. Why?**

If you want iTunes and similar software to show track names automatically, you need to submit your **manufactured** CD to a database known as 'Gracenote'. It is this database where iTunes gets the track names, not from the CD itself.

You can read more about how to submit your CD to the Gracenote database here: <http://www.gracenote.com/verticals/contentowners/>

Do not submit your reference disc if your pressing CDs. It's best to use the CD you get back from the duplication plant.

FAQ No.6.

**Do I need 'ISRC' codes on my master ?**

In a nutshell, ISRC codes help identify your music. Like a digital barcode of sorts.

If you want to add ISRC codes on your master, then you need to bring the codes to the mastering session, so as the engineer can embed them onto the master disc.

Not everybody wants them or needs the codes, but you can read the literature to help you make up your mind. There's certainly no harm in having these codes on your master, and the following link will direct you to the ISRC handbook on the ARIA website.

<http://aria.com.au/pages/isrc.htm>

For your convenience, we've included a brief version of this handbook with your quote, which outlines the basics.

FAQ No.7

**I'm selling my tunes on line as mp3s. Can I bring mp3s to mastering?**

Even though this might seem logical, it's an absolute 'must' to bring the full resolution .wav file to mastering. Mp3 or any other compressed format, is simply not a professional nor desirable format to master from.

It's all about giving you the best possible sounding master.

FAQ No.8

**Should I listen to my tunes outside my studio?**

Definitely. Don't fall into the trap of only referencing your mixes in your studio. Play your mixes on a variety of systems to get a feel of how they sound. This will give you the best indication of what you need to adjust in the mix.

FAQ No.9

**How far in advance do I need to book in at Crystal Mastering?**

Generally, you need to allow 2 weeks to book in a session. If you need something mastered urgently, then we will try and arrange our schedule to make it happen for you.

FAQ No.10

**Do I need to attend the mastering session?**

Our mastering engineers are happy to work with or with-out artists attending. Approximately 85% of our work is done in un-attended sessions, however we always welcome anyone who wants to sit in during sessions.

Our on-line service is available to everyone. Simply go to our website and use the 'drop box' on our **e-mastering** page. It's as easy as clicking 'browse' & selecting your file.

FAQ No.11

**Do I really need to organize a listening session prior to my mastering booking?**

We recommend our engineers hear your mixes prior to mastering if:

- a) It's the first time you've recorded an album
- b) It's the first time your mate has recorded an album
- c) You're not 100% happy with the mixes, and un-sure if the mastering process will be able to address certain issues.

If you're using an experienced recording engineer, then chances are your mixes are in great shape. If you still feel like you want us to have a listen then we'd be happy to.

Good luck with your recording,

From the staff at Crystal Mastering