climax MASTERING

HOW TO *PREPARE YOUR FILES*



FORMAT

Stereo WAV or dual mono. 44.1 kHz to 192 kHz, 24 or 32 bits. 16-bit is accepted but not recommended.

I recommend keeping the same sample rate as your mix session — no upsampling, no downsampling.

FILE NAMES

Name your files clearly so I can identify each track and its versions. Ideally, start with the track number.

```
01 My Song.wav
01 My Song (instrumental).wav
02 My other song.wav
02 My other song (radio edit).wav
```

LEVELS

Leave headroom and avoid any clipping. Just to be safe: export the mix at -3 or -6 dB to make sure no peak exceeds 0 dBFS — a signal that's too hot, distorted, or digitally clipped is very hard to fix in mastering.

Levels that are too low aren't ideal either: ideally, the highest peaks should sit above -12 dBFS.

MIXBUS PROCESSING

If you use any processing or plug-ins on your master bus, send three versions:

— All plug-ins bypassed

— All plug-ins active, for reference

— All plug-ins active except limiters and clippers

The versions with plug-ins serve as a reference to retrieve the energy you have in mind.

START, END, FADES

Leave silence at the start and end of each track. Make sure resonances, reverb tails, and delays have time to ring out before the export ends.

For a fade-out, clearly indicate where it should start and end — for example: *"fade-out from 3:00 to 3:10"* or *"fade-out over the last ten seconds"*. Avoid applying it to your mix: I prefer to add it at the end of the mastering chain. If you have a reference mix that includes the fade, feel free to send it as a guide — it's optional.

CLICKS, NOISE, HISS

I have tools to reduce these at mastering, but cleanup is always more effective at the mix stage. Ideally: a mix delivered already clean. If a few unwanted sounds slipped through, I'll attenuate them as much as possible.

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STEMS

Stem mastering means working from multiple sub-groups rather than the stereo mix alone. It's an additional refinement that gives me more control in certain cases — for example, taming sibilance on a vocal stem without de-essing the whole mix, or making small adjustments on one instrument without affecting the others.

If you go with stem mastering, here are the configurations I recommend:

— **Three stems**: full mix, instrumental (no vocals or vocal effects), vocals (with their effects, reverbs, delays)

— **By instrument groups**: for example drums, bass, guitars, keys, vocals, backing vocals

— **Or any other split** that makes sense for your project

Two rules: stems must be aligned with each other, and their sum at unity gain (all faders at 0) must match the stereo mix exactly. In all cases, also send the final stereo mix for reference.

TRACKLIST AND INFO

The tracklist must include the artist name, album name, and the exact order and title of each track. Enter this information exactly as you want it encoded in the files — watch for capital letters and spelling. If you have ISRC codes, include them in the tracklist.

A tracklist editor is built into the submission form to make this step easier.

For EPs and albums, you can also send sequencing instructions — track transitions, length of silences between tracks. For example: *"track 4 segues into track 5 with no silence"*. If you already have a reference sequence, send it: I can align the masters to it.

ISRC CODES

The ISRC code (*International Standard Recording Code*) is a unique identifier that allows automated recognition of each track. In a way, it's the recording's "barcode". It isn't required, but recommended.

If you have ISRC codes, I embed them in the metadata of your mastered files. You can pass them on in the tracklist via the file submission form.

For independent artists who don't have them yet, codes can be obtained free of charge from your local ISRC agency.

HOW TO SEND THE FILES

Everything goes through the submission form on the site. You enter the project info, the tracklist, and upload your files directly. No size limit — files are transmitted with no signup or account creation.

For multiple transfers, I can also share a private upload link on request.

You're also welcome to use your own transfer service. Just make sure files stay available for at least a week and that access permissions are set properly (especially on Dropbox or Google Drive).

SEND YOUR FILES ↗