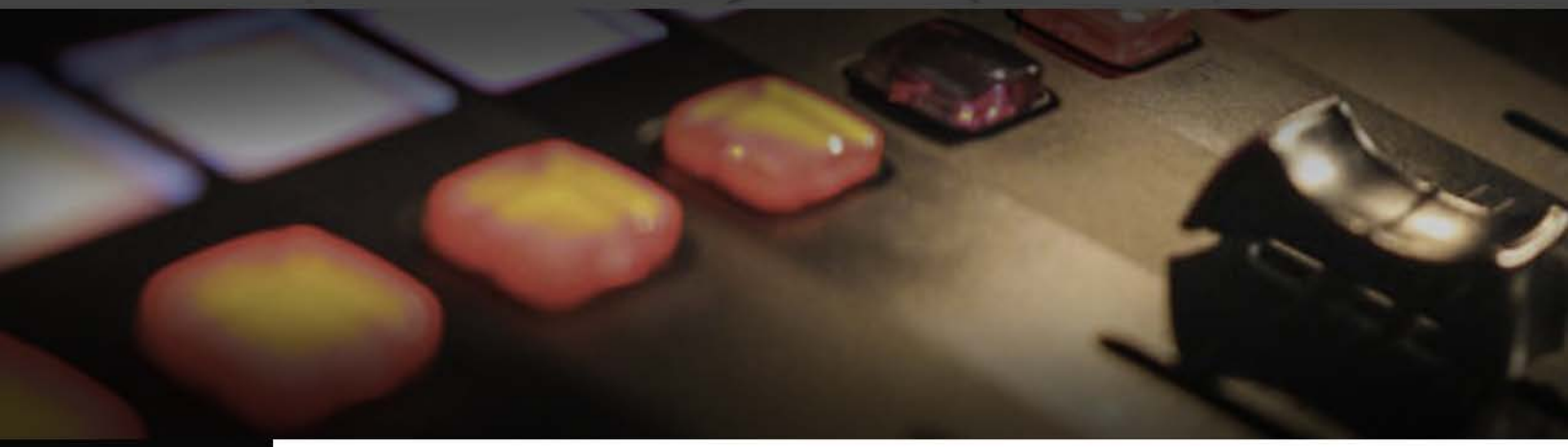
DER KATER STUDIOS



GETTING STARTED
CLIENT GUIDE

TABLE OF CONTENTS



DER KATER STUDIOS

While we cannot cover every question and need in a single document, Der Kater has created this general information brochure to help you understand online audio editing, mixing, and mastering.

As always, any questions regarding your needs should be directed to us by phone or email.

PAGE	TOPIC COVERED

2. **Overview, file guidelines, and general information**

3. **Preparing files for Mixing Services**

4. **Preparing files for Mastering Services**

5. **What's included in our services**

6. **What you must provide**

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FILE PREP & OVERVIEW



OVERVIEW

The easiest way to get started is to contact us. We can help guide you through the process of preparing your tracks, setting up media and folders, and delivering raw product to us for processing. This is especially helpful to the artist with little to no experience in digital formats, or if you'd like us to contact the recording engineer for proper file export.

If you've tracked the project yourself, or if you're comfortable with digital audio, the following guidelines help ensure that all files are properly formatted and printed for optimal results.

FILE PREP

All track files must be WAV files. They must be presented at 44.1KHz, 48KHz, or 96KHz, and either 16-bit or 24-bit.

- **We do NOT accept any compressed formats (mp3, flac, etc.) for any reason.**
- **We do NOT accept projects (DAW sessions). We accept stem or track files only.**
- **ALL FILES IN A SESSION MUST BE THE SAME FORMAT.**

No tracks file should have any effects (compression, limiting, EQ, reverb, etc.). Adding these effects prior to mixing can have adverse effects on the final product. If there is a special effect that you MUST have on a stem or track, please provide a second copy of that file with the effects for reference, or a reference rough mix of the entire song.

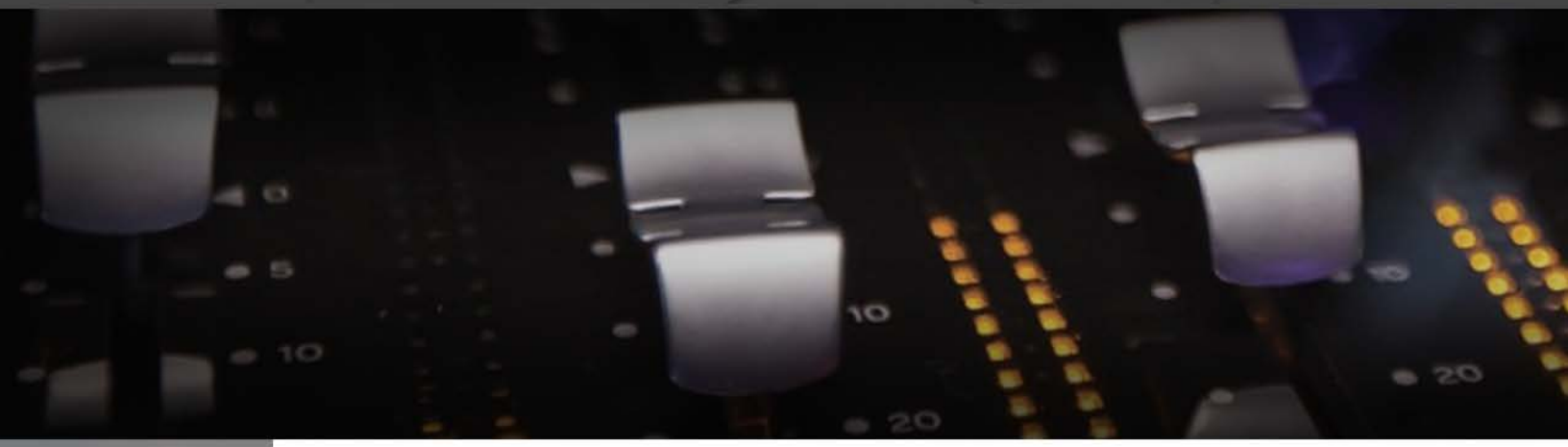
All track files MUST be named clearly:
(SongNameKickDrum.wav, SongNameStereoGuitarStem.wav, etc.)

All MIDI tracks must be rendered to a WAV with your MIDI or VSTi instrument.

No track file should clip (reach 0db).
All track files are recommended to not exceed -3db.



PREPARING FOR MIX





MIX PROJECT GUIDELINES

We accept the individual files that make up the tracks of the song. Our rates are for up to 36 tracks of audio. The following requirements need to be met in order to proceed:

Track files must be in proper stem or full track format. This means all files are of equal length, with the same start and end point and must all be of the same sample rate and bit depth. In other words, if your song is 4 minutes and 30 seconds long, every track or stem must start at the beginning of the song, and end at 4 minutes 30 seconds. This holds true even if the track only has audio information for 10 seconds of the song; the file should include correct silence before and/or after the audio to place it correctly in the song. This holds true for mono tracks or stereo stem submixes.

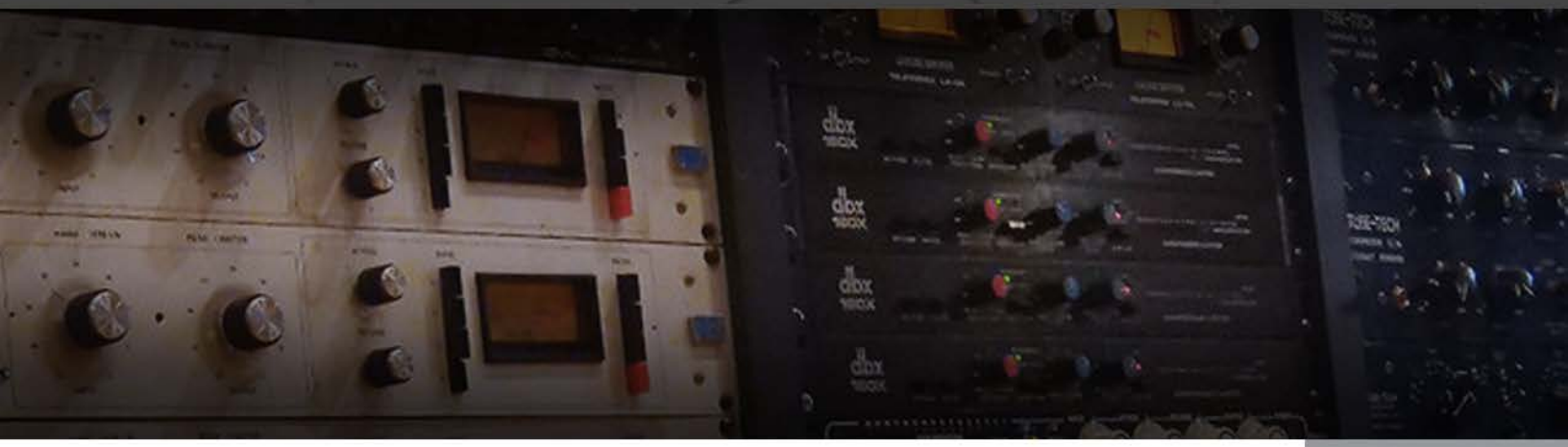
Stem and track files must contain only one type of voice or instrument.
For example, this means that while we will accept a stereo stem file of all of the background vocals pre-mixed, we will not accept a track file that contains an electric guitar in one section and an acoustic guitar in another.

All files must be of the same bitrate and resolution, and have no effects added. If there are specific effects you want, you can add them to a separate reference track and name it accordingly. Stems or tracks with effects printed can result in less-than-optimal final mixes.

IMPORTANT:

It is impossible to fix poorly-recorded audio. Any issues with the recording (excessive bleed, poorly placed microphones, digital clipping, artifacts, subpar recording equipment, etc.) will result in less than optimal product. Please be aware of the limitations in your raw files prior to mixdown. Note that we do offer audio editing services to help improve quality of poorly recorded audio. If you are experiencing less than optimal results with your tracks, please discuss your expectations with us so that we can consult.

MASTERING GUIDELINES



The following requirements need to be met in order to proceed with mastering:

Final mix files in WAV format (16 or 24 bit, 44.1, 48, or 96 KHz), appropriately named with
NO tempo information stored in any file

PLEASE NOTE: If your project was mixed at Der Kater, we only need the following track information to master the product, as we will already have appropriate audio files.

CLEARLY DOCUMENTED FOR EACH FILE:

- Artist Name
- Song Title
- Genre of music
- Copyright owner
- Copyright year
- Track number (e.g. 1 of 7)
- A copy of the album cover (JPG format)

IF APPROPRIATE:

- Songwriter (if different from copyright holder)
- Disc number (if part of a multi-disc compilation)
- ISRC code
- Release Date
- Website

IMPORTANT:

It is impossible to fix poorly-mixed audio. Any issues with the mix (lack of attention to bleed, poor EQ shelving, overuse of compression, poorly designed stereo field, etc.) will result in less than optimal product. Please be aware of the limitations in your mixed files prior to mastering.

WHAT YOU GET





OVERVIEW

The following is included in the aforementioned services. Please note that this applies to package pricing, and does not include hourly or block rate work, where the scope can be customized to your needs. Additional services are available for your mixdown, such as drum sample replacement, vocal pitch correction, and special effects. Please consult with us if you have any special requests, as they fall within the Audio Editing scope.

MIXING PACKAGE

For each song in the compilation, you will get professional mixing services, including volume, pans, equalization, compressions, signal processing, time-based effects, and track trimming. Files are completed in a format appropriate for CD-quality use and/or mastering. Client-specific file formats are available by request.

MASTERING PACKAGE

For each song, you will get professional mastering services, including mastering EQ, compression, expansion, loudness optimization, analogue emulation, and multiband compression as necessary. Files are completed in 24-bit, 16-bit, and completely tagged MP3 formats, appropriate for CD pressing and digital distribution. Multiple formats are available by request.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

If you are unsure of any item, please check with the studio where the audio was recorded. While we can help if you've recorded this yourself, doing so is billable at the hourly rate.

WHAT TO PROVIDE





WHAT TO PROVIDE TO DER KATER

Being an online audio production facility, Der Kater needs files provided electronically, or by mail. This is exceptionally easy with modern cloud services. We can accept files from any cloud service, such as Google Drive, OneDrive, Dropbox, etc. Please make sure that all files are compressed to a single ZIP file, organized as stated below.

If submitting by mail, contact us for our mailing address and a quick consultation. Generally speaking, we need all files on either a USB thumb drive, or burned to a data CD (NOT an audio CD) for file transfer. Files should not be compressed into a zip file, and should be organized as stated below.

Please provide the following:

- A portable (USB) drive or CD with a folder for each song, named the same as the song title. In each folder, the stem or track files for that song and any second sample copies with sample effects
- A folder with every song as a rough mix from the session if possible. ***(this is a perfect opportunity to apply effects you'd like to hear on the final mix)***
- A folder with a commercially released reference song that you like. ***(this is only used for reference. As stated above, final mix depends on initial quality and style)***

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Many studios ask for a referece track from your favorite artist, or an artist you'd like to sound similar to. However, limitations or deviations in instrument quality, performance, miking techniques, and recording hardware prevent identical mixes. These are used as a reference point to help mold your material to your vision.

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