

## Column by Renzo van Riemsdijk (Masterenzo):

### My 50<sup>th</sup> column: How nice, you turned your hobby into your profession

This is my 50<sup>th</sup> column and I regularly get to hear how nice it is that I turned my hobby into my profession. And exactly that is what I don't understand. Why is my mastering career a hobby that has gotten out of hand?

The definition of a hobby is an activity done regularly in one's leisure time for pleasure. Well, there you have it. So because I take pleasure out of tweaking mixes until they sound at their best, my "work" has the characteristics of a hobby.

Well, I do my work on a regular basis and yes, I love it. But there are more jobs out there that people love and do regularly. Perhaps the difference lies in the line of work. Mastering is part of the music industry. People tend to listen to music as a pleasant pastime. Pastime is a synonym for a hobby and bingo, this could very well be the main reason why mastering (and other jobs related to the music industry) are so connected to being a hobby.

But where lies the boundary between a hobby and a profession? Is money the only thing that counts? Of course, many people look at their jobs as a form of income. But having fun doing it and taking pride in it and pleasure out of it are equally important. I simply cannot imagine going to work while I'm not enjoying it.

Okay, I have the greatest job in the world. Mastering to me is a form of art. Gently tweaking, rubbing and scrubbing those incoming mixes with a fine set of tools until they become shiny like a diamond. It's basically the same what an artist does. The only difference is that mastering doesn't create things, it only emphasizes what's already made.

I take pride in being a mastering engineer and I spend most of my time doing it. But I do have another job on the side. Actually, I've always had more than one job. Sometimes taking the mind off of things like mastering deadlines (or any other deadline) can be very relaxing. It's like taking a short break and having a walk outside the studio when you're stuck and you can't seem to get any further. When you return from your walk everything just seems to go easier.

Besides, being a mastering engineer can be a bit lonely at times as I mostly work solo. Attended sessions only take place in about 20% of the times. At my job at the museum I have colleagues and the works of art seem to have the ability to put my focus on other things than mastering only. It's actually very refreshing. After a day at the museum I cannot wait to crawl behind my desk and to get to work on fresh mixes.

So I have two jobs that both qualify as hobby. Or do I have two hobbies that both qualify as work?

*PS* Writing 50 columns about the most beautiful profession in the world is a milestone for me. Both mastering and writing about it has something magical about it and I feel fortunate to call this my job. On my list I have many more topics within mastering to write about in the near future.

Renzo

*Renzo (Masterenzo) is a Rotterdam based Dutch mastering engineer. As the owner of premium mastering studio Masterenzo Mastering he has worked for many independent artists like OcoBar,*

*Black Nazareth and Hédi Carlee (Charlie Dée).*

*More info about Masterenzo Mastering can be found on [masterenzo.nl](https://www.masterenzo.nl).*