

Column by Renzo van Riemsdijk (Masterenzo):

The advantages to good mastering

In my first column I described some of the facts making mastering such a special art. In this column I will tell you what the great advantage to great mastering is.

Mastering can be divided into three global parts. One: molesting the music. This might sound a little brute but it's not that bad. When music is tweaked in either way, you could say the music is actually being molested. If it's done right, there is nothing wrong with it.

Directly coupled to changing the music's timbre is –here's number two: musical editing. Think of cuts, fade-ins, fade-outs. In short: editing without altering (molesting) the sound of music.

Number three and the most important one: Listening!

Being a mastering engineer it's crucial to own a couple of very decent and well trained ears, telling you what the music needs (or in many cases doesn't need) to get it to sound good or even better.

As I already mentioned in my first column, listening and the monitoring environment are among the most important tools of a mastering engineer. These tools are the biggest advantages to good mastering. A couple of fresh and well trained ears, without having heard the songs (mixes) over and over again.

It's the true advantage to good mastering: a skilled engineer, listening objectively and able to read the direction the music needs to go to. Now that's mastering!

Up to us, mastering engineers, to enhance and amplify that direction and to inject just enough energy to cause serious emotional tears in the eyes of the listeners, also a part of mastering.

A fresh set of ears. It's a blessing for many productions, be it a singer songwriter or a full band. With a clear and skilled view it's much easier to lift the music to a higher plan. Even if you don't do any processing, being a mastering engineer with an objective view is priceless.

Every once in a while it happens that -for money reasons- a mixing engineer also does mastering. As a mastering engineer I'd very much like to see the master done by a skilled and trained mastering engineer.

Mastering tracks you've also mixed? Now that's a challenge. Where does the mix stop and where does the master begin? A fresh set of ears: Priceless!

Okay, let's head back to the studio, molest some more music.

Renzo

Renzo (Masterenzo) is a Rotterdam based Dutch mastering engineer. He has worked for Gery Mendes (GMB), Charlie Dée and Phil Bee's Freedom. More info about mastering and about Masterenzo can be found on his [website](#).