Preparing your files for Stem Mastering

Essential Checklist:

☐ All audio files are well named
☐ No audio is clipping (hitting 0dB)
☐ Bit rate is set to 24 bits minimum
☐ Use your source sample rate (if your project is in 44100Hz don't upsample)
☐ Export audio as WAV or AIFF files

The Extra Mile:

☐ Include 1 or 2 reference tracks
☐ Include your notes/requests in a text document

How to name your stems:

Include the artist name, track name and remixer (if it's a remix), followed by the group name. Example:

Artist - Track Title - Vocal Buss

What to do if a channel is clipping:

If any audio track is clipping, select ALL your tracks and turn them down TOGETHER (by the same amount) until none of them are clipping.

What to do if you're unsure about an effect in your chain:

Send a second version with the effect off and name it accordingly (example: Vocal Buss - No Reverb)

Choosing a good reference track:

If you want to include a reference track, please note: it should have the same style and groove as your music and most importantly it should be professionally mixed and mastered. Using similar songs from top labels in your genre is a good approach.

HOW TO GROUP YOUR STEMS

Best practices when grouping stems:

If you're unsure how to groups your stems for mastering simply <u>contact me</u>! I'll listen to your song and let you know which elements should be separated to ensure a great result. Otherwise, you can also follow the general guidelines below.

• **Group sounds that are meant to work together** (example hi-hats, rides, snare and toms can be grouped into a Drum Buss).
Some of the most common types of groups include Drums, Bass, Vocals, Instruments, FX.

• **Keep main or "focal" elements separate**
Certain elements are better sent as their own stem, like separating your main vocals from your backup vocals or leaving your bass separate from the instrument group.

• **Electronic music? Send your kick as a separate stem**
For a dance track or bass-heavy genres, it's best to send the kick-drum as its own stem.

• **Make sure your groups sound good and balanced on their own**
Once you've organized your stems into groups, solo them and make sure they sound good on their own. All the elements in the group should be well balanced and sit reasonably well together. Nothing should stick out too far or be too hard to hear. If you're unsure of any element, it's best to remove it from the group and send it separately.

• **Don't do any processing to your groups**
Don't use any compressors or limiters on your group channel unless you are certain it is the result you want. Rather, it's best to do your processing on individual elements inside the group to achieve a cleaner mix.