Mixing Cymbals – EQ and Compression

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On 01.03.14, In Full Signal Chains For Each Instrument *, by*

Mixing cymbal tracks is a pretty straight forward task.

You've got most of the cymbal sound you need from the OH (Overhead) tracks but the direct cymbal tracks can complement the OH by blending them gently.

Their use is supportive to the OH and don't play the main role of the sound.

You just help the cymbals get a specific spot to the stereo image. Since these tracks are supportive **try to tweak them along with** the OH mics.

Using An Equalizer

Use a high pass filter and cut around **400Hz**. Now cut around **600Hz** with a **Narrow to Medium Q** to remove any excessive junk.

Never forget to cut around **2Khz to 5Khz** since if there's any clash in there, vocals should be the ones to win.

Now listen to the cymbals and figure out what they need. Do they need some brightness? Use a **high shelf** and boost a bit around **10Khz**.

Too much brightness? Keep the support tracks **dark enough** to complement the OH. Using a low pass filter at around **12Khz** can remove any annoying sizzling and excessive brightness and give some body to the sound.

Compressing Like A Gentleman

I compress similar to the OH tracks.

The general idea is to use **slow attack** so you won't cut the transients of the hits.

But a **limiter** on the back end is a good idea in order to keep the really-really sudden peaks under control.

Don't overuse the limiter though cause you'll make the limiter to pump and destroy the natural feeling of the cymbal hits.

Till next time… Happy tweaking!

~ Update ~

Nowadays I feel like using more and more the Waves Vocal Rider.

Its use is to automate the volume of your track, without any manual automation by yourselves.
I really love this plugin!

Using automation to fix the recording flaws is a tedious and time consuming task and now all I do is open the plugin and it does all the hard work for me.

I know that it's been created to use it for vocals but it works really great with OH/Cymbals too.

Where To Use It On The Signal Chain

I always use it *first* on the chain.

The reason I do this is cause I want the sound to act like it's been recorded gentler, nicer and a **bit more controlled** in volume.

This way I can then add my compressors and **help them to not work like crazy** cause of the peaks are being taken care of the automation plugin.

Use it – Trust me! Take care guys!

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