

- Each sound is just not clear but sounds great and stands up on its own,
- That encompasses great sounds spread across the frequency range.

## DIFFERENT STYLES OF MUSIC AND MIXING

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Surprisingly, your mix will not be appreciated in a different environment because of the style of music. For instance, if you mix club music, the bass and kick drum should be what needs to be heard and pounding the loudspeakers.

Genres like pop music are dependent on the voice and mid-range components for it to sound high for television and radio broadcasts.<sup>16</sup>

### *Method and Approach to Mixing Your Music Project*

Most musicians or producers mix as they go common with electronic music productions whereas others leave everything to the last. Another group affords to get an engineer to handle mixing duties.

#### *A tip*

The fundamental questions in mind should be the following:

- Does your final product sound like a record / cd/ mp3 to a listener?
- Does it sound like your favorite cds or your favorite genre?

## BASIC TOOLS AND TERMINOLOGY OF MIXING

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### *Volume / Pan*

Relevant of all the tools is the volume fader and pan pot. Pan pot is **equal left and right balances**, keeping in mind that a mix is a cautious and wise balance of sounds.

### *Compression / Limiter*

This implies bringing down all highs and lows at certain points or thresholds, so that no signals will pass these thresholds.

### *Reverb*

One of the headaches in music production is the inexistence of natural surroundings. Thus, the role of reverb units is to bring in a natural sounding effect to recorded music.

### *Equalizer*

Sound engineers prefer to use the terms **low-range (bass)**, **mid-range (mixture of bass and treble or high range)**, and **high range (treble or high pitch or very loud)**. **The function then of the equalizer is to equate the basses, mid-ranges, and trebles to acceptable hearing frequencies.**<sup>17</sup>

*Longer wavelengths + lower frequencies = low sound / bass sound (numbing feeling)*

*Shorter wavelengths + higher frequencies = shrill, loud, high pitched treble sound (damaging to the ears)*

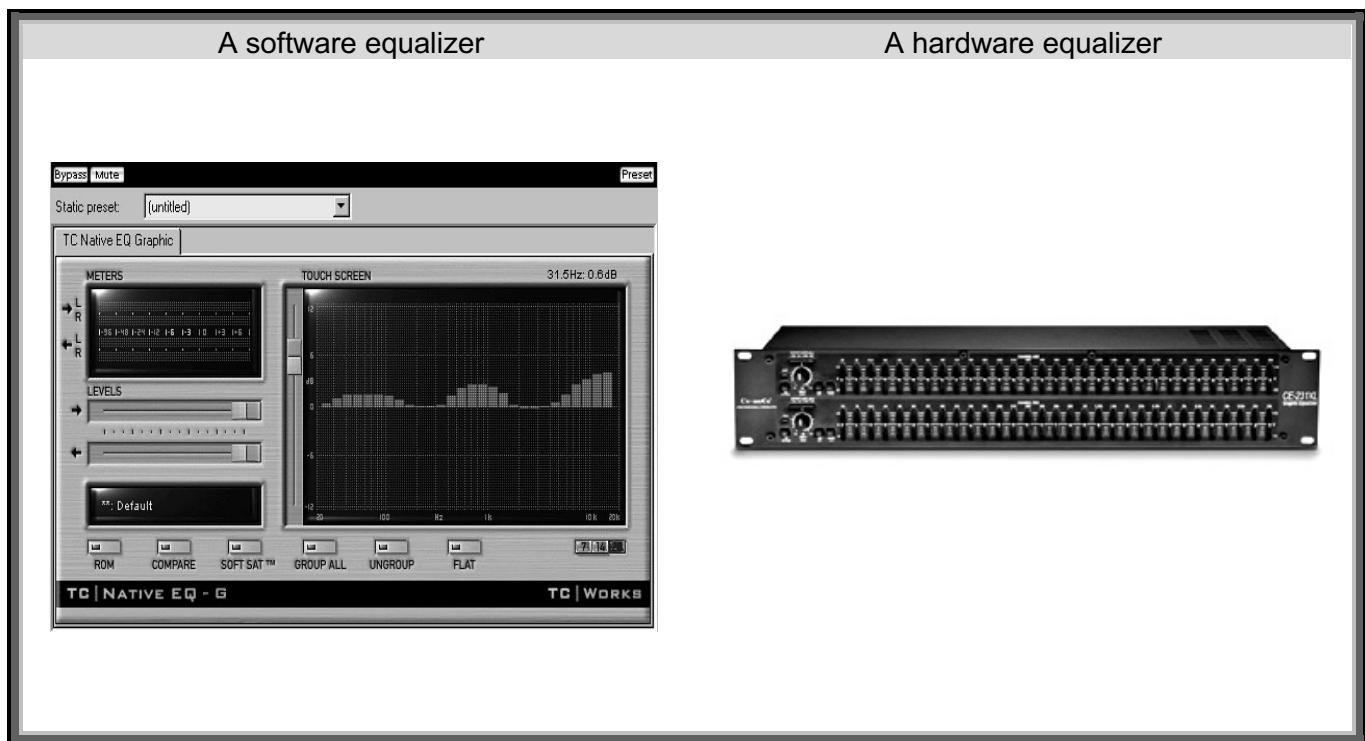
The equalizer is additionally for the following reasons:

- for acoustic dead rooms
- to correct the effects in our recordings because of our room's effects

### How do we choose an equalizer?

Like the effects mentioned above for mixing our songs, the equalizer comes as software or hardware devices. Whatever form you adopt will do the work for you.

Remember to go for a quality tool when it comes to equalizers.



### How do we adjust?

Before you start to turn knobs or move faders up and down, listen to your song before anything is undertaken.

Listen for too much bass, too highs or very loud sections, or noise or thumps that need taking out.

### Apply these two basic and important rules:

1. **gently roll down the highest and lowest frequencies**
2. **enhance (gently bring up) the low and high frequencies or bring down the middle range.**

## CHORUS

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A great effect useful for mixing vocals, to give it depth, warmth, and a nice blend in a song.

## DELAY

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The delay effect is applied to let sound repeat itself in a rhythmic fashion in a repetitive pattern.

## NEAR-FIELD MONITORS

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To accomplish a professional quality mix, we would need to hear the process through near-field monitors. They give a clear and precise sound to your audio work, with a flat frequency response as possible.

## AUTOMATION

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- Adding emphasis

In real-time, for example, when you are listening to your project, there will be sections missing. You can add more reverb or chorus to those parts as needed. With automation, you can make this happen by turning knobs and moving faders appropriately.

- *Fade-outs / fade-ins*

Have you realized that a substantial number of songs on cds finish with a fade-out or start with a fade-in? For your surprise, even the experts do not know why this application came about. But it has been popular for over fifty years and is still used.

- *Copying parts*

Most sequencers enable you to move the real-time controls along with any parts you are copying, and most will also allow you to copy just the automation data for use elsewhere in the project.

## ESSENTIALS OF MONITORING

Professionals in music either refer to the art of monitoring or the science of monitoring. Simply put, monitoring is complex, be it science or art. But there is good news for home studio owners. More professionals are currently relying on the home studios because even though we might have a dead acoustic environment, we are likely to get a better result. Acoustics is a different subject on its own and is out of the scope of this chapter. However, we cannot leave monitoring without acoustics since they both interchange on the sonic landscape.

### LISTENING TO YOUR MUSIC

There are two ways you can listen to your music or audio production. Either the earphones or the monitor can be used for this task.

#### EARPHONES/HEADPHONES

We can acquire affordable professional studio earphones. If you have other earphones such as those, we can get at discount prices, well, watch television with them because that is what they were meant for. Look for professional models or others recommended for studio work. **Then the only disadvantage is that you will damage your ears in the long term (MIX AT LOW LEVELS – LEVEL UP ONLY WHEN NECESSARY).**

Headphones can be used when recording solo with the guitar or vocals.

#### MONITORS

Near-field monitors were popular in the nineties and still are but then came active monitors with built-in amplifiers. Before we read on, let us philosophize on some principles. We should remind ourselves that all the processes of recording; dubbing, mixing, mastering is nothing if your monitoring system is compromised. It is all about your ears, acoustics of your room in which your monitor, the amplifiers (if any) and cables that drive the monitors.

Second, our human ears are not perfect, thanks to a phenomenon called the Fletcher Munson Curve. **The effects states that the ear has midrange peak and does not respond as well to low and high frequencies, particularly at lower volumes.** That is why we have the loudness button control on hi-fi amplifiers to compensate for this by boosting the high and low frequencies at lower volumes, then fluttering out the response as you maximize the volume.

A third point is that several ways can destroy our ears such as loud music, excessive alcohol drinking, deep sea diving, and plain old age. Thus, protecting our ears is imperative since they are crucial and important components of your monitoring system.