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Composition 2 Mastering Write-Up

1. What instruments are present and how do they fill the soundstage?
    a. The drums are composed of the main kick, the sub, an open and closed high-hat, and two different rides. The kick and sub are both centered due to their low frequency. The open HH is also centered since there is a lot of randomness on the decay that opens the sound. The closed high-hat utilizes a phaser-flanger to travel around the stereo field as well as offset echo to get different delays on either side of the stereo field. The first ride utilize a wider EQ band and lots of reverb while the second ride is more centered in the soundstage.
    b. There are 2 percussion elements, with one changing the sample midway through the track. The first perc that happens only every 2 bars utilizes heavy reverb with a 2 second decay time and automation to alternate the panning every time. The second perc also employs a long decay time that is increased with automation throughout the track and a phaser-flanger to move the sound around the stereo field.
    c. The analog instrument is present during parts A and C and is without any reverb but does use a phaser flanger to travel around the soundstage. This creates a "spiral" effect during these choruses when combined with a similar effect on the other main synth.
    d. The OB6 audio recording utilizes reverb with a decay time 1-6 seconds depending on automation, as well as an auto-pan that creates a similar spiral effect to the other main synth.
    e. There are 2 effects simplers for breaks and transitions. The first on for transitions implements a delay and random autopan to move the sound around the stereo field, and the second one for breaks has an extra-long reverb decay with a similar random autopan.
    f. There is an "effects noise" audio track that acts as background "crackle" common in this kind of techno. This is also randomly autopanned to create a more "fire-like" sound in the background.
2. What is the dynamic range of the track?
    a. There is heavy bass throughout the track due to the focused kick and sub for this type of music. This drops out during breaks and gives more room for other sounds during these times.
    b. Many high-frequency percussion elements tend to clash a bit during certain times of the songs, especially when combined with the lead synths. This may prove a bit challenging during the mastering.
3. Are there any elements that seem overly dynamic for the style of music?
    a. The final chorus (part C) does have a lot of dynamic elements, all moving around the stereo field. This creates a chaotic nature that I was looking for in this song,

but also proves a challenge for mixing and mastering to be able to hear all the elements individually.
    b. Sidechain compression was especially helpful for all the percussion elements with the kick drum, allowing the kick to be the center focus of the song.
4. Evaluate tonal balance
    a. The low end feels a bit overwhelming, especially the sub. I will try to tune this in my master.
    b. The midrange is a bit muddy, and thus EQ adjustments were added at 245 HZ to compensate. To emphasize synth tones, EQ boosts at 1.3 and 2.3 kHz were made. Finally a sharp boost of 60 Hz and slight reduction at 80 Hz were added to enhance the kick.
5. What is the overall level of the mix?
    a. The overall level before mastering was -2.93 dB. After mastering, -1.09 dB, including limiters and extra compression to even out the master.
6. Overall thoughts
    a. After revising my final mix, I was feeling a lot happier with my sound, but still found that it was bit muddy in the midrange, and oversensitive on the low-end. Mastering helped with small EQ adjustments to bring these sections in and even out my mix. Additional limiting and compression also helped to bring the whole mix alive a bit more.