Get Mastered

Mix Feedback Report

SONG: [name removed for confidentiality]

CLIENT: [name removed for confidentiality]

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Awesome track *[name removed for confidentiality]*. You are a really talented composer/artist! The biggest adjustments to the mix that I will suggest below are to add more low end in the choruses by bringing up the bass and adding weight to the kick, and to bring the lead vocals up overall. I'm really digging those high synths, the way you mixed the piano, and that arp at the end.

	Instrument	*Time*	*Description*	*Solution*
EQUALIZATION	Overall mix		The mix is missing some low end weight, especially in the choruses	Boost some low end on the kick in the choruses. The bass could be a good deal louder - I want a big deep "bwaaaa" of bass to hit me right as she finishes saying "*[removed for confidentiality]*"!
	Kick		Great punchiness and presence - Lacking low end in the choruses	There's a trick you can do here to keep the mix really tight when adding weight to the kick. You can give the kick a focused boost in a spot that corresponds to the key that your track is in. Since this song is in D minor, you can EQ in a big focused boost at 73 Hz (73.42 Hz to be exact), which happens to be where a really low D sits.
	Snare		Nice and fizzly! Slight issue with fundamental/tuning	The fundamental of the snare seems to be sitting on a C, which is great when you move to the F chord, but causes a bit of conflict when you're on the D or Bb chords. I would suggest experimenting

			with the following solutions and seeing what feels best to you: 1) Tuning the snare up a whole step 2) Adjusting the EQ of the snare at the fundamental - a narrow cut at 262 Hz and a narrow boost at 294 Hz, which will push the snare fundamental away from a C and towards a D. You could even change/automate the tuning of the snare so that it sits on a D for the D and Bb chords, and sits on a C for the F chords. I also feel like the snare could use a bit more punch right around 2 kHz.
Piano		Honestly sounds great. There are a few EQ tweaks you might like to try.	There's some rumbliness coming from the piano around 80 Hz, perhaps hammer noise. Nothing necessarily wrong with it when there's not much else going on in the mix. If you haven't already done so, I would consider automating an EQ and taking it way down when the mix is busier so that it doesn't get in the way of your kick and bass. Try taking a bit away from the piano around 700-900 Hz. For lack of a better way of describing it, scooping out a bit from this region often helps instruments like piano and guitar sound less congested.

	High synths		Wonderfully awesome.	I think you could get away with adding more low-mids, such as in the 250 - 350 Hz range, to make it sound even richer. If you do this, consider automating the low mids back down when the mix is busier. No solution necessary.
	Vocals		Sibilance pokes out	De-essing will help smooth out the vocals quite a bit. You could also just automate dips in volume every time she says something really sibilant. I usually prefer doing at least some volume automation here so that the de-esser doesn't have to do as much work. From what I can hear, the EQ on the vocals is great. They are perhaps a little wispy, and a boost around 1.5 kHz in this particular case could help give them more body/presence.
COMPRESSION			Nothing sticks out to me as a problem compression-wise. The vocals are nice and even as they should be in this kind of track. With different compression settings you may be able to get an even punchier snare.	There's no way I can know whether something you're doing is taking away a little edge and punch from the snare or if in fact the sample wasn't punchy to begin with and you made it much better. In either case, if you compare the kick and the snare, the kick seems to have a

sharper, more solid transient. In fact, the kick is so nice and punchy that it makes the snare transient sound a little smeared by comparison. Here are some things you could try:

You can increase the perceived volume of the snare while lowering the volume of the transient by using a plugin that emulates saturation/soft clipping. Putting this on the snare can help you keep the snare fat and punchy without running the risk of squashing it when it reaches a limiter.

Make sure that any compressor in the mix that encounters the snare signal (except for a limiter at the end of course) gives the signal a little bit of breathing room for transients. To do this make sure the attack on these compressors is never faster than around 10ms. There's no attack time that is always the best so you could try anything from around 10ms to 50ms on the attack to allow transients to pass through.

If the snare sample is already missing a lot of snap/bite, try using a transient designer to inject some snap back into it.

LEVELS	Kick		I think the kick is in a great spot level wise - once you give it more weight in the choruses it should be just perfect.	
	Snare		Also sitting nicely in this mix.	
	Bass		More bass!	Raise the bass several dB's. Use a reference track and walk around the room to hear how the bass from that track is sitting in your room - it will probably be loud and boomy in corner areas and less present right in front of your speakers. Try to achieve a similar level of bass in your track and check it from different areas of the room.
	Piano		Sitting perfectly in choruses. Could use a boost when it's playing solo.	Try giving the piano a couple more dB's when it's playing solo. You can fade it down slowly when other parts start to come in and bring it down even more right before a chorus kicks in so that the chorus still feels massive when it arrives.
	Chopped Vocals		A little too loud when the lead vocals come in.	Bring down a dB or two when the lead vocals begin so they blend more into the mix as an accompaniment to the vocals. As you suspected, the lead vocals are a bit drowned out by other stuff throughout

	Lead Vocals		Make louder overall	the mix. I think they could use around 2 dB more in the choruses and around 2.5 dB of gain in the verses.
	Plucked Arp		The arp at the end is so tasty - I want more of it!	I would suggest giving the arp a lot more volume as soon as it comes in, and fading the volume down really slowly so that it's back down to the level it's currently at by right around 3:11.
LIMITING / HEADROOM			I don't think you've over-limited the track by any means. If I was mastering this I would probably squeeze it out a tiny bit more to make sure it competes easily with other similar tracks. Not sure what sort of tools you're working with as far as mastering/limiting goes so I'm going to suggest keeping it right around where it is now.	
DEPTH			Here is where automation is your best friend. By meticulously automating volume levels you can give a mix so much life and character.	The fine bits of volume automation that I am suggesting will very much be creative decisions that are up to you. Here are some ideas that came to me: It's already ingrained in the piano part, so the idea is already there - you can bring out certain notes in the piano part to make it more emotive and exaggerate its rhythmic interest. For example, right at the start of the song I'm feeling that the

			notes on the “and” of 3 in the second and fourth measures could use a boost. I love the back and forth between the vocals and the high synth in the choruses. I think you could go even further with this by bringing up some of those really bright synth melodies that happen around the vocals. You can inject some energy by giving the synth an exaggerated swell in volume right before it cuts out and the next vocal line begins (i.e. at 0:53, 1:03, 1:14). Another thing you can do to keep it fresh is to cut the snare off early every once in a while. This can be pretty subtle - it’s good at keeping the snare from starting to sound stale as it’s a sample.

PERSONAL CONCERNS:

1. Is the mix too bright?

Overall I don’t think the mix is too bright, and besides the sibilance in the vocals I don’t think anything needs to lose top end. I think the reason why it seems like it may be too bright is that it’s missing a lot of low end weight. After bringing up the bass and giving the kick some weight, the track should balance out nicely.

2. Are the main vocals too quiet in general?

The main vocals do sound a bit quiet overall. Try listening to the track at different volumes - very soft, medium volume, and very loud - and think about how the vocal is sitting in each case. Also try listening to the track in mono and on different playback systems such as headphones, earbuds, and car speakers. You want the vocals to be floating across the top of the mix in all cases - listen at loud volumes to pick out spots where the sibilances are too loud and harsh, make a note of where they are and go automate those suckers down. You want to be able to crank the song super loud and not be bothered by sibilant parts, but at the same time listen to the mix at a medium volume and still have clear "esses" that don't sound too quiet or smeared.

3. Are the vocal chops too sharp frequency wise?

They do stick out a bit from the mix because they're pretty bright. To me the issue seems to be a combination of their volume level and EQ. I think it's cool that you EQ'd them the way you did so that they have a clear and unique tone which is much different from that of the main vocals. To blend them more into the mix I would try taking a tiny bit of that bright crispiness away from them and turn them down a dB or two when the vocals come in so that they don't compete as much for the listener's attention.

Another thing you could try to help them gel more in the mix is to give them some bright sparkly reverb so that they don't jut in and out as quickly from the mix.