

CRMT160 Mixcraft Assessment #2:

Online Submission (Portfolio) comprising complete studio production and written critical documentation (70%)

Brief

This assessment is made up of a practical component and a written component. You should work individually, though you should regularly seek feedback on your work from peers as well as tutors.

Practical Component: Studio Production

For the **practical component**, please choose **one** of the following multitrack projects (from the Cambridge MT Resource¹) and create a fully mixed and mastered track and lasting 3-5 minutes. Use the guidance for each track below to help you.

Whichever project you choose, you should apply the mixing techniques that have been covered in the module and discovered through your own research. These should include both corrective and creative techniques. You should use at least one reference track in your project to help you with your mixing and mastering decisions.

You may choose to use software instruments and/or samples e.g. through drum replacement/enhancement. You should also use a combination of insert and send effects/parallel processing. Basic mastering should also be applied through careful use of compression, EQ and limiting to match current streaming standards.

Please choose one of the following:

Santa Fe by Fruition (Indie Americana)

- Aim for a lively, reverberant track but be careful to avoid muddiness.
- Trim or extend any sections according to your own judgement.
- Even out the vocal level through use of automation, EQ and compression.
- Process the lead guitar solo for a more distorted, up front, interesting sound. Automate the second lead guitar to take over towards the end of the solo.
- Automate the reverb on the snare for a fuller sound when the full snare drum is played (rather than the side).
- Apply creative processing to enhance and extend the guitar ambient effect on the breakdown.

¹ Mixing resources for students available at <https://www.cambridge-mt.com/ms/mtk/>. Link to download the files for each project are also on Learning Space.

The Inner Circle by Lead Inc (Progressive Stoner Rock)

- Aim for a contemporary heavy rock / metal sound.
- Cut the track down to around 3.5-4 minutes by removing weaker sections/passages.
- Apply time and pitch correction where appropriate.
- Aim for a full, powerful sound, while giving plenty of room for the lead vocal.
- Double-up the rhythm guitar by copying over sections and panning left and right.
- Apply creative processing to the vocal - particularly on the longer, drawn out syllables and where there are no words.

Echoes by FIN (Experimental Electronica)

- Aim for an interesting, instrumental track lasting 3-4 minutes.
- Re-arrange the track as you see fit.
- Aim for either a live drum sound using natural tones and reverbs or go for a more electronic aesthetic.
- Make sure the bass grooves with the drums.
- Edit and process the rhythm guitars to ensure they blend well with the drums and bass.
- Apply loads of creative processing to add ambient layers, dynamics and interest.
- Use processing to 'frame' sections of the song: think particularly about the ambient layers, the density of each section and the overall energetic arc of the track.
- Add further sound using software instruments, electronic instruments, acoustic instruments or 'found' sounds and samples.

The Glass by Primakova (Folk Rock)

- Aim to give this folky song less of a live performance feel and more of a produced rock track.
- Trim or extend any sections as you see fit.
- Apply pitch correction to the lead and backing vocals as appropriate.
- Even out the lead vocal level through use of automation, EQ and compression.
- Avoid muddiness on the denser sections through careful arrangement and panning of the different instruments.
- Add interest to the verses by copying over phrases of the instruments from other sections as appropriate.

Space by Francisco Perez (Atmospheric EDM)

- Aim to remix this track in your own style.
- Map out the desired structure of the track using markers in your DAW.
- Retain the atmospheric elements but process in your own way to make these a foreground feature of the track.
- Place the drum sound into a sampler, using the sampler's transpose, envelope and filters to change the timbres as you see fit. Layer the original sounds with other sounds and/or process further.
- Add further layers using software instruments, electronic instruments, acoustic instruments or 'found' sounds and samples.

Please note: If there is another project that you would really like to do instead, then please speak to a tutor.

Written Component: Critical Documentation

For the **written component**, please write an individual 1000-word (+/- 10%) report that details two or three aspects of the mixing process. This might be:

- Editing e.g. timing and pitch correction
- Audio processing e.g. vocals, drums or mastering
- Software instrument techniques e.g. drum replacement

This discussion must contain critical analysis and research - i.e. you must state your reasons for the actions you took drawn from analysis and research. Use screenshots from your DAW project (with figure numbers and titles) to illustrate your points.

As well as this discussion, your report should also include a project title, an introduction (detailing your overall aim and objectives), a conclusion (how successful you were) and a brief evaluation (strengths, weaknesses and recommendations).

Reports should be written in a formal style with close attention paid to correct spelling and grammar, use of technical terms and precise language. Avoid conversational styles, abbreviations and vague terminology.

Use Harvard referencing – both within the text and in a ‘References’ section at the end. See the Learning Space ‘Resources’ section for guidance on this. If you are mixing someone else’s track, please make sure that you reference it as well as any reference tracks used.

Additional information (e.g. additional written information and screenshots not directly linked to the text) can be contained within an Appendix at the end of the report. This is not included in the word count.

Submission

Please submit the following to the link on Learning Space:

- A 2-channel 44.1kHz 16bit .wav or .aif of your finished track
- A pdf of your individual written account

Please see MyFalmouth for your deadline.

Marking Criteria

Marks are awarded as follows:

Percentage	Classification	Description
90-100%	1 st	Exceptional
80-89%	1 st	Outstanding
70-79%	1 st	Excellent
60-69%	2:1	Very good
50-59%	2:2	Good
40-49%	3 rd	Satisfactory
30-39%	Fail	Poor
1-29%	Fail	Very poor

Detailed criteria for each learning outcome are given in the following table...

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria	Assessment Detail
1. Creativity <i>Demonstrate a creative and innovative approach to ideas, materials and methods.</i>	Demonstrate through practice, your creative approach to sound mixing to support the aesthetic aims of a piece of music.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of both corrective and creative mixing approaches in the track. Overall mix approach is appropriate to the chosen genre.
2. Critical thinking <i>Think critically about concepts, contexts and practice, evaluating these through scholarship, and/or self-reflection.</i>	Demonstrate through practical and written submissions, a clear rationale for the artistic and technical decisions you have made in the development of your mixing project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report contains clear aim and conclusion. Report contains analysis as well as description of two-three techniques. Report contains evaluation. The track evidences the points made in the report.
4. Professionalism <i>Demonstrate the application of industry standards and recognized external arbiters of best practice within your discipline, including appropriate project management.</i>	Demonstrate through practical and written submissions, an awareness of best practice, as benchmarked against industry standards, in the technical and artistic skills needed to bring about your mixing project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The track's overall quality against a professional release. Standard of presentation and writing in the report. Quality of overall submission (e.g. adherence to guidelines, file naming).
5. Research <i>Produce informed work through the use of appropriate research methods.</i>	Demonstrate through documentation, the technical and artistic research undertaken in the development your mixing project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report contains research from a range of sources. Report contains Harvard-formatted in-text references and reference list.
6 Skills <i>Demonstrate a sufficiently high-quality skill-set to realise your work.</i>	Demonstrate through practical work, competency in a range of studio mixing and production techniques.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track demonstrates a range of well-executed techniques. Quality of individual audio elements. Quality of overall mix.

Feedback

You will receive written feedback against the above criteria which will be uploaded onto Learning Space. This will be discussed during the summative feedback tutorials towards the end of the module. You will also be able to get feedback on your work before submission during taught sessions.

Questions

Please use the Module Forum on the Learning Space or book Office Hours.