

VSX Mastering Guide

Build masters that translate everywhere

Mastering isn't about making a track sound impressive in just one place.

It's about making sure it sounds correct everywhere before it leaves your studio on different speaker systems, in a car, and especially on a phone.

VSX gives you multiple world-class virtual mixrooms.

The key is using them in the right order and having a monitoring plan.

1 Start on Full-Range, High-Resolution Studio Monitors

Begin on your most revealing full-range speakers. These are your primary truth tellers. Good starting points in VSX:

- Yellow Matter Farfields (modern full-range reference)
- Howie Weinberg Mastering Engineer Position
- Archon Midfields



Yellow Matter Farfields
(modern full-range reference)



Howie Weinberg Mastering Engineer
Position



Archon Midfields

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Move to Consumer and Real-World Playback Systems

Once your master sounds solid on virtual studio monitors, it's time to listen to it on consumer systems.

This is where translation is tested—not where you start sculpting the entire sound. Use the following VSX virtual rooms:

- SUV2
- Boombox
- Cellphone
- SA-PODS



SUV2

Boombox

Cellphone

SA-PODS

Check for:

- Low end holding together (not vanishing, not distorting)
- Bass staying audible without overwhelming the mix
- Vocal intelligibility on small speakers
- No brittle top end or fatigue on SA-PODS
- Energy and impact staying present at lower levels

If the master falls apart here, the problem is usually balance (and sometimes dynamics), not just loudness.

This is where you listen closely to the fundamentals of your mix, including:

- Overall tonal balance
- Low-frequency extension and control
- Low-mid clarity (no haze, no congestion)
- Upper-mid / treble smoothness (no glare or bite)
- Stereo width, depth, and center stability
- Overall dynamics and impact

At this stage, it's important to pull up some reference mixes you trust. Switch back and forth between your reference and your mix and determine how your track scores on the above fundamentals. Remember, you're not chasing hype, you're confirming your master sits naturally next to proven references you trust. If your mix doesn't feel balanced, stable, and full, don't move on yet. Keep working on it until you can confidentially check off each of the above points.

3 Cross-Check With Other Pro Studio Perspectives

Once the master feels right on your primary full-range speakers, do short passes through a couple other pro rooms, such as Warren Huart's Spitfire Studios, Steven's Mix Room, and Mike Dean's Studio.

This step is about confirming the decisions you made in the previous step.



Warren Huart's Spitfire Studios



Steven's Mix Room



Mike Dean's Studio

Listen for:

- Low end staying consistent from system to system
- The vocal/lead staying anchored and present
- Any band of frequencies suddenly jumping out or disappearing
- Stereo image staying solid without tilting or sounding hollow

Don't worry if you hear small differences– that's completely normal. But you don't want any big surprises here. If you hear any, go back to step 1 and go through your fundamentals again.

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The Final Rule: No Major Flaws Anywhere

A master doesn't need to sound identical on every system. It needs to avoid major problems on any of them.

Your master is ready when:

- It feels balanced and confident on full-range studio monitors
- It translates naturally across multiple pro references
- It holds together on consumer devices without obvious weaknesses

When that's true, your mix will sound great everywhere car, phone, earbuds, club, and other speaker systems.

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