

3 – EQ for Weight Exercise

EQ for Weight

Equalization for weight refers to making sure the low frequency range from 20Hz to 250Hz is full and has a feeling of weight without becoming overly muddy or boomy. It is the process of ensuring the overall frequency spectrum does not sound thin or lack lower frequency energy. Harmonics equalization, the method of equalizing two or more harmonics, such as a fundamental tone and the second harmonic an octave above that fundamental tone, offers a musical way to achieve the goal of low frequency weight in a mix.

Overview

Use the provided multitrack recording to practice your skills using equalizers to achieve weight. While the purpose of the exercise is to focus on equalization for weight specifically, you may also use other processing as necessary to achieve a quality result (such as compression or reverb). However, the majority of the time you spend on this exercise should be working with equalization.

This piece, Johann Sebastian Bach’s “Invention No. 13 in A Minor,” was arranged for classical guitar and recorded in MTSU’s Studio D. The classical guitar tracks captured are thin and lack a sense of fullness and weight. Use equalization to create an even tonal balance with a solid foundation of lower frequencies without letting the overall mix become muddy.

Guidelines

1. Before starting to mix, come up with a plan for your approach to this exercise by using what you have learned about equalization for weight from your readings and class instruction. Listen to all the tracks provided and take notes of: 1) any problems you hear, 2) your best guess as to how to fix these problems, and 3) what you would like your final mix to sound like. *Be prepared to discuss your mix approach in class after handing in your assignment.*
2. Focus on equalization for weight. The primary purpose of this exercise is to improve your skill using equalizers to add weight.
3. Use only stock plugins within your DAW. The reason for this is twofold. Firstly, it does not take expensive or unique plugins to achieve a good mix. Simple tools used by a skilled mix engineer will outperform fancy plugins used by an unskilled novice. Secondly, this enables a fair comparison between student mixes.
4. Apply any processing as necessary to achieve a polished and professional product (e.g. EQ, compression, reverb, etc.). You may use processors other than equalizers. Don’t forget that using the foundational tools of level and panning will be essential for crafting a compelling mix in addition to using equalizers.

Initial Deliverables

Please deliver the following in one parent folder entitled “**LastName_EQforWeight v1.**”

Upload this folder and share it with your instructor.

1. Pro Tools session of your mix. Label the session name with your last name and “v1”.
2. Make sure the “Audio Files” folder in the Pro Tools session includes only newly created audio files. The original files included in the exercise should be deleted for delivery to the instructor. Please note that you will want to keep a copy of the session with the original audio files for your own records and for future revisions.
3. 48kHz sample rate and 24 bit interleaved stereo .WAV file bounce of your final mix.

First Mix Attempt - Rubric

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Overall quality of mix</i>	<i>All materials submitted as requested</i>	<i>Followed exercise guidelines</i>	<i>Focused on the assigned mixing technique</i>
<i>Points Allotted</i>	2 points	1 point	1 point	1 point
<i>Guidelines for full points</i>	The mix has a well-presented tonal balance. This includes a solid foundation in the lower frequency range, proper body in the lower midrange, and clarity in the upper midrange and high frequencies. The mix does not sound overly muddy, boomy, thin, or harsh.	All materials are properly labelled, all original audio files are deleted in Pro Tools session, and final mix delivered at proper specifications.	Used only stock plugins. Product delivered is well-organized and professional in presentation.	It is clear that a significant amount of effort was put into using equalization for weight in the exercise.

Revision Process

To simulate a real-world mixing process better, and to help you to continue improving your skills using equalization for weight, this mixing exercise will go through one round of revisions between the instructor and student. In the professional realm, it is very common for clients to listen to the initial mix and provide the mixing engineer with notes for revisions.

After you have submitted your initial mix to the instructor, they will provide you with notes regarding their thoughts on your mix, including what you did well and areas for improvement. Come up with a plan to address the instructor’s concerns before starting your revisions. This could be a simple checklist of the revisions you need to complete or a general brainstorm of what techniques you might use during your revisions. Coming up with a plan will help you stay focused and address the instructor’s concerns.

Once you are finished revising the exercise, closely listen to the results of your work and write a brief paragraph about your experience. In your written reflection, outline any difficulties you encountered while mixing. Compare your initial impressions and goals for your mix with the actual process of mixing and the final result. Did you fully or partially achieve your goal for what you wanted your final mix to sound like? Were you able to address all of the instructor's revision notes? Were there any particular revision notes that you struggled with and why?

As the mix engineer, it is your job to provide the instructor (the client in this scenario) with one updated version of this mixing exercise with the below deliverables.

Revision Deliverables

Please deliver the following in one parent folder entitled "**LastName_EQforWeight v2.**" Upload this folder and share it with your instructor.

1. Pro Tools session of your revised mix addressing the instructor's concerns. Label the session name with your last name and "v2".
2. Make sure the "Audio Files" folder in the Pro Tools session includes only newly created audio files. Please note that you may want to keep a copy of the session with the original audio files for your own records.
3. One Word Doc or PDF of your written reflection notes for your revised exercise. This document should include a brief paragraph and be no longer than one page maximum (shorter is fine).
4. 48kHz sample rate and 24 bit interleaved stereo .WAV file bounce of your revised mix.

Second Mix Attempt - Rubric

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Addressed revisions</i>	<i>All materials submitted as requested</i>	<i>Followed exercise guidelines</i>	<i>Focused on the assigned mixing technique</i>
<i>Points Allotted</i>	2 points	1 point	1 point	1 point
<i>Guidelines for full points</i>	Your mix addressed all or almost all of the instructor's concerns regarding revisions.	All materials are properly labelled, all original audio files are deleted in Pro Tools session, and final mix delivered at proper specifications.	Word Doc or PDF included with written reflection. Used only stock plugins. Product delivered is well-organized and professional in presentation.	It is clear that a significant amount of effort was put into using equalization for weight in the exercise.