

QUICKIE COURSE - HOW TO MIX A FILM

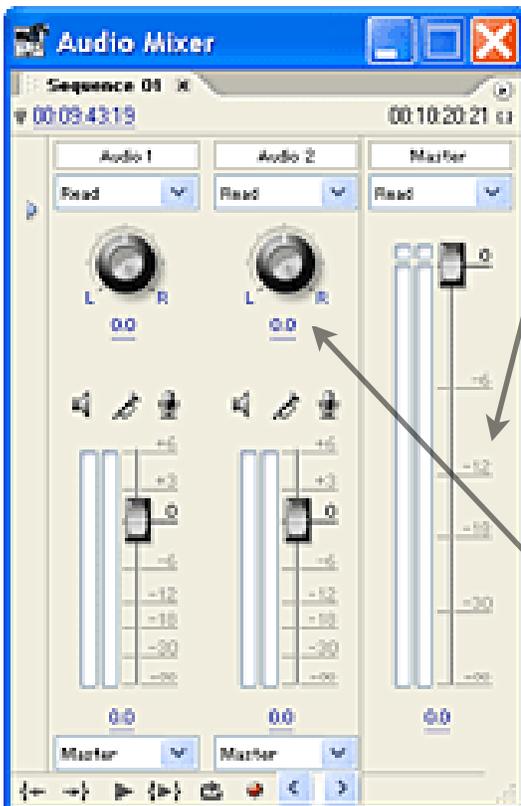
This instruction sheet explains how to produce a professional sounding audio mix which will play effectively on television or in any properly calibrated film theatre. It assumes the use of Adobe Premiere as your primary editing software and a *reference level* of -12 db for audio playback.

PROCEDURE

1. Determine for your film which sound element is dominant:

Dialog (Narration)
Music
Sound Effects

For most of you, music will be the dominant element. However some of you may have an important narration track, which will then take dominant place. Only rarely are sound effects the dominant audio element.



2. Using Premiere's' track volume automation, adjust the level of your dominant element so that it remains approximately at -12 db throughout your project. In order to accurately measure the audio level in Premiere you must open the Audio Mixer Window (Menu: Window > Audio Mixer). Use the large meters labeled "Master".

This step can be time consuming but is extremely important! Take good care with it because without it none of the following steps will work correctly. The goal is to create an "even playing field" for your sound.

Note that this is the stage where you may also choose to adjust the Pan position for sounds which require Left-Right placement within the stereo sound-image.

3. Adjust the level of the remaining sound elements relative to your dominant element. The volume of these can be higher or lower than -12 db, as needed. Naturally, loud sounds (e.g. gunshots) can be much louder than -12 db, and soft ones (e.g. footsteps) can be much lower. Use your own judgement and good taste.

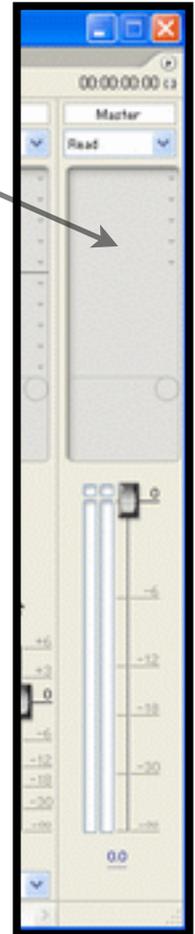
4. Open the *Inserts Area* of the Mixer by clicking the triangle on the left side of the window. Insert the following Effects into the Master Track -

- slots 1 and 2 - leave empty
- slot 3 - *Classic Master Limiter*
- slot 4 - *Audio Level*
- slot 5 - leave empty

5. Adjust the effects parameters as follows:

Audio Level - This effect does not have a control panel, so you must adjust its settings using the small menu on the mixer channel. Set **both** left and right channels to a level change of -6 db. NB - be sure to set both channels!

Classic Master Limiter - this excellent professional quality effect plugin has only one parameter, labeled "level". It controls the perceived loudness of your master audio output. Adjust it according to your program material and taste. Note that the knob works in a manner opposite to what you might normally expect - the perceived loudness will **INCREASE** as you turn the knob **DOWN**.



6. Carefully listen to your audio throughout your project to ensure that it sounds good at every point! Pay particular attention to the *loudest* and most *quiet* sections. Monitor these carefully and tweak the loudness of individual elements if you hear any distortion (too loud) or if a sound is inaudible (too quiet).

7. Congratulations! Your audio work is now complete, and, assuming the picture work is also finished, you can export your project in the format requested for the screening.

NB - When exporting your film make sure that the audio settings are 16-bit, 48 khz for professional quality. Do NOT use 32 khz or lower rates!