

# Cirrus Mix Prep

Welcome to the Cirrus Family! Here's a simple guide to prep your files so they allow the best end result and a smooth run through the mixing process.

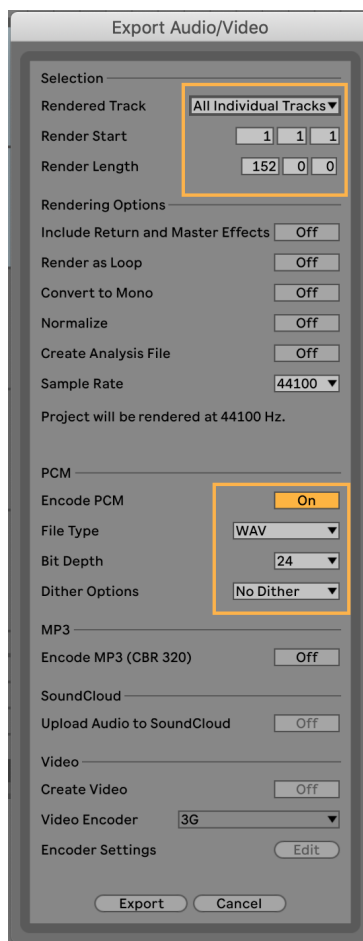
## What to Provide

Please shoot over high quality stems and a reference bounce of your mix that you are most happy with in one folder. Please remove any blank stems as we are often not sure if something has gone wrong during the bounce or whether they are simply unused tracks.

You should be able to take all stems in the folder (bar the reference), drop them back into a blank session and it play back exactly how you want it to.

## Bouncing Stems in Live

1. File > Export Audio / Video (Shift + CMD + R)
2. At the very top 'Rendered Track' should be set to:
  - **'All individual tracks'** if you simply want to provide every single track
  - or **'Selected Tracks Only'** which will only bounce highlighted tracks within the session. This can be great if you just want to bounce groups for instance



Set the render length by highlighting the entire track on the timeline.

Make sure to bounce a little extra time to avoid cutting off reverb or delay tails at the end of the track

Rendering as a WAV or Aiff (which are exactly the same) will ensure we are working at the highest quality possible.

Ensuring that Dither is set to 'No Dither' is extremely important. Dither will add a small amount of white noise to each stem which builds up during the mixing process. Dither should only be applied once during mastering

## Important Info

### What's the best way to send files?

We have the best experience with Dropbox or Google Drive. Services such as We Transfer which delete the upload after a set amount of time can cause issues.

Sometimes we need to access the files at a later date (often due to corrupt files etc) and the deleted upload means we can't fix the issue in the allocated time and puts us behind schedule.

### Should I send notes with the Stems?

Please provide as much information on what you'd like to achieve in the session. If you want a Bass heavy mix or a particular element to be up front for instance - please let us know! Although you have been working on this track and know it intimately, we are hearing it for the very first time so please share your vision with us to help make the best decisions in the session.

Alternatively, if you would just like to leave it to the engineer to go with their instinct we are more than happy to do this and can make any necessary changes during the mix revisions.

### What if I have too many stems?

We generally ask for projects not to exceed 40 or so individual stems as this actually makes the mixing process more difficult. If you have over 40 tracks in your session, a great way to reduce the number of stems is to group sounds which will not likely need individual treatment.

Sounds which are good to group include:

- 4-5 Sound fx layers
- Atmos and reverbs together
- A number of vocal harmonies
- Multiple sounds which play at different times

We will want as much separation and control over the main elements so we can change their level and apply specific processing. Elements you will definitely want separated include:

- Kick, bass, snare, lead vocal, lead elements

## **Why is the reference bounce important?**

We believe mixing is a collaboration between an artist who has great ideas and an engineer who has tools and knowledge to bring those ideas to life.

Although your reference mix might be a work in progress to you, our engineers get a lot of useful information from your reference bounce drawing on the general energy and direction to inform the final mixdown.

## **Should I leave my processing on or take it off?**

Processing is an integral part of modern production and it can either be creating the very essence and vibe of a track or it can be taking away from it.

As a general rule, if you take a plugin off a sound and the track sounds worse or loses something - it's an indicator that it's an integral part of the production. If you remove something and it has little to no effect on the track as a whole, it's a good idea to leave it off. If you're unsure, it's best to leave any plug-ins in place unless we ask for it to be removed.

## **Can I Send the Live Session instead?**

A little bit like processing, sending the session is a double edged sword. On one hand, it simplifies file handling and allows us to manipulate native live plugins inside the session.

On the downside, if we don't have a 3rd party plugin that you're using such as a synthesiser, saturator or EQ - the track won't play correctly when we load the session.

However - If you feel confident and would like to make this work you can do the following:

- 'Collect All and Save' to ensure all samples are in the folder
- Freeze (or freeze and flatten) any tracks which contain 3rd party plugins
- Provide the project folder with the sample folder inside
  - NB Its very easy to send the **.als** which doesn't contain the samples and therefore won't work

Any further questions, feel free to get in touch and we will sort it out

The Cirrus Team