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# What's All This Mastering Stuff, Anyway?

A Panel Discussion

With

Ed Brooks - RFI / CD

Rick Fisher - RFI / CD

Mark Guenther / Seattle Disc Mastering

Max Rose - Disc Makers

Al Swanson - Seattle Symphony

Steve Turnidge - Ultraviolet Studios

Mastering...a topic as shrouded in mystery as it is steeped in magic. The mastering studio provides the final reality check before your audio reaches mass duplication. What, exactly, is mastering? What's the big deal? Join us as we explore this and more on September 30, 2003 at 7:00PM at Shoreline Community College, Music Building, Room 818 (note that this is 30 minutes earlier than usual).

[Directions to Shoreline Community College.](#) There is parking in the on-campus lots. Refer to the map on the Directions [link](#). Avoid obvious No Parking zones.

Some food for thought:

- What mastering is;
- What mastering isn't;
- Why should a recording be mastered prior to duplication?
- Why not just do the mastering in the studio where it was mixed? Chances are that they have many of the tools needed.
- What about mastering for different media (vinyl, cassette, DVD, etc.)

- Why bother? Why leave the recording studio? Why can't I do it myself?
- What's so different about mastering equipment?
- What is your goal when you master someone's recording?
- What sorts of things should be sent back to the studio for fixing?
- What sorts of things can you 'fix' in mastering?
- Do you see any difference between mastering in software vs mastering in hardware?
- Philosophy and the individual engineer's approach to mastering.
- History; How has mastering changed?

These questions/topics are our starting point. No doubt, you have your own questions. Bring them. Our distinguished panel of five practioners of the art are:

RFI / CD Mastering [www.RFICD.com](http://www.RFICD.com)

**Services:**

Custom audio mastering, editing, sequencing, dynamics, equalization, leveling, and coding; Merging Technologies Pyramix, Sonic Solutions Sonic Studio, and Digidesign ProTools LE workstations; delivery to CDR, DDP Exabyte, or DDP folder (CD-r, DVD+r, DVD-r, or ftp); sources include all standard digital file formats (from CD, DVD, Exabyte, or HD), 1/4" & 1/2" analog tape, DAT, and CD-audio.

I started doing recording in 1986, working primarily as a freelance engineer, with a stint as a staff engineer at Bad Animals between 1988-92. Started doing mastering at the suggestion of Rick Fisher about 4 years ago. It has been my primary work ever since, I absolutely enjoy it.

**Recent Projects**

The Blues Traveler, Hot Hot Heat, Death Cab For Cutie (PCM and SACD release), Vendetta Red, The Long Winters, The Supersuckers, Minus The Bear, Julian Priester, Kelly Harland, Chris Robinson, 71 Pearl Jam Live Concerts and Pearl Jam Live at The Showbox DVD

I've worked as a recording engineer since 1978, working between NYC and Seattle. This morphed into a 13 year job with Steve Miller doing everything from recording to tour management. I started RFI / CD Mastering in 1997.

**Projects**

Brad, Cat Power, Shins, Posies, Damien Jurado, Iron & Wine, Walkabouts, Guarneri Underground, Deems, etc.

Ed Brooks

Rick Fisher

Mark Guenther	<p>Seattle Disc Mastering <a href="http://www.seattlediscmastering.com">www.seattlediscmastering.com</a></p> <p><b>Recent projects</b>          Pearl Django, several releases for Origin Records including Don Lanphere, Marc Seales. Rock projects: 15-year old punk phenoms DEK, 80 x Simplified, Roundabout, Robert Roth. Historical/restoration: Bukka White, Sunnyland Slim.</p> <p>I started playing music in the late '60's, was always interested in recording. Began as a recording engineer in 1980. Founded Seattle Disc Mastering in February 1996.</p>
Max Rose	<p>Disc Makers <a href="http://www.discmakers.com">www.discmakers.com</a></p> <p>Max Rose is the senior multimedia specialist at Disc Maker's Seattle regional office. He joined the Disc Makers team in 1999 as a mastering engineer when Disc Makers acquired Seattle based Martin Audio Duplication, where he was chief mastering engineer since 1996. During his tenure at these facilities he has mastered a wide range of compact discs for independent artists throughout the country. In addition to mastering duties, Max has served as a bridge to the engineering and mastering community seeking information about master preparation, pre-mastering and the compact disc manufacturing process. Beginning in 2000, he began developing the multimedia department at Disc Makers, which now offers a full range of CD-ROM, DVD, and Enhanced-CD authoring services. Disc Makers, based in Pennsauken, NJ, is the nation's leading independent media manufacturer, offering complete CD, DVD and cassette packages for independent artists and record labels.</p> <p>I'm originally from Chicago, Illinois. I worked for over 15 years in Boston, Mass. as a musician, engineer, and producer before relocating to Seattle in 1996.</p>
Al Swanson	<p>Seattle Symphony Orchestra</p> <p>A recovering musician, I've been in this wacky audio business since 1975, specializing in live and other location recordings (although I have, in various pinches, worked in a lot of studios as well). Inevitably, this has led to a reputation for being the classical/acoustic guy, and then to the Symphony, my current main customer. As an un-studio, I mostly master my own projects, along with others that require heavy score-based editing, using the Merging Technologies Pyramix system.</p>
Steve Turnidge	<p>Ultraviolet Studios <a href="http://www.arsdivina.com/Ultraviolet_Studios/index2.html">www.arsdivina.com/Ultraviolet_Studios/index2.html</a></p> <p><b>Services</b>          CD Mastering, Vinyl Restoration, Noise Reduction and Audio Processing.</p> <p>Significant Projects: The Fading Collection, King Crimson Archives, Norman Durkee, Electron Love Theory, The U-MEN, I DEFY, The Heats, The Cowboys, Zony Mash, David Miles Huber, Gordon Raphael, Colour Twigs, Steve Fisk.</p> <p>Mastering your music is like mastering your life. It's amazing what happens when you clean up the noise, maximize your good work, and have your music sparkle and shine like you really want it to.</p>

Come and hear our five panelists talk about the ins and outs of mastering... Join us as we explore this and more on September 30, 2003 at 7:00PM at Shoreline Community College, Music Building, Room 818. Refreshments will be served.

**N.B.** This meeting starts 30 minutes earlier than our customary start time!

**Our meetings are open to anyone interested in Audio. AES membership is NOT required for you to attend our meetings.**

Last modified 9/14/2003.