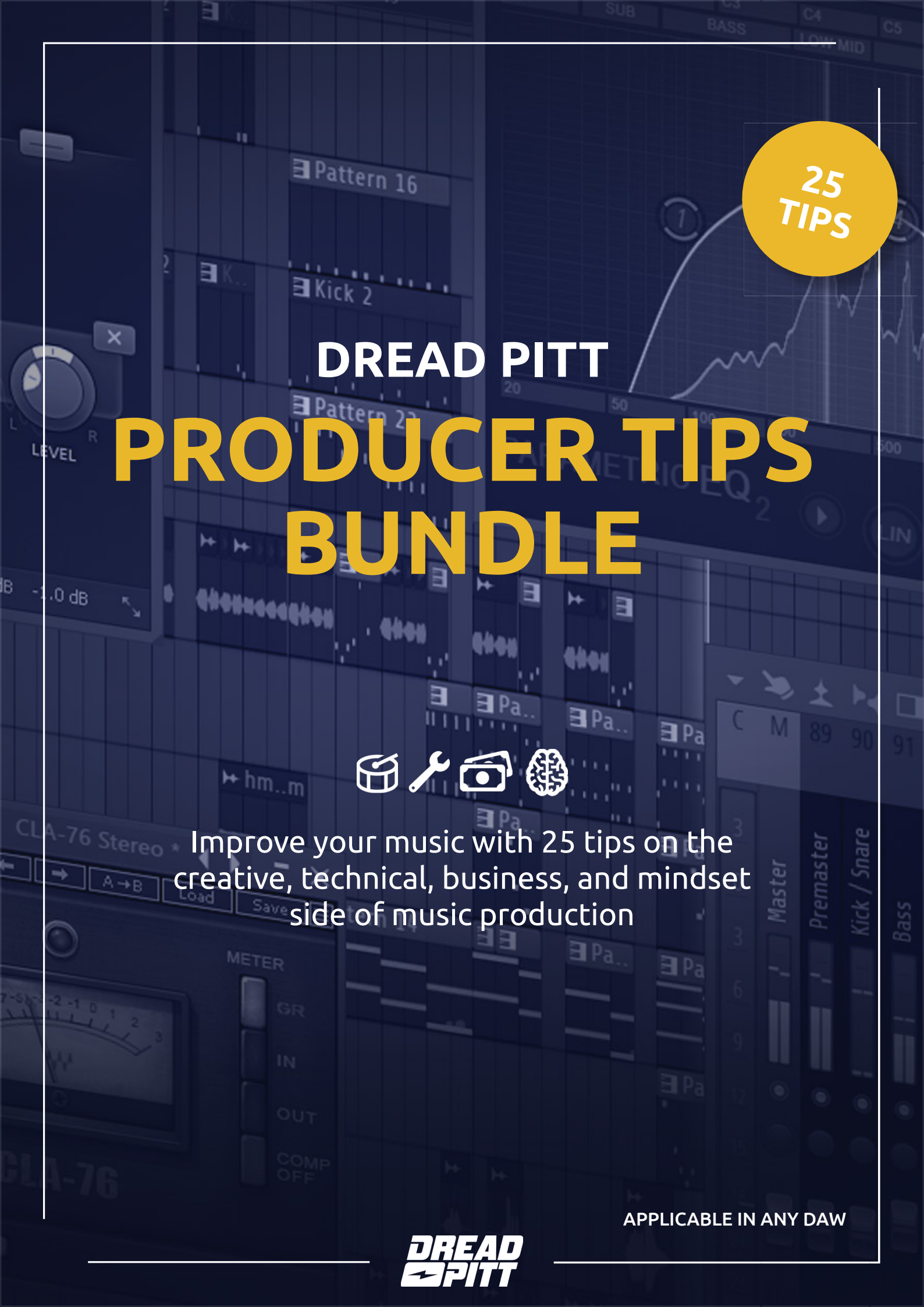
25 TIPS
DREAD PITT
PRODUCER TIPS BUNDLE
Improve your music with 25 tips on the creative, technical, business, and mindset side of music production
APPLICABLE IN ANY DAW
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CONTENTS

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This is an interactive PDF. That means that you can click everything you think is clickable. Skip directly to a specific page from the contents page, and try out links and videos in the content. You will be redirected to a website or video outside of this document.

Read about my **online courses** and **mentorship program** on page 34-36

Author: Tim Alkemade/Dread Pitt
info@dreadpittmentorship.com

Hey!

Really cool that you downloaded this bundle. These tips are bits and pieces taken from my courses which I thought would be nice to share. I'm sure that there will be some info in here that you can use to improve your skills, whether you are a producer, artist, engineer, or musician. If you have any questions or comments about these tips, or any other music related questions, feel free to contact me on **Reddit** or at **info@dreadpittmentorship.com**.

Here is a little background info on me, so you know who wrote this.

My name is Tim and my artist name is Dread Pitt. I have been producing music for 10 years. While studying psychology in college, I downloaded the FL Studio demo and started experimenting. Over the years, I developed my skills and after graduating, I started building my music career.

My music has been played millions of times across the world, and has gotten impressive sync placements. It has been supported by record labels, brands, and taste-makers such as NoCopyrightSounds, NFL, Trap City, MLB, Trap Nation, Vice, and many more.

My passion for music and my master's degree in psychology fuse together in my mission to share my knowledge. In the last 4 years, I have personally mentored over 50 students and gave many masterclasses and workshops, all with great results. My goal is to share my knowledge to as many people as I can, so I hope to help you with these tips, and maybe welcome you in one of my courses.

Enjoy!

TIP #01

USE YOUR SOUNDS SPARINGLY

One songwriting technique I use to make my songs more interesting is using sounds sparingly.

What I mean with that is to have a few sounds in your song that you only use once or a few times. You can have other sounds that repeat throughout the song, but when you have a few sounds that you use sparingly, you show something new for the listener. This keeps the listener's attention at your song.

For example, get a flute note or melody that you only play at the end of each chorus, leading into the next part. Or a drum fill that you only use once in the song. Sounds like that can really spice up your song and keep it interesting over time.

Watch **this video** to see some examples of how I used this technique in my songs.

TIP #02

GROUP YOUR SOUNDS

A good first step in getting a good mix is to group your sounds. Usually, I group my sounds in Kick & Snare (my most important drums), Bass, Sounds (all melodic sounds, except bass), Percussion (everything but kick and snare), Vocal (if you have one), and FX (risers, foley, etc.). This can make your mix better in a few ways.

Firstly, you have a good overview of how loud all the groups actually are. Looking at all the separate sounds can be deceiving. For example, one sound may not be louder than the kick, but all the sounds together may actually be louder. So you can easily see how your track is balanced, and turn an entire group up or down in volume.

Secondly, you can process the groups if you want. For example, you can add a compressor to all the percussion, to "glue" them together, or add EQ to all the sounds, to give the whole group extra brightness. Only add processing to a group if you need to though, it is not always necessary.

Thirdly, it makes the mix easier to grasp. This one is a bit more subtle, but I found it has had the most benefit for me. I used to listen to mixes and try to focus on the positioning on each separate sound. This was difficult, because my brain can't focus on that many things at once. Being zoomed in on each sound, you lose perspective of the balance of the mix as a whole. When I started dividing my mix into groups, I started to mentally visualize the mix as a whole, instead of trying to piece together all the separate sounds. This gave me a much better grasp of the balance of my mixes, as well as mixes of other tracks. So I really recommend dividing your mix into groups, not only because you have more control over your mix, but also because it makes mentally visualizing your mix much easier.

This is how my groups look in my mixer

TIP #03

REVERB TRICK TO SPICE UP A SOUND

You probably already know that you can use reverb to make things sound far away and create depth in your mix. But did you know you can also use reverb as a sound design tool?

For this sound design trick, you use reverb in a different way. Let's say you have a cool pluck sound, but it sounds a bit dry and clicky. You can try this: Put a reverb plugin on it, and turn up the wet to 100% (and the dry to 0%), and put the decay at about 0.1 to 1 second. The reverb now takes over the whole sound, making it less of a tight pluck sound, but more of a softer pluck. You can then change the settings of the reverb to shape the sound some more.

Keep in mind this is not a normal way to use reverb; only a way to shape a sound. So to add depth to this sound, you can add another reverb as you would normally use.

Watch **this video** to see some step-by-step examples of this reverb trick.

TIP #04

DON'T MAKE YOUR SONG TOO LONG

9 out of 10 times when I listen to songs from other producers to give them feedback, the song is too long, or a certain section is too long.

I get it. As the producer, you probably like your song, and you're already used to listening to it for hundreds of times, so the sections may seem shorter than they are. But for a listener, a song can become repetitive much faster.

To get a decent song length, consider your genre. What is the average length of a song in your genre? Some genres like pop and hip hop have songs that are usually around 3 minutes, but some genres like techno and metal genres have songs up to 15 minutes! So use reference songs from your genre to get an indication of your song length.

Then there is one more important thing to consider. If you do want to make your song longer than average, ask yourself: What is this extra length adding? If your answer is clear (you're adding a cool outro, an extra verse, or an unique bridge, etc.), sure make it longer. If it's not clear, don't make it longer than it needs to be.

Something to remember: If it's not adding anything new or important to the song, it shouldn't have to be there.

TIP #05

HOW YOUR BRAIN TRICKS YOU

Did you know your brain makes up a lot of what you hear?

Listening is an active thing. When you hear something, it's not just the sound itself, but it's your brain's interpretation of the sound. This is because we have patterns in our brain based on experience. We experience sounds coming from places around us our whole lives, so our brain makes patterns to understand them easier.

For example, we have patterns to interpret distance. When something is far away, it usually sounds softer in volume. Quite simple. An example of how this influences your mixing is with reverb. Imagine someone talking to you from a distance in a parking garage, and then imagine someone talking to you from very close. The difference here is reverb.

This also works like that in the mix. If you add a lot of reverb to a sound, your brain will think it is far away. Even if you turn the sound up very loud in the mix, it will still sound far away with reverb. Think about that when you are adding reverb to your drums, for example.

TIP #06

ACTUALLY HEARING COMPRESSION

As you may have learned already, compression makes a sound more stable in volume, but sometimes this may be quite difficult to hear.

You may have seen some videos where someone shows you how great something sounds with compression, but you hear almost no difference. So how can you actually hear compression?

To do this, you need a melody, vocal, or drum loop that has two notes that are very different in volume. It works best if a very soft note is followed by a very loud note. Without compression, you can clearly hear the difference. Then put a compressor on it, and compress the loud parts. If you did it right, you can now actually hear compression: The louder note sounds softer, and the two notes now have a more similar volume.

Watch **this video** to see a step-by-step example of this.

TIP #07

BE ECONOMICAL WITH YOUR SOUNDS

Of course, it doesn't cost anything extra to add more sounds and drums to your track (imagine if you had to pay every time you use a sound!), but using your sounds economically can make your track more interesting for the listener.

The idea is that if you give all your sounds away in the beginning of your track, the listener has nothing to get surprised with later in the track. So if you space your sounds out, and use some sounds later in the track, you will keep the listener interested. For example, if you have four main melodies in your track, maybe use one of those melodies only in the second verse, so your second verse has something new.

This also works within a loop. If you have an 8 bar loop, it's good to not have all the sounds play constantly. For example, in your drum loop, add a little percussion fill only at the last bar. In that way, the listener won't get used to that percussion too fast, because it will only come along once in every 8 bars. That is how your loop stays interesting throughout your song.

TIP #08

CHALLENGE: USE ONLY THESE 3 TOOLS

When the first mixes were made in the 60's, engineers didn't have a lot of fancy tools. Sure, they had basic compressors and EQ, but not much else.

Mixes relied the most on these three tools to place sounds in the mix: Volume, panning, and reverb. These tools can be seen as most fundamental for any mix, and if you set these right, the mix will already have a good balance. Other tools like compression, distortion and EQ will improve the mix, but they can't fix errors in the first three tools. Therefore, always think of these three tools first when you are placing sounds in your mix.

As an exercise, try to do the following. Take a song you're working on, and when it's time to mix it, start the mix by only using the volume faders, panning, and reverb. Create a nice balance with just these three tools. You'll already hear that the mix sounds really good if you get the balance right. After that, adding other tools (EQ, compression, stereo widening) will become much easier and work better in the mix.

TIP #09

ARE YOU PRACTICING ENOUGH?

This is a tip that will maybe feel a bit uncomfortable, because many of us are guilty of this: Procrastination.

You're likely reading this because you want to become better at making music, and that's a good thing. So if you're reading tips like this, watching tutorials, and reading books on music production, you're well on your way to becoming better. These days, there are so much tutorials online that you can fill your whole day watching tutorials and learning new tricks. And after a long day of learning, you probably feel satisfied with a productive day.

But it may not be as productive as it seems. Reading, watching, and learning may feel very productive, but these are all passive activities. To become better at something, you also need to actively practice it. In our case, that means making a lot of music. This is the trap we can sometimes fall into. We feel like we're productive because we are getting so much information from tips and tutorials, but we're not making real progress because we're not actively practicing. Subconsciously, we may actually be procrastinating to make music, because it's easier to watch videos and feel productive, than actually making music.

Of course, there is a place for learning, but we need to find the right balance between learning and practicing. For example, you don't need to watch ten videos on EQing in one day to learn EQing. You may need one good video, and spend the rest of the day actually EQing things, so you can train your ear. Generally, I think we can best divide our time to get 20% of learning, and 80% of practicing.

TIP #10

WHY YOU NEED GOOD DRUM SAMPLES

You have probably noticed that the drums you find in sample packs can vary quite a bit in quality.

Some drums sound super full and rich, while other drums sound thin and weak. With some drums, the quality difference is smaller, but it's important to notice these differences when you choose your drums to use in your track.

So what is a high quality drum sample? Of course, the drum has to sound how you want it to sound to fit your creative idea. But there may be several drum sounds that fit the creative idea, some of which are higher in quality. Two things to look for in a drum sample is loudness and transients.

Some drum sounds sound louder by themselves, without any processing on it. They may sound quite a bit louder than other drum samples, without actually be louder in dB. This is very useful in the mixing stage, because it means that you don't have to turn up your drums as much to get a loud, punchy drum sound. This leaves more headroom in your mix.

Good drum sounds also have strong transients. Transients are the first milliseconds of a sound. If the transients are strong, it sounds like it hits directly. If the transients are weak, it sound more like a very fast fade-in than a direct hit, kind of like a "whoosh". If you use drums with stronger transiens, you will be able to hear them "punch through" the mix. Just like with louder sounding drums, it means that you can hear them more easily, without having to turn them up in volume.

Watch **this video** to see and hear the difference between high-quality and low-quality drum samples

TIP #11

HOW TO GET THAT VINTAGE SOUND

You may be wondering how producers get that warm, gritty vintage sounds in their songs.

It's a very common and nice sound, and can be a nice addition in any genre. Usually, the vintage sound is a combination of pitch bending (the pitch slightly going up and down, called vibrato), vinyl crackle or noise, and band-pass filtering (vintage sounds didn't have super low and high frequencies). Luckily, there are some cool plugins which have all of these functions in one. Slap it on a sound, tweak some settings, and you're good to go. The most popular paid plugin is RC-20 (I use this one), and a very good free one is iZotope Vinyl (I used this one until I got RC-20). This can make many things sound cooler very easily!

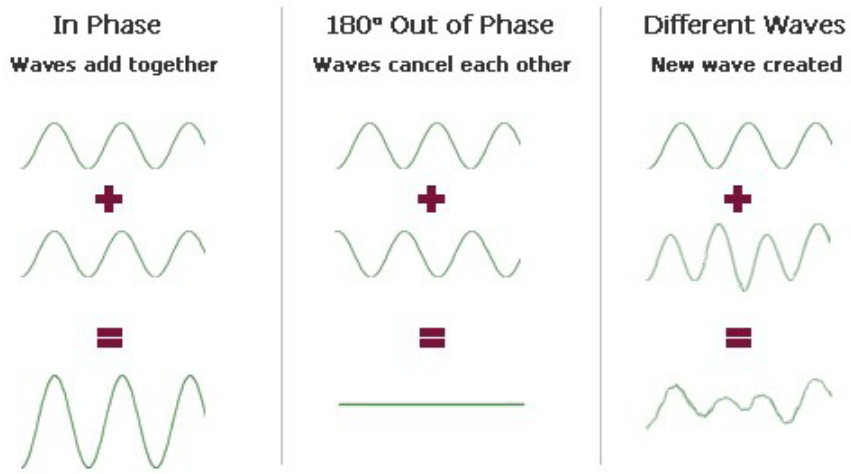
Click on the images to go to the plugins' websites

TIP #12

ARE YOU OUT OF PHASE?

Phasing issues can be harmful for your mix in certain situations.

What is phasing? It occurs when two sounds with similar waveforms play at the same time. The waveforms can add up, subtract, or both. That looks like this:



Phasing. **Source:** https://www.mediacollege.com/audio/01/wave-interaction.html

To really hear the effect of phasing, try the following: Add two identical samples (e.g. claps) to your DAW. Let them play at the same time. The volume should be louder than just one clap. Then, reverse the phase of one clap. This can be done with a "reverse polarity" button in the sampler, or with a plugin with a button that looks like this: Ø (look up how it works in your DAW). Now, the sound completely disappears. Weird right? Two claps are playing, but you're hearing nothing. That is because they are 180 degrees out of phase.

In your mix, these problems can also occur when things are out of phase. The sounds are completely cancelled out, or certain frequencies are cancelled out. So when you are layering sounds or using stereo spreading, and the sound suddenly sounds weird, it is likely a phasing problem. One way to deal with this is to reverse the phase of one of the sounds, and sometimes you just have to live with the sound that's out of phase (if it's not too bad), or replace the sound.

TIP #13

THE MAGIC OF REFERENCE TRACKS

Do you use reference tracks? You can use reference tracks for every part of the production process.

For the creative process, use reference tracks to get inspiration for melodies, instruments, drums, rhythms, and more. It's good to actively listen to music every once in a while (not just put it on in the background) to really learn from other artists creatively. For example, focus only on the melody, or only on the background drums. You'll hear things in the tracks you likely never heard before.

You can apply this same technique for sound design, arrangement and mixing. Listen actively to your reference tracks and learn from other artists' choices. One important thing to note though is that your track is not exactly the same as your reference track, so don't try to copy it. Take things that you can use out of it, but remember that your track may require an unique treatment on another front. Reference tracks can really teach you a lot!

TIP #14

SIMPLICITY VS. COMPLEXITY

You obviously don't want your song to be boring, but if you add too much stuff, listeners will only be confused.

So how do you get that balance? A simple way to approach this is to divide simplicity and complexity in your track. A rule of thumb: If you make one thing complex, make another thing simple. For example, if you have a complex melody in one section, make the drums a bit simpler. Or if you have a complex hi hat rhythm, make the other drums a bit simpler. In that way, you give the listener the space to listen to the complex part, without being distracted by the more simple parts.

Watch **this video** to see how I applied this concept in one of my songs

TIP #15

CUT FIRST, BOOST SECOND

A quick rule of thumb when EQing is to cut first and boost second.

Let's say you want to EQ a sound and it has some rumble in the mid and it can use some more brightness. When cutting first, you may actually achieve both goals at once. Because you cut the rumble in the mid, the high frequencies now become relatively louder than the mid frequencies, making the overall sound brighter. Two birds with one stone. An extra benefit of this is that by cutting first, you are removing something from the mix, creating more space in the mix as a whole. If you do this for every sound, the sounds in the mix can have more space overall. Simple, yet effective.

TIP #16

THE EXTRA BENEFIT OF CLASSIC EQS

There are many classic EQs out there which are praised a lot, like the EQP-1A, the SSL Channel Strip, and Neve 1073. Of course, they are known for their great crisp analog sound. This is why I really recommend using them to add "niceness", like a touch of high frequencies.

But they have another great benefit: You can train your ears by using them. A common mistake less-experienced producers make is listening with their eyes instead of their ears. They look at an EQ with a curve and see the curve boost somewhere, and think "that sounds about right". But your ears can be tricked easily by the placebo effect when you see the EQ curve.

When you are using classic EQs, there is not much visual aid. There are usually just a few buttons to select the frequency, the bandwidth, and the boost/cut size. So you are forced to use your ears when boosting or cutting. This can be a great exercise of actively listening which frequencies are actually affected by the EQ. Of course, you can keep using other EQs, but adding classic EQs to your tool set can not only bring a great sound, you will also train your ears. There are even some nice replica plugins of the classic EQs which you can get for free, like EQ1A, Blindfold EQ, SL84 Console EQ.

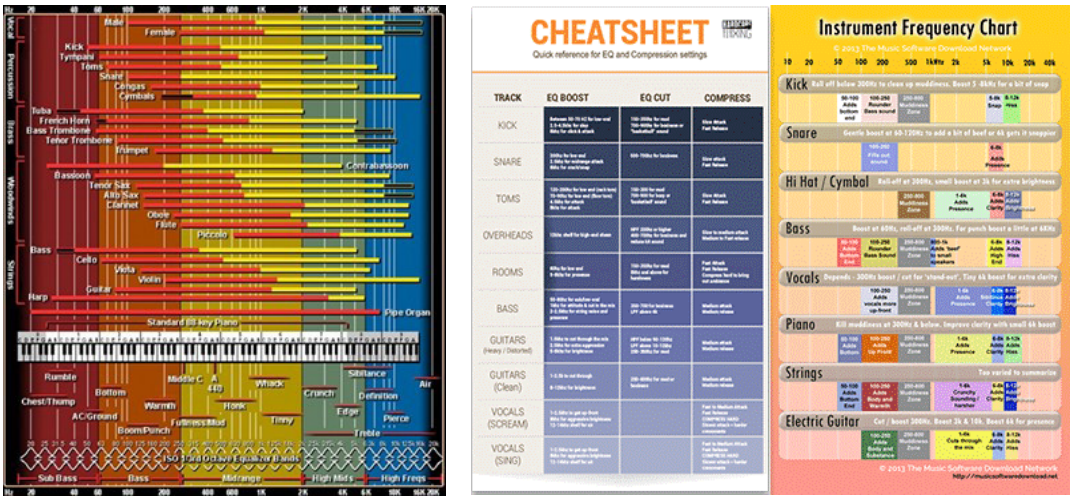
TIP #17

DON’T BLINDLY FOLLOW EQ CHEAT SHEETS

1/2

Don’t blindly follow EQ cheat sheets.

If you have browsed online to find some producer tutorials and tips, you have probably come across EQ cheat sheets. They look like this:



The first thing I think of when seeing these is a term I learned during my course on educational psychology: Cognitive overload. These cheatsheets have so much information on them that they become confusing rather than informing. Our brains can only process so much information at once, and these sheets clearly contain too much. And that’s before we even look at what’s written on them.

What’s written on them isn’t much better. They will tell you things which can’t do much harm, like where the low frequencies of a cello are located. But that won’t also help you a lot when you want to EQ a cello. They can also tell you things which do more harm than good, like where to always boost, cut, and compress a snare.

Read more on the next page »

TIP #17

DON’T BLINDLY FOLLOW EQ CHEAT SHEETS

2/2

The problem with the info on these cheat sheets is that they oversimplify things. They don’t take into account that every mix is different. First of all, the sounds of your instruments can differ. One snare can sound completely different from another. So if you are told that you always need to boost a certain frequency in your snare, you will get wildly different results with different snares, because each snare’s frequencies differ.

Secondly, and maybe more importantly, the context of the mix matters. If you want to EQ that cello, you need to look at the other instruments in your mix too. Which space do you want the cello to take in relation to the other instruments? If there is another instrument that takes up a similar frequency, like a guitar, which one do you want to give more space in that frequency range? Also, what type of song is it? Is it a warm, mellow song, or a high-energy song? You likely want to adjust your EQ settings to the energy of the song as well.

These things always differ from mix to mix, and they involve decisions you have to make yourself. There are many moving parts in every mix, which you have to take into account and base your decisions on. A cheat sheet can’t tell you which decision to make.

So next time you see these cheat sheets, think twice about printing them and hanging them above your desk. When it comes to EQing a sound, there are two important things to consider, which give you different results every time: The frequencies you hear in your sound, and the relative place of the sound in the mix.

TIP #18

USING DELAY INSTEAD OF REVERB

If you want to add some depth to a sound, your first choice is probably reverb.

Reverb can add a nice layer of atmosphere around a sound, which makes it sound further away. But as you may have noticed, the reverb sound can sometimes sound quite dense, and clutter up the mix.

As an alternative, you can also use delay. Normally, you may have only used delay to get some extra groove into a sound, but if you get the right settings, you can actually get that sense of depth from delay, without the density you get from reverb.

To do this, add a very short delay (1/16th note or faster) to a sound and turn down the feedback. Filter the high and the low frequencies out of the delay, so the delay signal sounds like a filtered version of the dry sound. If you did this, you can probably already hear a sense of depth. Now, you can compare it to reverb and see which one you prefer.

Watch **this video** to see how I do this delay technique step-by-step

TIP #19

SPICE UP YOUR DRUMS

A common thing I come across when giving feedback is that the drums can use some more spice.

Sure, the drums that are in there may sound good. Usually, there's a kick, a snare, a hihat, and maybe a clap. After a while, that may sound a bit boring, so it's good to add some extra drums and make more variation.

As a rule of thumb, try to use at least two extra percussion sounds in your drum loop. An extra hi hat, rimshot, bongo, djembe, shaker, or foley are good examples. You don't have to use them throughout your whole loop. If you let those play once in a while, it can perk up the listener just a little bit, so they keep their attention to your song. With enough variation, you can keep it interesting.

For example, instead of having one drum pattern with a kick, hihat, snare, clap loop throughout most of the song, you can make something like this: First bars only hihat and clap, then add kick and snare, then after a few bars take all drums out and only let a shaker play, then add all drums back in for extra impact. Then make new combinations every four bars. Lastly, add spice to the whole thing by adding an extra percussion every once in a while.

TIP #20

COLOR CODING WILL SAVE YOUR LIFE

Okay, that sounds a bit drastic, but color coding will definitely save you time. And if you think about it, if you save time, you have more time to live your life, so color coding may save a few percent of your life. ;p

Color coding is one of those things of which you see the real benefit after you've tried it. You probably have seen some tips before that recommend color coding, but I wanted to emphasize its benefit a bit more.

For those who don't know: Color coding is giving a specific color to a group of instruments in your DAW mixer and/or playlist. For example, my percussion is green, my melodic instruments (except bass) are red, and my bass is blue.

The obvious benefit here is that you have a more organized project, which is easier to work in. But after I started using color coding, I noticed the real benefit, which was that my mixes indirectly got better.

My mixes got better because I was able to quickly make small changes to the mix which I wouldn't have made without color coding. Without color coding, it happened often that I had a quick idea to change something in the mix, but had to search for the sound, and once I found it, forgot what I wanted to change. When I started using color coding, those few seconds searching for sounds was gone, and I remembered much more of the small mixing changes I wanted to make.

Our short-term memories really aren't that great, so everything we can do to help our memory when producing will improve your end result. In this way, something as simple as color coding has great indirect effects.

TIP #21

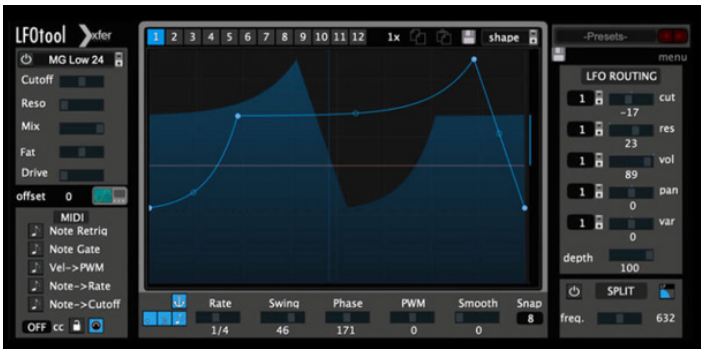
MY 5 FAVORITE SOUND DESIGN PLUGINS

1/3

You can do sound design in many different ways. Basically anything you do to change a sound can be seen as sound design.

This can be as simple as moving further away from the microphone, or more complicated, like modulation in a synthesizer. There is one type of sound design I like to do a lot of in my tracks, and that is sound design with plugins in the mixer. It doesn't matter whether you put the plugins on sounds from a synthesizer, sample, or recorded instrument, you can get really cool results with these plugins.

5 LFO-TOOL



With this plugin, you can modulate volume and frequencies over time. You may know it from the sidechain curve that's often used (ducking the volume in the beginning of each quarter note to make space for the kick), but you can create really cool stutter effects, filter movements, and panning movements in the plugin too. It will definitely create more movement in your sounds. A good free alternative is TAL Filter 2.

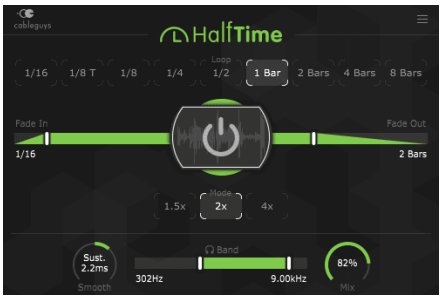
Read more on the next page »

TIP #21

MY 5 FAVORITE SOUND DESIGN PLUGINS

2/3

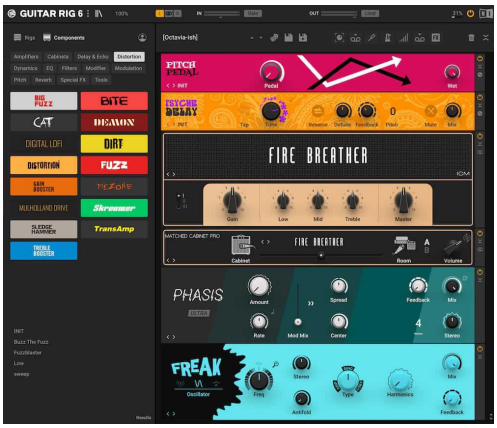
4 HALFTIME



As the name implies, this plugin can let sounds play in half time. It will lower the pitch by an octave, and slow down the sound. The artifacts that are created by turning down the pitch can sometimes sound really cool, and your melody may also sound cool in half time. To create more variation in your track, you can for example alternate between the normal melody and the halftime melody in different sections of your song. Unfortunately, there is no free alternative for this, except rendering your melody and stretching it to twice the length. But hey, the plugin is very cheap.

GUITAR RIG 3

This plugin emulates guitar amplifiers and pedals, but it's not just for guitars. You can also get really interesting sounds from the plugin if you put it on other sounds, like pianos or synths. Just put it on a sound and browse through the presets to get a feeling what the plugin can do. You can also browse through the separate components to shape your own sound. There are actually lots of compressor, EQ, reverb, chorus, and other components in here, so this is actually lots of plugins in one. I've made many instruments sound completely different and awesome with this plugin. A good free alternative is Ignite Amps.



TIP #21

MY 5 FAVORITE SOUND DESIGN PLUGINS

3/3

2 SHAPERBOX 2

This plugin has everything LFOtool and HalfTime has, and much more. You can modulate pretty much anything with this plugin, which can create really interesting sounds. For example, modulate the pitch to create small bursts of plucky sounds from a longer continuous sound, or modulate the pitch to create entirely new melodies and textures in your sound. The possibilities really are endless here. Same as with LFO Tool, a good free alternative is TAL Filter 2, but it has less features.

1 RC-20 RETRO COLOR

This plugin is on number one because it's on pretty much all my sounds. The goal of this plugin is to make everything sound retro. It does that with different components, like vinyl crackle, pitch modulation, distortion, and reverb. I don't always use it to make things sound retro, but a slight pitch modulation and distortion can give all your sounds a little bit more character, and make them sound a bit more human. Even if you put this plugin on a dry saw wave from a synth, it can already give it character and warmth. A good free alternative is iZotope Vinyl.

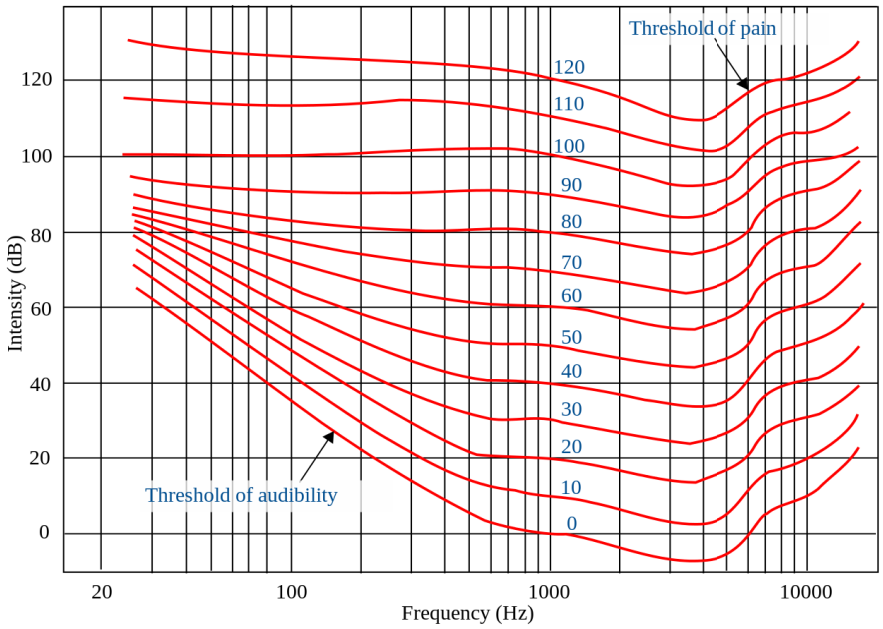
TIP #22

DOES YOUR MIX SUCK IN THE CAR?

1/2

This may probably sound familiar: You work for hours on your mix in your (home) studio until you're finally happy with it. Then you take it for a spin in the car, but it sounds like trash. Why is that?

It's likely because the bass is not mixed in well. This is because the bass is mixed in a different environment (your studio) than where it's played (the car). To deal with this, we need to understand that our ears are more sensitive to certain frequencies than to others. This is shown in the Fletcher Munson curve:



Fletcher Munson Curve.
Source: https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phon#/media/Bestand:FletcherMunson_ELC.svg

Read more on the next page »

TIP #22

DOES YOUR MIX SUCK IN THE CAR?

2/2

You don’t have to learn all the numbers, but as you can see on the red line, the threshold of audibility is much higher for bass than for higher frequencies. This means at lower volume, you can’t hear the bass as well as you can hear the high frequencies.

This could be why your mix sounds so different in the car. For example, you have a lower volume in your studio, so you don’t hear the bass well, so you turn the bass up in the mix. Then when you take the mix to your car and play it at high volume, suddenly your bass overpowers everything.

The solution for this is firstly to get very familiar with your studio speakers and headphones. How loud does the bass sound on average in other songs? Adjust it to that. Secondly, listen to your mix at different volume levels in your studio. Based on the Fletcher Munson curve, your bass should sound much softer at lower levels, but louder at higher levels. So be aware that your ears may trick you, and adjust your mix to that.

TIP #23

MAKE YOUR DRUMS PUNCH HARDER WITH SOFT CLIPPING

A problem that many producers face is that their songs sounds nice and clean, but their drums don't punch hard enough. When you compare your song to a song of your favorite artist, the drums just seem to be lacking.

One technique that is useful here is to use distortion. As you may know, distortion happens when you push a sound's volume over a certain threshold (usually 0dB), and the waveform of the sound changes. This causes the sound to sound loud and distorted. Of course, a rough, distorted sound may not be what you want, but you can also use distortion more subtly.

This is where soft clipping comes in. Soft clipping is a subtle form of distortion, where the waveform of a sound changes, resulting in more loudness, but you can't hear a big difference in the sound. This is how you can make your drums sound louder, without actually making them louder in volume. You can try this yourself: Just add a soft clipper on your drum sound, and turn up the volume going into the soft clipper.

Watch **this video** to see how you can apply soft clipping to your drums

TIP #24

CAN YOU USE DISTORTION INSTEAD OF COMPRESSION?

Are you already using distortion or saturation to make sounds fatter?

What distortion does, simply put, is raising the volume higher than a certain ceiling, above which it starts clipping. The wave form is 'cut off', so the shape changes. For example, a round sine wave turns into a square wave when distorted.

With this process, harmonics are added to the sound. With hard distortion, it's clear to hear; it usually sounds like a crunchy, high frequency sound (think electric guitars). With saturation, it's more subtle, but some harmonics are still added. Using this in a smart way, you can make your sounds fatter by adding harmonics.

But how can it replace a compressor? Well, a side effect of distorting a sound is that the volume of the sound gets a 'ceiling'. The difference is that with a compressor, everything above the 'ceiling' gets turned down in volume, and with distortion it gets distorted. But the dB level of the peaks will be reduced by distortion as well, just like compression. So thereby, you are reducing the dynamics of your sound. So if you also wanted to reduce dynamics, you may not even need a compressor to do that job anymore.

A good example for this is bass. By adding distortion or saturation to bass, you are adding harmonics, which makes the bass fatter and easier to hear in the mix. This is already a benefit. You are also reducing the dynamics, so the bass will be steadier in your mix too. The same thing works with guitars, synths, and other sounds.

Of course, a compressor may come in handy when you want even more control over your dynamics, or when you want to control the transients in your sounds. But in some cases, the distortion may already have done the job.

TIP #25

EARNING MONEY WITH MUSIC WHILE YOU SLEEP: PASSIVE VS. ACTIVE INCOME

Earning money while your sleep is something probably everybody would like. Luckily, in the music industry, it's possible. For that, it's good to look at active vs. passive income. With music, we can earn both types of income.

Active income is the income that is specifically tied to a certain time spent working, or a specific activity. For example, a regular job pays you active income: You get paid for the hours you work. That means, if you don't work, you don't get paid. In music, there are several types of active income. Examples are a fee for a live show, a fee for production work, or an hourly wage for mixing/mastering.

Passive income is not specifically tied to time spent working. For example, earning interest on a savings account or investment is passive income. The income is tied to a certain asset, which is worth something. In our case, the asset is music. There are several types of passive income in music. One example is royalties from streams. You finished the song, but it can keep earning money if it continues to be streamed. Another example is revenue from leasing beats. Your beats are already finished, but they can continue to earn money when they are leased. A third example is revenue from sync licensing. Your songs are already finished, but you can keep earning money with them if you receive sync licenses and royalties when the songs are placed on tv or games.

So which type of income should you focus on? First, you should focus on the activity that suits you best. Don't go for an activity just because you like the income you can get with it. But if you are able to get some passive income with what you do, I would recommend combining it. That way, you can get some active income to sustain yourself, and build an increasing stream of passive income. Hopefully that passive income stream one day is large enough that you can live off it, and you can quite literally make money while you sleep.

THAT'S IT!

I really hope you enjoyed reading the bundle, and that you have been able to apply the things you have learned here. Now, these tips are really just the tip of the iceberg of knowledge that you can learn to develop your music and career. If these tips have made you want to learn and develop your skills even more, there are definitely ways I can help you.

Take a look at the things I offer on the next pages »

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ONLINE COURSES

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Mixing & Mastering Course

click on the image to go to the course

In the Mixing & Mastering course, you will learn all the technical knowhow and skills behind a good mix. Learn how to balance each element, use EQ properly, implement compression, distortion, reverb, and much more. Learn how to record and mix vocals to sit right in the mix, and finally master your track to make it sound professional and ready for release.

Creative Production Course

click on the image to go to the course

In the Creative Production course, you will learn tips, tricks, and techniques to turn your creative ideas in to interesting, full-length songs. Apply songwriting tips, learn the essentials for good melodies and chords, learn about good sound design, and how to structure your song to make it sound full and interesting.

More courses on the next page »

ONLINE COURSES

2/2

Music Career Course

click on the image to go to the course

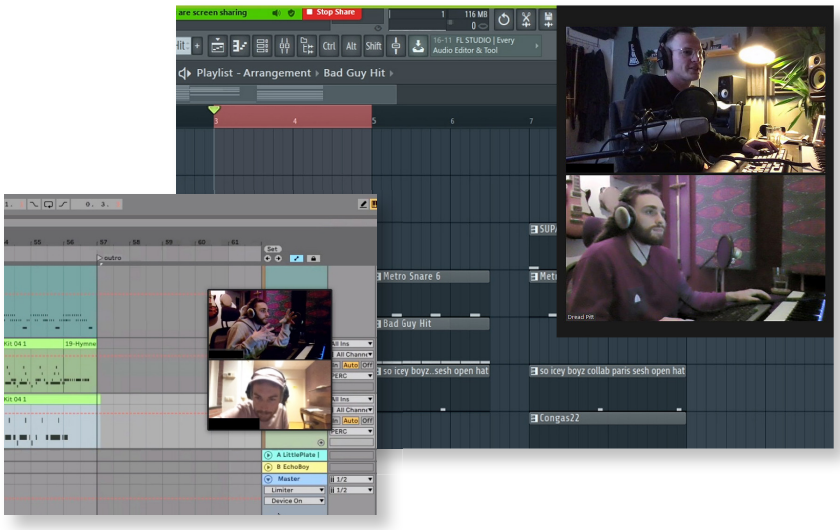
In the Music Career course, you will learn the ins and outs of the music business. You will learn how to release music, and many different ways of how to make money with your music, so you can start building your music career.

Producer Mindset Course

click on the image to go to the course

In the Producer Mindset course it's all about mentality. You will learn knowledge and techniques to train your mind to stay creative, productive, and healthy during your music career.

MENTORSHIP



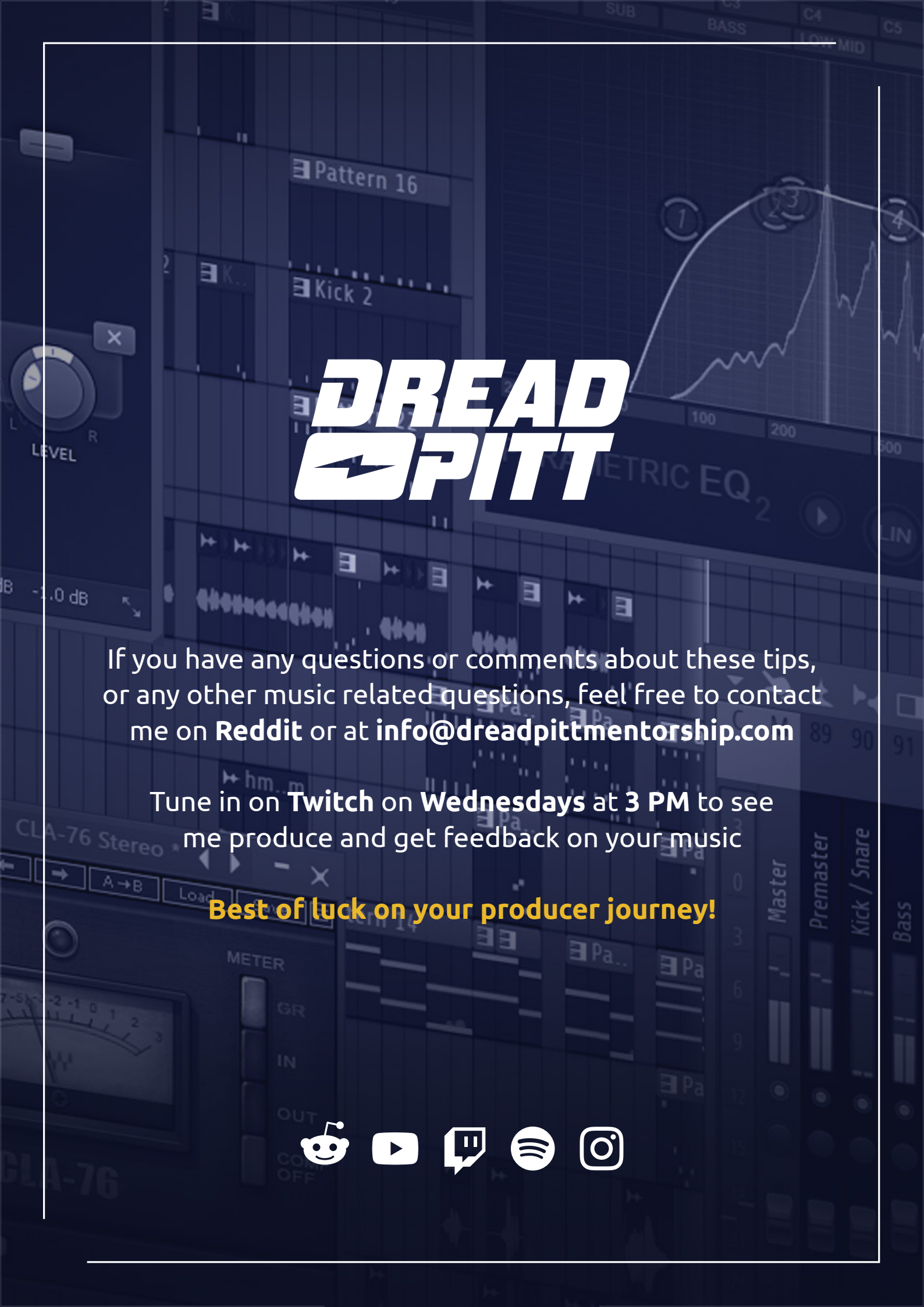
This is the holy grail when it comes to learning and investing in your music career. You will get full personal attention from me to discuss all the questions you want, get personal feedback on your music, and work together with me on your projects.

I have mentored **over 50 students** from all different levels and genres, with great results. After the one-on-one sessions, I'm always amazed by the progress my students make, and happy to hear how positively they experienced the lessons.

Plan a one-on-one session with me to discuss specific questions about your production, mixing, or music career. Jump right into your DAW with me, and get feedback on your music, learn new theory, and apply new skills and techniques.

Interested?

Click here to schedule a free introduction call.



If you have any questions or comments about these tips, or any other music related questions, feel free to contact me on **Reddit** or at **info@dreadpittmentorship.com**

Tune in on **Twitch** on **Wednesdays** at **3 PM** to see me produce and get feedback on your music

Best of luck on your producer journey!