

# STEREO WIDTH CHEAT SHEET

## 5 STEREO WIDTH TIPS

- LCR Panning
  - Pan instruments 100% left and right to help spread parts out and create separation
  - Use 50/50 panning to pan some parts halfway between center and left/right
- Adding Stereo Effects
  - Use stereo reverbs and/or delays to widen existing parts
  - Use sends to blend in the stereo effects
- EQ
  - Look for instruments or doubled parts that are panned opposite of each other
  - Find a flattering frequency on one track and boost
  - Cut that same frequency on the opposite track/s
- Mid-Side Processing
  - Use a mid-side processing plugin like bx\_solo to bump the volume on the edges of your mix
  - Try this method on your mixbus or effects sends
- Check The Mix In Mono
  - Use a gain or utility plugin in your DAW to check your mix in mono
  - Make sure all important parts still come through and that there isn't in phasing

## WHY IS STEREO WIDTH IMPORTANT

- Modern mixes sound wide
  - On your own, your mix might sound okay
  - BUT when compared to a mainstream mix, it suddenly sounds narrow and 2D
- A lot of people go about this the wrong way
  - Adding a stereo enhancement plugin to your whole mix isn't enough
  - In fact, that could ruin all your hard work so far

# PANNING

- This is the main way you create width in your mixes
- A lot of people use LCR panning, but this often doesn't make full use of the stereo field
- Instead, I recommend [50/50 panning](#)
  - Start with LCR panning - this is the act of only panning dead center, hard left or hard right
  - Then add one or two instruments at 50% to each side (hence 50/50)
  - This makes full use of the stereo field without losing width
- Get used to hard panning on headphones, as it may sound unnatural at first

# STEREO EFFECTS

- Adds width to things that are mono, e.g. vocals
- Reverb is the best way to add stereo width to instruments
- For vocals, rely more on stereo delays
  - Stereo slapback delay with different times on left and right
  - Maybe a subtle stereo plate reverb tucked underneath (use a pre delay to create more space for the vocal to cut through)

# EQ

- With instruments or backing vocals that are panned hard left and hard right, use EQ to create more separation
- For example, cut 1kHz on the left and boost it on the right
- This creates more separation between the left and right ears, and therefore enhances width
- Also helps to create space and separation in the mix

# MID/SIDE PROCESSING

- Focus on the other techniques first - this is for advanced users (Development or Growth stages)
- Process the middle (center) and sides (hard left and hard right) independently
- Some EQs allow you to EQ the middle and sides different (like the FabFilter Pro Q 2)
  - Try reducing the low end and boosting the top end on the sides
- Adjust the volume of middle and side independently
  - By simply turning down the middle, the mix sounds wider