MIX #3 Equalization

Mix any song from the Mix 1 Library 8trk Songs.

With each new mix you are adding new skills to your understanding of mixing. In this mix you will add Equalization to balancing instrument volumes and panning.

Equalization is the process of using passive or active electronics either analog or digital to alter the frequency response characteristics of a system or sound. Using EQ in your mix allows you to blend sounds by adjusting their frequency contour or “shape” by boosting or cutting frequencies. EQ can make your mix more vibrant. It can give your mix more punch, more impact.

Getting Started
Using equalization effectively requires experience, good ears, good judgment and a good monitoring environment. One tried and true way to start is to boost the signal enough to be noticeable, say +12db. Sweep the frequency to find the right sound. Then adjust or blend the EQ for the best use in the mix. While that sounds simple enough, achieving the perfect blend for each sound in each song is, at best, a moving target. The “perfect” or “magic” EQ setting for every situation simply doesn’t exist. Your ears and your skill using equalization is something that will develop and evolve over your entire lifetime.

Breaking it down
Applying EQ breaks down into 4 basic approaches...

1. Fix
2. Enhance
3. Blend
4. Effect

Fixing a problem in a sound is the most common use of the boost, sweep, blend method. Unwanted ringing in a drum, buzz from a guitar amp, too much rumble from overhead mics, no definition in a bass track are common examples.

Enhancing sounds with EQ brings out the best parts of the sound to blend into a mix. Clearing up vocals by boosting consonant sounds, a midrange boost to warm up a guitar sound.

Blending with EQ helps make all the tracks in your mix work together better. Adjust the enhancements you made to individual tracks to create the best blend of all the tracks.
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Creating effects with EQ includes creating stereo effect such as chop filters, exaggerating frequencies to make a prepared piano track more pronounced, hyping a bass track for that “phat” sound you need, Wah, Wah on a guitar is a form of EQ effect. Try things. Play with your sounds. Look for new sounds and ways to get them into your mix.

For this assignment try to use all four approaches. Be sure to record a Unity Tone as the first track. Record a flat (no eq) mix next and include a slate. Record your EQ’d mix next, be sure to include a slate. Record as many EQ mixes as you want just be sure to mark the one you want graded on your Take Sheet.