Records

USER MANUAL

VERSION 1.2 · MACOS

masterMALO

MIX BALANCE & MASTERING

Clean the stems.
Balance the mix.
Master it for where it's going.



masterMALO app · VST3 · Audio Unit · macOS 10.13 or later, Intel & Apple Silicon

A Kenya-based Páa Records product

WELCOME

A senior engineer's ears, on your own computer.

You send a mastering engineer a few stems: the beat, the lead vocal, the backing vocals. A good engineer listens to each one, cleans what's noisy or harsh, sets the levels for the style, makes room where parts fight, and then masters the song for where it will be played. masterMALO does that work with you, and **shows you what it hears and what it changes**, so you learn from every song.

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HOW MASTERMALO WORKS

1 · MIX

Clean and balance

Drop the stems. The **diagnosis** lists what's noisy, harsh, sibilant, out of phase or fighting. Press AUTO-MIX: masterMALO's own tools go into every stem's **FX slots**, the levels are set for the style, and stems that fight make room. Change anything; DIAGNOSE shows what got better.

2 · MASTER

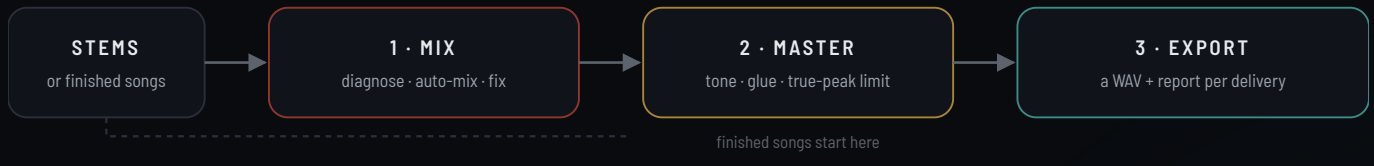
Tone, glue, loudness

The balanced mix goes through the mastering chain: a tone EQ fitted to the style (or to a song you love), gentle compression, stereo care, warmth, and a **true-peak limiter** that never lets the master go over the ceiling.

3 · EXPORT

One master per destination

Tick where the song is going: Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube, Boomplay, a club, a CD, radio. Each delivery gets its own WAV at the right loudness and ceiling, and a short report of how every streaming service will play it.



EVERYTHING STAYS ON THIS COMPUTER

masterMALO listens, cleans, balances and masters on your computer. No audio is ever uploaded. Loudness and true peak are measured to **ITU-R BS.1770-4** and **EBU R128**, the standards the streaming services and broadcasters use.

01 Quick start

From stems to finished masters in a few minutes. Start in the **masterMALO app** (Applications › masterMALO): it is the full studio for stems and batches of songs.

1. **Drop your stems on MIX**
   The stems you'd send for mastering: often 2–4 stereo files (beat, lead vocal, backing vocals, bass) or a full multitrack. Export them from the same session, all starting at the same point.

2. **Read the diagnosis**
   Each stem gets a role (`LEAD VOCAL`, `BEAT`…) and a light: red, yellow or green. Each card says what's wrong; its gold `FIX` button puts masterMALO's tool for it in that stem's slots. Click a role to correct it.

3. **Pick the style**
   Click the `STYLE` in the header: Western, East Africa, West Africa, South Africa or World. The style sets the balance, the tone and the loudness.

4. **Press `AUTO-MIX`**
   A minute or two. masterMALO cleans every stem with its own tools (they appear in gold in each stem's FX slots), sets the levels for the style and makes room where stems fight. Then press play: `BEFORE` plays your raw stems at the same loudness, so you hear what changed, not what got louder.

5. **Make it yours, then `DIAGNOSE`**
   Click a stem to see its slots: change, bypass or remove any tool, or add one; in the app, your own plugins too. `DIAGNOSE` listens again and shows what got better or worse.

6. **Go to MASTER**
   Choose the `DELIVERY` (Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube, club…). Listen on `PHONE` too: most of your audience will.

7. **EXPORT**
   Tick every delivery you need and press `EXPORT`. Each WAV comes with a loudness report.



MIX after AUTO-MIX: seven stems, each with its FX at a glance; under the list, the lead vocal's slots and the MIX spectrum; on the right, the diagnosis (first vs now) and the fight map.

> **ONLY HAVE THE FINISHED SONG?**
> Drop it on `MASTER`, or press `MASTER SONGS` on MIX. One song or a whole batch: masterMALO skips the mix stage and masters them. See page 19.

> **IN YOUR DAW**
> Put the masterMALO plug-in **last on the master bus** and play the song. It listens for 40 seconds, learns the tone and loudness, then masters live. See page 19.

> **FIRST TIME ON THIS COMPUTER?**
> masterMALO asks for your pass once, with an internet connection. Until then the diagnosis is free, but the FX slots, AUTO-MIX, FIX, DIAGNOSE, mastering and export are locked, and audio passes through untouched. The Install & Activation Guide walks you through it.

02 The window at a glance

The header and the transport stay on every stage; the page below them changes. Hover over any control to see what it does.



1 **Stages**
1 MIX ⟶ 2 MASTER ⟶ 3 EXPORT. Click to move; a tick marks a finished stage.

2 **Style**
‹ › step through; click for every style and your presets. Pages 5, 21.

3 **A / B · Undo · Redo**
Two settings to compare; masterMALO's own history of the sound settings.

4 **Menu · Bypass**
≡: projects, size, files, plugins, manual, activation. ⏻ bypasses all.

5 **Transport**
Play / pause (SPACE in the app), stop, loop, and the time.

6 **Project**
Its name, Auto-saved; click to open, save, recent. Page 20.

7 **Waveform**
What plays; click to jump. Plug-in: SESSION · HOST too (page 19).

8 **Monitor**
Studio, Phone (a phone speaker), Mono or Stream. Page 16.

9 **Before · Reference · Mastering**
The original or your reference at the same loudness; mastering on or off. Page 16.

10 **Add stems · Master songs · M S · Bin**
Bring in stems or songs; mute or solo every stem; a new project.

11 **Stems**
One row per stem: light, role, its FX at a glance, meter, fader. Page 6.

12 **FX slots · Presets**
The selected stem's 8 slots; its chain as a preset. Pages 9, 21.

13 **MIX spectrum**
The mix and the selected stem. Page 11.

14 **Diagnosis · Fix all**
What's wrong, with a FIX for each; then first vs now. Pages 7, 11.

15 **Fight map**
Which stem covers which, and where: BEFORE or NOW. Page 12.

16 **Strength · Auto-mix**
How much of the engineer's work, the button, ▾ for more. Page 8.

17 **Diagnose**
Listens again and compares with the first diagnosis. Page 11.

18 **Reference**
A song you love: its tone, width, loudness and balance guide yours.

19 **Where the mix stands**
Loudness and peaks; after a new style, Mix for it? Page 8.

20 **Status line**
What masterMALO is doing, and its notes.

03 Styles

The style is the most important choice you make. It tells masterMALO where the vocal sits against the beat, who owns the sub, which tonal balance to aim for, and how loud and dense the master should be. Pick the closest one; if none fits, try **Transparent** or a **reference**.

WESTERN

US Pop — −9.0 LUFS · PLR 8.5
Polished, bright and wide; vocal on top, tight low end.

Hip-Hop / Trap — −8.0 · 7.5
808 owns the sub, punchy drums, vocal forward and dry.

R&B / Soul — −10.0 · 9.5
Warm and silky: round low end, smooth top, gentle dynamics.

Gospel — Praise & Choir — −9.5 · 9.0
Big choir body, organ and bass, lead vocal clear above the praise.

Gospel — Worship Ballad — −11.0 · 11.0
Open and dynamic; space for the voice, warm pads, airy top.

Urban Gospel — −9.0 · 8.5
Gospel vocals on modern hip-hop drums and 808s.

EAST AFRICA

Bongo Flava — −9.0 · 8.5
Tanzanian vocal-forward pop: bright voice, bouncing kick, crisp percussion.

Gengetone — −7.5 · 7.5
Nairobi energy: hard kick and bass, loud, shouted hooks cutting through.

Kenyan Afro-pop — −9.0 · 8.5
Smooth Afro-pop from Kenya: warm groove, clear vocal, airy top.

Benga & Ohangla — −10.0 · 9.5
Fast guitar lines and walking bass up front, live drums, natural dynamics.

Swahili Gospel — −9.5 · 9.0
East-African praise: choir and lead in front, Afro-pop bounce under them.

Great Lakes Afro-pop — −9.0 · 8.5
Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda: melodic Afro-pop, guitars and voices in harmony.

Kidandali / UG Dancehall — −8.0 · 8.0
Ugandan dance: driving kick and bass, loud and bright.

Rumba & Ndombolo — −9.5 · 9.5
Congolese guitars (sebene) shining, round bass, vocals sweet and present.

WEST AFRICA

Afrobeats — Lagos Pop — −8.5 · 8.0
Nigerian Afrobeats: warm bouncing kick, shakers in the air, vocal glowing on top.

Afro-fusion — −9.0 · 8.5
Afrobeats meets R&B and dancehall: warm, wide, rhythmic.

Afro-R&B / Soft Afro — −10.0 · 9.5
Mellow Afro grooves: soft top, rich low end, intimate vocal.

Street-pop / Afro-dancehall — −7.5 · 7.5
Loud, raw and bouncy: big kick, hard snare, voice in your face.

Highlife — −10.0 · 9.5
Ghanaian highlife: bright guitars and horns, live feel, natural dynamics.

Afro Gospel — −9.0 · 8.5
Praise on an Afrobeats groove: choir, lead and percussion all lifted.

SOUTH AFRICA

Amapiano — Log Drum — −8.0 · 8.0
The log drum leads: deep, round and loud, with shakers and keys floating above.

Private School Piano — −9.5 · 9.5
Soulful amapiano: jazzy keys, sax, softer log drum, more room to breathe.

Gqom — −7.0 · 7.0
Durban's dark, heavy broken-beat: huge low end, loud, minimal top.

Afro House — −8.0 · 8.5
Deep, wide and hypnotic: rolling kick, percussion everywhere, airy vocals.

SA Gospel & Choral — −10.5 · 10.0
South-African choirs: rich harmonies, warm body, space and power.

WORLD

Dancehall — −8.0 · 8.0
Jamaican riddims: heavy bass, snappy drums, voice up front.

Reggae — −10.0 · 10.0
Roots: bass is king, warm mids, relaxed top end and real dynamics.

Kompa & Zouk — −9.5 · 9.0
Caribbean romance: smooth bass, lush keys and guitars, sweet vocals.

Latin / Reggaeton — −7.5 · 7.5
Dembow drive: tight kick, big sub, loud and present.

Acoustic & Live — −12.0 · 12.0
Natural and open: real dynamics, honest tone, just cleaner and safer.

Transparent — −14.0 · 12.0
No tone shaping: only safe loudness and a clean true-peak ceiling.

WHAT A STYLE SETS

The balance family on MIX (vocal-forward, groove, club, or choir & live), the target tone, the lead's presence and air, how hard stems make room, and the mastering controls. A new style resets those controls; the header says EDITED once you change one.

THE NUMBERS

The loudness Loud & clean aims for in this style, and the style's guard (minimum PLR, page 15). The guard has the last word: −1 dBTP minus a 9 dB guard stops the master at −10 LUFS. Streaming deliveries keep their own targets.

Styles describe the sound of a genre. They are not affiliated with, or endorsed by, any artist or label.

04 MIX: your stems

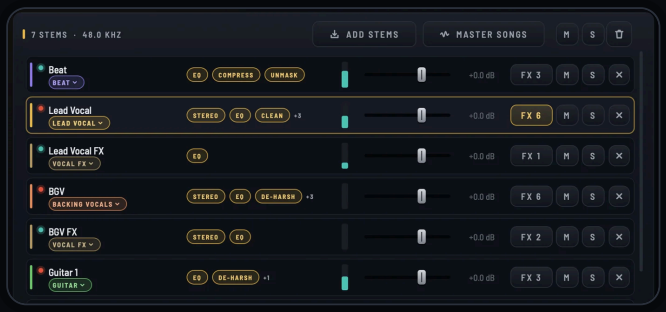
Drag the files onto masterMALO, or press ADD STEMS. masterMALO listens to each one, guesses what it is from its name and its sound, and lists it as a row.

WHAT TO SEND

- **Typical:** the 2–4 stereo stems a producer sends for mastering, such as Beat, Lead Vocal, Backing Vocals, Bass. **Or a full multitrack**: kick, snare, bass, keys, guitars, every vocal (up to 48 stems).
- **Formats:** WAV, AIFF, FLAC, MP3, M4A or OGG, up to 30 minutes long. WAV or AIFF at 24-bit is best.
- **Export them from one session, from the same start point.** masterMALO lines the stems up at their start, exactly as exported. Don't trim the silence at the beginning.
- **Leave headroom.** Stems that peak around −6 dBFS are ideal. Don't put a limiter on the master bus when you export them.
- **Name the folder after the song.** masterMALO names the masters after the folder that holds the stems.

MASTERMALO TAKES CARE OF

- **Split left and right files.** Mono pairs like BGV L / BGV R, Vox_Left / Vox_Right or Pad.L / Pad.R are joined into one stereo stem.
- **Mixed sample rates.** The session runs at 48 kHz if any file is 48 kHz or more, otherwise at 44.1 kHz; the other files are converted, and the status line says so.
- **Effect returns.** A return named like its voice (LEAD FX, BVs FX, Vox Reverb) becomes VOCAL FX and follows its dry track: the send level you chose is kept. NO FX or dry in a name means the dry track.
- **Mono in stereo.** A stereo file with identical sides is treated as mono.



After AUTO-MIX. The lead vocal is selected (gold edge): its slots show under the list.

ONE STEM, ONE ROW

Light	The stem's worst open finding: ● a problem, ● advice, ● nothing open.
Role chip	What masterMALO thinks the stem is. **Click it to change it**: the role decides the cleaning, the level and who makes room for whom.
FX at a glance	Its slots as pills: gold masterMALO's tools, green yours, blue your plugins; +3: three more.
Meter	Its level after the fader. A red flag: it went over full scale. Lower the fader, or put LIMIT last in its slots; click the meter to clear the flag.
Fader	**Your** level on top of masterMALO's, −24 to +12 dB. Double-click: 0 dB. Hover over the row for its loudness and masterMALO's level.
FX · M · S · ×	FX 3: three slots in use; click it, or the row, to show its slots (page 9). Mute, solo, remove the stem.

Above the list, the M and S over those columns act on every stem: mute them all (lit: unmute them all), solo them all (lit: clear the solos). The bin starts a new project (page 20).

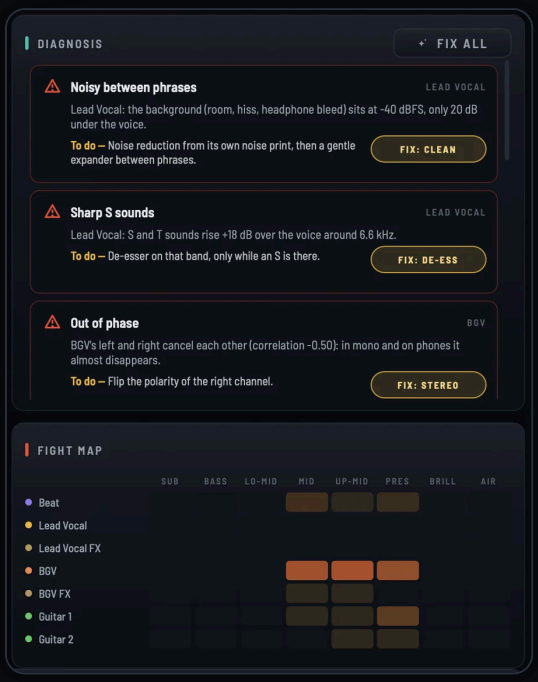
THE ROLES

LEAD Lead Vocal	BGV Backing Vocals	VFX Vocal FX	BEAT Beat (2-track)
KICK Kick	SNR Snare & Claps	DRUM Drums	PERC Percussion
BASS Bass	LOG Log Drum	GTR Guitar	KEYS Keys & Synths
INST Lead Instrument	PAD Pads & Strings	FX FX	OTHR Other

The colours match the stems' colour bars and the fight map. A stem you set by hand keeps its role.

05 The diagnosis and FIX

As soon as the stems are in, masterMALO lists what a careful engineer would notice on the first listen. The diagnosis is free: it works before masterMALO is activated. Each card names the stem, says what's wrong in plain words and what to do. Where one of masterMALO's tools can do it, a gold FIX button does it for you.



The first diagnosis, before AUTO-MIX: problems first, then advice, then notes. Below it, the raw stems' fight map.

- **Red** · a problem you would hear
- **Amber** · advice: worth fixing
- **Blue** · a note about the session
- **Green** ✓ · resolved or better, after DIAGNOSE

FIX AND FIX ALL

Click FIX: DE-ESS and masterMALO puts DE-ESS in that stem's FX slots, set for what the card found, or adds to the same tool if it is already there. Nothing goes in until you click, and a message says what was added. FIX needs the pass; the diagnosis doesn't. FIX ALL, above the cards, does every card at once. Then listen, and press DIAGNOSE (page 11).

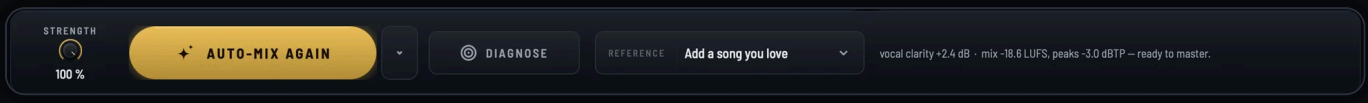
FIX IT AT THE SOURCE WHEN YOU CAN

masterMALO repairs what can be repaired. A clipped vocal, a noisy room or a stem printed through a limiter is always better fixed with a new export. Mastering for a client? Send them the diagnosis: it tells them exactly what to change.

THE CARD SAYS	WHAT IT MEANS · THE REMEDY
Noisy between phrases	Room, hiss or headphone bleed close under the voice. · FIX: CLEAN learns the stem's noise print and lowers it between phrases.
Sharp S sounds	S and T sounds jump out of the voice. · FIX: DE-ESS works only while an S is there.
Ringing / harsh resonance	One frequency (1.8–8 kHz) rings above its neighbours and gets harsher when mastered loud. · FIX: EQ + DE-HARSH a narrow cut, then dynamic de-harshing.
Boxy / room tone	A boxy ring in the low-mids of a voice, kick, snare or guitar. · FIX: EQ a narrow cut.
Out of phase	Left and right cancel: in mono and on phones the stem almost disappears. · FIX: STEREO flips the right channel.
Wider than mono-safe	More side than middle: it thins out in mono. · FIX: STEREO narrows it.
Fighting Lead Vocal...	It covers a more important stem in some zones while that one plays (page 12). · FIX: UNMASK dips it there only then.
Saturating (after DIAGNOSE)	It comes out of its slots over full scale. · FIX: LIMIT last in its chain, or turn down the slot that drives it.
DC offset	Off centre: it wastes headroom. · FIX: EQ a 20 Hz high-pass.
Clipped in the file	Clipped on export: it can't be fully undone. · Ask for a new export peaking around –6 dBFS.
Printed too hot	Peaks above –0.3 dBTP. · Nothing clips inside masterMALO; next time, export with headroom.
Mono in a stereo file	Identical sides. · Handled as mono, centred.
Silent	Nothing above –100 dBFS. · Muted.
Different lengths	The stems end seconds apart. · Aligned at their start: nothing to fix.
No lead vocal	No stem was recognised as the lead. · The balance is anchored on the beat; if there is a lead, set its role to LEAD VOCAL.

06 AUTO-MIX

Press AUTO-MIX. In a minute or two masterMALO cleans every stem, sets the levels for the style and makes room where stems fight. It does the work with **its own tools, placed in each stem's FX slots** (page 9), where you can see, change, bypass or remove every one of them.



The footer after AUTO-MIX: STRENGTH, AUTO-MIX AGAIN and its ▾ menu, DIAGNOSE, the reference, and where the mix stands.

1 · EACH STEM IS CLEANED, BY ITS ROLE

masterMALO chooses the tools a stem needs and sets them for it, in this order: STEREO EQ CLEAN DE-HARSH DE-ESS COMPRESS, and UNMASK last.

- **High-pass** against rumble: about 80 Hz on a lead vocal, 140 Hz on backing vocals, 25 Hz on bass and kick.
- **The repairs** from the diagnosis, and a 300 Hz cut on a muddy voice or instrument.
- **De-harsh** (2–9 kHz, only when it pokes out) and a **de-esser** on vocals.
- **Tone by role:** presence and air on the lead, as the style asks; a 3 kHz dip on backing vocals; darker effect returns.
- **Compression by role:** leveller then peak control on vocals and bass, a 12 ms attack on the kick to keep the knock, a light 1.6:1 on a 2-track beat.

2 · YOUR BALANCE, MOVED TOWARD THE STYLE

masterMALO starts from **your** balance: stems exported from one session carry your fader levels. With the lead vocal as the anchor (the beat, without one), each stem moves part of the way toward where the style wants it: 60 % of the way, at most 6 dB, at full Strength. It corrects a balance; it doesn't rewrite your arrangement.

3 · ROOM IS MADE, THE VOCAL IS CHECKED

A stem that covers a more important one gets UNMASK: it dips there **only while the other plays** (page 12). Stems piling up at 150–400 Hz get gentle cuts at 280 Hz. The lead must stand out in 1–5 kHz while it sings: buried, it comes up; pasted on top, it comes down a little.

4 · THE ARRANGEMENT'S TONE, THEN A DIAGNOSIS

Instrument levels are nudged (2 dB at most) toward the style's balance of lows, mids and highs, or the reference's. Bus glue holds it together; the mix goes to MASTER at about **–18 LUFS, peaks no higher than –3 dBTP**. Last, masterMALO diagnoses the mix as it now plays, so the report shows first vs now (page 11).

Your slots stay yours

AUTO-MIX replaces only its own slots (gold), never yours (green) or your plugins (blue). Change a gold tool and it is yours. When a stem's slots are full, a tool that doesn't fit is left out and the status line names it.

The ▾ menu

- AUTO-MIX: clean, level and make room
- Resolve conflicts only: keep my slots, redo levels and room-making
- Fix every finding with masterMALO's tools: FIX ALL
- DIAGNOSE: how does it sound now? (page 11)

A new style, role or reference?

After a style change the footer asks The style is now Afro House. Mix for it? AUTO-MIX, RESOLVE CONFLICTS (your slots stay, levels and room-making follow the style) or KEEP MY MIX. After a role or reference change, press AUTO-MIX AGAIN. Your faders stay.

STRENGTH 0–100 % · 100 %

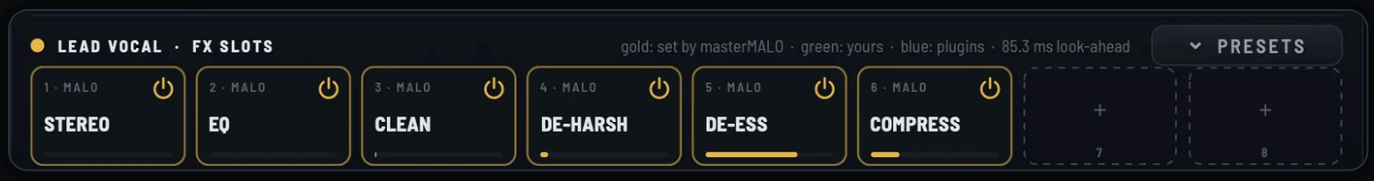
How much of the engineer's work AUTO-MIX applies: cleaning, compression, room, and how far levels move. 60–70 % for stems already mixed with care.

REFERENCE add a song you love

AUTO-MIX leans the levels (±2.5 dB) toward its balance; MASTER matches its tone, width and loudness.

07 FX slots and masterMALO's tools

Every stem has **8 FX slots**. Click a stem: its slots show under the list, in the order its sound goes through them, before its fader. A slot holds one of masterMALO's tools or, in the app, one of your plugins (page 10).



The lead vocal's slots after AUTO-MIX: six of masterMALO's tools (gold) and two empty slots. Top right: the colours, and the chain's look-ahead.

- **Click a slot** for its menu. An empty one (+) lists masterMALO's tools and your plugins. A full one offers Edit (Open for a plugin), Turn off (bypass), Move left, Move right, Replace with, Remove.
- **Double-click** a slot to edit it: a tool's editor opens over the window; a plugin opens its own window.
- ⏻ turns a slot off and on. The thin bar under its name shows how hard it's working.
- `MALO` gold: set by masterMALO; AUTO-MIX may replace it. Change it and it becomes `YOURS` green: AUTO-MIX leaves it alone. `PLUGIN` blue: one of your plugins.
- **The editor** shows SET BY MASTERMALO or YOURS, how hard the tool works (WORKING), `BYPASS`, `RESET` and `REMOVE`.



EQ in the lead vocal's slot 2. Drag a knob; double-click it for its default.

THE NINE TOOLS

They run live while you play, and the same code renders DIAGNOSE, the master and the exports: what you hear is what you get.

TOOL	WHAT IT'S FOR	WHEN MASTERMALO PUTS IT IN	ITS CONTROLS
`EQ`	Filters, two shelves, four bells: shape the tone, cut what rings.	The role's high-pass; cuts where a stem rings, is boxy or muddy; the lead's air.	High-pass, Low-pass, Low and High shelf, Bell 1–4 (frequency, gain, Q)
`CLEAN`	Noise reduction from the stem's own noise print; a gate between phrases.	A noisy vocal. It learns the print when it goes in; `LEARN NOISE` learns it again.	Reduction, Gate at, Gate range, Gate release
`DE-HARSH`	Tames resonances only when they poke out.	Vocals and bright parts that ring (2–9 kHz).	Depth, Max cut, Threshold, From, To, Release
`DE-ESS`	Brings S and T sounds down, only while they're there.	Vocals with sharp S sounds, on their S.	Frequency, Threshold, Range, Mode, Release
`COMPRESS`	A slow leveller, then a fast stage for the peaks.	By role: vocals, bass, kick, a 2-track beat.	Leveller and Peak stage (at, ratio, attack, release), Make-up, Mix
`UNMASK`	Dips in up to 3 zones, only while the stems it makes room for play.	Where a stem covers a more important one.	Make room for, In (zone), At, Up to; And for… (twice more); Speed
`STEREO`	Polarity, mono, width, mono lows: phase and mono safety.	Out of phase, wider than mono-safe.	Flip left, Flip right, Mono, Width, Mono below
`SATURATE`	Warmth and density, oversampled so it stays clean.	Never: it's yours to add.	Drive, Mix, Output
`LIMIT`	Stops a stem from saturating: nothing passes the ceiling.	`FIX: LIMIT` on Saturating, last in the chain.	Ceiling, Input, Release

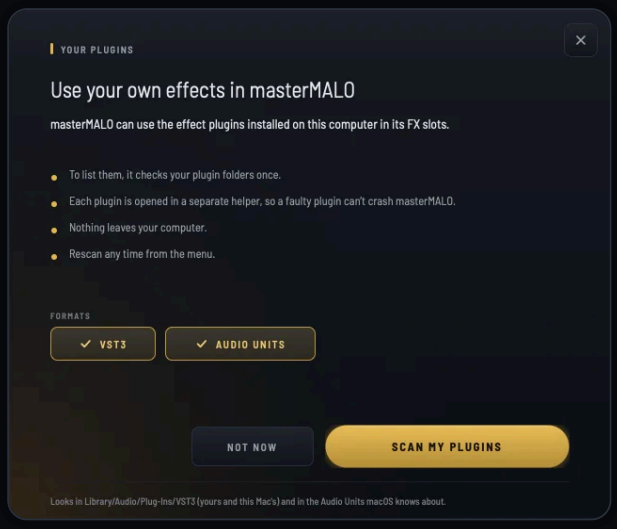
08 Your plugins

In the masterMALO app, a slot can also hold one of the effect plugins installed on this computer: VST3 or Audio Unit. They sit in the chain next to masterMALO's tools, and play, diagnose and export with them.

THE FIRST TIME: MASTERMALO ASKS

1. **Click an empty slot, choose Use my plugins...**
   The card on the right opens. NOT NOW leaves everything as it is.
2. **Pick the formats, press SCAN MY PLUGINS**
   masterMALO lists the effects on this computer by opening each plugin in a separate helper, MaloScan, so a faulty plugin can't crash masterMALO. Nothing leaves your computer. You can close the card: the scan carries on.
3. **Read the result**
   The card says how many effects are ready for the FX slots. A plugin that crashes, hangs or waits on a licence dialog is listed under Problems and skipped from then on.

≡ › Your plugins (scan, problems)... opens the card again. SCAN FOR NEW PLUGINS checks only what was installed or updated since, so it's quick; RESCAN EVERYTHING tries every plugin again, the problems too.



The card on a Mac: it looks in Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/VST3 and in the Audio Units macOS knows about.

IN A SLOT

- The slot menu lists your plugins **by maker**. When a plugin is installed as VST3 and as Audio Unit, masterMALO takes the VST3, so a session opens on Mac and Windows alike.
- Choose one and **its own window opens**. Double-click the slot to open it again. Its slot is blue; bypass, move, replace or remove it like a tool.
- **Saved sessions reopen your plugins with their settings.** A plugin that isn't installed on this computer is kept: its slot says MISSING and keeps its settings for when it's back.
- Plugins in slots are rendered into DIAGNOSE and every export too. Some take longer to render than masterMALO's tools.

> **IN YOUR DAW**
> The masterMALO plug-in (VST3, AU) has masterMALO's tools in its slots, but not your plugins: its slot menu says they load in the masterMALO app. Your DAW already has inserts on every track, and a plugin hosting plugins could take the whole DAW session down if one of them crashed.

LATENCY AND CPU

- **Look-ahead is compensated for you.** CLEAN, DE-HARSH, SATURATE, LIMIT and some plugins delay the sound a little. masterMALO reads that stem ahead by the same time, so every stem stays in time and the playhead stays exact. The slot strip shows the chain's look-ahead; there is nothing to set.
- **CPU.** Nine stems with full chains of masterMALO's tools play at about 15 % of one core on a 2019-era Intel Mac. Your plugins add what they use: if playback stutters, turn the heaviest ones off while you work, or raise the buffer size in the app's audio settings.

09 DIAGNOSE: first vs now

Changed a slot, a fader, added a plugin? Press **DIAGNOSE**. masterMALO renders every stem through its slots at its fader, your plugins included, listens to the mix again and compares it with the first diagnosis. AUTO-MIX ends the same way, so the comparison is there right after it.

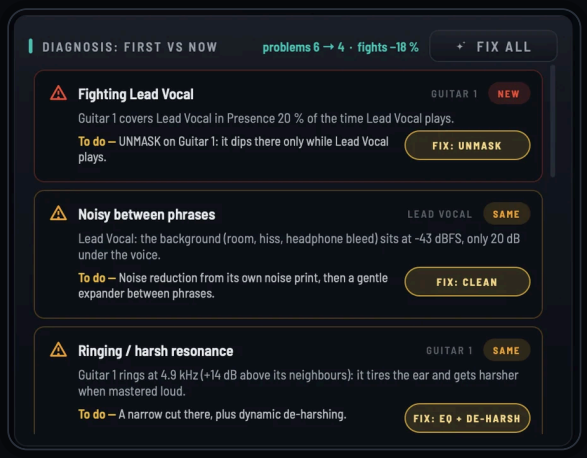
THE HEADER

The report becomes Diagnosis: first vs now, with problems 6 → 4 · fights −18 %: the problems the first diagnosis found and the ones left, and how much the fights shrank (−) or grew (+), every stem and zone together. Green when it got better, red when it got worse.

EACH CARD

RESOLVED	It no longer shows. The card stays, dimmed, at the end of the list.
BETTER 40 %	Measured that much better than at first.
SAME	Within 15 % of where it was.
WORSE 25 %	That much worse, or more serious than before.
NEW	Not there at first: a stem now fights another, or a chain saturates.

Worse and new cards come first. An open card keeps its FIX button.



After AUTO-MIX: problems 6 → 4, fights −18 %. The guitar now fights the lead vocal (NEW); its ringing is the SAME.

THE LIGHTS AND THE BUTTON

Each stem's light shows its worst open finding in the latest diagnosis: 🔴 a problem, 🟡 advice, 🔵 nothing open. Change the mix and DIAGNOSE lights up; the footer says You changed the mix since the last diagnosis: press DIAGNOSE to see what it did.

SATURATING

A stem whose chain comes out over full scale is Saturating, with FIX: LIMIT. While you play, its meter shows a red flag the moment it goes over (page 6).

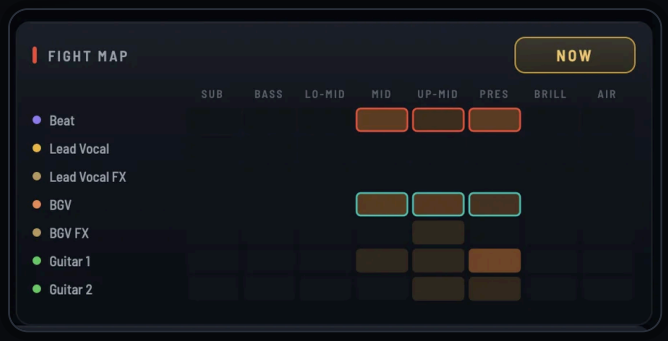
THE MIX SPECTRUM



Under the slots: the mix (grey) and the selected stem (in its role's colour), on the fight map's eight zones. LIVE while the song plays, with the stem's song average as a dashed line, so a stem that's silent right now still shows where it sits; SONG AVERAGE when stopped. Zones where the stem covers a more important one are tinted red, their names too.

10 The fight map

A mix sounds muddy or crowded when two parts want the same space at the same moment. The fight map shows it: **one row per stem, one column per frequency zone**. A lit cell means that stem covers a more important one there. After AUTO-MIX or DIAGNOSE, the button above the map switches between BEFORE and NOW.



NOW after AUTO-MIX: the stems as they play now, through their slots, at their faders. A green edge: that fight shrank since the first diagnosis (the BGV); a red edge: it grew (the beat). BEFORE shows the raw stems.

WHO GIVES WAY TO WHOM

- Every role has a priority. The **lead vocal** comes first, then kick, log drum, bass, snare, drums, lead instrument, beat, backing vocals, guitar, keys, percussion, pads, effects.
- Anything covering the **lead vocal** in the mids, upper mids or presence dips there while the lead sings.
- Bass, log drum or beat covering the **kick** in the sub and bass dip on each kick hit.
- Keys, pads and guitars covering a **lead instrument** dip in the upper mids and presence.
- In styles where the bass or the log drum owns the sub (Hip-Hop, Amapiano…), the beat's sub makes way for it.
- A voice and its own reverb never fight.

ZONE	RANGE	WHAT LIVES THERE
Sub	20–60 Hz	808 and log-drum fundamentals, kick weight. Felt more than heard; phones can't play it.
Bass	60–150 Hz	The bass line, the kick's punch.
Lo-mid	150–400 Hz	Warmth, or mud when everything piles up here.
Mid	400 Hz–1 kHz	The body of voices, guitars and keys.
Up-mid	1–2.5 kHz	Words and attack: where a vocal is understood.
Pres	2.5–5 kHz	Presence. The ear is most sensitive here; harshness too.
Brill	5–10 kHz	Shakers, hi-hats, S sounds.
Air	10–20 kHz	Sparkle and breath.

WHY DIPS, NOT CUTS

A fixed EQ cut would thin the guitar for the whole song. masterMALO's UNMASK follows the more important stem: the guitar keeps its body between vocal lines and only steps aside while the lead sings. Cuts are gentle (about 2–6 dB, less on backing vocals) and set by the style: groove styles leave the beat its weight, vocal-forward styles clear more space for the voice.

YOUR HANDS ON IT

Use the faders after AUTO-MIX: they sit on top of the engineer's levels. Solo a stem to hear what it lost, mute it to hear what it gives. Open its UNMASK to see whom it makes room for, where and how much; STRENGTH lowers every dip at once. Then DIAGNOSE.

11 MASTER: chain, spectrum, spectrogram

The mix, or your finished song, goes through one mastering chain. Each stage has a macro control, already set by the style. masterMALO plans the chain from what it hears: the tone EQ is fitted to the difference between your song and the target.



On export, masterMALO searches for the drive that lands the master on the loudness target (within about a tenth of a LU), then checks every master's true peak against the ceiling. Masters never go over it.



READING THE SPECTRUM

- **Output** (teal fill): the master, as it plays.
- **Input** (thin blue line): what goes in.
- **Target tone** (gold dashes): the style's tonal balance, or your reference's (it then reads Reference tone), lined up with the output over 100 Hz–10 kHz.
- **Tone EQ** (cream line): the EQ that `TONE` and `TILT` apply, on its own ±12 dB scale around the middle line.

The display is weighted so pink noise reads flat: a balanced mix looks like a gentle slope down to the right. Where the teal sits above the gold, the master is fuller there than the target.



THE SPECTROGRAM: WHAT HURTS

- Switch `SPECTRUM` | `SPECTROGRAM` at the top right of the panel. The spectrogram shows the master's **last 9 seconds**, newest at the top, on the same frequency axis. Hover for the frequency, the note and the level.
- **Red: hot spots.** Narrow peaks that ring more than 6 dB above their neighbours, 150 Hz–12 kHz. **Orange:** 2–6 kHz harshness that stays up.
- Under the picture they are named, for example 660 Hz · E5 · +12 dB over its neighbours · 30 % of the time → a narrow cut; No hot spots when nothing rings.

A ringing peak wants a narrow cut, best on the stem it comes from (EQ on MIX; the MIX spectrum shows who sits there). Harshness: raise `SMOOTH`.

12 The mastering controls



Swahili Gospel's settings. Drag a knob up or down; double-click it to return to the style's setting.

TONE 0 … 100 % · **style: mostly 55–60 %**

How far the master moves toward the style's tonal balance, or your reference's. It never boosts more than 4.5 dB anywhere, and much less in the deep sub and the extreme top.

TILT Darker 100 % … Brighter 100 % · **Neutral**

The quickest tone move: warmer and darker to the left, brighter and more open to the right, pivoting at 1 kHz (about ±2.5 dB at the ends).

SMOOTH 0 … 100 %

Tames harshness around 2–5 kHz **only when it jumps out** (cymbals, shouted vocals), up to 5 dB, so it never dulls the song.

GLUE 0 … 100 %

Three-band compression that holds the mix together. It calibrates itself to the song; higher is denser.

PUNCH 0 … 100 %

Lets the kick, log drum and snare hit through the glue: a slower attack and lifted transients.

TIP If Glue makes the drums feel soft, raise Punch before lowering Glue.

WARMTH 0 … 100 %

Analogue-style saturation, 4× oversampled: density and harmonics without fizz.

WIDTH 0 … 150 % · **100 % = as is**

Stereo width above the bass. It never makes a mix less mono-safe than it was: a mix that is already very wide or out of phase isn't widened further. With a reference, the width follows the reference's.

BASS FOCUS Off · 30 … 250 Hz

Makes everything below this frequency mono, so the low end is solid on club systems and vinyl-safe. Mono < 120 Hz suits most songs.

TRANSLATE 0 … 100 %

Adds the bass's harmonics, so phones and laptop speakers "hear" the 808 and the log drum. Check it with **PHONE** monitoring (page 16).

CHARACTER Clean · Punchy · Loud

The final stage. **Clean**: gentle and open, the limiter does the work. **Punchy**: a clipper shaves the fastest peaks first, so drums stay sharp. **Loud**: the clipper and limiter work harder, for club and street styles.

A / B, UNDO, REDO

Press **B** to try other settings on the same song, then switch back to **A**: each holds a complete setting, style included. Undo and redo (the arrows in the header) cover the mastering controls (also when a new style changed them), the delivery, loudness, ceiling, guard and character: up to 200 steps, separate from your DAW's.

13 Loudness, delivery and the guard



The loudness panel while the song plays.

LUFS INTEGRATED

The big number: the master's loudness over the whole song so far. Below it, in gold, the target and the ceiling (· guard when the guard lowers the target).

MOMENTARY · SHORT-TERM

Loudness over the last 0.4 s and 3 s, against the gold target line: teal below it, gold near it, red more than 2 dB over.

REDUCTION — LIM · LO · MID · HI

How hard the limiter (amber) and the three glue bands (blue) are working, up to 12 dB.

TRUE PEAK · RANGE (LRA) · PLR

True peak: teal at or under the ceiling. LRA: how much the loudness moves between quiet and loud parts. PLR: true peak minus loudness, how much punch is left; amber when it falls under the guard.

PHASE — −1 … +1

Left and right in agreement on the right side (teal); amber under 0.3; red under 0 means parts cancel in mono.

HOW THE STREAM PLAYS IT

For example Spotify: turned down 4.0 dB. Louder never sounds louder there.

DELIVERY, LOUDNESS, CEILING, GUARD

DELIVERY — 13 choices, page 17

Where the song goes. It sets the loudness target and the ceiling. Choose Custom to set your own.

LOUDNESS — −24 … −6 LUFS

The integrated loudness to aim for.

CEILING — −3.0 … −0.1 dBTP · **−1.0**

The highest true peak allowed, inter-sample peaks included.

GUARD — PLR 6 … 14 dB · **style**

The dynamics guard: the smallest peak-to-loudness ratio allowed. masterMALO stops getting louder before the master gets crushed.

WHY −1 DBTP

Between two samples the real waveform can peak higher than either sample: a "true peak". Players and the lossy encoders the stores use (AAC, MP3, Opus) turn those into distortion. A −1 dBTP ceiling, measured 4× oversampled, keeps the stream clean. Amazon asks for −2.

WHY LOUDER DOESN'T WIN

Spotify, YouTube, Apple Music and the others turn every song to the same level. A −8 LUFS master on Spotify is turned down 6 dB: it plays exactly as loud as a −14 master, only flatter. Press **STREAM** to hear it the way listeners will.

THE GUARD, IN NUMBERS

Once the limiter works, the peaks sit at the ceiling, so loudness can't go above ceiling − guard. −1 dBTP with a 9 dB guard stops at −10 LUFS. Ask for more and the export's report says "the guard held it". Lower the guard only if the style truly needs it.

14 Listening and comparing

Your ears make the final call, so masterMALO makes honest comparisons easy. Every comparison is **level-matched**: louder always sounds "better" for a few seconds, and that has fooled engineers for decades.



MONITOR: LISTEN AS

STUDIO

As is: what your file will contain.

PHONE

A phone speaker: mono, almost nothing under 300 Hz, a honky bump around 2.3 kHz, little air. **Does the bass line still come through? Is every word clear?** If the 808 vanishes, raise TRANSLATE.

MONO

Left and right summed: radio, Bluetooth speakers, club systems. A part that disappears here is out of phase.

STREAM

Plays at the level the delivery's streaming service will play it; for deliveries no service turns down (SoundCloud, Boomplay, club, CD, radio, custom), at Spotify's –14 LUFS. It only ever turns down.

COMPARE

BEFORE

The original at the same loudness: your raw stems (or your unmastered song) against the mixed, mastered version. On MIX it shows what AUTO-MIX and your slots changed; on MASTER, what the master changed.

REFERENCE

Your reference song, turned to the master's loudness. Switch back and forth on the same part of both songs: the chorus against the chorus.

MASTERING

Off, you hear the mix without the master: useful to judge the balance on its own. Exports are always mastered.

WHY THE PHONE CHECK MATTERS

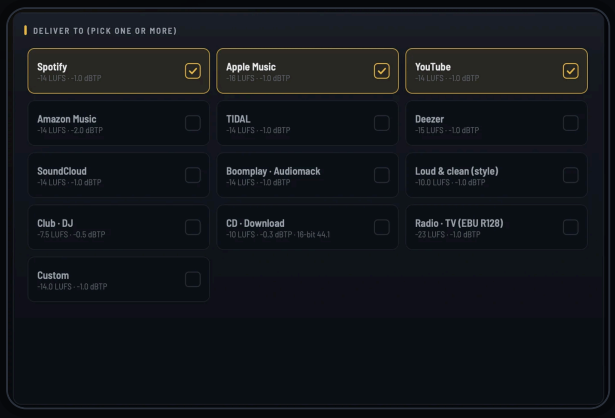
In Nairobi, Dar es Salaam, Kampala or Lagos, most people first hear a song on a phone: WhatsApp, TikTok, YouTube. A phone speaker can't play the 808's or the log drum's fundamental. If the bass only lives down there, it disappears. Translate adds harmonics a phone can play, so the ear rebuilds the bass line.

THE TRANSPORT

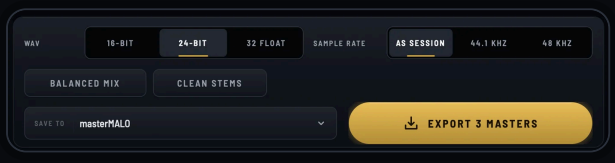
Play / pause (SPACE in the app), stop, loop. Click the waveform to jump. BYPASS (⏻, top right) turns everything off and keeps the latency, so nothing jumps in time in your DAW.

15 EXPORT

Tick every destination you need: one click makes a master for each, at its own loudness and ceiling, from the full-quality mix.



Deliver to. Gold cards are ticked. Spotify, Apple Music and YouTube are ticked at first.



The format, the extras, where the files go, and the button. It counts the masters it will make.

DELIVERY	LUFS	CEILING	WHY
Spotify	−14	−1	Plays everything at −14 LUFS: louder masters are turned down.
Apple Music	−16	−1	Sound Check plays at −16 LUFS. Send 24-bit for Apple Digital Masters.
YouTube	−14	−1	Turns louder uploads down to about −14 LUFS.
Amazon Music	−14	−2	Normalises to about −14 LUFS; asks for −2 dBTP of headroom.
TIDAL	−14	−1	Normalises to −14 LUFS.
Deezer	−15	−1	Normalises to about −15 LUFS.
SoundCloud	−14	−1	Safe streaming level; −1 dBTP for its lossy encoding.
Boomplay · Audiomack	−14	−1	The streaming standard for African platforms.
Loud & clean	style	−1	As loud as the style is played, without crushing it (page 5).
Club · DJ	−7.5	−0.5	Sound systems and DJ sets: loud and punchy, still true-peak safe (guard down to PLR 7).
CD · Download	−10	−0.3	Always 44.1 kHz, 16-bit with dither (or 32-bit float if you pick it).
Radio · TV	−23	−1	Broadcast delivery to EBU R128.
Custom	yours	yours	Your Loudness and Ceiling from MASTER.

FORMAT AND EXTRAS

WAV — 16-bit · **24-bit** · 32 float

24-bit for streaming and stores. 16-bit gets TPDF dither, a gentle noise that keeps quiet fades smooth. 32-bit float for another engineer.

SAMPLE RATE — **As session** · 44.1 kHz · 48 kHz

Changing the rate happens before the limiter, so the true peak still holds.

SAVE TO

The folder for the masters: `~/Music/masterMALO` at first. **SHOW FILES** opens it after an export.

BALANCED MIX — stems sessions

Also saves the mix before mastering, every stem through its slots at its fader: 24-bit, about −18 LUFS and peaks no higher than −3 dBTP after AUTO-MIX. For another mastering engineer, a video editor, or later.

CLEAN STEMS — stems sessions

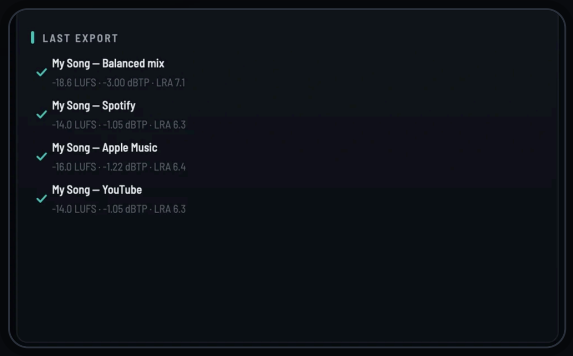
Also saves every stem through its FX slots, at its level (24-bit), so the mix can be rebuilt in any DAW.

ALBUM MODE — song batches

Keeps half of the songs' level differences: a ballad stays softer than the single. Off, every song hits the target.

16 Files and the report

Press EXPORT. The progress ring shows each master as it's made; CANCEL stops it. When it's done, Last export lists every file with its loudness, true peak and range.



After an export of a stems session: the balanced mix and three masters, each under its ceiling.

WHAT YOU GET

The masters	`My Song – masterMALO Spotify.wav`, `My Song – masterMALO Apple Music.wav` … one per delivery.
A report for each	`My Song – masterMALO Spotify – report.txt`, next to its master.
Balanced mix	`My Song – masterMALO mix.wav`
Clean stems	A folder `My Song stems` with `Lead Vocal – clean.wav` …

A stems session is named after the folder that holds the stems; a song keeps its file name. An export with the same name replaces the old file, so rename a master you want to keep.

THE REPORT

```
masterMALO by Paa Records – mastering report

Song:      My Song
Preset:    Swahili Gospel
Delivery:  Spotify (Plays everything at –14 LUFS: louder
           masters are turned down.)
File:      My Song – masterMALO Spotify.wav (24-bit, 48.0 kHz)

Loudness:  –14.0 LUFS integrated (before: –18.9)
True peak: –1.05 dBTP (ceiling –1.0)
Range:     6.4 LU (LRA), PLR 12.9 dB
Mono:      –1.0 LU when folded to mono (mono-safe)

How the services will play it:
  Spotify       as is
  Apple Music   turned down 2.0 dB
  YouTube       as is
  Amazon Music  as is
  TIDAL         as is
  Deezer        turned down 1.0 dB
```

A real export of the session in these pictures. Mono is how much quieter the master gets folded to mono (phones, Bluetooth speakers); past 3 LU the report warns that parts will disappear.

SEND THE REPORT WITH THE MASTER

The report answers the questions a label, a distributor or a client will ask: how loud, how much headroom, what each service does with it. When the guard kept a master under the asked loudness, the report says so, and by how much.

BEFORE YOU UPLOAD

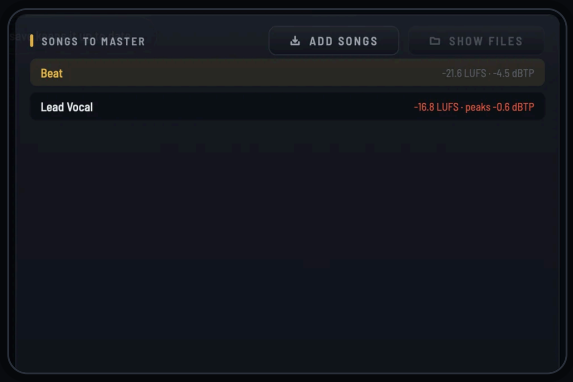
Listen to each master from the folder, start to end, on two systems: your monitors or headphones, and your phone. Check the start and the end aren't cut, and that the fade-out is smooth.

17 Songs, batches and the plug-in

MASTER FINISHED SONGS

No stems? Drop one or more finished songs on MASTER or EXPORT, or press MASTER SONGS on MIX (ADD SONGS on EXPORT, ≡ › Master songs…). masterMALO skips the mix stage and opens MASTER.

- **One style, one delivery, every song.** The style, the controls and the deliveries apply to the whole batch, in one go.
- **Click a song** in the list on EXPORT to hear it and see it on MASTER.
- **Red numbers** flag a song that already peaks over –1 dBTP: it would distort on streaming encoders as it is. masterMALO's master of it won't.
- **Album mode** keeps half of the songs' level differences (page 17).
- Each song keeps its own sample rate unless you choose one on EXPORT.

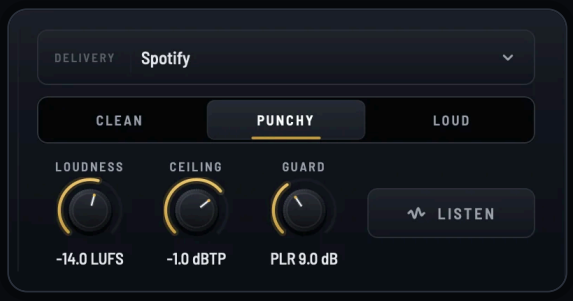


Two songs ready to master, with their loudness and true peak.

THE PLUG-IN, IN YOUR DAW

1. **Put masterMALO last on the master bus**
   Logic: the last slot of the Stereo Out. After every other plug-in, so nothing can push the peaks over the ceiling again.
2. **Leave HOST selected**
   masterMALO masters the audio of the track it sits on.
3. **Play the song**
   The first time music plays, masterMALO listens for 40 seconds by itself (LISTENING 42%); the loudest part counts most, so let the chorus play. Then: Listened: –16.2 LUFS. Tone and loudness are set for this song. Press LISTEN AGAIN to learn it again after you change the mix.
4. **Choose the delivery and shape it**
   Everything on MASTER works the same. Bounce (export) the song from your DAW as usual.

The plug-in can also import stems or songs, exactly like the app: it then switches to SESSION and plays them itself; switch back to HOST for your DAW's audio. masterMALO remembers the session in your project (the files' locations, roles, faders, every slot with its settings, and the reference) and renders the mix again when you reopen it, so keep the files where they are; ≡ › Save as… makes it a project for the app (page 20). In the plug-in, the slots take masterMALO's tools; your own plugins load in the app (page 10).



In plugin mode, LISTEN sits next to the loudness controls.

LATENCY
On the master bus masterMALO reports about 125 samples at 44.1 kHz (3 ms) for its true-peak lookahead and oversampling. Your DAW compensates it; bypass keeps it, so nothing jumps.

KEYS
In a DAW, Space and ⌘Z stay with the DAW. In the app, Space plays and pauses.

18 Projects: stop, and pick up later

Every session is a **project**: the stems and their roles, faders, mute and solo, every FX slot with its settings, the style, the mastering, the delivery and export settings, and the reference. In the app, masterMALO **saves it as you work**. Close it whenever you like: it's all there when you come back.



Next to the time: the project, My Song, and when it was last auto-saved. Click it for the project menu.

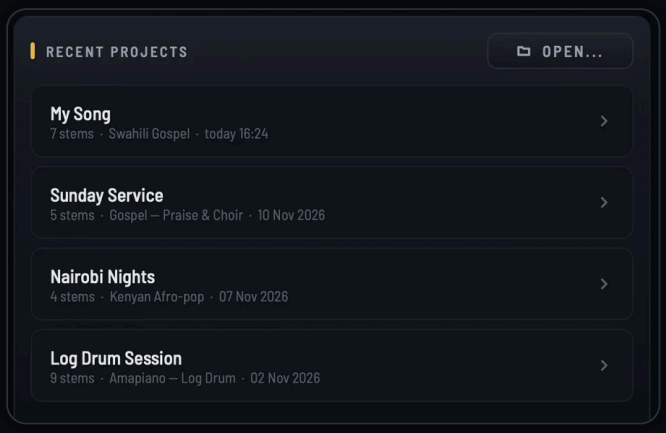
AUTO-SAVE

- **A new session is a project as soon as it has audio**, named after the stems' folder, in `~/Music/masterMALO/Projects`.
- **Every change is saved a moment later.** Nothing waits for you to remember.
- **Quit, and the app reopens where you left off.** If the computer shuts down unexpectedly, it reopens the last auto-save.
- **Revert:** masterMALO keeps the project as it was when you opened it (Projects › Backups, the last five). Revert to the version I opened goes back to it.
- Rather save by hand? Untick Auto-save in the project menu. masterMALO then asks before it closes a project with changes.

THE PROJECT MENU

New project ⌘N	An empty session. The one you leave stays in your projects. The bin above the stems does the same.
Open a project… ⌘O	Any .malo file.
Open recent	The last twelve projects.
Save ⌘S	Now, without waiting for auto-save.
Save as… ⇧⌘S	A copy under a new name or in another folder (next to the stems, on a drive). You carry on in the copy.
Show in the Finder	The project file, or the Projects folder.

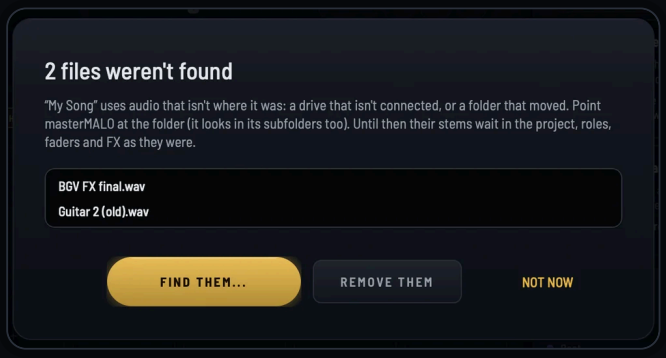
The same menu is at the top of ≡, and in the menu bar under File.



With no stems in, MIX lists your recent projects: click one to pick it up. OPEN… finds any other.

THE AUDIO STAYS WHERE IT IS

A project points to your stems; it doesn't copy them. Keep each song's stems in its own folder, and the project finds them. Move the whole folder, project included, and it still does.



A drive isn't connected, or a folder moved: FIND THEM… and point at the folder; masterMALO looks in its subfolders too. Until then their stems wait in the project as they were (role, fader, FX), and auto-save goes on. Gone for good? REMOVE THEM.

IN YOUR DAW

Your DAW saves masterMALO with its own session, as it does any plug-in. Save as… in ≡ writes a project you can open in the app (and Open a project… brings an app project into the DAW). The plug-in never auto-saves to a project file: two DAW sessions could otherwise overwrite each other's.

19 Presets: your chains, your sound

Two kinds of presets, both yours: an **FX chain** is one track's slots (your vocal chain, your log drum); **my preset** is your whole flow (the style, the mastering, the delivery, the reference and your chains), for your own sound or for every song of an album or EP.

FX CHAINS

`PRESETS`, above the selected stem's slots (page 9):

- **Save this track's FX as a chain...** All its slots: masterMALO's tools and your plugins, with their settings.
- **Load a chain** on any stem, in any project. It **replaces** that stem's FX, and its slots are yours (green): AUTO-MIX leaves them alone.
- **Copy this track's FX**, then **Paste FX here** on another stem.
- **Remove every FX** from the stem.

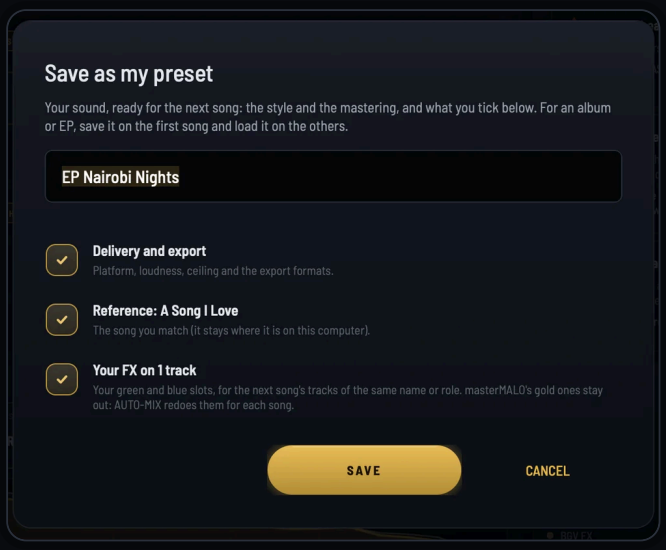
CLEAN learns the noise of the stem you load it on: a noise print belongs to its recording. UNMASK keeps the stems it makes room for by name (Lead Vocal), else by role.

MY PRESETS

Click the style in the header: your presets are at the top of the list.

- **Save as my preset...** The style and the mastering, plus what you tick: the delivery and export formats, the reference, and your FX on each stem.
- **Load it** and the header says MY PRESET; EDITED once you change something. Update saves the changes into it.
- **Your FX** go to the stems of the same name, else of the same role. masterMALO's gold slots stay out: AUTO-MIX makes them for each song. Load the preset before you drop the stems, and the chains wait for them.





Save as my preset: the name, then what it keeps.

An album or EP, one sound — EVERY SONG

1. **Finish the first song**
   Mix it, master it, choose the deliveries; load the reference you're matching.
2. **Save as my preset**
   Name it after the record (EP Nairobi Nights), everything ticked.
3. **Next song: the bin, then the preset**
   A new project; load the preset from the style menu, then drop the stems. Your chains go on the stems of the same name or role.
4. **AUTO-MIX, listen, adjust**
   masterMALO cleans this song's stems; the style, the mastering, the reference and the deliveries are the record's. Export with `ALBUM MODE` on a batch to keep the songs' levels related.

Presets are files in `~/Music/masterMALO/Presets`: copy them to another computer, or send them to a collaborator. Their plugins have to be installed there too.

20 Recipes

Starting points that work on most songs. Pick the style, press AUTO-MIX, then adjust with your ears, comparing with BEFORE.

Beat + vocals, the usual session

3-5 STEMS

Bongo Flava · Kenyan Afro-pop · Afrobeats

› Check the roles: the beat is Beat, every voice its own role, returns Vocal FX.

› AUTO-MIX, then compare on PHONE: every word should be clear.

› Lead too far in front? Its fader –1 dB, rather than lowering Strength.

Choir and praise

GOSPEL

Swahili Gospel · Gospel — Praise & Choir · SA Gospel & Choral

› Group the choir in one or two Backing Vocals stems; split L/R files are joined.

› The lead stays on top; the choir gets a small presence dip to leave it room.

› Big, dynamic songs: Character Clean, Glue 30–40 %.

Log drum and 808

LOW END

Amapiano — Log Drum · Gqom · Hip-Hop / Trap

› Check the roles: Log Drum, the 808 as Bass. The style decides who owns the sub: the log drum in Amapiano, the 808 in Hip-Hop, the kick in Gqom.

› These styles set Bass focus to 140–150 Hz. Translate 60–70 % for phones.

› Check MONO and PHONE: the bass line must survive both.

A song you want to sound like

REFERENCE

Any style · a reference

› Add the reference on MIX, then AUTO-MIX: the levels lean toward it.

› On MASTER the gold line becomes Reference tone; Tone sets how far to go (60 % is a good start).

› Compare with REFERENCE at the same loudness, chorus against chorus.

An EP or album

BATCH

Master songs · Album mode

› Drop all the finished songs on MASTER. Pick one style for the record.

› Album mode on: the ballad stays softer than the single, as it should.

› Tick Spotify, Apple Music and Boomplay · Audiomack, then export once.

Club and DJ version

LOUD

Club · DJ · Character Loud

› Export it next to your streaming masters, never instead of them.

› Bass focus 120–150 Hz keeps the sub solid on big systems.

› Too squashed? Raise the Guard and accept a little less loudness.

Live recording, worship, acoustic

DYNAMIC

Acoustic & Live · Gospel — Worship Ballad

› Strength 60–80 %: clean it, don't flatten it.

› Noisy room mics? The diagnosis finds them; FIX: CLEAN cleans between phrases.

› Character Clean, Warmth 20–30 %.

Radio and TV

BROADCAST

Radio · TV (EBU R128)

› –23 LUFS, –1 dBTP: the broadcast standard.

› Send it with the report, which states the loudness and true peak.

› For a radio station that wants it "loud", ask which loudness they play at.

21 Troubleshooting

YOU SEE OR HEAR	TRY
A stem has the wrong role	Click its role chip, pick the right one, then AUTO-MIX AGAIN.
An effect return is treated as a voice	Set its role to Vocal FX; name returns after their voice (LEAD FX).
The stems are out of time	Export every stem from the same start point, silence included.
The vocal is too loud or too soft	Its fader (±1–2 dB is usually enough), or a vocal-forward style.
A stem's meter shows a red flag	It went over full scale: lower its fader, or put LIMIT last in its slots. Click to clear.
No free slot on …	All 8 slots of that stem are full: remove or replace one, then try again.
A plugin is listed under Problems	It crashed, hung or waited on a licence. Update or authorise it, then RESCAN EVERYTHING.
Files weren't found (a project)	Connect the drive, or FIND THEM… and point at their folder. Their stems wait in the project meanwhile.
A slot says missing	That plugin isn't installed here, or its format is off. Its settings wait for it.
Playback stutters	Turn off the heaviest plugins, or raise the buffer size in the app's audio settings.
The master is quieter than the target	The guard held it (· guard on the panel). Lower the Guard a little, or accept it.
The master sounds harsh or thin	Lower Tone or Tilt; raise Smooth. Look for hot spots on the SPECTROGRAM.
The bass disappears on a phone	Raise Translate; check the bass isn't only sub (the fight map's first column).
A file can't be read	The status line names it. Use WAV, AIFF, FLAC, MP3, M4A or OGG, under 30 minutes.
A padlock; audio is unprocessed	masterMALO isn't activated here yet: click the banner and enter your pass.
Nothing plays in the plug-in	HOST plays your DAW's audio: press play there. SESSION plays imported files.

SPECIFICATIONS

Formats	masterMALO app, VST3, Audio Unit
System	macOS 10.13 or later; Intel and Apple Silicon
Files in	WAV, AIFF, FLAC, MP3, M4A, OGG; up to 48 stems, 30 min each
Files out	WAV 16-bit (TPDF dither), 24-bit, 32-bit float; 44.1 or 48 kHz
Measurement	ITU-R BS.1770-4 / EBU R128; true peak 4× oversampled
Ceiling	never exceeded: every export is checked
Plug-in latency	about 125 samples at 44.1 kHz (3 ms), reported to the DAW
FX slots	8 per stem: masterMALO's 9 tools; your VST3 and AU in the app
Your files	`~/Music/masterMALO`: masters, Projects, Presets

SUPPORT

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Tell us your macOS version, your DAW (or the app) and what you hear. A screenshot of the diagnosis or the loudness panel helps a lot.

masterMALO

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Records