

# Mp3 Fredrick Hoffer - Cd 28 Piano Suite Number 11



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An American follower of Erik Satie. 18 MP3 Songs EASY LISTENING: Mood Music, JAZZ: Free Jazz

Details: MAKING THE MASTER The master is the last step before producing a CD. It is the end of a long process; the final step after which no further changes can be made. One of the major things that a mastering engineer does is to adjust the levels of the songs so that they are more or less consistent with each other. He also has to make sure that the music is not too loud, to avoid the very unpleasant distortion that occurs when the levels go above 0 Db on the meters. Because the recording medium, whether it is a CD, or a cassette tape, or perhaps even a vinyl record, simply cannot handle the tremendous range that the human ear is capable of, literally from a soft whisper to the crash of thunder, the music must be compressed. Otherwise the soft notes simply drop out, and the loud ones will destroy the speakers. The compression brings up the soft notes and tames the loud ones so that they can be recorded. one simply cannot record the full range that a piano, or a trumpet, or even a synthesizer is capable of. There is also a curious phenomenon that sometimes occurs, where an instrument seems to swing from near you to out in the back yard and back agasin. Judicious compression will prevent this from happening. Also it is the case that certain kinds of music are recorded as loud as is possible, and with very little variation from the maximum amount. This gives the music more "presence." Music that is to be played over the radio also has to have a reduced dynamic range. The mastering engineer also sometimes rearranges the order of the songs so that they do not cancel each other out, and so they will have the maximum impact. An engineer will have the necessary expensive equipment to do this job well; however it will cost upwards of \$500 to have him do it for you. In my case that is not possible, so I have to do it all myself. Fortunately my problems are much simpler, because I'm not using microphones or live instruments, and I think if I ever have to do vocals I will take a lo-fi approach. I still do have to do a form of

compression, because my synthesizers are capable of some very loud sounds. However, unlike an engineer, I do not have to deal with the sounds after they have been made, which is hard. Instead by using Midi, I can use the numbers that go with each note to make changes in volume before the notes are actually sounded. My feeling here is that there should be as much dynamic range as is possible, especially for piano music. The arrangement of the songs is a very subjective matter, and it probably could be improved by someone who has more distance from the music than I do. I have a bunch of songs that I want to put on a CD, and I usually start out by putting them in the order in which they were composed. I find that pieces that were composed at around the same time do fit together better. Some of them I do discard. The first piece should catch your interest, and the last one should form a closing. Gradually, and through many listenings, things begin to fall into place; that is as much as they ever will. I do try to achieve a variety, some fast and some slow, but not a very fast piece right after a very slow piece. I want to entertain you, not shock you. And that just about covers mastering, as I understand it. Next time we will talk about artificial reverb.

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