

The 10 Yule-Tide Tricksters of Audio



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In Iceland, there are 13 Santa Clauses. In English, they're called Yule Lads.

They used to be real mean to the townspeople. Harassing them in the night, stealing their stuff and generally being one big nuisance.

Or actually 13 nuisances for that matter.

It all starts 13 days before Christmas, on December 11th, when one by one they come down from the mountains and terrorize the townsfolk.

They have strange names. Like Gully Gawk, who hides in gullies and waits for the perfect opportunity to steal milk from your cows. Others are more direct, like Door-Slammer. He loves nothing more than to run around slamming every door he sees, much to the dismay of sleeping farmers.

They've calmed down in recent years. Modern society has a way of smoothing out even the most terrifying tales. Today, they still venture into the cities, one by one. But this time the children wait

for them. The children put their shoes in the windows and wait for them to come bearing presents, one for each Yule lad, 13 days before Christmas.

But this story isn't about them.

This story is about their 10 cousins.

The 10 Yule-Tide Tricksters of Audio. They show up at any time they want to terrorize you and your recordings.

Compression-Slammer

The first one is Compress-Slammer. He sneaks into your DAW and pushes your threshold all the way down. He squashes your audio by cranking up the ratio while you sleep. But his favorite is the release. He dials up the release all the way to the top so that any audio coming into your compressors has a terrible pumping sound.

EQ-Booster

The second is EQ-Booster. He hides until you're done EQ'ing. Once you're happily working on other parts of your production he reverses all of your EQ cuts with narrow EQ boosts. His favorite

sound is an abnormally boosted vocal with a high Q, resulting in a gritty and horrific telephone tone.

Acoustic-Harasser

The third trickster is especially scary. Acoustic-harasser sneaks into your studio while you're on your coffee break and moves all of your acoustic treatment around. He's especially fond of thick bass-traps. He steals all the absorption out of them and keeps the frames hanging in place, leaving you none the wiser.

Bass-Boomer

Bass Boomer is an insecure scrawny little man with a whiny voice. He loves nothing more than to boost the bass of every instrument, causing boominess in every part of your production. Since he doesn't have any 200 Hz in his own voice, he tries to compensate by adding it to everything he hears.

Meter-Stealer

The fourth brother in line, Meter-Stealer, has a whole vault of stolen metering tools. He's a tragic character that wants nothing more than his songs to read DR 12. Unfortunately, he doesn't have any control over his own voice so his songs all read DR 2. Whenever he croaks his haunting chants he breaks the meters,

leaving everything that's run through them an eternal loudness casualty.

Phase-Finangler

You should be warned not to leave your drum-kit unattended between sessions. Phase-Finangler enjoys nothing more than to move mics out of phase with each other. He'll flip the under-snare mic out of phase, move the overheads together to skew the stereo image and destroy your delicate double-kick mic setup. If you ever smell anything fishy when you return to your recording session, make sure to re-set your mics back in phase.

Reverb-Rigger

Number six is a belching fatso with a baritone voice. His name is Reverb-Rigger. He hates the dry sound of vocals. When you're not looking, he'll change your subtle and short plate reverb to a lush and spacious cathedral reverb. He can be tricked with gates, since he's never figured out the side-chaining tricks of a gated reverb. Let the gate take care of the decay and you'll never have to fear him again.

Vocal-Drowner

Vocal-Drowner is the youngest brother. When he was little he used to love to sing, but his older brothers always harassed him, especially Reverb-Rigger. Now he hates nothing more than a mix

with a loud vocal. He'll go to great lengths to make sure the vocal is drowned out of your mix. Not only will he push the fader down, but also EQ out the mid-range and even drown the vocal in guitars.

Shadow-Clicker

Shadow-Clicker is one shifty Santa. He has the uncanny ability of projecting clicks and pops into your audio from the shadows of your studio. You'll go crazy trying to find them since they never existed in the first place. The only way to escape his downward spiral of unnecessary editing is to decorate your studio with comfy lighting and bass traps in the corners. Without shadows in your studio, you'll never see him again.

Limit-Crusher

The final trickster is Limit-Crusher. He's the most dangerous of all. He can counteract everything that was ever great about your mix. Even if you've outsmarted his brothers at every turn, Limit-Crusher will sneak onto your master bus and push your limiter down until there's nothing left to call a mix. Just a solid piece of signal once called a waveform.

Keep Your Audio Free of Trickery

These crazy tricksters might live within you at times. You might have boomed too many bass frequencies, compressed too many kick drums or filled up your mix with a tad too much reverb.

This story was just intended to help you get better mixes this Christmas, even if it was weird and ridiculous.

Have a great holiday.

Björgvin,

Audio Issues

For an in-depth guide on recording and mixing, check out the Recording & Mixing Strategies Bundle: <http://www.audio-issues.com/strategies>



