

# Ketevan: Sound quality issues?

Like most Ketefans, I was delighted when Ketevan was released. I loved the songs and Katie's performances. I was more than happy – at first. But after a few plays I started to find myself getting increasingly bugged by what I perceived to be distortion in "Sailing Ships From Heaven". It was one of those things that you can't un-notice and the malaise spread as I began to feel the whole album seemed loud compared to her previous ones. My first thought was that maybe my audio equipment was just rubbish. But all her other albums sounded great, so I dismissed that. Then I wondered if it was just a problem with the CD mastering, so I downloaded the digital version from iTunes – same problem! My next thought was – was it just me? I started trawling through reviews. Most of them were saying how wonderful the songs were and how amazing Katie is, neither of which I have any argument with, but I did manage to find a few that felt the album had been engineered badly. Here is a comment from one thread...

[Swordfish](#) 4 years ago (Edited)

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I've seen several comments here regarding problems with the audio quality of this CD. I had a comment which I later deleted after Mr. Batt had read it and commented. My criticism, meant to be constructive, related to issues with a CD that has been mastered too loud, with too much compression and limiting, with too little dynamic range, and perhaps with problems in the mix, such as times when Katie's voice is mixed too far back and parts of the track seem too loud, to the point of being annoying. I noticed the guitar problem you mentioned, where the sliding noise on the frets (which is otherwise a natural sound) here is nearly as loud as Katie's voice. This could be a problem related to too much compression, or just bad mixing. I suggested to Mr. Batt that the CD be pulled, remixed, and remastered, but he didn't seem to appreciate that. Either way, all the audio problems are denied, but rest assured that Mr. Batt has been advised and has heard us. I've thought of a way he could save face... Offer a new CD with bonus tracks, and have it remixed and remastered also (by a different mastering engineer), and no one will even notice.

Everybody: If you want music that sounds better, speak up! Leave a comment. Don't let Katie's music get ruined by the "loudness war." Your silence doesn't help Katie. She deserves better.

So, it wasn't just me. I contacted Dramatico about it. They suggested I send them my CD so they could check it. I did. Their conclusion? It's fine. I suspect the guy checking it must have been the same guy who engineered it in the first place. As far as I know, nobody was ever able to convince Dramatico that Ketevan had been mastered too loud. These days I have just about conditioned myself to put up with it because I don't want to deprive myself of listening to Katie sing these great songs, though I still grimace a little during "Sailing Ships". I wish she had done a live album featuring these songs but that is unlikely to ever happen now.

If you don't hear anything wrong with Ketevan then good luck to you, and I wish I was you! I'll leave you with one final piece of evidence. "In Winter", the first album since "Ketevan" and the first post-Dramatico (so Katie was more heavily involved in the production) has absolutely stunning sound quality. The "Live in Berlin" CD on the Special Edition is so well produced that you wouldn't know it was live if wasn't for the applause between tracks! So I decided to load "Sailing Ships From Heaven" from Ketevan, and "A Time To Buy" from In Winter into Audacity to compare the waveforms of each. Draw your own conclusions from it.

