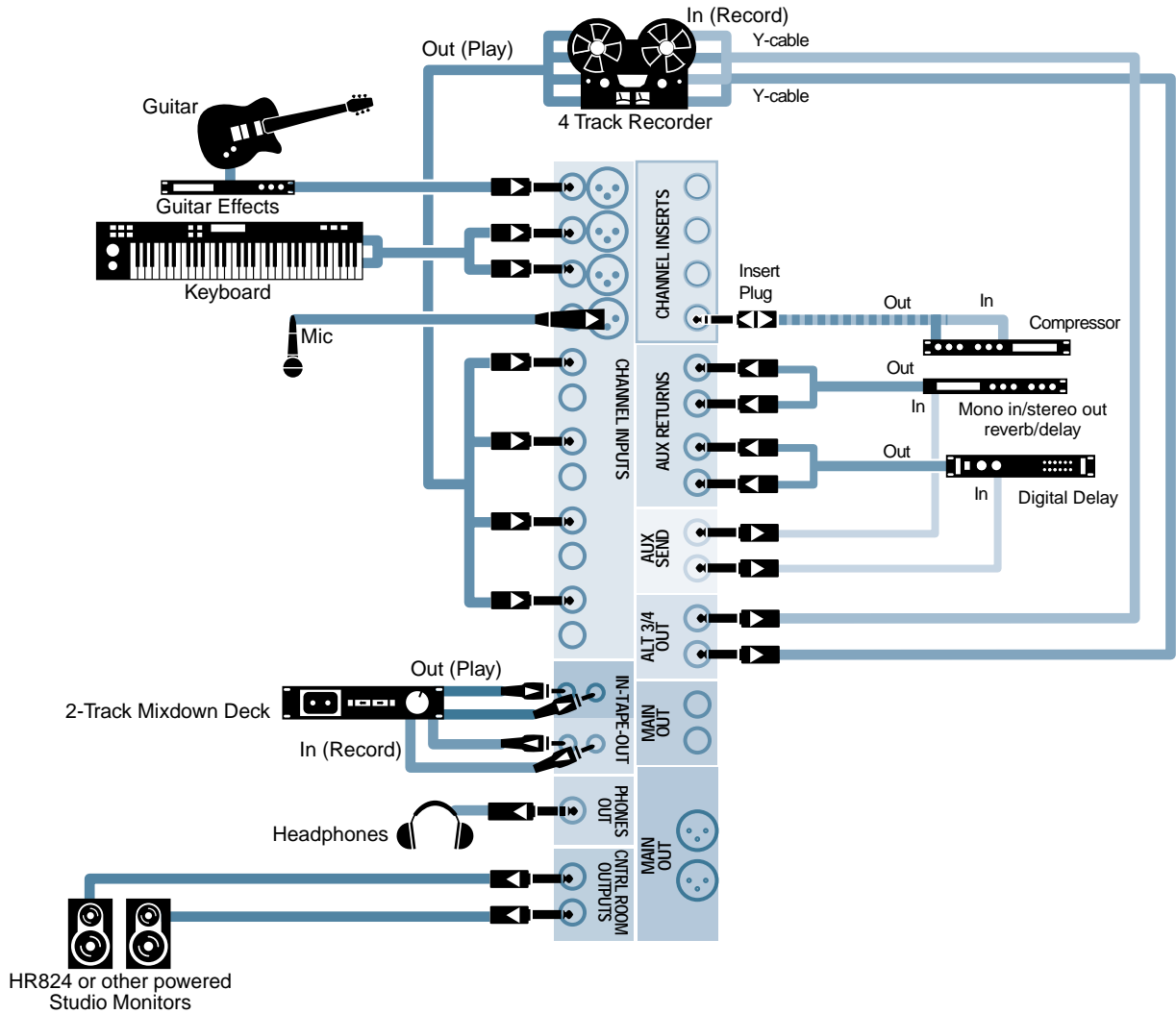


1202/1402-VLZ PRO 4-Track Recording – An ALT Approach



Using the ALT Outputs

This variation on the previous setup shows how the ALT3/4 OUTPUTS can be used to feed the recorder. This gives you more flexibility when bouncing tracks, the tradeoff being that there are more electronics in the signal path between the input and the recorder. But they're good electronics so don't let it worry you.

Studio engineering is all about compromises between perfection, working efficiently, and plain ol' common sense. Check out all the possibilities and learn their benefits and limitations.

As before, the recorder outputs are connected to mixer line inputs which are routed to the MAIN L-R bus so we can always monitor what we've recorded as what we're recording.



Remember that the recorder is part of the monitoring path, so you must enable Record or Input Monitor on a track in order to hear that channel in the control room monitors and phones.

Double Bussing

We've shown the ALT OUTPUTS split with Y-cables so that ALT 3 feeds the odd numbered tracks and ALT 4 feeds the even numbered ones. See the discussion on "double bussing" on page 73 for more info.

For a cleaner signal path, you can patch an INSERT output to a recorder track, but you'll need the ALTs in order to bounce tracks without re-patching.

INSERTS

In the previous setup, the INSERTs served as direct outputs to feed the recorder, so we had to patch our compressor in line with the channel that we wanted to compress. Using the ALT outputs to feed the recorder frees up the INSERT jacks, so in this setup, you can use an Insert Cable to patch a compressor or other signal processor into a channel path.

Bus Assignments

When something's connected to the ALT outputs, MUTE/ALT 3-4 serves as a bus assignment switch. In the normal (up) position, inputs are routed to the MAIN L-R outputs. In the MUTE/ALT (down) position, the channel signal is removed from the MAIN outputs and routed to the ALT outputs.

The PAN control functions on the ALT busses just as it does on the MAIN L-R busses. Panning fully in one direction ("hard panning") assigns the channel

to only one bus. Panning between extremes routes the signal to both outputs in proportion to the PAN setting.

Making Tracks

To record the guitar on Track 1, press the ALT switch on Channel 1 and turn the PAN knob fully left. Be sure that recorder Track 1 is in Record, and that Track 3 (which will be getting the same signal) is in Safe or Play mode.

More Guitars

Let's say you want to record three guitar parts. Since you've routed the guitar channel to the odd numbered tracks, simply take Track 1 out of Record and put Track 3 into Record. Now, you'll hear the playback of your first guitar track and you can play along, recording the second part.

To add a third guitar track, swing the PAN knob fully clockwise and you'll send the guitar signal to the even-numbered tracks. Take Track 3 out of Record, put Track 2 into Record, and add the third part.



We're using a direct guitar output here (no microphone), but when recording from a mic, if it's in the same room as the speakers, be sure to kill the speaker output or you'll get a blast of feedback!

Bounce Time

We've filled up three of our four tracks and all we have is the guitar parts. What we're about to do is assign the recorded tracks to the ALT bus so we can mix them and record the mix to the remaining track.

First, though, since we want to record only the guitar mix and not extraneous signals and noises from our input sources, switch the input channels from ALT back to MAIN by releasing the MUTE/ALT buttons. So stray sounds don't distract us, turn the GAIN controls on the input channels all the way down.

Now, assign the Tracks 1-3 return channels (5/6, 7/8, and 9/10) to the ALT bus by pressing the MUTE/ALT switches on those channels. Since you'll be recording on Track 4, set the PAN knobs on those channels fully clockwise.

Leave Track 4's channel (11/12) assigned to the MAIN bus so you can hear the mix of your guitar tracks. Since you're mixing to mono, pan this channel to the center for now. In the final mix, it can go wherever you want, but it's usually easier to mix a mono track (that's what you're really doing here) if it's panned to the center.

Be sure Recorder Tracks 1, 2, and 3 are in Repro (play) mode. Put Track 4 into Record Ready.

Now rewind, roll the tape (or spin the disk) and you'll hear all three of your guitar parts. Adjust the EQ and GAIN on the guitar channels until you have the right blend. Keep an eye on the recorder's meter while you're mixing. Since there's no Master level control for the ALT 3-4 bus, the record level will be determined by the levels going into the ALT 3-4 mix. When you have both a good mix and the proper record level, rewind, press the Record button, and relax while the recorder is making your composite guitar track.

Wow! Three More Tracks!

Now you have three tracks you can erase and use to record additional parts. A six-track recorder for the price of four! Or you can continue the bouncing process until you run out of ideas or start building up too much noise, which will eventually happen, even with a digital recorder.

More Stereo

With only four tracks, you can have only one or two stereo tracks going into your final mix, but you can still get pretty creative.

If you have a good quality stereo mixdown recorder (and you should!), you can do what's called an off-line bounce. Instead of bouncing three tracks to the fourth track of the 4-track recorder, mix them in stereo and record that mix on your mixdown recorder. Then record that stereo mix back to two tracks on the 4-track. You'll need to move some cables to do this, but it's not complicated. Unplug the recorder input cables from the ALT OUTPUT jacks and plug them into the 2-track recorder outputs.

After this bounce, you can add two more tracks, mix those together with the first bounce mix, and then you'll have six parts in stereo on two tracks.

You can get extremely creative if your stereo mixdown recorder is a computer with a sound card. You can record tracks, build loops, and then use the multitrack to build songs around them. The sky's the limit.



Since there's no means (at least none we've described here) to synchronize the stereo and multitrack recorders, this technique only works when you're bouncing all of the tracks in one pass. Other than with good coordination and some luck, there's no way to, for example,

leave one guitar track intact on the 4-track, mix the other three to the outboard recorder, and then put that mix back in sync with the remaining guitar part on the 4-track.

Notes
