ABCDE Bus Card

Five paths to one mix. Brauer-inspired routing for any console or DAW.

Attack / release are in that order. GR means gain reduction on the wet path. Use the closest available time. The X32 uses 5:1 for B, and the API 2500+ can use 6:1. Detector, knee, blend and GR are starting choices.

BUS / SOURCE	CONSOLE START	2022 COURSE REFERENCE
A / Sustain Keys, piano, strings, horns, synths. Backing vocals can also feed D.	**1.5:1 · 3 ms / 100 ms** RMS · soft knee · 100% wet · 1–2 dB GR	UAD Neve 33609/C. 1.5:1, Fast (3 ms), 100 ms recovery.
B / Foundation Drums and bass. Blend selected drums or bass into clean E.	**5:1 · 25 ms / ~100 ms** Peak · medium knee · 65% wet · 2–4 dB GR	UAD Distressor. 6:1, Attack ~8.5, Release ~2, detector HP 100 Hz, Dist 2, some dry blend. Timing knobs have no published ms map.
C / Guitars Guitars and other midrange parts that need gentle leveling.	**1.5:1 · 50 ms / ~400 ms** RMS · soft knee · 100% wet · ~1 dB GR	UAD Manley Variable Mu in Compress. Midrange attack position (25–70 ms control range), Medium Fast recovery (400 ms). Width 120% upstream.
D / Width Adjustable stereo send from backing vocals. Main backing vocal path can stay on A.	**2:1 · 20 ms / ~200 ms** RMS · soft knee · 100% wet · 1–2 dB GR	MagicDeathEye Stereo. Time 2, Attack Medium. No published ms mapping. bx_digital width 200% after compression.
E / Clean Selected drums, bass or FX. Independent dry path to the same mix.	**Dynamics off** Unity to start · blend by send or return	Unprocessed bus to the master alongside A–D.

Patch & set levels

01 **Patch five stereo paths.** X32 example pairs 1/2 A, 3/4 B, 5/6 C, 7/8 D, 9/10 E. Use subgroup feeds for A–C and post-fader stereo sends for D and E. Assign all five masters to Main LR.

02 **Check the splits.** Switch off direct LR on inputs carried by A–C unless you want a dry path. Match send pans to the source. Give lead vocal a separate path to LR. Start subgroup masters at unity and bring up the D and E sends to taste. Use E sends only where you want an additional clean blend.

03 **Set gain by the meters.** Comp mode, Log, Auto off, minimum Hold, internal key and 0 dB makeup to start. Set B key low-cut near 100 Hz (LC6 if offered). Start with other key filters off. Lower threshold to hit the listed GR, then match bypass loudness.

Eight free buses? Use A–D and send selected dry sources directly to Main LR. Ten buses give E its own fader.

Compressor substitutes

Set up what the room has. The settings below are starting points for each bus role.

A / C / D **SSL G-style VCA**	A 2:1, 3 ms / 100 ms. C 2:1, 30 ms / 300–600 ms. D 2:1, 10 ms / 300 ms. Start with light GR. Add D width after the compressor. SSL models vary by detent. Choose the closest fixed time.
A / B **API 2500+**	A 1.5:1, 3 ms / 100 ms, Soft knee, OLD, NORM. B 6:1, 30 ms / 100 ms, Medium knee, NEW, MED THRUST. Start fully linked with manual makeup at 0 dB. MED THRUST reduces the influence of lows through a different filter shape than a 100 Hz high-pass.
B / PARALLEL **1176-style FET**	4:1, attack 1 (slowest), release 5–7 (fast side). Drive Input to 3–6 dB GR on the wet path, match Output, then blend in roughly 15–30% wet. Classic attack spans about 0.02–0.8 ms. Both knobs speed up clockwise. Use a stereo model or linked pair for stereo.
B / MONO STEMS **dbx 160A VCA**	Start 4:1 and 1–3 dB GR on kick, bass or a linked pair. Use OverEasy for a gentler onset. Try hard knee for more snap and level-match with Output Gain. Attack and release are program dependent. 160 models differ, so look for OverEasy and stereo link on the unit in front of you.
C / MONO STEMS **LA-2A-style opto**	Choose Compress. Raise Peak Reduction to 1–2 dB GR and use Gain to match the bypassed level. For stereo C use a stereo instance or a matched linked pair. Nominal attack is around 10 ms. The release has a quick first stage and a much slower tail. Use it for leveling.
A / B / C / D **Stock digital compressor**	Use the timing and ratio targets in the bus table. If there is no Mix knob, split B to a post-fader parallel return and blend it while checking delay alignment. Start with stereo linked gain reduction if available. Match threshold by gain reduction and match output by ear.

Soundcheck fixes

B loses punch

Lengthen attack or lower the wet blend. If the kick ducks the bass, raise the detector low-cut a little or raise the threshold.

C stays pinned

Shorten recovery or reduce input drive until gain reduction eases between phrases.

D spreads too far

Start with modest widening after compression and bring up the D return to taste. Check the combined mix in mono.

Sources / UA Neve 33609/C · UA Distressor · UA Manley Variable Mu · DDMF MagicDeathEye Stereo · Behringer X32 manual · SSL Bus Compressor 2 · API 2500+ manual · UA 1176 manual · dbx 160A specs · UA LA-2A timing · 2022 Puremix course