

# VCAs

Most people rarely think about the scenario mentioned above. For those that do, many do not seek solutions. For the professional mixing engineer, a solution has existed for quite some time. VCAs! Essentially it is a type of a fader that controls other faders within it. Unlike a group folder track that serves as a master fader, a VCA takes all of the faders assigned to it and moves their faders and pans in synchrony. It means that moving a VCA fader up, results in the children tracks it controls having their faders move up in perfect ratio together.

But, these are generally a NIGHTMARE to setup in most DAWs. Heck, even Reaper is daunting and confusing when trying to set it up. You essentially have to tell a track that it is a VCA master track. Then you have to manually assign each slave track to this VCA fader. If you move the track around and want it in another location with another group, good luck combing through the routing matrix and turning it off. Maybe it is not as horrible as I just illustrated. But for the seasoned pro, mistakes are made frequently because there has not (up until now) been a simple way to handle VCAs.

But you guessed it! OTR does this kind of auto-magically.

OTR looks inside each VI-C track and takes all of the tracks that should have a VCA assigned to them in order to properly and professionally mix your session and automatically assigns them where they need to go. All it takes is the push of a button when you are ready to mix. This button is located in the Mix Utilities Toolbar as shown in the image below.



When you are ready to use your VCAs, this button must be pushed. If you make any changes to your template after having pushed this button, you will need to push it again. Essentially (like the refresh status on the track concept), OTR handles track assignments passively and not actively. If you add a new track to your session and then want to mix with the VCA faders, press the button one more time. It will become habit...second nature. But the result is marvelous! Magical! Something that is unachievable in any other DAW! It is really a beautiful thing.

So now that you understand the concept of VCAs, how are they used?

Quite simply as a way to balance your template. Here's a real-world example that will make any composer smile.

Within each VI-C, you will first, likely, balance your tracks appropriately. Say you are in the "VI-C: 1 - Orchestral - Strings" section of the template. Within it, you have a variety of string libraries from various vendors. Within each library, sometimes even the instruments recorded position needs to be balanced and adjusted. So essentially, a composer would focus on adjusting all of the string tracks so they are balanced. Every library's "Forte" is the same output volume, etc. Some single-mic position string libraries may be sent to the virtual orchestral hall where it would have a balanced output to the other string libraries not sent to the virtual orchestral hall. So you can see, this is already one of a composer's top tasks when setting up the instruments they own.