

WHY DO MIXER CONTROLS HAVE SUCH WEIRD NAMES? (part 2)

By Bruce Bartlett



For example, "aux" or "aux send". That refers to a mix that is auxiliary, or secondary. It's not the main mix which your audience hears. An aux knob (or aux-send knob) in your mixer can control at least two things: (1) the loudness of effects (reverb, echo) in a mic channel or (2) the loudness of an instrument or vocal in the monitor speakers.

In some mixers, aux is labeled FX (effects). It controls how much reverb, echo, chorus, etc. you hear mixed with the mic signal.

Some mixers have several aux sends, such as aux 1, aux 2, etc. You might use all the aux 1 knobs to create a mix in the singer's monitor speaker; use all the aux 2 knobs to create a monitor mix for the guitarist, and so on. Or you could use aux 1 for effects and use aux 2 for monitors.

Most mixers have a pre/post switch next to each aux knob. Pre means pre-fader, or before the fader. Post means post-fader, or after the fader. For EFFECTS, set the pre/post switches to POST. That way, when you turn up a mic's fader, the dry-to-reverb ratio stays the same. For MONITORS, set the pre-post switches to PRE. Then the fader settings for the main mix will not affect the monitors.

You can use an aux send for any supplemental purpose, such as creating an independent mix for a recording. But effects and monitoring are the main uses. The aux-send jack on the back of your mixer contains all the aux signals that you turned up. You could connect the aux-send jack to an outboard effects unit. The effected signal (with reverb, say) returns to the mixer into the aux-return jack, where the reverb mixes with the "dry" signal from a microphone.

Some mixers have effects built in, so you don't need to use the aux jacks for effects. Alternatively, you could connect the aux-send jack to a power amplifier that drives the monitor speakers.