

STAGE

USER MANUAL · VERSION 2.0.0

Measured staging, **provably** non-destructive. STAGE sets your levels by measurement instead of guesswork, and EVEN lets you prove a plugin chain changed the tone and nothing else.



THE STAGE INTERFACE

WHAT STAGE IS

STAGE is two tools in one plugin, selected by the tab at the top of the window:

STAGE

Measured gain-staging. Play your loudest section once; STAGE measures that loud pass and suggests a single, click-free trim to your target level. Link instances to stage a whole mix in one tap.

EVEN

A null-verified A/B and a mix-invariant Drive / Restore pair. Compare processing loudness-matched (even blind), and drive a plugin into its sweet spot without moving your downstream level.

FORMATS

[AU](#) [VST3](#) [AAX](#) Mac (universal, Intel + Apple Silicon) · [VST3](#) Windows. Mono and stereo tracks are both supported.

LICENSING

STAGE runs a **5-day free trial** the first time you use it. Audio passes through **bit-exact** during the trial until you activate. When you are ready, click **Start Free Trial / Activate** and follow the prompt to activate your purchase.

QUICK START · STAGE

- 1 **Insert STAGE** on the track you want to stage. Make sure the **STAGE** tab is selected.
- 2 Pick a **SOURCE** hint (Vocal, Drum, Bass, Master) and a **TARGET** level. The target presets are common gain-staging landmarks in dBFS.
- 3 **Play your loudest section once.** STAGE listens and captures the loud pass. The INPUT meter shows the running level and the loudest reading it has seen.
- 4 STAGE displays the suggested **TRIM** as a large readout. Click **SET TRIM** to apply it. The trim is a smoothed, click-free gain, so it is safe to set while playing.

MEASURE MODES

Choose how STAGE measures the loud pass with the **MEASURE** row:

- **Peak** — the highest sample peak.
- **RMS** — average energy, the everyday staging choice.
- **VU** — a slower averaged needle, classic console feel.
- **LUFS-I** — integrated loudness (ITU BS.1770), for loudness-referenced work.

Use **rescan** to clear the captured loud pass and measure again. **Save default** stores your Target and Measure mode so new instances open there.

LINK & MASTER · STAGE A WHOLE MIX

STAGE instances on different tracks can share one session brain, so you can stage an entire mix in a single move.

LINK

- **Solo** — this instance works on its own.
- **All** — join every STAGE in the session.
- **Grp** — join a numbered group; tap to cycle groups.

Linked instances show a live peer count so you always know how many tracks are in the group. Set-All broadcasts your target to the group; each member applies it as soon as it has measured its own loud pass.

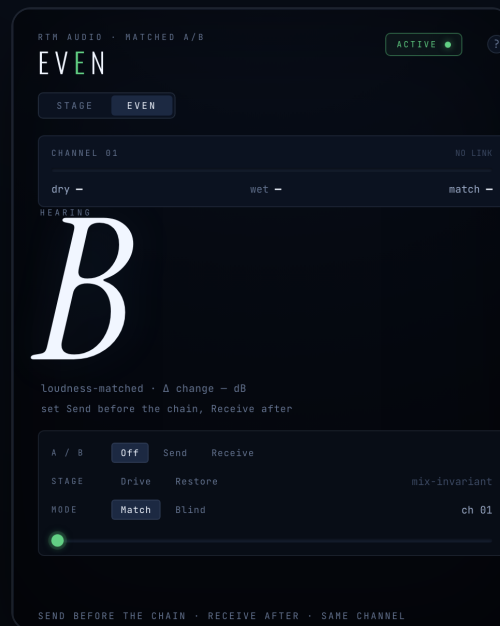
MASTER

One instance in a group can act as **MASTER**: its Target and Measure mode drive every member. A controlled instance shows a "following master" state so there is no ambiguity about who is in charge.

Note: LINK shares state across separate plugin instances in the same session, including hosts that load plugins out-of-process (such as Logic on Apple Silicon).

EVEN · A/B AND DRIVE / RESTORE

Switch to the **EVEN** tab. EVEN gives you two honest ways to judge processing.



THE EVEN TAB

A/B – SEND & RECEIVE

Place a **STAGE** set to **Send** before a plugin chain, and another set to **Receive** after it, both on the same **Channel**. EVEN loudness-matches the two so you compare the **sound**, never the volume. Turn on **blind** to hide which side is which and remove bias entirely.

DRIVE / RESTORE

Place **Drive** before a saturator or EQ and **Restore** after it. Drive feeds the plugin the input level it likes best; Restore puts the level back afterward. The result: the tone changes, but everything downstream in your mix stays exactly where it was.

The dry and processed signals are aligned sample-accurately and the match is verified to null deeply, so what you hear is only the plugin's effect.

INSTALL, UPDATE & SUPPORT

INSTALLING

Run the installer and choose the formats you need. STAGE installs system-wide to the standard locations:

- AU → **/Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/Components**
- VST3 → **/Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/VST3**
- AAX → **/Library/Application Support/Avid/Audio/Plug-Ins**

UPDATING

The installer **removes older versions automatically** before installing the new one, so you never end up running a stale build. If your DAW still shows an old version after updating, rescan your plugins (some hosts cache the plugin list until a rescan or restart).

ACTIVATING

Open STAGE, click **Start Free Trial / Activate**, and follow the prompt. Your license is tied to the machine.

SUPPORT

rtmaudio.com

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