REASONABLE AUDIO

PREAMBLE

User Manual



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Preamble User Manual

Preamble is a neural preamp plugin from Reasonable Audio. Its model was trained on the input stage circuit of a legendary bucket-brigade delay pedal, a sound that a number of equally legendary guitarists used to polish their tone on the way into an amp.

With a convenient auto-gain feature, as well as wet-path filtering and a dry/wet blend, the saturation, distortion, and all analog character can be tailored to suit all types of signals. Not just guitar, but drums, synths, vocals or even full mixes.

Have fun using **Preamble** and thank you for supporting Reasonable Audio.

This manual describes the **Preamble** plugin interface. Each chapter matches a section of the editor. Please read through to discover all the details and tips and tricks of **Preamble**.

Panel overview



The interface is organised into these areas:

Section	Chapter
Header	**Header**
Presets	**Presets**
Menu	**Menu**
Controls	**Controls**
Analyser	**Analyser**

Hover any control in the plugin to see a short description in the **context help bar** at the bottom of the panel. This manual expands on those descriptions.

Getting started

Supported formats

Run the Preamble installer for your platform.

Platform	Formats
macOS	AU, VST3, CLAP, AAX
Windows	VST3, CLAP, AAX
Linux	VST3, CLAP
iOS	AUv3

On Linux, use the release tarball (`Preamble_Linux_*.tar.xz`) and run `./install.sh`. Factory presets install to `~/.local/share/Reasonable Audio/Preamble/Presets`.

System requirements

- **macOS:** 12.0 or later (Apple Silicon, or Intel with AVX2)
- **Windows:** Windows 10 (22H2) or Windows 11, 64-bit (CPU with AVX2: Intel Core 4th generation, AMD Ryzen, or newer)
- **Linux:** Ubuntu 24.04 or later, or another 64-bit distribution with glibc 2.38 or newer (CPU with AVX2: Intel Core 4th generation, AMD Ryzen, or newer)
- **iOS / iPadOS:** 17.0 or later

Mono and stereo

Preamble works on mono and stereo tracks.

- **Stereo:** the left and right channels each run through their own instance of the preamp model, so the stereo image is kept. Each side's preamp reacts to its own signal, the way two separate pedals would. **Auto gain** is linked: it measures both sides together and applies the same level change to each, so it never shifts the balance between them.
- **Mono:** a single instance processes the track. A mono source on a stereo track is processed once and sent to both sides; a stereo source on a mono output is summed to mono first.

First steps

1. Insert Preamble on an audio track or bus in your DAW.
2. Set **Input** for how hard the preamp is driven and **Output** for the final level in the Controls chapter. Leave **Auto gain** on to keep the level matched while you drive.
3. Shape the wet path with **Lo cut** and **Hi cut**.
4. Blend dry and wet with **Mix**.
5. Browse factory presets from the header preset strip.

Context help

When the context help bar is enabled (default), move the mouse over any control to read a one-line description at the bottom of the editor. This manual provides fuller explanations organised by panel section.

UI themes

Choose **Light** or **Dark** from the menu in the header.

Header

The preset title bar runs across the top of the editor. It provides preset navigation, global plugin actions, and access to the About overlay. The menu button has a chapter of its own: Menu.

Controls



#	Control	Description
1	Bypass	Dry signal passes through unchanged.
2	Previous preset	Load the previous factory or user preset.
3	Next preset	Load the next factory or user preset.
4	Preset selector	Select a preset; changes load immediately.
5	Save preset	Save the current settings as a new preset.
6	Delete preset	Delete the selected user preset.
7	Menu	Theme, oversampling, the manual and more.
8	Logo	Show the version, credits and third-party software.

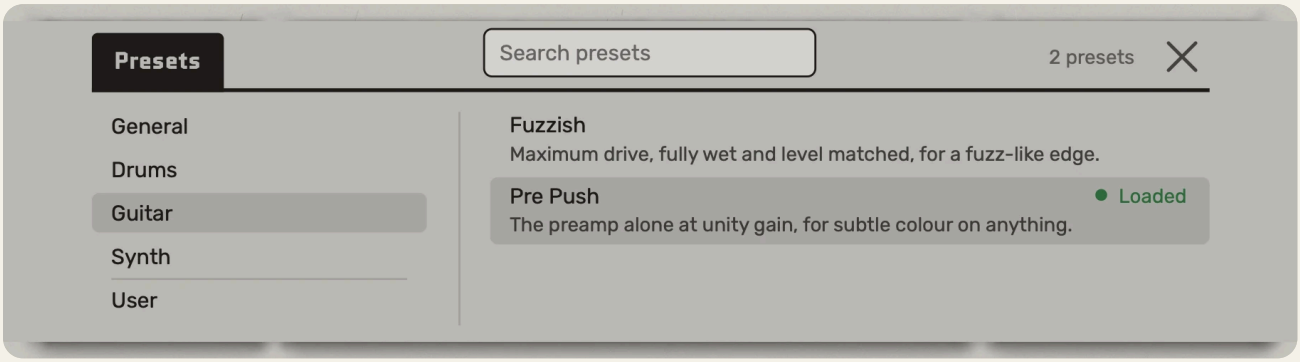
Tips

- Factory presets ship with the plugin, and your own presets are saved to your user preset folder. See Presets for the preset browser, saving, deleting and where presets are stored.

Presets

Preamble ships with factory presets, and you can save your own alongside them. Everything happens from the preset strip in the header: the arrows step through presets, the preset name opens the preset browser, and the save and delete buttons manage your own presets.

Browsing presets

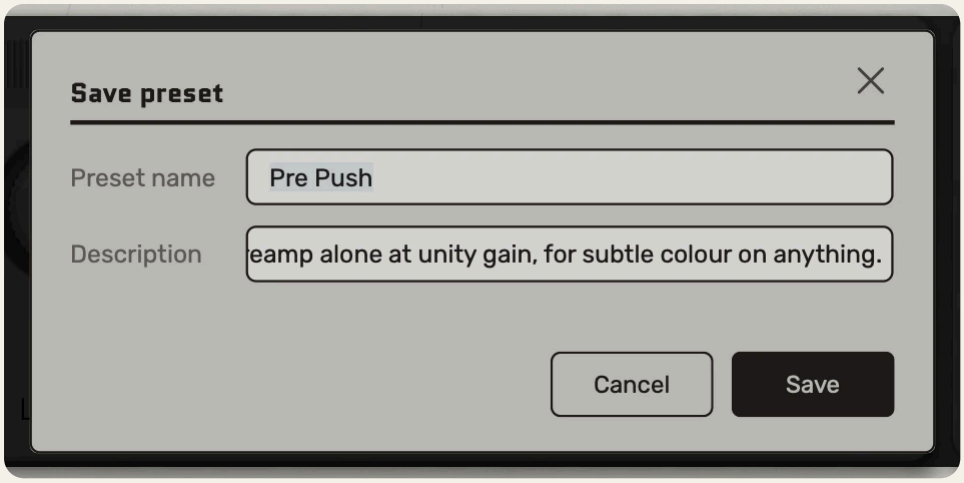


Click the preset name in the header to open the preset browser. It opens on the folder you left it on, even after closing the plugin window. If a different preset has been loaded since, it opens on that preset's folder instead. The loaded preset is marked **Loaded**.

- **Folders** are on the left: the factory folders that come with Preamble, with **General** first, then **User**, which holds the presets you've saved.
- **Presets** in the selected folder are on the right, in alphabetical order. The count next to the close button shows how many are listed.
- Hover over a preset to read its description in the help bar along the bottom.
- **Search presets** finds presets in every folder, including User. You can also just start typing while the browser is open. **Esc** clears the search.
- Click a preset to load it. The browser closes as soon as it loads.
- To close the browser without loading anything, press **Esc** or use its close button.

The **previous** and **next** arrows in the header step through every preset in alphabetical order across all folders, wrapping round at either end.

Saving a preset



Click the save button in the header to open **Save preset**.

- **Preset name** starts with the name of the loaded preset. Change it to save a new preset, or keep it to update your copy.
- **Description** starts with the loaded preset's description. It shows in the help bar when you hover over the preset in the browser or its name in the header. You can leave it empty.
- **Save** (or **Return**) saves; **Cancel** (or **Esc**) closes without saving.

Presets you save go to **User**, so factory presets are never changed. If you save under the name of a factory preset, your version is in **User** and the original stays in its folder.

Replacing a preset



If one of your presets already has that name, the dialog says so under the fields and **Save** becomes **Replace**.

- **Replace** (or **Return**) saves over your preset.
- **Save as copy** keeps your preset and saves this one under the next free number, such as *Warm Bus 2*.
- To save a new preset instead, change the name. The note goes away and the button goes back to **Save**.

Deleting a preset



Load one of your own presets and click the delete button in the header, then confirm with **Delete**. The preset file is removed from disk. Factory presets can't be deleted: the button is dimmed while one is loaded.

What a preset stores

A preset stores the sound: the input and output levels, **Auto gain**, the filters and **Mix**.

Loading a preset leaves **Bypass**, the theme, the view scale and oversampling as they are.

Double-click a knob or slider (or Option-click it) to return it to the value it has in the loaded preset.

Where presets are stored

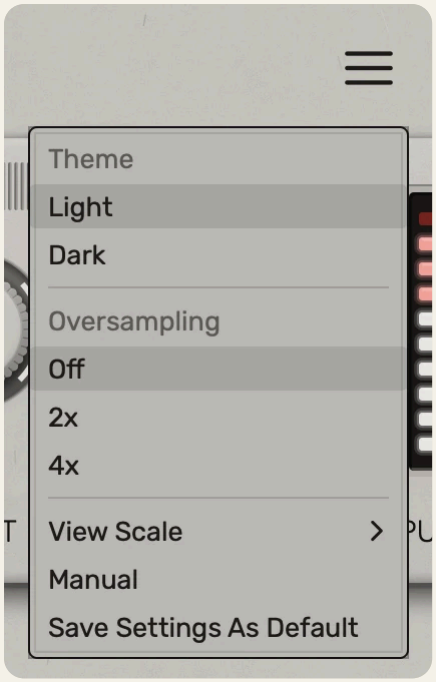
Each preset is an `.xml` file. Factory presets sit in one folder on disk per browser folder; your presets sit directly in your preset folder. To back up or share presets, copy the files; presets copied into your preset folder appear under **User** the next time the browser opens.

Platform	Your presets	Factory presets
macOS	`~/Library/Application Support/Reasonable Audio/Preamble/Presets`	`/Library/Application Support/Reasonable Audio/Preamble/Presets`
Windows	`%APPDATA%\Reasonable Audio\Preamble\Presets`	`%PROGRAMDATA%\Reasonable Audio\Preamble\Presets`
Linux	`~/.config/Reasonable Audio/Preamble/Presets`	`~/.local/share/Reasonable Audio/Preamble/Presets`

On iOS, factory presets are built into the app.

Menu

The three-line button near the right of the header opens the menu.



Item	What it does
Theme	Switches the interface between **Light** (the default) and **Dark**.
Oversampling	Reduces aliasing when the preamp is driven hard: **Off** (the default), **2x** or **4x**. See **Oversampling**.
View Scale	Sets the size of the editor, from 50% to 150%.
Manual	Opens this manual in your browser.
Save Settings As Default	Starts new instances of Preamble with the current theme, view scale and oversampling.

Theme, view scale and oversampling are saved with your session. Presets don't change them, and they can't be automated. A saved session keeps its own settings, whatever the default is.

On iOS there's no **View Scale**, and the app and the AUv3 plugin each keep their own defaults.

Oversampling

Driving the preamp hard creates high harmonics. Any that go past the top of the model's range fold back down as aliasing: faint tones that aren't in tune with the note. **2x** and **4x** run the model at a higher rate and filter those harmonics out. All three settings use the same model, so the tone stays the same.

- **Off** suits most material. Guitar, bass and other darker sources make very little aliasing, even with **Input** pushed hard.
- **2x** clears most of the aliasing from bright sounds driven hard, such as saw synths.
- **4x** goes further, which shows most on loud, high test tones.

2x and **4x** both add 0.8 ms of latency at any sample rate, which Preamble reports to your host so your tracks stay in time. **2x** uses a little over twice the CPU of **Off**, and **4x** between four and five times.

The model always runs at 48 kHz internally, so raising your session's sample rate won't reduce aliasing. At 44.1 kHz, **2x** and **4x** are closer together.

You can change the setting while audio is playing: the output dips for a moment as it switches.

Controls

The signal runs left to right across the panel. **Input** drives the preamp, **Lo cut** and **Hi cut** filter what comes out of it, **Mix** blends that with the dry signal, and **Output** sets the final level. The screen in the middle is the Analyser, which also works as a touch pad for the two cuts.



#	Control	Description
1	Input level	How hard the preamp is driven. The dry side of Mix stays at the incoming level.
2	Auto gain	Keeps the preamp level matched to the dry input as Input drives it harder.
3	Lo cut	Cuts lows from the wet path, up to 5 kHz. Fully left is Off.
4	Analyser	White is the dry path, red the wet. Drag sideways to move both cuts, up to narrow, down to widen.
5	Hi cut	Cuts highs from the wet path, down to 200 Hz. Fully right is Off.
6	Mix	Blend between the dry input and the wet path.
7	Output level	Final level after Mix, ahead of a soft safety clip.

Tips

- Turn up **Input** to drive the preamp harder. With **Auto gain** on the wet level stays matched to the dry input, so **Mix** compares tone rather than volume and **Output** is a plain master trim. Auto gain adapts to new material over the first fraction of a second.
- With **Auto gain** off you hear the hardware's own output level, which rises and compresses as you push **Input**.
- Note that when pushed hard, the preamp can create discordant overtones with certain chords. This is exactly how the real analog circuit performs.
- **Lo cut** and **Hi cut** apply to the wet path only; dry stays unfiltered. They come after the preamp, so they shape the distortion rather than what drives it.
- The LED meters show peak level. The input meter reads after **Input**, so it shows how hard the preamp is driven; the output meter reads after **Output**.
- A soft safety clip with a -1 dBFS knee sits after **Output**.

Analyser

The screen in the middle of the panel compares what goes into **Preamble** with what the preamp makes of it, band by band, while you play. It's also a touch pad for **Lo cut** and **Hi cut**: drag on it to place both cuts at once and watch what they take away.



Reading the screen

- **Across:** frequency, from 20 Hz at the left to 20 kHz at the right. Slightly brighter columns of dots mark 100 Hz, 1 kHz and 10 kHz, which are labelled under the screen.
- **Up:** level. Each row of dots is 2.5 dB. The screen tilts up by 4.5 dB per octave around 1 kHz, as many analysers do, so a typical mix reads closer to level instead of falling away toward the highs.
- **White dots:** the dry path, which is the input as it arrives, before **Input**, with both channels mixed to mono.
- **Red dots:** the wet path, after the preamp, **Lo cut**, **Hi cut** and **Auto gain** but before **Mix**. The red deepens toward the top of the screen, where the wet path is loudest.
- **The line: Lo cut** and **Hi cut** together. It runs flat near the top while both are off and bends down where a cut takes away the lows or the highs.

Mix dims the side you hear less of. At 100% only the wet path plays, so the white fades back; at 0% the red fades instead. Levels jump up quickly and fall back slowly, so short peaks stay on screen long enough to read.

What it's for

- **Seeing what the drive adds.** With **Auto gain** on, the wet path is level-matched to the input, so white and red sit close together wherever the preamp leaves the tone alone. Where red climbs above white as you push **Input**, the preamp is adding harmonics; where it drops below, the preamp or a cut is taking something away.
- **Trimming fizz and mud.** When the red spreads well past the white at the top of the range, or piles up at the bottom, bring in **Hi cut** or **Lo cut** until the line trims it back.
- **Focusing the drive on a band.** Narrow the band to turn the wet path into a band of saturation, such as a thin, mid-forward tone, then lower **Mix** to blend it under the full-range dry signal. The cuts work on the wet path only, so the dry side keeps its lows and highs.

Using it as a touch pad

Drag anywhere on the screen to move **Lo cut** and **Hi cut** together. Both knobs follow, and show their cutoffs under them while you drag.

Drag	Effect
Left or right	Slides the band down or up in frequency, keeping its width. The band travels as far along the frequency scale as the pointer does.
Up	Narrows the band: the two cutoffs move toward each other until they meet.
Down	Widens the band. All the way down turns both cuts off.

- The pad moves the cuts from wherever they are. Clicking changes nothing, and nothing moves until you've dragged a few pixels.
- With both cuts off, dragging up brings them in from either end, closing on the middle of the range at about 630 Hz.
- Each cut stops at the end of its range: **Lo cut** at 5 kHz, **Hi cut** at 200 Hz.
- **Auto gain** matches the level before the cuts, so a narrow band plays quieter than a wide one. Use **Output** to make up the difference.
- The pad sets the same **Lo cut** and **Hi cut** parameters as the knobs, so your host records a drag as automation.
- On iPhone and iPad, drag with one finger.