

PAINSTAGER



Two selectable drive stages, individual blends and shared tone shaping.

Version 3.2.0 for Windows and macOS

User Manual

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Table of Contents

GETTING STARTED	3
LICENSING AND TRIAL	4
INSTALLATION	5
FILE LOCATIONS AND REMOVAL	6
INTERFACE OVERVIEW	7
STAGES A AND B	8
LEVELS AND FILTERS	9
tone, MID AND SHAPE	10
INCLUDED PROFILE BANK	11
WORKFLOWS AND RECALL	12
TROUBLESHOOTING	13
SUPPORT AND CREDITS	14

GETTING STARTED

PAINSTAGER combines two selectable drive profiles in a fixed A-then-B chain. Each stage has its own blend and footswitch. Shared input, filtering, tone and output controls shape the result.

Your first sound

1. Insert PAINSTAGER on an audio track. For a guitar rig, place it before your amp simulator and cabinet stage. It has no cabinet loader of its own.
2. Start with the default profiles: PAIN in A and HATE in B. A starts engaged; B starts bypassed. Both mix controls start at 50%.
3. Play a clean DI or monitor your instrument through the DAW. Adjust IN for the amount of drive, then OUT for a comfortable listening level.
4. Audition A alone. Engage B with its footswitch and raise or lower B Mix to hear what it adds. Change one setting at a time.
5. Save your sound using the DAW session or its plugin-preset system.

What is included

19 factory profiles are built into the plugin and available to either stage. No separate profile download or external NAM file is needed. The front panel selects the supplied bank; it does not import user NAM files.

Mono and stereo

Use a mono or stereo instance to match your track. A stereo instance processes both input channels; it does not turn one performance into a double-tracked guitar.

LICENSING AND TRIAL

PAINSTAGER uses a product-specific Oracle Sound licence key. The same installer provides the 10-day trial and the activated product.

Activate your purchase

1. Sign in to your Oracle Sound account with the email address used for the order, then open My Products.
2. Find PAINSTAGER and copy its complete licence key. A key for another Oracle Sound product will not activate this one.
3. Click ACTIVATE at the bottom of the plugin window beside the trial status.
4. Paste the full key and click Activate. Check the success message and licence status before closing the dialog.

Trial and expiry

The trial runs for 10 calendar days from first use, rather than 10 days of accumulated playing time. The remaining time is shown in the product. Reinstalling or updating does not begin a new trial.

After expiry, activation is required to continue audio processing.

Offline use

The licence is stored and checked locally. Oracle Sound activation requires no iLok or subscription. Internet access is needed to get your download and key; the activated product can be used offline.

My Products: www.oraclesound.com/account

Activation help: www.oraclesound.com/pages/activate

INSTALLATION

Windows

Use a compatible 64-bit host on Windows 10 or 11. Close the DAW, download the PAINSTAGER Windows installer from Oracle Sound, run the .exe and follow the prompts. Allow administrator access and the required Microsoft Visual C++ runtime installation.

Windows includes VST3 and AAX. These are effect plugins and need a DAW or compatible plugin host; there is no standalone app in this release.

macOS

Use macOS 11 or later on an Intel or Apple Silicon Mac. Your DAW may require a newer OS. Quit your hosts, run the signed and notarized .pkg installer and follow its administrator prompts.

macOS includes AU, VST3 and AAX. Use AU in Logic Pro, AAX in Pro Tools, or VST3 in a compatible host.

Open and update

Restart the host after installation and rescan its plugins if the product is missing. Select the current version rather than an older duplicate. Back up sessions and presets before updating.

The current Windows release is digitally signed. Obtain installers from Oracle Sound and check the publisher if Windows asks for confirmation. Contact support if the official download reports a missing or invalid signature.

Downloads: www.oraclesound.com/pages/downloads

FILE LOCATIONS AND REMOVAL

Windows plugin locations

VST3: C:\Program Files\Common Files\VST3\PAINSTAGER.vst3

AAX: C:\Program Files\Common Files\Avid\Audio\Plug-Ins\PAINSTAGER.aaxplugin

macOS plugin locations

AU: /Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/Components/PAINSTAGER.component

VST3: /Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/VST3/PAINSTAGER.vst3

AAX: /Library/Application Support/Avid/Audio/Plug-Ins/PAINSTAGER.aaxplugin

Removal and backups

On Windows, use the PAINSTAGER entry in Installed apps or its uninstaller. On Mac, close the host and remove only this product's plugin bundles.

Keep your sessions, user presets and any external model or IR files. Removing a plugin should not mean deleting your own sound library.

INTERFACE OVERVIEW



The trial countdown, when visible, depends on when your trial began.

Find the controls

IN and OUT flank GATE and TIGHT on the main row. TONE, MID and SHAPE sit above the pedal. The two lower knobs blend A and B; the profile names and arrows select their sounds.

Click a footswitch to engage or bypass that stage. Its lamp indicates the state. Click the information icon for version and credits. ACTIVATE appears beside the trial status when a key has not been entered.

STAGES A AND B

Choose a profile

Click either profile name to open its menu, or use the arrows to step through the bank. The two stages can use different profiles or the same profile. Selection changes the sound of that stage without changing the other stage's mix.

Two independent blends

Each mix knob runs from dry to fully processed. At 0%, that stage contributes no processed sound. At 100%, its processed output replaces the stage input. Intermediate settings retain some of the signal entering that stage.

A Mix blends stage A with the incoming signal. B Mix blends stage B with the result from A. These are serial blends: setting both to 50% is not an equal parallel blend of two independent profiles.

Footswitches and bypass

Bypassing A sends its input onward to B. Bypassing B leaves A available. Bypassing both stages still leaves shared filtering, tone and level controls in the signal path. Use your DAW's plugin bypass for a whole-plugin comparison.

Useful combinations

Start with one stage, then add a small amount of the second. For clarity, reduce IN or one stage's mix if stacked drive becomes congested. Use OUT to compare alternatives at a similar listening level.

LEVELS AND FILTERS

IN and OUT

IN adjusts the feed to the chain from -24 to +24 dB. More input can drive the selected profiles harder. OUT adjusts final level from -12 to +12 dB. Lowering OUT cannot repair clipping that occurred in your audio interface.

TIGHT

TIGHT applies a high-pass filter before the drive stages. The minimum leaves the cut off; increasing it removes more low-frequency energy, up to a 600 Hz setting. Use small amounts first so low notes retain useful body.

GATE

GATE adjusts the noise-gate threshold from -100 to 0 dB; the default is -70 dB. Raise it until idle noise closes, then check soft notes and long tails. Lower it if notes disappear too early. The Gate On host parameter starts enabled.

Meters

The input and output meter pairs help you judge signal level. Watch your interface and DAW meters as well. Changing profiles or stacking stages can change both tone and loudness.

TONE, MID AND SHAPE



TONE

TONE tilts the balance with low and high shelves. Positive settings reduce lows and lift highs; negative settings add lows and soften highs. The centre is neutral. Its displayed range is -100% to +100%.

The shelves are centred around 500 Hz and 2 kHz and reach approximately 6 dB of adjustment in opposite directions at the extremes.

MID

MID boosts or cuts around 850 Hz, from -8 to +8 dB. Use it to bring out the guitar's focus or reduce a crowded midrange. Zero is neutral.

SHAPE

SHAPE changes the width of the MID adjustment. Lower Q values are broader; higher values are narrower. The range is 0.35 to 4.0, with a default of 1.0. At MID = 0 dB, changing SHAPE alone does not add a mid boost or cut.

Working together

Choose the profiles and input drive first. Use TIGHT to control lows before distortion, then TONE for overall balance and MID/SHAPE for focus. Recheck the finished sound through your amp and cabinet.

INCLUDED PROFILE BANK

PAINSTAGER includes 19 profiles. Every name below is available in both A and B; audition the profiles at a consistent input level.

Profile bank	Profile bank
BLEED	BURN
DOOM	FEAR
GORE	GRIM
HARM	HATE
HURT	KILL
MAIM	PAIN
RAGE	SLAY
TEAR	WAIL
WILT	WOE
WRATH	

Default selection

A: PAIN - engaged, mix 50%. B: HATE - bypassed, mix 50%.

The names identify sounds in this product's factory bank. They are not external file paths or user presets.

WORKFLOWS AND RECALL

One stage before an amp

Insert PAINSTAGER before an amp simulator. Leave B bypassed, choose A and vary A Mix. Reduce IN for a cleaner blend or increase it for more drive. Rebalance OUT before the amp if the whole rig becomes too saturated.

Stacking A into B

Keep the first sound, engage B and begin with a low B Mix. Compare different B profiles with the same A setting. To hear B alone, bypass A; to hear the stack, re-engage it.

Saving and automation

Your DAW session stores the selected profiles, switches and control settings. Use the host's plugin-preset system to reuse a sound in another project. This release has no separate on-panel user-preset browser or save button.

The controls are available as host parameters. Use automation for deliberate changes, but audition profile switches in context before relying on them in a final bounce.

Backups

The factory profiles are embedded, so a recalled session does not need external profile files. Keep the same product installed on the receiving system, activate it there, and back up the DAW project and any amp/cabinet files used elsewhere in the chain.

TROUBLESHOOTING

No sound

Check the licence or trial status, track monitoring, input selection and DAW routing. Confirm that IN/OUT and the source track have sensible levels. If soft playing is gated, lower the GATE threshold.

Too much distortion or fizz

Reduce IN, bypass B and audition A alone. Lower stage mixes, check the following amp's drive and confirm a cabinet is present in your guitar rig. Use TONE to rebalance brightness.

Both stages are off but the tone still changes

The shared filters, EQ and level controls remain active. Use host bypass to compare the entire plugin with the unprocessed signal.

Clicks or CPU overload

Increase the DAW buffer, reduce the number of simultaneous instances and confirm the project sample rate and interface driver. Select a buffer appropriate for live tracking or mixing.

Activation or scanning problems

Use the key for PAINSTAGER, copied in full from My Products. Reopen older instances after activation. If the host cannot find the plugin, restart it, rescan the correct format and check for an obsolete duplicate.

SUPPORT AND CREDITS

Contact Oracle Sound

jay@oraclesound.com.au

Include the product version, operating system, DAW and plugin format, audio interface, sample rate and buffer size. Describe the exact steps and error. For account issues, include the order number; never post your licence key publicly.

Credits

Oracle Sound - PAINSTAGER.

Developed by Jay Huxtable.

R. Jorj - original development and GUI.

Artwork by Thrashwolf.

Neural Amp Modeler by Steven Atkinson.

Oracle Sound: www.oraclesound.com

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