BabiczTools

PRE + BUS

The illustrated user manual



Conceived and created by Robert Babicz

Version 1.0.0 · ENGLISH · Release Candidate - 2026-11-01

babicztools.com

A few words from Robert

Thank you for choosing PRE + BUS. Robert Babicz and BabiczTools wish you a wonderful time making music. These tools bring the colour and interaction of Robert's hardware studio into your mix. Start gently, listen to the whole arrangement, and let different tracks keep their own character.

Robert Babicz & BabiczTools

I have been making music since 1990. PRE and BUS distil more than 30 years of listening, experimenting and working with analogue equipment into my own sonic aesthetic. They bring together many of the experiences that have shaped how I hear a mix: depth, movement, weight and the small interactions that make sound feel alive. Today, it is possible to bring this approach into a plugin - an approach that previously demanded an elaborate collection of analogue hardware. My wish is to make that experience accessible inside your own session, while leaving room for your musical decisions.

The originals behind the PRE models live in my studio: carefully analysed preamps and transformer circuits from internationally renowned makers, whose equipment helps shape music in leading studios around the world. Each brings its own voice: silky openness, warm body or a generous helping of punch. These are characters to get to know by ear. Switch models, play with the input level and let a voice step forward, a bass find its outline or a beat catch fire. Follow your ears and enjoy the discovery.

Robert Babicz



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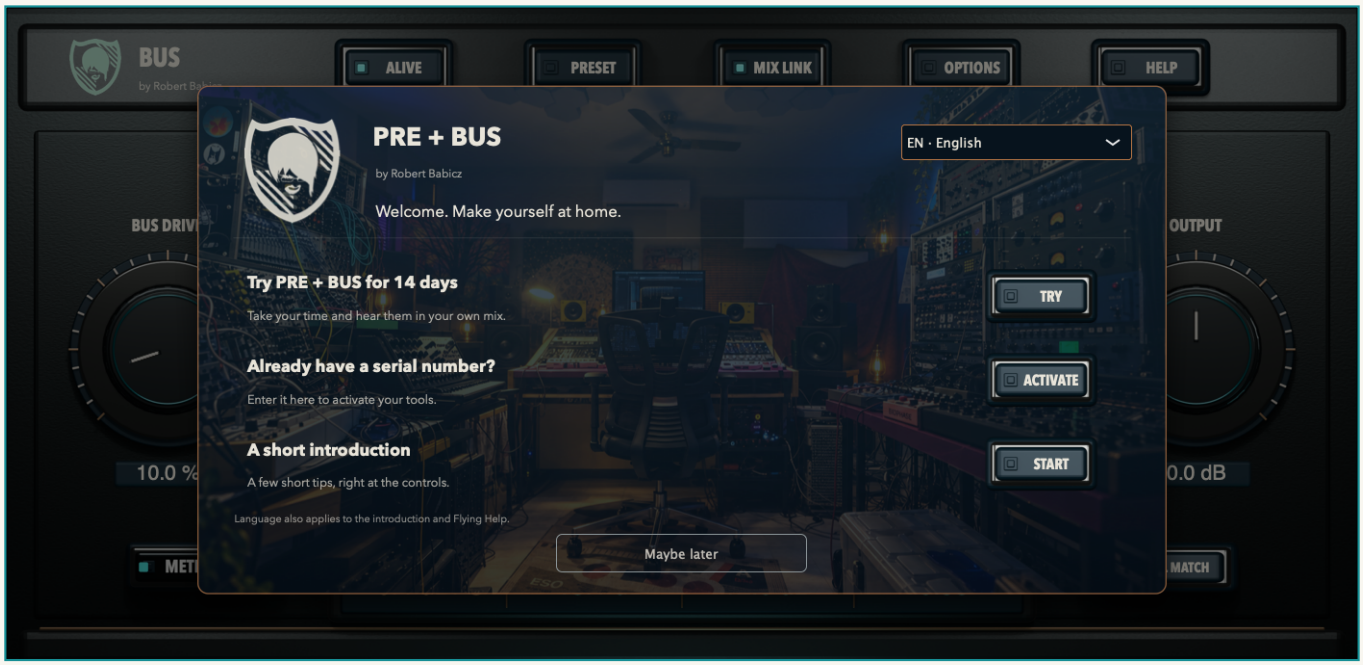
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Welcome and activation



Welcome

English is the initial language. Choose EN, DE, FR or ES at the top right. This also selects the language of the introduction and Flying Help; it does not alter sound.

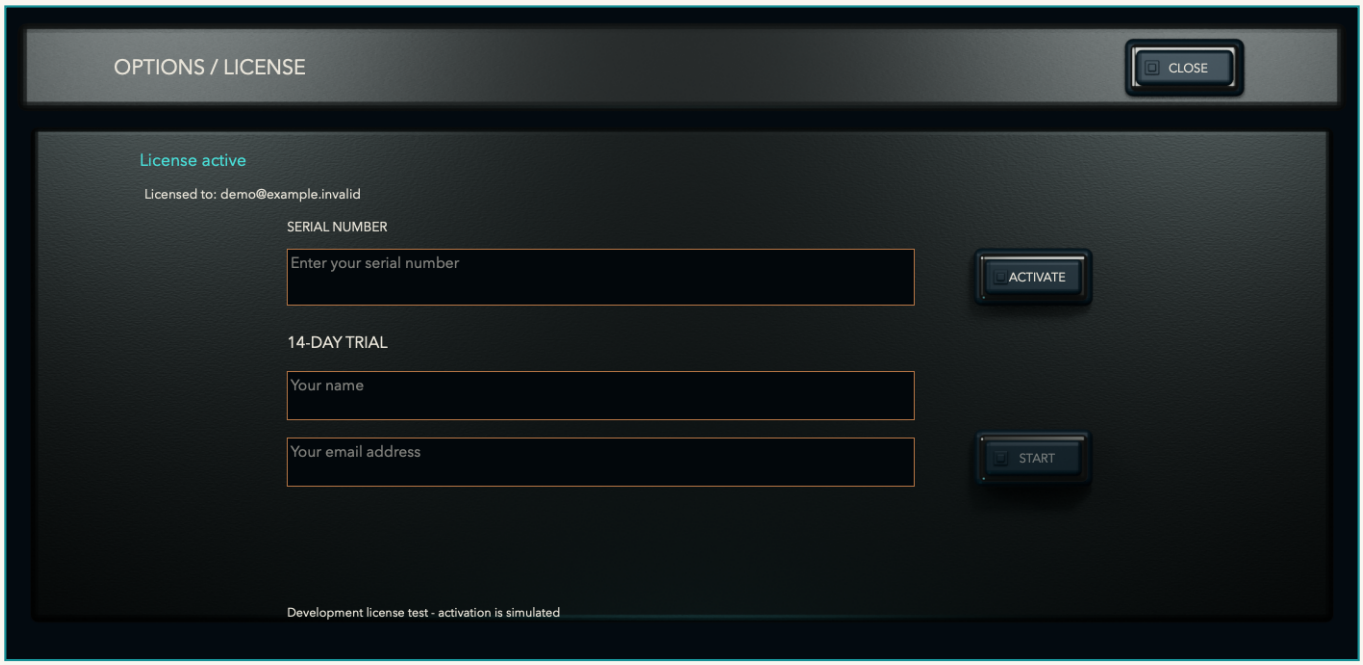
TRY / ACTIVATE / START

Choose **TRY** to open the 14-day trial form, or **ACTIVATE** to enter a purchased serial number. **START** opens the short introduction. Opening Welcome alone starts neither a trial nor an activation.

Maybe later / Close

Choose Maybe later or the close button to return to the plugin. Without a valid trial or licence, audio follows the latency-aligned dry path. Welcome never activates a licence automatically.

License panel



OPTIONS > LICENSE

Open this panel again at any time. Enter your purchased serial number in **SERIAL NUMBER** and press **ACTIVATE**. For a trial, enter your name and email and press **START**. Wait for the service result; **CLOSE** or Escape returns to the plugin.

Status

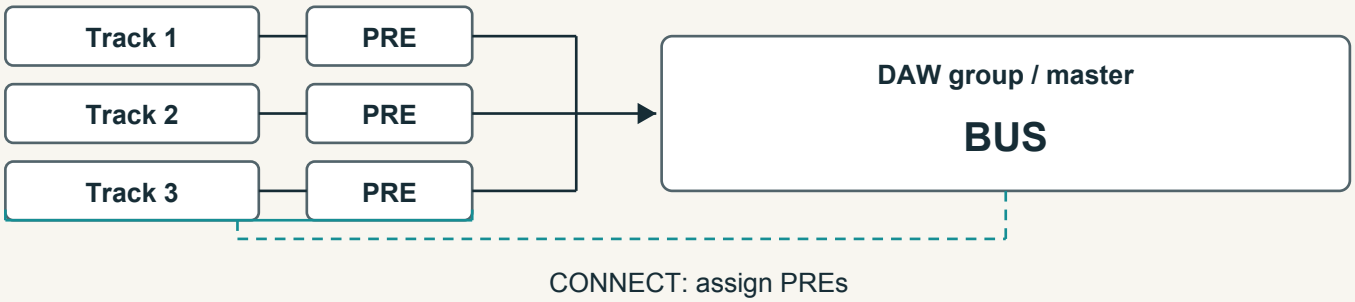
Check the licence state and remaining trial days. After expiry, activate a full licence to restore processing. If either product reports inactive, check **OPTIONS** > **LICENSE** in that product. These illustrations use a development activation with fictional demonstration data; your installation shows its own validated status.

Licensed email

The read-only line shows the email address associated with the validated licence or trial. It does not simply repeat the address typed into the trial form. Older activations without stored email show an explicit unavailable message. The address in this illustration, demo@example.invalid, is fictional.

Quick start and signal flow

Audio routing in the DAW



PRE → DAW routing → BUS

In the DAW plugin browser, look for PRE - BabiczTools and BUS - BabiczTools under BabiczTools. Insert PRE on the individual tracks. Route their audio in the DAW to a group or master channel containing BUS. The solid arrows in the diagram show audio. **CONNECT** assigns PRE instances to a console; the dashed line shows that assignment. It does not route audio.

First steps

1. Select a PRE model and play a representative passage. Adjust **INPUT** and **OUTPUT**.
2. In BUS, open **CONNECT**, tick the desired PRE instances and press **APPLY**.
3. Use Console A/B to switch this BUS and its assigned PREs between **PROCESSED** and **ORIGINAL**. Adjust **OUTPUT** or use **LEVEL MATCH** for a useful loudness comparison.

Starting settings (INIT)

INIT means the supplied starting settings. In a new instance, **ALIVE** is on. BUS also starts with **SWEET** on, **GLUE** 55%, **CONSOLE LOAD** 50%, **PRE ALIVE** 150% and **BUS ALIVE** 100%. **REALTIME** starts at **NORMAL** and **BOUNCE** at **HIGH**. Loading a saved project or preset restores its saved values.

PRE: levels and meters



INPUT / OUTPUT

INPUT drives the selected preamp circuit. More input can increase saturation, not only loudness. **OUTPUT** is the final trim. Use **LEVEL MATCH** after a sound decision to reduce loudness bias. Like studio hardware, PRE invites a little deliberate mischief: push **INPUT** harder and explore saturation, rough edges and distortion as musical colours. Lower **HEADROOM** to reach saturation sooner; compensate with **OUTPUT** and compare at a similar listening level. Try a gentle glow, then a bolder growl. Let the song decide how far to go.

Ranges / PRE meters

INPUT: -24 to +24 dB. **OUTPUT**: -24 to +12 dB. **HEADROOM**: 0-24 dB. **TEXTURE**: 0-150%. IN PEAK and OUT PEAK show the maximum channel peak before and after the PRE circuit. Both columns in each meter repeat that peak; they are not separate left/right or RMS readings. The display below the eight model buttons shows character text such as **FAST PUNCH**. **CONNECT** IN BUS is now below the **OUTPUT** value.

PRE: headroom, texture and control



HEADROOM / TEXTURE

HEADROOM changes the circuit's operating margin: lower values reach saturation sooner; **INIT** is 20.4 dB. **TEXTURE** sets the amount of the selected model's harmonic texture; **INIT** is 100%. Both controls are on the PRE Options surface.

Mouse control / INIT

Drag knobs vertically and faders horizontally; Shift gives fine adjustment. The numbers are read-only displays and do not open text fields. Double-click a knob or fader to restore its **INIT** value. All sound parameters still support DAW automation.

PRE: eight circuit buttons



12

Open, fast and punchy discrete/transformer preamp.

TR

Dual-mono transformer pair: subtle iron, depth and magnetic memory.

GR

Wide-headroom discrete preamp: large, deep and open.

P1

Focused Class-A/transformer preamp: present and controlled-creamy.

73

Classic transformer console colour: warm, dense and rounded.

25

Early discrete console: clean and punchy, with a hard late edge.

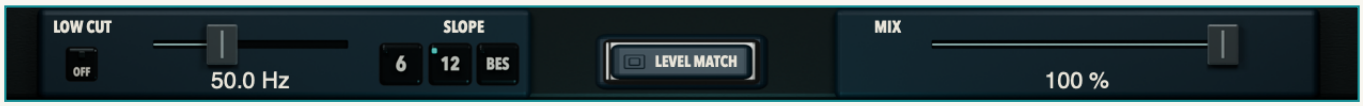
RED

British transformer preamp: polished, solid and subtly authoritative.

4K

4000-series console: immediate, controlled and rhythmically precise.

PRE: lower controls



LOW CUT / Frequency

ON enables the musical low cut; **OFF** retains frequency and slope without filtering. Set the continuous frequency from 20 to 400 Hz. Double-clicking the frequency control restores the special **INIT** state: **OFF** and 50 Hz.

SLOPE: 6 / 12 / BES

6 is a broad 6 dB/oct cleanup. 12 is a more focused 12 dB/oct response with punch. **BES** is the smoother Bessel 12 dB/oct choice. Listen to the low end and transient shape rather than choosing solely by the number.

MIX / LEVEL MATCH

MIX blends processed PRE with the dry input; **INIT** is 100% processed. **LEVEL MATCH** measures once and adjusts **OUTPUT**. While measuring it blinks; DONE confirms an applied result, NO SIGNAL means no valid correction was applied. Another click cancels a running measurement.

The breathing of an analogue console



Shared power supply

PRE and BUS bring the shared breathing of an analogue mixing console into your mix. In an analogue console, the channels draw on a common power supply. It responds to changing current demand with a certain inertia: it cannot deliver energy instantaneously and without limit. Strong impulses on one channel can therefore affect the operating conditions of the others. This subtle yielding and recovery contributes to the cohesion and living dynamics of a mix.

Hear the interaction

With **MIX LINK**, activity in the assigned PRE channels contributes to the shared console response. **CONSOLE LOAD** controls the amount of this response in BUS. The result is a musical interaction between tracks, inspired by the breathing of a commonly loaded power supply. Try a lively drum passage: listen to the relationship between kick, bass and the rest of the mix as you vary **CONSOLE LOAD**.

BUS: drive, load and iron



BUS DRIVE

Drives the BUS circuit into more colour and saturation. **INIT** is 10%. Compensate with **OUTPUT** or use **LEVEL MATCH** when judging the tonal result. Range 0-100%.

CONSOLE LOAD

Sets console operating load and shared supply interaction. **INIT** is 50%. **MIX LINK** lets activity from assigned PREs contribute to the console behaviour; it does not move the PREs' individual controls. Range 0-100%.

IRON / OUTPUT

IRON controls the amount of transformer character, 0-150%, **INIT** 100%. It is distinct from the **IRON** character button below. **OUTPUT** is the final trim, **INIT** 0 dB; use it to keep sensible headroom in the following chain. **OUTPUT** range: -12 to +12 dB.

BUS: character and parallel compression



OPEN / IRON / PUNCH

These three buttons choose the BUS character. **OPEN** offers the widest headroom and least density. **IRON** adds transformer weight and rounded authority. **PUNCH** uses a faster envelope and firmer rhythmic edge. Only one character is selected at a time.

GLUE / ALIVE

GLUE is based on analysis of an American bus compressor. Its parallel compression adds density, body and weight while preserving the direct transient path. Turn **GLUE** up and discover how much cohesion suits your music. **INIT** is 55%. Switch on **ALIVE** to add movement to this compression; **GLUE** must be above zero. Set the movement strength with **BUS ALIVE** under **OPTIONS**. **GLUE** range: 0-100%.

SWEET

The tonal shaping of **SWEET** is based on analysis of a legendary 1960s valve equaliser, particularly renowned in mastering. Its musical idea shapes this broad smile curve: pleasantly warm bass and open, silky highs. A gentle low-mid dip adds clarity. It starts enabled. Under **OPTIONS**, **SWEET AMOUNT** controls the colour from 0 to 200%: 0% neutral, 100% the original curve, 200% twice the filter gains in dB. Experiment above 100% too, and find the warmth and sparkle that makes your music feel good.

ALIVE and MIX LINK: hear the interaction



ALIVE

In PRE, **ALIVE** adds subtle supply response and stereo variation to the selected circuit. In a connected console, **PRE ALIVE** under BUS > **OPTIONS** sets its strength; **ALIVE** must be on in the affected PREs. In BUS, **ALIVE** animates the **GLUE** compression. Set its strength with **BUS ALIVE** under **OPTIONS**; **GLUE** must be above zero. Listen to a complete phrase and compare **ALIVE** on/off at a similar output level.

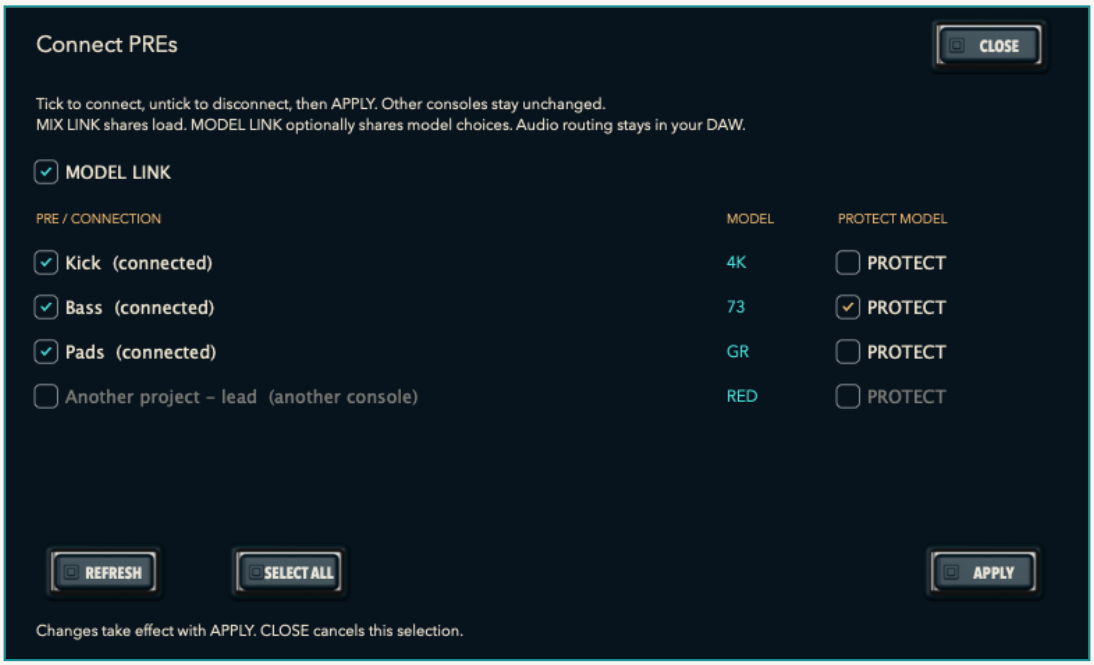
MIX LINK

MIX LINK enables shared console-load interaction within the assigned group. Activity in the connected PREs contributes to the console response; **CONSOLE LOAD** in BUS sets the load amount. Assign the PREs with **CONNECT** and confirm with **APPLY**, then enable **MIX LINK** for the group. **PRE DRIVE** and **PRE ALIVE** in BUS > **OPTIONS** provide separate group controls. Use **MODEL LINK** in **CONNECT** when you also want linked model selection.

Explore above 100%

PRE ALIVE and **BUS ALIVE** both range from 0 to 400%. Try values above 100%: the living responses become more pronounced and can give the mix a beautiful character. Explore different strengths and listen to how the tracks play together. The starting values are **PRE ALIVE** 150% and **BUS ALIVE** 100%.

CONNECT: build your console



Example: **MODEL LINK** is enabled; the bass PRE is protected. New BUS instances start with **MODEL LINK** off.

PRE rows / APPLY / CLOSE

SELECT ALL marks all available PREs at once; PREs in other consoles stay unchanged. Tick the desired PRE instances to assign them to this BUS. Untick an instance to disconnect it. **APPLY** confirms the selection; **CLOSE** or Escape discards pending changes. Track names and model labels identify each row. Each PRE belongs to one console at a time.

MODEL LINK

MODEL LINK starts off in new BUS instances. Enable it and confirm with **APPLY**. Clicking a model button in an unprotected PRE then selects that model in the other unprotected PREs of the console. Enabling it alone changes no model; levels and filters remain individual.

PROTECT

Tick **PROTECT** beside a PRE instance to exclude its model from **MODEL LINK**, then press **APPLY**. It neither sends nor receives linked model changes. You can still select its model locally. Console interaction and Console A/B continue to include this PRE.

REFRESH

Press **REFRESH** to update the list after adding or removing PRE instances.

One A/B for the connected console



A/B: PROCESSED ↔ ORIGINAL

Console A/B switches this BUS and its assigned PREs together between processing and the latency-aligned original. **PROCESSED** indicates processing and lights turquoise-blue; **ORIGINAL** indicates the original signal and lights orange. Click again to return. All parameter settings are retained.

Connection status

The centred display below the middle control panel reports connection status and recent processing or pending A/B acknowledgements. **CONNECT**, A/B and **PROCESSED**/**ORIGINAL** are centred above the panel. Other console groups and other DAW effects are outside this A/B. If no unique BUS controller is available, the control cannot promise a console-wide comparison. Resolve missing or duplicate BUS membership in **CONNECT** before judging the result.

BUS: meters and reset



METER VIEW

Cycles the scoreboard through LEVEL, LOUDNESS and IMAGE. LEVEL shows **MAX PEAK**, RMS, CREST and CORR. LOUDNESS shows momentary, short-term and integrated loudness with compressor gain reduction (GR). IMAGE focuses on stereo correlation, width left/right balance and PRE LINK count.

IN PK / RMS · OUT PK / RMS

The vertical meters show input and output peak/RMS levels. Compare them when adding drive or compression. Positive correlation is generally compatible; strong negative readings invite a mono check. Meter readings describe the signal, not a target you must reach.

Scoreboard click / OPTIONS > RESET

Click the scoreboard, or RESET in Options, to clear peak holds and integrated loudness before a new measurement. This does not reset sound parameters or choose **INIT**. **LEVEL MATCH** is a separate one-shot output adjustment, not a meter reset.

Reading the numbers

MAX PEAK is the held maximum sample peak; RMS describes average energy. CREST is the peak-to-RMS difference. **LUFS M** is momentary, **LUFS S** short-term and **LUFS I** integrated loudness; GR is compressor gain reduction. IMAGE adds WIDTH, BALANCE and the PRE LINK count (LOCAL when no linked activity is reported).

LEVEL MATCH

In BUS as in PRE, **LEVEL MATCH** measures a representative passage once and corrects **OUTPUT**. MATCHING and a blinking lamp indicate the measurement; DONE confirms a correction and NO SIGNAL indicates no valid result. Click again to cancel. It is useful after changing drive, **GLUE** or **SWEET**.

Header and presets



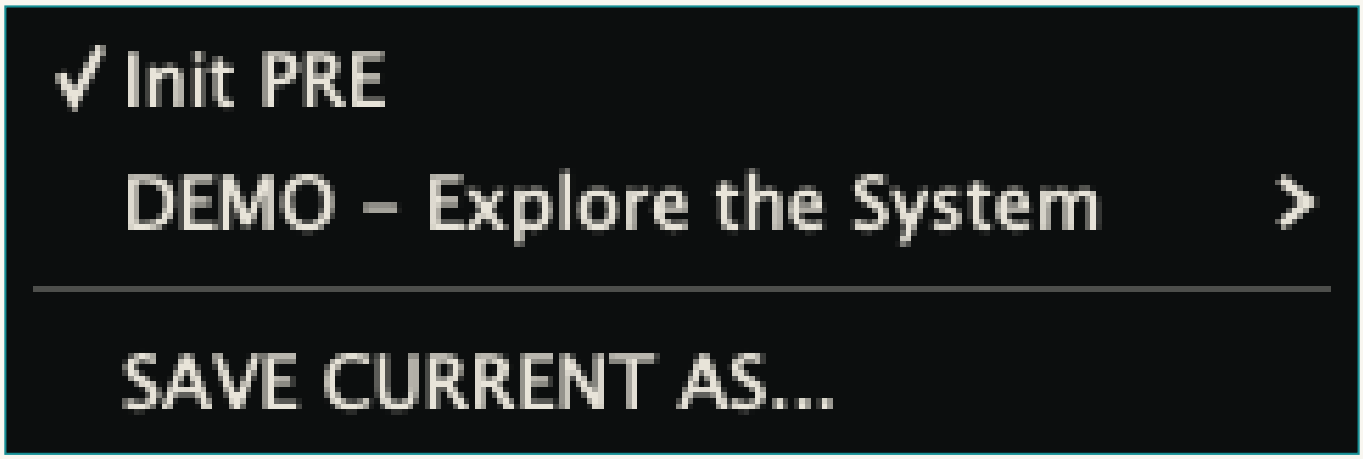
PRESET: one shared menu

Open **PRESET** to choose **INIT**, **DEMO - Explore the System** or **SAVE CURRENT AS**. **LOAD USER** and **DELETE USER** appear once user presets exist. The checkmark in the **PRESET** menu identifies the last loaded or saved preset, including after project recall. It remains beside that preset when you subsequently change controls, so the current sound may differ from the saved preset.

OPTIONS / HELP / Logo

OPTIONS opens settings and additional controls. **HELP** enables Flying Help at the control being used. Click the original BABICZSTYLE logo for product information and support actions.

Your own presets: save and recall



SAVE CURRENT AS

Set the sound in the desired plugin, then open **PRESET** > **SAVE CURRENT AS**. Enter a descriptive name such as "Warm drum bus" and press **SAVE** or Enter. A user preset saves that product's settings. Save the DAW project as well to retain the complete session and its audio routing.

LOAD USER / DELETE USER

After saving, reopen **PRESET** > **LOAD USER** and choose the name to recall it. **LOAD USER** and **DELETE USER** appear when user presets exist; an empty library initially shows only factory choices and **SAVE CURRENT AS**. PRE and BUS keep separate libraries. **DELETE USER** asks for confirmation before removing a file.

Name, confirm or cancel



Names and duplicate files

Use a short descriptive name. Unsupported filename characters are replaced and names are limited to 64 characters. If a name already exists, a number is appended instead of silently overwriting the existing preset. PRE files use .babiczpre; BUS files use .babiczbus.

SAVE / CANCEL / Escape

SAVE or Enter confirms. **CANCEL**, Escape or a click outside dismisses the naming dialog without saving. Closing the plugin editor also closes its naming dialog. After finishing, the DAW owns the keyboard again. Save the DAW project separately for full session recall.

Logo menu: product and documentation



Version and plugin format

Click the original logo at the top left. The menu shows the installed product version and plugin format. AU is a macOS format; VST3 is available on macOS and Windows.

Website / Instagram / Legal Notices

babicztools.com provides product information, updates and new tools; Instagram opens @babicztools. Legal Notices opens the bundled third-party notices and licence texts using a system application. These links do not run background update checks.

Open Manual (PDF)

Open the separate PDF in the chosen help language; English is the fallback if that edition is unavailable. All four language books cover both PRE and BUS. If the manual is missing, reinstall the shared documentation supplied with PRE/BUS. **HELP** remains the compact Flying Help at the control.

Copy System Info for support



Copy, paste, add the steps

Choose Copy System Info in the logo menu. Open your support email and paste the clipboard text. Add what you expected, what happened, exact reproduction steps and the number of plugin instances. Attach a helpful screenshot if needed. Nothing is sent automatically.

Included information and privacy

The text contains product/version, format, DAW/host and available host version, OS, architecture, CPU/cores, RAM, sample rate, block size and channel count. Unavailable host versions are identified as such. Licence email, serial numbers, usernames, private paths and machine identifiers are not included. You decide what to send.

Options: quality, language and size



REALTIME / BOUNCE: ECO · NORMAL · HIGH

REALTIME selects processing quality during playback and realtime export. **NORMAL** is the middle starting level. **BOUNCE** is used only when the host reports offline rendering and starts at **HIGH**. **ECO** reduces processing cost; **HIGH** prioritises quality at higher CPU cost. A realtime bounce follows **REALTIME**.

S / X / XL · Language · INTRO

Choose 1056 × 510, 1408 × 680 or 1760 × 850. Size changes do not change sound. EN, DE, FR and ES select the Welcome, introduction and Flying Help language. **INTRO** starts the short control tour again. **HELP** preference and language are recalled with the DAW project. The last deliberately chosen size is remembered locally per computer and product; a sound preset or a project from another computer does not replace it. On smaller screens the display temporarily fits a smaller size, retaining your preference.

LICENSE / CLOSE

LICENSE opens activation and trial information; **CLOSE** returns to the main controls. Website, Instagram, Legal Notices, Open Manual (PDF) and Copy System Info are in the logo menu. These service actions do not alter sound parameters.

PRE console selection

The console selector in PRE **OPTIONS** assigns this PRE to an available console. If you click **MIX LINK** while this PRE is unassigned, **OPTIONS** opens the console selection first. You can also assign PREs from **CONNECT** in BUS. Choose **Not connected - select console** to disconnect this PRE.

BUS Options: shared tone and movement



PRE DRIVE · PRE ALIVE · BUS ALIVE

PRE DRIVE adds linked drive from 0 to 24 dB with inverse compensation; **INIT** is 0 dB. **PRE ALIVE** sets the linked PRE variation strength, 0-400%, **INIT** 150%. **BUS ALIVE** separately sets BUS compressor movement, 0-400%, **INIT** 100%. The latter requires **ALIVE** on and **GLUE** above zero.

SWEET AMOUNT · BREATHE OFF / SOFT / DEEP

SWEET AMOUNT sets the smile EQ amount, 0-200%, **INIT** 100%; the main **SWEET** switch enables it. **BREATHE** adds optional mix breathing through the saturation: **OFF** disables it, **SOFT** is restrained, **DEEP** stronger. **BREATHE** is independent of **ALIVE** and starts **OFF**.

CONSOLE group

Choose the intended console group or create a new separate console. Use **CONNECT** on the main page to select its PREs. Keep one BUS controller per group. When moving a BUS to another group, **MODEL LINK** returns off to avoid accidental model changes in a different mix. **New separate console** creates a separate group; **Not connected - select console** disconnects this BUS from its group.

Flying Help and the short introduction



HELP on / off

Enable **HELP**, then pause over a control or operate it. A compact explanation appears beside that control in the selected language. There is no separate help page. Switch **HELP** off to hide tips. Knob and fader tips explain drag adjustment and double-click **INIT**; numbers remain read-only.

INTRO: Back / Next / Close

The optional tour points to four essential controls. Next advances, Back returns, Close ends it. The tour never changes sound parameters. You can start it from Welcome or Options and continue working immediately after closing it.

Five colour sets



Original · Copper · Bronze · Champagne · Silver

Select a colour set in Options. Original preserves the familiar dark metal; Copper and Bronze add warmth; Champagne and Silver offer lighter surfaces. The selection changes materials only: control behaviour, signal colours and audio are unchanged. It is a local visual preference for each product.

Practical checks and troubleshooting



Different PRE models in one mix

Leave **MODEL LINK** off, or protect selected PREs, to combine different circuits. Keep **MIX LINK** on when you want their console interaction. Save the DAW project for complete recall of parameters and membership. Opening an older project preserves saved sound values; older sessions can retain their previous linked-model behaviour.

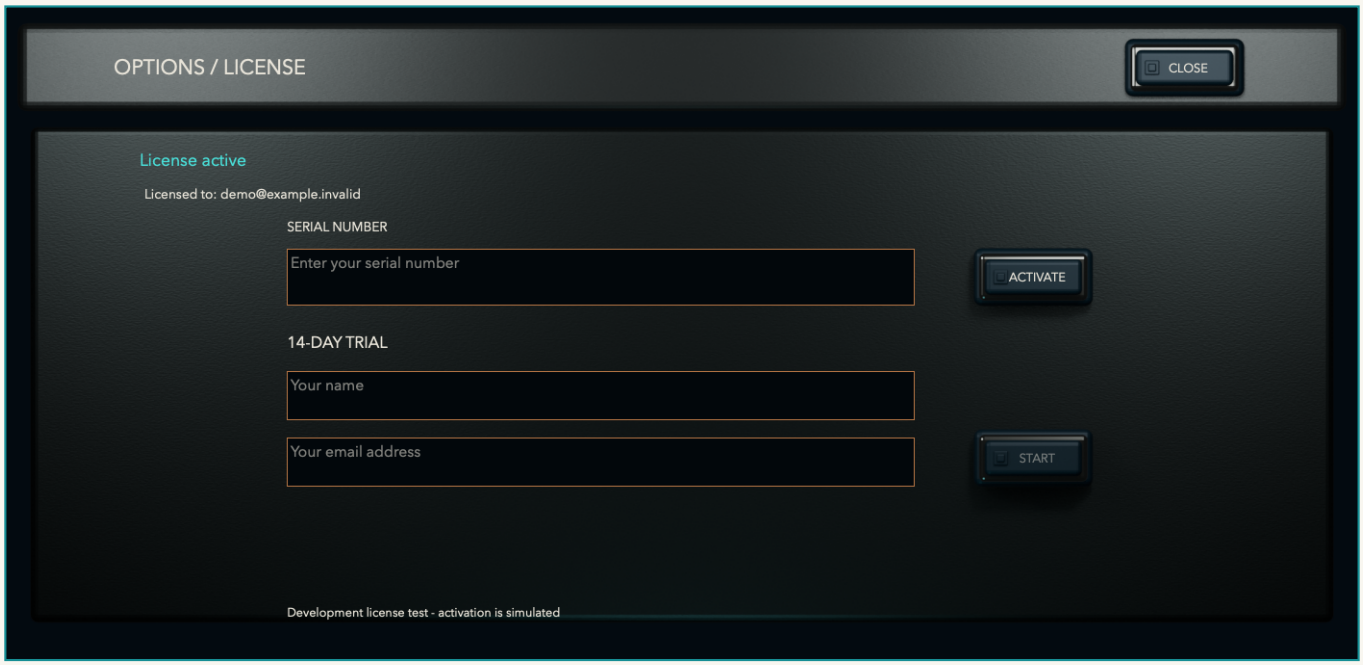
No sound change / No PRE found

Check the license state, **ORIGINAL/PROCESSED**, **MIX**, group membership and **MIX LINK**. Play audio so active instances can exchange status. **REFRESH CONNECT** after opening PRE. Check DAW track routing separately. For **LEVEL MATCH**, play a representative passage; silence may produce NO SIGNAL.

CPU / Support

Try **REALTIME NORMAL** or **ECO**, a larger DAW buffer or freezing completed tracks. **HIGH** for offline bounce is separately selectable. For support, use the logo menu > Copy System Info, paste it into your email and add instance count, exact steps and a useful screenshot. SINEE handles customer installation and licensing.

Text entry and DAW shortcuts



Only licence fields and preset names

Type only while editing a licence/trial field or naming your own preset. Spaces and other characters belong to that field; they must not operate the DAW. Tab moves between the licence fields. Numeric control values do not open editors.

Return to the DAW

After confirming or cancelling text entry, closing the page/dialog or clicking outside a field, keyboard control returns to the host. Space should again control DAW transport when no text field is active. If a host behaves differently, report the host/version, plugin format and exact steps with Copy System Info.