BLEVINS TONE CO.

THE PARLOUR

STUDIO ROOMS · RE-MIC · AMBIENCE · AU · VST3

User Manual



WELCOME

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SECTION 1

Introduction

The Parlour is a studio room ambience and re-mic plug-in. It puts a track into one of three imaginary 1940s–50s studio rooms and picks it up with three pairs of vintage-style room mics, each with its own distance, width, pan and level.

The room sound is calculated from the physics of each room (its size, its surfaces, the mic patterns and where the mics stand), not taken from recordings. The window shows a photoreal picture of the chosen room, with each mic pair standing where its Distance control puts it. Below it is a 1940s-style control panel.

Inside The Parlour

- **Three rooms:** The Booth, Studio B and The Scoring Stage.
- **Three mic pairs:** a crossed ribbon pair, a spaced pair of valve condensers and a spaced pair of broadcast omnis.
- **Two ways to use it:** Re-Mic (only the room) or Ambience (the room blended with your dry track).
- **Mono or stereo source,** and Time Align to keep the room in time with the dry track.
- **A fully parametric Program EQ** and a variable-mu style **leveller** on the room sound.
- **Factory presets,** a NORMAL / HQ / HQ BOUNCE quality switch, and no added latency.

New in version 0.5

- **Levels that match your track:** the room now comes out about as loud as the track going in. Before, strong sources could push the meters into the red.
- **New starting point:** a fresh copy opens in Re-Mic with a stereo source and Time Align off.
- **Presets rebalanced:** the Ambience presets' MIX settings were raised so they keep the same room-to-dry balance at the new levels. Presets you saved yourself may need a little more MIX.
- **Your presets in the preset menu** (0.4): the PRESET box also lists the presets you have saved in Logic, and can save, delete and show your preset folder.

SECTION 2

Installing The Parlour

The Parlour comes as a standard Mac installer. It installs two versions of the plug-in, so it works in almost any recording app:

- **Audio Unit (AU)** for Logic Pro, GarageBand, MainStage and other AU hosts.
- **VST3** for most other recording apps that load VST3 plug-ins.

What you need

- A Mac running macOS 11 or later (Apple silicon or Intel; it runs natively on both).
- A 64-bit AU or VST3 host.

Install

1	Quit your recording app.
2	Double-click the installer (.pkg) and follow the steps. Click **Customize** if you only want some of the plug-ins.
3	Open your recording app. If The Parlour doesn't appear, ask the app to rescan its plug-ins.
4	**Logic Pro:** on a track or bus Audio FX slot, choose **Audio Units › Blevins Tone Co. › The Parlour**. **Other apps:** look in the VST3 list under **Blevins Tone Co.**

If something goes wrong

Problem	What to do
The Parlour doesn't appear in Logic	In Logic, open **Settings › Plug-in Manager**, find The Parlour, and click **Reset & Rescan Selection**.
The Parlour doesn't appear in another app	Make sure the app is scanning **/Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/VST3**, then rescan its plug-ins.

PLUG-IN LOCATIONS

The installer puts the Audio Unit in /Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/Components and the VST3 in /Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/VST3. To uninstall, delete The Parlour.component and The Parlour.vst3 from those two folders.

Trial and activation

The Parlour runs as a full, free 14-day trial on each computer: every feature works. When the trial ends, The Parlour goes quiet until you activate it with your licence from your Blevins Tone Co. purchase.

Start a trial or activate

- Open The Parlour in your recording app. The first time, the activation panel covers the window. Click **Activate online**.
- Your browser opens your Blevins Tone Co. account (blevins-audio.moonbase.sh). Sign in, or create an account with your email. If you have bought The Parlour, your licence activates; if not, your 14-day trial starts. Go back to your recording app: The Parlour unlocks within a few seconds. There is no serial number to type.
- During the trial, a small **Trial** pill in the bottom-right corner of the window shows the days left. Click **Unlock** on it to open the activation panel at any time, or the × to hide it until the window is next opened.

Your licence and your computers

- Each licence works on up to 3 computers. Once activated, The Parlour keeps working without an internet connection; it checks in with the licence server now and then when you are online.
- To move it to another computer, sign in to your account, remove the old computer from your licence, then activate The Parlour on the new one.
- Bought a bundle? Each plug-in in it has its own licence in your account; activate each one the same way.
- Studio computer never online? Email info@blevinsguitarcompany.com and we will help you activate it offline.

Installing and updating

- One Blevins Tone Co. installer covers every plug-in. On the Installation Type page, click **Customize** to choose which plug-ins, and which formats, to install. Anything you install but haven't bought simply runs as a trial.
- To update, download the latest installer from your account and run it again. Your licence, settings and presets stay as they are.

PRIVACY

Activation sends the licence server a device ID, your computer's name and the The Parlour version, never your audio or projects. See blevins.io/privacy.html.

SECTION 3

Quick start

1	**Insert it.** Put The Parlour on a track (Re-Mic) or on an aux bus fed by sends (Ambience with MIX at 100%).
2	**Pick a room.** Turn the ROOM selector to BOOTH, STUDIO B or STAGE. The picture changes to show it.
3	**Place the mics.** Turn each pair's DISTANCE, or drag its stand in the picture. Closer mics hear more of the source; further mics hear more room.
4	**Balance the pairs.** Set each pair's LEVEL, WIDTH and PAN. Use M (mute) and S (solo) to hear one pair at a time.
5	**Choose how to use it.** MODE on RE-MIC gives only the room. Flip it to AMBIENCE and use MIX to blend the room with your dry track.
6	**Shape and level.** Switch in the Program EQ and the leveller to shape and tame the room, then set OUTPUT.

STARTING FROM A PRESET

Open the PRESET box in the header. **Make Room** and **Studio Drums** are good starting points for drums; **Default** returns every control to its starting position.

SECTION 4

The window



Studio B, with the three mic pairs placed by their Distance controls.

- **Header:** the PRESET box, the quality switch (NORMAL / HQ / HQ BOUNCE).
- **Room picture:** the chosen room with its size and decay at the top left. Each mic pair has a tag showing its distance from the source. Drag a stand left and right to move it.
- **Control panel:** ROOM, the three mic pairs, PROGRAM EQ, LEVELLER and OUTPUT.
- **Resizing:** drag the bottom-right corner. The Parlour remembers its size.
- Double-click any control to reset it.

SECTION 5

Two ways to use it

Re-Mic (default)

Put The Parlour on the track as an insert. The output is only the room, as if the track were played back through a speaker in the room and recorded again with the room mics. The MIX knob doesn't apply in this mode. The room comes out about as loud as the track going in, so switching it in and out keeps your level steady. The VU meter reads 0 VU at −18 dBFS, so a hot track pushes the needle up just as it would on the dry track: use OUTPUT to bring it down.

Ambience

Flip MODE to AMBIENCE and use **MIX** to blend the room with the dry track (default 100%; the knob is marked AMBIENCE ONLY). Or put The Parlour on an aux bus, feed it with sends, and set MIX to 100%.

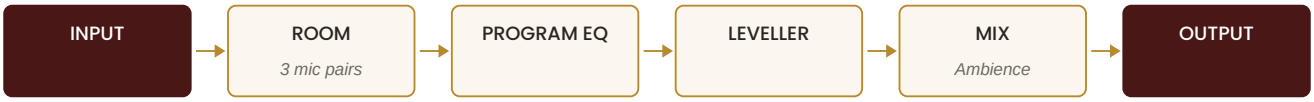
Source: Mono or Stereo

Mono plays one source in the room (left and right are summed). **Stereo** (the default) plays two speakers, left and right, so a stereo track keeps its spread in the room.

Time Align

ALIGN (off by default) removes the time it takes sound to travel to the mics, so the room stays in time with the dry track. Off, you hear the natural delay: at the far end of The Scoring Stage it's about 45 ms, which gives a real sense of distance.

Signal flow



SECTION 6

The rooms



The Booth.



The Scoring Stage.

Room	Size (W × L × H)	Decay	Mic distances	Character
The Booth	14 × 19 × 10 ft	about 0.45 s	3 to 12 ft	Small, tight and woody: close, intimate ambience
Studio B (default)	22½ × 32½ × 14 ft	about 0.9 s	4 to 22 ft	A mid-sized tracking room: the all-rounder
The Scoring Stage	45 × 70 × 24 ft	about 1.5 s	5 to 50 ft	A big orchestral room: depth and air

SECTION 7

The mic pairs



The three mic pairs: Velvet, Bottle and Eight Ball.

Pair	Type and setup	Character
BA-44 Velvet	Ribbon, figure-8; a crossed pair at one point	Dark and smooth; hears the most room
BA-47 Bottle	Valve condenser, cardioid; spaced 3 ft	Thick lows and a presence lift; the most focused
BA-8 Eight Ball	Broadcast omni; spaced 5 ft	Mid-forward; the widest

Each pair's controls

Control	Range (default)	What it does
DISTANCE	nearest to farthest (Velvet 35%, Bottle nearest, Eight Ball 65%)	Where the pair stands. The readout shows feet from the source.
LEVEL	Off, −60 to +6 dB (0)	Level of this pair.
WIDTH	0–200% (100%)	Stereo width of the pair; 0 is mono.
PAN	L100 – C – R100 (C)	Constant-power pan after Width: hard to one side is 3 dB up on that side.
M / S / Ø	buttons	Mute, solo and polarity. The lamps above them light when each is on.
SIG	lamp	Lights when the pair is passing signal.

Each pair's level stays about the same as you move it, like an engineer adjusting the preamp, so DISTANCE changes how much room you hear rather than how loud the pair is. Moving a mic while audio plays is crossfaded, and the tail keeps going.

SECTION 8

The Program EQ



A fully parametric three-band EQ on the room sound, after the mics and before the leveller. LOW and HIGH are shelves and MID is a bell; each has its own FREQ, GAIN and Q. LOW CUT and HIGH CUT finish it off.

Q on the shelves sets how sharp the corner is: low values give a gentle, broad slope, higher values a steeper shelf with a slight bump at the corner. On the MID bell, low Q is broad and musical and high Q is narrow, for notching out one problem note.

Sessions and presets from earlier versions of The Parlour keep their EQ settings: the old fixed frequencies are carried over to the new FREQ knobs.

Band	Controls, range (default)	Use it to
LOW (shelf)	FREQ 30–600 Hz (100), GAIN ±12 dB (0), Q 0.3–2 (0.6)	Weight or warmth in the room sound, or take out boom.
MID (bell)	FREQ 120 Hz–8 kHz (1 kHz), GAIN ±12 dB (0), Q 0.3–8 (0.9)	Find and tame a boxy or honky note in the room, or push presence.
HIGH (shelf)	FREQ 1.5–16 kHz (10 kHz), GAIN ±12 dB (0), Q 0.3–2 (0.6)	Air and sheen, or a darker, older room.
LOW CUT	Off, 40, 80, 120, 200, 500 Hz (Off)	Keeps low-end build-up out of the room.
HIGH CUT	Off, 12, 8, 5, 3 kHz (Off)	Rolls off the top for a vintage, distant sound.
IN	on / off (off)	Switches the Program EQ in. The lamp lights when it's in.

SECTION 9

The leveller



A variable-mu style compressor in the style of the valve levelling amplifiers of the 1950s. Its ratio rises the harder it works, so light settings just hold the room steady and heavy settings squeeze it into a dense, breathing ambience. Its valve stage adds a little warmth when pushed.

It sits after the Program EQ, so it levels the room exactly as you've shaped it.

Control	Range (default)	What it does
IN / OUT	toggle (OUT)	Switches the leveller in.
REDUCE	0–100 (30)	How far the threshold comes down. Level is made up automatically, so it changes the amount of levelling, not the loudness.
TIME	1–6 (2)	Release: 1–4 are fixed releases of 0.3, 0.8, 2 and 5 s; 5 and 6 are program dependent.
GAIN	±12 dB (0)	Make-up after the leveller.
GR meter		Gain reduction.

PUMPING ROOMS

For a classic squashed drum room, set REDUCE to 60–80 and TIME to 1 or 2, then blend it in with MIX.

SECTION 10

Output and presets

Control	Range (default)	What it does
MIX	0–100% (100%)	Dry against room. Ambience mode only.
OUTPUT	−24 to +12 dB (0)	Final level.
VU meter		A proper VU-style average of everything leaving the plug-in; 0 VU = −18 dBFS.
PEAK lamp		Lights at 0 dBFS.

Factory presets

Choose a preset from the PRESET box in the header, or from your recording app's preset menu.

Preset	What it sets up
Default	Roger's everyday setting: Studio B in Re-Mic mode, stereo, with a gentle low cut.
Make Room	The Booth in Ambience mode, stereo source, Time Align off, about 44% room. The Program EQ cuts the lows below 200 Hz and lifts the top; the leveller works hard (Reduce 68) for a dense, close room.
Studio Drums	Studio B in Ambience mode, stereo source, Time Align off, about 35% room, low cut at 120 Hz and the same firm levelling: a punchy, glued drum room.
Elmers	The Booth in Ambience mode at about 36%, stereo, with a 200 Hz low cut and the leveller holding it together.
Vocal Booth	The Booth with the Bottle close and the Velvet behind it, mono source, about 33% room and a little air.
Strings on the Stage	The Scoring Stage with all three pairs, the Eight Balls far back and wide, about 50% room.
Distant Piano	Studio B with the pairs pulled back, about 50% room, natural delay (Time Align off) and a slightly darker top.
Old Radio Room	One mono ribbon in The Booth, band-limited and levelled, for a 1940s broadcast sound.
Wide Ambience Bus	The Scoring Stage at 100% wet, very wide, for an aux fed by sends.
Studio B Re-Mic	Studio B in Re-Mic mode with the default pairs and an 80 Hz low cut: the plain room.

SAVING YOUR OWN

Save your favourite settings with your recording app's preset menu. Everything, including the window size, is saved with your project.

SECTION 11

Quality: Normal, HQ and HQ Bounce

The three buttons in the header choose how much The Parlour oversamples its leveller, the only part that adds harmonics. Oversampling stops those harmonics folding back as harsh, unrelated tones.

Setting	What it does	When to use it
NORMAL	2x oversampled leveller	Everyday use; lowest CPU
HQ	8x oversampled leveller	Heavy levelling, final mixes
HQ BOUNCE	NORMAL while you play; HQ automatically when you bounce or export	Best of both: light on CPU while you work, highest quality in the final file

- The Parlour adds no latency in any setting.

SECTION 12

Tips and troubleshooting

If you hear…	Try this
The room is too loud in Re-Mic mode	That's all you hear in Re-Mic. Switch to Ambience and use MIX, or lower OUTPUT.
Muddy, boomy room	Raise LOW CUT to 120 or 200 Hz, or cut the LOW shelf.
The room smears the timing	Turn ALIGN on, or move the mics closer.
Not enough room	Move the pairs further back, raise the Eight Ball, or choose a bigger room.
The stereo image collapses	Set SOURCE to Stereo, and check each pair's WIDTH.
Nothing at all	Check that no pair is muted, that a solo isn't on elsewhere, and that LEVELs aren't at OFF.

SECTION 13

Specifications

Item	Value
Formats	Audio Unit (AU) and VST3 effect; universal binary (Apple silicon and Intel)
Channels	Mono or stereo in; stereo out
Rooms	The Booth, Studio B, The Scoring Stage, calculated from room physics
Mics	Three pairs: crossed ribbons, spaced valve cardioids, spaced omnis; distance, level, width, pan, mute, solo, polarity
Program EQ	Low shelf 30–600 Hz, mid bell 120 Hz–8 kHz, high shelf 1.5–16 kHz, ±12 dB with Q; low cut to 500 Hz, high cut to 3 kHz
Leveller	Variable-mu style with valve stage; six time constants; 2x oversampled (8x in HQ)
Latency	None
Presets	Ten factory presets, from the PRESET box or your recording app's preset menu
Requirements	macOS 11 or later; a 64-bit AU or VST3 host

SECTION 14

Legal

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The Parlour is an original Blevins Tone Co. design. Where this manual describes a sound or a module as being in the style of a kind of classic equipment, that describes the character Blevins Tone Co. set out to capture; it does not imply any connection with, or endorsement by, any manufacturer.

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