




Blackstar[®]
AMPLIFICATION

the sound in your head

 Designed and Engineered by
Blackstar Amplification UK

ST. JAMES PLUGIN

EL34 AND 6L6 EDITIONS

VERSIONS 1.3.0 (AND LATER)

Owners' Manual

Introduction

Our mission is to design the ultimate tools for self-expression for guitarists. Since 2007 when Blackstar was founded in Northampton, England, we have launched countless award-winning products that inspire guitarists around the globe.

The software amplifiers featured in the St. James EL34 and 6L6 are designed by the same design team who created the benchmark products ranges of Artisan, Series One, ID:Series and St. James. By applying decades of world-class real-world amplifier design experience, the St. James plugins deliver the TONE and FEEL of real valve amplifiers in a visually stunning, low-latency package that is easy to use and sets new standards in the live and studio / recording world.

The St. James plugins will become your go-to tool for guitar tone, with the versatility to traverse genres and styles effortlessly from pristine cleans to modern high gains.

Find your tone using:

One of the St. James Amplifiers

- EL34 - Vintage clean to chimey mid-gain tones.
- 6L6 – Dynamic clean to classic crunch and aggressive modern sounds.

CabRig

- Two channels with curated cabinet and microphone combinations
- Virtual room environment
- Comprehensive mix controls
- Custom IR loader

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Getting Started

Basic Requirements

To use a Blackstar St. James plugin you will need:

A computer running a supported operating system.

St. James uses the PACE licensing and anti-piracy system. To authorise a St. James plugin you will need an iLok account and the most recent version of the iLok License Manager.

If you have purchased the full version of a St. James plugin, you will also need the authorization code provided in your order confirmation email.

To use a Blackstar St. James plugin within a DAW instead of as a standalone application, you will also need a supported DAW software (please see the list below of supported DAWs).

Compatibility and Formats

Blackstar plugins are available in multiple formats, as well as having standalone versions. We provide the following formats:

- VST3
- AU
- AAX
- Standalone Application

Supported Operating Systems

- macOS 10.15 and later
- Windows 8 and later

Supported DAWs

- Pro Tools 2023.6 or later, Mac & PC - AAX Native
- Logic Pro X 10.7.8 or later - AU
- Cubase 12.0.60 or later, Mac & PC - VST
- Ableton Live 11.0 or later, Mac & PC - Mac: AU & VST; Windows: VST
- Reaper 6.80 or later, Mac & PC - Mac: AU & VST; Windows: VST
- Presonus Studio One 6.1.0 or later, Mac & PC - Mac: AU & VST; Windows: VST
- FL Studio 21.0.3 or later, Mac & PC - VST
- Reason 12.5.1 or later, Mac & PC - VST

Downloading

You can download the plugin installers from:

www.blackstarplugins.com

For details on how to purchase a licence, please see the relevant sections below.

After going through the process of obtaining either a full licence you will be provided with a download option for Mac and a download option for Windows. Please click on the appropriate download for your operating system. The download will begin automatically.

Getting Started

Installing

Once the download is complete, unpack/extract the zip folder and open the installer inside. Follow the onscreen instructions to install your new software.

File Directories

The Blackstar St. James plugin will install as default into the following directories.

macOS

- AU:
Macintosh HD/Library/Audio/Plug-ins/Components/
- VST3:
Macintosh HD/Library/Audio/Plug-ins/VST3/
- AAX:
Macintosh HD/Library/Application Support/Avid/Audio/Plug-ins/
- Standalone App:
Macintosh HD/Applications/

Windows

- VST3:
C:/Program Files/Common Files/VST3/
- AAX:
C:/Program Files/Common Files/Avid/Audio/Plug-Ins/
- Standalone App:
C:/Program Files/Blackstar/

Full License

To purchase a full license of the Blackstar St. James plugin, click on “add to cart” on the St. James page and complete the on-screen steps for purchasing. Collect the Blackstar Plugin activation code from the Blackstar Plugins website.

If you have already been using the St. James plugin as a free trial, open iLok License Manager, log in, and right-click on your free trial activation and click on “deactivate”. You will not need to do this if your trial is already expired.

Once this is done, go to the “Available” tab, right-click on your full license and select “Activate”.

NOTE: Your St. James plugin license can be activated on up to three different computers..

Overview



Header Bar



Preset Box

The current preset will be displayed in the centre of the top bar. Clicking on the arrows will cycle through your saved presets. You can favourite the current preset clicking on the Heart icon and favourited presets will appear in the favourites folder in the preset menu.

Preset Menu

To open the preset menu, click on the preset box. All saved presets will appear here, organised by folder. Click on the arrow icons to open each folder and load a preset by clicking on it.

Search for specific preset names by clicking on the search bar in the preset menu and typing out the appropriate preset name. Searching will return results from all folders.

Use the Import button to add non-factory presets to your St. James plugin, such as preset packs or presets made by another user. Click on the Import button, browse to the relevant directory and select the preset files you wish to import.

Use the Export button to export presets you have created and saved whilst using your St. James plugin, in order to transfer them to another computer or give them to another user. Click on the Export button, select the presets you wish to export and choose the directory you want to export them to.

MIDI (standalone version)

Click on the MIDI port icon to view the MIDI menu. From this menu you can enter/exit MIDI Learn, open the MIDI Map, or reset all MIDI mappings. For more information on MIDI please see the MIDI section (page 19).

Settings

Click on the Settings icon to view the settings for the St. James plugin. For the standalone version, settings is where you can configure your audio device IO and/or select your MIDI devices. You can also reset the plugin to the default state from the settings menu.

Info Box

All parameter adjustments will be displayed in the Info box on the right side of the top bar. This can be used for fine adjustment of controls and when setting tempo sync divisions.

Footer Bar



Input

Use the Input Level meters on the left of the footer bar to view the signal level into your St. James plugin. The input level can be adjusted using the Input control next to the Input Level meters.

NOTE: The Input Level meters will display when clipping occurs with red Clip Indicators at the top of the meter bar. If clipping occurs, turn down the Input control and clear the Clip Indicators by clicking on them.

Gate

The Gate control affects the threshold of the Noise Gate. Turning the Gate control up will increase the threshold and result in lower-level signals, such as noise, being muted. To turn the Noise Gate off, turn the Gate control all the way down.

NOTE: Turning the Gate control up too high may result in your guitar signal being affected. To set the Noise Gate correctly, turn the Gate control up slowly until the unwanted noise is only just muted.

Mono/Stereo Switch

The Mono/Stereo switch affects the input configuration of your St. James plugin. When the switch is set to Mono, there will be a single mono input to the plugin and when the switch is set to Stereo, the input to the plugin will be stereo across a pair of channels.

Signal Chain

The signal chain is shown in the centre of the footer bar. The plugin modules shown in the signal chain are applied to your guitar signal in this exact order.

To navigate to a module page, click on the Page button you want to navigate to. The button will depress and the page will be shown in the main plugin window.

Individual modules can be activated and deactivated using the On/Off buttons next to the Page buttons. When a module is active, the On/Off button will be lit.

Tuner

Clicking on the tuning fork icon will open the Tuner window. To close the Tuner window click on the tuning fork icon again, the 'X' button in the top left or anywhere on the background behind the Tuner window. For more information on the Tuner please see the Tuner section (page 11).

Output and Window Size

Use the Output Level meters on the right of the footer bar to view the signal level coming out of your St. James plugin. The output level can be adjusted using the Output control next to the Output Level meters.

Adjust the overall window size by clicking on the resize icon on the far right of the footer bar.

NOTE: The Output Level meters will display when clipping occurs with red Clip Indicators at the top of the meter bar. If clipping occurs, turn down the Output control and clear the Clip Indicators by clicking on them.

AMP Page

Depending on your plugin variant, your St. James plugin will include one of the software versions of either the 50W EL34 or 50W 6L6 variations of the award-winning Blackstar St. James range of valve amplifiers.

EL34



Channel I is inspired by clean, dynamic American amps of the mid '60s, with clean headroom and dynamic compression to deliver inspired musical-mids and tight-lows. This channel is a perfect pedal platform.

Channel II of the EL34 powered St. James amp is vintage in nature. The preamp design delivers the classic crunch you'd expect from an EL34 amp but with stunning clarity and chime. All this is topped off with a switchable 10dB front-end boost.

6L6



Channel I is inspired by clean, dynamic American amps of the mid '60s, with clean headroom and dynamic compression to deliver inspired musical-mids and tight-lows. This channel is a perfect pedal platform.

Channel II has a gloriously British, 'punch in the chest' roar. However, with the Voice switch activated, the saturation gets cranked 'to 11' and the emulated power-stage damping is reduced for a tight low-end chug.

CabRig Page



Cabs and Mics

The cab and mic combinations are preset in the St. James EL34 and 6L6 plugins. You can adjust the sound in CabRig to your taste using the “Axis” switch and the mix controls (described below).

Room

Adjust the level of the room mics by adjusting the Room knob.

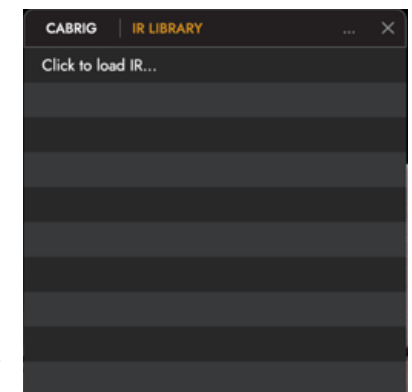
Mix Controls

Balance the levels of your cabs using the Channel Faders and craft your stereo image using the pan sliders. Use the solo buttons to isolate Cab One or Cab Two, or the mute buttons to silence them.

Custom IR Files

You can load your own IR files. Click on the Cab One or Cab Two box to open the speaker cabinet selection panel, then select the IR LIBRARY tab. You can also clear the IR LIBRARY or load IR files in the “...” menu.

Thanks to Blackstar’s intelligent behind-the-scenes processing, each IR is automatically phase-aligned and optimized for smooth, hassle-free integration—no hassle, just tone.



Tuner



Overview

Clicking on the tuning fork icon in the Footer Bar will open the Tuner window. To close the Tuner window click on the tuning fork icon again, the 'X' button in the top left or anywhere on the background behind the Tuner window.

The Tuner is fully chromatic and features a tuning gauge, note display, tuning reference and mute toggle. The Tuner is capable of accurately tuning guitars in standard tuning as well as extended range.

Tuner Gauge and Note Display

When playing a note, the Tuner automatically detects the target note and displays this on the note display. The target note detection is affected by the tuning reference (see section on tuning reference for more information).

The gauge displays whether the note being played is flat (to the left of centre) or sharp (to the right of centre) compared to the detected target note and selected tuning reference. The gauge displays across a range of +/- 50 cents, with the centre being the correct tuning for the detected target note.

To tune, adjust the tuning of your instrument to move the amber LED strips on the tuning gauge towards the centre. When the tuning of your instrument is close to the target note, the centre LED strip will be lit in green. When the tuning of your instrument is stable and within +/- 1 cent of the detected target note, the centre LED strip will flash to indicate that the note being played is in tune.

If the detected target note is not the note you want to tune your instrument to, tune your instrument up or down until the furthest reaches (left or right) of the tuner gauge LED strips are reached. Continue tuning until the LED strips disappear and light up on the opposite side of the gauge. The note display will update to indicate the new detected target note.

Tuning Reference and Mute Toggle

The tuning reference is displayed underneath the note display and shows the tuning reference in Hz. The default and most common tuning reference is 440Hz.

To adjust the tuning reference, click on the tuning reference value and type in a new tuning reference, for example 432Hz. Press enter or click outside of the text box to confirm the new tuning reference. Adjusting the tuning reference to 432Hz will tune the note 'A4' 8Hz lower in pitch than the default of 440Hz.

NOTE: The range of the tuning reference that can be set is 420Hz to 460Hz. Entering a value outside of this range will snap to the nearest permitted value.

By default, opening the Tuner will mute the output of the plugin. However, if you want to hear the output of the plugin whilst tuning your instrument, simply click the 'M' mute button (located next to the tuning reference and under the note display) to toggle the mute off. To mute the output, press the mute button again.

Midi (Standalone Only)

Overview

The St. James EL34 and St. James 6L6 standalone versions feature MIDI support. You can use your favourite MIDI devices to change presets, or to custom map plugin parameters for easy control.

Setup

Connect a MIDI device to your computer, click the Settings icon at the top right of the Header Bar, click Audio Settings, then select your device from the Active MIDI Inputs section. You can select multiple devices at once.

Mapping and MIDI Learn

There are two ways to enter MIDI Learn:

- Click the MIDI port icon found at the top right of the Header Bar, select Enter MIDI Learn
- Right-click the parameter or preset you want to control, select Enter MIDI Learn (this will preselect the parameter or preset)

Here are some starting examples of how to map parameters or presets:

Mapping Channel II Select toggle switch

- Click the MIDI port icon, Enter MIDI Learn
- Click on the Channel II toggle to select it for MIDI Learn
- Press the controller on your MIDI device
- Click the MIDI port icon, Exit MIDI Learn

Mapping Amp Gain

- Right-click the Amp Gain knob, Enter MIDI Learn
- Move the controller on your MIDI device
- Exit MIDI Learn from the right-click menu

Mapping Bass, Middle, and Treble to one controller

- Right-click the Bass knob, Enter MIDI Learn
- Move the controller on your MIDI device
- Click the Middle knob
- Move the same controller on your MIDI device
- Click the Treble knob
- Move the same controller on your MIDI device
- Exit MIDI Learn from the right-click menu

Mapping the current Preset

- Click the MIDI port icon, Enter MIDI Learn
- Click the Preset box to select it for MIDI Learn
- Press the controller on your MIDI device
- Click the MIDI port icon, Exit MIDI Learn

Mapping other Presets

- Open the Preset Menu
- Right-click the Preset you want to map
- Enable MIDI Learn
- Press the controller on your MIDI device

MIDI Mappings Window

To open the MIDI Mappings window, click on the MIDI icon menu. All mapped events can be found here. You can further add, remove, or customise mappings.

Resetting Mappings

Resetting all existing MIDI Mappings can be done easily by clicking the MIDI port icon and selecting Reset MIDI Mapping.

Support

FAQs

For detailed answers on FAQs and other support, please visit: <https://blackstarplugins.com/support/>

macOS Requirements

For all of the below requirements, iLok License Manager and an internet connection are required to activate your plugin license.

Minimum

- Intel Core i3 Processor (i3-4130 / i5-2500 or higher)
- 8 GB of RAM
- Mac OSX 10.15 (Catalina)
- 700 MB of drive storage

Recommended

- Intel Core i5 Processor (i5-6600 or higher), also runs native on M Series Apple Silicon.
- 8 GB of RAM or more
- Mac OSX 11 (Big Sur)
- 700 MB of drive storage

Windows Requirements

For all of the below requirements, iLok License Manager and an internet connection are required to activate your plugin license.

Minimum

- AMD Quad -Core Processor (R3 2200G or higher) / Intel Core i3 Processor (i3-4130 / i5-2500 or higher)
- 8 GB of RAM
- Windows 8
- 350 MB of drive storage

Recommended

- AMD Ryzen 5 Processor (R5 1600 or higher) / Intel Core i5 Processor (i5-6600 or higher)
- 8 GB of RAM or more
- Windows 10
- 350 MB of drive storage



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