



1 Two Microphone Preamplifiers

Crimson offers two high performance microphone preamps with individual phantom power plus rumble filters. They are designed with single transistor technology (instead of an IC), otherwise known as a 'discrete' design which used to be an exclusive feature of high-end boutique preamplifiers – until now.

48 V

The phantom power is used to feed a voltage supply of 48V to condenser microphones. For operation safety, switch 48V off when mics are plugged in and out.

Highpass Filter

This 2nd order highpass filter eliminates rumble and other unwanted low frequencies. The filter cuts off at 75Hz with a 6dB per octave slope.

Mic Gain

The Mic Gain control determines the preamplification of the microphone signal. For a good recording level turn up the gain until the -6dB LED illuminates. Avoid OVL from lighting up.

2 Two Instrument Preamplifiers

Crimson offers two identical instrument preamps to amplify Hi-Z (high impedance) signals from instruments like guitar or bass. You can connect your instrument directly to record or play-along. These preamps can accept levels up to +22dB and are ideally suited for active instruments.

Instr Gain

The Instr Gain control sets the amount of preamplification gain of the instrument. For a good recording level turn up the gain until the -6dB LED illuminates. Avoid OVL from lighting up.

Instrument Input Jacks

The input jacks are located on the rear panel for easy access. Note: Use Mono plugs only!

3 Four Line Inputs

All four Line Inputs (rear panel) are balanced and feed the converters with unity gain level (1:1). Alternatively to instruments or microphones, you can record line level signals from keyboards, for instance.

For a good recording level make sure the -6dB-LED illuminates. Avoid OVL from lighting up.

Please refer to the rear panel on the last page of the overview for more information about routing priorities of mic, instrument and line inputs.

In Artist Mode use Line 3 (Talk In) as input of the talkback signal. A pre-amplified mic signal is required.

4 Analog Inputs

Crimson allows to record four analog inputs at the same time. Select the input you want to hear in the analog monitoring section.

Press 1|2 to listen to the Mic or Line 1/2 inputs.
Press 3|4 to listen to the Instrument or Line 3/4 inputs.

If you record a mono vocal track, it makes sense that the voice appears in the center, so you should press Mono.
If only one instrument is recorded, use Instrument input 3, which appears in the center by default.

5 DAW Returns

Crimson has four DA converters onboard to listen back to four tracks – most commonly two stereo stems – from the DAW.

Press 1|2 to listen to the main mix of DAW outputs 1/2.
Press 3|4 to listen to e.g. the headphone fx mix of DAW outputs 3/4.

6 Three Stereo Sources

As a true monitor controller the Crimson can act as the preamplifier of your studio. Three different connector types are supported:

- 1. Jack:** to connect a balanced stereo source like a balanced CD player
- 2. RCA:** to connect an unbalanced stereo source like a CD player or an AV receiver or similar.
- 3. Mini-J:** to connect an iPhone, iPad or MP3 player.

By default sources 2 and 3 are boosted to professional level for better comparison with all other signals.
Unity gain can be set with the Dip switches on the bottom of the Crimson.

7 Artist Mode

The Artist Mode is used for recording other artists who may need dedicated headphone (HP) mixes and a talkback to guide them through the recording.

All monitoring options available for the recording artist:

- Mic, Line, Instrument inputs monitoring in real-time
- DAW 1|2 to listen to the current mix
- DAW 3|4 for a more sophisticated mix with effects (reverb, etc.)
- Any Source as playback for rehearsal or play-along

The engineer/producer focuses on the mix. DAW 1|2 is therefore fixed to Phones 1 and Speakers A without the need of engaging the respective switches.

- The engineer/producer can check the artist's HP mix by disengaging Artist Mode
- The engineer/producer can send the mix to the artist by simply pressing Speakers A to B without touching any monitoring setting

A Talkback can be realized by plugging a preamplified mic into the Talk In jack on the rear. Press the **Talk** button to speak into Phones 2 and Speakers B. Speakers A will be dimmed automatically to avoid feedback.

Tip: Use Speakers B to connect a headphone amplifier with more HP outputs when you record more artists at the same time.

8 Two Stereo Speakers Sets

You can connect two stereo speaker sets and toggle between them with the A to B switch.

Speakers B can be trimmed precisely to match Speakers A. Two 10-step trimmers on the rear provide a super fine trim range of +/-5dB.

The Dim switch reduces the monitoring level by -20dB.

In Artist Mode, Speakers B outputs can be used to drive an external headphone amplifier with a dedicated headphone mix. Alternatively this output can be used as a unity gain AD converter output.

9 Digital In

When judging the mix it is a good idea to compare it with a reference track from a CD. Crimson makes that comparison easy and faithful by using the same high-performance built-in DA converter for both SPDIF IN and DAW 1|2 and thereby avoiding sonic differences between different DACs.

Use the SPDIF switch to toggle between the reference track and your mix.

You can use the Digital In to record two more tracks. Two of our SPL channel strips would be a perfect match, but bear in mind that one of them should be equipped with the optional AD converter module.

10 Two Headphone Amplifiers

Crimson is equipped with two independent headphone amplifiers. They offer a lot of output power and can drive headphones from 20Ω to 600Ω. Be reasonable with high listening levels to protect your hearing.

In Artist Mode different signals can be fed to the phones. Phones 1 will carry the Mix from DAW 1/2 while Phones 2 carries an individual headphone mix.

11 Monitor Mix

With the Monitor Mix control you create a monitor mix fast and easily. No need to fiddle with gain controls or faders, just blend between the Analog Inputs (mic, line, instrument) and the DAW Returns/Sources/Digital In.

The analog monitoring of all analog inputs and sources is absolutely latency-free, it is as real-time as it gets.

In Artist Mode, Monitor Mix only affects Phones 2 and Speakers B.

12 Volume

The big volume knob controls the level of Speakers A & B. It is important to note that the volume is controlled in a fully analog way, which is an advantage over digitally controlled options due to the fact that bit resolution, and thus audio quality, shrinks when lowering the volume – something that does not happen in the analog domain.

In Artist Mode the Volume knob only controls Speaker A.

Unique Crimson Features

Stand-Alone Operation

Crimson can operate without a USB connection too. Everything is fully functional except for USB, MIDI and SPDIF in/out.

You can use Crimson as your studio preamplifier to monitor your audio sources and to rehearse and play or sing along with the DAW.

iPad Recording

Crimson has built-in USB Class 2 drivers for hot-plugging and recording with an iPad. Do note that the original Apple Camera Kit Adapter is required.

USB & AD/DA Features

- USB 2.0 Hi-Speed audio/MIDI system
- USB Class 2.0 compliance (asynchronous mode)
- 6 simultaneous recording channels to the DAW
- 6 simultaneous output channels from the DAW
- 4 high performance AD/DA converters with 115dB S/N
- 24-bit audio processing and up to 192kHz Sample Rate
- Very low jitter due to FMCTM (Fixed-Master-Clock)
- No sample rate conversion or clock recovery for true 1:1 audio
- Super low latency Mac OS X HAL plug-in driver (1ms)
- Super low latency Windows ASIO/WDM driver (1ms)

System Requirements

- Mac OS X, iOS 6 and higher
- Windows XP, Vista, 7, 8

Quick Start

1. Please go to: www.spl.info/crimson
2. Register to access the latest drivers and manual
3. Download and install the Crimson driver
4. Connect your studio equipment to Crimson

Package Contents

- SPL Crimson
- 12V power supply
- Product guide
- Safety instructions

USB cable not included. Be eco-friendly: Use cables you already own and freely choose the quality and length you need.

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