

# Owner's Manual

**PRO-EQ.™**

*Platinum*

*BASS*



P R E A M P , E Q U A L I Z E R , & D I  
F O R E L E C T R I C & A C O U S T I C B A S S

**FISHMAN®**  
*Acoustic Power*

Thank you for purchasing the Pro EQ Platinum Bass. Whether you play electric or upright, on stage or in the studio, you can now produce the bass tone you've always heard in your head, but have never been able to coax out of the speakers. With this product we set out to make an easy to use, road-worthy "Swiss Army Knife" preamp/DI that is especially dialed in for bass instruments. We want you to be completely satisfied with your Platinum Bass preamp. If you have any questions or comments, please contact us at [tech@fishman.com](mailto:tech@fishman.com) or at 978-988-9665.

If you want to get up and running right away, install a 9V battery and check out the Quick Start printed on the underside of the preamp (or see below). To take full advantage of all the Platinum Bass' features, please take a few minutes to glance over this guide, especially the setup for the Depth control and the Compressor.

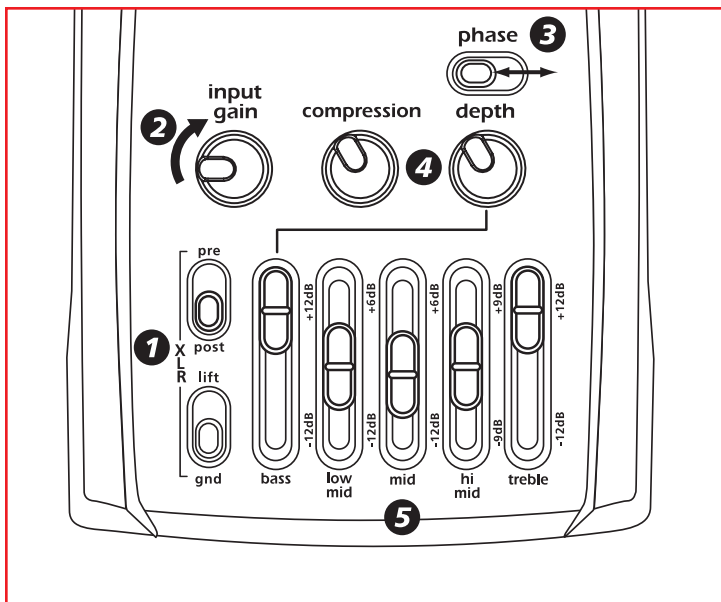
## DESCRIPTION

The Pro EQ Platinum Bass is suitable for electric or acoustic bass. A versatile control layout features five bands of bass-EQ, a photo-optic compressor and an innovative "depth" control for dialing in big bottom without boom. The unit's advanced circuitry is recessed into a road-rugged 12-gauge steel platform, surrounded by tough injection-molded bumpers. For a smooth, musical response and tube-like warmth we use sweet sounding J-FET technology throughout. Plus, an exclusive "Voltage Doubler" gives you the extra front-end headroom needed for today's high-output active basses.

Pro-audio features include an accurate and smooth sounding XLR DI with a pre/post EQ switch, plus 48-Volt phantom power operation. The XLR's special hum-killing ground lift switch does not interrupt phantom power, unlike some other bass DI's.

## QUICK START

1. Place XLR pre/post switch to "post" position.
2. Adjust the input gain so that the clip/low battery light barely flickers with strong playing.
3. **For acoustic bass only:** Set phase switch to position that sounds best and suppresses feedback.
4. Set compression and depth to 10:00.
5. Set EQ and re-adjust input gain if necessary (clip light should barely flicker with strong playing).



## POWER OPTIONS

### 1. 9-Volt Battery

Squeeze the tabs on top of the preamp together and the battery drawer will pop out. Snap in a fresh 9-Volt alkaline. To conserve the battery, unplug the input of the Platinum Bass when you are not using the preamp.

### 2. 48 Volt Phantom Power

Use an XLR cable to connect the Platinum Bass to a mixing board with 48V phantom power. When you turn on the 48V phantom at the mixer, the green 48V phantom LED lights up, the 9V battery shuts off and the Platinum Bass draws power through the XLR cable.

The green 48V phantom led may not light up once you switch on phantom power. This means the phantom power from the mixer is not delivering enough voltage. For insurance, keep a fresh 9V battery in the preamp. The battery will take up the slack if the phantom power is too low.

### 3. AC Adapter Input (center = negative)

Use only a well filtered and regulated adapter with a 9 Volt DC output. We recommend the Fishman 910-R or Boss PSA series. Use a non-recommended adapter and not only will you void the warranty, you may damage the circuit.

## INPUT - PLUG YOUR BASS IN HERE

When you plug into the input jack, the 9-Volt battery switches on. Remember to unplug the input jack when you are not using the preamp to save the battery. Turn down your amp or mute your mixer input before you plug into the Platinum Bass input to protect your speakers (and your ears) from loud pops.

This very high impedance 10 MΩ input is perfectly matched for magnetic/piezo pickup signals from passive or active instruments. The "Voltage Doubler" circuit that we build into the preamp offers plenty of headroom and dynamics for today's hot active basses.

In most cases you'll have the best results if you go directly from your bass into the preamp. If you use any external effects, put them in line after the Platinum Bass. One exception is if you use the Fishman Pocket Blender. In these cases take the ¼" mix output from the Pocket Blender into the Platinum Bass preamp.

**Tone Tip** - If your bass has passive pickups, the quality of your instrument cable will be directly reflected into your tone. The Platinum bass preamp's low noise audiophile circuit is very transparent and will reproduce the tone differences between various instrument cables. If your bass has passive pickups (no battery onboard), use a good quality low capacitance cable between the instrument and the input of the Platinum Bass preamp. Auditioning the Platinum Bass with a number of cables in a music store will give you a good sense of the differences between one brand and the next. As a general rule, the lower the capacitance, the better the sound. A low capacitance cable will add snap and sizzle to a passive magnetic pickup and more clarity to a passive piezo pickup. Choose the shortest length that is practical for you, because the longer the cable, the higher the capacitance. The "pico Farad" is the unit of measure for capacitance. A cable with a capacitance of 200 pico-Farads or less is ideal. If you are not sure of the cable's capacitance, check with the manufacturer.

## INPUT GAIN

Like the trim control on a pro-audio mixer, the input gain accommodates a wide variety of incoming signal levels. For the cleanest possible signal, adjust the input gain so that the clip/low battery LED barely flickers with strong playing. If the LED lights up brightly as you play, your bass signal is overdriving the circuit and you will hear distortion. Keep an eye on the clip LED (and reset the input gain if necessary) when you make adjustments to the depth, tone or compression settings.

## CLIP / LOW BATTERY LIGHT INDICATOR

*This light has three distinct functions:*

### 1. Power Up Indicator

The LED flashes briefly when you plug into the input - it is telling you that the unit is powering up.

### 2. Clip Indicator

Flashes brightly when your bass signal overloads the preamp. Adjust the input gain so that the clip LED barely flashes with strong playing.

### 3. Low Battery Warning

When the red LED lights with no signal present it is time to change the battery. If the low battery light comes on while you're playing don't worry, you'll have enough power to get through a gig (at least 4 hours).

## VOLUME

For the cleanest sound, set the volume as high as you can without distorting your amp or mixer.

## COMPRESSION

This allows you to alter the attack, sustain and dynamics of your bass. Set the input gain before you turn on the compressor (compression is off at 7:00).

For you players who have given up on compression for bass, we feel your pain. We spent months developing and refining a one knob photo-optic compressor just for bass. With it you can dial up more punch, attack, and sustain without any of the "pumping" or "squashing" that plagues other so called "bass" compressors.

Compression is a useful tool for bass, especially for recording. But if you've ever used it onstage you probably know that a poorly designed or improperly set up compressor can completely screw up your live bass sound. Recognizing the common shortcomings of "bass" compressors, we designed our soft-knee photo-optic compressor to set up quickly and sound good right out of the gate.

For slap and other aggressive playing styles, the Platinum Bass' compressor does not strangle your highs. We deliberately placed it in the signal chain before the bass and treble controls so you can boost without squashing these important frequencies. Plus we carefully fine tuned the compressor to complement the attack and sustain characteristics of bass instruments.

**Note:** *As you raise the compression level, the apparent volume will drop, due to the gain reduction of the compressor. Compensate for this by raising the volume knob on the Platinum Bass proportionately as you raise the compression level.*

To gently smooth out your instrument's all-around response, set the compression between 8:00 and 11:00.

For more punch set the compression between 12:00 and 2:00. This is especially effective for tumbao and walking bass styles.

Solid rock bass tone: Boost the low mids with the compressor set around 12:00.

For heavy compression with lots of sustain set the compression knob between 3:00 and 5:00 (for best results set the input gain as high as possible, lighting the red clip light occasionally). You will find that this works well for bass-synth effects, especially with an octave pedal placed after the Platinum Bass preamp.

## DEPTH

Tighten up your sound, or dial out deep-bass feedback with the depth control. The depth control works hand in hand with the Bass control to bring out tight and articulate lows.:

1. Start with the depth turned up full (5:00) with the EQ set flat on your bass, bass amp and/or PA.
2. Set the bass slider to full boost.
3. Play the bass and back off the Depth (counter-clockwise) until you hear the sound tighten up, usually between 9:00 and 12:00.
4. Re-set the bass slider to taste.

In addition to cleaning up your low end, the depth control will let your power amp work more efficiently and provide protection for your speakers. When set below 1:00, the depth control gets rid of the power-gobbling sub-sonic stuff that taxes both your amp and speakers (not to mention your ears).

### Depth control Tone tips:

*A good place to start with the depth control is usually at about 10:00 In this position you can max the bass control without losing articulation and mid-bass attack.*

*For electric bass in rooms that absorb a lot your low end (e.g. a "dead" room with curtains, upholstered furniture or carpeted floors), set the depth to the higher positions; between 2:00 and 5:00.*

*To get rid of low frequency feedback with acoustic bass, sweep the depth knob counter-clockwise until the feedback goes away (usually between 8:00 and 10:00).*

*For extremely difficult acoustic environments such as gymnasiums or high ceiling rooms with reflective surfaces, set the depth to 9:00 or lower.*

## PHASE SWITCH

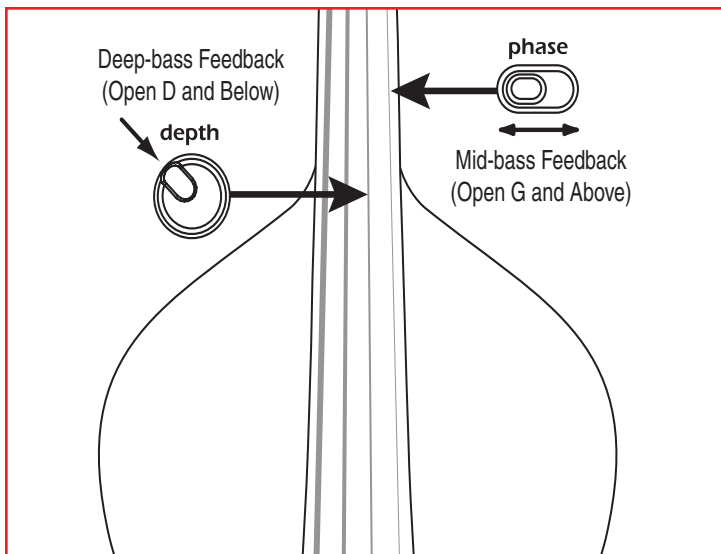
Use the Phase switch in combination with the Depth control to suppress feedback for upright bass and acoustic bass guitar.

Electric bassists (solid body) can ignore this section -just leave the phase switch in either position and go!

Unlike electric bass, acoustic bass tends to feedback when you amplify it at high volumes. Feedback generally occurs in two different ranges: deep-bass feedback (open D and below) and mid-bass feedback (above open G).

### Fighting Feedback:

1. Start with the phase switch in the left position and the depth control at 5:00.
2. Turn your amp or PA up so that it is on the verge of feedback.
3. Flip the phase switch back and forth until you find the position that sounds good and doesn't feedback from open G and above (mid-bass feedback).
4. Turn up the amp some more until you get feedback around open D and below. (deep-bass feedback)
5. Move the depth control counter-clockwise until deep bass feedback goes away. (usually between 9:00 and 10:00).

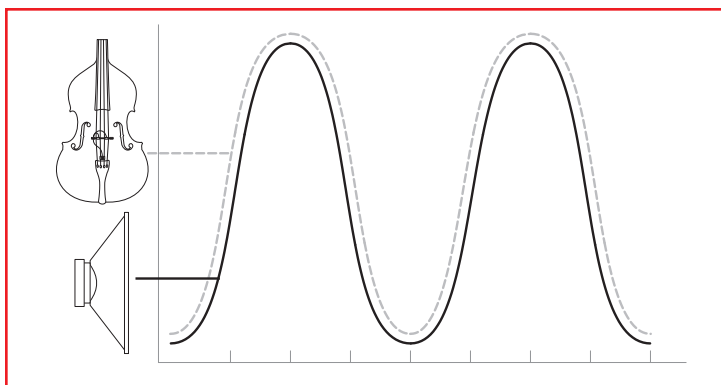


### USE THE PHASE SWITCH TO IMPROVE YOUR AMPLIFIED SOUND

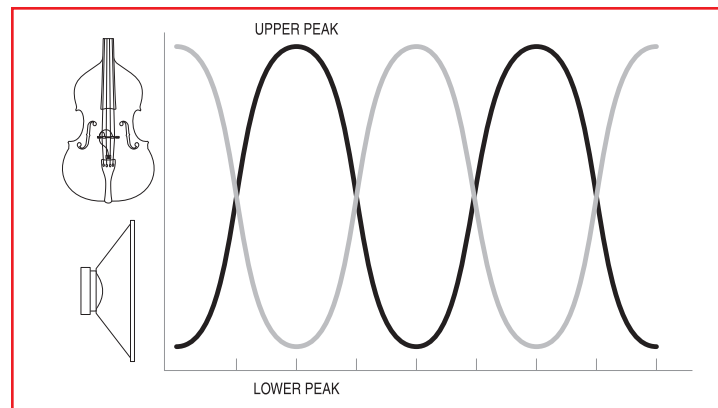
The phase switch lets you get better amplified performance by electronically aligning the bass signal from the speaker with the actual acoustic sound that radiates from the bass.

Simply put, in phase or out of phase describes the way the sound waves from your speaker blend together with the lower notes of your acoustic bass. Phase quality (in or out) is most noticeable at low amplified volume levels, when you stand near the bass speaker (or a floor monitor fed with bass)

In phase is when your acoustic bass and the speaker sound full and resonant together and the speaker augments the natural sound of the instrument. In most cases, you want your acoustic bass to be in phase with the speaker.



When your acoustic bass and speaker are out of phase the sound is usually "doinky", artificially compressed and lacking bottom end, especially on the G string.



### SET UP THE PHASE SWITCH

The simplest way find the "in phase" position of the switch to tell is by listening to the sound of your amplified acoustic and toggling back and forth between switch positions. The position that sounds the deepest and most natural will be in phase.

#### Tone Tip

*Whenever you add a new piece of equipment (pickup, amplifier, effect, speaker) to your setup, toggle the Phase switch back and forth until you find the position that sounds best and kills mid-bass feedback.*

### TONE CONTROLS

To keep the EQ for the Platinum Bass as simple and precise as possible, we were very careful to choose five universal equalization points for both electric and acoustic basses. In the center detent position, each tone control is flat.

**Note:** *If you make radical changes to your tone settings, keep an eye on the clip indicator and slightly lower the input gain level if the red led starts flashing brightly (and you hear distortion).*

We recommend that you start with flat EQ on your instrument, bass amp or mixer (no cut or boost) and make your tonal adjustments with the Platinum Bass' EQ. You'll find that very little (if any) additional EQ will be necessary after you dial in your sound with the Platinum Bass.

#### EQ Tone Tip

*For a cleaner and more "direct" bass sound, try bypassing the preamp in your bass amp and plug the output from the Platinum Bass directly into the effects return or the power amp input in the back of your amp.*

#### Bass

We carefully voiced this control to give you the deep bass you need for your lowest notes, with plenty of mid-bass punch for the D and G strings. If the sound becomes boomy when you raise the bass slider, lower the depth control until the sound tightens up.

### Low-mid

Boost here to thicken up the low end. Cut low mids for a more transparent tone or to reduce feedback with acoustic bass.

Low mids are crucial for voicing your instrument. A very slight change in the position of the low-mid slider will have great effect on the personality of your tone.

Cut low mids (and boost the bass slider) for the open "hi-fi" tone favored for thumb-style electric bass. A low-mid cut will also help to unmask the high end and give clarity to deep bass frequencies for a modern "amplified acoustic" upright bass sound.

A slight low-mid boost will give a nice percussive "burp" to upright sound.

### Mid

This control subtly affects how well the instrument blends in or stands out in the mix.

Cut mids (also boost bass and treble) to bring out a classic "smiley face" tone for electric bass. Push the mid slider all the way down to unveil a sweet, sizzly top end for thumb-style electric.

For an aggressive fretless tone, boost the mid and low-mid sliders and cut the treble.

### High mid

This control zeros in on click, fret buzz and string handling sounds produced by your fingertips.

Slightly boost high mids (a little goes a long way) to emphasize left hand articulation (a la' Marcus) or to add presence to a bass speaker without a high frequency horn.

Cut high mids to reduce the effects of a glaring tweeter or to attenuate the sound of your fingertips passing along the length of your strings (especially for upright). Also cut the high mids to suppress feedback from mini mic (Blender system)

### Treble

The platinum Bass' J-FET circuitry ensures that the treble will sound smooth and airy when boosted. Cut treble for a vintage "flatwound" sound.

## OUTPUT (1/4" UNBALANCED)

**Signal Path:** Bass signal ➔ Input gain ➔ Depth ➔ EQ ➔ Compression ➔ Volume ➔ Phase Switch ➔ Output

Plug a standard instrument cable from the Platinum Bass output to your bass amp or an unbalanced input on a mixer.

You can also patch into an audio input on a computer through the Platinum Bass' output. You'll need a special cable with a plug that matches the input of your PC. Often a cable with one 1/8" plug (such as our V-100 patch cord) will do the trick.

## XLR (BALANCED) OUT

Plug a standard mic cable from the XLR out into a PA or recording console.

Note that the Platinum Bass can be powered off a 48V phantom supply through this output. (See Power Options on page 2)

## XLR PRE/POST SWITCH

Choose between a true DI (pre EQ) or an affected XLR (post EQ) output.

### 1. XLR Post

**Signal Path:** Bass Signal ➔ Input Gain ➔ Depth ➔ EQ ➔ Compression ➔ Volume ➔ Phase Switch ➔ XLR Out

Post is useful in live venues (especially if you are mixing from onstage) where you want your personal "dialed-in" sound to come through the PA.

### 2. XLR Pre

**Signal Path:** Bass Signal ➔ Input Buffer ➔ Phase Switch ➔ XLR Out

You'll find that this true direct or "DI" output produces a warm and uncluttered signal that is exceptional for recording. Set the pre/post switch to the pre position when you want a "flat" DI signal going to the board and you wish to leave it to the sound-person or recording engineer to dial up the bass tone from the console.

## XLR GROUND LIFT

Use this switch to eliminate AC ground loop hum. When you use the XLR and one of the other outputs together and you hear hum from the speakers, put the switch in the lift position and the hum should go away. If you use all three outputs (XLR, 1/4" output, and tuner/send) to three separate AC powered devices, the "lift" position may not completely eliminate ground loop hum.

**Note:** When you use only the XLR out, leave the gnd/lift switch in the "gnd" position. In these cases, if you move the switch to the "lift" position, you will hear a "pop" through your speakers and phantom power to the unit may be compromised.

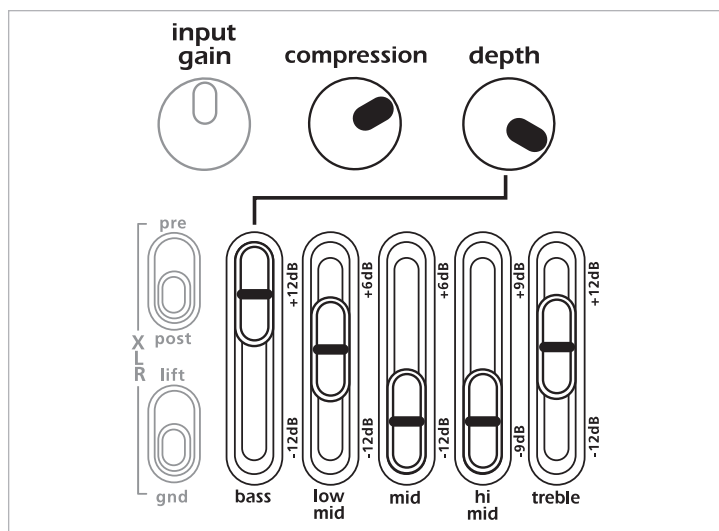
## TUNER/SEND

**Signal Path:** Bass Signal - Input Buffer - Tuner/Send

Use the tuner/send output when you need an unbalanced direct signal that is not affected by any of the front panel controls. Use it for an external tuner or as an aux send to a stage amp or a second mixer for broadcast/live recording.

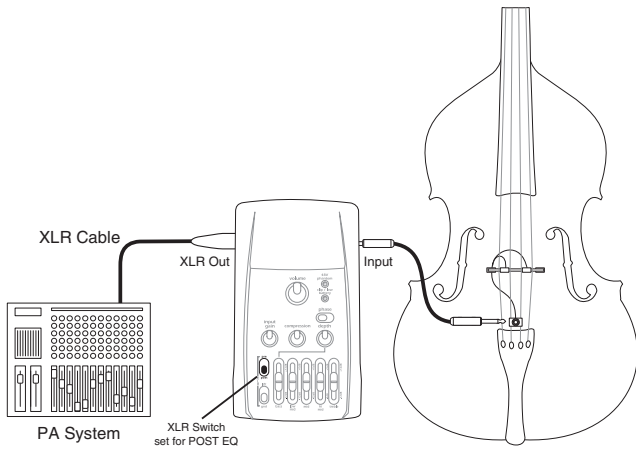
## SAMPLE EQ SETTINGS

Here are a few suggested settings for the Pro EQ Platinum Bass.

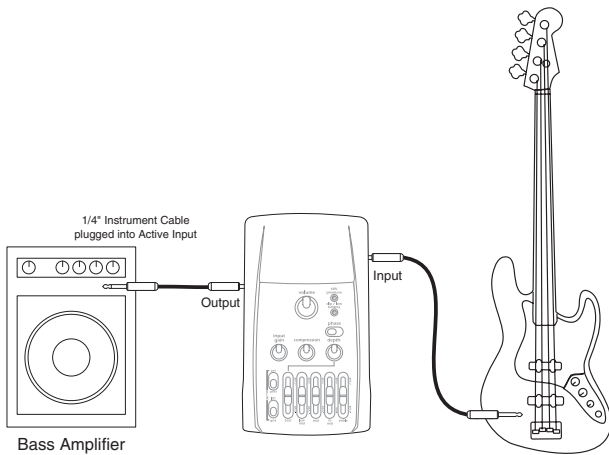


## STAGE SETUPS

1. Set the XLR pre/post switch to "post" when you want your personal "dialed in" sound to come through the PA

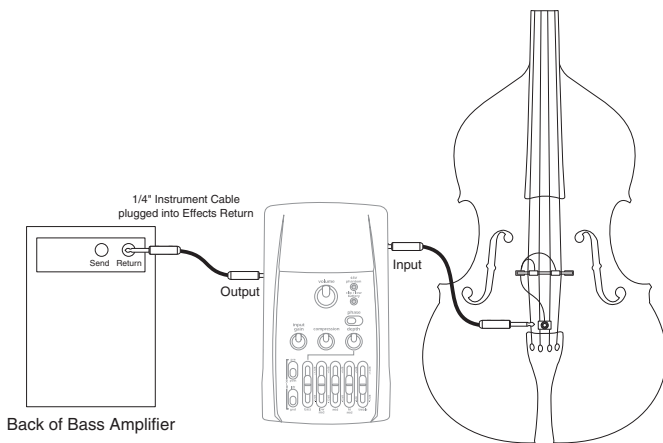


2. Plug into a bass amp. Start with the amp's tone controls set flat. Primary equalization is performed by the Platinum Bass EQ

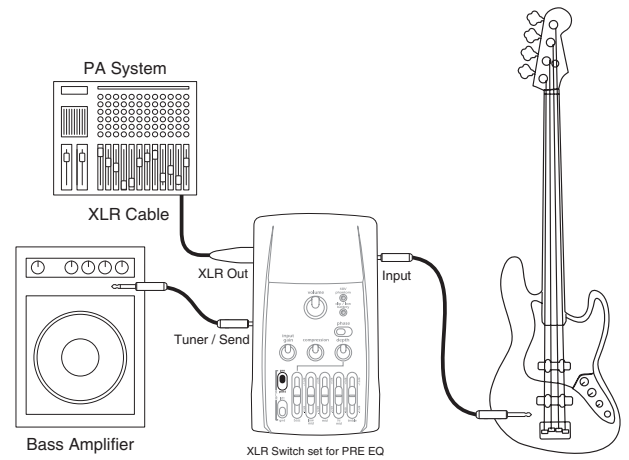


- 2a. Alternate into bass amp (especially for upright)

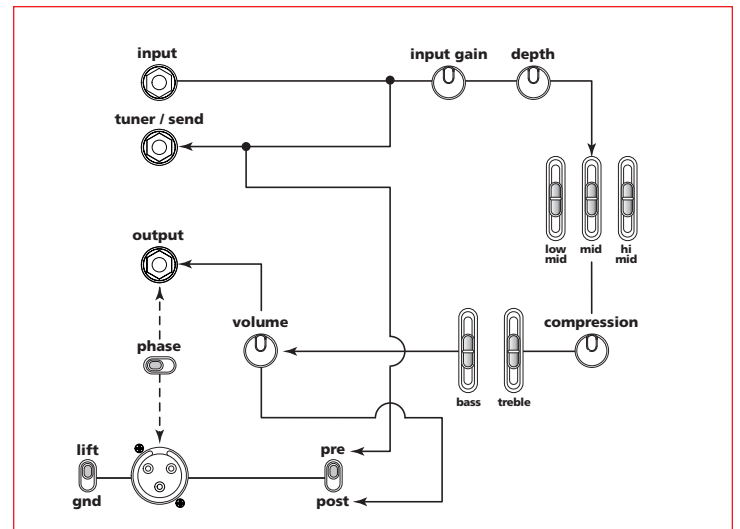
For a cleaner and more uncolored sound, try bypassing the preamp in your bass amp and plug the output from the Platinum Bass directly into the effects return or the power amp input at the back of your amp.



3. Splitter/ "Transparent" DI.:  
If you wish, you may bypass all the Platinum's controls for a true DI. into both the PA and a bass amp.



## BLOCK DIAGRAM



## SPECIFICATIONS

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Nominal Input Level:	-14dBu
Input Overload Level:	+10dBu
Input Impedance:	10 M $\Omega$

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### Nominal Output Levels and Impedances

Amp Out::	-20dBu to +10dBu (1k $\Omega$ )
Tuner/Send Out:	-14 dBu to + 10 dBu (1 k $\Omega$ )
XLR Out :	-30 dBu to -6 dBu (600 $\Omega$ )

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### Tone Controls

Bass:	$\pm$ 12 dB @ 30 Hz
Low mid:	+6dB, -12 dB @ 200 Hz
Mid:	+6dB, -12 dB @ 1.25 kHz
Hi Mid:	$\pm$ 9 dB @ 5 kHz
Treble:	$\pm$ 12dB @ 10kHz

All tone controls within  $\pm$ 1 dB of nominal.

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Depth Control:	12 dB / octave low cut filter
Range:	15 Hz (5:00) to 125 Hz (7:00)
Compressor max gain reduction:	-14 dB

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THD @ 1kHz:	Less than .05%, -14dBu input level
A weighted S/N:	-89 dBu (-91 dBV)
Noise:	27 $\mu$ V (A weighted)

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### Power Options

9 Volt Alkaline Battery:	(Battery life- est. 80+ hours continuous)
Current draw:	4.5 mA typical

Low Battery light comes on when approx 4 hours of battery life remain

**OR**

48 Volt phantom power via XLR cable

**OR**

Fishman 910 or Boss PSA series AC adapter (center negative)

*All specifications subject to change without notice.*