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Neve 88RLB

Neve 88RLB 500-series Microphone Preamp

User Manual

Model: 88RLB | Brand: Neve

1. Introduction

The Neve 88RLB is a high-performance 500-series microphone preamplifier module, designed to deliver the sonic characteristics of the flagship AMS Neve large-format recording consoles. This module offers a versatile input stage with options for microphone, line, and instrument (DI) sources, coupled with modern clarity and high headroom. It is engineered for professional audio recording environments, providing essential features for signal conditioning and tone shaping.

2. Safety Information

Please read and understand all safety instructions before operating the Neve 88RLB module. Retain this manual for future reference.

- **Power:** Ensure the 500-series rack is powered off before installing or removing the module. Connect the rack to a grounded power outlet.
- **Environment:** Operate the module in a dry environment, away from moisture, extreme temperatures, and direct sunlight.
- **Handling:** Handle the module with care. Avoid dropping or subjecting it to physical shock.
- **Servicing:** Do not attempt to service the module yourself. Refer all servicing to qualified service personnel.
- **Ventilation:** Ensure adequate ventilation around the 500-series rack to prevent overheating.

3. Package Contents

Verify that all items are present in the package:

- Neve 88RLB 500-series Microphone Preamp Module
- User Manual (this document)

4. Product Overview

The Neve 88RLB module features a robust front panel with intuitive controls for input gain, filtering, and signal conditioning. Below is a detailed description of the module's front panel controls and connectors.





Figure 1: Front panel of the Neve 88RLB module, showing all controls and input jack.

Front Panel Controls:

- **SIG LED:** Illuminates to indicate signal presence.
- **I/P GAIN Knob:** Adjusts the input gain for the selected input source. Provides a wide range of amplification.
- **REG Button:** Activates the REGeneration feature, routing Line and DI inputs through the mic input transformer for added analog warmth.
- **MIC LINE DI Selector:** A rotary switch to select between Microphone, Line, or Direct Instrument (DI) input sources.
- **HPF Knob (31.5 Hz - 315 Hz):** A sweepable high-pass filter to remove unwanted low-frequency rumble and noise from the signal.
- **+48V Button:** Engages 48V phantom power for condenser microphones and active DI boxes.
- **-20dB Button:** Engages a -20dB pad for attenuating hot input signals, preventing clipping.
- **Ø (Phase) Button:** Inverts the phase of the input signal by 180 degrees.
- **FR I/P (Front Input) Button:** Activates the front panel combo jack for DI or microphone input.
- **LIFT Switch:** Provides a ground lift function for the DI input, useful for eliminating hum caused by ground loops.
- **MIC/LINE/DI Combo Jack:** A combination XLR/TRS input jack on the front panel for microphone or instrument (DI) connections.



Figure 2: Angled view of the Neve 88RLB module, highlighting its compact 500-series form factor.

5. Setup

The Neve 88RLB is a 500-series module and requires a compatible 500-series rack chassis for operation. Follow these steps for proper installation:

1. **Power Off:** Ensure your 500-series rack is completely powered off and disconnected from the mains power supply.
2. **Identify Slot:** Select an available slot in your 500-series rack.
3. **Insert Module:** Carefully align the Neve 88RLB module with the guide rails of the chosen slot. Gently push the module into the slot until the edge connector is fully seated in the rack's backplane connector. Do not force the module.
4. **Secure Module:** Once seated, use the two screws on the front panel of the 88RLB module to secure it firmly to the 500-series rack chassis. This ensures proper electrical contact and physical stability.
5. **Power On:** After all modules are installed and secured, reconnect the 500-series rack to the mains power and power it on.



Figure 3: Side view of the Neve 88RLB module, illustrating its depth and construction.

6. Operating Instructions

This section details the operation of the Neve 88RLB's various features.

6.1. Input Selection

Use the **MIC LINE DI Selector** knob to choose your input source:

- **MIC:** For connecting microphones via the rear XLR input of the 500-series rack or the front combo jack (when FR I/P is active).
- **LINE:** For connecting line-level signals via the rear TRS input of the 500-series rack.
- **DI:** For connecting instruments (e.g., guitar, bass) directly via the front combo jack (when FR I/P is active).

To use the front panel combo jack for microphone or DI input, ensure the **FR I/P** button is engaged.

6.2. Gain Adjustment

The **I/P GAIN** knob controls the amount of amplification applied to the input signal. Rotate clockwise to increase gain and counter-clockwise to decrease it. Monitor the SIG LED to ensure optimal signal levels without clipping.

6.3. Phantom Power (+48V)

Press the **+48V** button to supply 48V phantom power to condenser microphones or active DI boxes connected to the microphone input. Ensure phantom power is only engaged when required by the connected device. Disengage when using dynamic microphones or passive DI boxes.

6.4. -20dB Pad

If your input signal is too hot and causes clipping even at low gain settings, engage the **-20dB** pad button. This attenuates the input signal by 20 decibels, allowing for more headroom and preventing distortion.

6.5. Phase Invert (Ø)

The **Ø** button inverts the phase of the input signal by 180 degrees. This is useful for correcting phase issues when combining multiple microphones on a single source or when dealing with phase discrepancies in multi-track recordings.

6.6. Sweepable High-Pass Filter (HPF)

The **HPF** knob allows you to sweep the cutoff frequency of a high-pass filter from 31.5 Hz to 315 Hz. Engage this filter to remove unwanted low-frequency content such as rumble, handling noise, or proximity effect from microphone signals, improving clarity and definition.

6.7. REGeneration Feature

The unique **REG** button activates the REGeneration feature. When engaged, this routes the Line and DI inputs through the module's microphone input transformer. This process imparts the inherent analog warmth and characteristic coloration of the Neve transformer to these signals, offering a distinct tonal option.

7. Maintenance

Proper care and maintenance will ensure the longevity and optimal performance of your Neve 88RLB module.

- **Cleaning:** Use a soft, dry, lint-free cloth to clean the exterior of the module. Do not use liquid cleaners, solvents, or abrasive materials, as these can damage the finish and internal components.
- **Storage:** When not in use, store the module in a clean, dry environment. If removed from the rack, consider

using a protective case.

- **Inspection:** Periodically inspect the module for any signs of damage or loose connections.

8. Troubleshooting

If you encounter issues with your Neve 88RLB module, refer to the following common problems and solutions:

Problem	Possible Cause	Solution
No power to module	Rack not powered, module not seated correctly, rack power supply issue.	Ensure 500-series rack is powered on. Check module seating and screws. Test with another slot or rack if possible.
No audio output	Incorrect input selected, gain too low, cable issue, phantom power not engaged (for condenser mics).	Verify MIC/LINE/DI selector. Increase I/P GAIN. Check all cables. Engage +48V if using a condenser mic.
Distorted audio	Input signal too hot, gain too high.	Engage the -20dB pad. Reduce I/P GAIN. Check source level.
Hum or buzzing noise	Ground loop, faulty cable, external interference.	Engage LIFT switch for DI input. Try different cables. Ensure proper grounding of all equipment.

If the problem persists after attempting these solutions, please contact Neve customer support or a qualified service technician.

9. Specifications

Key technical specifications for the Neve 88RLB 500-series Microphone Preamp:

- **Product Type:** 500-series Mic/Line/Instrument Preamp
- **Phantom Power:** +48V switchable
- **Pad:** -20dB switchable
- **Phase Invert:** 180-degree switchable
- **High-Pass Filter:** Sweepable (31.5 Hz - 315 Hz)
- **Special Features:** REGeneration (routes Line/DI through mic input transformer)
- **Input Types:** Microphone, Line, Direct Instrument (DI)
- **Item Weight:** 1.8 Pounds
- **Item Height:** 3.45 inches
- **Brand:** Neve
- **Model:** 88RLB

10. Warranty and Support

The Neve 88RLB module is covered by a manufacturer's warranty against defects in materials and workmanship. For specific warranty terms and conditions, please refer to the documentation provided with your purchase or visit

the official Neve website.
For technical support, service inquiries, or further assistance, please contact Neve customer support through their official channels. When contacting support, please have your product model (88RLB) and purchase information readily available.
Neve Official Website: www.ams-neve.com

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