USER MANUAL

Dogma C

Laboratory-precision compressor

A compressor computed in 64-bit precision, with six detectors, a filtered sidechain, lookahead and four quality modes. Below the threshold it is perfectly transparent, bit for bit.



Contents

01 **Introduction** 3
What makes Dogma C different

02 **Installation and activation** 4
Requirements, installer, license

03 **Loading Dogma C in your DAW** 7
Every major host

04 **Quick start** 8
Good compression in a minute

05 **The interface** 9
A tour of the window

06 **The compressor controls** 11
Every knob, its range and its effect

07 **Detectors** 12
Six ways to measure level

08 **The sidechain** 13
Filter, listen, external key

09 **Quality modes and lookahead** 15
Accuracy, latency and CPU

10 **Curve, history and setup** 16
The three views of the display

11 **Presets and recipes** 17
17 factory presets and starting points

12 **Troubleshooting** 19
Common problems and their fixes

13 **Specifications and support** 20
Technical data, help, safety, legal

This manual covers Dogma C 0.8 for Windows. Screenshots may show an earlier build; the controls are the same. The latest edition is always at isaac-audio.rotabox.workers.dev/manuals/.

CHAPTER 01

Introduction

Dogma C is a feed-forward compressor built to measure. Its detectors, its curve and its ballistics are computed exactly, in 64-bit precision, and in its higher quality modes the compressor is solved in continuous time, between the samples. The result is compression that does only what you ask of it.

Transparent below the threshold

Where there is no gain reduction, the output is the input, bit for bit. No hidden colour, no saturation.

Six detectors

From the instant sample peak to a 25 ms average, plus AUTO, which follows RMS on dense material and peaks on spiky material.

A sidechain that listens well

Internal or external key, with a high-pass, low-pass, band-pass or notch filter you can audition.

Four quality modes

ZERO latency for tracking, LAB by default, and REFERENCE and IDEAL, which solve the compressor in continuous time.

From gentle to extreme

Ratios from 1:1 to LIMIT, and beyond: negative ratios for over-compression effects. A Depth control caps the reduction.

See it work

A live transfer curve and a four-second history of input, output and gain reduction.

CHAPTER 02

Installation and activation

Dogma C installs in about a minute. One installer puts every format in the folder your DAW already scans.

System requirements

- **Windows 10 or 11**, 64-bit, and a 64-bit DAW. *A macOS version (Apple Silicon and Intel, macOS 11 or newer) is on its way; it is included in your license at no extra cost.*
- A host for one of the formats below, or none at all.
- **Microsoft Edge WebView2 Runtime**, which draws the plugin window. It is part of Windows 11 and almost every Windows 10. If it is missing, the installer offers to open Microsoft's download page.
- Administrator rights: plugins are installed in the shared Windows folders.

FORMAT	HOSTS
VST3	Cubase, Nuendo, Studio One, Ableton Live, FL Studio, REAPER, Bitwig, Cakewalk and most others
CLAP	REAPER, Bitwig Studio, FL Studio, Studio One
AAX	Pro Tools (the AAX is signed by PACE, as Pro Tools requires)
Standalone	No DAW needed: Dogma C runs as its own application with your audio interface

Installing

1. **Close your DAW.** Windows locks a plugin file that is loaded, and the installer cannot replace it. Pro Tools in particular must be closed.
2. **Run** `Dogma-C-…-Windows-Setup.exe` (double-click) and approve the Windows permission request.
3. If Windows shows **"Windows protected your PC"**, click `More info` and then `Run anyway`. SmartScreen warns about any installer it has not seen many times before.
4. Choose the language and accept the license agreement.
5. **Choose the formats.** The default installs all of them. Untick what you do not need, for example AAX if you do not use Pro Tools.
6. Click `Install`, then `Finish`. The Start menu now has an **Isaac Audio › Dogma C** folder with the standalone application.

Where the files go

ITEM	FOLDER
VST3	`C:\Program Files\Common Files\VST3\Dogma C.vst3`

ITEM	FOLDER
CLAP	`C:\Program Files\Common Files\CLAP\Dogma C.clap`
AAX	`C:\Program Files\Common Files\Avid\Audio\Plug-Ins\Dogma C.aaxplugin`
Standalone	`C:\Program Files\Isaac Audio\Dogma C\Dogma C.exe`

Updating and removing

Updating: run the new installer over the old one. There is no need to uninstall first, and your presets and settings are kept.

Removing: `Settings › Apps › Installed apps`, then **Dogma C › Uninstall**. Your own presets stay in your Documents folder.

> INSTALLING FROM THE ZIP INSTEAD
>
> Extract the whole zip to a folder first (right-click › Extract All); do not run anything from inside the zip. Double-click **Install Dogma C.bat** and approve the permission request: it copies the plugin formats to the folders above. **Uninstall Dogma C.bat** removes them.

Activation

Dogma C needs a license file to pass audio. There are two kinds: the license of a purchase, tied to your computers, and the personal license of the beta programme.

If you bought Dogma C

Your license covers **two computers**. Activating one takes a minute:

1. **Open Dogma C** in your DAW. Without a license, the window shows a short notice with a button: `Activate this computer`.
2. Click it. Your browser opens **your account** on our website, with this computer's code already filled in. Sign in with the link from your purchase email if you are asked to.
3. Optionally give the computer a name ("Studio PC"), then click `Activate and download the license`.
4. **Leave the downloaded file in your Downloads folder.** The plugin finds it within a few seconds and starts working; you do not need to restart the DAW. It shows its terms once: click `I agree`.

> GOOD TO KNOW
>
> The license file is valid for 60 days, and the plugin renews it by itself in the background whenever the computer is online. If a computer stays offline longer than that, activate it again from your account: it is the same computer, so it does not use another slot. To move the license to a new computer, release the old one under **Active computers** in your account (up to three times a year; write to us if you need more).

If you are a beta tester

Testers use one personal file for all the Dogma plugins: `ISAAC-AUDIO-Beta-License.isaaclic`, issued in your name.

- **Downloaded the zip from the beta site?** The license is already inside it, and both the installer and **Install ... .bat** copy it to `Documents\Isaac Audio\Beta`. Nothing to do.
- **Don't have it?** Sign in to the beta site and click `Download license` on the downloads page. On Windows you can leave it in Downloads: the plugin finds it there.
- The first time you open the plugin, it shows the beta terms with your name once. Click `I agree`.

License details and status

Click the **version number** under the plugin's name, in the top-right corner of the window, to see whom the license is issued to and until when, and to open the feedback page.

> WITHOUT A LICENSE
> The plugin passes no sound and shows a "license required" notice with buttons to the website and the license folder. As soon as a valid file is in place, it unlocks by itself within a few seconds.

CHAPTER 03

Loading Dogma C in your DAW

After installing, open your DAW. Most hosts scan the plugin folders at launch. The plugin is called **Dogma C**, the vendor is **Isaac Audio**, and it is listed under **Dynamics**.

HOST	IF IT DOES NOT APPEAR	WHERE TO FIND IT
Pro Tools (AAX)	Scans at every launch: if Pro Tools was open while you installed, quit and reopen it.	Insert › plug-in › Dynamics › Dogma C
Cubase / Nuendo	Usually automatic. Otherwise: Studio › VST Plug-in Manager › Rescan.	Insert slot › Dynamics › Dogma C, or by vendor: Isaac Audio
Studio One	Options › Locations › VST Plug-ins: tick Scan at startup, or Reset Blocklist; restart.	Browser › Effects › Isaac Audio › Dogma C, drag to the channel
Ableton Live	Settings › Plug-Ins: turn on Use VST3 Plug-In System Folders, then Rescan.	Browser › Plug-Ins › VST3 › Isaac Audio › Dogma C. Open the window with the small wrench icon in the device title.
FL Studio	Options › Manage plugins › Find installed plugins; tick the star next to it to add it to the menu.	A free Mixer insert slot › Dogma C
REAPER	Options › Preferences › Plug-ins › VST › Re-scan (CLAP: Plug-ins › CLAP › Re-scan).	FX button on the track, search "Dogma"
Bitwig Studio	Automatic. The VST3 and CLAP folders are active under Settings › Locations › Plug-ins.	Browser › Devices › Isaac Audio › Dogma C (CLAP preferred)

Menu names are those of current versions and may differ slightly in yours.

Everyday behaviour in every host

- **Keyboard:** the space bar and all your DAW shortcuts (`Ctrl+S`, `Ctrl+Z`, transport keys) keep working while the plugin window is open and focused.
- **Window size:** drag the window's bottom-right corner, or pick a size in the plugin. A bigger window is drawn with more pixels, so it is also sharper.
- **Recall:** every setting, the preset name and the window size are saved with your project.
- **Automation:** every continuous control can be automated; the knob in the window follows the automation.

CHAPTER 04

Quick start

1. **Insert Dogma C** on a track and start playback.
2. **Pick a preset** close to the job: click the preset name and choose, for example, *Vocals › Gentle Leveler* or *Drums › Drum Bus Glue*. Hover a preset to read what it is for.
3. **Set the THRESHOLD by ear.** The presets are calibrated for a track at about −18 dBFS RMS. Turn THRESHOLD down until the GR meter moves on the loud parts: 2 to 6 dB is a typical amount for mixing.
4. **Adjust RATIO** for how firm the control is: 2:1 is gentle, 4:1 firm, 10:1 and above limiting.
5. **Shape it in time**: a faster ATTACK catches transients, a slower one lets them through for punch; RELEASE sets how quickly the level returns.
6. **Bring the level back** with MAKEUP, and compare with the DAW's bypass at matched loudness.

> WATCH THE HISTORY
> Switch the display to HISTORY. You see each hit's gain reduction and how fully it recovers before the next one. If the orange line never returns to the top, the release is too slow for the tempo.

CHAPTER 05

The interface

The large display shows what the compressor is doing; the knobs around it set it.



Dogma C on a drum bus: the live transfer curve at 8.5 dB of gain reduction, with the sidechain high-pass on.

1. **Preset bar**: category, name, previous / next.
2. **Status line**: quality, GR, sample rate, latency, CPU.
3. **CURVE, HISTORY, SETUP**: the display's three views.
4. **Detectors**: PEAK, TRUE PK, FAST, RMS, AVG, AUTO.
5. **Transfer curve** with the live point and recent history.
6. **SIDECHAIN**: INT / EXT, filter type, FILTER, LISTEN, FREQ, Q.
7. **Sidechain filter curve**: drag the F handle, scroll for Q.
8. **KNEE, ATTACK, RELEASE, DEPTH, MIX, LINK**: the six knobs and their values above.
9. **THRESHOLD**.
10. **RATIO** and **MAKEUP**.
11. **Meters**: IN, OUT and gain reduction (GR).

Working with the controls

ACTION	RESULT
Drag up / down	Changes a knob. Hold `Shift` for fine adjustment.
Mouse wheel	Changes the knob under the pointer.
Double-click	Returns the control to its default.
Click a value box	Type a value and press `Enter`. Units and shorthands are understood: `-3.5`, `2.5k`, `40 ms`.
Hover	Shows a short explanation of the control.

Shortcuts in the graphs: drag the threshold line in CURVE to set the threshold, and the mouse wheel there sets the ratio. In the sidechain graph, drag the F handle for frequency and scroll for Q. `Alt`-click resets.

CHAPTER 06

The compressor controls

CONTROL	RANGE	DEFAULT	WHAT IT DOES
THRESHOLD	−60 – 0 dB	−20 dB	The level above which compression begins.
RATIO	1:1 – 20:1, LIMIT, −20:1 – 0:1	3:1	How much a signal above the threshold is reduced: at 4:1, 4 dB over the threshold come out as 1 dB. At LIMIT nothing passes above the threshold. Past LIMIT the ratio turns negative: the louder the input, the quieter the output, from subtle (−20:1) to drastic (near 0:1).
KNEE	0 – 30 dB	6 dB	The width of the transition around the threshold. 0 is a hard knee; a wide knee eases into compression.
ATTACK	0.01 – 300 ms	10 ms	How fast the compressor reacts to a rise in level.
RELEASE	5 – 4000 ms	100 ms	How fast it recovers when the level falls.
DEPTH	−80 – 0 dB	−80 dB	The most gain reduction allowed. −80 is no limit; −6 dB, for example, never reduces more than 6 dB, however loud the input.
MAKEUP	−24 – +40 dB	0 dB	Gain after compression.
MIX	0 – 100 %	100 %	Parallel compression: the share of the compressed signal. 100 % is the compressor only; lower values blend in the dry signal, in time.
LINK	0 – 100 %	100 %	Stereo link: at 100 % both channels get the same gain (the image stays put); at 0 % each channel is compressed on its own.

All of these can be automated. When you type a ratio, `LIMIT` is understood; for MIX, `wet` and `dry`.

The meters

IN and **OUT** show the input and output levels; **GR** shows the gain reduction, in dB, from the top down. The status line above the display repeats the GR as a number.

CHAPTER 07

Detectors

The detector decides what "level" means to the compressor. Every detector reads a steady sine wave at its peak, so the threshold means the same thing in every mode; what differs is how they react to real material.

DETECTOR	HOW IT MEASURES	GOOD FOR
PEAK	The largest sample over the last 25 ms, held: it rises at once and does not ripple inside a low note's cycle.	Clean, precise control of transients without distortion. The default.
TRUE PK	Like PEAK, but includes the peaks between the samples (8× interpolation).	Limiting and mastering, where inter-sample peaks matter.
FAST	The instantaneous sample value, with no hold: the classic analog-style detector.	Character. On low notes the gain moves within each cycle, which adds harmonics, as many analog compressors do.
RMS	The power over a sliding 25 ms window.	Smooth, musical levelling of vocals, bass and buses; it follows loudness rather than peaks.
AVG	The average of the rectified signal over 25 ms.	Even gentler than RMS, close to how VU meters respond.
AUTO	RMS on dense material, and the peaks of material whose crest factor exceeds a sine's by more than 6 dB.	Mixed or unpredictable material: one setting that works on both sustained notes and sharp hits.

CHOOSING QUICKLY

Start with PEAK for drums and percussive sources, RMS for vocals and buses, TRUE PK for a final limiter. Try FAST when you want the compressor to be heard.

CHAPTER 08

The sidechain

The sidechain is what the detector listens to. Filtering it changes what triggers the compression without changing the sound that passes through.

CONTROL	RANGE	WHAT IT DOES
INT / EXT	Internal · External	INT: the track itself controls the compression. EXT: another track, routed to the sidechain input.
Filter type	High Pass · Low Pass · Band Pass · Notch	The shape of the sidechain filter.
FILTER	Off · On	Turns the filter on. The curve is grey when it is off.
FREQ	20 Hz – 20 kHz	The filter frequency (default 100 Hz). Drag the F handle in the graph, or type.
Q	0.1 – 10	The filter's width or resonance (default 0.71).
LISTEN	Off · On	Plays the sidechain as the detector hears it. Turn it off when you are done.

Classic uses

- **High pass at 80–150 Hz on a bus or mix**: the kick and the bass stop pumping the whole mix.
- **Band pass around 5–8 kHz on a vocal**, with a fast attack: a de-esser (the *De-Esser* preset).
- **EXT from the kick on a bass track**: the bass ducks under each kick (the *Ducked by Kick* preset).

External sidechain

To let another track control the compression (the classic: the kick ducking the bass), send that track to Dogma C's sidechain input, then choose **EXT** in the SIDECHAIN strip.

HOST	HOW
Pro Tools	Send the source to a bus; at the top of the plugin window choose that bus under Key Input (the key icon). Dogma C switches to EXT by itself.
Cubase / Nuendo	Click the Side-Chain button in the plugin window's title bar to enable it, then on the source track: Sends › Dogma C – Side-Chain.
Studio One	Click the Side-Chain button in the plugin window's title bar and choose the source track (a send is added).
Ableton Live	Show the device's Sidechain section (the small arrow in its title) › Audio From › the source track.
FL Studio	Select the source Mixer track, right-click the arrow under Dogma C's track › Sidechain to this track; in the wrapper's settings (gear › Processing) set it as input 2.

HOST	HOW
REAPER	Set Dogma C's track to 4 channels (Route › Track channels: 4) and send the source to channels 3/4.
Bitwig Studio	Choose the source in the sidechain selector of the device header.

CHAPTER 09

Quality modes and lookahead

The quality mode sets how exactly the compressor is computed, and how much latency that takes. Choose it in the SETUP view.

MODE	LATENCY	WHAT IT DOES
ZERO	none	No latency: for tracking and live use.
LAB (default)	0.5 ms	Oversampled detection and gain: the curve and the ballistics hold exactly up to 20 kHz, with no aliasing of the gain changes.
REFERENCE	1.8 ms (85 samples at 48 kHz)	Solves the compressor in continuous time, between the samples. The most accurate response; heavier on the CPU.
IDEAL	3.4 ms (165 samples at 48 kHz)	As REFERENCE with a longer interpolator: the reference against which the others are measured. The heaviest on the CPU.

Lookahead

Lookahead (0–10 ms, in SETUP) delays the audio so the compressor sees a transient coming and can catch it smoothly, even with a slower attack. It adds its time to the latency.

> LATENCY AND YOUR DAW
>
> Quality and Lookahead set the latency, so they cannot be automated. Dogma C switches live, with a short fade, and reports the new latency to the DAW, which keeps every track in time. The SETUP view and the status line show the current latency. A few hosts restart the plugin to apply it instead; that is normal.

> KNOWN BEHAVIOUR
>
> REFERENCE and IDEAL ring very slightly (up to 1.1 ms and 1.7 ms) around extremely sharp edges such as a click or a step. The ringing is at half the sample rate, above hearing. ZERO and LAB do not ring at all.

CHAPTER 10

Curve, history and setup

CURVE

The static transfer curve: input level across, output level up. The knee is shaded, and the threshold is a line with its value; a bright dot shows the signal right now, with a trail of recent values. Drag the threshold line to set it, scroll to change the ratio.

HISTORY



HISTORY of a 120 bpm drum bus: 7 dB on each kick and snare, full recovery between hits, the hats untouched.

Four seconds of the input (filled), the output (line) and the gain reduction (orange, from the top), with the threshold dashed. It is the best way to see your attack and release at work.

SETUP

The quality mode, the lookahead with the latency it results in, and the window size.

CHAPTER 11

Presets and recipes

Using presets

1. Click the **preset name** in the bar at the top of the display. The browser opens with the factory presets in categories, and your own.
2. Hover a preset to read what it is for; click to load it. The arrows on either side of the name step to the previous or next preset, so you can audition them while the track plays.
3. A dot next to the name means the settings have changed since the preset was loaded.
4. To keep your own, type a name and click `SAVE`. User presets are stored in `Documents\Isaac Audio\Dogma C\Presets`, so you can copy them to another computer.

The factory presets also appear in the preset browsers of hosts that read VST3 presets (Cubase, Nuendo, Studio One) and CLAP presets (Bitwig).

Factory presets



The preset browser: 17 factory presets in five categories, plus your own.

CATEGORY	PRESETS
Vocals	Gentle Leveler · Upfront · De-Esser

CATEGORY	PRESETS
Drums	Kick Punch · Snare Snap · Drum Bus Glue · NY Parallel · Room Smash
Bass	Even · Ducked by Kick (uses the external sidechain)
Instruments	Acoustic Guitar · Electric Sustain · Piano Gentle · Group Bus
Mix & Master	Mix Bus Glue · Mastering Gentle · Peak Limiter

Recipes

JOB	STARTING POINT
Vocal levelling	RMS, 3:1, knee 6 dB, attack 10 ms, release 120 ms, 3–5 dB of GR.
Punchy drums	PEAK, 4:1, attack 20–30 ms (lets the transient through), release to the tempo.
Parallel (New York) drums	PEAK, 8:1 or more, fast attack, heavy GR, then MIX 30–50 %.
Mix bus glue	RMS or AUTO, 2:1, attack 30 ms, release 100–300 ms, sidechain high pass at 100 Hz, 1–2 dB of GR.
Peak limiting	TRUE PK, LIMIT, attack fast, lookahead 1–5 ms, release 50–150 ms.

CHAPTER 12

Troubleshooting

WHAT HAPPENS	WHAT TO DO
The external sidechain has no effect	Check that EXT is selected, that the source's send is not at −∞ (use a pre-fader send if the source is muted), and that the host's sidechain is enabled (chapter 8).
Bypass with REAPER's FX checkbox clicks	REAPER's on/off box switches the plugin off at once. Dogma C's own Bypass is smooth: in REAPER it is the Bypass parameter (UI view or an envelope).
The CPU is high	REFERENCE and IDEAL are heavy by design. Use LAB while mixing and switch to REFERENCE or IDEAL for the final bounce if you like.
The plugin does not appear in the DAW	Rescan (chapter 3). Check that the file is in the folder listed in chapter 2 and that the DAW is 64-bit. If the host put it on a blocklist ("failed" plugins), reset the list and scan again.
It does not appear in Pro Tools	Check that `Dogma C.aaxplugin` is in the AAX folder. Quit Pro Tools, delete `%APPDATA%\Avid\Pro Tools\InstalledAAXPlugIns` and launch again: Pro Tools rescans everything.
The window is empty, or the DAW shows only a list of parameters	Install the Microsoft Edge WebView2 Runtime (search "WebView2 Runtime" on microsoft.com) and restart the DAW.
No sound, and a "license required" notice	Activate the computer (chapter 2). The plugin unlocks a few seconds after the license file arrives.
"Windows protected your PC" or an antivirus warning	Click More info › Run anyway. If an antivirus quarantines the file, restore it or add an exception for its folder.
Clicks or dropouts	Raise the buffer size of your audio interface, and compare with another plugin on the same track. If it persists, please write to us (see the Support chapter).

CHAPTER 13

Specifications and support

Formats	VST3, CLAP, AAX (PACE-signed), Standalone · Windows 10 / 11, 64-bit
Channels	Mono and stereo, with a stereo external sidechain
Processing	64-bit floating point; feed-forward; bit-transparent below the knee
Detectors	Peak, True Peak, Fast, RMS, Average, Auto (25 ms windows)
Quality	ZERO (0 ms), LAB (0.5 ms), REFERENCE (85 samples), IDEAL (165 samples); lookahead 0–10 ms; reported to the host
Sidechain filter	High pass, low pass, band pass, notch; 20 Hz – 20 kHz, Q 0.1 – 10; listen
Presets	17 factory presets in five categories, unlimited user presets

Getting help

We answer every message ourselves. Please include:

- What you did, what you expected, and what happened instead.
- The DAW and its version, the format (VST3, CLAP, AAX, Standalone), your Windows version, the audio interface, the sample rate and buffer size.
- A screenshot of the plugin window, and the version number shown under the plugin's name.
- For a sound issue: a short audio clip before and after, and the preset or settings.
- In Pro Tools: the newest log from `Documents\Pro Tools\Logs`.

Email	isaac.sound.studio@gmail.com
Beta testers	The feedback page, isaac-audio.rotabox.workers.dev/beta/feedback/ (also from the plugin: click the version number › Report a problem / feedback). You can attach files and follow the answers there.
Manuals	isaac-audio.rotabox.workers.dev/manuals/

Safety

> **PROTECT YOUR EARS AND SPEAKERS**
> A compressor with a high MAKEUP can raise the level a great deal. Start at a low monitoring level, especially when trying presets or typing values.

License agreement

Dogma C is licensed, not sold, under the Isaac Audio End User License Agreement shown by the installer and published at isaac-audio.rotabox.workers.dev/legal/eula/. The software is provided as is. Beta versions are for

testing and may contain faults: keep backups of your projects.

VST is a trademark of Steinberg Media Technologies GmbH. AAX and Pro Tools are trademarks of Avid Technology, Inc. All other product names are trademarks of their respective owners and are used only to identify compatible hosts.