USER MANUAL

Dogma DES

Laboratory-precision de-esser

Sibilance control computed in 64-bit precision, with a key filter matched to its analog prototype, three modes, relative or absolute detection and an external key. Where there is no reduction, the output is the input, bit for bit.



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This manual covers Dogma DES 0.2 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 DES removes harsh "s", "sh" and "t" sounds, and any other bright edge, without dulling what is around them. It listens through a key filter that matches its analog prototype exactly, and reduces only where and when the sibilance is.

Relative detection

The threshold follows the share of sibilance in the signal, not its absolute level: one setting works on a quiet take and a loud one alike.

Three modes

HF ONLY reduces only above a split frequency, WIDE reduces the whole signal, BAND works like a dynamic bell.

Hear what it does

LISTEN › KEY plays what the detector hears; LISTEN › DELTA plays only what is taken away.

Bit-transparent

Where there is no reduction, the output is identical to the input. No colour, no phase shift.

LAB quality

Oversampled detection and an analog-matched filter by default, or ZERO latency for tracking.

External key

Trigger from another track or a pre-EQ copy of the vocal.

CHAPTER 02

Installation and activation

Dogma DES 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.
- **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)

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-DES-…-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 DES** folder.

Where the files go

ITEM	FOLDER
VST3	`C:\Program Files\Common Files\VST3\Dogma DES.vst3`
CLAP	`C:\Program Files\Common Files\CLAP\Dogma DES.clap`
AAX	`C:\Program Files\Common Files\Avid\Audio\Plug-Ins\Dogma DES.aaxplugin`

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 DES › 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 DES.bat** and approve the permission request: it copies the plugin formats to the folders above. **Uninstall Dogma DES.bat** removes them.

Activation

Dogma DES 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 DES

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

1. **Open Dogma DES** 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 DES in your DAW

After installing, open your DAW. Most hosts scan the plugin folders at launch. The plugin is called **Dogma DES**, 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 DES
Cubase / Nuendo	Usually automatic. Otherwise: Studio › VST Plug-in Manager › Rescan.	Insert slot › Dynamics › Dogma DES, 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 DES, 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 DES. 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 DES
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 DES (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.

External key (side-chain)

Let another signal trigger the reduction, for example a pre-EQ copy of the vocal. Route it to Dogma DES's side-chain input, then set **SETUP › KEY SOURCE › EXT**.

HOST	HOW
Pro Tools	Send the source to a bus (not at −∞; pre-fader if the source is muted), then choose that bus with the key icon at the top of the plugin window. KEY SOURCE switches to EXT by itself.
Cubase / Nuendo	Enable Side-Chain in the plugin window's title bar; on the source track: Sends › Dogma DES – Side-Chain. Then KEY SOURCE › EXT.
Studio One	Side-Chain button in the plugin window's title bar › the source track. Then KEY SOURCE › EXT.
Ableton Live	Show the device's Sidechain section › Audio From › the source. Then KEY SOURCE › EXT.
FL Studio	Right-click the arrow under the plugin's Mixer track › Sidechain to this track; in the wrapper (gear › Processing) choose it as the side-chain input. Then KEY SOURCE › EXT.
REAPER	Route › Track channels: 4 on the plugin's track; send the source to channels 3/4. Then KEY SOURCE › EXT.

CHAPTER 04

Quick start

1. **Insert Dogma DES** on the vocal, after the EQ and before the compressor, and play a section with plenty of "s" sounds.
2. **Start from a preset**: click the preset name (NO PRESET) and choose, for example, *Vocals › Male Vocal* or *Female Vocal*.
3. **Find the sibilance**: set **LISTEN › KEY**. You hear what the detector hears. Turn **FREQ** (or drag across the RESPONSE display) until the "s" sounds stand out most. Then set LISTEN back to **OFF**.
4. **Set THRESHOLD by ear**, watching the GR meter: the reduction should appear on the sibilants only, typically 3–8 dB.
5. **Check with DELTA**: LISTEN › DELTA plays only what is removed. You should hear only "s" sounds, not vowels. Back to OFF.
6. **Limit the depth** with **RANGE** if the sibilants become dull or lispy.

> DON'T FORGET LISTEN
>
> KEY and DELTA replace the output. Always set LISTEN back to OFF before you move on, or bounce.

CHAPTER 05

The interface

The display above shows the filter, the curve and the history; the two panels below are the key filter and the de-esser.



Dogma DES in BAND mode: a dynamic bell at 7 kHz, the key filter, and 8 dB of reduction.

1. **Preset bar**: category, name, previous / next.
2. **RESPONSE, CURVE, HISTORY, SETUP**: the display's views.
3. **RELATIVE / ABSOLUTE** detection.
4. **PEAK / RMS** detector.
5. **Response**: the key filter (white) and the reduction (orange).
6. **Status line**: quality, GR, sample rate, latency in samples.
7. **Meters**: IN, GR and OUT per channel, with peak readouts below.
8. **KEY FILTER**: what the detector listens to.
9. **TYPE**: high pass or band pass key.
10. **LISTEN**: OFF, KEY, DELTA.
11. **DE-ESSER**: how much, how fast, and where.
12. **MODE**: WIDE, HF ONLY, BAND, with the SPLIT frequency.
13. **OUTPUT**.

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.

In the RESPONSE display, drag across to change FREQ and scroll to change FOCUS. In CURVE, drag to change THRESHOLD and scroll to change RATIO. `Alt`-click resets a control.

CHAPTER 06

The key filter

The key filter decides what the detector listens to. It does not change the sound by itself: it chooses what triggers the reduction.

CONTROL	RANGE	DEFAULT	WHAT IT DOES
FREQ	500 Hz – 16 kHz	6 kHz	The centre (band pass) or corner (high pass) of the key filter. Sibilance usually lives between 4 and 10 kHz: lower for male voices, higher for female voices.
FOCUS	0 – 100 %	50 %	How narrow the key filter is. Higher values isolate a single frequency; the resulting Q is shown under the knobs.
TYPE	High Pass · Band Pass	Band Pass	Band pass listens to a region around FREQ; high pass listens to everything above it.
LISTEN	Off · Key · Delta	Off	**KEY** plays the filtered key, as the detector hears it. **DELTA** plays only what is being removed. **OFF** is normal operation.

CHAPTER 07

The de-esser

CONTROL	RANGE	DEFAULT	WHAT IT DOES
Detection	Relative · Absolute	Relative	**RELATIVE**: the threshold is the level of the key band compared with the full signal, so it does not depend on how loud the take is. **ABSOLUTE**: a classic threshold in dBFS.
THRESHOLD	−60 – 0 dB	−15 dB	Where reduction begins.
RATIO	1:1 – 20:1, ∞ (LMTR)	4:1	How firmly sibilance above the threshold is reduced. At the top (LMTR) every dB above the threshold is removed, down to the RANGE.
RANGE	−36 – 0 dB	−10 dB	The most reduction allowed. The best protection against a lisp.
RELEASE	1 – 250 ms	40 ms	How fast the level returns after a sibilant.
SHIFT	−1 to +1 octave	0	Moves the SPLIT frequency (in HF ONLY and BAND) away from FREQ: the frequency where the reduction applies can differ from the one that is detected.
MODE	Wide · HF Only · Band	HF Only	Where the reduction is applied (below).
Detector	Peak · RMS	Peak	PEAK reacts to every sibilant at once; RMS is smoother on breathy or noisy sibilance.
OUTPUT	±24 dB	0 dB	Output gain.
ATTACK (SETUP)	0.05 – 20 ms	0.5 ms	How fast the reduction starts.
KNEE (SETUP)	0 – 20 dB	4 dB	How gradually reduction sets in around the threshold.
DRY MIX (SETUP)	0 – 100 %	0 %	Blends in the unprocessed signal: parallel de-essing.
STEREO LINK (SETUP)	0 – 100 %	100 %	100 %: both channels reduce together; 0 %: each on its own.

The three modes

MODE	WHAT IT DOES	BEST FOR
HF ONLY	Reduces only the frequencies above the SPLIT. The body of the voice is untouched.	Vocals and speech: the most natural mode.
WIDE	Reduces the whole signal for the duration of each sibilant, like a fast compressor keyed from the sibilance.	Backing vocals, and sources where HF ONLY sounds phasey.
BAND	A dynamic bell: reduces only a band around the SPLIT.	A single harsh resonance: a whistle at 7 kHz, harshness at 3 kHz, cymbals.

CHAPTER 08

Display and setup

RESPONSE

The key filter (white) and the response of the audio path at the current reduction (orange), with the SPLIT marked. Drag across the display to change FREQ; scroll to change FOCUS.

HISTORY



HISTORY of a sung phrase: reduction only on the five sibilants; the vowels pass untouched.

Four seconds of the input, the key, the output and the gain reduction. Use it to check that only the sibilants are reduced.

CURVE



CURVE: the static curve with the live point, the threshold and the range.

SETUP

Two rows: **QUALITY**, **ATTACK**, **KNEE**, **DRY MIX** / **STEREO LINK**, **LOOKAHEAD**, the window size, **KEY SOURCE** (INT / EXT) and the current sample rate and channels.

QUALITY	LATENCY	WHAT IT DOES
LAB (default)	about 1.8 ms (85 samples at 48 kHz)	Oversampled detection and an analog-matched key filter, exact up to 20 kHz.
ZERO	none	No latency, for recording and live use.

LOOKAHEAD (0–10 ms) lets the reduction start just before a sibilant, for a smoother onset; it adds to the latency. The DAW compensates the latency, and the status line shows it in samples (LAT). Quality and lookahead switch live with a short fade; a few hosts restart the plugin to apply them instead.

CHAPTER 09

Presets and tips

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 DES\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

CATEGORY	PRESETS
Vocals	Male Vocal · Female Vocal · Gentle Lead · Surgical Bell · Backing Vocals · Even Reduction · Natural No Lisp · Bright Pop Vocal · Rap Close Mic · Sh Sounds · Vocal Bus 2k
Speech	Podcast Voice · Voice-Over · Lavalier Edge · Film Dialogue · Audiobook
Instruments	Cymbal Tamer · Guitar Squeak · Brass Edge · Hi-Hat Overheads · Bass Clank · Guitar Fizz
Mix & Master	Mix Sibilance · Harshness 3k · HF Limiter · Mastering Air

A preset sets the sound; QUALITY and LOOKAHEAD stay as they are.

Tips

- **Order:** de-ess after EQ boosts in the presence region, and before compression, which would otherwise exaggerate the sibilants.
- **Less is more:** 3–6 dB of reduction is usually enough. Past that, the "s" turns into a lisp: lower RANGE.
- **"Sh" sounds** sit lower (2.5–4 kHz) than "s" (5–9 kHz). The *Sh Sounds* preset is a starting point.
- **Two in series**, each gentle and on a different FREQ, often sound better than one working hard.

CHAPTER 10

Troubleshooting

WHAT HAPPENS	WHAT TO DO
The voice sounds dull or lispy	Lower RANGE (for example −4 to −6 dB), raise THRESHOLD, or switch MODE to HF ONLY.
Only silence or a thin hiss is heard	LISTEN is on KEY or DELTA: set it to OFF.
KEY SOURCE does not switch to EXT	It switches by itself only in Pro Tools. In other hosts choose SETUP › KEY SOURCE › EXT after routing.
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 DES.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 11

Specifications and support

Formats	VST3, CLAP, AAX (PACE-signed) · Windows 10 / 11, 64-bit
Channels	Mono and stereo, with an external key input
Processing	64-bit floating point; analog-matched key filter; bit-transparent where there is no reduction
Modes	Wide, HF Only, Band; relative or absolute detection; Peak or RMS detector
Latency	LAB: about 85–90 samples at 48 kHz; ZERO: none; plus lookahead 0–10 ms; reported to the host
Presets	26 factory presets in four 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), 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**
> OUTPUT can raise the level by up to +24 dB. Start at a low monitoring level, especially when trying presets or typing values.

License agreement

Dogma DES 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.

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