Syne Control User Manual

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Welcome

Syne Control runs your lights from the music. It listens to each song, finds its intro, builds, drops, breakdowns and outro, and builds a light show for your whole rig: colors, movement, strobes, lasers and haze timed to the music. You play your set; the lights follow.

There are three ways for the lights to follow you:

- **Follow decks**: Pioneer players with PRO DJ LINK. Syne Control knows which song is on air and where in it you are.
- **Listen**: the sound from your mixer. Songs Syne Control has analyzed are recognized; anything else gets a live show made on the spot.
- **Play here**: play a song from this computer with its show (to try things out).

Syne Control sends DMX straight to a USB DMX interface, or over the network to Art-Net or sACN nodes. It doesn't need any other lighting software.

Install and first start

Mac (Apple Silicon: M1 or newer, macOS 14 or newer)

1. Open **Syne-Control-0.1.0-mac-arm64.dmg** and drag **Syne Control** into **Applications**.
2. Open Syne Control. The beta isn't signed by Apple yet, so macOS stops it the first time. Open **System Settings** → **Privacy & Security**, scroll down and click **Open Anyway** next to Syne Control, then confirm.
3. When macOS asks, allow Syne Control to **find devices on your local network** (DJ players, Art-Net, the phone remote need it) and, if you use Listen, to use the **microphone** (that's how it hears your mixer's input).

Windows 10 / 11 (64-bit)

1. Unzip **Syne-Control-0.1.0-win-x64.zip** somewhere that stays, for example **Documents\Syne**. Don't run it from inside the zip.
2. Double-click **Syne Control.exe**. If Windows says it protected your PC, click **More info** → **Run anyway**.
3. When Windows asks whether Syne Control may use the network, allow **private networks**.
4. For **Listen**: in **Settings** → **Privacy & security** → **Microphone**, turn on **Let desktop apps access your microphone** (that's how Windows lets Syne Control hear your mixer's input).

> **Windows is the least tested part of this beta.** See Known issues.

The first-start steps

The first time Syne Control opens it walks you through a few choices (about a minute):

1. **The beta test agreement.** Read it and agree.
2. **Light safety.** Start with **Safe strobes** (nothing flashes faster than 3 times a second) or full strobes. You can switch any time in the top bar.
3. **Your lights.** Pick a demo setup (no lights needed) or **Set up my own lights**.
4. **Where the DMX goes** (your own lights only): Auto, a USB interface, Art-Net or sACN.
5. **Add your music**, or later.

You can run these steps again from **Settings** → **General** → **Run the first-start steps again**. Nothing you set is undone by it.

Where your files are

Your songs stay where they are: Syne Control reads them in place and never copies or changes them. What Syne Control makes (each song's analysis and show, your setups, settings and backups) is kept in:

- Mac: **~/Library/Application Support/Syne**
- Windows: **%APPDATA%\Syne**

Installing a newer build keeps all of it. Syne Control also makes a backup once a day in **Documents/Syne backups** (see Settings).

The screen at a glance

Everything is in one window with a menu along the top:

Show	What the lights are doing now, where they follow from, the moment buttons and ambient looks. Where you live during a set.
Music	Your songs and playlists, importing, and each song's light show.
Lights	Your setups: the room, the lights in it, colors, safety, and where the DMX goes.
Settings	Phone remote, MIDI/OSC controllers, backup, updates, reporting a problem.

On the right of the top bar, always there:

- **Status**: what the lights are doing right now (click it for Show).
- **Safe strobes**: photosensitive-safe strobes on or off.
- **Master**: every light's level at once.
- **White** `W`: every light full white over the show (a speech, finding something on the floor). Click again to go back.
- **Blackout** `B`: all lights off now. The show keeps running underneath and comes back when you click again.

Rest the pointer on any control for a moment to see what it does. Press `⌘K` (Mac) or `Ctrl+K` (Windows) to search songs, screens and actions, and `?` for the keyboard shortcuts. Most changes show a note at the bottom with **Undo**.

Try it with a demo setup

No lights yet? Pick a demo setup (in the first-start steps, or in **Lights** → pick it → **Use this setup**). Syne Control then shows what it would do on that rig:

- **Music** → **a song**: the stage preview plays the song with its light show on the demo rig.
- **Show** → **Stage, live**: draws what the lights are doing right now, whatever plays (Play here, Follow decks, Listen, buttons, ambient looks).

The demo setups: **Club** (a stage on a truss with bars, pars, moving heads, strobes, lasers and fog: the best overview), **Mobile DJ**, **Wedding DJ**, **Bar with ceiling lights** and **Club with venue map** (both with a room map: the heads aim around a real room).

You need songs to see a show: import a few first.

Add your music

Open **Music** → **Import**. You can import from:

- **Your DJ software**: rekordbox, Serato, Traktor, Engine DJ and VirtualDJ playlists. On a Mac, Syne Control asks before it reads your DJ libraries (**Read my DJ libraries**); if macOS asks to let Syne Control see a folder, choose **Allow**. Pick a playlist, then **Import whole playlist** (it stays in step: songs you add to it in your DJ software can be brought in later) or select songs and **Import selected**.
- **rekordbox**: Syne Control reads rekordbox's XML export. In rekordbox choose **File** → **Export Collection in xml format** and save it in Documents (or pick the file in Syne Control). Export again to see new playlists.
- **A rekordbox USB stick**: plug it in, pick it, **Show songs**.
- **Files or a folder**: **Choose files**, **Choose a folder**, or drop audio files and folders anywhere on the window. WAV, AIFF, MP3, FLAC, M4A and more.

Each song is **analyzed once**, in the background: about 40 seconds a song (longer on older computers). The list shows **Ready**, **Analyzing** or **Needs attention** (a file that couldn't be read or moved). You can keep using Syne Control while it works.

> Songs you haven't imported still get lights: **Follow decks** downloads and analyzes an unknown song from the player (about a minute; a simpler show from rekordbox's own analysis runs meanwhile), and **Listen** gives unknown songs the live show.

A song's page

Click a song in Music. Its page has:

- **The stage preview**: **Preview** plays the song with its show on the setup chosen in the preview's **Setup** menu. The colored strip under it is the song's sections (intro, build, drop, breakdown, bridge, light drop, outro): click it to jump.
- **Look**: the song's genre (the show is styled for house, pop, hip-hop, rock, dubstep and drum & bass), its mood, colors, how big the drops hit, and whether big drops get the big moving-head moves. Change any of it; **Undo** is in the note.
- **Builds**: where each build starts (the lights rise from there to the drop). Syne Control's guesses are listed; play from 2 bars before to check, pick another one or type a time.
- **Play here / Stop**, and under **More**: analyze again, remove from the library.

Two more tabs are switched off by default, in **Settings** → **General** → **Interface**:

- **Edit song sections**: fix where a section starts or what it is (split, join, rename). The show follows your changes.
- **Edit song timelines**: your own edits on the song's bars (an effect, a color, a blackout, white, strobe) over or instead of the automatic show. **Back to the automatic show** removes them all.

Running the show

The **Show** screen, top to bottom: what's happening now and the checks (output, setup, beat, safe strobes), where the lights follow from (**Follow decks**, **Listen**, **Play here**: starting one stops the others), now/next with the section timeline, the moment buttons, ambient looks, and **Stage, live**.

Follow decks

1. Turn on **PRO DJ LINK** on your players / all-in-one and connect them to the same network as the computer (an Ethernet cable to the player or a switch is the most reliable).
2. Click **Follow decks**. Load a song and press play: the lights follow the deck that's on air, and move to the next song's show on its next downbeat when you mix over.

Light timing (in the Follow decks panel) nudges the lights earlier or later in 10 ms steps if they look late or early on your rig.

> Close rekordbox (or other Pro DJ Link software) on the same computer: it holds the network ports Syne Control needs. Syne Control warns you when that happens.

Listen

1. Get the sound into the computer: a spare output of your mixer (booth or record out) into an audio interface or the computer's input. A laptop usually needs a USB audio interface; the level is set automatically.
2. Click **Listen** and pick the input.

Songs in your library are recognized within a few seconds and get their own show, following your tempo, loops and jumps. Any other song gets the **live show**, made from what Syne Control hears as it plays; the confidence meter shows how sure it is of the part it's in (it eases in when unsure). **Live genre** tells the live show what's playing (Auto takes the genre of the last song it recognized). **Record** saves what comes in (handy for a problem report).

Play here

Search a song and play it from this computer with its show: to check a show on your rig, or for an event with no decks.

Night, Lift, buttons and looks

- **Night**: **Full show** (every song gets everything), **Auto** (warm-up → mid → peak over the hours you set in Settings, from the night's first show), or a stage by hand (**Warm-up**, **Mid**, **Peak**, **Closing**). Warm-up and

closing use less white and strobe, smaller sweeps and no lasers or fog on drops, so peak time hits harder. Takes effect from the next song.

- **Lift**: brings up the darker parts of the show for a bright room. Kept for each setup.
- **Buttons**: hold or toggle moments over the show (strobe, white flash, blackout hit, a color, smoke if you have a fog machine, an ambient look…), each with a key. **Release all** lets go of everything. Change them with **Edit** (this opens the Console's Board: turn the Console on in Settings).
- **Ambient looks**: calm looks for dinner, cocktails, waiting for the doors. Click one to put it on over whatever plays; click again to take it off. **Comes on by itself** plays a look after a number of seconds with nothing playing. **Fallback** is the look Syne Control runs if a show stops sending while following or playing.
- **Stage, live**: a drawing of what the lights are doing now.

Your lights (setups)

A **setup** is a set of lights in one place: your mobile rig, a club, a wedding venue. Make as many as you like; one is **in use** at a time (**Use this setup**). **New setup** starts one. Each setup has six steps:

Room	Optional. A map of the room seen from above: dance floors, trusses and pipes the lights hang from, walls, aim spots (mirror ball, DJ, logo, stage) and no-go zones (the only hard limit: heads keep beams out of them). With a room map, moving heads use the whole dance floor; **Patterns travel** sets how chases move around the room (across, front to back, out from the booth, around).
Lights	The patch: each light's universe, DMX address and channels, plus per-light limits (never lit, max level, no flashes). The **patch check** finds problems (overlapping addresses, past channel 512, a model or mode that's missing) and fixes them with **Fix** / **Fix all**, with **Undo**.
Stage	The front view: add lights by kind (bar, par, moving head, moving bar, strobe, laser, hazer, fog machine, dimmer) and drag them into place; trusses and the DJ booth too. Each light's panel sets its name, address and **model** (search the fixture library). Preview a song on the unsaved setup. **Save setup** when done.
Colors	Venue colors for this setup (a brand's colors win everywhere), and your own palettes.
Safety	Event mode (club, wedding, corporate), Safe strobes, how many groups of lights at a time, fog and haze limits, laser limits (raise every beam, max size, minimum height) with **Show the lowest beams** to check, and advice for what each fixture should do if the DMX signal stops.
Output	Where the DMX goes (below), light timing, and test patterns to check your patch.

The fixture library

Find or make a light (Stage step) or **Add lights** (Lights step) opens the library: over 2,000 fixtures from the Open Fixture Library, QLC+'s collection and our own, searchable by maker, model, nickname or channel count ("14ch"). Each mode shows its channels and what the show will use. Not there?

- **Make your own fixture**: one row per DMX channel, the way the manual lists them (dimmer, colors, pan/tilt, strobe ranges, color and gobo wheels, prism, zoom, pixels…). Start from a copy of a similar fixture to save time. **Try on the lights** checks a channel on the real fixture.
- **Import a file**: a GDTF file (download from GDTF Share with your own account) or a QLC+ .qxf file.

Tell us which fixtures are missing (the website has a fixture request form): library updates arrive inside the app, free.

Find lights (RDM)

With an RDM-capable interface (Enttec DMX USB Pro, or an Art-Net node with RDM), **Find lights** in the Lights step lists fixtures on the line and can set their address and mode, identify them, and add them to the setup.

Sharing a setup

Send to a box / save as a file sends a whole setup (patch, room, buttons, schedule, colors and the effects and fixtures it uses) to another computer, which opens it with **Open a setup file** or **Settings** → **Receive a setup**.

DMX interfaces

In **Lights** → **Output** (or the first-start steps) choose where the DMX goes:

Auto	A USB DMX interface when one is plugged in, otherwise Art-Net. Right for most people.
USB	**FTDI "Open DMX" dongles** (Enttec Open DMX USB and the many FT232 clones): Syne Control makes the DMX signal itself. **Enttec DMX USB Pro** (and compatibles): also RDM. One universe per interface. On Windows, install the FTDI VCP driver if the dongle isn't found.
Art-Net	Any Art-Net node or Art-Net fixture: set its IP address and universe. A broadcast address (ending in .255) reaches every Art-Net device on the network, so Syne Control asks twice.
sACN	E1.31 nodes and consoles, multicast or to one address.

Syne Control sends only your setup's channels. **DMX coming in** (Output step) can merge another desk's Art-Net or sACN with the show.

Safety

> **Flashing lights can cause seizures** in people with photosensitive epilepsy, often without any history of them. Flashes faster than about 3 a second are the main risk. Syne Control strobes up to 10 times a second unless **Safe strobes** is on. Put up a notice where strobes are used, and use Safe strobes for events with children, older guests or anyone who asks.

- **Lasers**: follow the laser laws where you play (some places need a permit or variance for audience lasers). Keep beams well above people: set your lasers' height and limits in the Safety step and check them with **Show the lowest beams** before guests arrive. Syne Control never uses lasers in builds and always keeps them as a ceiling over the crowd, but it can't see the room.
- **Fog and haze**: follow the venue's rules and ask about smoke detectors before you use either (some can be covered or set for the night; some places need a permit); keep fog away from exits and stairs. **Fog & haze** in the top bar (shown when your setup has a fog machine or hazer) has a button each to turn the haze or the fog off now (if the room gets too thick, or a smoke alarm is a worry) and an **Output** slider each to turn them down from what the show plans (100%); both stay as set after a restart. **Lights** → **Safety** → **Fog and haze** sets limits that hold whatever drives the machine (the show, the Smoke button, the Console, DMX coming in): the most output, the longest burst (10 s unless you change it), the least time between bursts, and the most fog in any minute or hour. The show's own fog is 3–4 s bursts on big moments, at least 40 s apart; hazers keep running. If Syne Control has a problem it turns fog machines off (and on quit, hazers too).
- **Moving heads and rigging**: safety cables on everything hung.
- **If the signal stops**: once the DMX signal is gone Syne Control can't send anything, so set each fixture's own signal-loss setting: blackout for lasers, strobes and fog machines.
- Whenever an audience is there, someone should be able to hit **Blackout**.

The Console (optional)

Most DJs never need it. Turn it on in **Settings → General → Interface → Show the Console**. It has:

- **Board**: build the moment buttons and faders on Show (what each does, its key, color, fade).
- **Effects**: chases, color fades, rainbows, pulses, sparkles and moving-head shapes (circle, figure 8, sweeps), on the music's beat.
- **Cue lists**: looks and effects in order, with GO, Back and fades.
- **Manual**: take hold of chosen lights (intensity, color, position, gobos…) over the show, and save scenes.

Settings

- **General**: the interface switches (hover descriptions, booth mode for a darker screen, the Console, song section and timeline editing), White/Blackout fade, feet or meters, the auto night's hours, and the first-start steps.
- **Controllers**: MIDI controllers and OSC (phone apps such as TouchOSC). **Learn**: pick a button or fader in Syne Control, then touch the control. Pads light up and motor faders follow where the controller supports it.
- **Backup and moving computers**: back up now, restore, and the daily backup folder. A backup holds your library, setups, settings, every song's show and your own fixtures (audio only if you ask). To move to another computer: back up, install Syne Control there, restore; Syne Control finds your songs on the new computer (or keeps their shows if it can't).
- **Updates**: Syne Control checks for a newer beta once a day and tells you in the top bar; it never installs anything by itself. Fixture library updates install from the Lights library.
- **What's new and news**: after an update, a window lists what changed; messages from Syne Labs about the beta (known problems, new builds) show the same way. Each shows once, never while the lights follow your decks, listen or play: it waits until nothing is playing. Find them again in Settings, Updates. Offline, nothing shows.
- **Report a problem**: makes a zip on your Desktop with what we need (version, log, your setup, a note from you; no passwords, phone codes or personal paths). Send it to us.
- **About**: version, this manual, and the open-source notices.

If something goes wrong

- **Lights wrong or too bright right now**: **Blackout** B, or bring **Master** down. The show keeps running underneath.
- **A part of Syne Control fails mid-show**: the lights hold the last look for 2 seconds, then the **fallback look** runs while Syne Control recovers; the show comes back by itself. The top bar says "recovered" or "running on fallback".
- **Syne Control quits unexpectedly**: it starts again by itself and picks up following the decks or the sound.
- **No lights**: check **Lights** → **Output** ("where the DMX goes now"), the interface is plugged in, the fixtures' addresses match the patch (the patch check helps), and run a test pattern.
- **Follow decks sees no players**: PRO DJ LINK on, same network, rekordbox closed on this computer.
- **Listen hears nothing**: the right input picked, the level reaching the computer, and microphone access allowed: Mac **System Settings** → **Privacy & Security** → **Microphone**; Windows **Settings** → **Privacy & security** → **Microphone**, with **Let desktop apps access your microphone** on.
- **A song's sections are wrong**: turn on section editing (Settings → General) and fix them on its page; tell us which song.

Then **Settings** → **Report a problem**, with a sentence on what you saw and when.

Known issues (beta 0.1)

- **Windows hasn't been run on a real PC yet.** Also on Windows: M4A/AAC files can't be read yet (use WAV, AIFF, MP3 or FLAC), and the program has Python's icon (use a shortcut with the Syne Control icon).
- The beta isn't code-signed: Open Anyway (Mac) / Run anyway (Windows) the first time.
- Mac: Apple Silicon only (M1 or newer).
- **Build starts** are right within a bar about half the time on new songs: the build lights ease in to cover it. Fix a song's build in its **Builds** tab.
- Pop and hip-hop choruses are found less reliably than house drops.
- **The live show** (unknown songs in Listen) reacts to drops within a fraction of a second, but builds and breakdowns show up about 2–3 seconds late.
- When two songs share a sample, Listen can briefly pick the wrong one.
- Not yet tried with real hardware: RDM, MIDI/OSC controllers, sACN receivers, room maps on real moving heads, restoring a backup on a second computer.
- The phone remote and setup sending aren't encrypted: use them on a network you trust.
- DMX coming in over a cable needs an Art-Net node (USB interfaces can't receive yet).
- A few fog machines' DMX channels can't be read from the library (some with their own timer modes): Syne Control leaves them off. If yours doesn't fog, tell us its model.
- The first analysis after installing takes longer while Syne Control gets ready.

About the beta

- Testers get everything; nothing is locked.
- Each beta build works for 90 days. Syne Control tells you two weeks ahead in the top bar; a newer build (or an extension from us) moves the date. It never stops in the middle of a show: an ended build just won't start again.
- Your setups, songs and shows carry over to every new build.
- Feedback is what this is for: what looked great, what looked wrong (song and time), what was confusing. **Settings → Report a problem** or a message to us.

Thank you for testing Syne Control.