

ShowDeck

User Manual

Control of audio, lighting, video and text overlays for live events

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ShowDeck · DualMind Studio · www.show-deck.de

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1 Introduction

1.1 What is ShowDeck?

ShowDeck is a computer program (Windows and macOS) that lets you trigger audio, lighting, video and text overlays at events with a mouse click or a key press. Typical uses include theater performances, concerts, church services, trade fairs, club celebrations and corporate events.

The basic idea is simple: before the event, you prepare everything in small building blocks. During the event, a single click is then enough, and ShowDeck starts, at exactly the right moment, for example a piece of music, shows a title on the screen and switches a lighting mood at the same time.

ShowDeck can control the following things:

- **Audio:** Music and sounds (file formats MP3, WAV, OGG, FLAC, AAC, M4A) through up to three separate outputs.
- **Video:** Films on a screen or a second display, with fade in and fade out.
- **Overlays:** Texts and images shown on top of the video picture (for example titles, song lyrics, logos, scrolling text).
- **Lighting:** Lighting consoles and lighting devices over the network (“Art-Net” protocol), including color presets and lighting effects.
- **MIDI:** Signals to musical devices, for example keyboards or effects units. ShowDeck can also receive MIDI, for example from a foot switch.
- **Mixing consoles and lighting programs:** the Yamaha DM3 digital mixing console and the DasLight 5 lighting software (via the “OSC” network protocol).
- **Timecode:** ShowDeck can follow an external time reference (LTC, MTC and Art-Net) and trigger sequences at fixed times of the show.

After the license has been activated, ShowDeck does not need an internet connection during the event.

1.2 Who is this manual for?

This manual is aimed at people without technical background knowledge. All technical terms are explained before they are used. Each chapter builds on the previous ones. If you are using ShowDeck for the first time, read chapters 1 to 6 in order. The later chapters then also serve as a reference.

You do not have to be an expert in audio or lighting technology to operate ShowDeck. If your event involves lighting consoles, mixing consoles or video projectors, however, you should know how these devices are connected to the computer, or get help from the responsible specialist.

1.3 How this manual is organized

The chapters follow the natural course of an event:

Chapter	Content
1 and 2	Basics: what ShowDeck is, startup, license, layout of the interface, saving files
3 and 4	Preparation: adding media (audio, video, images) and setting up devices

Chapter	Content
5 to 9	Programming: creating CUEs and Actions, all Action types, timeline, external triggers
10 and 11	Performance: live operation with grid and list, timecode
12 and 13	Additional tools, preparation before the event, troubleshooting, keyboard shortcuts
14	Two worked-through practical examples

Conventions:

- The ShowDeck interface is in English. Labels of buttons, menus and fields are therefore shown in this manual in **bold type** and in their original spelling, for example **Add Action**.
- A menu path is written with an arrow, for example **Tools → Audio Files**. This means: first open the **Tools** menu, then choose the **Audio Files** entry.
- Highlighted paragraphs begin with **Note:** (additional information), **Tip:** (recommendation) or **Warning:** (risk of data loss or malfunction).
- The figures show the sample show “TestShow Zuhause” in the demo version. Your display may differ in details, for example in the names of the devices.

1.4 The most important terms

You will come across the following terms throughout the manual. You do not need to memorize them now; they are explained in more detail in the later chapters.

Term	Meaning
Show	Your entire project: all CUEs, media files and device settings. A show is saved as a folder on the computer.
CUE (pronounced “Q”)	A cue that you trigger. On the screen, a CUE is a button with a name and a color. One click on it starts everything you have prepared in the CUE. Example: the CUE “Welcome” plays music and shows the title.
Action	A single task within a CUE, for example “play file” or “set lighting mood”. A CUE can contain any number of Actions.
Edit mode	The working view for preparation: here you create and change CUEs and Actions.
Live mode	The view during the event: here you trigger CUEs. Changes are deliberately not possible here, so that nothing gets changed by accident.
Grid	Live view in which all CUEs lie next to each other as buttons. Suitable when you decide freely what happens next.
List	Live view in which the CUEs are arranged one below the other in a fixed order. A “PLAY NEXT” button always starts the next entry. Suitable for sequences with a fixed script, for example a theater play.

Term	Meaning
Timeline	A display in Edit mode in which you arrange the Actions of a CUE on a time axis, similar to a video editing program.
Bus	An output channel for audio. ShowDeck has three: Main (main speakers), Monitor (stage speakers or headphones) and Backing (backing track). You can assign each bus its own speaker or headphones.
DMX / Art-Net	DMX is the common standard with which lighting consoles and spotlights exchange values (0 to 255) for brightness, color or movement. Art-Net is a way of sending these values over a normal network cable or Wi-Fi.
MIDI	A standard with which musical devices send each other commands, for example “play note C”.
OSC	A network standard for commands between devices and programs. ShowDeck uses it for the Yamaha DM3 and DasLight 5.
Trigger	An external trigger for a CUE, for example a MIDI signal or a timecode time. This way a CUE starts automatically without you clicking.
Timecode	A running clock time of the show (hours:minutes:seconds:frames), supplied by another device. ShowDeck can follow it.

2 Getting Started

2.1 Installation and launching the program

ShowDeck is installed like an ordinary program. On Windows you run the provided installer; on macOS you open the installation file (DMG) and drag ShowDeck into the “Applications” folder. Then start ShowDeck from the Start menu or the Applications folder, respectively.

On the first launch, a splash screen appears briefly, followed by the activation screen (see Section 2.2).

Tip: Use a computer dedicated exclusively to the event. Turn off power saving mode, automatic updates and screen savers, and close other programs. This avoids unwanted interruptions.

2.2 License and demo version

At startup, ShowDeck shows the activation screen. You have two options:

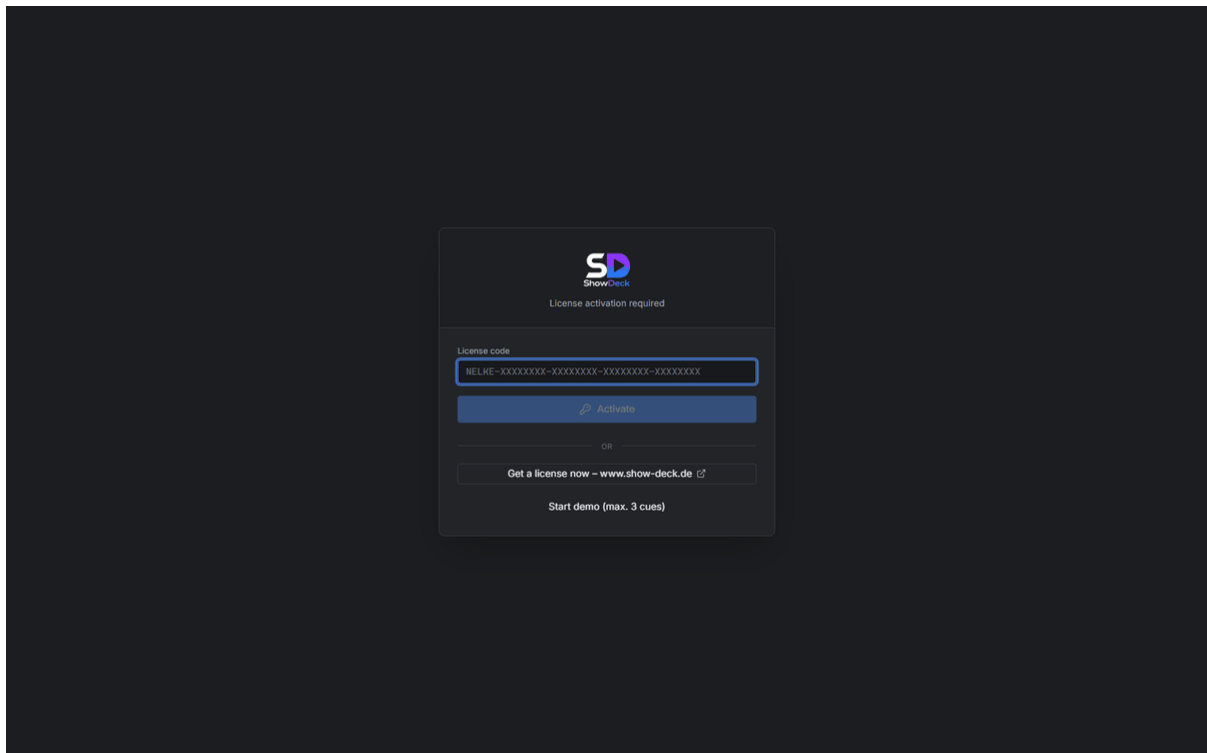


Figure 1: Activation screen at startup

Element	Function
License code	Input field for your license key. It has the format NELKE-XXXXXXXX-XXXXXXXX-XXXXXXXX.
Activate	Checks the key and fully unlocks ShowDeck. You need an internet connection once for this. The button is only active once a key has been entered.
Get a license now – www.show-deck.de	Opens the website where you can purchase a license.
Start demo (max. 3 cues)	Starts ShowDeck without a license in the demo version.

Limitations of the demo version:

- A maximum of **3 CUEs** is possible. If you try to create a fourth one, the **+** button stays locked and shows the message “Demo version: max. 3 Cues”.
- Shows with more than 3 CUEs cannot be opened.
- Importing shows from ZIP files is not possible.
- The status bar at the bottom right shows the **DEMO** marker.

You can enter the license at any time later: open **Tools → About ShowDeck**. There you will find the license status, a field for the key and the **Activate license** button. With **Contact support** you open a prepared e-mail to support.

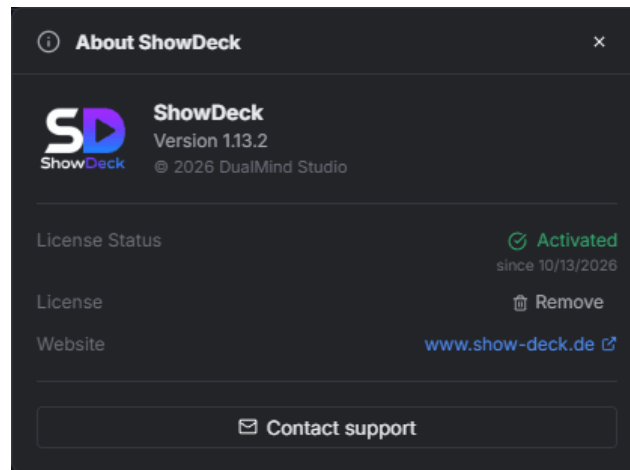


Figure 2: The “About ShowDeck” dialog (shown here with an activated license; in the demo version it additionally contains the field for the license key)

2.3 The user interface at a glance

After startup, ShowDeck opens the most recently used show. If there is none yet, you see an empty area. The interface consists of five areas:

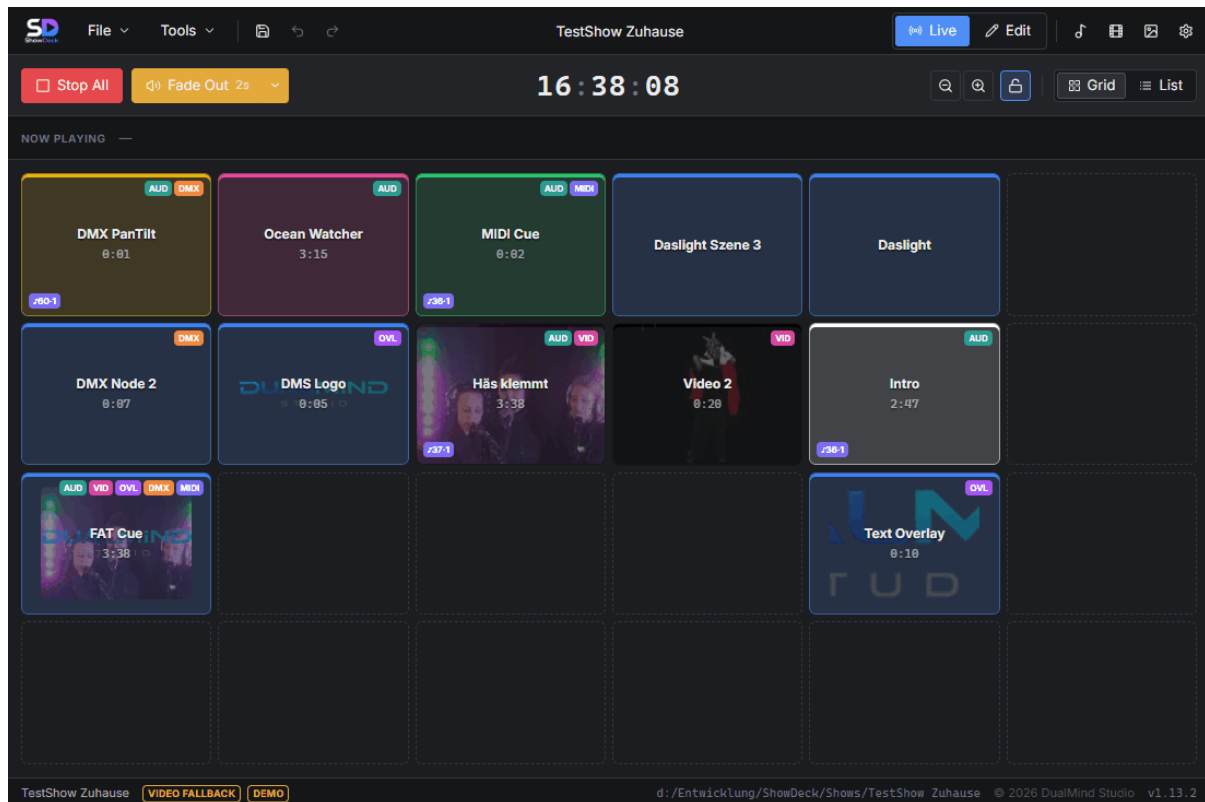


Figure 3: The Live view (Grid) at a glance

Header (top)

Element	Function
Logo “SD” (far left)	A click takes you back to the Live view in the grid.
File	Menu for creating, opening and saving shows (Section 2.4).
Tools	Menu with monitoring windows, media management, settings and About (Section 2.4).
Floppy disk icon	Saves the show. If it is orange, there are unsaved changes.
Left arrow / right arrow	“Undo” reverts the last step, “Redo” restores it.
Name of the show (center)	Here you can change the name. The name is also used as the folder name when saving.
Live / Edit	Switch between Live mode (performance) and Edit mode (preparation).
Music note icon, film icon, image icon	Open the management of audio files, video files and graphics (Chapter 3).
Gear	Opens Devices & Settings , the device settings (Chapter 4).

Work area (center)

In **Live mode** you see a toolbar at the top (Section 10.1) and your CUEs below it. In **Edit mode** you see a list of all CUEs on the left and the settings of the selected CUE on the right (Chapters 5 to 8).

Timecode bar (bottom, only when timecode is enabled)

Shows the running timecode time (see Chapter 11). It is only visible if timecode is switched on in the settings.

Status bar (very bottom)

- Left: the name of the show. Next to it, **Unsaved changes** appears if you have not yet saved changes.
- **VIDEO FALLBACK** (orange): The configured video display is not available; the video window was therefore opened on the main display (see Section 4.5).
- **DEMO**: You are using the demo version.
- Right: the location of the show, the copyright notice and the version number.

2.4 The File and Tools menus

The File menu

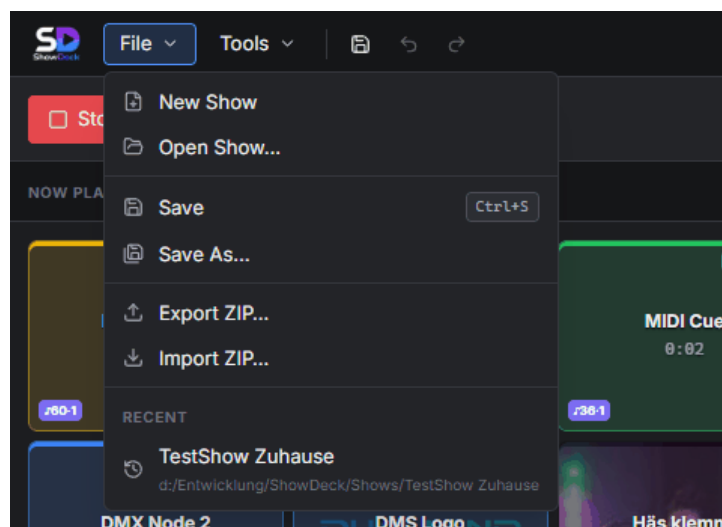


Figure 4: The “File” menu

Entry	Function
New Show	Creates a new, empty show. If the current show contains unsaved changes, ShowDeck asks first.
Open Show...	Opens a saved show. To do so, select the show’s folder.
Save (Ctrl+S or Cmd+S)	Saves the show. For a new show you are asked for a storage location.
Save As...	Saves the show under a new name or in a new location.
Export ZIP...	Packs the complete show including media into a single ZIP file, for example for a backup or for transferring to another computer. Only possible if the show has already been saved.
Import ZIP...	Unpacks a ZIP file that was created with Export ZIP... and opens the show. Not available in the demo version.
Recent	List of recently opened shows. One click opens the show.

The Tools menu

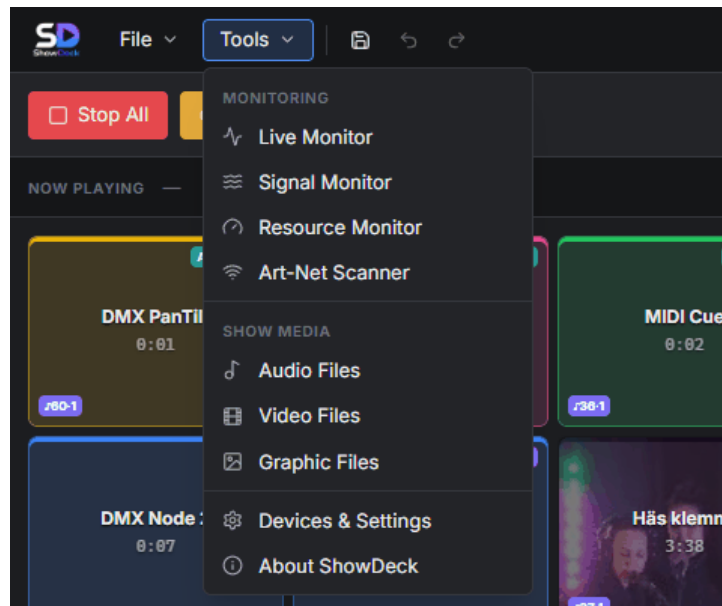


Figure 5: The “Tools” menu

Entry	Function
Live Monitor	Window that displays the lighting values, MIDI signals and OSC commands sent (Chapter 12).
Signal Monitor	Window that displays incoming signals (Chapter 12).
Resource Monitor	Window that shows the load on the computer (Chapter 12).
Art-Net Scanner	Window that searches for lighting devices on the network (Chapter 12).
Audio Files / Video Files / Graphic Files	Open the media management (Chapter 3).
Devices & Settings	Opens the device settings (Chapter 4).
About ShowDeck	Shows version, license and support (Section 2.2).

2.5 Saving and opening shows

A show does not consist of a single file but of a **folder**. It contains the programming (CUEs, settings) and copies of all media you have added. You can back up the folder by copying it or by using **File → Export ZIP....**

Saving a show for the first time:

1. Enter a name for the show in the header (field in the center).
2. Click **File → Save As...** or press Ctrl+S.
3. In the file dialog, choose a folder in which the show is to be stored. ShowDeck automatically creates a subfolder there with the name of the show.

After that, **Save** (or Ctrl+S) is enough to save changes. If you change the name of the show, ShowDeck renames the folder accordingly when saving.

Warning: Save regularly. When you close ShowDeck, the program asks if there are unsaved changes: **Save & Close** saves and closes, **Close without Saving** discards the changes, **Cancel** aborts closing.

Note: While CUEs are running, you cannot switch to Edit mode. ShowDeck reports “Show still running”. First end all CUEs with **Stop All**.

3 Managing Media

All audio, video and image files that your show is to use must first be **imported** into the show. ShowDeck copies the files into the show's folder. This makes the show complete even if you later move or delete the originals, and lets you transfer it as a whole to another computer.

You reach the media management via the three icons at the top right of the header (music note icon, film icon, image icon) or via the **Tools** menu.

3.1 Audio files

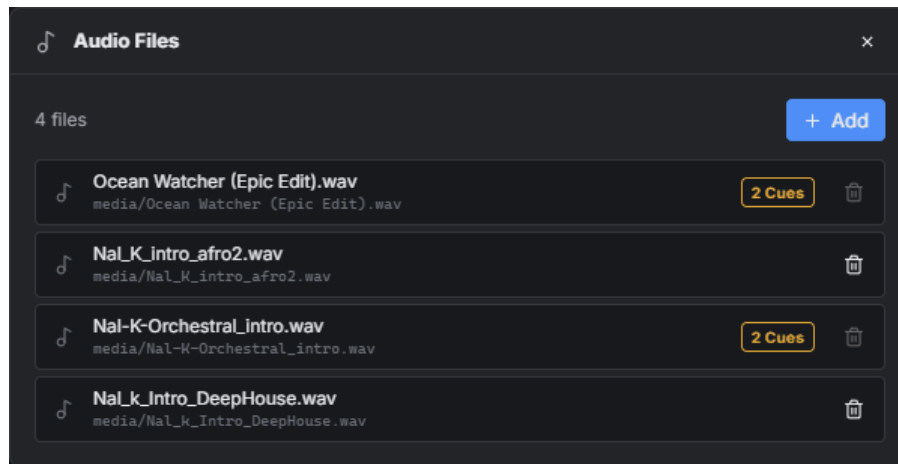


Figure 6: Managing audio files

1. Click the music note icon at the top right (or **Tools** → **Audio Files**). The **Audio Files** window opens.
2. Click **Add**. A file dialog opens.
3. Select one or more files. MP3, WAV, OGG, FLAC, AAC and M4A are allowed.
4. Confirm. ShowDeck copies the files into the show and lists them.

For each file, the list shows the name, the storage location within the show and – if the file is in use – a marker such as **2 Cues**. This means the file appears in two CUEs.

With the **trash can icon** you remove a file from the show. Files that are still used in a CUE cannot be deleted; the trash can is then locked. First remove the file from the CUEs concerned.

Tip: Very large audio files (over 50 MB, for example a multi-hour recording) are not loaded completely into memory by ShowDeck but read while playing. This is easier on the computer. Short effects, on the other hand, are fully preloaded so that they start without delay.

3.2 Video files

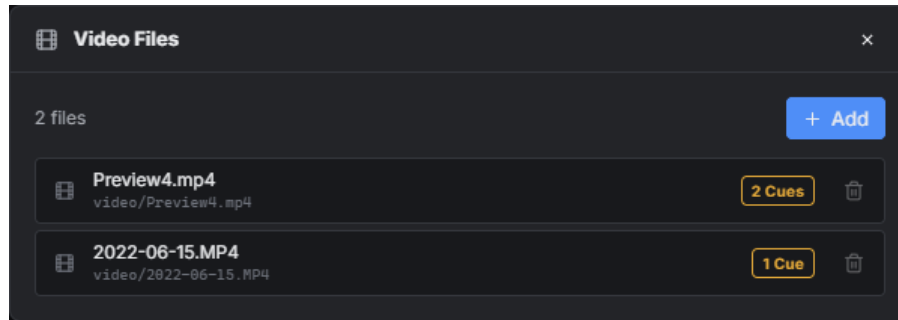


Figure 7: Managing video files

The procedure is the same as for audio files: the icon with the film or **Tools** → **Video Files**, then **Add**. The formats MP4, MOV, WEBM and M4V are allowed. Files in H.264 format (MP4) work best.

ShowDeck automatically generates small preview images of the videos. They later appear in the Action settings and on the buttons in the Live grid.

3.3 Graphics

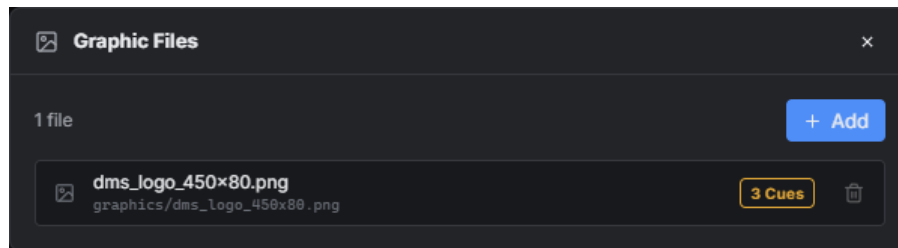


Figure 8: Managing graphic files

Graphics are needed for image overlays (Section 7.9), for example a logo. Open the image icon or **Tools** → **Graphic Files** and click **Add**. PNG, JPG, WEBP, GIF and SVG are allowed. PNG files with a transparent background are particularly well suited for logos.

4 Devices and Settings

Before you create CUEs, you tell ShowDeck which devices are connected: speakers, MIDI devices, lighting devices, mixing console, video screen. These settings are called **Devices & Settings**. They are saved with the show.

How to open the settings: Click the **gear** at the top right or choose **Tools → Devices & Settings**. On the left of the window you will find the areas **Audio**, **MIDI**, **Art-Net**, **OSC**, **Video**, **Timecode** and **Appearance**. Clicking an area shows its settings on the right. With the **x** at the top right of the window or the Esc key you close the window; changes take effect immediately.

Tip: Set up the devices first and create the CUEs afterwards. In the CUEs you then only select the devices from a list.

4.1 Audio: setting the outputs

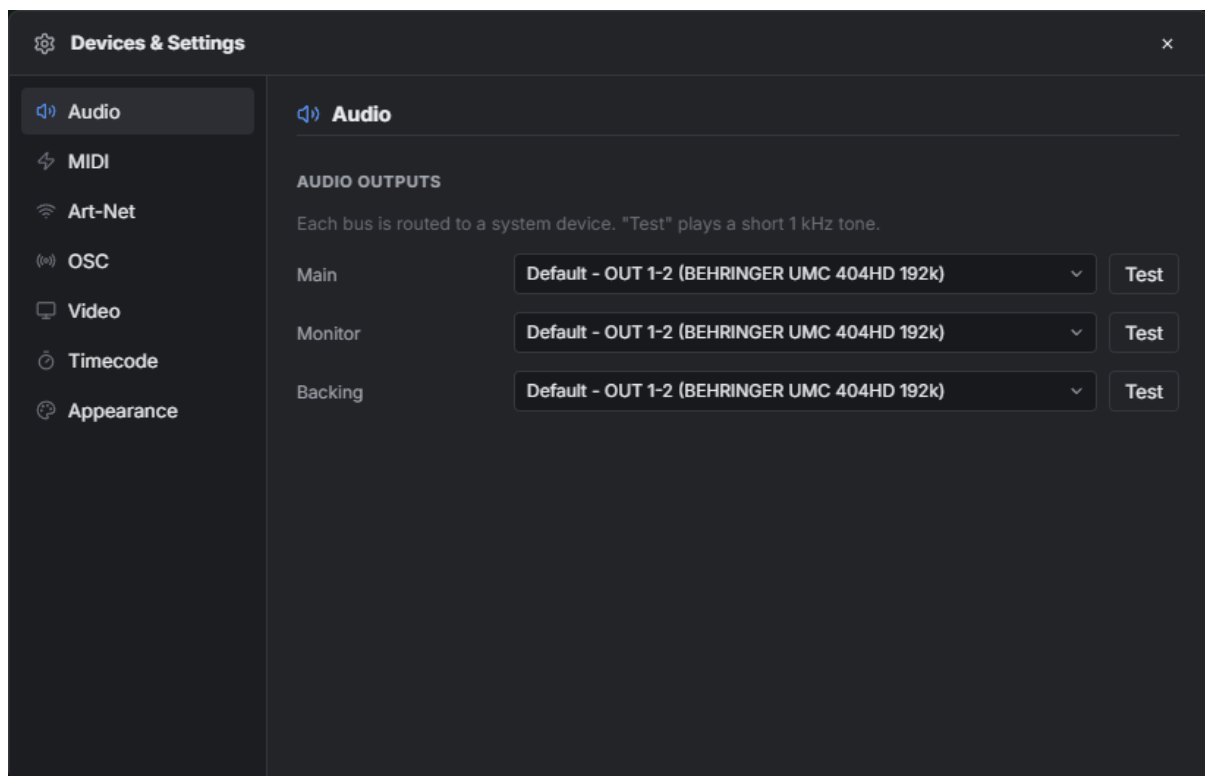


Figure 9: "Audio" area

ShowDeck has three independent audio outputs, called **buses**. Each bus can be routed to a different speaker or headphones of the computer:

Bus	Typical use
Main	Main speakers for the audience.
Monitor	Speakers on stage or headphones for the operator, for example for pre-listening.
Backing	Backing track (playback), for example for musicians or a second sound system.

For each bus there is a selection list with all audio devices known to the computer (built-in speakers, USB audio interfaces, Bluetooth and so on). **System Default** means: the output that Windows or macOS currently has set as the default is used.

With **Test** next to each bus, ShowDeck plays a short sine tone (1000 hertz, just under one second). This lets you check whether the sound arrives at the right speaker.

4.2 MIDI: outputs and inputs

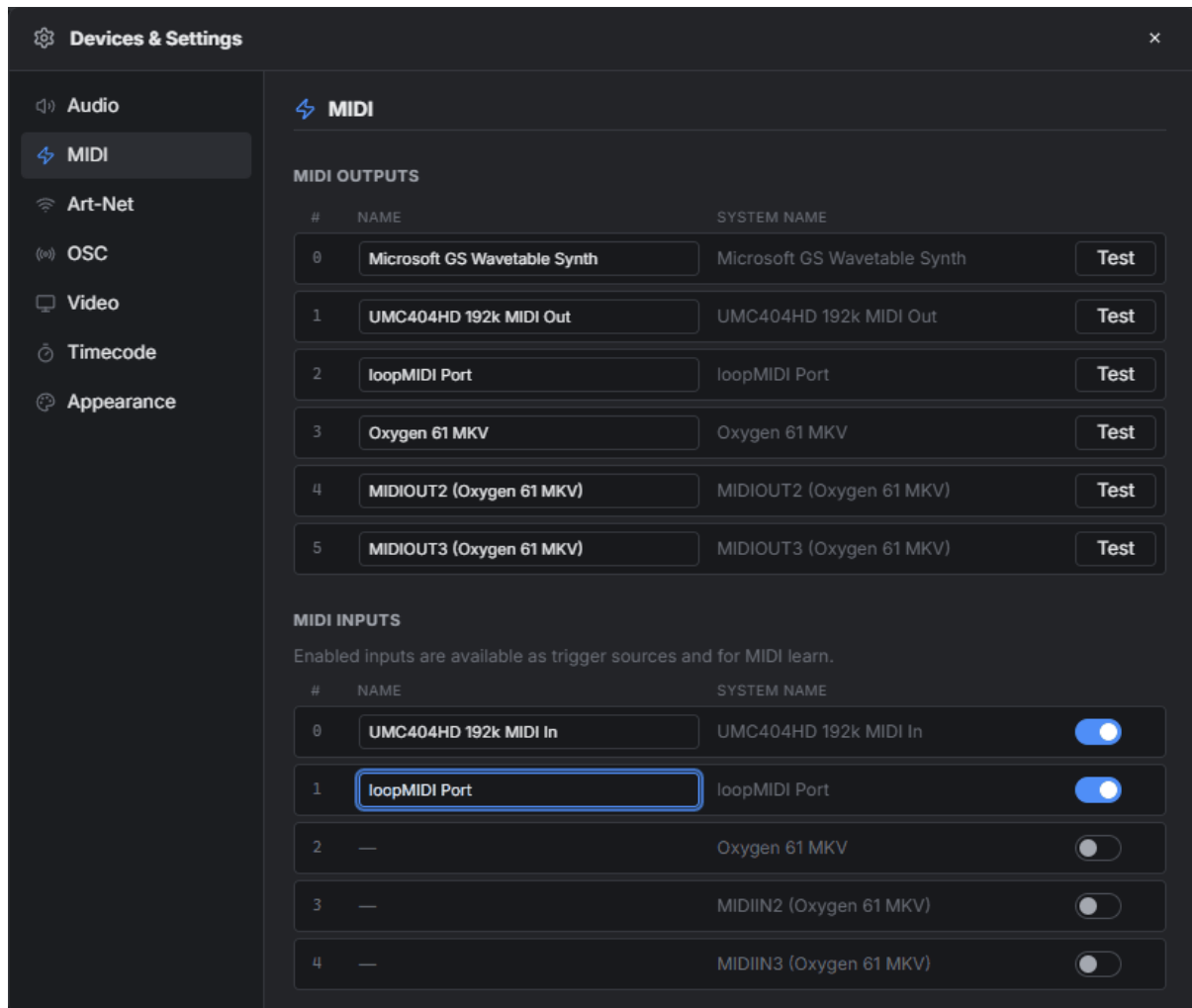


Figure 10: “MIDI” area with outputs and inputs

The area shows two tables with the same columns:

Column	Meaning
#	Running number of the port, as assigned by the system.
Name	A freely selectable name that you may change. This name later appears in the selection lists of ShowDeck. Choose an understandable name, for example “Keyboard Stage”.
System name	The name the device reports to the computer. It cannot be changed and helps you identify the port reliably.

MIDI Outputs

These are devices to which ShowDeck **sends** MIDI signals. **Test** sends a tone (note 60 on channel 1) for one second. If the connected device responds, the connection is fine.

MIDI Inputs

These are devices from which ShowDeck **receives** MIDI signals, for example a foot switch or a controller with which you want to trigger CUEs (see Chapter 9). To the right of each input there is a **switch**: only inputs that are switched on can be used in ShowDeck. Only once an input is switched on can you change its **Name**.

Warning: The assignment of a switched-on input is based on the running number (#). If the order of the devices changes, for example because you plug in or unplug a USB device, a name can suddenly belong to a different device. Therefore, before every event, compare the **Name** and **System name** columns. If they no longer match, switch the input off and on again. It then receives the correct name.

Note: Connect MIDI devices before you start ShowDeck. If devices are plugged in or unplugged while the program is running, they may not appear in the list until the program is restarted.

Note: On Windows you will see virtual MIDI ports (for example “loopMIDI Port”) like real devices. They can be used to exchange signals between two programs on the same computer.

4.3 Art-Net: lighting devices on the network

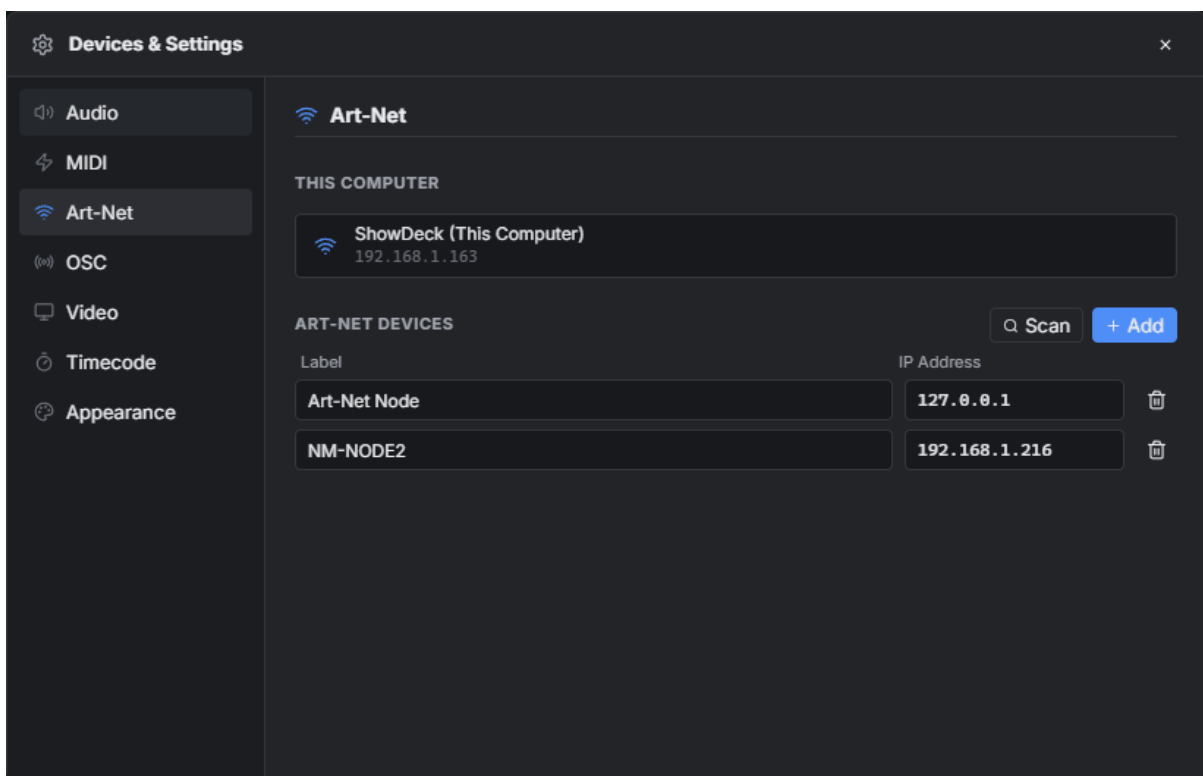


Figure 11: “Art-Net” area

Art-Net is the method by which lighting values are sent over a network. Your computer and the lighting device (for example a lighting console or an “Art-Net node” that converts the network signal into DMX) must be on the **same network**.

At the top, the area shows **This Computer**: the name and network address (IP address) of your own computer. Below it follows the **Art-Net Devices** list, i.e. the receivers to which ShowDeck is to send lighting values.

Adding a receiver:

1. Click **Add**. A new row appears.
2. Enter a name under **Label**, for example “Stage lighting”.
3. Enter the network address of the device under **IP Address**. It is usually printed on the device or in its manual. The address consists of four numbers separated by dots, for example 192.168.1.216.

It is easier with **Scan**: ShowDeck then searches for Art-Net devices on the network by itself and offers the devices it finds for adding (+ icon next to the entry). The **trash can** icon removes a receiver.

Note: Art-Net uses network port 6454. On Windows, the firewall may block this port. If your lights do not respond, allow ShowDeck access to private networks in the Windows firewall.

4.4 OSC: mixing console and DasLight

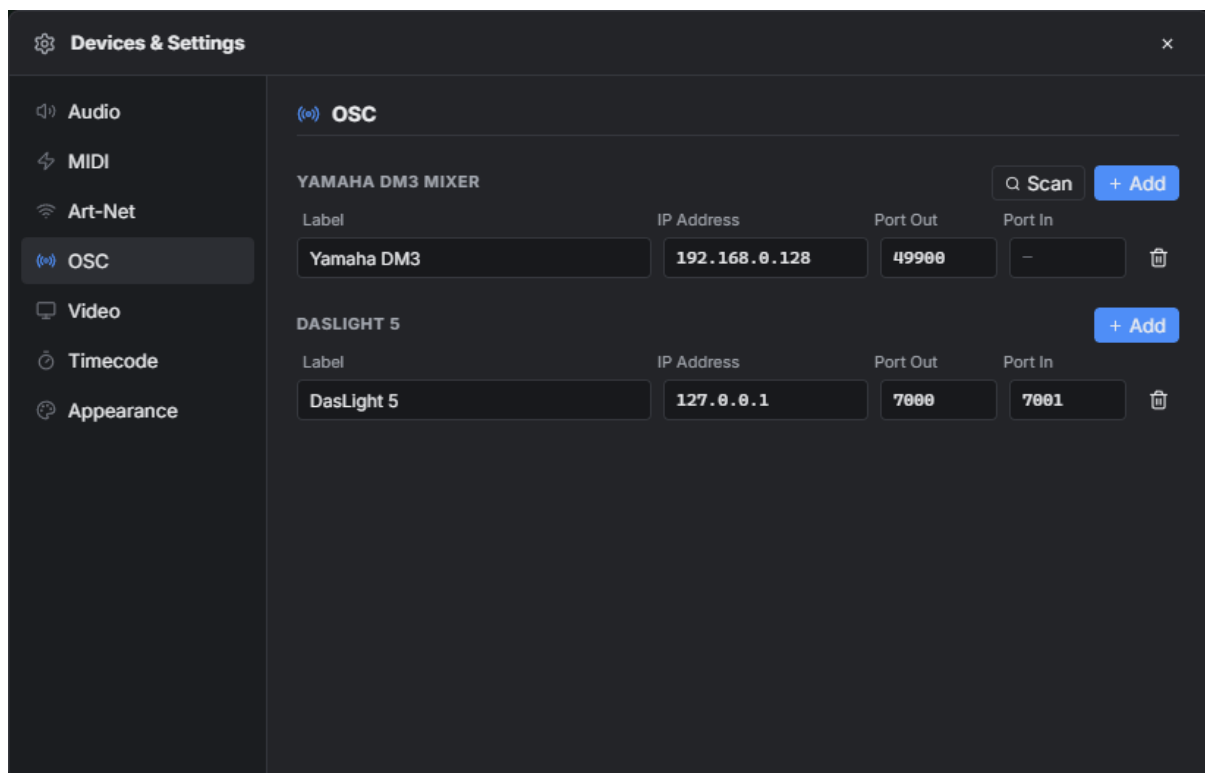


Figure 12: “OSC” area with DM3 and DasLight 5

The **OSC** area contains two lists for devices that ShowDeck controls over the network:

- **Yamaha DM3 Mixer**: the Yamaha DM3 digital mixing console.
- **DasLight 5**: the DasLight 5 lighting control software (a program on a computer).

For both lists: **Add** adds a device, the **trash can icon** removes it, and for DM3 devices **Scan** searches the network automatically. Each device has the following fields:

Field	Meaning
Label	Your name for the device.

Field	Meaning
IP Address	Network address of the device. If DasLight runs on the same computer as ShowDeck, enter 127.0.0.1.
Port Out	The port to which ShowDeck sends its commands. It can be found in the manual of the device or software.
Port In	The port on which ShowDeck receives feedback from the device. It is needed for external triggers and the learn function and can be left empty if you do not use them.

4.5 Video: output window and screen

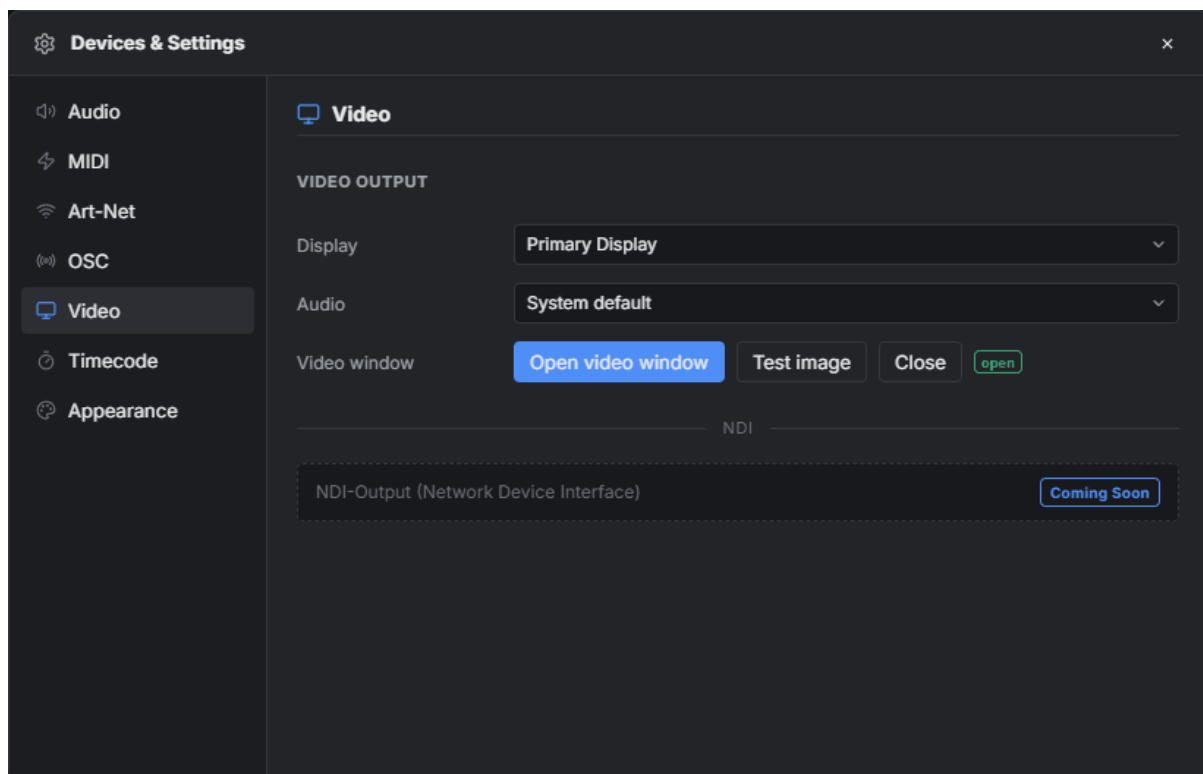


Figure 13: “Video” area

ShowDeck displays videos and overlays in its own **video window**. This window is normally output full-screen on a second display or a projector so that the audience can see it while you keep working on the main display.

Setting	Meaning
Display	On which connected display the video window appears. Choose your projector or your second display.
Audio	Through which audio device the sound of the videos is output. System default uses the default output.
Open video window	Opens the video window on the selected display. Next to it, a green open marker shows that it is open.

Setting	Meaning
Test image	Shows a test image with which you check the alignment of the projector. A second click hides it again. Only possible when the video window is open.
Close	Closes the video window.



Figure 14: The video window with the test image displayed

Note: The “NDI-Output” entry is marked “Coming Soon” and is not yet available.

Note: If the selected display is not connected, ShowDeck opens the video window on the main display instead. The status bar then shows the orange **VIDEO FALLBACK** marker. Connect the projector and open the window again.

4.6 Timecode

Here you determine whether and from which source ShowDeck receives timecode. Because this topic requires prior knowledge of timecode, you will find the settings described in detail in **Chapter 11**. To begin with, you can leave the area switched off (**Timecode enabled** switch off).

4.7 Appearance: color scheme

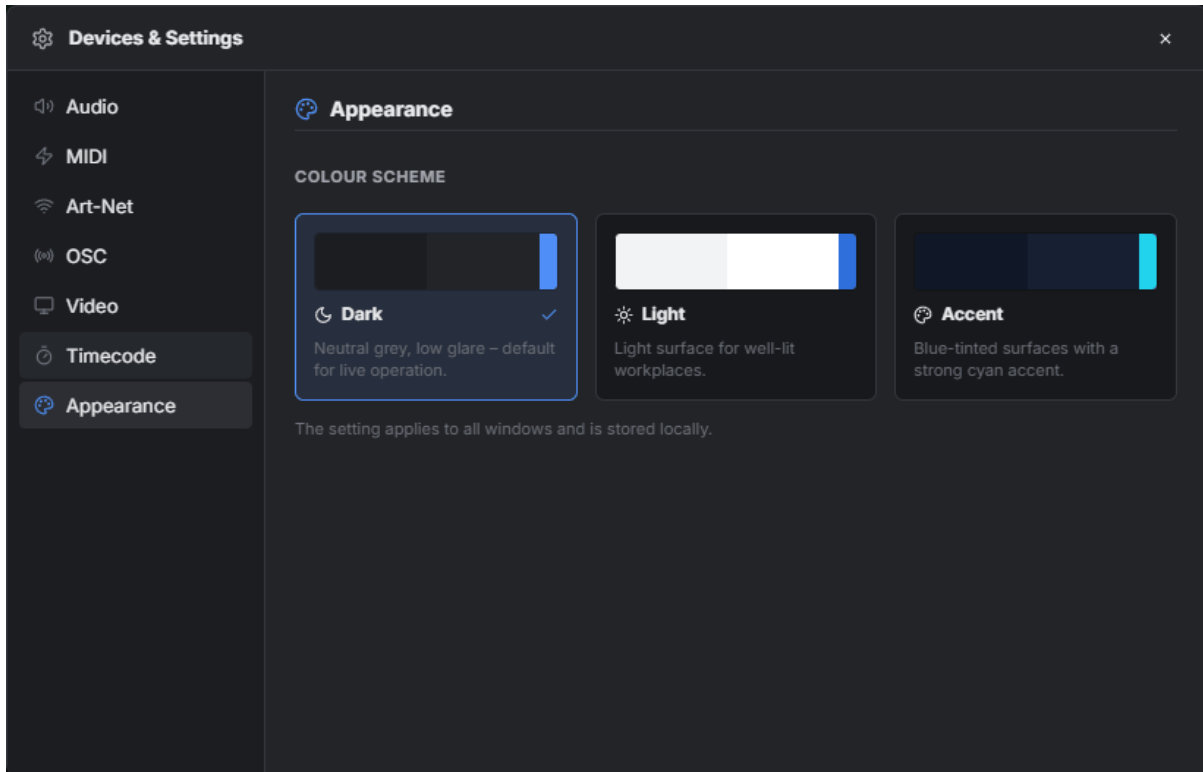


Figure 15: “Appearance” area with the three color schemes

Here you choose the look of the program. The setting is saved on your computer and restored at the next start.

Color scheme	Description
Dark	Dark surface in neutral gray. Causes little glare and is the recommendation for use in a darkened hall.
Light	Light surface for well-lit workstations.
Accent	Bluish-tinted surface with a strong turquoise as the accent color.

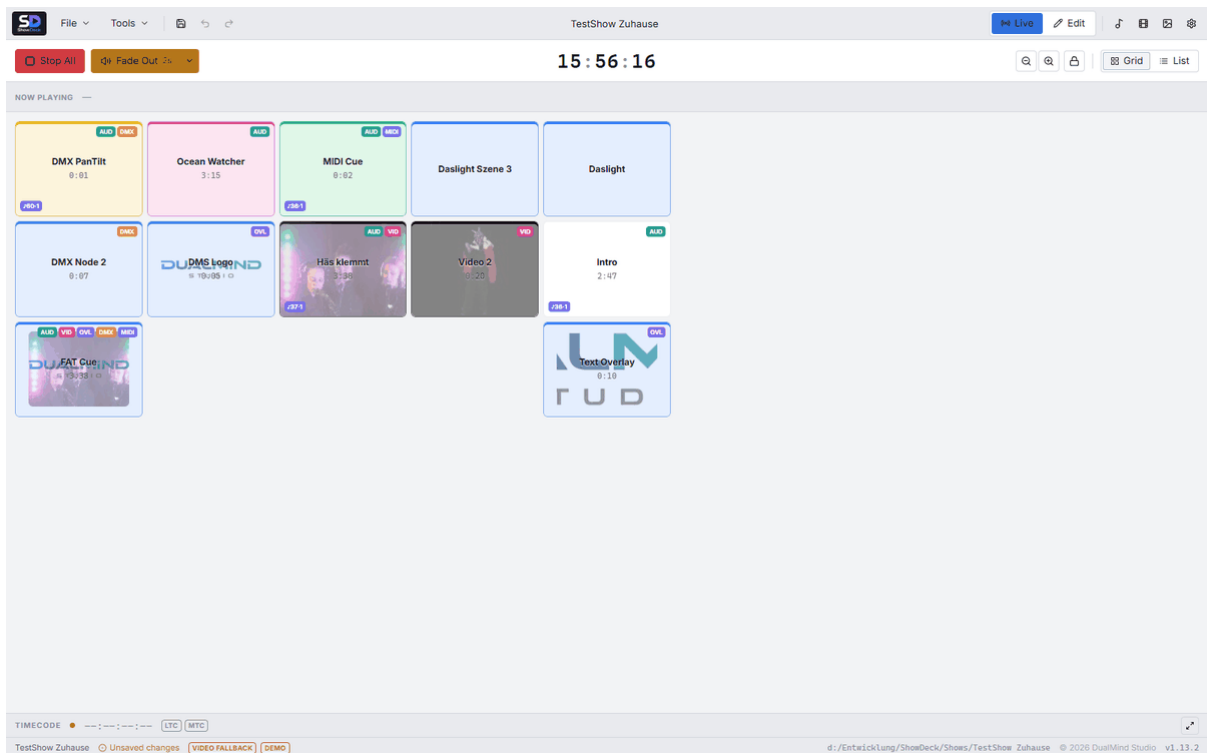


Figure 16: The Live view in the “Light” color scheme

5 Your First CUE – Step by Step

In this chapter you create a first CUE that plays a music file and trigger it in Live mode. After that you know the basic procedure, which is the same for all other CUEs. All details follow in Chapters 6 to 8.

Prerequisite: You have added at least one audio file in Chapter 3, and an audio output is set in Section 4.1 (or **System Default** is selected).

5.1 Creating the CUE

1. Click **Edit** at the top right. You now see a list of all CUEs (“CUES”) on the left and the work area on the right.
2. At the top left next to “CUES”, click the + icon (tooltip **Add Cue**). A new CUE named “Cue 1” appears in the list and is selected immediately.
3. On the right, in the **Cue Settings** area, you will find the **Name** field. Overwrite the name, for example with “Welcome music”.
4. Choose a color under **Color** by clicking one of the color swatches. The color later helps you tell CUEs apart at a glance.

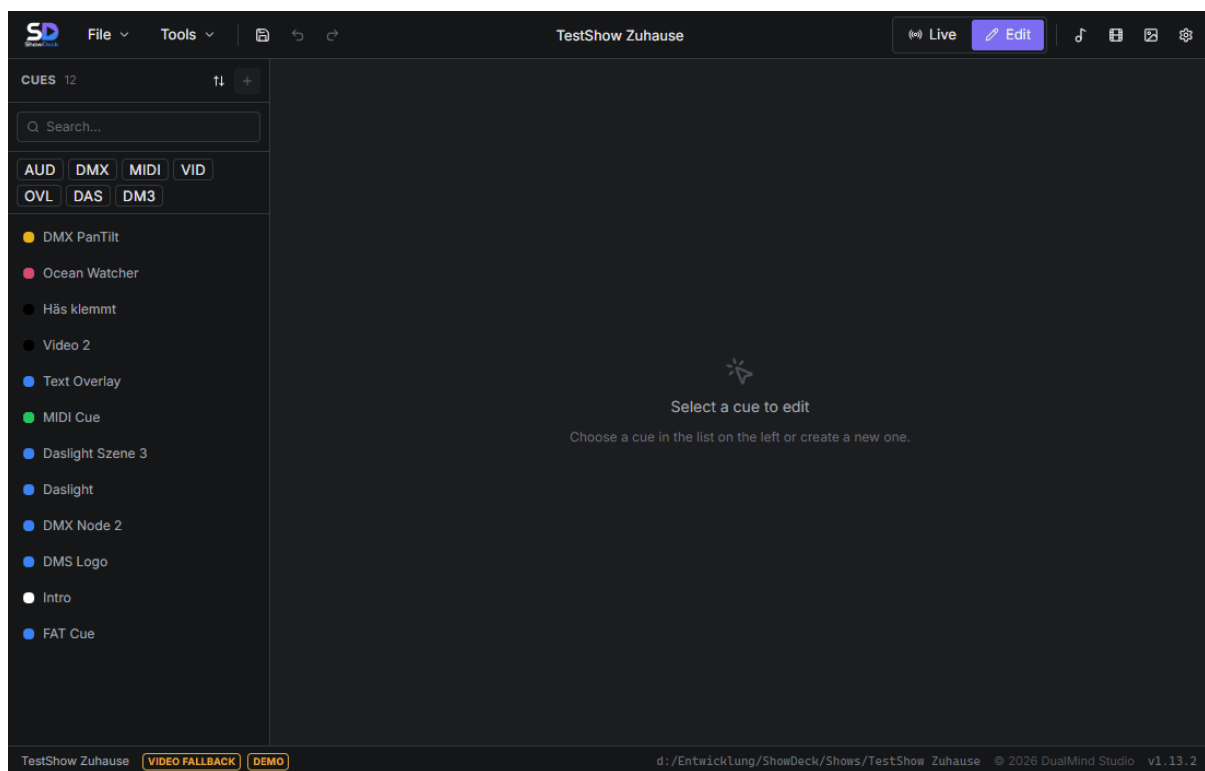


Figure 17: Edit mode: on the left the CUE list with the “+” button, on the right the work area

5.2 Adding an Action

1. In the **Actions** area, click the blue **Add Action** button at the top right.
2. In the menu, choose the **Audio** entry.
3. A card for the Audio Action appears. Under **Audio File**, choose your music file from the list.
4. Optional: under **Fade In (ms)**, set a fade-in time, for example 2000 (two seconds). The music then starts quietly and gets louder over two seconds.

5. Click the **play triangle** next to the waveform to listen to the file as a test.

A simple CUE needs nothing more. The “Audio” Action is now fully set up.

5.3 Triggering it in Live mode

1. Click **Live** at the top right.
2. Your CUE appears as a button in the grid. Click it. The music starts; the button changes color and shows the remaining time and a progress bar.
3. Another click on the button ends playback (with the default setting “Toggle”, see Section 6.2). With the red **Stop All** button you end everything at once.

Tip: Save the show now with Ctrl+S (see Section 2.5).

6 Managing and Configuring CUEs

This chapter explains everything you can set around the CUE itself in Edit mode. The individual Action types (audio, lighting, video and so on) follow in Chapter 7.

6.1 The CUE list (sidebar)

In Edit mode, the list of all CUEs of the show is on the left. The number next to “CUES” shows how many there are.

Element	Function
+ (Add Cue)	Creates a new CUE. In the demo version the button is locked at 3 CUEs.
Up/down arrows (Sort)	Changes the order of display: each click switches between Sort: default (the order in which you created the CUEs), Sort: A–Z and Sort: Z–A .
Search...	Search field: type part of the name and the list shows only matching CUEs.
AUD, DMX, MIDI, VID, OVL, DAS, DM3	Filter by Action type (audio, lighting, MIDI, video, overlay, DasLight, DM3). One click switches the filter on: the list then shows only CUEs that contain at least one Action of this type. With the small × you reset all filters.
Colored dot and name	Shows each CUE. A click selects it for editing.
Copy icon (when hovering with the mouse)	Duplicates the CUE including all Actions.
Trash can icon (when hovering with the mouse)	Deletes the CUE. For safety, the question Delete? first appears in the row, with a check mark (Yes, delete) and a cross (Cancel).
! (orange)	Appears next to CUEs that need a device that is not (or no longer) set up (tooltip “Device missing”).

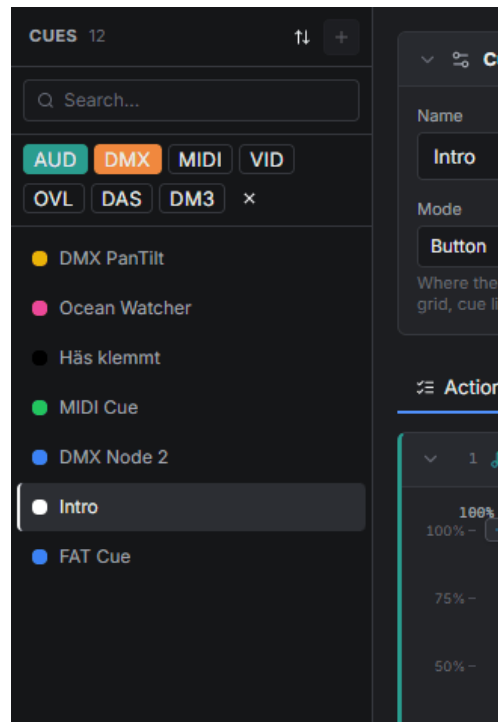


Figure 18: CUE list with the “AUD” and “DMX” filters switched on

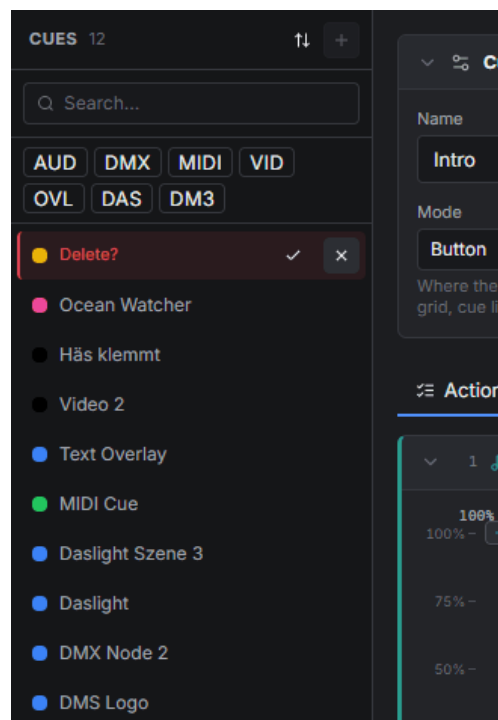


Figure 19: Confirmation prompt when deleting a CUE

Note: The sorting of the list only changes the display in Edit mode. You define the order in the Live grid there (Section 10.2), and the order of the Live list in the list itself (Section 10.3).

6.2 Cue Settings: the basic settings

As soon as you select a CUE, the upper area **Cue Settings** shows its basic settings. A click on the **Cue Settings** heading collapses or expands the area to make more room for the Actions.

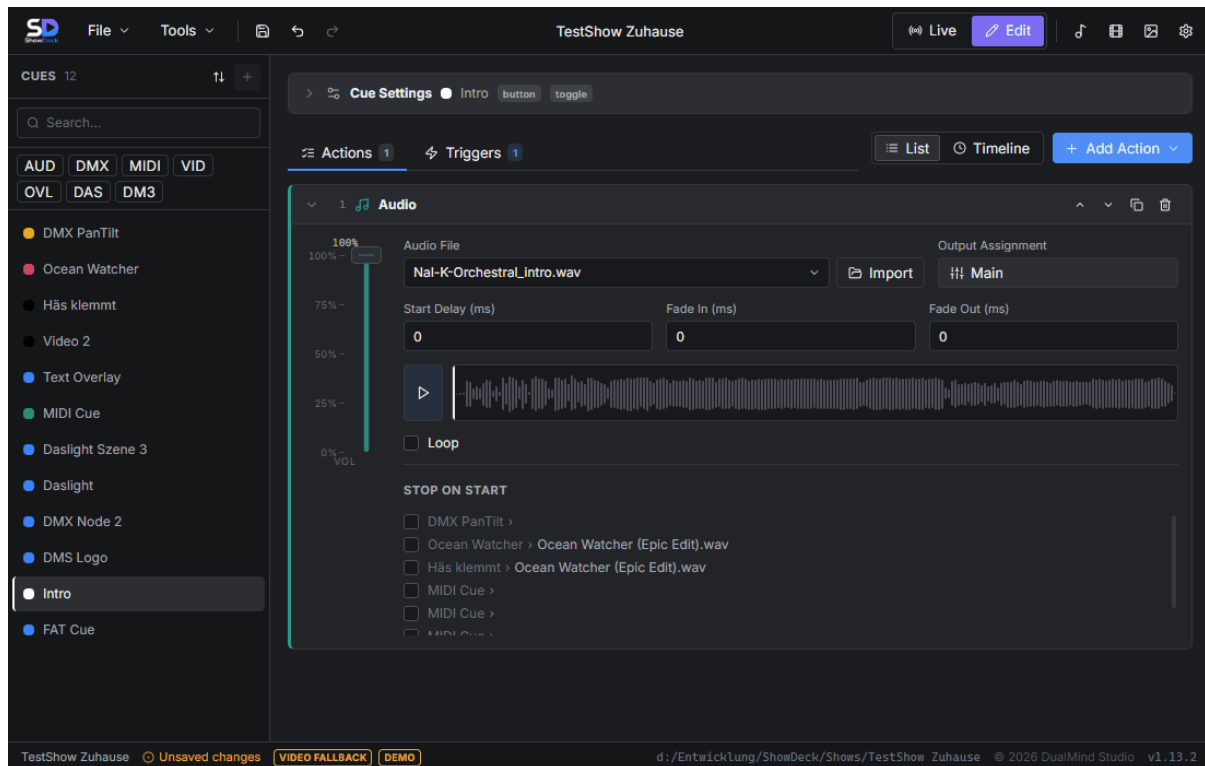


Figure 20: Collapsed “Cue Settings” area

Setting	Meaning
Name	The name of the CUE. It appears on the button in the Live grid. Choose short, unambiguous names so that you can read them quickly in the dark.
Color	The color of the CUE. Click one of the color swatches. The last swatch shows the currently selected color. The color appears on the button in the grid and as a stripe in the list.
Mode	Determines where the CUE is available (see below).
Retrigger	Determines what happens when you trigger the CUE again while it is still running (see below).
Hotkey	A key or key combination with which you trigger the CUE in the Live grid.
Solo	With the check mark Stops all other running cues , this CUE ends all other running CUEs when it starts.

Mode: where does the CUE appear?

Option	Meaning
Button	The CUE appears as a button in the Live grid (default).
Timeline	The CUE does not appear in the grid. It can, however, be used in the Live list.
Both	The CUE appears in the grid and can be used in the Live list.

Retrigger: what happens on the second click?

“Triggering” means clicking the CUE button (or pressing the key or an external trigger). “Still running” means that the CUE is not yet finished at that moment.

Option	Behavior when triggered again
Restart	The running CUE is ended and starts again from the beginning immediately.
Ignore	The repeated click is ignored; the CUE keeps running undisturbed. This protects against double clicks.
Overlay	The CUE starts a second time in addition to the first. Both run at the same time.
Toggle (click to start/stop)	The first click starts the CUE, the second click stops it (default).
Latch (hold until re-click)	Like Toggle; in addition, the CUE stays “active” even when all its Actions have been completed, until you click it again. This is suitable for states that are meant to persist, such as a lighting mood.

Assigning a hotkey

1. Click in the **Hotkey** field. It now shows **Press key(s)...**
2. Press the desired key or combination, for example F5 or Ctrl+1.
3. The field shows the key. With the **x** next to it (**Clear hotkey**) or the Backspace key you remove the hotkey again. With Esc you cancel the input.

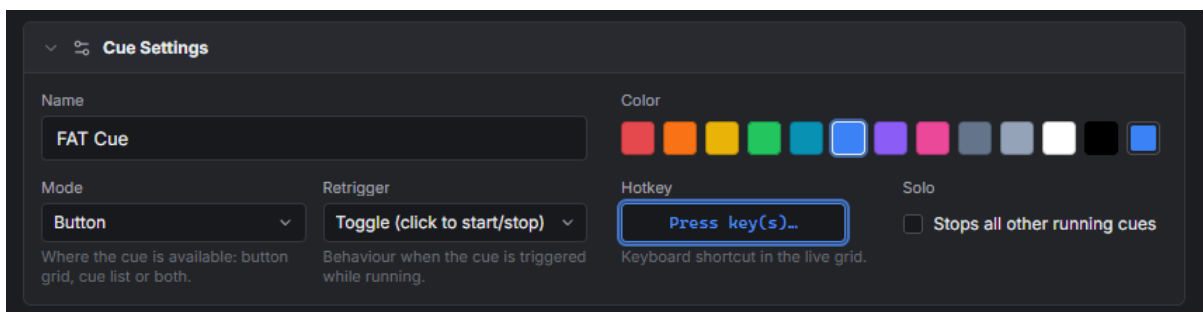


Figure 21: The “Hotkey” field waiting for a key press

Note: Hotkeys work in the Live grid as long as ShowDeck is the active window. Avoid keys that Windows or macOS use for themselves. In the Live list, the space bar is assigned to “PLAY NEXT” by default (Section 10.3).

6.3 The “Actions” area

Below the Cue Settings you will find two tabs:

- **Actions:** the tasks of the CUE (this chapter and Chapters 7 and 8). The number on the tab shows how many Actions the CUE contains.
- **Triggers:** external triggers for the CUE (Chapter 9).

To the right of the tabs there are two groups of switches:

Element	Function
List Timeline	Selects the display of the Actions (see below).
Add Action	Opens the menu with all Action types: Audio , MIDI , DMX / Art-Net , Stop , Yamaha DM3 (OSC) , DasLight , Video , Volume Override , Overlay / Chromakey . A click adds a new Action of this type.

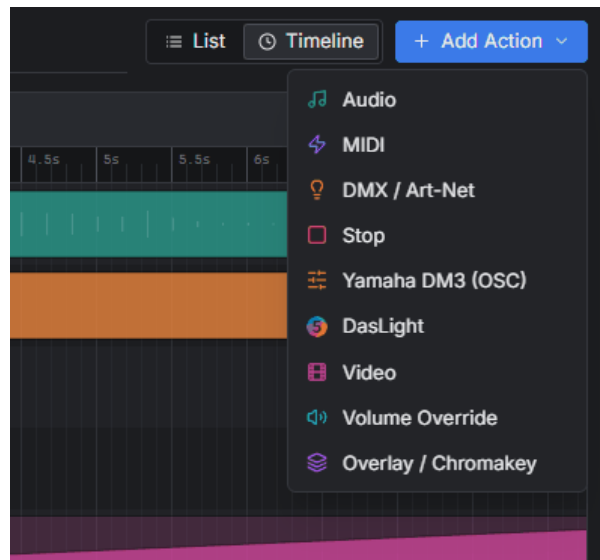


Figure 22: The “Add Action” menu

List or Timeline?

Display	How the CUE works	Suitable for
List	The Actions appear as cards one below the other and are processed from top to bottom . Each card shows all settings of the Action. Audio keeps running in the background, so the next Action starts immediately. Actions with their own duration (for example a lighting transition, a MIDI note with Duration or a video) hold back the following Actions until they are finished.	Simple CUEs with few Actions.
Timeline	Each Action is a block on a time axis. You determine exactly when each Action begins, and blocks on different rows run simultaneously .	Sequences in which several things happen with time offsets or in parallel. See Chapter 8.

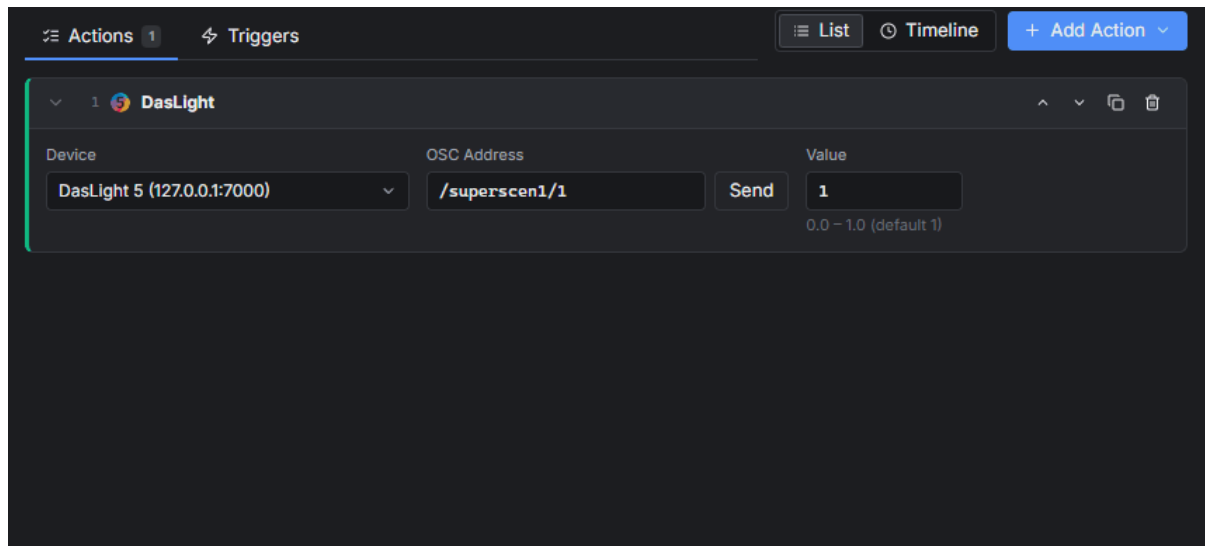


Figure 23: The “Actions” area in the “List” display (here with a DasLight Action)

Editing, moving, copying and deleting Actions

- **Edit:** In the List display, each card shows its settings. The small arrow at the left of the card header collapses or expands it.
- **Change order (List only):** The **up** and **down** arrows in the header move the card.
- **Duplicate:** The copy icon in the header creates a copy.
- **Delete:** The trash can icon removes the Action.

Note: When you switch between **List** and **Timeline**, all Actions are kept. The Timeline uses the position of the blocks for the start times; the start delay (**Start Delay**) of the Audio Action does not apply there.

Tip: With the **Undo** button (left arrow in the header, Ctrl+Z) you undo changes, with **Redo** (Ctrl+Y) you restore them. This applies to all editing steps in Edit mode.

7 The Action Types in Detail

This chapter describes every Action type with all its settings. The examples mostly show the Timeline display, in which the settings of an Action appear below the time axis; in the List display the same fields are directly in the Action's card.

Time values are generally entered in **milliseconds (ms)**. 1000 milliseconds are one second. Example: 2500 means two and a half seconds.

7.1 Audio: playing sound

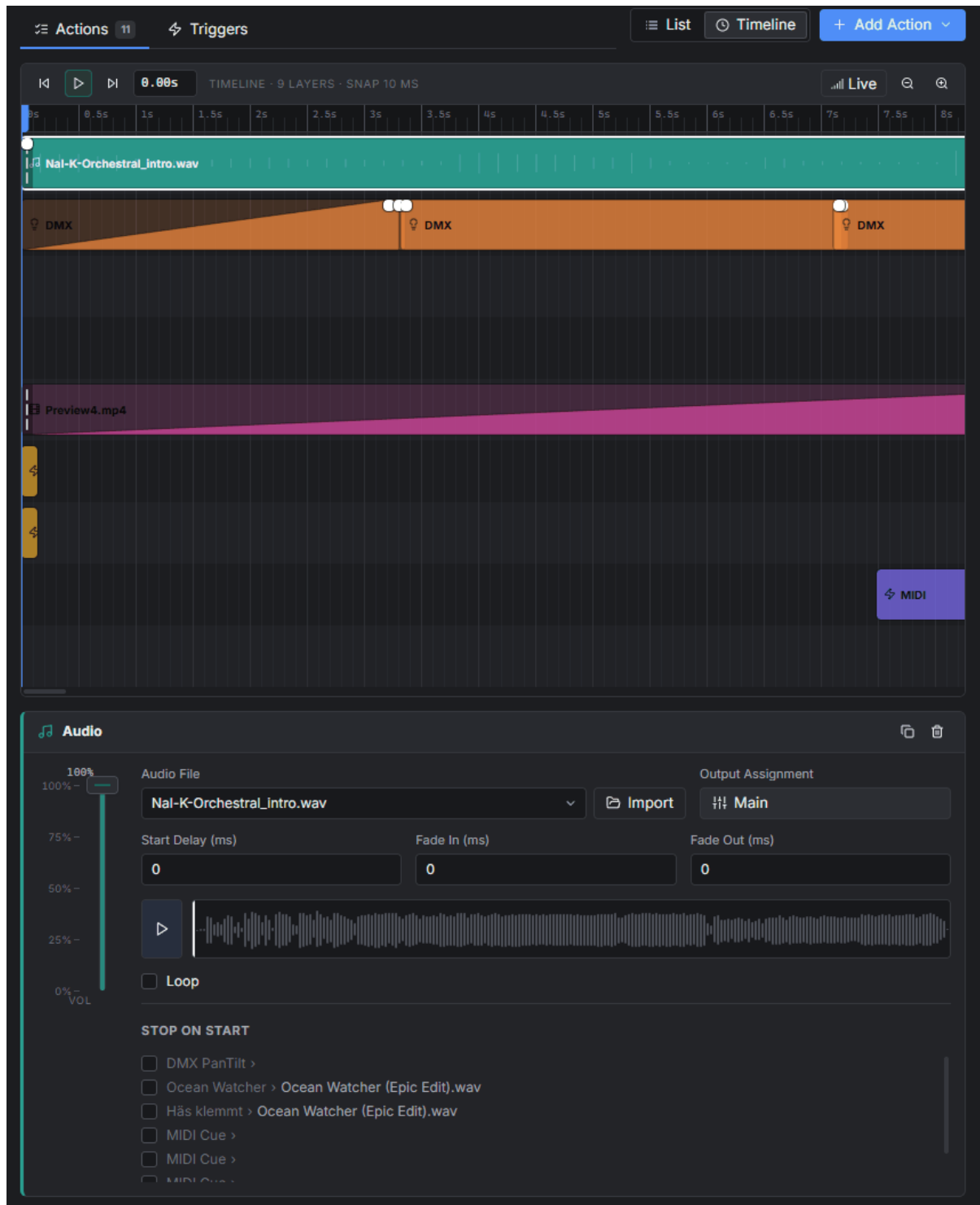


Figure 24: The settings of an Audio Action

An Audio Action plays an imported audio file (Chapter 3).

Setting	Meaning
Vol (slider on the left)	Volume of the file from 0% to 100%. Drag the slider or click on it.
Audio File	Selection of the file from the imported audio files.
Import	Opens the audio management to add more files (Section 3.1).

Setting	Meaning
Output Assignment	Determines through which buses the sound is output (see below). The button shows the name of the selected bus.
Start Delay (ms)	Delay before the start. 3000 means: the sound begins three seconds after the Action starts.
Fade In (ms)	Fade-in time: how long the sound takes to rise from quiet to the set volume.
Fade Out (ms)	Fade-out time: how long the sound takes to die away when the CUE is stopped.
Waveform with play triangle	Shows the profile of the file. With the triangle you listen to the file as a test.
Loop	Repeats the file endlessly until the CUE is stopped.
Stop on Start	List of all other Audio Actions in the show. If you tick one of them, it is faded out when this Action starts. This lets you, for example, replace one piece of music cleanly with the next.

Output Assignment: several buses at the same time

A click on **Output Assignment** opens a dialog. There you switch on individual buses (**Main**, **Monitor**, **Backing**) and set a separate volume slider for each. This way you can output the same file loudly on **Main** and more quietly on **Monitor**. With **Done** you close the dialog.

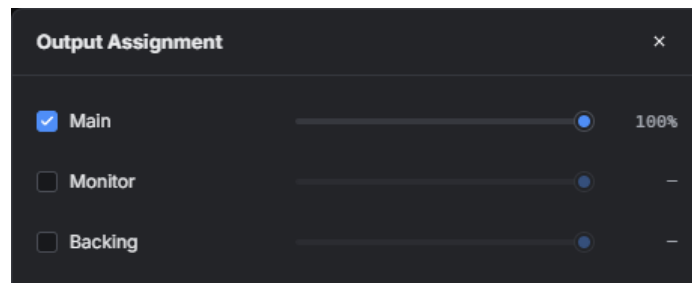


Figure 25: The “Output Assignment” dialog

Warning: If no bus is switched on, the Action plays no sound anywhere. ShowDeck points this out with a warning icon.

Trimming in the Timeline

In the Timeline, the start and end of an audio file can be trimmed without changing the file itself: drag the left or right edge of the block (Section 8.3). This cuts away silence at the beginning or end.

7.2 MIDI: sending a signal to a musical device

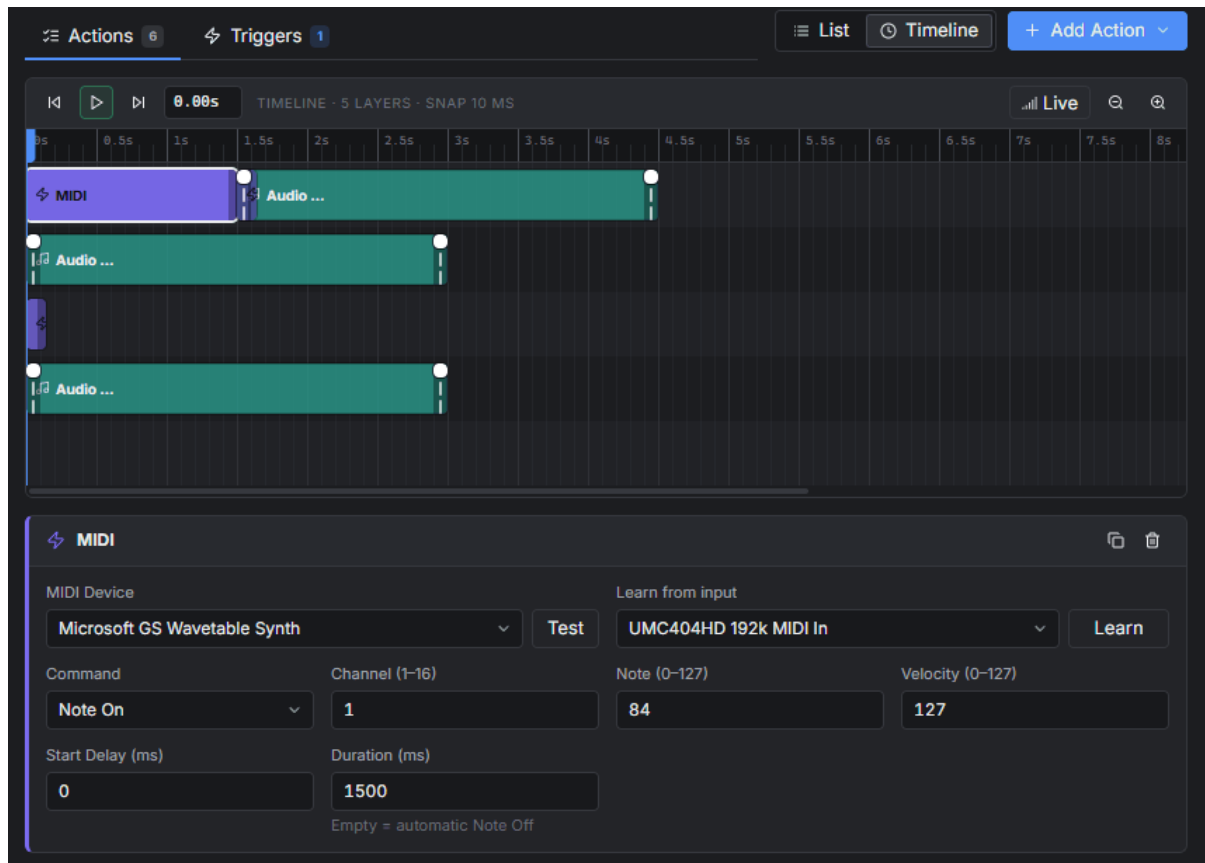


Figure 26: The settings of a MIDI Action

A MIDI Action sends a note command to a musical device, for example a keyboard, a sampler or a computer with a virtual MIDI connection.

Setting	Meaning
MIDI Device	The device to which it is sent. The list shows the names from the settings (Section 4.2).
Test	Immediately sends a test tone to the selected device.
Learn from input and Learn	Helper function for filling in channel, note and velocity: choose a MIDI input device, click Learn and press a key on the device. ShowDeck takes over the values.
Command	Note On (note on) or Note Off (note off).
Channel (1–16)	The MIDI channel. Many devices only listen to a specific channel.
Note (0–127)	The pitch, or the number of the key. 60 corresponds to middle C.
Velocity (0–127)	The strike strength (that is, the loudness of the note).
Start Delay (ms)	Delay before sending.
Duration (ms)	After this time, ShowDeck automatically sends “Note Off”. Leave empty for “no automatic switch-off”.

7.3 DMX / Art-Net: controlling lights

With this Action you set values on lighting devices. **DMX** works with **channels** (1 to 512 per “universe”). Each lighting device occupies one or more channels, for example one for brightness and three for red, green and blue. Each channel receives a value from 0 (off) to 255 (full intensity). Which channels a device occupies can be found in its manual.

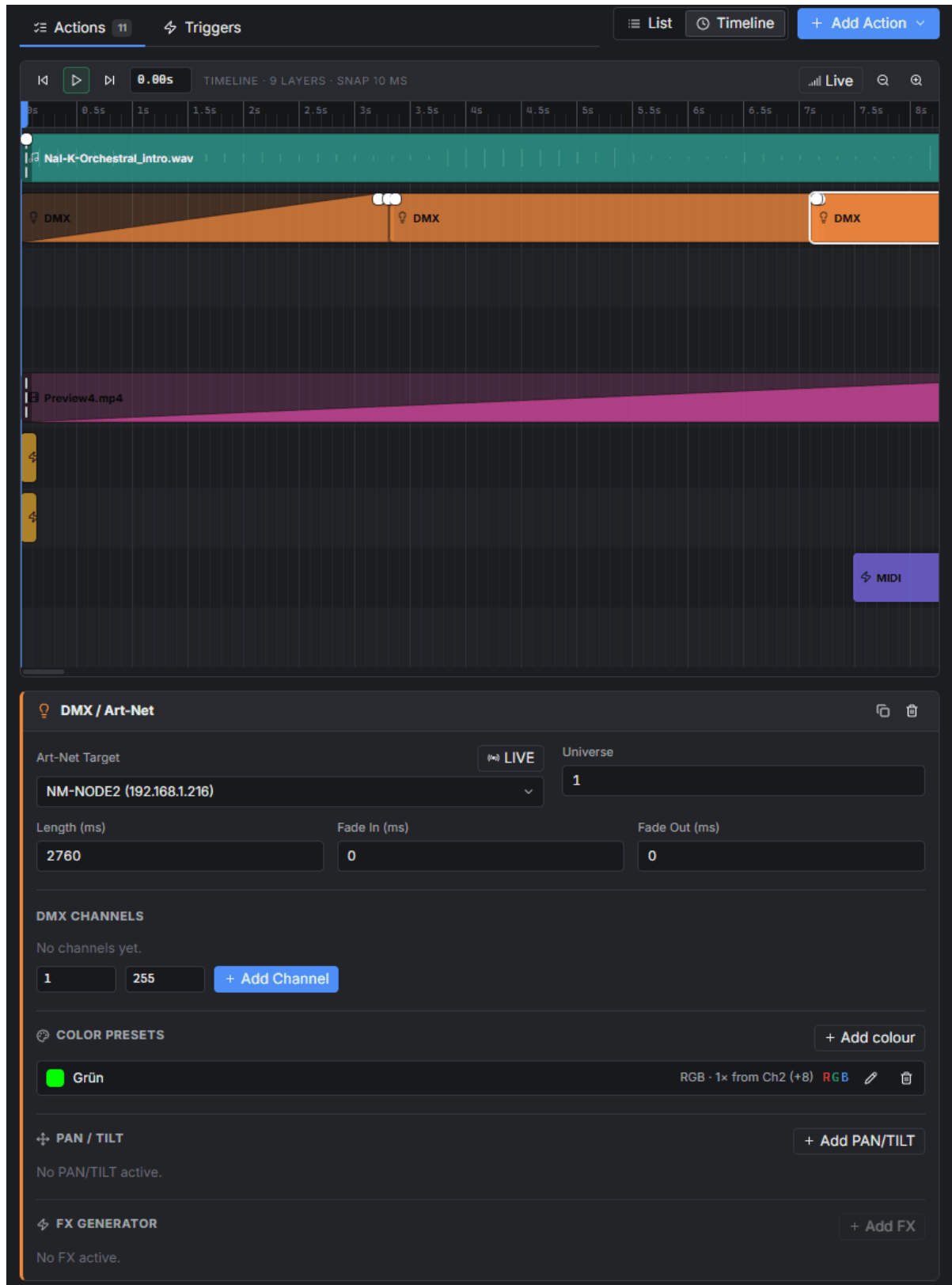


Figure 27: The settings of a DMX Action

Basic settings

Setting	Meaning
Art-Net Target	The target device from the Art-Net settings (Section 4.3).
LIVE	Switch that takes effect during editing: with LIVE switched on (blinking), ShowDeck sends every change to the lighting device immediately, so you see the result directly. When switched off, ShowDeck sends nothing while editing.
Universe	The DMX universe. A universe combines 512 channels. Larger installations use several universes. For simple installations it is 0 or 1; the value is given in the manual of your lighting device.
Length (ms)	How long the values are held. In the Timeline this corresponds to the length of the block.
Fade In (ms)	Transition time from the current state to the set values.
Fade Out (ms)	Transition time back to 0 at the end.
Hold until Cue stop	Only in the List display: the values stay in place until the CUE is stopped ("no fixed length"). The CUE therefore stays active.

Assigning DMX channels

1. In the **DMX Channels** area, enter the channel number (1 to 512) in the first field and the value (0 to 255) in the second.
2. Click **Add Channel**. The row appears above with a slider. You can change the value there at any time.
3. With the **trash can (Remove channel)** you remove a channel.

If you see a red-outlined field with "already in use", the channel number is already occupied in this Action (for example by a color or Pan/Tilt preset). Then choose a different number.

The check mark **reset value on stop** on a channel causes ShowDeck to restore the value the channel had before the Action started, as soon as the Action or the CUE ends.

Tip: The following applies to all three additional functions below: you can cancel these dialogs at any time with **Cancel**. Nothing is saved until you click **Save**.

Color Presets: color presets for RGB devices

Many spotlights mix colors from red, green and blue (RGB) and sometimes white (RGBW). A color preset saves you from setting each channel individually. In the **Color Presets** area, click **Add colour** (or the pencil icon **Edit** of an existing preset):

Figure 28: The “Colour Preset” dialog

Setting	Meaning
Name	Name of the preset, for example “Warm white”.
Mode	RGB (red, green, blue), RGBW (additionally white) or Custom (own channel order).
Addressing: Consecutive / Manual	With Consecutive you only enter where the first device starts. With Manual you specify the channels individually.
Start address	The first channel of the first device.
Count	How many identical devices are controlled.
Offset (Ch→Ch, min 4)	Spacing between the devices. If a device occupies 4 channels, the spacing is at least 4. A row below shows which channels result from this, for example “Ch 5, 33, 61, ...”.
Values	Sliders for Red , Green , Blue (and White). The small color swatches next to them show the resulting color.

Pan / Tilt: aiming moving lights

Moving spotlights (“moving heads”) can be panned (Pan) and tilted (Tilt). In the **Pan / Tilt** area, click **Add PAN/TILT**:

Pan / Tilt Preset

X

NamePAN/TILT

Resolution8 bit16 bit

Channel order (per fixture)

P · PF · T · TF P · T · PF · TF

ADDRESSING

Start address1Count8Offset (min 4)28

Ch 1, 29, 57, 85, ... (8 Fixtures, 4 channels each)

POSITION

● live

Pan: -45.0 %Tilt: -70.3 %

← Pan →

↑ Tilt ↓

-45.0%

+100-

0-

-100-

PAN

-70.3%

+100-

0-

-100-

TILT

Pan: 18022

Tilt: 9728

Figure 29: The “Pan / Tilt Preset” dialog

Setting	Meaning
Name	Name of the preset.
Resolution	8 bit or 16 bit . 16 bit controls the movement more finely but needs two channels per axis ("Fine" channel).
Channel order (per fixture)	Order of the channels in the device, for example "P · PF · T · TF". P stands for Pan, T for Tilt, PF and TF for the respective fine channels. The order is given in the device documentation.
Start address, Count, Offset	As with the color preset: first channel, number of devices and spacing.
Position	The area on the left and the two sliders (Pan, Tilt) determine the position, from -100% to +100%. The calculated raw values are shown on the right. A live marker shows that changes are sent immediately when LIVE is active.

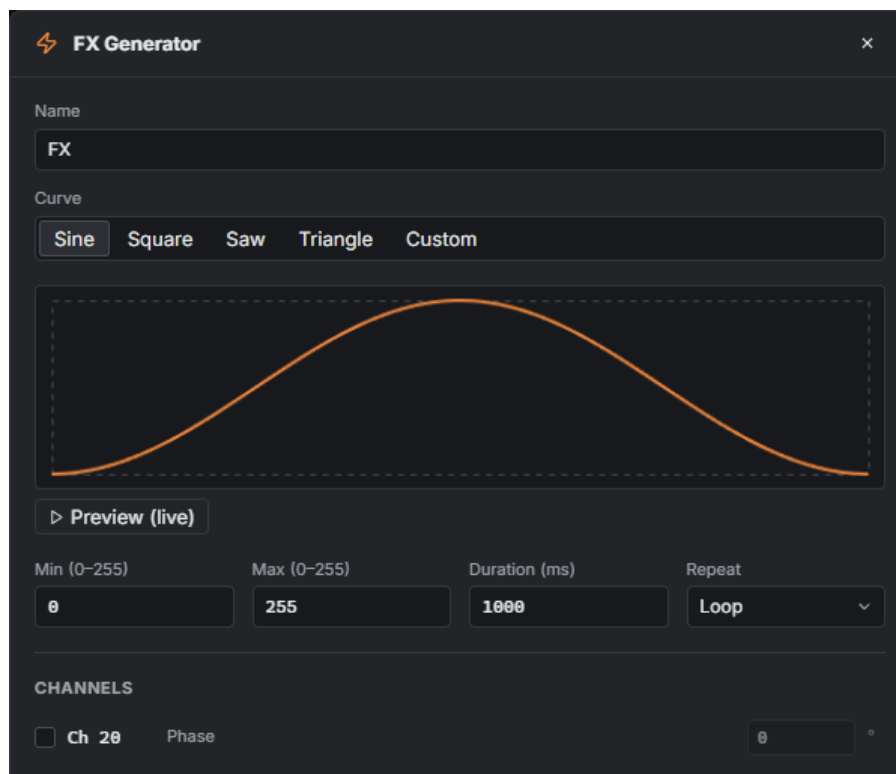


Figure 30: The “FX Generator” dialog with the “Sine” curve shape

Setting	Meaning
Name	Name of the effect.
Curve	Curve shape: Sine (gentle up and down), Square (hard on/off), Saw (slowly rising, then a jump), Triangle (evenly up and down), Custom (own curve, see below).
Preview (live)	Plays the effect immediately on the lighting device. Make sure that lights are actually being driven when you do this.
Min / Max (0–255)	Lower and upper limit of the value between which the effect fluctuates.
Duration (ms)	Duration of one pass of the curve.
Repeat	How often the effect repeats: once, several times, or Loop (endlessly, until the CUE ends).
Channels	Here you tick the channels that the effect is to control. Phase shifts the effect in time per channel, in degrees. This makes effects run staggered, for example as a chaser.

Custom (own curve): Choose **Custom** to draw the curve yourself. A click in the area adds a new point; hold the mouse button to move a point; a double click deletes it. With the right mouse button on a point you switch between **Standard** (angular) and **Bezier** (smooth).

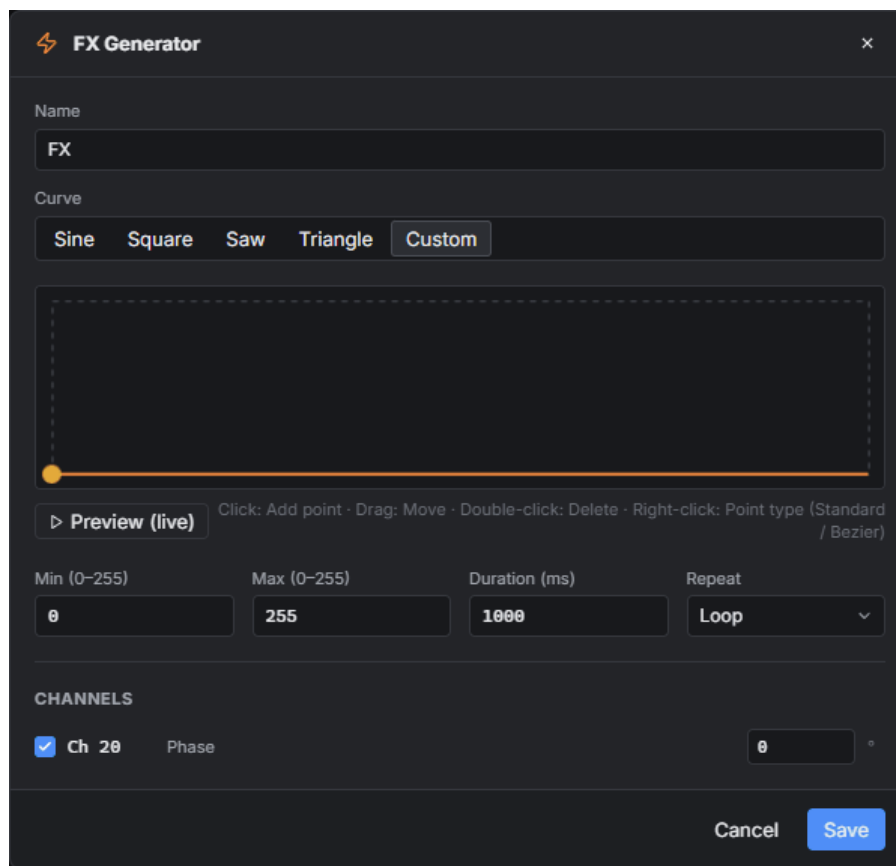


Figure 31: The FX Generator with a custom curve ("Custom")

After saving, the effect appears in the **FX Generator** area. With the **play icon** next to the effect you play it live as a test.

Note: If an effect runs in a loop (**Loop**) and the Action has no fixed length, the CUE stays active until you stop it. The ∞ icon then appears on the Live button.

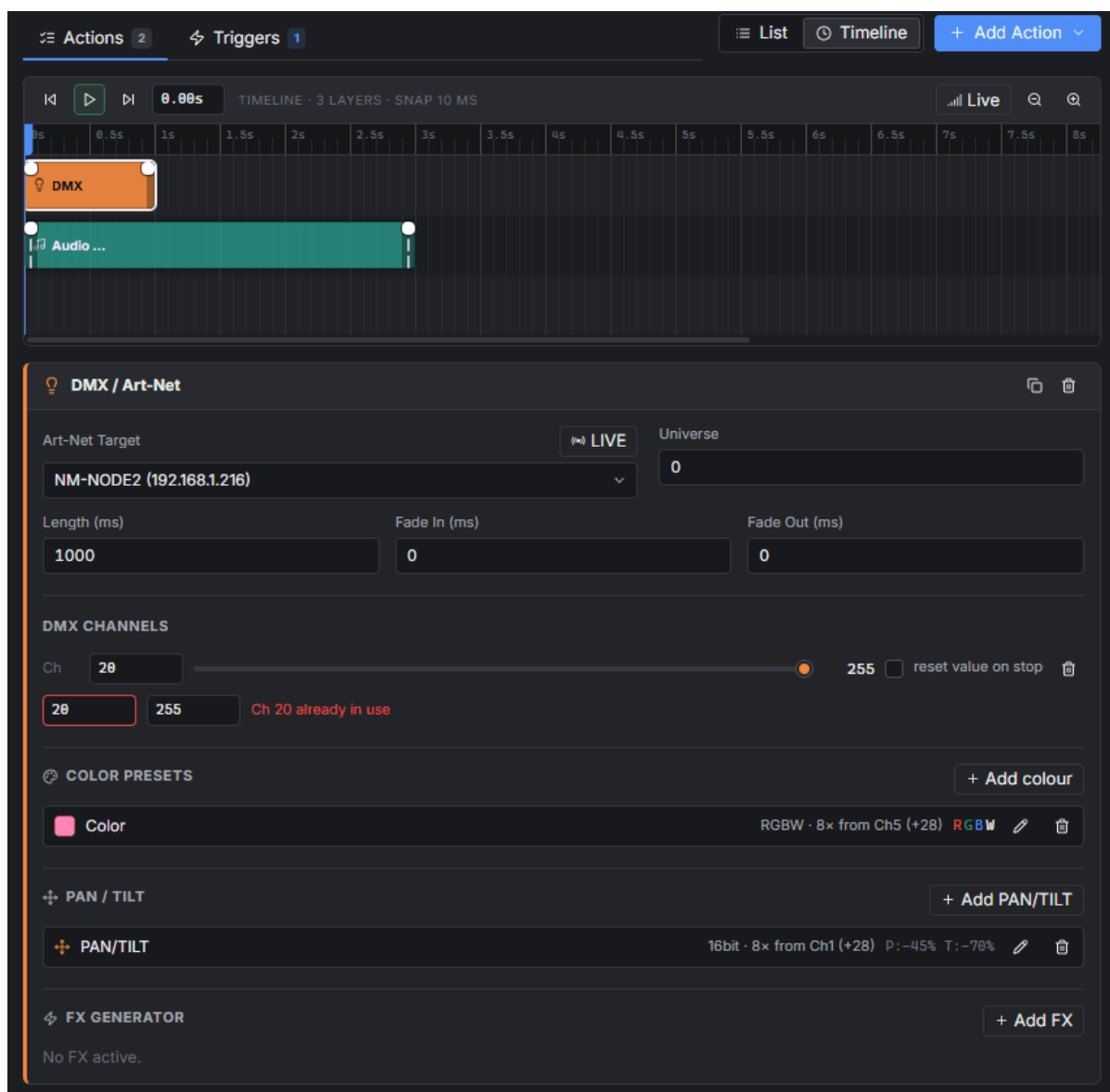


Figure 32: A DMX Action with channel, color preset and Pan/Tilt preset

7.4 Stop: ending playback

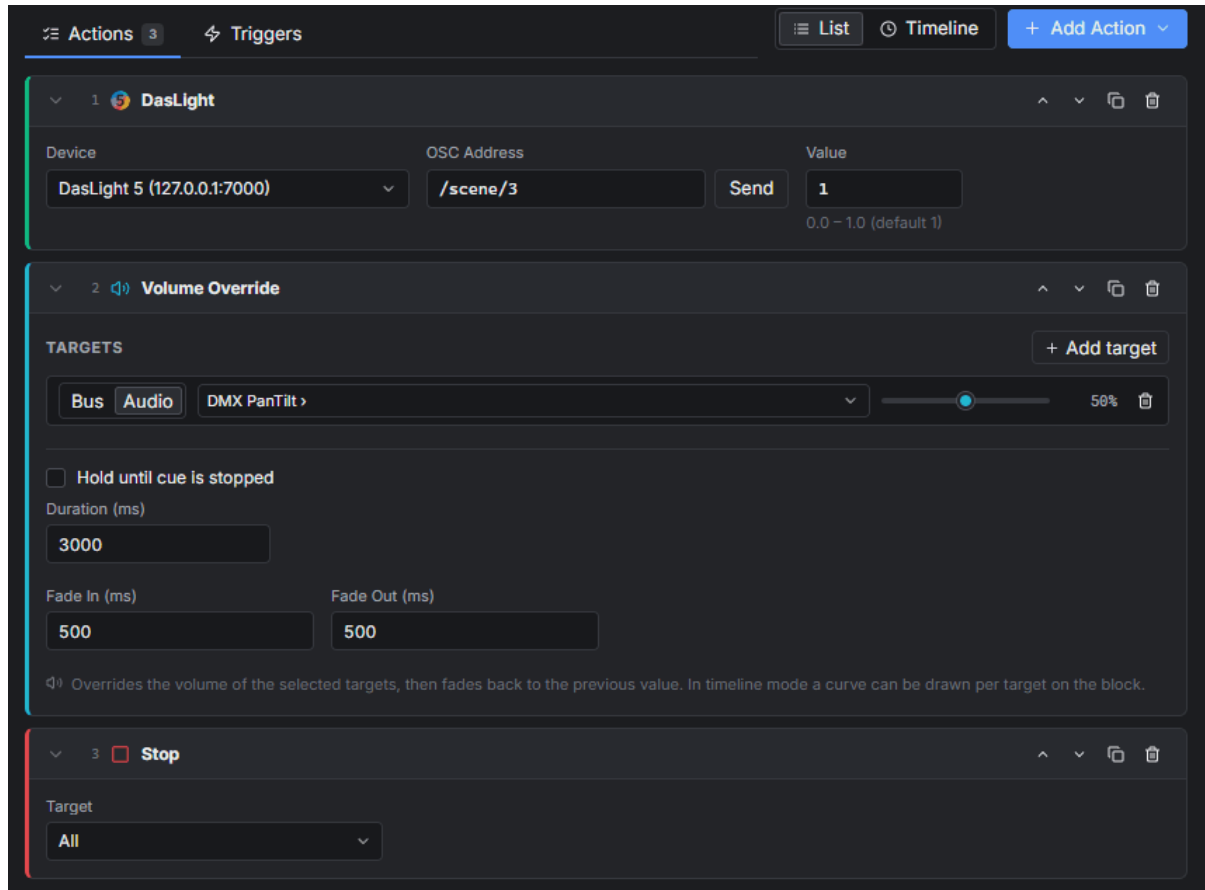


Figure 33: The settings of a Stop Action (at the bottom of the list)

A Stop Action ends running playback within the CUE. It has only one setting, **Target**:

Option	Effect
All	Ends audio and video.
Audio only	Ends only the audio.
Video only	Ends only the video.
MIDI only / DMX only	These options are present in the list but have no effect in the current version.

Note: If another CUE is supposed to replace a running piece of music, **Stop on Start** in the Audio Action (Section 7.1) is usually the better choice, because the old piece is then faded out gently.

7.5 Yamaha DM3 (OSC): controlling the mixing console

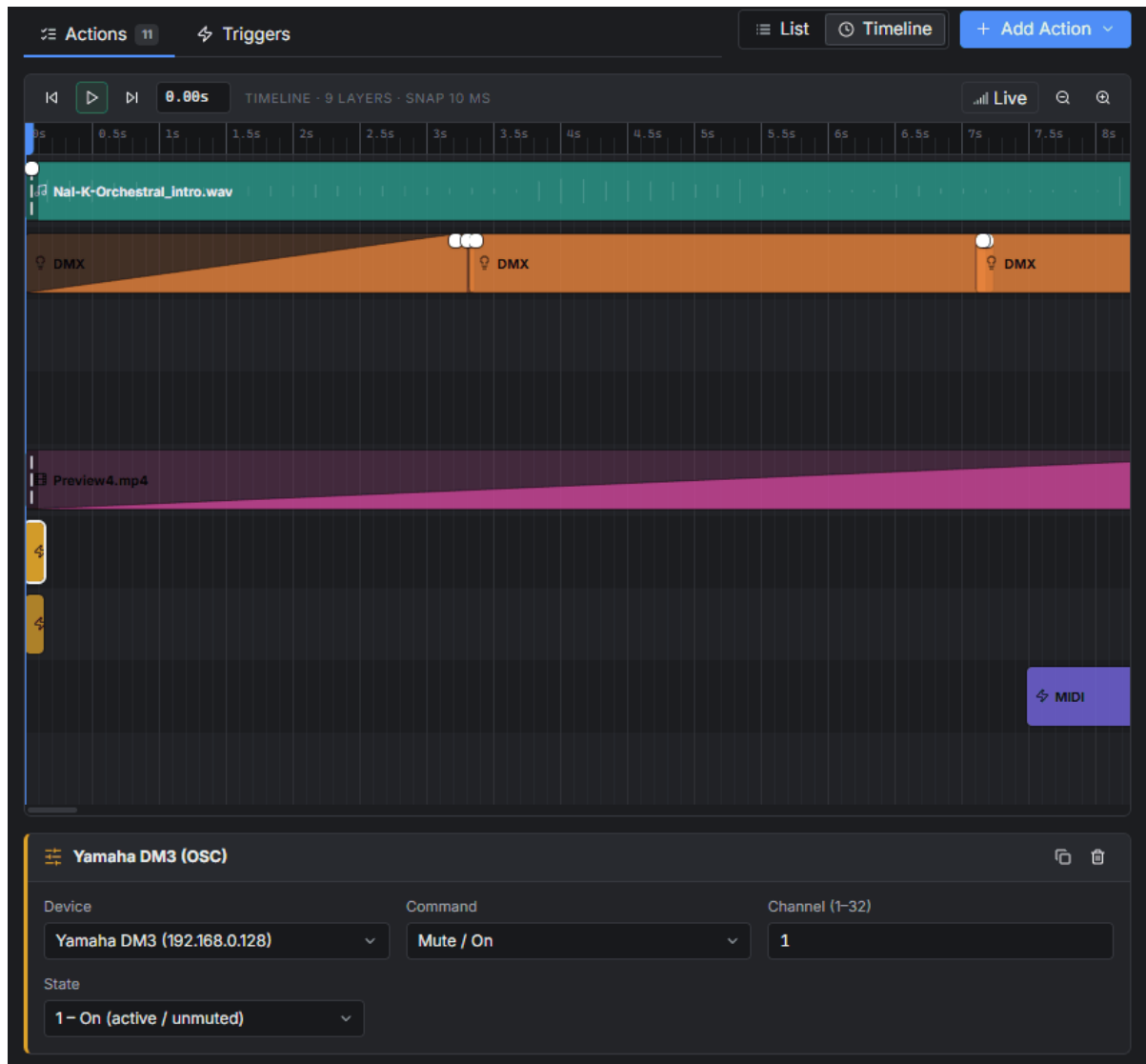


Figure 34: The settings of a DM3 Action

This Action mutes a channel or sets a fader on the Yamaha DM3 digital mixing console. The console must be set up in the settings under **OSC** (Section 4.4).

Setting	Meaning
Device	The mixing console from the settings.
Command	Mute / On : switch the channel on or off. Fader Level : set the level of the channel fader.
Channel (1–32)	The channel number on the console.
State (for Mute / On)	1 – On (active / unmuted) : the channel is audible. 0 – Off (muted) : the channel is muted.
Fader / Raw value (for Fader Level)	A slider sets the fader position. Next to it is the raw value that the console receives (from –32768 to 1000, where 1000 corresponds to the upper limit of the fader).

7.6 DasLight: controlling a lighting program

With this Action you send a command to the DasLight 5 lighting software (Section 4.4). There you can use it, for example, to trigger a lighting scene.

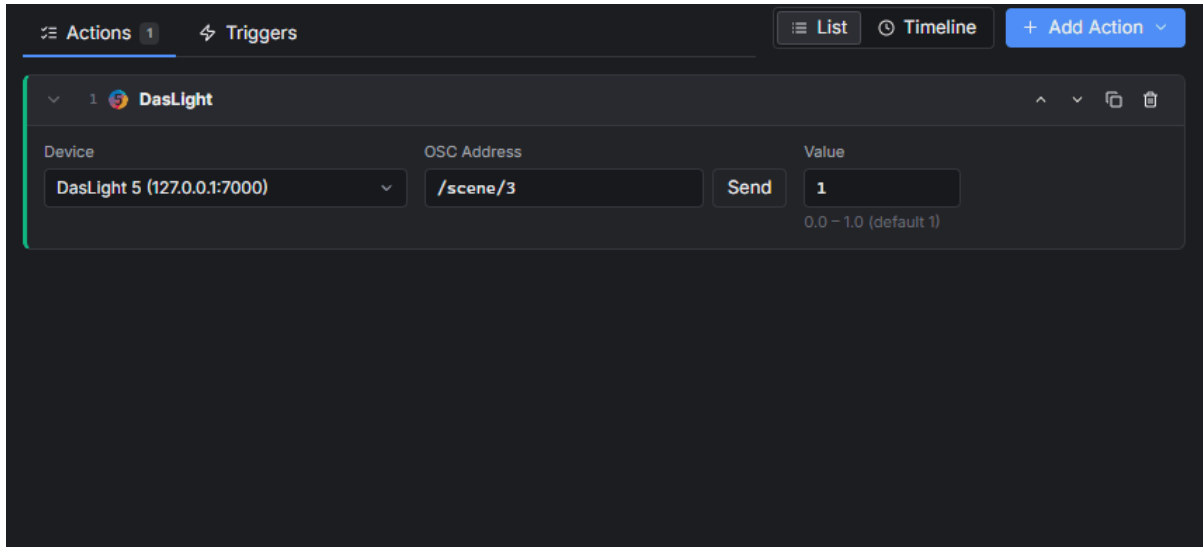


Figure 35: The settings of a DasLight Action

Setting	Meaning
Device	The DasLight device from the settings.
OSC Address	The “address” of the command in DasLight, for example /scene/1. It always begins with a slash. You will find the addresses in the DasLight 5 manual.
Send	Sends the command immediately as a test.
Value	A number from 0.0 to 1.0 that is sent with the command. The default is 1.

7.7 Video: playing a film

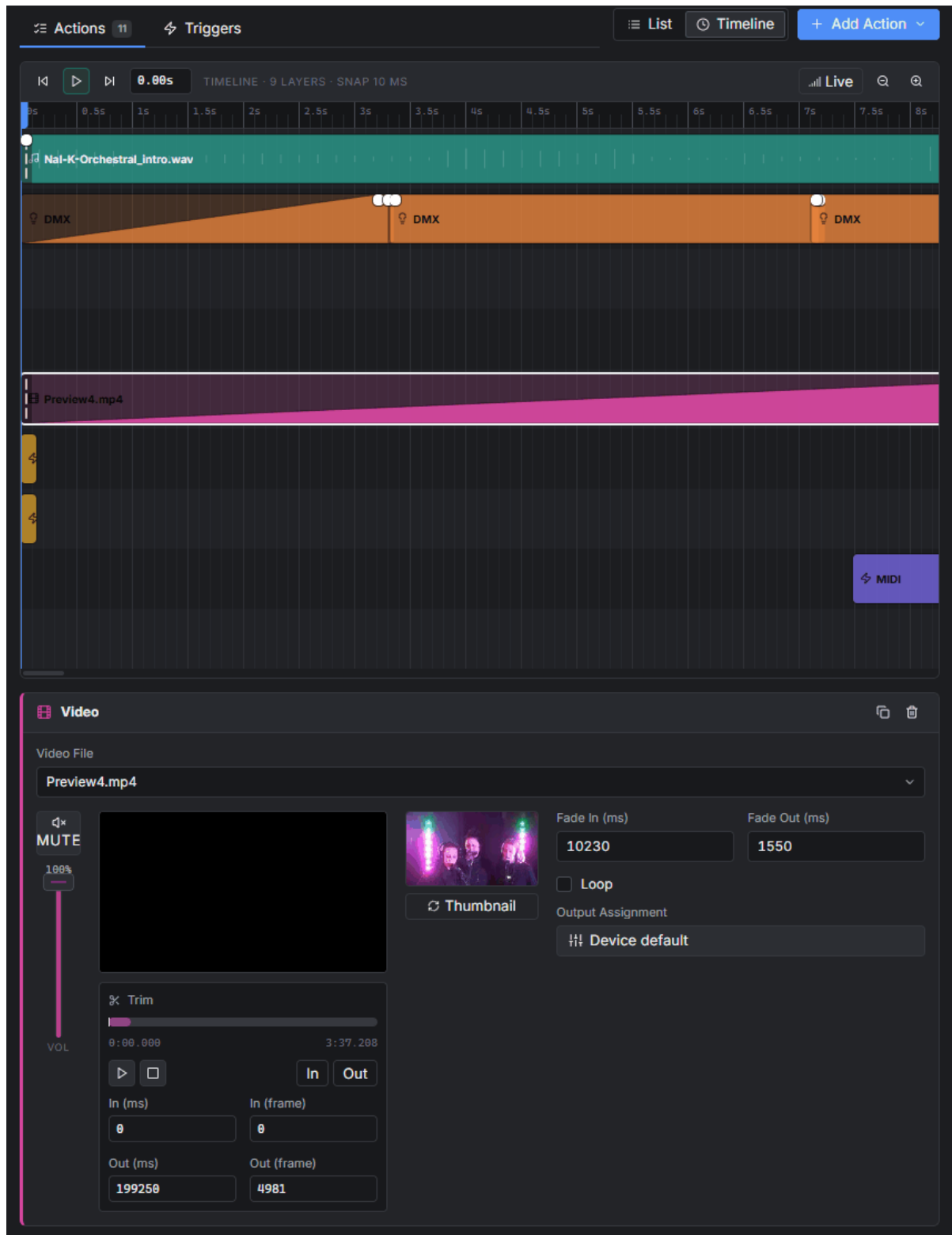


Figure 36: The settings of a Video Action

A Video Action plays an imported video (Section 3.2) in the video window (Section 4.5). If a second video starts while the first is still running, ShowDeck cross-fades between the two.

Setting	Meaning
Video File	Selection of the video from the imported files.

Setting	Meaning
MUTE and VOL (slider on the left)	Volume of the video sound. MUTE mutes the video's sound.
Preview	Shows the picture of the video. The Play and Stop buttons below it play the preview.
Trim, In, Out	With Trim you cut off the beginning and end of the video without changing the file. Play the preview or drag the slider to the desired position and click In for the start point or Out for the end point. The fields In (ms) , In (frame) , Out (ms) and Out (frame) show the values in milliseconds and in individual frames and can also be typed in directly.
Thumbnail	Regenerates the preview image (tooltip "Regenerate thumbnail").
Fade In (ms) / Fade Out (ms)	The picture fades in from black or out to black over this time.
Loop	Repeats the video until the CUE is stopped.
Output Assignment	Through which audio device the video sound is output. Device default uses the device from the Video settings. The actual audio devices of the computer are available for selection here, not the three buses.

Note: Like overlays, videos need the video window. If it has not been opened, ShowDeck opens it automatically on the configured display when the first video plays.

7.8 Volume Override: temporarily lowering the volume

This Action does not play any sound itself, but **changes the volume of sound that is already running** and then restores it automatically. The classic use case is called "ducking": while an announcement is playing, the background music becomes quieter and afterwards louder again.

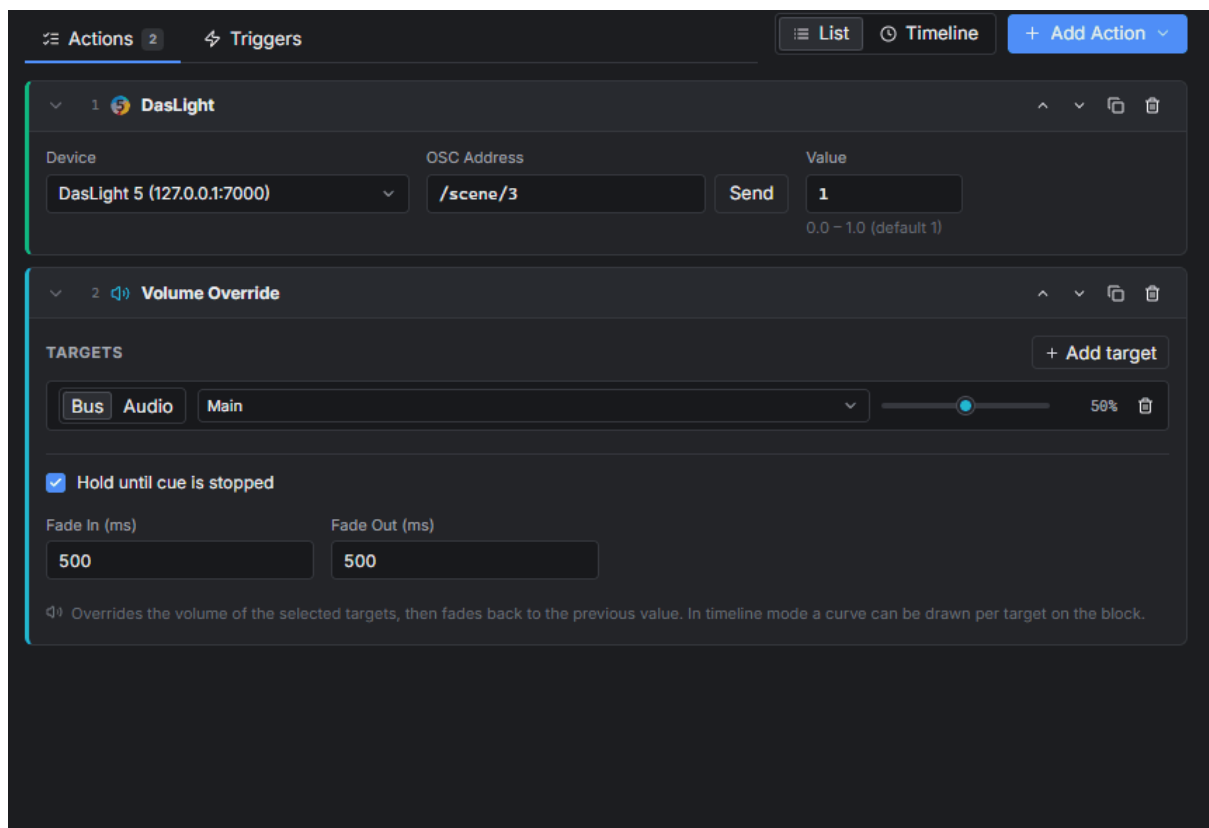


Figure 37: The settings of a Volume Override Action

Targets

One Action can change several targets at the same time. Each row contains:

Element	Meaning
Bus Audio (toggle)	Bus: the target is a whole output (Main, Monitor or Backing). Everything playing there becomes quieter, including sound that only starts later. Audio: the target is exactly one specific Audio Action, regardless of which bus. Other tracks remain untouched.
Selection list	For Bus the bus, for Audio the desired Audio Action (shown as "CUE name › file name").
Slider and percentage	Target volume from 0% to 100%. The volume is only lowered, never raised above the original volume.
Trash can	Removes the target.

With **Add target** you add further targets. A ! after a target warns if the same target occurs more than once; the most recently registered value then applies.

Duration and transitions

Setting	Meaning
Hold until cue is stopped	Only in the List display. Switched on: the reduction remains until the CUE is stopped. The CUE stays active for that time.

Setting	Meaning
Duration (ms)	Only visible when the check mark is off: after this time the volume is automatically raised again.
Fade In (ms)	How long the lowering takes.
Fade Out (ms)	How long raising back to the original value takes.

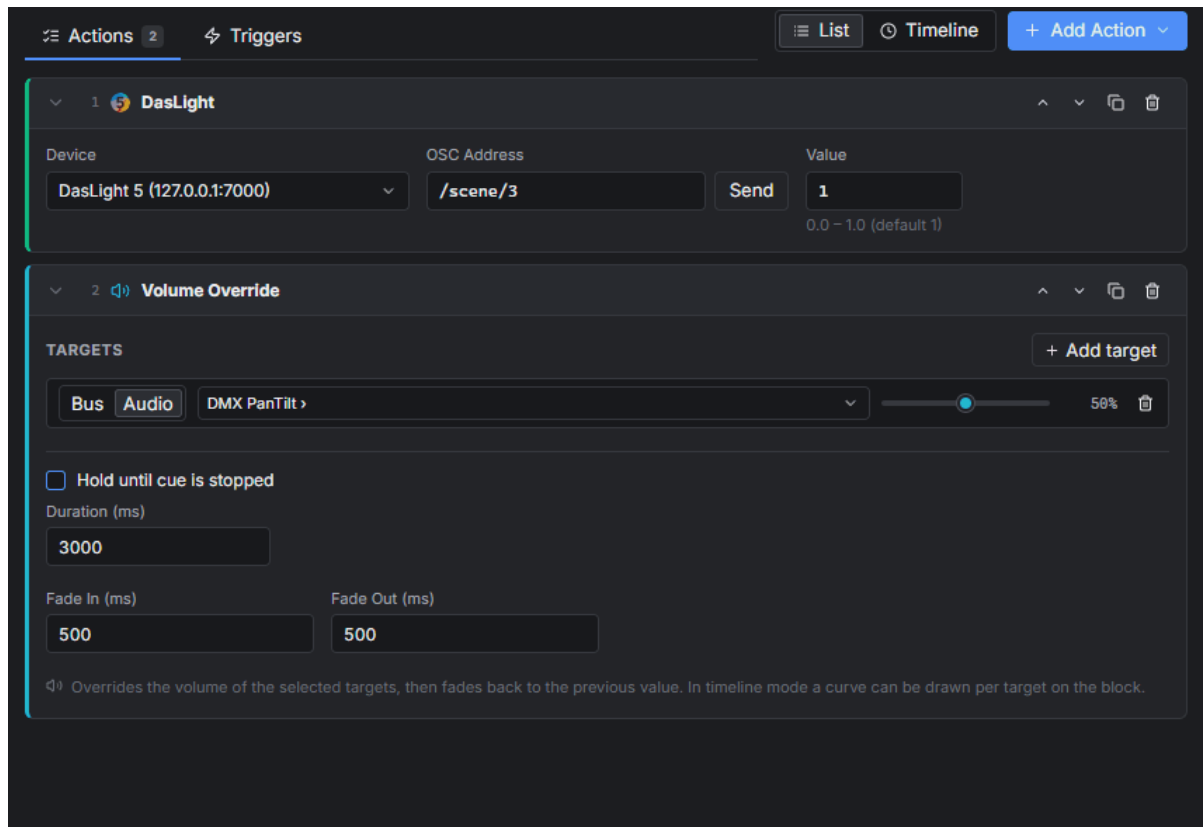


Figure 38: Volume Override with a specific Audio Action as the target and a fixed duration

Example (ducking): In the CUE “Background music” a piece of music is playing on the Main bus. You create a second CUE “Announcement” and add the Volume Override Action there: target **Bus Main**, 30%, **Fade In 800**, **Hold until cue is stopped** switched on. When “Announcement” is triggered, the music drops to 30% in 0.8 seconds. When the CUE “Announcement” is stopped, it rises back to 100% over the **Fade Out** time.

Note: If the selected target is not playing at that moment, nothing happens and there is no error message. If several reductions act on the same target at the same time, the most recently triggered one applies. When it ends, the target returns to the next-highest reduction that is still active, or to the original value. CUEs with this Action show the **VOL** marker on the button.

In the Timeline, instead of a fixed value you can draw a **volume curve** for each target (Section 8.4).

7.9 Overlay / Chromakey: showing text and images

An overlay shows **text** or an **image** on top of the video picture, such as a title, song lyrics, a name or a logo. There are **three layers** (Layer 1, 2 and 3) that can be visible at the same time. The overlays sit in front of the video.

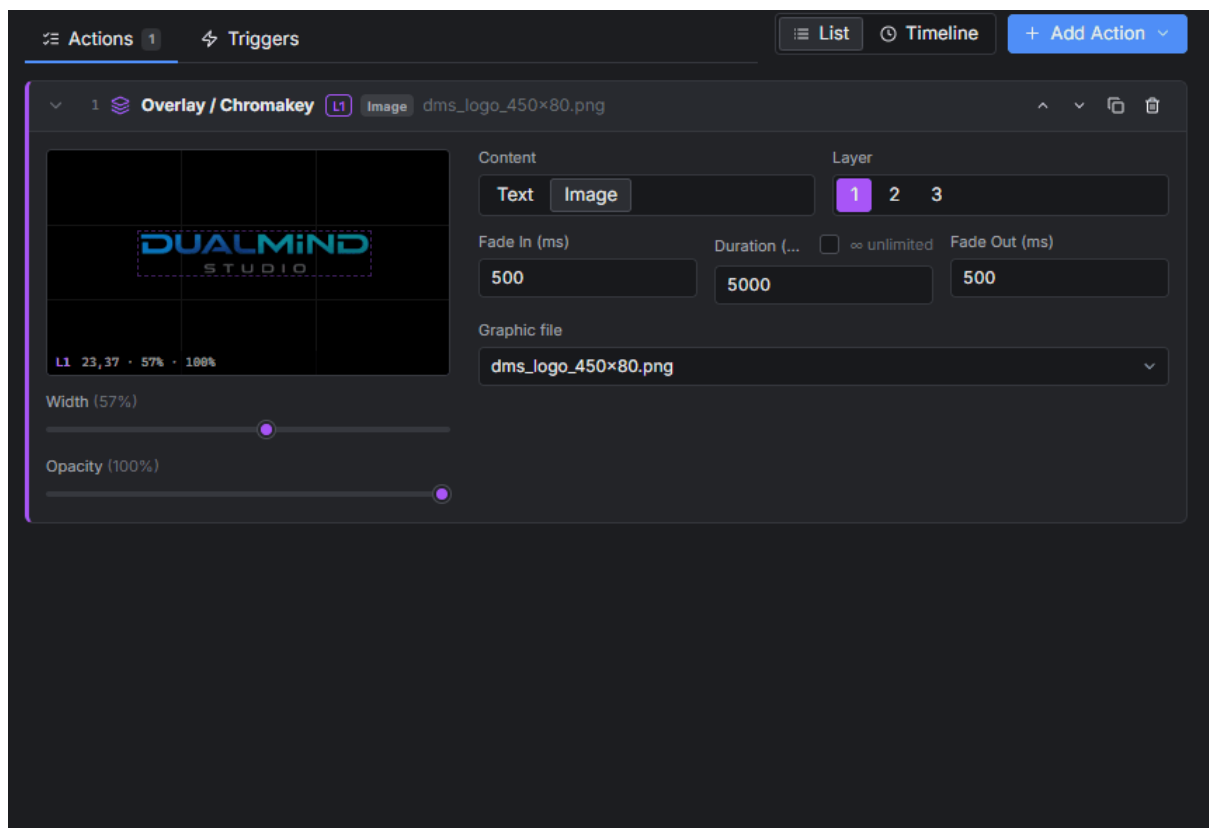


Figure 39: The settings of an Overlay Action with an image

Common settings

Setting	Meaning
Preview area (left)	Shows the picture as it appears on the screen (16:9). You can move the overlay with the mouse. Below the area, its position is shown in percent. A grid of thirds lines helps with alignment.
Content: Text Image	Chooses whether text or an image is shown.
Layer: 1 2 3	The layer. Layer 3 sits in front of Layer 1. Use different layers if several overlays are to be visible at the same time.
Fade In (ms) / Fade Out (ms)	Fade-in and fade-out time.
Duration (ms)	How long the overlay stays visible. With the ∞ unlimited check mark it stays until the CUE is stopped.
Width, Height, Opacity	Width and height of the overlay as a percentage of the picture, as well as the opacity (100% = fully visible, 0% = invisible).

Image

With **Image**, choose one of the imported graphics under **Graphic file** (Section 3.3). The aspect ratio is always preserved; the width determines the size.

Text

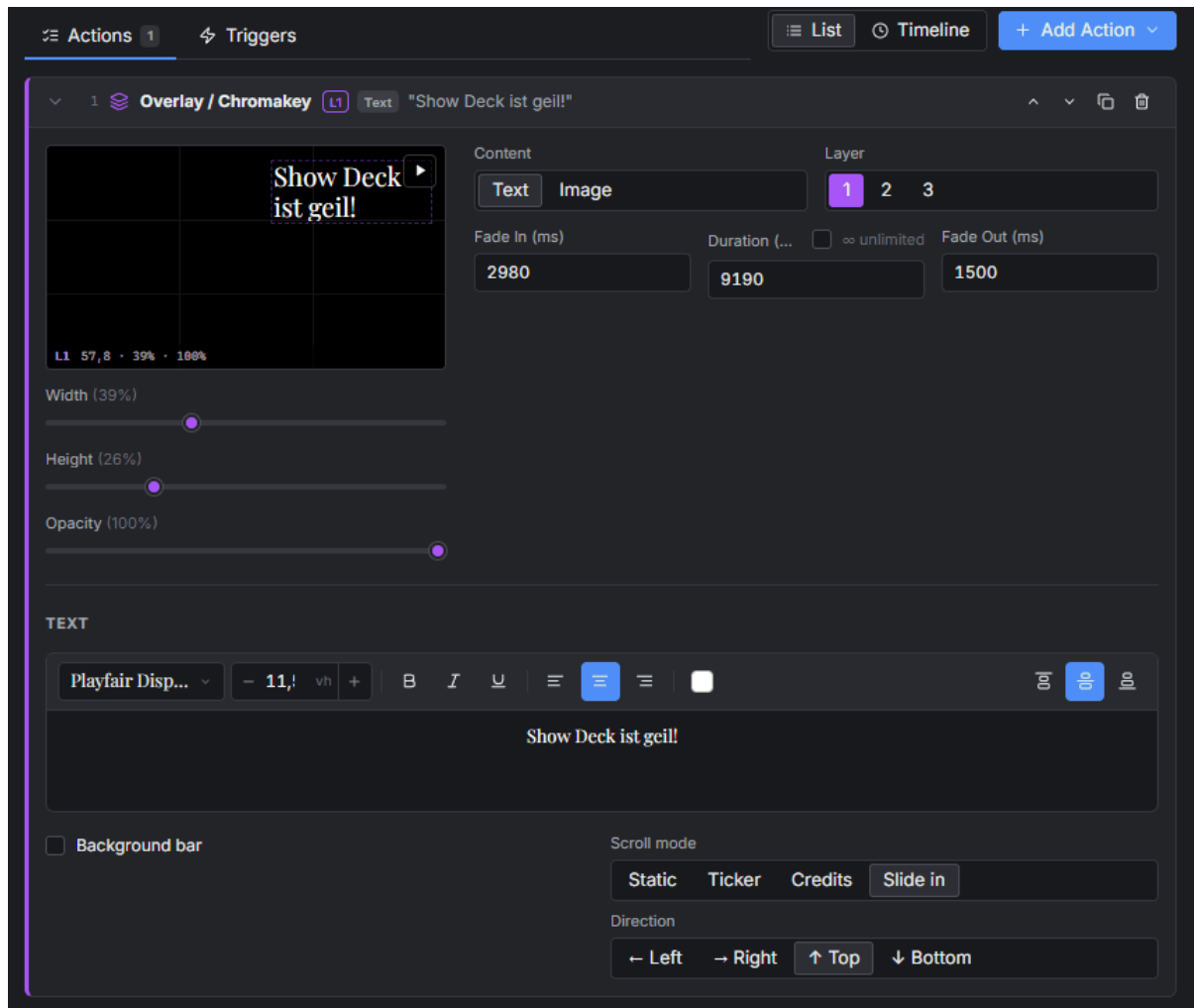


Figure 40: The settings of a Text Overlay Action

With **Text**, a small toolbar with an input field appears under **Text**:

Element	Meaning
Font (selection list)	One of 20 bundled, freely usable fonts.
- / + and number	Font size (in “vh”, which is one percent of the picture height; this makes the text adapt to any resolution).
B / I / U	Bold, italic, underline (Ctrl+B, Ctrl+I, Ctrl+U).
Alignment (three icons)	Left, centered or right. The three icons at the right edge align the text vertically (top, middle, bottom).
Color swatch	Text color.
Text field	Type your text here. Multiple lines are possible.
Background bar	Switches on a colored bar behind the text.

The **Scroll mode** determines whether and how the text moves:

Mode	Behavior
Static	The text stays still at the set position.
Ticker	Scrolling text: the text moves continuously from right to left. Speed sets the speed.
Credits	End credits: the text moves from bottom to top. Speed sets the speed.
Slide in	The text slides in once from one side and then stays in place. Under Direction you choose where it comes from (left, right, top, bottom).

Tip: The **play icon** in the preview area plays the movement as a test.

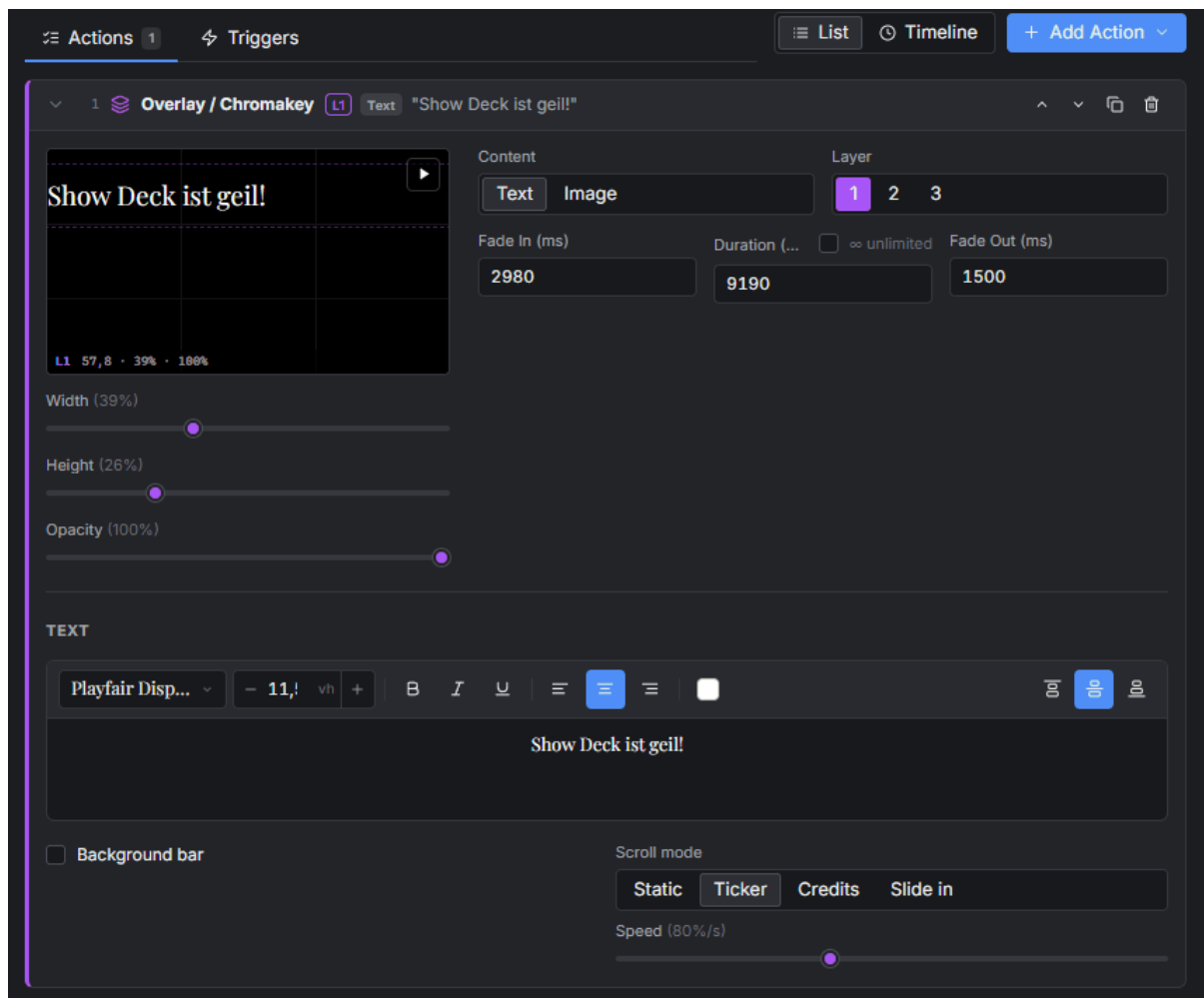


Figure 41: Text overlay in the “Ticker” scroll mode

8 The Timeline: Actions on the Time Axis

When several things are to happen **with time offsets or simultaneously**, you work with the Timeline. You switch it on in the Actions area with **Timeline** (Section 6.3).

8.1 Structure of the timeline

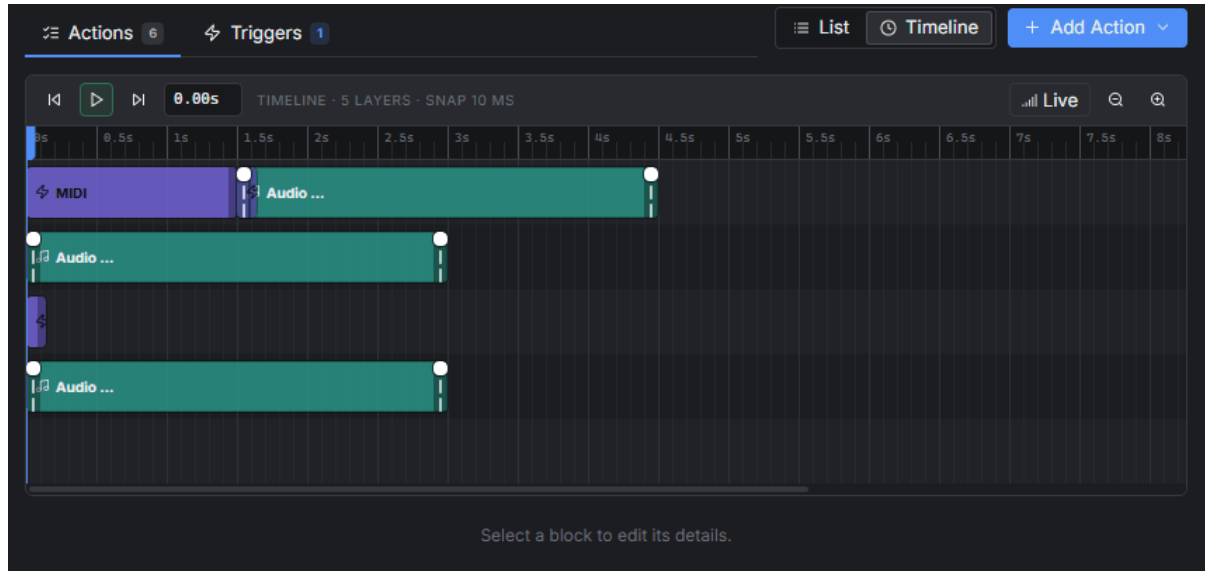


Figure 42: A Timeline with MIDI and Audio blocks on several rows

Element	Meaning
Time ruler (top)	Shows the time in seconds. The start of the CUE (0 s) is on the left.
Block	Each Action is a colored block. The color depends on the type (for example green for audio, orange for lighting, violet for MIDI, pink for video). Its length shows the duration.
Row (layer)	Blocks in different rows can run at the same time.
Time display and arrows at the top left	The buttons Back to start , Play from marker and Jump to end control the rehearsal playback. Next to them is the current position (for example 0.00s).
Live	Switches the sending of live data at the marker position on and off (tooltip “Send live data at marker”).
Magnifier icons	Zoom out and Zoom in shrink or enlarge the time axis.

Below the Timeline, ShowDeck shows the settings of the currently selected block (Chapter 7). With no selection, it shows “Select a block to edit its details”.

8.2 Adding and selecting blocks

1. Click **Add Action** and choose the type. The block appears in the Timeline.
2. Click a block to select it. It gets a white frame, and its settings appear below the time axis.

8.3 Editing blocks

Action	Effect
Drag the block with the mouse left or right	Moves the start time (in steps of 10 milliseconds).
Drag the block up or down	Moves it to a different row.
Right edge – drag	Changes the duration (for lighting and MIDI).
Drag the left or right edge of an Audio block	Trims the beginning or end of the file (Trim).
White dots at the corners of a lighting, audio or video block – drag	Sets the fade-in and fade-out time (Fade).
Right-click on a block	Opens the context menu with Copy block , Paste block , Duplicate block and Delete block .

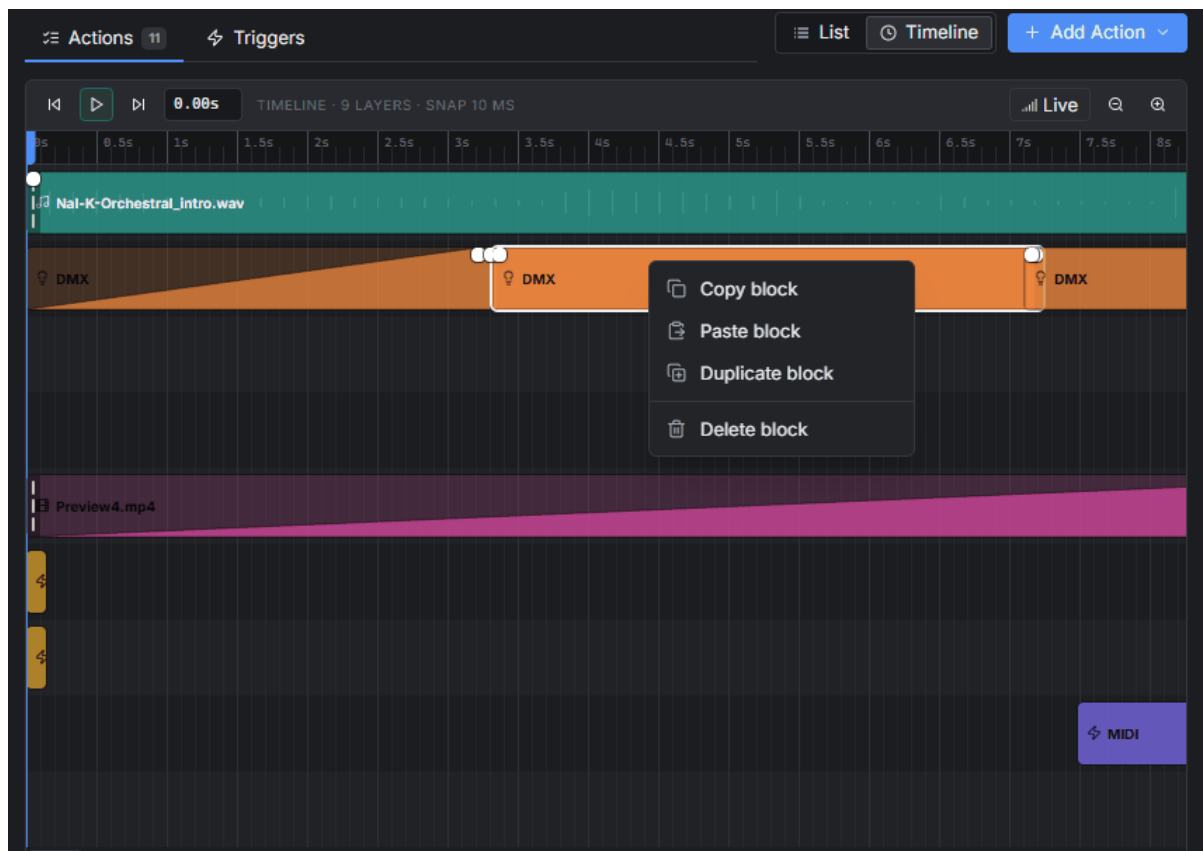


Figure 43: The context menu of a block

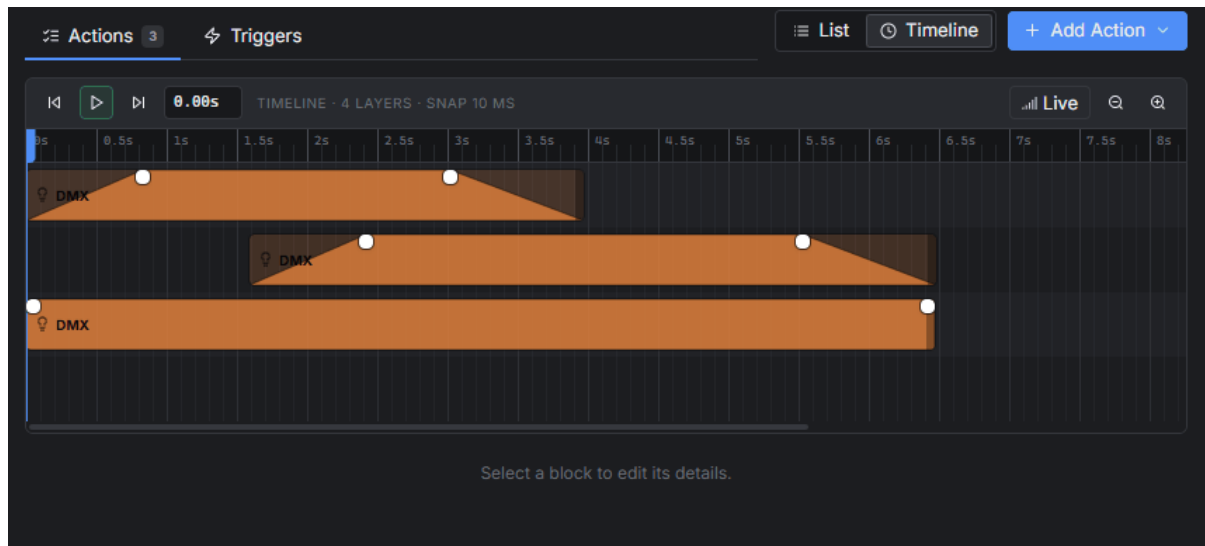


Figure 44: Lighting blocks with fades (white dots) on several rows

8.4 Volume curve for Volume Override

With a Volume Override Action, you can draw a free volume curve for each target in the Timeline instead of a single fixed value. To do so, select the block:

- A **click** in the selected block adds a point to the curve. The left/right position determines the time, up/down the volume.
- **Dragging** a point moves it.
- A **double click** on a point deletes it. At least two points are always kept.
- If the Action has several targets, use the **Kurve** buttons in the block's toolbar to choose which curve you are currently editing.

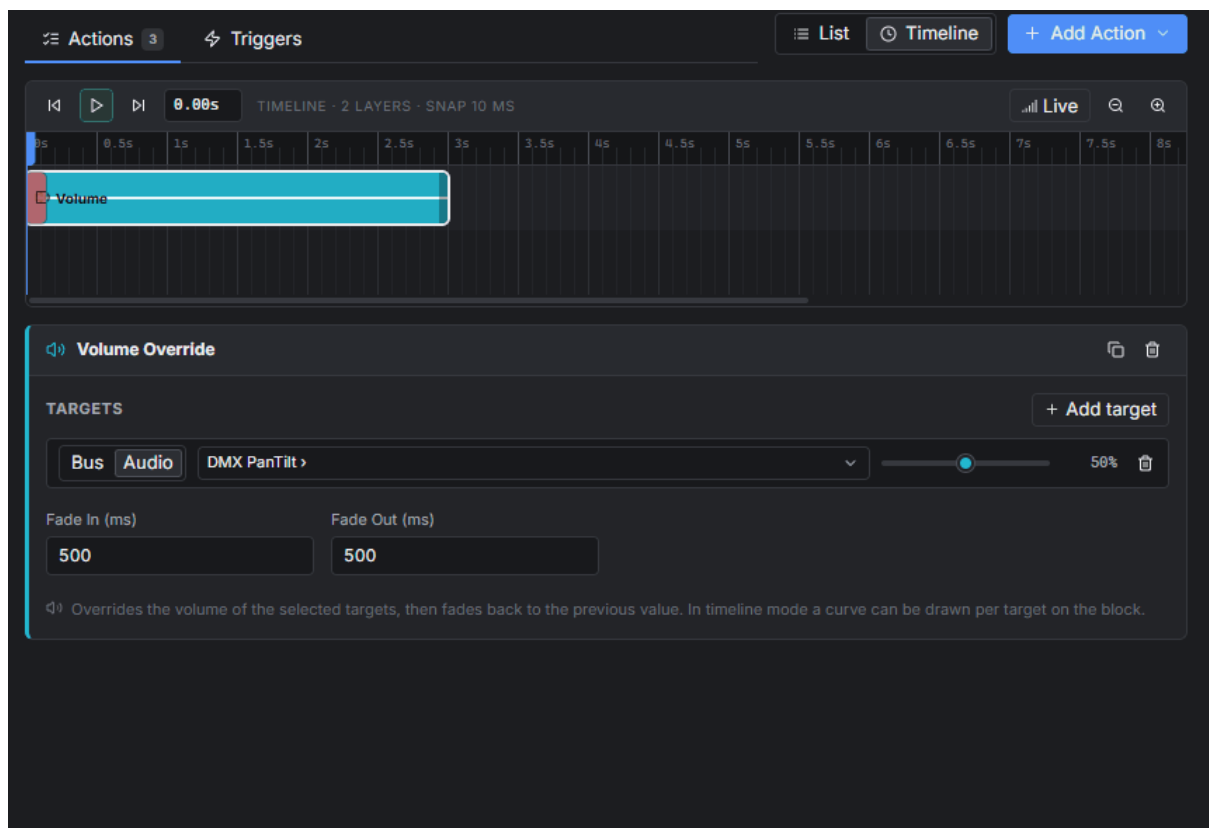


Figure 45: Volume Override as a block in the Timeline

Note: A block without length is very small and can easily be overlooked. This affects, for example, Actions that only send a single command (DasLight, DM3, Stop). They sit at the point in time where the block begins.

9 Triggers: Firing CUEs Automatically

So far you have started CUEs with a mouse click or key press. A **trigger** starts a CUE **from outside** without you clicking: for example when someone presses a particular key on a MIDI keyboard, when a lighting console sends a particular value, or when the timecode reaches a particular point in time.

Triggers are optional. A CUE can have any number of triggers; each one of them fires the CUE. Triggers are set up in the CUE's **Triggers** tab.

9.1 Adding a trigger

1. In Edit mode, select the CUE.
2. Click the **Triggers** tab. The number after it shows how many triggers the CUE has.
3. Next to **Add trigger:** click **MIDI**, **Art-Net**, **OSC** or **Timecode**. A card for the trigger appears.
4. Fill in the fields (see below).

Each card has a summary of the settings in its header (for example “channel 1 · note 36 · vel ≥ 127”) and, on the right, a **trash can (Remove trigger)** that deletes the trigger.

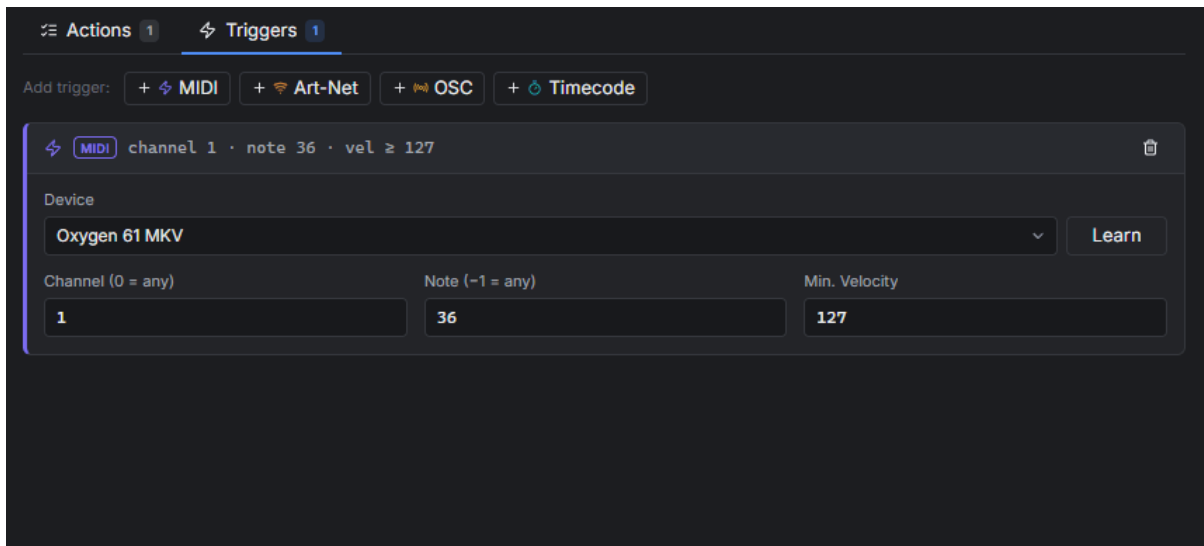


Figure 46: The “Triggers” tab with a MIDI trigger

9.2 MIDI trigger

Fires the CUE when a MIDI device presses a particular key. Prerequisite: the device is switched on in the settings under **MIDI Inputs** (Section 4.2).

Field	Meaning
Device	The MIDI input device.
Learn	Click Learn and then press the desired key on the device. ShowDeck enters the channel and note by itself.
Channel (0 = any)	The MIDI channel 1 to 16. With 0, ShowDeck responds to every channel.
Note (-1 = any)	The number of the key. With -1, ShowDeck responds to every key.

Field	Meaning
Min. Velocity	Minimum strike strength (1 to 127). Only notes struck at least this hard fire the trigger. This rules out accidental light touches.

In the Live grid, a small field such as **J36•1** appears at the bottom left of the button. It shows the note and channel of the MIDI trigger (an asterisk * stands for “all”).

9.3 Art-Net trigger

Fires the CUE when a lighting console sends a particular value for a particular channel via Art-Net. This way you can start a CUE with a fader or a button on the lighting console.

Field	Meaning
Input Source (Device)	From which device the signal may come. any (except localhost) accepts any device on the network except your own computer.
Universe	The DMX universe that is listened to.
Channel (1–512)	The DMX channel.
Mode	Threshold (≥) : the CUE fires when the value is at least as high as Value . Exact (=) : the CUE fires only at exactly this value.
Value (0–255)	The comparison value.

Note: If ShowDeck shows the orange message “... is already a DMX output ...”, ShowDeck itself is sending to this device on the same universe and channel. In that case the trigger is not activated, so that ShowDeck does not trigger itself. Choose a different channel or a different universe.

9.4 OSC trigger

Fires the CUE when a device or program sends a particular command via OSC (Section 4.4).

Field	Meaning
Device (with input port)	The OSC device. It must be set up in the settings with a Port In .
OSC Address	The address of the command, for example /cue/trigger.
Mode / Value	As with the Art-Net trigger: Threshold (≥) or Exact (=) with the comparison value.

9.5 Timecode trigger

Fires the CUE when the timecode reaches a particular time (see Chapter 11).

Field	Meaning
Trigger TC (HH:MM:SS:FF)	The point in time in the form hours:minutes:seconds:frames, for example 00:01:30:00 for one minute and 30 seconds.

Field	Meaning
Capture	Takes the currently running timecode time into the field. Only possible while a timecode is being received.
Tolerance ($\pm$ frames)	Time window in individual frames within which the point in time still counts as “reached”.
Source	Any: LTC, Art-Net or MTC. LTC only, Art-Net only or MTC only: only the selected source fires the trigger.

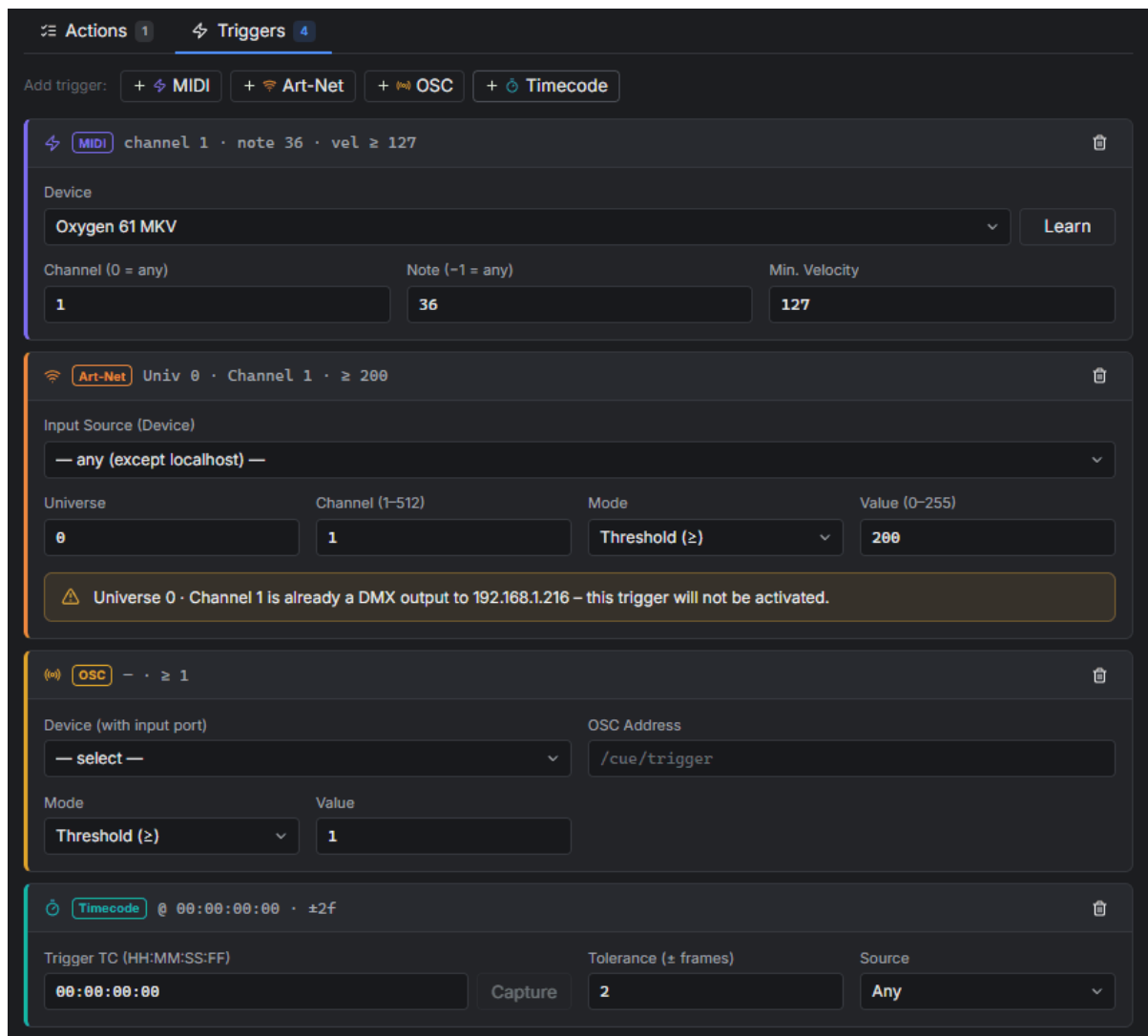


Figure 47: All four trigger types in one CUE

Tip: Test every trigger in Live mode before the event by sending the triggering signal and watching whether the CUE starts. With the **Signal Monitor** (Section 12.2) you can see whether the signal arrives at ShowDeck.

10 Live Operation

The **Live mode** is the view for the event. Everything you have prepared is triggered here. Switch to it with **Live** at the top right. There are two displays: the **Grid** and the **List**. With the **Grid | List** switch on the right of the toolbar you switch between the two.

Warning: When switching between grid and list, ShowDeck asks for confirmation if running CUEs would be stopped by doing so (**Switch & Stop**) or if CUEs in the list are already marked as played. With **Cancel** you stay in the current view.

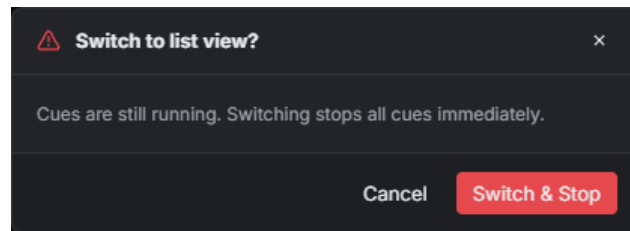


Figure 48: Confirmation prompt when switching the view while CUEs are running

10.1 The toolbar in Live mode

At the top of Live mode there is a bar. It changes depending on the display.

In the grid (Grid)

Element	Function
Stop All (red)	Immediately ends all running CUEs.
Fade Out (orange)	Ends all running CUEs and fades the sound out gently. The duration is shown on the button (for example “2s”).
Arrow to the right of Fade Out (or right-click on Fade Out)	Opens the Fade time menu: choose 0.5s, 1s, 2s, 3s or 5s, or enter your own time in seconds at the bottom (for example 2.5) and confirm with OK . The time is saved with the show.
Clock (center)	Shows the current time of day of the computer.
Magnifier – and Magnifier +	Zoom out and Zoom in shrink or enlarge the buttons.
Lock	Locks or unlocks the layout (see Section 10.2).
Grid List	Switches the display.

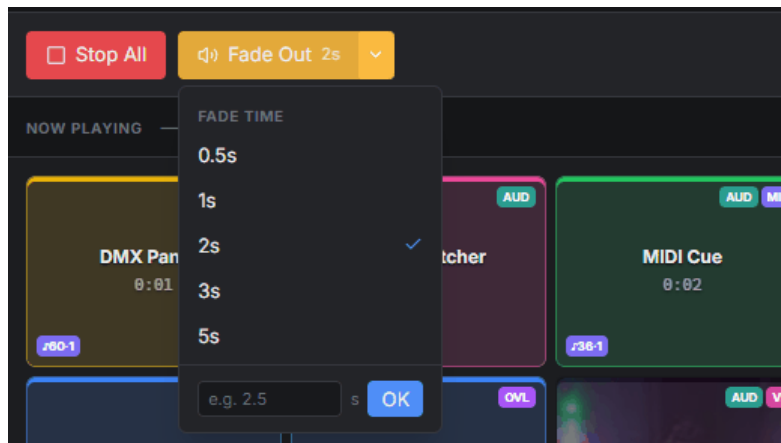


Figure 49: The “Fade time” menu for setting the fade-out time

Below the bar, **NOW PLAYING** shows all currently running CUEs as colored fields. If nothing is running, only a dash is shown there.

In the list (List)

On the left, instead of **Stop All** there is the large **PLAY NEXT** button (see Section 10.3). In the middle, next to the clock, ShowDeck shows the estimated **remaining playing time** of the entries not yet played. On the right is **PDF** for printing the list.

Note: There is no **Stop All** button in the list view. There, end running entries with the **stop square** of the row or group, or by pressing **PLAY NEXT** again (Section 10.3). To end everything immediately, you can switch to the grid view; ShowDeck then asks for confirmation and stops all CUEs (**Switch & Stop**).

10.2 The grid (Grid)

In the grid, all CUEs with the Mode **Button** or **Both** (Section 6.2) are laid out next to each other as buttons. A click on a button triggers the CUE. The grid is suitable when you decide spontaneously what happens next, or when several CUEs are to run independently of one another.

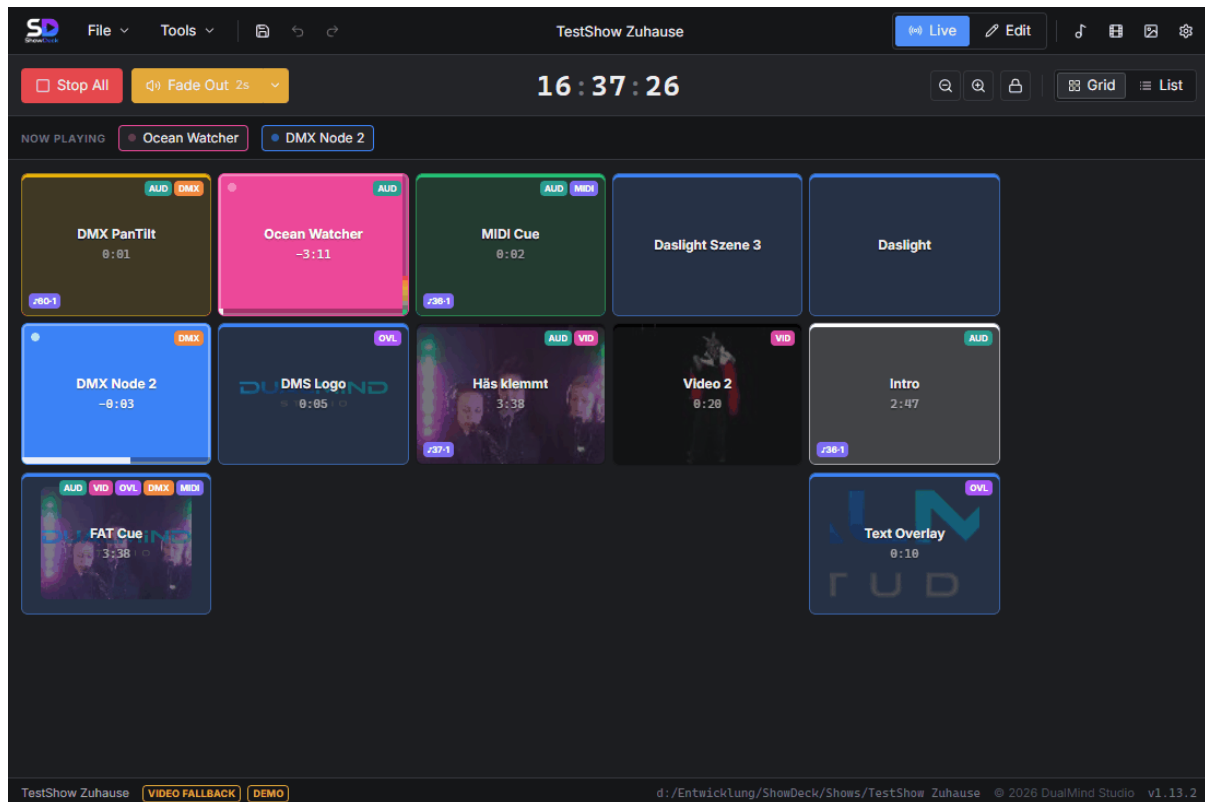


Figure 50: The grid with two running CUEs

What does a CUE button show?

Element	Meaning
Color and name	The color and name from the Cue Settings. The color is muted on an idle button and fully opaque on a running button.
Preview image in the background	For CUEs with video, the preview image; for CUEs with an overlay, the image or the text.
Time	Idle: total duration of the CUE (for example 3:15). Running: remaining time with a leading minus sign (for example -3:11). For endless CUEs (Loop, held overlay) no time is shown.
Progress bar (bottom edge)	Shows how far the CUE has progressed.
White blinking dot (top left)	The CUE is running.
Orange ! (top left)	A device that the CUE needs is not set up or not available (tooltip "Device missing").
Type markers (top right)	Show which Action types are in the CUE: AUD (audio), VID (video), OVL (overlay), DMX (lighting), MIDI , VOL (Volume Override). An ∞ indicates an endless loop.
SOLO (bottom left)	The CUE ends all others when it starts.
♪36·1 (bottom left)	The CUE has a MIDI trigger (note 36, channel 1).
Key (bottom right)	The assigned hotkey.

Element	Meaning
Level meter (narrow strip on the right edge)	Shows the volume of the running sound (green, yellow, red).

Editing the layout: lock and empty cells

Normally the layout is **locked**. A click triggers the CUE, and no button can be moved by accident. To rearrange, click the **lock** in the toolbar (tooltip **Unlock layout editing**). The following then applies:

- The buttons can be moved to another cell by **drag and drop**. If the button lands on an occupied cell, the two swap places.
- Empty cells are visible as dashed frames. A click on an empty cell creates a **new CUE** there and jumps to Edit mode.
- When you hover over a button, a **pencil icon** appears. A click on it opens the CUE in Edit mode.
- A click on a button does **not** trigger the CUE in this state.

Afterwards, click the lock again (**Lock layout**) to lock the layout once more.

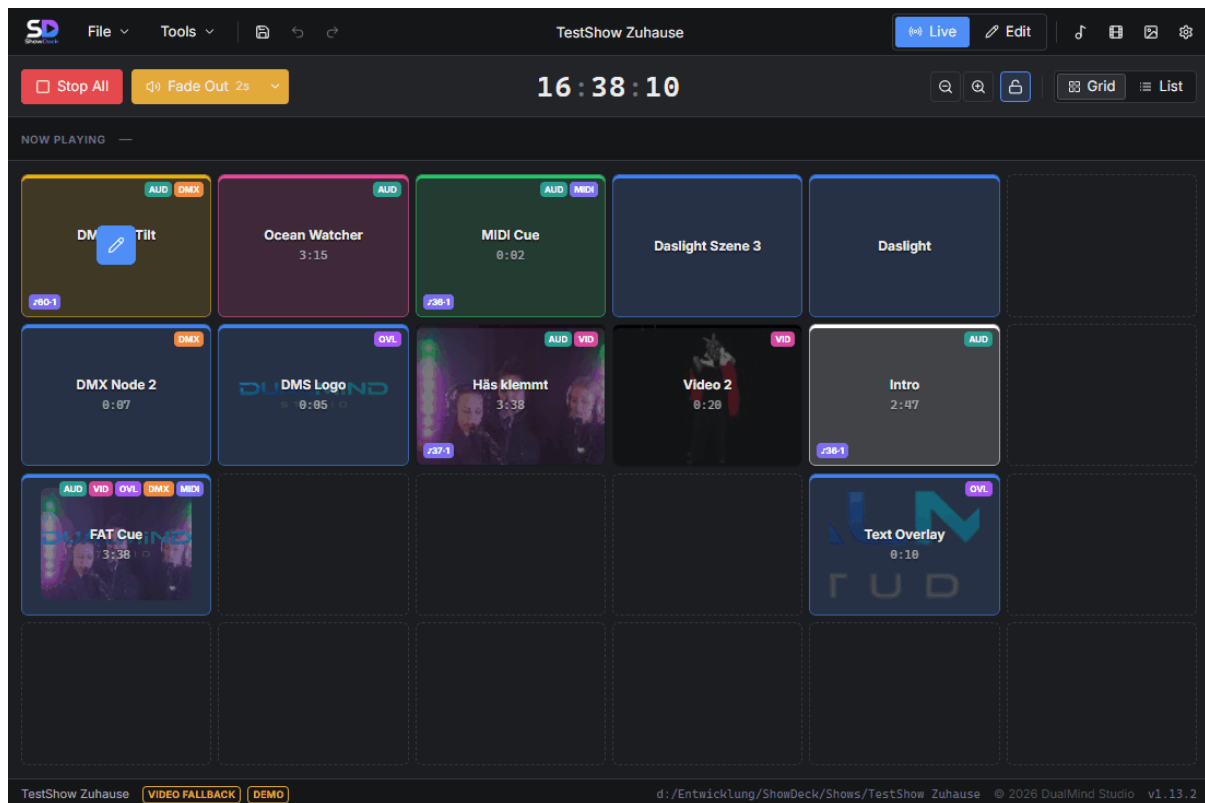


Figure 51: Unlocked layout: empty cells and pencil icon when hovering over a button

Note: You change the size of the buttons with the magnifier icons. **Zoom in** is locked if a button would fall out of the window as a result.

10.3 The list (List)

The list shows the CUEs in a **fixed order** from top to bottom, like a script. It is suitable for sequences in which one item follows another: a theater play, a presentation, a church service. Instead of clicking each CUE individually, you press the same button again and again: **PLAY NEXT**.

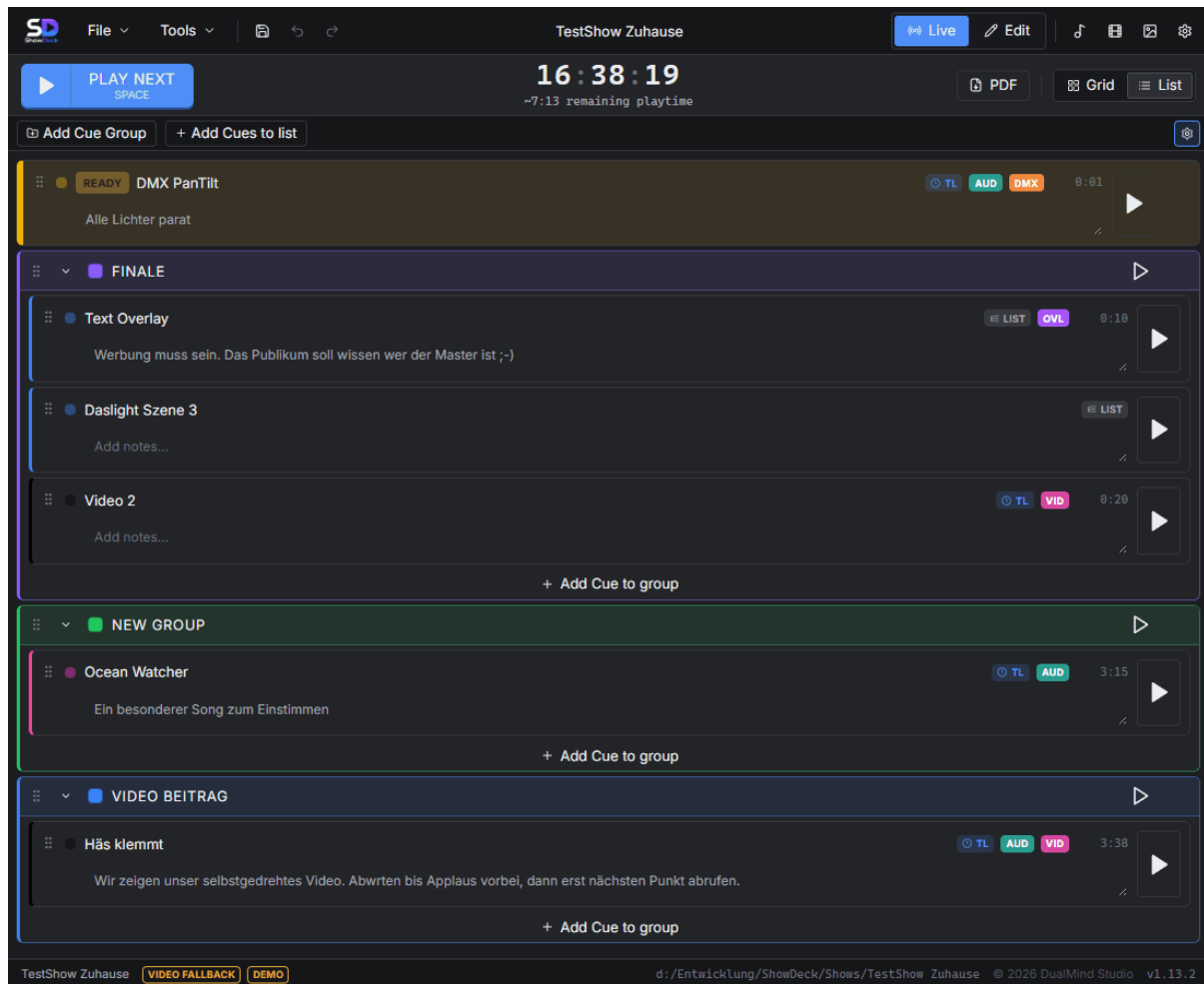


Figure 52: The Live list with groups

How does the list work?

- The entry that is next in line carries the yellow **READY** marker and a wider color stripe.
- A click on **PLAY NEXT** (or the **space bar**, see below) starts the **READY** entry. After that, **READY** moves on to the next entry automatically. The started entry is dimmed and marked **PLAYED** as soon as it has finished.
- As long as the most recently started entry is still running, the button shows a **stop icon**. Pressing it again then does **not** start the next entry but **ends the running one**. An accidental double click therefore does not start two entries in a row unintentionally.
- At the end, ShowDeck shows “Show completed!”. With **Reset** you start again from the beginning.

Each row contains:

Element	Meaning
Handle (six dots on the left)	For moving the row by drag and drop.
Color dot, name, markers	READY (next entry), PLAYED (already played), SOLO , LATCH (running in Latch mode), a timecode marker if the CUE has a timecode trigger, and TL (Timeline display) or LIST (List display), respectively.
Type markers	As in the grid (AUD, DMX, MIDI, ...).

Element	Meaning
Time	Total duration or remaining time, respectively.
Play triangle / stop square (right)	Starts or stops exactly this entry, independently of READY .
Notes field (“Add notes...”)	Free text field for stage directions or reminders, for example “Start after the applause”. The note is saved with the CUE and printed in the PDF.

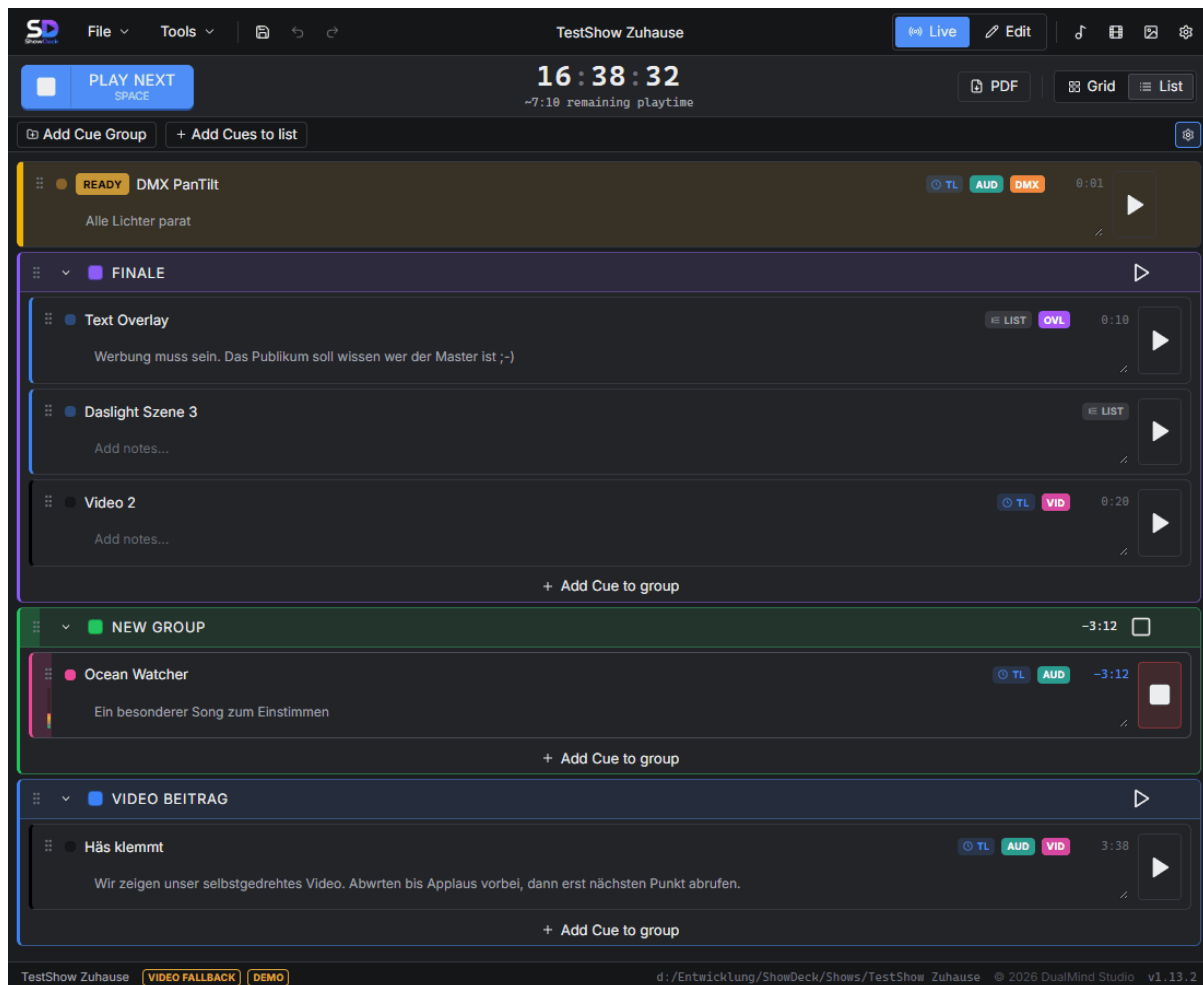


Figure 53: The list while an entry is running (stop icon on “PLAY NEXT” and remaining time)

Adding and arranging entries in the list

- **Add Cues to list:** opens a searchable selection of all CUEs. Choose one or more to add them to the list.
- **Add Cue Group:** creates a new group (Section 10.4).
- By **dragging** the handle you change the order.
- When you hover over a row, a **×** appears (**Remove from list**), which removes the entry from the list after a confirmation prompt. The CUE itself stays in the show.

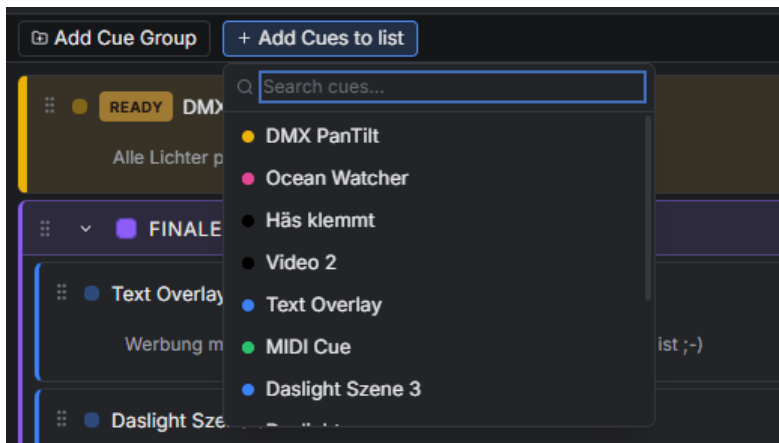


Figure 54: The “Add Cues to list” selection

List Trigger Settings

The **gear** on the right of the list bar opens the list settings:

Setting	Meaning
GO Hotkey	The key that triggers PLAY NEXT . The default is the space bar (Space). Click in the field and press a different key to change it; with the x you delete the hotkey.
Moveable Ready State	When switched on, the ↑ and ↓ arrow keys move the READY marker without starting anything. This lets you skip an entry or go back.
MIDI Trigger	A MIDI device with a key that triggers PLAY NEXT , for example a foot switch. Learn detects the key automatically.
DMX / Art-Net Trigger	Grayed out and not yet available (“Coming soon”).

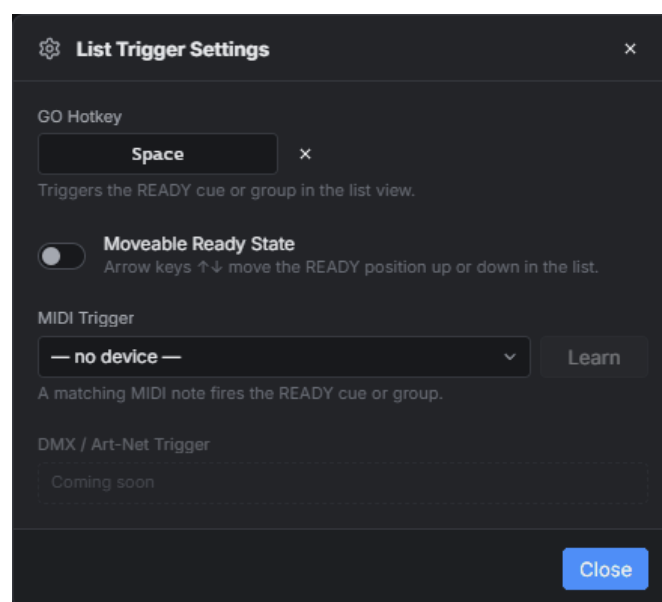


Figure 55: The “List Trigger Settings” dialog

PDF printout of the list

With **PDF** you create a PDF document of the list that you can print or pass on: with groups, CUE names, playing times, type markers, colors and notes. A dialog asks for the storage location. The button can only be used if the list contains at least one entry.

10.4 CUE groups

A **group** combines several CUEs in the list, for example all CUEs of an act or a scene. This keeps the list clear.

- **Creating a group:** Click **Add Cue Group**. A group named “NEW GROUP” appears.
- **Renaming:** Double-click the group name, type, and confirm with Enter or the check mark (**Apply**). Esc cancels.
- **Changing the color:** Click the color swatch in front of the name (**Change Group Color**).
- **Expanding and collapsing:** Click the small arrow (**Expand / Collapse**). When collapsed, the number of CUEs is shown after the name.
- **Adding CUEs:** The group has an **Add Cue to group** button. You can also drag a CUE from the list into the group.
- **Removing a CUE from the group:** Right-click the CUE and choose **Remove Cue from Group**.
- **Starting a group:** The group’s **play triangle (Play all N Cues simultaneously)** starts all CUEs of the group at the same time. With the **stop square (Stop all Cues)** you end all CUEs of the group.
- **Deleting a group:** When you hover over it, **Delete Group** appears. The CUEs it contains are not lost.
- **Moving a group:** by dragging the handle.

A group can also be **READY** or **PLAYED**. **PLAY NEXT** starts a READY group by starting all its CUEs at once.

Tip: Use groups as chapters of your show (“Act 1”, “Intermission”, “Encore”). This makes the structure visible at a glance in the list and in the PDF.

11 Timecode: Making ShowDeck Follow a Time Reference

This chapter is intended for events where another device or program specifies the time, for example a playback unit, a lighting console or a recording. If you work only with clicks and key presses, you can skip this chapter.

11.1 What is timecode?

Timecode is a precise time of day for productions. It is given in the form **hours:minutes:seconds:frames**, for example 01:23:45:12. The “frames” are the individual pictures per second. Common frame rates are 24, 25, 29.97 and 30 frames per second (fps). All devices in a production show the same time and can therefore start simultaneously.

Timecode can reach ShowDeck in three ways:

Type	Transmission
LTC (Linear Timecode)	As an audio signal . A device outputs the timecode as an audio signal (it sounds like a fax machine). ShowDeck receives it through an audio input (line in, microphone input, audio interface).
MTC (MIDI Timecode)	As a MIDI signal via a MIDI input.
Art-Net (ArtTimeCode)	As a network packet . A timecode program or lighting console sends the timecode via Art-Net (UDP, port 6454), either directly to one computer (unicast) or to all devices on the network (broadcast). ShowDeck needs no interface of its own for this: it listens automatically. This also works when the timecode program runs on the same computer.

11.2 Setting up timecode

1. Open **Devices & Settings** (gear) and the **Timecode** area.
2. Switch on **Timecode enabled**. Only then is timecode received, and the timecode bar appears at the bottom edge.
3. Under **Source**, choose the source: **LTC + MTC** (both; LTC takes priority, MTC steps in when LTC is silent), **LTC (Audio)**, **MTC (MIDI)**, **Art-Net (Network)** or **Auto (LTC > Art-Net > MTC)** (all three; the highest source always wins, a lower one steps in when the higher one is silent).
4. Under **MTC input**, choose the MIDI input at which the signal arrives. The input must first be switched on in the **MIDI** area. If it is missing, ShowDeck points this out.
5. Under **LTC audio input**, choose the audio input at which the LTC signal is present.
6. With **Art-Net** you do not have to select a device. In the **Art-Net sender IP** field you can optionally enter the sender’s address; ShowDeck then only accepts packets from there. This is useful when several devices on the network send timecode. If the field is left empty, any sender is accepted. As soon as packets arrive, ShowDeck displays the sender’s address, and the **Use ...** button copies it into the field. If your timecode program runs on the same computer, set its target to **127.0.0.1** or broadcast.

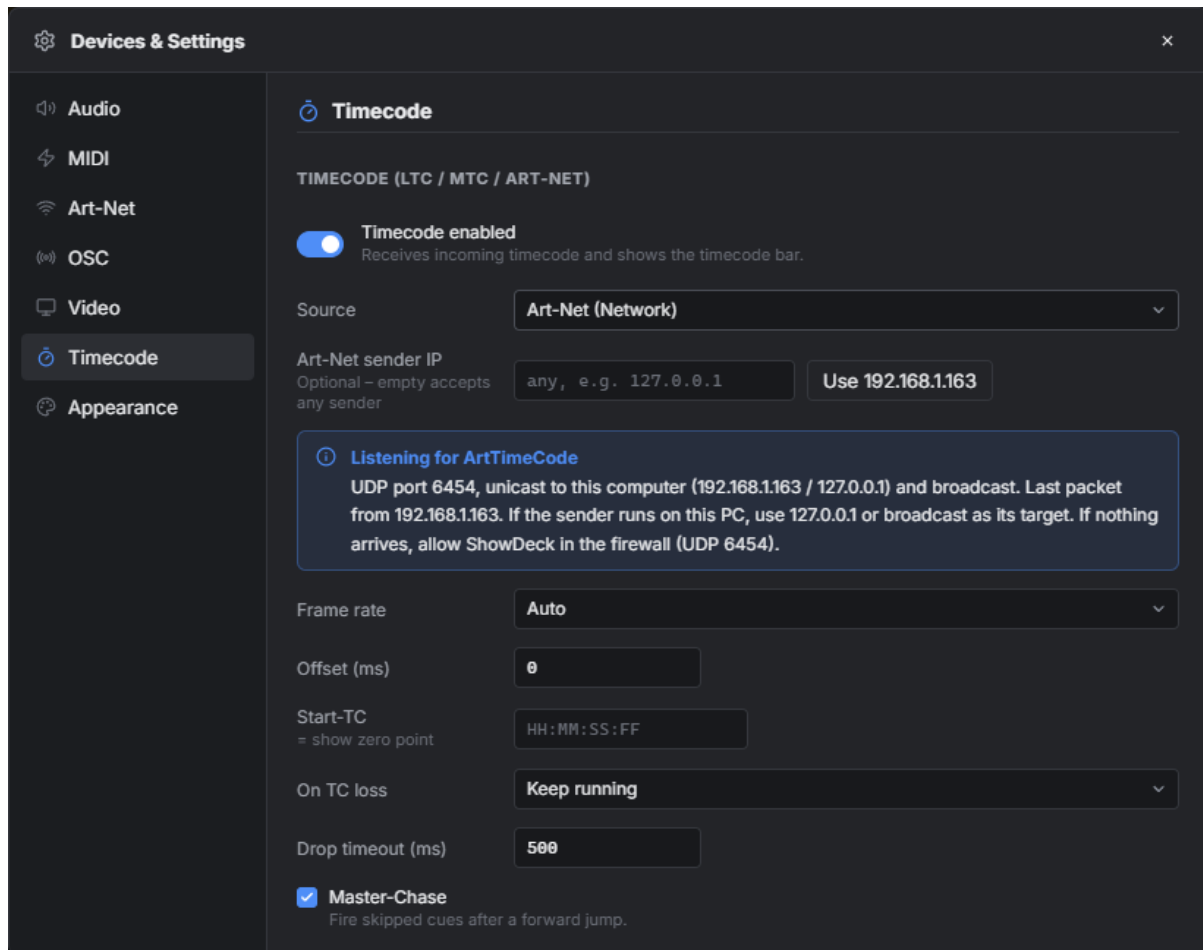


Figure 56: The “Timecode” area with the Art-Net source and timecode being received

Setting	Meaning
Frame rate	Auto detects the frame rate by itself. You can also set 24, 25, 29.97 or 30. With Art-Net, ShowDeck reads the frame rate from the packet; a fixed value overrides it.
Offset (ms)	Shifts all received times by this number of milliseconds. This compensates for a known delay. With Art-Net, which sends no timestamp, it also compensates for network delay.
Start-TC	The timecode value that counts as the zero point of the show (“show zero point”). Example: a playback unit starts at 01:00:00:00. Enter that; a trigger at 00:00:30:00 then fires at timecode 01:00:30:00.
On TC loss	What happens when no more timecode arrives: Keep running (everything keeps running), Stop everything (all CUEs are ended) or Pause (audio) (sound is paused and resumes as soon as the timecode returns).
Drop timeout (ms)	How long without a signal counts as “signal loss”. Default: 500 ms.

Setting	Meaning
Master-Chase	When switched on, after a forward jump of the timecode (for example when someone fast-forwards the playback unit), ShowDeck fires all triggers skipped in the process after the fact (“Fire skipped cues after a forward jump”). When switched off, they are silently passed over.

11.3 The timecode display

When timecode is switched on, a **timecode bar** appears above the status bar:

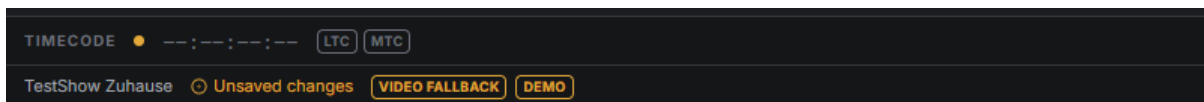


Figure 57: The timecode bar at the bottom edge of the window (above the status bar)

- A **dot**: blinking green when timecode is being received; orange when none arrives.
- The current **time** (00:00:00:00 as long as nothing arrives).
- **LTC**, **ART-NET** and **MTC**: the source that is currently active is highlighted. With only one source, only that one is shown.
- The **frame rate** (for example 25 fps).
- The **Show timecode in separate window** icon (right) opens the time in its own window with large type.

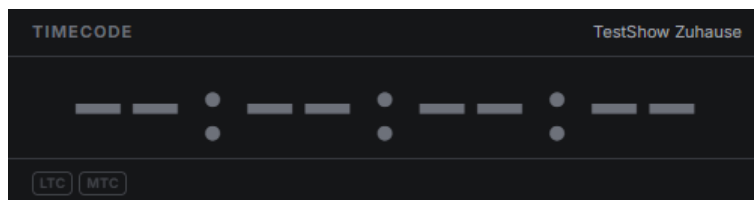


Figure 58: The separate timecode window

11.4 Triggering CUEs by timecode

To do so, create a timecode trigger in the CUE (Section 9.5). The CUE starts as soon as the timecode reaches the set time. Two special points:

- Each trigger fires **once**. If the timecode jumps back significantly (rewinding or a loop), ShowDeck stops the CUE that this trigger started, and the trigger is armed again.
- In the Live list, a CUE with a timecode trigger carries a marker with the trigger time.

Note: For testing without an external time source: with a program such as MIDI-OX you can generate MTC timecode on the same computer via a virtual MIDI port (for example “loopMIDI”) and select it in ShowDeck as the **MTC input**.

12 Auxiliary Tools and Monitors

In the **Tools** menu you will find windows that help you see what ShowDeck is currently sending and receiving. They open as separate windows that you can move to a second display.

12.1 Live Monitor

The **Live Monitor** shows what ShowDeck is sending. At the top right you choose the area: **DMX**, **MIDI** or **OSC**. At the far right there are three level meters (**MAIN**, **MON**, **BACK**) for the three audio buses.

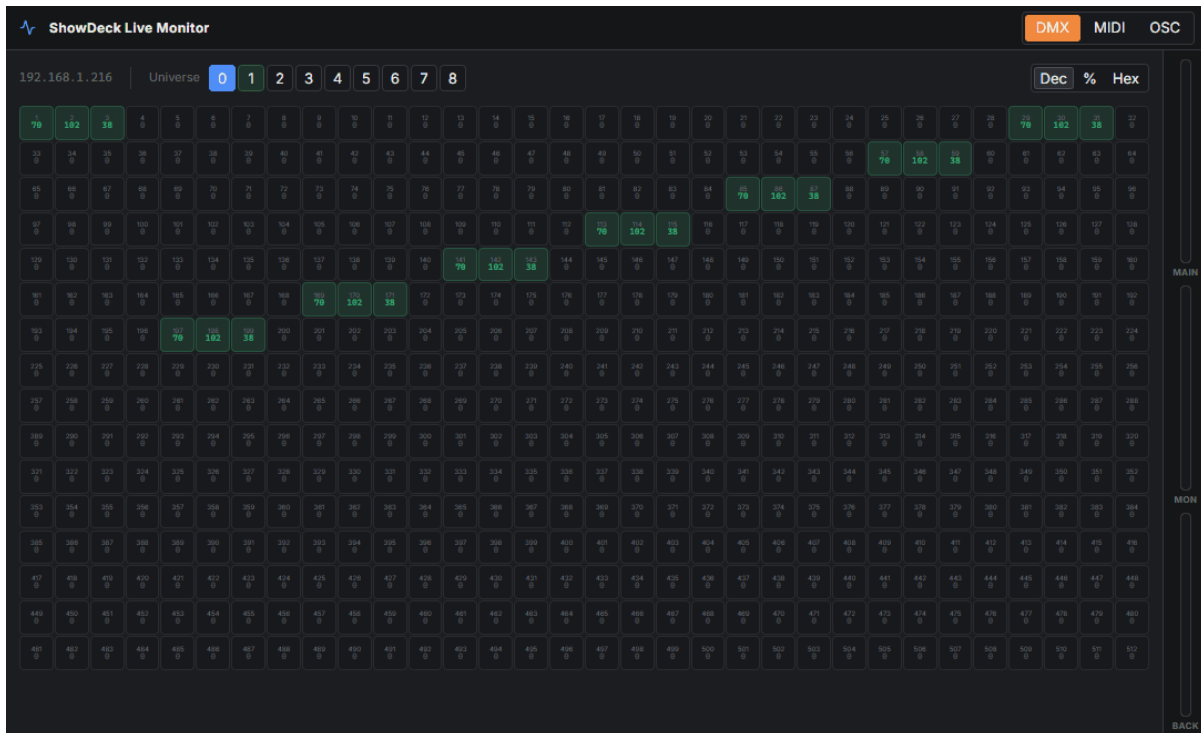


Figure 59: Live Monitor, DMX area, while a lighting CUE is running

- **DMX:** 512 cells show the values of all channels of the universe. Channels with a value greater than 0 have a green background. With the numbers **0** to **8** you choose the universe. With **Dec**, **%** and **Hex** you switch the display: as a number from 0 to 255, as a percentage, or hexadecimal.
- **MIDI:** List of the MIDI signals sent and received. As long as nothing arrives, it says “Waiting for MIDI events...”.
- **OSC:** List of the OSC commands sent and received.

12.2 Signal Monitor

The **Signal Monitor** shows **incoming** signals in a table with time, type, source and details. It is helpful for checking whether triggers (Chapter 9) arrive at ShowDeck. With the colored buttons **MIDI**, **ART-NET** and **OSC** you show or hide signal types, **Pause** freezes the display, **Clear** empties the list. At the bottom is the number of events (maximum 200).

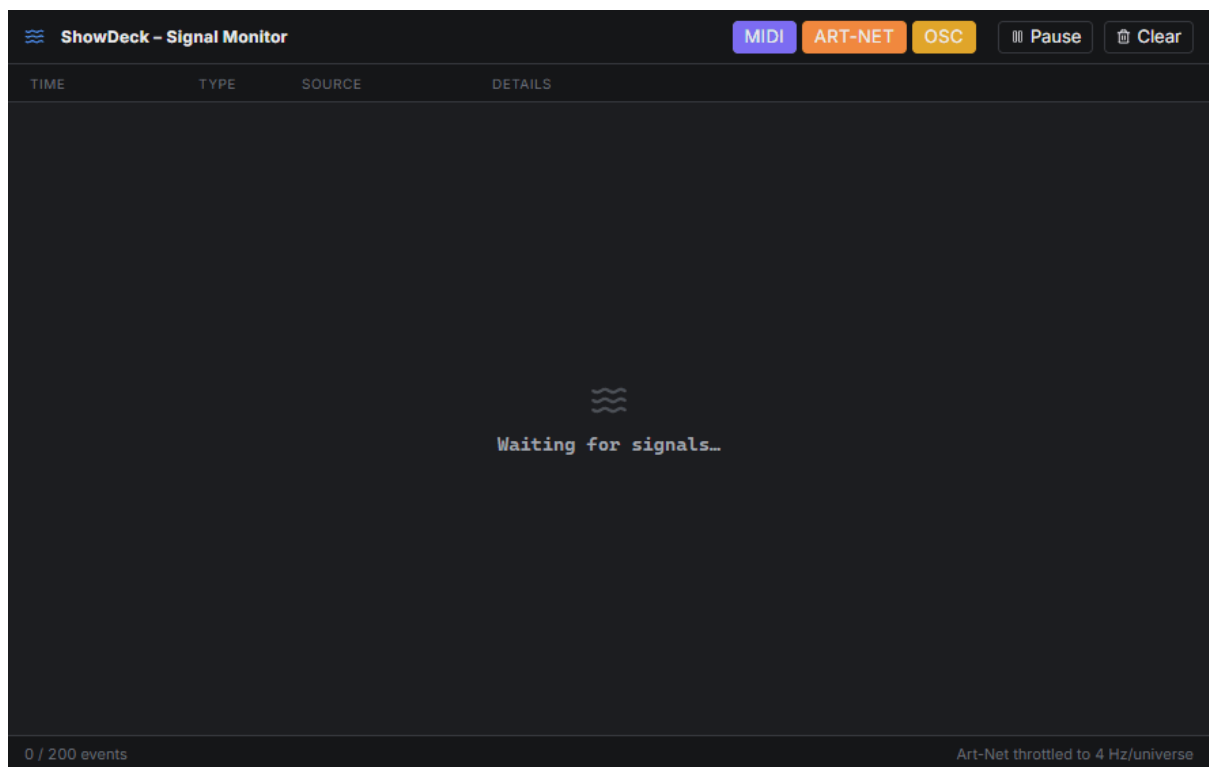


Figure 60: The Signal Monitor with no incoming signals

12.3 Resource Monitor

The **Resource Monitor** shows the load on the computer over the last five minutes: **CPU Usage** (processor load), **RAM Usage** (memory of the system and ShowDeck) and **Show File Size** (size of the show folder). If the load is high with your show, playback often stutters too. Check this at the dress rehearsal.

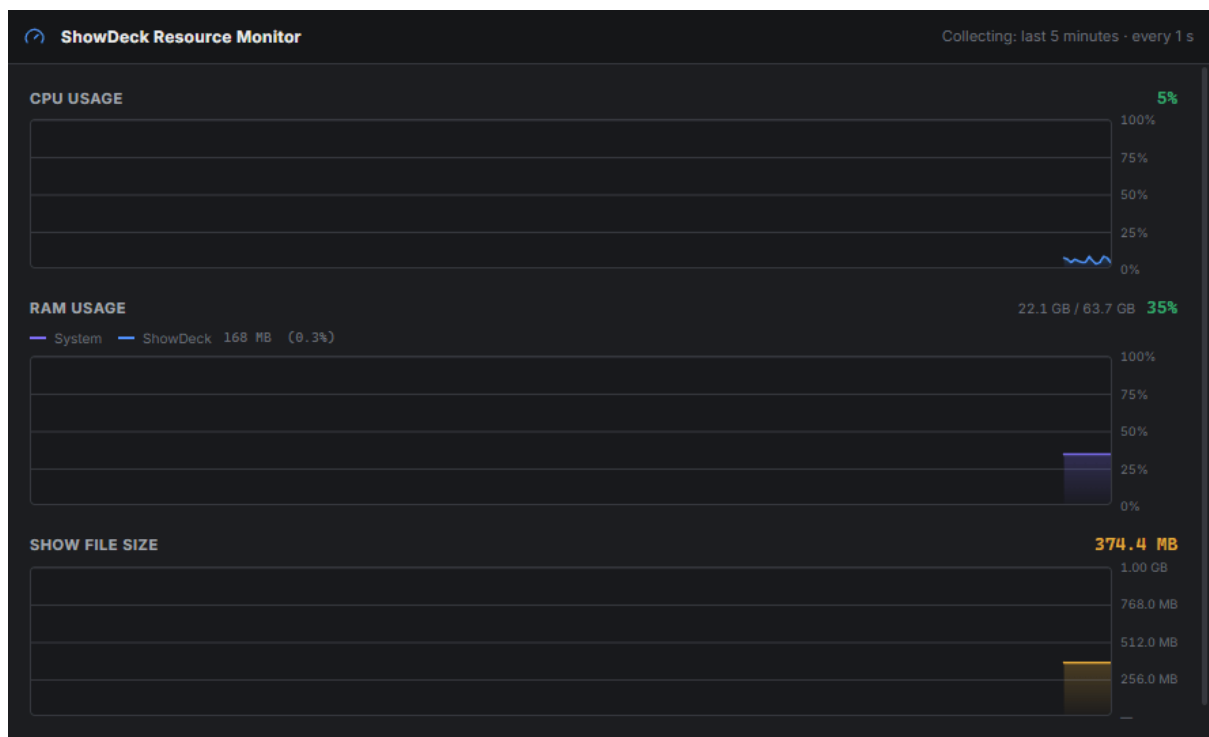


Figure 61: The Resource Monitor

12.4 Art-Net Scanner

The **Art-Net Scanner** searches the network for Art-Net devices and lists them with name, network address and port. With **Refresh** you repeat the search. This lets you check before the event whether the lighting device is reachable, and find out its address.

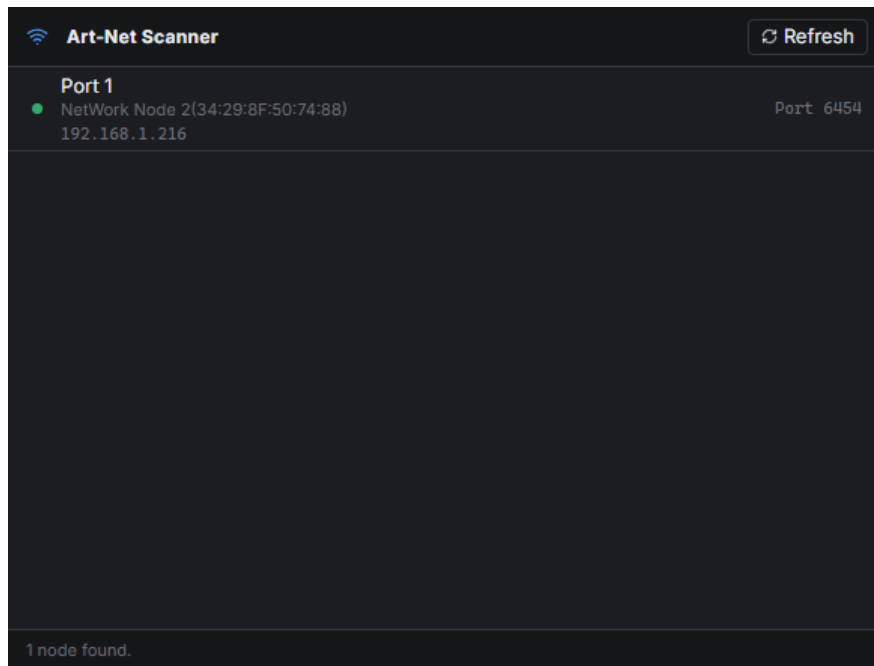


Figure 62: The Art-Net Scanner with one device found

12.5 The video window in practice

The video window (Section 4.5) shows what the audience sees: video and the three overlay layers.



Figure 63: The video window with a running video and overlays shown (logo and text)

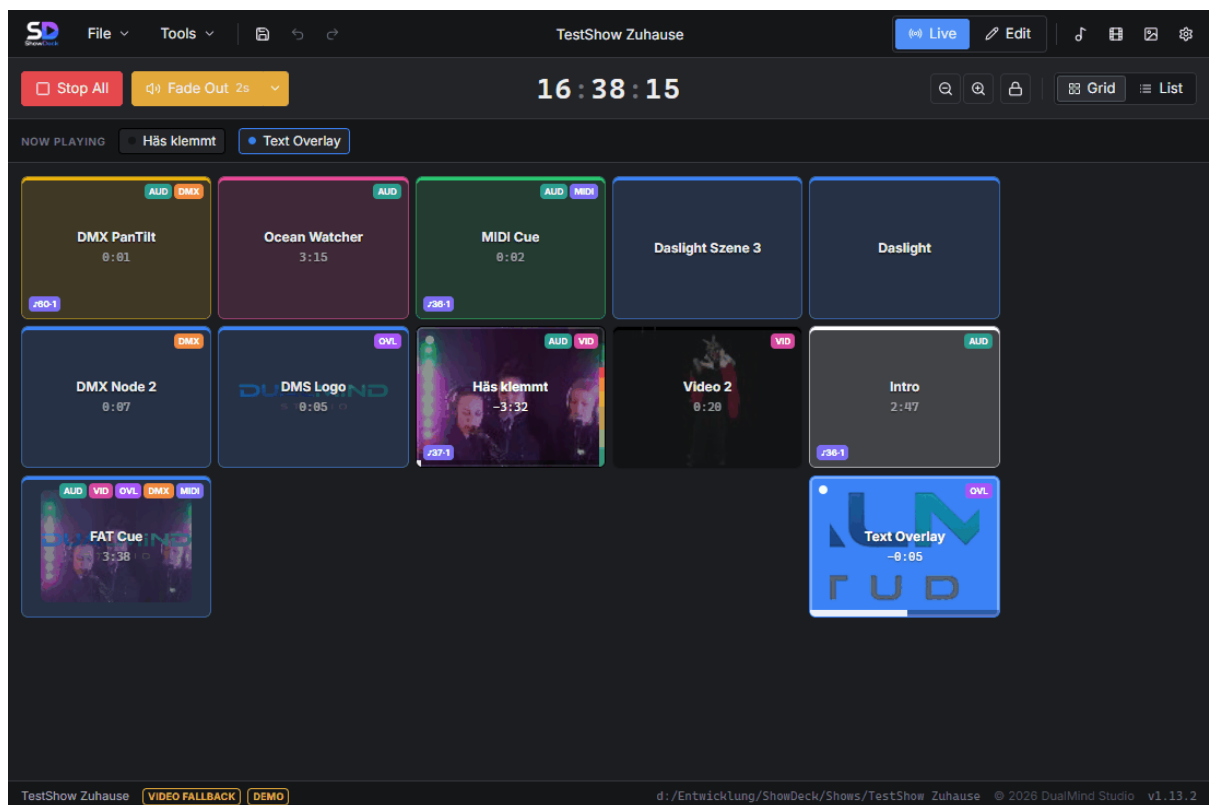


Figure 64: The corresponding Live view with the two running CUES

13 Preparation, Troubleshooting and Keyboard Shortcuts

13.1 Checklist before every event

Most problems during an event are not caused by the program but by things that were not checked beforehand. Go through the following list before every event:

Check item	How to proceed
Prepare the computer	Turn off power saving mode and screen savers, close automatic updates and other programs, connect the power supply. After a program or system update, always check the entire show again.
Connect and switch on all devices	Connect the audio interface, MIDI devices, projector and network cable before you start ShowDeck.
Check audio	In Devices & Settings → Audio , use Test on each bus to check that the sound arrives at the right speaker.
Check video	In Devices & Settings → Video , open the video window and show the Test image . The orange VIDEO FALLBACK marker must not appear in the status bar.
Check lighting and network	Use the Art-Net Scanner (Section 12.4) to check that the lighting device is found. Trigger a lighting CUE and check it in the Live Monitor and on the device.
Check MIDI	In Devices & Settings → MIDI , check with Test . Compare the Name and System name columns (Section 4.2).
Check warning signs	No orange ! may appear in the CUE list or in the grid.
Play through every CUE once	Trigger every CUE once in Live mode and check sound, picture and lighting. Run the show in the order of the event (dress rehearsal).
Check triggers	Actually fire external triggers such as MIDI foot switches or timecode triggers once (Chapter 9).
Create a backup	Save the show (Ctrl+S) and use File → Export ZIP... to place a backup copy on a USB stick or a second computer. Repeat after every change.
Lock the layout and start live	In the Live grid, close the lock so that nothing gets moved.

13.2 Troubleshooting

Observation	Possible cause and solution
No sound can be heard.	Check: (1) Is at least one bus switched on under Output Assignment in the Audio Action? (2) Is the right device assigned to the bus in Devices & Settings → Audio (Test)? (3) Is the volume (Vol) greater than 0? (4) Is a Volume Override Action running that has lowered the bus? (5) Is the input turned up on the amplifier or mixing console?
The video picture does not appear, or appears on the wrong screen.	Open Devices & Settings → Video , choose the projector under Display and click Open video window . Use Test image to check the output. If the projector is not connected, the window opens on the main display instead (VIDEO FALLBACK).
The lights do not respond.	(1) Are the computer and the lighting device on the same network? (2) Is the IP Address correct (Art-Net Scanner)? (3) Do Universe and channel numbers of the Action match the lighting device? (4) On Windows: is the firewall blocking port 6454 (UDP)? Allow ShowDeck access. (5) Check in Live Monitor → DMX whether ShowDeck is sending values.
A MIDI device is missing from the list or has the wrong name.	Connect the device and restart ShowDeck. Switch the input off and on again in Devices & Settings → MIDI so that the name is correct (Section 4.2).
A CUE shows an orange “!”.	A device that the CUE needs is not set up or not available. Open Devices & Settings and check the devices.
A hotkey does nothing.	Hotkeys work only in the Live grid and only when ShowDeck is the active window (click once in the window). In the Live list only the GO Hotkey applies. Check that the key is not taken by the operating system.
A CUE does not start when I click it.	Is the layout unlocked (lock open)? Then a click does not trigger. If the CUE is already running and Retrigger is set to Ignore , the click is likewise ignored.
A click on a running CUE ends it.	This is the behavior with Retrigger: Toggle (default). Choose Ignore or Restart if you do not want that (Section 6.2).
I cannot switch to Edit mode.	ShowDeck reports “Show still running”. First end all CUEs with Stop All (grid) or with the stop icons (list), respectively.
A trigger does not fire.	Check in the Signal Monitor whether the signal arrives. Check device, channel, note, value and Min. Velocity . For MIDI, the input must be switched on.

Observation	Possible cause and solution
Timecode is not being received.	Is Timecode enabled switched on? Is the right source chosen under Source and the device selected (MTC input , LTC audio input)? An LTC signal must not be too quiet or overdriven. With Art-Net: is the timecode program sending to 127.0.0.1 or by broadcast to port 6454, and does the address under Art-Net sender IP match (leave it empty if in doubt)? Does the firewall allow incoming UDP traffic for ShowDeck? The timecode bar shows the dot in green as soon as timecode arrives.
A show cannot be opened or imported.	In the demo version, a maximum of 3 CUEs is possible and ZIP import is locked. Activate the license (Section 2.2).
The program stutters.	Check in the Resource Monitor whether CPU or memory is heavily loaded. Close other programs. Very large video files at high resolution can burden the computer; if necessary, use smaller files (H.264, MP4).

13.3 Keyboard shortcuts at a glance

Key	Effect
Ctrl+S (macOS: Cmd+S)	Save the show.
Ctrl+Z (macOS: Cmd+Z)	Undo the last editing step (Undo).
Ctrl+Y or Ctrl+Shift+Z	Restore an undone step (Redo).
Esc	Closes dialogs and menus, cancels hotkey recording.
Space bar	In the Live list: PLAY NEXT (changeable under List Trigger Settings).
Arrow ↑ / ↓	In the Live list: move the READY marker (when Moveable Ready State is switched on).
Free key per CUE	In the Live grid: triggers the CUE (hotkey, Section 6.2).
Ctrl+B / Ctrl+I / Ctrl+U	In the text overlay: bold, italic, underline.
Backspace	In the hotkey field: deletes the hotkey.

14 Two Practical Examples

The following two examples show how the functions from the previous chapters come together into a finished solution. The starting situation of both examples is modeled on typical problems described in practice in event technology and theater. For this purpose, publicly accessible sources were reviewed in October 2026 (manufacturer pages, specialist forums, production handbooks). The sources are listed at the end of the chapter and are marked in the text with numbers in square brackets.

Note: Forums and experience reports reflect individual cases. They show that a problem occurs, but not how often. The description of QLab is based on public pages and forum posts, some of them older; check current features and prices with the manufacturer. The examples are fictitious; people and events are not real.

14.1 Example 1: Theater group with a Windows laptop, a play in two acts

Starting situation

An amateur theater group performs a play in two acts. There is music for scene changes, sound effects (thunder, doorbell), a video projection with surtitles and three lighting moods via an Art-Net lighting device. The sound technician, Ms. Weber, operates everything alone from a laptop; the assistant director calls the cues over a headset (“Standby”, “Go”).

The problem

- QLab, a program widely used in the scene, is, according to the manufacturer, macOS software [1]. Anyone working with Windows computers therefore asks in forums for alternatives; in one forum, an additional Mac mini is recommended as a way out [3].
- According to information in a public encyclopedia, QLab is offered in license tiers: a free version with limited audio and video functionality, plus separate licenses for full audio, video and lighting control [2]. For an amateur group with a small budget, this matters. (For exact current prices, ask the manufacturer.)
- The most dreaded operating error is the **double GO**: a start button accidentally pressed twice. It does not always do harm, but can become embarrassing during fast dialogue. Some programs offer their own protective functions against this [5].
- Production guides stress that cues are only run after a clear “Go”, and that every cue is tested before the performance, also after every change to the system [8][9].
- From practice, one user reports that after a program update an audio CUE was “played” silently even though it was shown as finished in the list [6]. Without a rehearsal, something like this only becomes noticeable in front of an audience.

Approach with ShowDeck

ShowDeck runs on Windows and macOS and contains audio, video, overlay, lighting and MIDI in a single program. Ms. Weber proceeds as follows:

1. **Set up devices** (Chapter 4): bus **Main** to the house system, bus **Monitor** to her headphones, **Display** to the projector, enter the lighting node in the **Art-Net** area. Check all devices with **Test** and **Test image**.
2. **Import media** (Chapter 3): music, sound effects, videos and the club logo.

3. **Create one CUE per director's cue** (Chapters 5 and 6): names following the prompt book, for example "A1-03 Thunder" or "A2-01 Waltz". The cue line from the prompt book goes in the **notes field** ("After the line: 'I'm leaving now!'").
4. **Audio:** Audio Actions with **Fade In** and **Fade Out**. For music that replaces other music, **Stop on Start** (Section 7.1). For a voice-over, a **Volume Override** Action that lowers the background music to 30% and raises it again afterwards (Section 7.8).
5. **Lighting:** DMX Actions with **Fade In** for the three lighting moods, color presets for the color changes (Section 7.3), **Hold until Cue stop** for moods that are meant to stay on permanently.
6. **Surtitles: Overlay** Actions with text in the **Static** scroll mode; a logo on its own layer (Section 7.9).
7. **Arranging:** In the **Live list** (Section 10.3), arrange the CUEs in playing order and organize them into **groups** "Act 1", "Intermission", "Act 2" (Section 10.4).
8. **Operation:** Use the space bar as the **GO Hotkey**, optionally also a MIDI foot switch (**MIDI Trigger** in the **List Trigger Settings**). Ms. Weber only has to press the **PLAY NEXT** button on "Go"; ShowDeck moves **READY** to the following cue by itself.
9. **Catching errors:** If Ms. Weber accidentally presses twice, the second press does not start the next cue but ends the running one (Section 10.3). If a scene is cut, she moves the **READY** marker past the entry using the **Moveable Ready State** option. Individual effects (thunder) get **Retrigger: Ignore** so that a double click does not trigger a second thunder.
10. **Prepare and back up:** Before the performance, work through the checklist (Section 13.1) and trigger every CUE once in the dress rehearsal. Print the prompt book as a **PDF**. Back up the show as a **ZIP**.

Result and limits

- The group does not need a Mac; an existing Windows laptop is enough.
- All departments are in one list, which the assistant director has available as a PDF.
- ShowDeck does not lock a rapidly repeated **PLAY NEXT** but **stops** the most recently started entry. This prevents an unintended double start, but it remains the operator's task to run the cue when the director calls it. Simply locking the start button during playback, as Show Cue Systems offers as an option [5], does not exist in ShowDeck.
- ShowDeck does not replace the dress rehearsal: after every update of the computer or of ShowDeck, check every CUE again [6][8].

14.2 Example 2: Company anniversary with non-technical staff and external lighting

Starting situation

A company celebrates its anniversary in a banquet hall. An employee without technical experience, Mr. Krämer, operates the playbacks for one evening: welcome film, background music, announcements, a slide presentation with names shown on screen, and lighting moods. The lighting system is additionally run by an external lighting console that outputs timecode. For Mr. Krämer it is important that he cannot change anything by accident and can stop everything immediately in an emergency.

The problem

- A user of an established show control program names, in a public wish list, among other things a **simplified user interface** with buttons for non-specialists (Play, Stop, Pause, “Panic”), a **“Stop all” cue**, a **built-in MIDI monitor** instead of additional programs, a **warning about faded-out cues that are still running and consuming computing power**, the ability to **switch off the sound of a video**, and a **mirrored working state on a spare computer with simple switchover** in the event of a crash [4].
- From practice, silent cues after updates [6] and occasionally skipped control cues under high computer load [7] are reported.
- The production handbook of an event company recommends backing up critical playbacks with a **backup system**, switching to the backup system in case of a fault rather than troubleshooting live on the main system, and re-testing every change to the system [8].

Approach with ShowDeck

ShowDeck already covers several of the wishes mentioned. The setup:

1. **Grid instead of list:** All playbacks as **CUEs** in the **Live grid** (Section 10.2). Large, colored buttons with names such as “Welcome film”, “Music quieter”, “Applause jingle”. The colors organize the buttons: blue for films, green for music, yellow for lighting.
2. **Safe to operate:** In Live mode, the layout is locked by the **lock**. Nothing can be moved or edited by accident (Section 10.2). The two emergency buttons **Stop All** (everything off immediately) and **Fade Out** (fade the sound out gently) are always visible at the top left.
3. **Announcements without volume chaos:** For the “Announcement” CUE, a **Volume Override** Action that lowers the music to 25% (**Hold until cue is stopped**). On the second click the music comes back up (Section 7.8).
4. **Name displays:** For the slide presentation, **Overlay** Actions with text, **Fade In** and **Fade Out**, on Layer 1; the company logo permanently on Layer 3 (Section 7.9).
5. **Controlling the sound of the video:** In the **Video** Action, switch off the built-in sound with **MUTE** if the music is to come from the other CUE (Section 7.7).
6. **Playbacks in sync with the external lighting console:** The lighting console outputs timecode as an audio signal (LTC). In **Devices & Settings → Timecode** the technician switches on **Timecode enabled**, chooses the sound card’s input under **LTC audio input** and sets **On TC loss** to **Keep running** so that a dropout of the signal does not stop the event. The playbacks (film, overlays) get **timecode triggers** so that they start in sync with the console’s lighting moods (Section 9.5, Chapter 11).
7. **Monitoring:** With **Tools → Live Monitor** the technician sees which DMX, MIDI and OSC signals ShowDeck is sending; a built-in MIDI monitor is available. The **Signal Monitor** shows incoming signals, the **Resource Monitor** the load on the computer (Chapter 12). The timecode bar at the bottom shows whether timecode is arriving (Section 11.3).
8. **Backup and spare:** The show is backed up with **File → Export ZIP...** and opened with **Import ZIP...** on a second laptop, which stands ready next to the main computer (devices connected, checklist in Section 13.1 worked through). In the event of a failure, Mr. Krämer switches to the second computer.

Result and limits

- Operation consists of a few large buttons and two emergency buttons; Mr. Krämer cannot change anything.
- Several of the wishes mentioned in [4] (Stop-all button, MIDI monitoring, switching off a video's sound, resource monitoring) are already included in ShowDeck. There is no dedicated simplified "kiosk" interface; the locked Live grid comes close to it, however.
- An **automatic** synchronization of two computers with immediate switchover ("failover") does **not** exist in ShowDeck. The backup consists of the ZIP copy and a spare computer kept ready manually. A faded-out cue that is still running is not reported separately; the **NOW PLAYING** display and the Resource Monitor help you keep an overview.
- Here, too: trigger every CUE once as a test beforehand, and again after changes [8].

14.3 Sources

All pages were retrieved in October 2026 or found via a web search.

- [1] QLab – home page of the manufacturer Figure 53 ("powerful macOS software for designing and playing back sound, video, light, and show control cues"). <https://qlab.app/>
- [2] Wikipedia: QLab (license tiers, free version, Mac platform). <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/QLab>
- [3] ControlBooth forum: "QLab of Windows" (Windows alternatives and Mac mini recommendation). <https://www.controlbooth.com/threads/qlab-of-windows.45418/post-397359>
- [4] QLab Google Group: "[QLab] Experience with QLab and some improvement requests" (a user's wish list). <https://groups.google.com/g/qlab/c/Llq1iT1-pB4>
- [5] Show Cue Systems forum: post on the double GO and the "exclusive cue" option (content from a search result; the page was not reachable on a repeat retrieval). <https://www.showcuesystems.com/xjsu8djka/viewtopic.php?p=8013>
- [6] Show Cue Systems forum: "Audio cue didn't play" (silent audio CUE after an update; content from a search result, page not reachable on a repeat retrieval). <https://www.showcuesystems.com/xjsu8djka/viewtopic.php?p=8760>
- [7] Dataton forum: "task skips pause and stop control cue" (skipped control cues; content from a search result, page not reachable on a repeat retrieval). <https://forum.dataton.com/topic/2701-task-skips-pause-and-stop-control-que>
- [8] Maryland Productions: SOP "video playback" (testing all cues, backup system). https://mdp-sops.readthedocs.io/_sources/technical/video/video_playback.rst.txt
- [9] Toronto Metropolitan University: Production Handbook (division of tasks when calling "Standby" and "Go"). <https://pressbooks.library.torontomu.ca/productionhandbook/?p=64>