

WHATTHEKEY 3

USER MANUAL

Drop it on any track and instantly know the key — then turn what you hear into editable MIDI you can drag straight into your project.

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What It Is

WHATTHEKEY 3 is the fastest way to answer two questions that come up in every session: *what key is this in?* and *what are the actual notes?* Drop it on a track, capture a few seconds of audio (or feed it MIDI), and it tells you the key — with a confidence reading, ranked alternatives and the relative major/minor — while transcribing the performance into a fully editable piano roll you can audition, fix and drag out as a MIDI file.

It's powered by a real neural pitch-detection model running on your own computer that listens to your audio and extracts the notes, plus a musically-aware key engine that scores all twelve roots across **nine modes** — major, minor, Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, Mixolydian, Locrian, harmonic minor and melodic minor — not just the usual major/minor guess. The result is a tool that's equally happy telling a bedroom producer "this sample is in F minor" and telling a film composer "this is actually D Dorian, here's the chord progression to prove it."

Here's the part that matters for your signal chain: **WHATTHEKEY 3 doesn't change your sound.** It's an analysis/utility plugin — audio passes through untouched while it listens. It only makes sound on purpose: when *you* play back the transcription, audition a key's chord progression, preview a note, or hold a test note in the Find-Key quiz. The one exception is on purpose too: **SOLO SYNTH** (the DRY / SYN slider pushed all the way to SYN) mutes your track so you hear only the notes. Switch it off and the plugin is transparent again, so you can leave it anywhere and trust your mix is exactly as you left it.

Why You'll Love It

- **Instant key detection** — capture a few seconds and get the key, a confidence read, and up to two ranked alternative scales, with the relative major/minor shown right beside the result.
- **Nine modes, not two** — detects major, natural minor, Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, Mixolydian, Locrian, harmonic minor and melodic minor, so modal and exotic material is named correctly instead of being forced into "major or minor."
- **Audio or MIDI input** — transcribe audio with the neural model, or switch to MIDI mode and capture incoming MIDI notes directly, exactly as played.
- **Real audio-to-MIDI transcription** — the on-device neural model turns a recorded phrase into notes you can see, edit and reuse.
- **A full editable piano roll** — add, move, resize, delete and mute notes; snap to a grid and quantize; zoom and scroll; expand to full-screen for serious editing; undo/redo throughout.
- **Drag-to-export MIDI** — grab the result and drag it straight onto a track in your DAW, or onto your desktop as a MIDI file. Tempo and time signature come along for the ride.
- **Hear the key, don't just read it** — audition a mode-specific chord progression built from the detected scale, or click any pitch in the histogram to preview it.
- **The Find-Key quiz** — not sure which candidate is right? A guided listening test plays the notes that tell the candidate scales apart; you pick the one that fits your loop.
- **Host-synced capture & playback** — arm record and it starts the moment your transport rolls; play the transcription back locked to your DAW's tempo and grid, overlaid on the original.
- **Import audio or MIDI files** — drag a file onto the plugin (or use the IMPORT FILE button) to detect the key of anything on your drive.
- **Sensitivity you control** — one slider trades "only the obvious notes" for "every detail," re-transcribing the take instantly without re-recording.
- **Your take stays with your project** — the notes, your edits and the result are saved with your DAW session and come back when you reopen it.
- **Built-in help** — context tooltips in five languages (English, German, French, Spanish, Italian), an AI assistant, this manual one click away, and undo/redo, all on board.

The Interface at a Glance

WHATTHEKEY 3 is a single, focused panel that changes shape with what you're doing. It moves through four stages:

- **Ready (start screen)** — an **AUDIO | MIDI** input selector, a big **RECORD** button with a **SYNC** toggle beside it, an **IMPORT FILE** button, and a short line explaining what RECORD will do with your current SYNC setting. This is your "set up the take" screen.
- **Recording** — an elapsed-time counter, a live wave that reacts to what's coming in (audio level in AUDIO mode, note activity in MIDI mode) so you can see capture is working, and a **STOP** button.
- **Analyzing** — a brief "thinking" stage ("ANALYZING") while the neural model extracts notes from your audio. MIDI captures skip it.
- **Done (the result)** — the **hero key** readout with its relative twin and a play button to audition it, the confidence reading, up to two **alternative keys**, the **HELP ME FIND THE KEY** quiz button, a **chroma histogram** of the pitch-class distribution, the editable **piano roll** with ruler, playhead and grid controls, the **DRY / SYN** and **SENS** sliders, and the transport row: a record button (back to the start screen for a new take), **PLAY/STOP**, the drag-out **EXPORT** handle, **SYNC TO HOST** and **SOLO SYNTH**. A button in the roll's top-right corner expands it to full-screen.

Around the panel sits the plugin "chrome": a **bypass** button (with a big BYPASSED notice you can click to re-enable), a **settings** button, an in-app **documentation** button, an **AI assistant** button, **undo/redo** arrows, a **logo**, an **update** notification banner, and a corner **drag handle** to scale the whole UI. Hover almost anything for a tooltip in your language.

Controls — In Depth

RECORD (capture / arm)

What it does: Starts and stops capturing the incoming signal for analysis. With **SYNC** off, capture begins immediately and the button turns into **STOP** — click it when you're done. With **SYNC** on, RECORD *arms* (the button reads **ARMED** and the helper line says "Start the transport to begin recording"), and the take starts the moment your DAW transport rolls — or right away if it's already rolling. Click ARMED again to cancel. Host-synced takes stop automatically when you stop the transport; you can also click STOP.

Range/units: Ready → Recording → Analyzing → Done. A take holds up to 60 seconds of material.

In your music: This is the one button you always press first. Play or loop the part you want identified, hit RECORD, and let a few seconds through.

Pro tip: You rarely need a long take — a few bars that contain the key's important notes is plenty. Shorter captures analyze faster and are less likely to drift across a key change.

AUDIO MIDI (input mode)

What it does: Chooses the capture source on the start screen. **AUDIO** runs the neural model on recorded audio to detect notes. **MIDI** skips transcription entirely and records incoming MIDI notes (pitch, timing and velocity) straight into the piano roll.

Range/units: Two-state toggle (AUDIO / MIDI). It also sets which file types the IMPORT FILE button offers.

In your music: Use AUDIO for vocals, samples, stems, instruments — anything that isn't already MIDI. Switch to MIDI to instantly get the key of a MIDI part, or to capture a performance with perfect note accuracy.

Pro tip: MIDI mode is the ground truth — if you already have the notes as MIDI, send them into WHATTHEKEY 3 for a 100%-accurate transcription and the cleanest key read.

SYNC / SYNC TO HOST

What it does: Locks WHATTHEKEY 3 to your DAW transport. It's one setting, shown as **SYNC** next to RECORD on the start screen and as **SYNC TO HOST** in the result transport row. Default: on.

- **Recording:** RECORD arms and capture starts exactly when the transport starts playing. The take keeps its position in your song (leading silence isn't trimmed), and it ends automatically when you stop the transport.
- **PLAY:** playback follows your DAW and only sounds while the transport is rolling. A take recorded with SYNC plays once, right where it was recorded, overlaid on the original. A take recorded without SYNC, or an imported file, plays as a loop starting at bar 1, following your DAW's tempo.
- **Chord audition:** the progression locks to your DAW's bars and waits while the transport is stopped.

With SYNC off, RECORD captures immediately and the first note is moved to the start of the take, and PLAY and the audition run on their own clock, so you hear them even with the transport stopped.

Range/units: On/off.

In your music: Leave it on when you want the transcription to line up bar-for-bar with the source so

you can A/B the MIDI against the audio in place. Turn it off for quick, free-running "what key is this?" grabs that don't care about timing.

Pro tip: SYNC on + PLAY + roll the transport over the recorded section = the detected notes sit right on top of the original, perfect for checking the transcription is faithful.

IMPORT FILE

What it does: Loads an audio or MIDI file from disk and analyzes it as if you'd recorded it. The button opens a file picker for the type selected on the AUDIO | MIDI toggle. You can also drag a file onto the panel — it's routed by file type and switches the input mode for you. Audio files are mixed to mono and run through the same neural transcription; MIDI files load their notes directly, along with the file's tempo and time signature. Importing replaces the current take.

Range/units: Audio files (such as WAV or AIFF) or MIDI files (.mid / .midi). For audio files, the first 60 seconds are analyzed.

In your music: Find the key of any loop, sample or stem on your drive without routing it through a track first.

Pro tip: Building with a sample pack? Import each loop in turn to tag its key before you commit to one in your arrangement.

The hero key & relative twin

What it does: Displays the detected key in big letters (the hero, e.g. "C MAJOR") with its same-notes twin beside it, smaller and dimmer (e.g. "A MINOR"). Below it, the detection confidence reads as "NN% CONFIDENT". Click the **twin** to make it the key; click it again to swap back. If you've picked a different key (twin, alternative or quiz), click the **hero** to return to the detector's own top pick.

Range/units: Any of the 108 key/mode combinations. The twin is the relative minor of a major key, the relative major of a minor key, and the parent major scale of a mode (D Dorian → C major). Harmonic minor and melodic minor have no same-notes twin, so none is shown.

In your music: The hero is the engine's best call; the twin is the "same notes, other tonic" reading. If your track *feels* minor but reads major (or vice-versa), the twin is one click away.

Pro tip: Relative major and minor share all seven notes, so both are "correct" scales — pick the one whose tonic matches where your music resolves.

Alternative keys

What it does: Lists up to two other strong candidates beneath the hero, each with a confidence bar and percentage. Only genuinely different scales appear here — readings that share the hero's notes are covered by the twin. Click a row to make it the key.

Range/units: Up to 2 ranked alternatives.

In your music: When material is ambiguous (sparse, chromatic, or modal), the runner-ups are often musically valid — try them.

Pro tip: If the top two are close, audition both (below) rather than trusting the ranking alone — your ears are the tie-breaker.

Audition (chord-progression preview)

What it does: The small play button to the right of the key name plays a looping 4-chord progression built from the selected key's own scale, one chord per bar, so you can hear whether the key actually fits

the material. While it plays, the confidence line turns into the four chords (name and roman numeral) with the current one lit. Each mode has its own progression that spotlights its characteristic tone:

Mode	Progression
Major	I – V – vi – IV
Minor	i – v – bVI – iv
Dorian	i – IV – v – i
Phrygian	i – bII – bvii – i
Lydian	I – II – V – I
Mixolydian	I – bVII – IV – I
Locrian	i° – iv – bII – i°
Harmonic minor	i – iv – V – i
Melodic minor	i – IV – V – i

With **SYNC TO HOST** on, the chords follow your DAW's bars (bar 1 is always the first chord) and "WAITING FOR TRANSPORT" shows while the transport is stopped. With SYNC off, the progression runs on its own clock, so it plays even with the transport stopped. Click the button again to stop.

Range/units: On/off. Plays the key currently shown as the hero; pick a different key while it plays and the progression follows.

In your music: Reading "D Dorian" means nothing until you hear it. Audition plays i – IV – v – i (for Dorian) so the modal colour is obvious against your part.

Pro tip: Audition the hero *and* the twin back-to-back — the one that "agrees" with your track is your key.

PLAY (transcription playback)

What it does: Plays the captured/edited notes through the internal synth (a piano tone). With **SYNC TO HOST** on, playback follows your DAW transport, so press PLAY and roll the transport; a small dot on the PLAY button's corner lights while it's locked to the host. With SYNC off, it plays straight away. Click the ruler above the roll to play from that point at any time — that always plays straight away, without waiting for the transport. Muted notes stay silent.

Range/units: Play/stop; click the ruler to play from a position.

In your music: Audition your transcription, check edits, and verify the notes match the source.

Pro tip: With SYNC-captured takes, playback overlays the original in time — the truest test of transcription accuracy.

DRY / SYN (monitor mix)

What it does: Balances your incoming audio (DRY, left) against the internal synth (SYN, right) — that's note playback and the chord audition. The centre plays both at equal level. Your audio is only turned down while the synth is actually playing, so the plugin stays transparent the rest of the time. At the far right your audio is muted completely (the same as SOLO SYNTH). Double-click the slider to snap it back to the centre.

Range/units: DRY ↔ SYN slider with a centre detent. Default: centre.

In your music: Balance how loud the previewed/played notes are against the original while you check a transcription.

Pro tip: Park it in the centre to hear MIDI and audio together; push toward SYN when you're scrutinizing the notes, back toward DRY when you're done. Pulled all the way to DRY, the preview sounds go silent — if you can't hear playback, the audition or note previews, check this slider first.

SOLO SYNTH

What it does: A one-click shortcut that pushes DRY / SYN all the way to SYN, so you hear only the internal synth. It lights while active; click it again to return the slider to where it was.

Range/units: On/off.

In your music: Flip it on to hear *only* the transcribed MIDI — great for confirming the notes are right without the original masking them.

Pro tip: While SOLO SYNTH is on, your track's own audio is muted even when nothing is playing. Switch it off before you get back to mixing.

SENS (sensitivity)

What it does: One slider that sets how readily the neural model calls something a note. Higher detects more (quieter/shorter) notes; lower keeps only the strong, obvious ones. Changing it re-transcribes the take instantly — no re-recording.

Range/units: 0–100% (default 50%).

In your music: Turn it up to catch ornaments and ghost notes; turn it down to strip a busy transcription back to the structural notes that define the key.

Pro tip: If the key read looks wrong, try *lowering* sensitivity first — fewer spurious notes often means a cleaner, more confident key. SENS re-transcribes from scratch, so it replaces any note edits you've made (the undo arrows bring them back) — set it before you start editing. It works on audio takes while the plugin is open; it has no effect on MIDI captures, imported MIDI files, or a take reopened from a saved project.

New take (record button on the result screen)

What it does: The red record button at the left of the result transport row takes you back to the start screen so you can record or import again. It clears the current take, stops playback and the audition, closes the quiz, collapses a full-screen roll and returns DRY / SYN to the centre.

Range/units: Momentary.

In your music: Wrong part captured, or want to try a different section? Click it and go again.

Pro tip: Your AUDIO | MIDI choice and SYNC setting stay as you left them. The current notes are cleared, so drag out anything you want to keep first.

EXPORT (drag-out MIDI)

What it does: Drag from the export handle straight into your DAW, or onto your desktop, to drop the current notes there as a MIDI file. Exporting is drag-only — a plain click does nothing. The file carries the tempo and time signature of the take (your project's tempo when you captured it; imported MIDI files keep their own). Takes recorded with SYNC keep their timing from where the recording started; other takes start with the first note.

Range/units: Standard MIDI File.

In your music: Turn a sampled melody, a hummed idea or a detected chord part into MIDI you can re-voice with any instrument.

Pro tip: Edit and mute notes first — only unmuted notes export, so you can quickly carve a transcription down to just the part you want before dragging it out.

Expand roll (full-screen editor)

What it does: The button in the top-right corner of the piano roll toggles a full-screen mode that hides the key result, alternatives, histogram and the SENS and DRY / SYN sliders, so the roll fills the panel for detailed editing. The transport row stays.

Range/units: On/off.

In your music: Switch to it when you're doing real note surgery rather than just reading the key.

Pro tip: Combine full-screen with the zoom slider and SNAP for precise note editing.

Piano-roll editing & navigation

What it does: Direct note editing on the roll:

- **Add:** drag across empty space to draw a note, or double-click empty space.
- **Move:** drag a note (pitch and time); you hear the pitch as it changes. **Resize:** drag a note's right edge.
- **Preview:** click a note to hear it.
- **Mute/unmute:** Shift-click a note.
- **Delete:** right-click a note (Alt-click or Cmd/Ctrl-click also work), or select notes and press Delete/Backspace.
- **Select:** Shift-drag across empty space to draw a selection box; the roll shows how many notes are selected. A plain click on empty space clears the selection.
- **Navigate:** the mouse wheel scrolls horizontally, Alt + wheel zooms horizontally, Cmd/Ctrl + wheel zooms vertically, and Shift + wheel scrolls vertically once you've zoomed in. The zoom slider with its – / + buttons and the scrollbars sit along the bottom and right edge.
- **Undo:** the undo/redo arrows in the top bar step through your edits; inside the roll, Cmd/Ctrl+Z undoes too.

The roll fits itself to the whole take when the result appears, with bar numbers on the ruler and a grid from the take's tempo and time signature. Hovering shows the note name and time under your cursor ("OFF" marks a muted note).

Range/units: Full add/move/resize/delete/mute/select; horizontal & vertical zoom/scroll.

In your music: Fix a missed note, tighten timing, or trim a transcription to exactly the phrase you need before exporting.

Pro tip: Muting a note (rather than deleting it) keeps it out of the key calculation, playback and the export while letting you bring it back later — great for testing "does this note belong to the key?"

SNAP, grid and Q (quantize)

What it does: Three small controls at the bottom-left of the roll. **SNAP** makes adding, moving and resizing notes land on the grid. The value next to it picks the grid size. **Q** quantizes note starts to the grid in one step — the selected notes if you've selected some, otherwise every note. Picking a grid

value switches SNAP on.

Range/units: SNAP on/off (default on). Grid: 1/4, 1/8, 1/16 (default), 1/32, 1/8T, 1/16T, 1/8. and 1/16. (T = triplet, dot = dotted).

In your music: Tighten a loose live performance before you drag it out, or turn SNAP off to keep the human feel while you fix pitches.

Pro tip: Q only moves note starts — lengths stay as played. Not happy with the result? One undo brings the whole quantize back.

Chroma histogram

What it does: Shows the distribution of detected pitch classes — how often each of the 12 notes occurs — the raw evidence behind the key decision. Bars are colour-coded per pitch class to match the roll; the tonic gets a small tick, out-of-scale notes are faded, and scale notes your material never played show as faint hollow slots. **Click** a column (bar or letter) to preview that pitch. **Double-click** a column to mute or unmute every note of that pitch class at once (muted columns are struck through). Double-clicking an empty column adds a short note of that pitch at the start of the take, which you can then move in the roll.

Range/units: 12 columns (C...B), scaled to the most frequent note.

In your music: See *why* a key was chosen — the tallest bars are the notes your material leans on. A strong tonic and a clean scale make for a confident read.

Pro tip: Spot an out-of-scale bar standing tall? That's often a borrowed chord, a key change, or a detection artifact. Double-click it to mute it and watch the key and confidence update.

HELP ME FIND THE KEY (the Find-Key quiz)

What it does: Opens a guided, ear-based key finder in place of the key result; the histogram, piano roll and transport stay usable. The quiz works with the scales still in contention (up to eight). Each round shows two piano-key pads, **A** and **B**, each holding the one note that tells two candidate scales apart, with the scale it completes written underneath. **Press and hold** a pad (**HOLD TO HEAR**) to sound its note over whatever is playing, then click **PICK** for the note that fits. The losing scale drops out and the winner meets the next candidate. **SKIP — TRY OTHERS** shows a different pairing instead; in the final round it becomes **NEITHER FITS**, which closes the quiz without changing the key. The header counts down the picks left, and the × closes the quiz at any time. When one scale remains, **WHATTHEKEY 3** makes it the key, re-enables any muted notes that belong to it, and shows the scale's unplayed notes as hollow slots in the histogram — nothing is added to your MIDI.

Range/units: Available when there is at least one alternative and the confidence is below 95%. Pads, **PICK**, **SKIP — TRY OTHERS** / **NEITHER FITS**, ×.

In your music: When the automatic read is genuinely ambiguous — a sparse vocal, a riff that never plays the third — this lets your ears make the call with clear either/or questions instead of guessing.

Pro tip: The quiz doesn't start playback for you. Loop the section in your DAW (or use **PLAY**), keep **DRY** / **SYN** near the centre so you hear both your loop and the test note, then hold each pad — the right note "locks in" with your material; the wrong one clashes. The quiz settles the *notes* of your scale; if it lands on the relative major/minor of what you hear as home, click the twin.

Bypass

What it does: Soft-bypasses all processing. A large "BYPASSED - CLICK ANYWHERE TO RE-ENABLE PROCESSING" panel appears; click it (or the bypass button) to resume.

Range/units: On/off.

In your music: Standard A/B and CPU-saving bypass.

Pro tip: Because the plugin is transparent to your audio anyway, bypass is mostly about pausing it: while bypassed, nothing is captured and the internal synth is silent.

Settings · Documentation · AI Assistant · Undo/Redo · UI scale

What it does: Plugin chrome — **Settings** opens a panel with the tooltip **Language** (English, Deutsch, Francais, Espanol, Italiano), a **Show Tooltips** switch, the version number, **Reset Zoom** and a **Tutorial** link. **Documentation** opens this manual inside the plugin, the **AI Assistant** answers questions about the plugin and your current detection, **Undo/Redo** arrows step through your edits, and the corner **drag handle** scales the entire UI.

Range/units: Buttons/overlays; UI scale via the corner handle.

In your music: Get help without leaving the plugin, recover from an editing mistake, and size the window to your screen.

Pro tip: The AI assistant can see a summary of the current detection (the key, the candidates and the pitch distribution), so you can literally ask it "why did you pick this key?"

Visual Feedback & Metering

WHATTHEKEY 3's display *is* the meter — every element shows you what the engine is thinking:

- **Stage transitions** — the panel visibly moves Ready → Recording → Analyzing → Done, and a faint "foreshadow" of the result layout shows under the earlier stages so the hero/histogram/roll appear to light up in place when detection finishes.
- **Live recording wave** — during capture the wave reacts to the real input: audio level in AUDIO mode, the notes you play (and how hard) in MIDI mode, so you can confirm signal is arriving. An elapsed-time counter runs above it.
- **Hero key + confidence** — the detected key, its relative twin, and "NN% CONFIDENT", which rises the more cleanly and completely your notes fall inside the winning scale. A handful of notes can't read 100%.
- **Ranked alternatives** — up to two candidate scales in ranked order, each with a confidence bar and percentage.
- **Chord strip** — while auditioning, the four chords of the progression with the current one lit.
- **Chroma histogram** — the 12-pitch-class distribution that drives the decision, colour-coded and clickable for preview.
- **Piano roll with ruler & playhead** — colour-coded notes (one hue per pitch class, out-of-key notes faded, muted notes dimmed), a moving playhead during playback, hover row-highlight with a note/time readout, and a play-from-here cue on the ruler, plus zoom/scroll affordances.
- **HOST sync dot** — a small dot on the PLAY button's corner lights while playback is locked to the DAW transport. While a synced recording is waiting for the transport, RECORD reads **ARMED**.
- **Update banner** — a non-intrusive notification appears when a newer version of WHATTHEKEY 3 is available online.

How to Use It — Real-World Workflows

"What key is this sample?" (fastest path)

1. Insert WHATTHEKEY 3 on the track playing the sample.
2. Leave input mode on **AUDIO**.
3. Press **RECORD** — with SYNC on it shows **ARMED** — then start your DAW playback and let a few representative bars play.
4. Stop the transport (the take ends automatically) and read the **hero key** — done in seconds. With SYNC off, RECORD starts right away and you click **STOP** instead.
5. If it looks off, nudge **SENS** down and check the **histogram** for a clean tonic.

Turn a melody into MIDI

1. Capture the melodic part in **AUDIO** mode.
2. On the result, press **PLAY** and roll the transport to check the transcription against the source.
3. Open the **full-screen roll** and fix any wrong/missed notes; **mute** (Shift-click) anything you don't want; hit **Q** if the timing needs tightening.
4. **Drag the EXPORT handle** onto a new track — you've got MIDI you can play with any instrument.

Confirm an ambiguous or modal key by ear

1. Capture the part.
2. **Audition** the hero key's chord progression — does the colour fit?
3. Not sure? Click **HELP ME FIND THE KEY**, loop your part, and **hold** each pad to hear its note over the loop.
4. **PICK** the note that fits each round; when one scale is left, WHATTHEKEY 3 applies it (and re-enables any muted notes that belong to it).

Transcribe a MIDI performance perfectly

1. Switch input to **MIDI** and send your MIDI part into WHATTHEKEY 3.
2. Leave **SYNC** on, press **RECORD** to arm, and roll the transport while you play.
3. Stop the transport — the notes are captured exactly as played, with no transcription guesswork.
4. Edit if needed and **export**.

Pro Tips & Creative Techniques

- **Let the histogram explain the key.** The tallest bars are the notes your music leans on — a strong tonic and a clean scale is the signature of a confident detection.
- **Sensitivity is a key-accuracy tool, not just a note-count tool.** Fewer spurious notes often yields a cleaner, more certain key — when in doubt, turn it *down*. Do it before you start editing.
- **Trust the twin.** Relative major/minor share the same notes; if a result feels wrong, the relative reading is a single click away and frequently the better musical call.
- **Mute, don't delete, while exploring.** Muting keeps a note out of the key math and the export but lets you reinstate it — perfect for "does this note belong?" experiments.
- **Use MIDI mode as ground truth.** When the part is already MIDI, capture it that way for a flawless transcription and the cleanest key read.
- **SYNC for in-place A/B.** Host-synced takes overlay the original when you play them back — the most honest way to verify a transcription.
- **Can't hear anything?** With SYNC TO HOST on, PLAY and the audition wait for your transport. And check DRY / SYN isn't pulled all the way to DRY.
- **Ask the assistant.** It can see the current detection summary, so "why this key, and what are the runner-ups?" is a question you can ask right in the plugin.

Quick Start

1. Insert WHATTHEKEY 3 on the track you want to identify — it's transparent, so it won't change your sound.
2. Make sure input mode is **AUDIO** (or switch to **MIDI** for a MIDI part).
3. Press **RECORD**, start your DAW playback and let a few bars through; stop the transport to finish (or turn **SYNC** off, record right away, and click **STOP**).
4. Read the **hero key** and its relative twin. Tweak **SENS** if needed.
5. Want the notes too? **PLAY** to check (roll the transport while SYNC TO HOST is on), edit in the roll, then **drag EXPORT** to drop a MIDI file into your project. That's a key *and* a transcription in under a minute.

Specs

- **Plugin type:** Key detection & audio-to-MIDI transcription utility. The audio signal passes through transparently — the plugin only produces sound when you play back the transcription, audition a key, preview a note or test a quiz note (and SOLO SYNTH mutes your track on purpose). Works on audio input (neural transcription) or MIDI input (direct capture).
- **Detection engine:** On-device neural pitch model (audio mode) feeding a musically-weighted key detector that scores all 12 roots across 9 modes — major, minor, Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, Mixolydian, Locrian, harmonic minor, melodic minor (108 key/mode combinations) — with a confidence reading and ranked alternatives.
- **Capture:** Up to 60 seconds per take, optional host-synced recording that starts and stops with your transport, audio/MIDI input modes, audio & MIDI file import (drag-drop or file picker).
- **Editing & export:** Full piano-roll editing (add/move/resize/delete/mute, snap grid and quantize, zoom/scroll, full-screen mode), undo/redo, internal preview synth with DRY / SYN mix and SOLO SYNTH, host-synced playback, key-audition chord progressions, the Find-Key quiz, and drag-out Standard MIDI File export with embedded tempo and time signature.
- **Session recall:** The take (notes, edits, tempo, time signature, input mode, SENS and DRY / SYN) is saved with your DAW project. The captured audio itself isn't stored, so SENS can't re-transcribe a reopened take.
- **Localization:** Context tooltips in English, German, French, Spanish and Italian; in-app documentation and AI assistant.
- **Formats:** VST3, AU (macOS), AAX (macOS and Windows). No standalone version.
- **Version:** 1.0.3.

Stuck, or found something this manual doesn't cover? Write to me at philspeiser.com/support. I answer support myself.