

# Blackbox Quick Start Guide

Blackbox by 1010music is a compact sampling studio. With blackbox, you can record and play samples, sequence those samples into patterns and riffs, and then record those sequences into sections, which together can form a song. You can further refine your sound by applying FX to pads and by mixing the sound levels and stereo effects. Use blackbox to record complete compositions from the comfort of your studio or, with the help of a USB power block, from the seat of your train or the park bench. You can also use blackbox to create materials to play in the background while you sing or perform with other instruments. We can't wait to see what you create with it!



## Setup



To get started with blackbox, insert the microSD card in the front slot, plug it in, and connect it to speakers or headphones. The microSD card slot is along the short front panel. The power jack and audio outputs are on the back panel. To start, we recommend connecting external speakers or headphones to the PHONES jack, since all outputs are routed to the PHONES jack. Blackbox streams WAV files from and saves your work on the microSD card.

## Overview

Blackbox was designed so that you build your song by working through the navigation buttons from left to right. You can certainly jump around and do things in any order, but the general flow is to start on the left and move to the right.

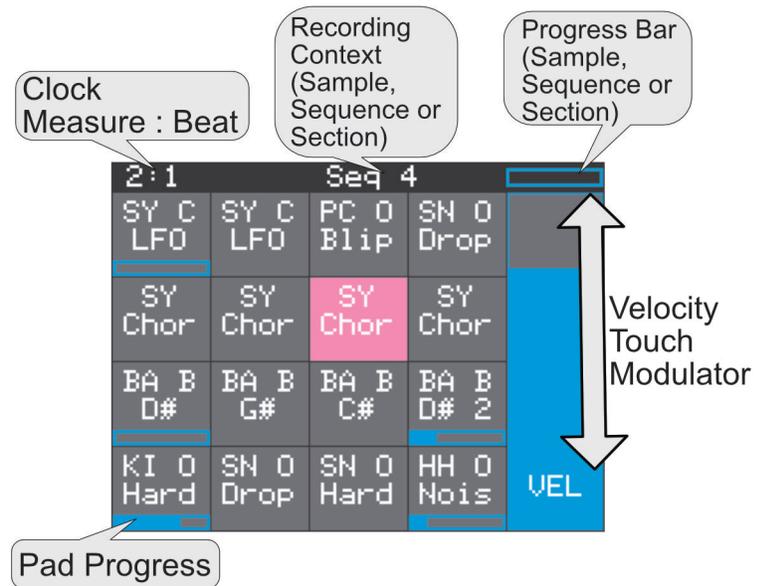
Choose a musical element to control by pushing one of the white navigation buttons. You control playback and recording of clips, sequences and songs using the black transport buttons. Select and trigger sound elements and configure parameters using the touch screen and the knobs. The **INFO** button allows you to drill into an item on the screen to edit more details. Push it repeatedly to access additional information about the item. The **BACK** button takes you back to the main screen for the current functional area.

<b>PADS</b>	Record WAVs & assign samples to pads Trigger pads
<b>KEYS</b>	Play pitch shifted samples Trigger sample slices
<b>SEQS</b>	Record & edit sequences Turn sequences on and off over time
<b>SONG</b>	Record sequence on/off events as song sections Play and loop sections
<b>FX</b>	Configure reverb and delay effects See which pads are mapped to each effect
<b>MIX</b>	Adjust level of each pad Pan each pad independently
<b>PSET</b>	Open presets - 60 are preloaded Create new, save and rename presets

## Screen Layout

The black bar at the top of the screen provides information about timing and recording context. The recording context is a useful way to see if you are in Song mode or Sequence mode. We'll talk about that more later. The blue progress bar in the top right displays the current progress of the sequence or section that has recording context.

The individual cells on some of the screens will have blue progress bars when they are actively playing. This bar will be white when the element is waiting for a quantization break to start to play.



## Presets

You can explore the available functionality of blackbox by trying out the preloaded presets. Push **PSET**, and then use the knobs to select a preset. Touch **Load** to open the selected preset. We will use the preset **SL BLASS MUSIC KIT** as our example in this guide. **NOTE:** Blackbox does not automatically save your changes to Presets. Use the **File** menu on the Presets screen to save your changes.

## Pads

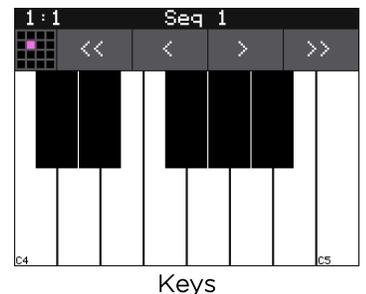
Touch the **PADS** button to go to the Pads screen with a grid of 16 WAV files. Touch a pad to trigger it. Depending on how the pad is configured, the sample might play all the way through each time you press it, it might play only while you are touching the pad, or it might play until you touch it again. A blue progress bar appears at the bottom of the pad while it is playing. You can trigger multiple pads at once.

The pink box indicates which pad is currently selected. Use the touch screen or a knob to select a pad. Push **INFO** repeatedly to drill into the WAV screen and parameters screens for the selected pad. Touch the name of the WAV file at the top of the waveform screen to select a different WAV file for this pad. Please select one of the pads labeled **SY Chor** so we can have fun with it on the Keys screen.



## Keys

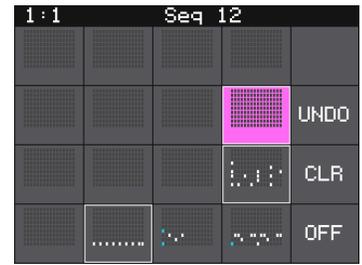
With **SY Chor** selected on the Pads screen, push the **KEYS** button. Blackbox displays a keyboard on the screen. Touch some of the keys on the keyboard to hear the selected pad play pitch shifted by key. You can adjust which octave is playing by touching the arrow buttons above the keyboard or by turning a knob. The C keys are numbered so you can quickly identify which octave will be playing.



## Sequences

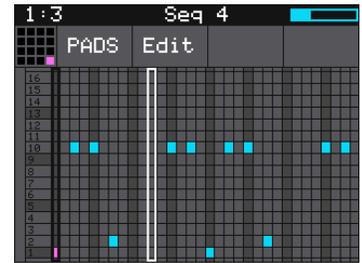
On the Sequences screen you can record and play back musical sequences. Push **SEQS** and you will see a grid of sequences. The currently active sequences have white frames around them. Before we push **PLAY** to hear the sequences, let's make sure we are not in Song mode. Push **SONG** to display the Song screen. Note the **Song** button at

the top of the touch screen. If it is blue, touch the on-screen **Song** button to deactivate Song mode. Now, push **SEQS** so we can watch the sequences as they play. Push **PLAY** now and you will hear the selected sequences play. A progress bar at the bottom of each active sequence cell shows you the play state of that sequence. Touch a sequence cell to activate or deactivate it. If you push **PADS** you can see the pads that are being triggered by the sequencer over time. The sequences will play in a loop until you deactivate them or push **STOP**. If any pads remain playing after you push **STOP**, you can end them by pushing **STOP** a second time.



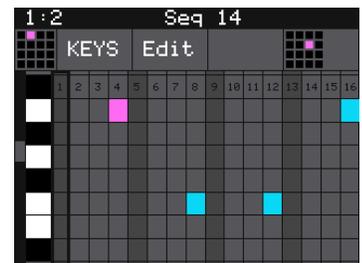
Sequences

Playing sequences is fun, but recording your own is even better. The pink square is the currently selected sequence. You can see the sequence number of the selected sequence at the top of the screen both on the Sequence and the Pads screen (as long as you are not in Song mode). Select an empty sequence cell and we will record into it. Push **PADS** to go to the Pads screen. Hold down the **REC** button and push **PLAY** to start recording a sequence. After the 4 beat count down, tap some pads to create a sequence. By default, the sequence is one bar long. Blackbox will play the sequence in a loop as soon as you finish recording it. If you tap some more pads, you will add more pad triggers to the sequence. Push **REC** to stop recording while the sequence still plays. You can choose different sequences to record into while the other sequences are playing. Press **STOP** when you want the sequences to stop.



Piano Roll Editor in PADS View

You can view and edit the sequence by pressing **INFO** with the sequence cell selected. Toggle the piano roll mode between **PADS** and **KEYS** view by touching the view selector to the right of the grid icon. You can touch the screen to add notes, and turn knobs to select and adjust the length of notes. In **PADS** view, each row represents a different pad and each bar represents a trigger of that pad. In **KEYS** view, each row represents a note on the keyboard and the bars represent note events. The black and white bars on the left side of the screen represent the notes on a keyboard and the Cs are numbered to show you which octave you are in. Use pinch and stretch touch gestures to zoom in and out on the piano roll. Push **INFO** to cycle through more sequence parameters, such as **Step Length**, **Step Count** and **Quant Size**. The top left grid icon reminds you which sequence you are editing. In **KEYS** view, the top right grid icon shows which pad is currently controlled in the piano roll. Touch this icon to switch to a different pad if you want more than one pad in the sequence.



Piano Roll Editor in KEYS View

Before we move on to song sections, go back to the sequences screen and touch **DEACT** on the right. This will deactivate all sequences.

## Song Sections

Song sections allow you to record a series of on and off events for sequences. You can record multiple sequences simultaneously, with independent start and stop times for each one. To hear a song section by itself, make sure all of the sequences are deactivated first. Then push the **SONG** button to view the Song screen. Touch the on-screen Song button to toggle the Song mode state to active (blue) if needed. Turn off Loop mode by touching the **Loop** button as well. Now push the **PLAY** button and blackbox will playback a previously recorded song, section by section. The currently playing section is highlighted in pink. In Song mode, the context display at the top of the screen now displays the name of the

current section, e.g Section 1. On the Sequences screen, you can watch as the song section turns sequences on and off, and you can activate additional sequences. If you want one section to play in a loop, select that section and touch **Loop** to activate loop mode. Touch **Loop** again when you are ready to fall through to the next section.

Once you have a few sequences recorded, you can create your own song section. A new preset starts with one song section and you can add more up to a total of 16 sections per preset. Touch **Edit**, then **Add** to insert a new section after the currently selected section.

When you are in Song mode, the **PLAY** button will play both the current song section and any active sequences. The **REC + PLAY** button combination will record sequence on and off events into the currently selected section. Please note that Song mode only records sequences. It does not record anything played on Pads or Keys screen. But you can use Pads and Keys to play along with what you have recorded.

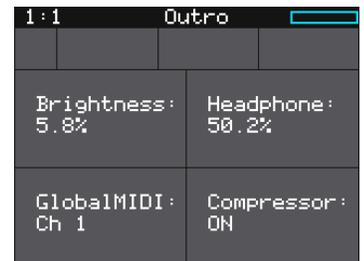
The Song screen also allows you to change the BPM of the internal clock, and alter the length of each song section. The current BPM is displayed in the top left below the bars and beats counter (**150** in the screenshot). Turn the top left knob to adjust the BPM. Select a section and push **INFO** to view and change the number of beats in this section. Back on the main Song page, use the **Edit** menu to manipulate song sections.



Song Sections

## Tools

The Tools screen is the home for global settings that apply across presets. This is where you can adjust the Headphone volume and turn on the metronome. Push **TOOLS** and then push **INFO** to cycle through the available settings pages. Turn a knob to adjust the value of the nearest setting.



Tools

## MIDI Devices

Blackbox is designed to work with MIDI devices to offer a more tactile input mode and a bigger keyboard. Plug your MIDI input device into either the **Device** USB jack or the **MIDI In** TRS jack. Blackbox supports the Novation standard for mini TRS audio jacks. Use the MIDI adapters provided to connect to devices that use an alternative standard for these jacks. For more information about the TRS connection for MIDI, please read the [Mini TRS Audio Jacks for MIDI Connections Compatibility Guide](#) on 1010music.com.

## Updating Your Blackbox

We highly recommend that you check for firmware updates regularly. You can find firmware updates and instructions for installing them at [forum.1010music.com](http://forum.1010music.com). You must be a registered member of the forum to see and download the latest firmware. Register for free at [forum.1010music.com](http://forum.1010music.com), and then scroll down to the Tabletop Instruments, Firmware Downloads forum. Blackbox displays the current firmware version on the system start up screen.

## Additional Information

This quick start guide introduces the basics to get you started. If you want more information, including the full user manual, you can find it on our website at <https://1010music.com/blackboxdocs>. Join the conversation about blackbox on our forum at [forum.1010music.com](http://forum.1010music.com).