FX Lite User Guide
Version 1.0

March 2015

Introduction

FX Lite is an application designed for the playback of a sequence of sound clips including multiple clips at once. It has the ability to accurately control the levels of the sounds and the way they fade in and out or mix between each other. It is primarily designed for use in drama productions but can be used anywhere where you need to accurately control playback of audio clips.

FX Lite is a simplified version of its big brother FX Live which runs on the iPad and can exchange show files with FX Live so that it can be used to playback more complex shows created on FX Live or shows designed on FX Lite can be transferred to FX Live for further work.

Basic Principles

Shows

FX Lite uses the concept of a show which holds all the information about a particular production. Shows can be archived to iCloud or Shared using AirDrop and this enables them to be moved between devices, as well as kept offline for safety. Show archives contain everything needed to reproduce the show, including all the audio files.

Shows can contain one or more versions. This means that you can make a duplicate copy of an existing show and make changes to it, but you can quickly switch back to the previous version if needed. Or you might present the director with several different versions of the show for discussion.

Cues

A show consists of a number of cues and these in turn can contain one or more events. A cue can have a name or this can be left blank, in which case it will pick up the name of the first event in the cue.

During the performance you normally step through the cues in order, but controls are provided to enable you to jump around at random if needed.

An empty cue can be used to create silence and fade out any currently running effects.

A cue is self-contained; any events included in that cue will be played when the cue is executed and will fade in using the set fade in time. When you leave a cue to move to the next, ALL running effects will be faded out using their fade out times.

If you want an audio effect to stay running across multiple cues, see the section on Background Effects.

Events

A cue can contain one or more events, these are audio clips that you have recorded within the application, imported from iTunes or other applications such as mail or Dropbox. You can also offset events from the start of the Cue by setting a delay.
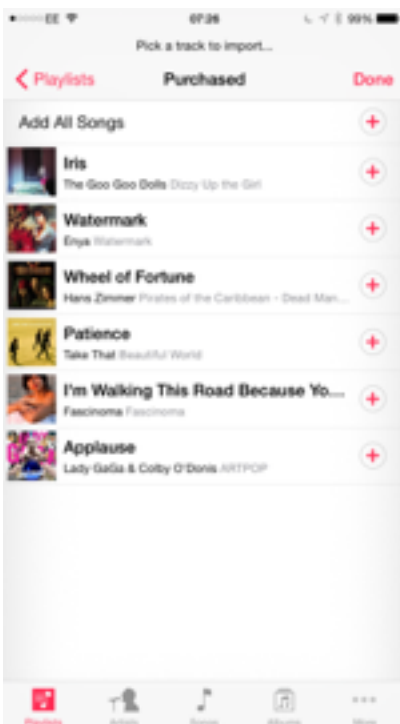
Importing Audio

There are a number of ways of getting audio into FX Lite:

Importing from iTunes

Audio can be imported from the local iTunes library on the device and this is then copied into the application folder. You can multi select files and add them all at once by clicking on each file in turn until it goes grey or pressing the plus button and then selecting Done.
Note: you will only see tracks that are on the local device and not those in iCloud. So, if you can't see what you are looking for, go to iTunes on the device and download the tracks first.
The easiest way of getting a number of tracks into FX Lite is to build a playlist in iTunes, download the playlist to the device and then import all the tracks into FX Lite in one go using the "Add All Songs" option at the top of the playlist in the iTunes import dialog. You may need to scroll down to see this.

Importing from other applications

Many other applications such as mail or Dropbox have the ability to handle audio files. If you click on and hold on the file in any of these applications you will get the 'Open In' dialog and you will see FX Lite listed as an application. If you select this, the device will switch to FX Lite and the file will be copied into the FX Lite library.
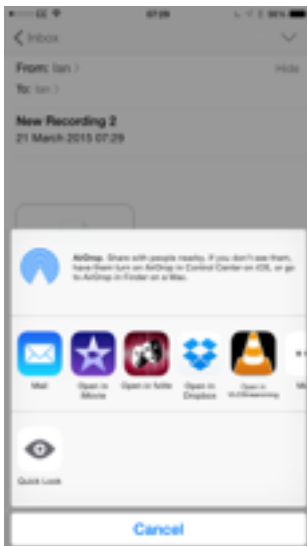
Docking to a Mac

The fastest way of getting a large amount of files on or off the device is to dock it to your Mac and then go to the Application Documents tab and drag files on or off the device.

Quick Start

The fastest way of learning FX Lite is to try it for yourself. So the first place to start is with the demo show provided. This consists of a small pre-built show of effects that you can step through yourself and examine how it's built.

To run the show, make sure it is selected in the Home screen and then select the Perform screen and press GO. This should start the walk-in music playlist. Pressing GO will then allow you to step through the show and you will notice you can even start the next CUE before the previous transition has completed. Experiment with the other controls on the screen to see how you can move around the show.

You can go to the Design screen to look in detail at how the show is built.

Building a show

To demonstrate some of the basic principles let's build a simple show from scratch.

• First go to the Home screen, press the > button next to the name of the show, this switches to the show screen. Use the + button at the top of the screen and give your show a name.


• Switch to the Design screen and you will see an initial silent cue.
• Click on this first cue and you will switch to the cue settings, press the + button to add an audio event and you will be presented with the file select dialog.
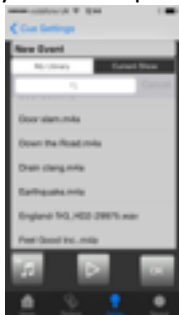
• Select one of the demo music tracks from the file list or import one of your own tracks from iTunes. You can type into the search box at the top of the file list to filter it. So typing "piano" will only show files with the word piano in the title.
• When you select a file it will start playing (unless you are in performance mode). Once you are happy you have the correct track press okay and you will now see your cue has single event in it.
• To adjust the settings of the event simply select it and then you move into the event settings screen.

- Here you can adjust the level, drag the position slider to scrub around in the file and manually add in and out points if you need to. You can also use the Auto Trim button to remove silence off the beginning and end of the file.
- At this point you need to think about how you want the track to fade in and out and you can set this with the audio fade buttons. You can now test the effect and do any fine level adjustment by returning to the cue settings screen and pressing the play button. When you stop and play the effect this way you hear it with its fade in and out transitions.
- Now add a new CUE and repeat the process and add some seawash as a background sound to run through the first scene. You may want to trim the effect to remove the fade in and out and then add your own fade times of, say, 5 seconds.
- Now add a second audio effect within the same cue and this time select the seagulls effect.
- You should now have two audio effects in this cue and you can play them both at once. Try setting a delay on the seagulls so they don't start at the same time as the seawash.
- Finally add a new silent cue to fade everything out. A silent cue is simply a cue with no audio events.
- We are now ready to test the show, so go to the Perform screen and press the Re-cue Show button to make sure we are ready for Cue 1.
- Press GO and you should hear the opening music. A second GO will cross-fade to the sea wash and a third GO should fade everything out to silence.
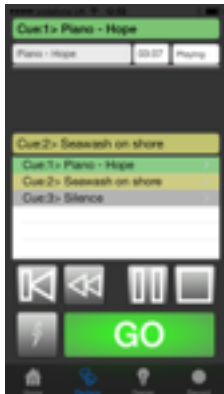

Spot Effects

A common requirement is to be able to play effects over the top of a background sound that keeps running. Often these effects are on a visual cue and may need to be used more than once. This is where Spot Effects come in.
- Return to the Design screen and select Cue 2
- Add 2 new effects - Thunder and Thunder Clap Kick Big

- Select each of these in turn in the Design screen and turn on Spot Effect.

- Return to the Perform screen and run the show. This time when you get to Cue 2 the lightning button will turn green to tell you that spot effects are available. Pressing this will bring up the spot effects screen
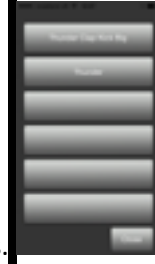
    with your two assigned effects on the first two buttons.
- You can then press these as often as you like and they will play mixed in with the seawash.

Background Audio Effects

In some situations you may want to run an effect under a number of following cues. To do this simply add the effect you want to keep running into all the following cues at the same level. The best way of doing this is when the file select dialog appears, select the Current Show tab rather than the My Library file list.
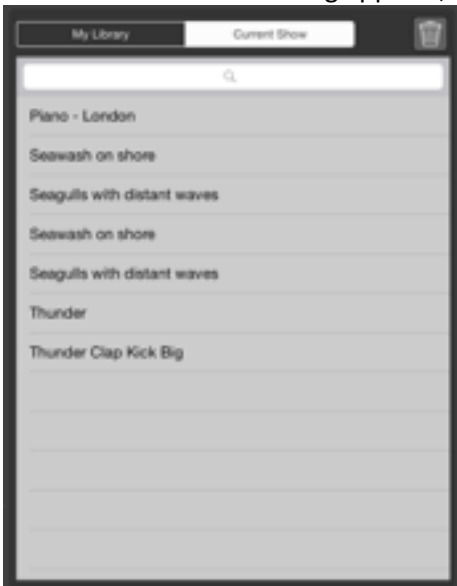

If you pick the effect from there it will automatically copy all its settings from the other cue.
The advantage of this way of working is that each cue is self-contained. This also means that you can jump into any cue at random and everything will work correctly.

The Home Screen

The Home screen is responsible for managing your shows and versions as well as providing useful support links.

The Show Screen
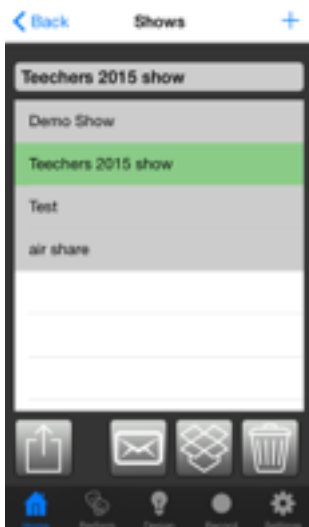
The show screen shows you a list of all the shows on your device and allows you to perform a number of operations.

+ Creates a new show.

Deletes the selected show with a confirmation.

Zips the show and all of its audio files and moves them into your Dropbox folder. The file will appear in Apps\FX Live-2 folder. This might take a while to appear as it happens in the background. To restore a show use the Dropbox app to download and export the file to your device and then use the 'open in' option to load into FX Lite.

Allows you email a copy of the show file only (no audio) to another user.

 Shows the AirDrop dialog allowing you to rapidly transfer a show archive including all of its audio to a nearby device that supports AirDrop.

Clicking on the name at the top of the screen allows you to change the name of the show.

The Version Screen
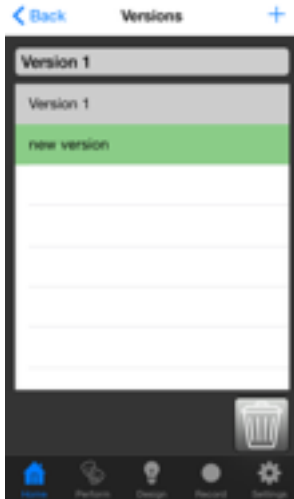
This screen shows you any versions you may have within the current show. If you are about to make some big changes to a show, it is best to create a new version. This will make a copy of the existing show with all its cues and you can then proceed to modify this, knowing that you can always get back to the previous version if you change your mind.

Clicking on the name at the top of the screen allows you to change the name of the version.

The Perform Screen

The Perform screen is the screen from which you run a show. It has all the controls you need to run cues and handle last-minute changes.

The centre panel shows you the Cue List with the current cue highlighted in green and the next cue in yellow. If you click on a cue in this list it becomes the cue that will be executed when you press GO.

The 4 buttons underneath the cue list are used to provide manual overrides for emergencies:

 This is the Recue Show button which will do an emergency fade out of all running effects and reset the next cue to be the first cue in the sequence.

 This is the Recue button which puts the system back to the state it was before the last GO. This is very useful if you accidentally hit GO too soon. If you have started a transition, it will reverse the operation and fade the original effect back in. If the previous cue has already ended, when you press Recue it will start it again but pick up the track where it was at the point GO was pressed.

 Pause will stop all running events but leave them loaded so they can be restarted again at the same place by cancelling pause.

 All Stop will do an emergency fade on any running effects and wait for you to decide what to do next.

 This is allows access to any spot effects in this cue, this is indicated by the button being green.

GO

The GO button is used to move from one cue to the next. You don't need to wait until one cue is complete before moving to the next; the transitions will simply overlap. The button is green if any events are running and red if the cue is set to auto-follow. If you press the GO button when it is red, the auto-follow will be cancelled and you will then need to hit GO yourself to execute the next cue.

Active Events

The top section of the screen shows any active events. Each running event has its own player to show you its current status.

The status display shows a number of different states so you can see at a glance what the event is doing:
- Playing
- Fade In
- Fade Out
- Transitioning
- Looping

If you click on an active event it opens a sub screen that allows you to make live changes while the event is running and provides controls for manual override.

If you make changes in this screen to the level it will make the change live and you can decide if you wish to make this change permanent in the show, or if not then select cancel.

The Design Screen

The Design screen is where you design shows and is divided into a number of sub screens.
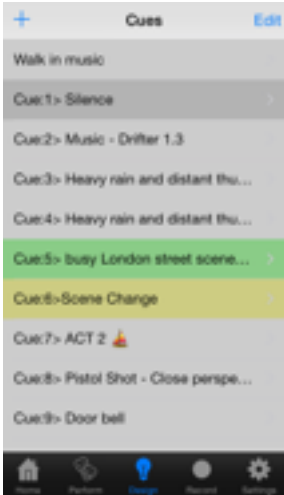
The design screen shows all cues in the show and allows you to add, delete and rearrange cues. To add new cues press the + button and this will append a new cue at the end of the show.
If you wish to insert a cue in the middle of the list press the edit button and then the green + button next to the cue you want to insert before.

If you want to rearrange the order of cues you press the edit button and then drag the cues in the list by pressing on the right hand end of the row.

To delete a cue make sure you aren't in edit mode and then swipe left on the cue you wish to delete.

Selecting a cue will take you into the cue settings screen.

The Cue Settings Screen
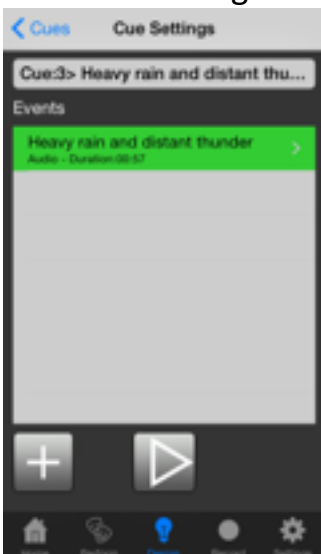
This screen shows details of the selected cue and any events it contains.

The cue name is auto-generated by the system, but you can overtype it with your own information. But if you type the cue name after the > you can keep the auto-numbering and your own cue name. Auto renumber will skip any cues that don't use this exact numbering syntax.

The Cue play button will play all events in the cue as they will sound when used in the show. This gives you the ability to adjust relative levels. You stop the cue by pressing the button again and this will fade any events out with their set times.

You can add events to the cue with the + button and delete events by swiping left on any event.

Event Settings
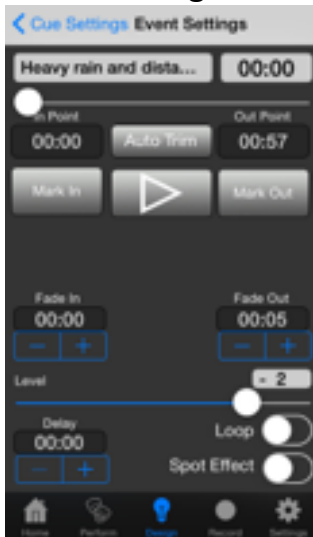
This screen allows you to adjust the settings of the event including the level and fade in and out times. You can use the drag bar to move around within the file when it is playing and optionally mark in and out points if you don't want to play the full file. If you just want to trim any spare silence of the start of the file you can use the Auto Trim button. Note you may not see any difference to the in point when you press Auto Trim if the amount removed is less than a second.

 You can use the delay option to delay the starting of the event relative to the start of the cue. This is used when you have multiple audio events in the same cue but you don't want them all to start at once. Marking an event as a Spot Effect will prevent it from running automatically and instead make it available on the Spot Effect screen which then allows you to fire it manually and multiple times. A good example of this would be in a storm scene you would have the rain and wind running as part of the cue and then a few thunder crashes loaded as spot effects that you could fire as required in sync with some lightning flashes. The loop option is a powerful feature that removes the need for you to have to make effects long enough for the scene. If you mark an event as loop then when it gets to the outpoint it will jump back to the in point with a cross fade that is the length defined in the fade in time. For best results with loop mark your in and out points a few seconds inside the track and then set a fade time of a few seconds so that you can't detect where the loop occurs.

Audio Event Select

This dialog is used to select audio files or to import audio into the application from iTunes.

The file list can be switched between 2 modes: My Library and Current Show.

My Library shows all of the audio tracks imported into FX Lite not just those used in the current show.

You can filter the list by typing into the Search box. This will filter the list to show any files that contain the word you have typed anywhere in the filename.

Selecting **Current Show** will filter the list to only show files that are used in the current show. If you select any of these you will also copy all of the other settings associated with the effect, including audio levels and file start and end points. You can then change these if you need to.

The Recording Screen
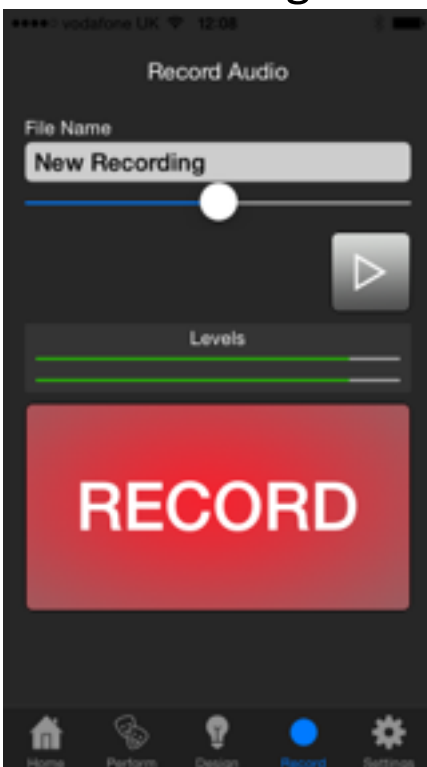
This screen is used to record audio directly into the application. This will work with the internal microphone on the device but for best results use an external microphone.

To make a recording first set the name for the recording and then press record. Stop the recording by pressing record again and then you can listen to the recording by using the play button and slider to drag around within the recording.

If you make a new recording without changing the name the previous recording will be erased but you receive a warning dialog if this is the case.

The settings screen
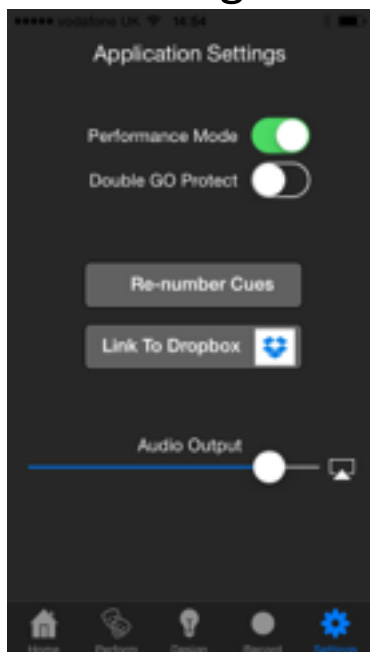
The settings screen provides some application settings as well as a few less used features.

Dropbox
If you wish to link FX Lite to your Dropbox account for archiving shows into the Cloud you need to press the Link To Dropbox button, but you only need to that once. You don't need a Dropbox account in order to use FX Lite but it provides a useful way of archiving files.

Re-number Cues
When you insert cues into the list or re order them the number aren't changed as you may have already written all the cue numbers into the script. If you do want them back into order then the Re-Number Cues button is used to re number the cues back into numerical order.

Performance Mode
When this is switched on various functions are disabled and some require confirmation:
- Audio preview in the File Select menu is disabled
- All of the cue controls on the Perform Screen require confirmation

Double Go Protect
This prevents GO from being pressed twice in quick succession; it protects against double tap or nervous operators.

Audio Output
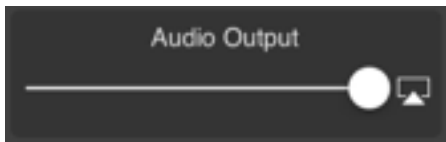
The Audio Output panel controls the hardware output level, equivalent to using the buttons on the iPad.

You can also use this control to route the audio to a Bluetooth device or Airplay device if available, but both of these introduce a slight delay so this has to be allowed for when pressing GO.