

## Genki Instruments Katla



Having twice blown European musical minds thanks to show-stealing showcases at SUPERBOOTH25, May 8-10, Berlin, Germany and Machina Bristronica 2025, September 27-28, Bristol, UK, before adventuring across the pond for a repeat performance at Buchla & Friends 2026, January 24-25, LA, CA, USA, Reykjavik-based instrument developer Genki Instruments announces the availability of the eagerly-awaited Katla as a Voice Rotating Polyphonic Synthesizer inspired by Iceland's largest subglacial volcano as its natural namesake - readily representing the company's first foray into analogue synthesis, albeit one that uniquely utilises a set of wildcard parameters to infuse it with organic, unpredictable behaviour as an instrument that is worthy of that legacy, excelling at generating rich, evolving, multi-layered textures, where each note stirs, swells, and erupts in its own distinct way - as of March 31...

Clearly Katla's inspiration runs through its 'volcanic' veins. After all, it is framed by side panels and knobs forged from authentic Icelandic lava, giving each instrument a tangible connection to the volcanic forces that inspired it. That this synth should surely roar is a given. Genki Instruments inevitably chose, therefore, to kit Katla out with four independent distortion destinations, the most unruly of which is a stereo CMOS (Complementary Metal Oxide Semiconductor) Drive effect - a characterful saturation stage, pushing tones from warm and rounded to fractured and snarling.

Active at the core of the Katla Voice Rotating Polyphonic Synthesizer - to give it its

full appellation - is its voice-rotating engine that routes notes across five discrete voices, each with individually adjustable parameters. Put it this way: with six unique voice allocation modes, Katla excels at generating rich, evolving, multi-layered textures. The VOICES MODE features three round-robin modes (with each note being assigned to one of the five voices in sequence, creating a rotating pattern of sound) - the first cycles forward through the voices, the second cycles backwards, and the third selects voices at random - alongside three unison modes (with all active voices automatically assigned to the notes played and dynamically adjusted according to how many keys are held): Staccato, whereby envelopes re-trigger with every note trigger; Legato, whereby envelopes re-trigger only when all keys have been released; and Mono Mode, disabling polyphony and allocating all voices to the same note.

Needless to say, Genki Instruments' first foray into analogue synthesis stands out from the sound of the analogue crowd courtesy of a set of wildcard KATLA parameters. Duly designed to infuse it with organic, unpredictable behaviour, bringing life and movement to the process of sculpting sounds, these comprise: MÓÐA, a way of adding tuning instability by simulating an old synthesizer drifting out of tune to give a vintage character; KVIKA, applies slow pitch fluctuations per voice using a slewed random waveform, inspired by the wow modulation found in vintage tape machines; SKJÁLFTI, applies faster pitch fluctuations to each voice, reminiscent of the flutter behaviour found in vintage tape machines; GLÓÐ, produces brief bursts of pitch modulation applied independently to each voice, similar to the effect of momentarily slowing a tape by pressing on the reel; ASKA, inserts random modulation on per-voice volume and filter cutoff, and also introduces short bursts of noise that result in a chaotic and unpredictable sound as the most complex of the KATLA parameters; SKRIÐA, applies random values to the A (Attack), D (Decay), S (Sustain), R (Release) times of the AMP ENVELOPE; RÖKKUR, spreads notes across the stereo field, positioning voices 2 and 4 to the left, 3 and 5 to the right, with voice 1 remaining centred - think notes shaped by dedicated left and right distortion channels, immersed in a spacious stereo reverb; and last, but by no means least, RÚSTIR, Katla's wavefolder - often considered a hallmark of so-called West Coast synthesis, which generates harmonics by folding the signal back on itself.

But back down from the molten-hot heady heights of those KATLA parameters and onwards into more familiar subtractive synthesis terrain, Katla's five independent voices — each paired with its own dedicated sub-oscillator, with global SUB controls for waveform and octave - allow for five-voice polyphony, with individual filters, amplifiers, LFOs (Low Frequency Oscillators) offering unique combinations of their minimum and maximum outputs which are used to modulate stereo effects (including a lush stereo digital reverb inspired by classic 1980s hardware, designed to add depth and ambience to the sound); this enables unique, non-repetitive modulations that feel organic and alive, while looping envelopes blur the lines between envelopes and LFOs, letting users craft rhythmic, evolving patterns or tempo-synced modulation. It is worth noting here that Katla can be synced to the BPM (Beats Per Minute) of a DAW (Digital Audio Workstation) or any external

## Genki Instruments announces the Voice Rotating Synthesizer Katla

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clocking device, allowing all modulations to lock tightly to the music, while envelopes and LFO timings can be quantised to musical intervals, such as quarter notes, eighths, or triplets.

That is not all, though. The keyboard tracking adapts envelopes, LFO timing, and filter cutoff to the pitch of each note, making every key respond with its own unique character and movement. Moreover, Katla is fully MPE (MIDI Polyphonic Expression) compatible, with per-note response to pressure, pitch, timbre, and aftertouch. And when in unison mode, all voices are allocated to a note, so when releasing a chord one of the notes will linger slightly longer than the rest, all the voices being assigned to that note, resulting in a monophonic release phase; alternatively, Unison Grace Period enabling introduces a slight timing offset, allowing Katla to let all notes fade out smoothly and naturally.



Naturally, of course, Katla features five external inputs, each routed to its corresponding voice, so users can freely feed audio from any source, sequence between the inputs, and process the signals through the Voice Rotating Polyphonic Synthesizer's analogue signal path, thereby adding warmth, distortion filtering, and character to external sounds.

Since each Katla is meticulously hand assembled, it is fair to say that every unit is not just a synthesizer but rather a rare, finely-crafted piece of musical artistry. According to Genki Instruments CEO Ólafur Bjarki Bogason, "Beyond the volcanic synth concept, we wanted to create a truly inspiring instrument with loads of character and a unique and immense quality; I hope artists appreciate the attention to detail we put into it - quality that can be felt all the way from the bold aesthetics and design, the high torque of the sliders, to how Katla sounds and feels to play. Now that we are emerging out on the other side of the creative process, I feel grateful for the opportunity to create a truly novel synth that will hopefully inspire a whole new generation of players."

Shipping on March 31, 2026, Katla is available to order - priced at €4,990.00 EUR - directly from Genki Instruments.

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