Tonal Matter Säve River



Swedish instrument developer Tonal Matter AB has released Säve River, a sample-based instrument for Native Instruments Kontakt 8 and the free Kontakt Player. It is available now at the company's website for €89, delivered and activated through Native Access. It marks the debut release in the company's Instrumental Places series.

Säve River is built from field recordings captured at five places along a one-kilometre stretch of the Säveån river in Västra Götaland, western Sweden. The same five places were recorded in spring flood, under snow, and in August low water. The river in full sun and the river at dusk are different instruments. It is designed for film, television, and game composers and producers working in ambient and cinematic styles.

Rather than conventional controls, the instrument uses five XY pads. The main pad blends between the five places using bilinear interpolation, with monophonic true legato on the water sounds and a polyphonic tonal layer mixed in. Part of the

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pitched material was extracted from the field recordings themselves - some of the notes in Säve River are the river, tuned.

Because the pads blend rather than switch, there is no list of sounds to choose from. Every position on the main pad mixes all five places in a proportion that exists only there, and the four remaining pads act on whatever is present. The instrument is meant to be explored, not configured. Two features are specific to the instrument. Water Legato sustains the water layer continuously while at least one key is held, so changing notes doesn't retrigger or cut the recording. Nightly Detune, assigned to the mod wheel, adds the pitch instability of outdoor night recording to sustained notes.

What it sounds like is on the product page: a single piece, three and a half minutes long, written with Säve River and nothing else. "I wanted to know whether a place could become an instrument - not only its sounds, but how it looks, how it feels, what it carries," said Ivan Ivarsson, founder of Tonal Matter. "That question started the company. Säve River is the first answer, and it won't be the last. The place provides the matter. We shape the tone."

Key Features:

- One kilometre of the Säveån river in western Sweden, recorded in spring flood, under snow, and in August low water.
- One main pad, five places. The five recording locations sit at the corners and centre. Moving between them blends the recordings continuously, water and tone together, so every position is a mix that exists only there.
- Four effect pads. Darkness & Light for tone and space, Shimmer & Surface for movement, Water & Tone for the balance between river and pitch, Flow & Pulse for a slow swell beneath it.
- Water Legato. The water runs unbroken as long as a key is held - changing notes doesn't retrigger or cut the recording.
- Nightly Detune. The mod wheel adds the pitch drift of an outdoor night recording to sustained notes.
- Pitched material from the river. Tonal Matter extracted part of the tonal layer from the same field recordings as the water.
- Every control is automatable - fifteen parameters, so pad movements record straight into a DAW.
- Thirty presets as starting points, not destinations.
- NKS certified; compatible with the free Kontakt Player.
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Säve River is available now from tonalmatter.com for €89. It ships and activates through Native Instruments Native Access.

System requirements: Kontakt 8 or Kontakt 8 Player, macOS 14 or 15, Windows 10 or 11. Supports VST3, Audio Unit, and AAX formats. Space required: 0.5 GB installed; NCW-compressed 24-bit/48 kHz audio.

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