**FORM OSCILLATOR**
Form's main oscillator, hosts a sample – from its library or one of your own

**OSCILLATOR FX**
Apply frequency modulation, distortion, waveshaping and more to the Form Oscillator

**TABBED PAGES**
Switch between the Sample, Sound and Effects pages here

**ADDITIVE OSCILLATOR**
A sub-oscillator tracking the Form Oscillator from –24st to +120st

**MODULATION**
Form's powerful modulation system is housed here, but assignments are made via the target parameters themselves

**MOTION**
The heart of Form. Design your own playback path for the loaded sample

**PERFORM**
Assign synth-wide parameter snapshots to these 12 buttons, and trigger them via MIDI

**MACROS**
Each preset can have up to four Macro modulation knobs assigned

VIDEO
2 MINUTES WITH...

COMPUTER MUSIC INNOVATION Award

COMPUTER MUSIC VALUE Award

COMPUTER MUSIC PERFORMANCE Award

# Native Instruments
# Komplete 11
# and Form  £159-959, £89

PC  MAC

## Another update to the German software giant's all-in bundle brings both an orchestra and one of the year's coolest synths…

> Native Instruments' Komplete has long stood as the best deal in music software, bundling every synth, sampler and effect they make into a single blockbuster package. As ever, Komplete 11 Ultimate (500GB) includes everything released over the year since the last version (Reaktor 6, Una Corda, Strummed Acoustic, Discover Series: India, Replika XT, Emotive Strings and Flesh), plus the all-new Symphony Essentials and Form synth, the latter reviewed separately below. That's 87 plugins in total, or "over 18,000 sounds". The cheaper Komplete 11 (155GB) drops this to 45 plugins ("over 13,000 sounds"). We don't have space to get into specifics here, so check out the NI website for the full listings.

The new Symphony Essentials series, included with Komplete 11 Ultimate, consists of cut-down versions of NI's Symphony Series of orchestral ROMplers (Woodwind Solo and Ensemble, Brass Solo and Ensemble and String Ensemble), powered by the same scripted

Kontakt engines but packing in far fewer articulations, and losing True Legato, timestretching and the Mixer page. Obviously, it feels like a lot is missing in comparison to their pricey full-on parents, but for adding a bit of symphonic pomp to your latest garage number, they've got plenty going for them and sound magnificent.

This year sees the addition of a whole new tier to the Komplete range, too. Sitting below Komplete 11 and Komplete 11 Ultimate, the new Komplete 11 Select is an even cheaper option for those new to music production, bringing together the Monark, Massive and Reaktor Prism synths, a handful of Kontakt Player libraries, Drumlab, and the Replika and Solid Bus Comp effects.

### Form and function
Included with Komplete 11 and Komplete 11 Ultimate (and available separately), Form is

Native Instruments' new "sample-tracking synthesizer". Loading in Reaktor 6 or the free Reaktor Player, its core concept is very straightforward: load a sample, either from the sizeable bundled library or your own collection, then select a range within it to serve as an 'oscillator', and design a path for the constant movement of the playhead through that range. Deep but accessible oscillator and effects processing, and a comprehensive modulation setup bring the spice.

The main panel of the interface flips between three tabs – Sample, Sound and Effects – with the Speed, Motion and Perform sections, and four preset-specific macro knobs below being omnipresent. The base speed of the playhead is set in the Speed section as a multiple of the original speed of the sample or project tempo, or in Hz, all three ranging from 0.01 to 16. The Motion panel is covered in *Poetry in Motion*, and the Perform section enables storing and

Build a playback path through your sample using the Curve Editor

## "We still can't recommend NI's gargantuan sonic powerhouse highly enough"

switching of up to 12 snaphots, for on-the-fly transformation of Form's entire parameter state.

## Going deeper

The Sample Page shows the waveform of the loaded sample, and the range to be used as the Form Oscillator wave is marked out by dragging its two handles left and right. Activating the Pitch Curve button reveals an overlay showing the pitch progression of the sample, for reference purposes, although it's also available as a modulation source.

The Sound page is where Form's two oscillators and filter are tweaked, and modulation is applied. The Form Oscillator (hosting the sample) offers control of Amp (level), Pitch, Pan and Formant, while the bolstering Additive Oscillator (a sub oscillator tracking the Form Oscillator from two octaves below to ten octaves above) outputs a constantly variable waveform, sweepable from sine to soft square via soft saw.

A variety of processing options for the Form Oscillator are on hand in the Oscillator FX section, comprising FM (using the Additive Oscillator as the FM source), waveshaping, stereo 'jitter', distortion and harmonic multiplication. The Filter is a simple resonant affair featuring Low-Pass, High-Pass and Notch types.

Form's many modulation sources – two envelopes, two LFOs, Sidechain (a multiplied or alternated blend of any two sources), Motion and Pitch Curves, four Macros, mod wheel, etc – are assigned by clicking the name of the target parameter (each of which can accept three sources) and selecting from the pop-up panel that appears. It's as intuitive a system as we've ever seen, and with the modulation of each control visualised by an animated white marker, it's always easy to keep up with what's happening movement-wise.

Last but not least, the Effects page houses compressor, overdrive, reverb and delay
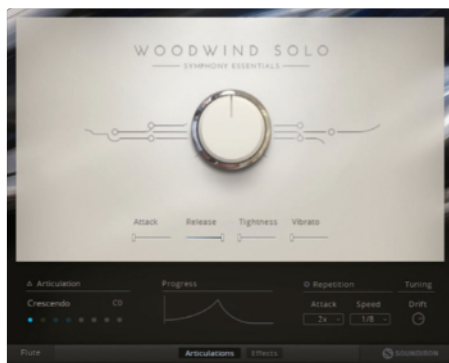


The five Symphony Essentials introduced with 'Ultimate' bring more orchestral instrumentation to Kontakt

## Poetry in Motion

**The Motion section is Form's headline feature, where the progression path of the playhead through the sample upon note input is edited in exquisite detail. You can load a preset Curve from the onboard selection or design your own in the Curve Editor, where as many curve segments as you need are strung together to create a flowing sequence. Each segment holds one of five single curve shapes or three repeating ones – the number of repeats is user-adjustable via the Frequency control, and they can be snapped to grid.**

**Segments can be added, deleted, merged, split, copied and pasted, and are resized by dragging their left and**

**right edges. The level, stereo positioning and attack time of each segment are all editable, and the range of a segment's motion within the sample is constrained by dragging the top and bottom handles. The Motion Curve can run forwards, backwards, or forwards then backwards, looped or one-shot, with a Legato mode for preventing retriggering with overlapping notes.**

**Using the Motion controls, even a very short sample can be turned into an endlessly extended sonic adventure with as much temporal variation as you can find the time to design. The Motion curve can also be used as a modulation source, interestingly.**

modules, plus the rather novel Frequency Shaping module – a pair of graphically editable band-pass filters.

## Fully Formed

Form is a lot like a wavetable synth in the way it scans through samples, but with a more 'contiguous' approach. It's an instrument for those who enjoy sonic exploration, rather than those seeking instant results – although there are some fine basses and leads presets, its clear speciality is intricate soundscapes, evolving pads, spacey textures and burbling, skittish electronica in general. A beautiful thing, Form is something we'd put up there with that other Reaktor-based classic, Razor.

As for Komplete 11, we still can't recommend NI's gargantuan sonic powerhouse highly enough. Priced at over 80% less than the total of its constituent parts bought individually, the Ultimate edition represents a truly insane bargain that anyone serious about their music production has to give serious consideration to. The regular edition is less of a must-have, but still qualifies as excellent value; and although the new Komplete 11 Select makes for a peculiar combination on paper, for newbies, it's a solid introduction to the Native Instruments line-up. **cm**

**Web** www.native-instruments.com
**Upgrade** Komplete, £159; Ultimate, £319

## Alternatively

**Melda Production MTotalBundle**
**N/A » N/A » €1499**
96 effects, many of them multiband

**Arturia V-Collection 5**
**N/A » N/A » €499**
17 classic keyboard/synth emulations

## Verdict

For Komplete 11 Ultimate is an essential
Komplete 11 Select is an interesting new budget-priced tier
Form's Motion system is brilliant...
...as is its modulation setup
Form sounds phenomenal

Against Apart from Form and Reaktor 6, the v11 upgrade may not be so compelling
Form's sample range and Motion Curve Editor controls can't be modulated

For newcomers to Komplete, Komplete 11 Ultimate still stands as the biggest bargain around, and Form is a fabulous new synth for sound designers and experimentalists

**Komplete 11: 10/10**

**Form: 9/10**