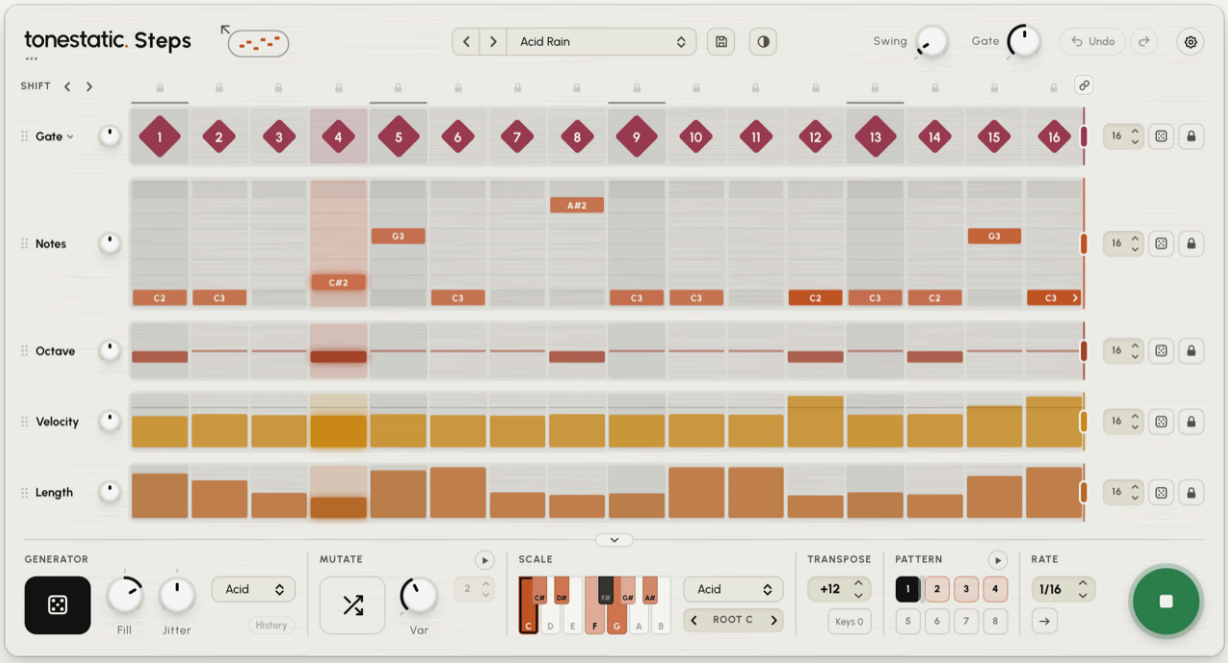
tonestatic.

Tonestatic Steps

MIDI step sequencer

MANUAL · VERSION 0.13.0



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Welcome to Steps

Steps is a MIDI step sequencer. It makes no sound of its own: it plays a synth — a plugin in your DAW or a hardware synth on a MIDI cable — in time with your song.

Each step has a gate, a note, an octave, a velocity and a length, each on a lane of its own — with a chance of playing and a ratchet there when you want them — and two more lanes move any two of your synth's parameters step by step. Draw a line by hand, or press the dice for a pattern in a style — Acid, Techno, Bass, Arp, Melodic — as a place to start, then mutate part of it, lock what you like and keep going. Eight patterns live in each preset and can be chained, and a finished pattern drags out of the window onto a MIDI track.

At a glance

Formats	VST®3 (macOS, Windows) · AU MIDI FX (Logic)
macOS	11+, Universal, Apple Silicon native
Windows	10+, 64-bit
Output	MIDI: notes, velocity and two CC lanes, on any channel. Monophonic. No audio of its own.
Steps	Up to 64 per lane, each lane its own length; 8 patterns per preset
Tempo	Follows the DAW's transport and tempo; Rate 1/4 to 1/32, dotted and triplet
Presets	181 factory presets in five styles (Acid, Acid 2, Techno, Bass, Arp), plus Init and your own
Export	The pattern or chain as a MIDI file, by drag and drop



Installation and activation

One installer per system puts every Tonestatic plugin on your computer. Open any of them to start a free 14-day trial of all of them; a licence key unlocks Tonestatic Steps for good.

What is in the download

The download is a zip. Unpack it (double-click it on a Mac; on Windows, right-click it and choose **Extract All**) and you get a folder with:

- the installer: `Tonestatic-0.13.0-macOS.pkg` or `Tonestatic-0.13.0-Windows.exe`,
- this manual, and the manuals for the other Tonestatic plugins,
- **Installation.txt**, the short version of this chapter,
- **Changelog.txt**, what changed in each version,
- **Licence Agreement.txt**, the licence you accept when you install, and **Third-Party Notices.txt**, the licences of the open-source software inside the plugins.

There is one installer for all eight plugins: Alpine, Grains, Alpine's four modules as plugins of their own (Artifact, Modulation, Delay and Reverb), Steps, and Steps Free — Steps' free edition, unlocked for good with just your email. You can leave out any of them while you install.

Installing on macOS

1. **Close your DAW.**
   A host that is running will not see new plugins until it starts again.
2. **Open the installer**
   (`Tonestatic-0.13.0-macOS.pkg`) and follow it. It shows the licence agreement, which you accept to go on.
3. **Choose what to install**
   , if you like: on the Installation Type page, **Customize** lists the Audio Unit and VST3 versions of each plugin, and you can untick any of them.
4. **Open your DAW**
   and let it find the new plugins. Logic Pro and GarageBand do that when they start. In Ableton Live, open **Settings → Plug-Ins** and press **Rescan** if they do not show up.

The plugins are installed for every user of the Mac, in `/Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/Components` (Audio Unit) and `/Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/VST3`. They are Universal: they run natively on Apple Silicon and on Intel Macs, and in a DAW running under Rosetta. macOS 11 or later.

Installing on Windows

1. **Close your DAW.**

2. **Run the installer**
   (`Tonestatic-0.13.0-Windows.exe`). Windows names its publisher as Paweł Witkowski: Tonestatic is the trading name of his registered business. If Windows SmartScreen says "Windows protected your PC", choose **More info**, then **Run anyway**.
3. **Choose the plugins**
   : all eight, or pick them yourself.
4. **Open your DAW**
   and rescan its plugins if they do not appear.

The plugins are VST3, 64-bit, and go to `C:\Program Files\Common Files\VST3`, the folder every VST3 host looks in. The installer lets you choose another folder if your DAW scans one of its own; leave it as it is otherwise, because some hosts, Cubase among them, look only in the standard one. Windows 10 or later. The plugin windows are drawn by Microsoft Edge WebView2, which Windows 11 and most of Windows 10 already have; the installer adds it if your computer does not.

The trial and your licence

The first time you open a Tonestatic plugin it asks for your email address. Type it and press **Start trial**: every Tonestatic plugin on this computer is unlocked for 14 days. We send two emails, a quick start straight away and a reminder the day before the trial ends. Steps Free is not part of the trial: it asks for your email once, and is then unlocked for good. Until a trial is started, and after it ends without a licence, an effect passes your sound through without the effect, so a project that uses it still plays; Steps plays no notes.

Buying

Open the plugin's menu (the ··· under its name), choose **Licence** and press **Buy**. That opens tonestatic.com with your trial attached; bought that way, the plugin unlocks this computer by itself once you have paid. You can also buy at tonestatic.com.

Entering a key

Your licence key arrives by email. It looks like `TNST-XXXX-XXXX-XXXX-XXXX`. In the licence panel choose **Already bought? Enter your key**, paste it and press **Activate**. A key works on up to three of your computers; each computer counts once, however many DAWs and formats load the plugin there.

Alpine licence	Alpine, and Artifact, Modulation, Delay and Reverb
Grains licence	Grains
A module on its own	that module
Steps licence	Steps

Moving to another computer

To free one of your three computers, open ··· → **Licence** on the one you are leaving and press **Deactivate this computer**. Every plugin that key unlocked there goes back to the trial, and you can activate the key somewhere else.

Updates

Updates are free. ··· → **Updates** shows the version you have and whether a newer one is out, and can check once a day, when a plugin opens; the menu shows a **New** badge when there is one. To update, download the new version from tonestatic.com and run its installer over the old one. Your presets, your licence and your projects carry over: every setting a project or preset is saved with is kept the same from one version to the next.

Uninstalling

macOS: open `/Library/Application Support/Tonestatic` and double-click **Uninstall Tonestatic.command**. **Windows: Settings → Apps**, find **Tonestatic plugins** and choose **Uninstall**. Neither removes your own presets or your licence, so a reinstall picks up where you were.

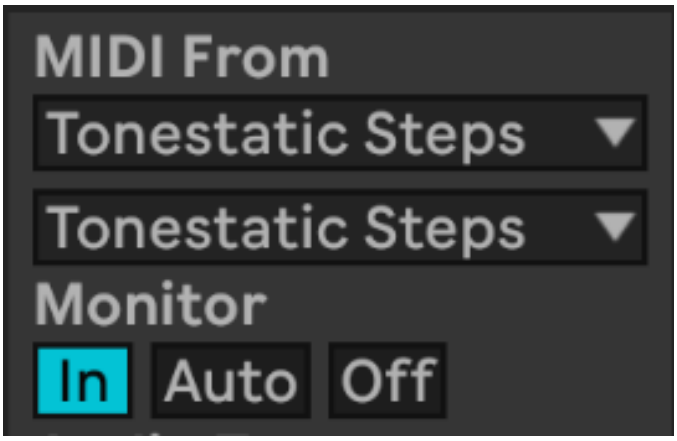
Getting Steps to a synth

Every DAW listens to a MIDI plugin its own way, so this is the one thing to set up before anything else. The plugin carries the same instructions: the gear button opens Settings, and its **How to use** tab has them for each DAW below.

> **Which format.** In Ableton Live, Bitwig Studio, Reaper, FL Studio and Cubase use the **VST3**. In Logic Pro use the **Audio Unit**: it is a MIDI FX, in the MIDI FX slot of an instrument track. Live does not load Audio Unit MIDI effects, so in Live on a Mac it is the VST3 too.

Ableton Live (VST3)

1. Make a MIDI track and drop Tonestatic Steps on it (the VST3 - Live doesn't load AU MIDI effects).
2. On your synth's track, set MIDI From to the Steps track, and in the box under it pick Tonestatic Steps.
3. Set the synth track's Monitor to In. On Auto it only listens while the track is armed.
4. Press play: Steps follows Live's transport.



The synth track's In/Out, set up

- Hardware synth: put Live's External Instrument on the synth's track and set its MIDI To to your synth.
- Stop Steps with its own Run button, not Live's device switch - switching the device off can leave a note hanging.
- With Keys on (MIDI tab), a clip on the Steps track drives it: C0-G0 pick patterns 1-8, other notes transpose.
- Learn (MIDI tab) needs your synth's knobs to reach Steps: set the Steps track's MIDI From to the synth's MIDI port, Monitor In.
- To record what Steps plays, arm the synth's track and record - or drag the Export icon onto a track.

Logic Pro (AU)

1. On your synth's software instrument track, click the MIDI FX slot and choose Audio Units > Tonestatic > Tonestatic Steps.

2. Press play: Steps plays the instrument on that track.

> - Hardware synth: do the same on a track with Logic's External Instrument plug-in.
> - Logic doesn't record what a MIDI FX plays - drag the Export icon onto a track to get it as a region.
> - With Keys on (MIDI tab), notes played into the track transpose the line and C0-G0 pick patterns 1-8.

Bitwig Studio (VST3)

1. On your synth's instrument track, put Tonestatic Steps before the synth in the device chain.
2. Press play: Steps' notes go straight into the synth after it.

> - Hardware synth: put Bitwig's HW Instrument after Steps instead of a synth.

Reaper (VST3)

1. Open a track's FX chain and add Tonestatic Steps first, then your synth below it in the same chain.
2. Press play: Steps' notes go down the chain to the synth.

> - Hardware synth: on that track's Routing, set MIDI Hardware Output to your synth's MIDI port.

FL Studio (VST3)

1. Add Tonestatic Steps to the Channel rack.
2. Open its wrapper settings (the gear at the window's top left, then Processing) and set the MIDI Output port to a number - say 1.
3. In your synth's wrapper settings, set the MIDI Input port to the same number.
4. Press play: Steps follows the song position.

> - Each Steps needs its own port number, matched by the synth it plays.

Cubase (VST3)

1. Add an Instrument track with Tonestatic Steps on it.
2. On your synth's track, set the MIDI input to Tonestatic Steps (Cubase lists it once Steps is loaded).
3. Turn on Monitor (the speaker button) on the synth's track, or arm it.
4. Press play: Steps follows Cubase's transport.

- Hardware synth: a MIDI track with its output set to your synth, input set to Tonestatic Steps.

Quick start

1. **Route Steps to a synth**
   as your DAW wants it — see *Getting Steps to a synth*.

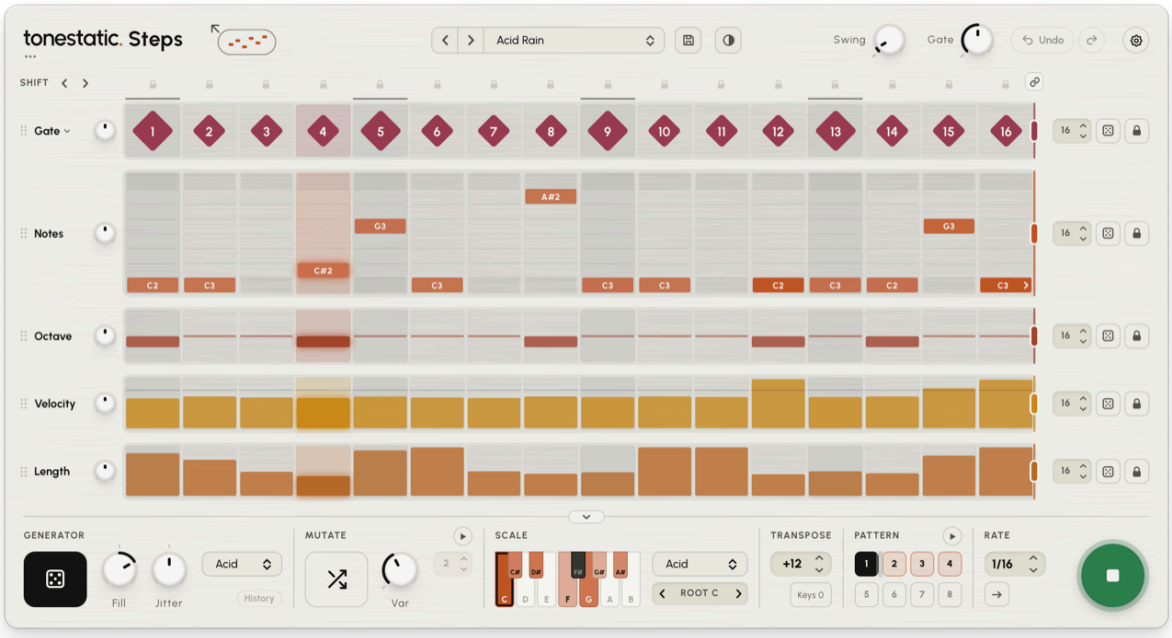
2. **Start the trial**
   the first time it opens: type your email address and press Start trial.

3. **Press play**
   in your DAW. Steps follows the transport; the **Run** button lights while it plays.

4. **Load a preset**
   : click the name in the header and pick one from a style, or press the **dice** in the generator, under the lanes, for a new pattern in the style beside it.

5. **Make it yours**
   : click and drag on a lane to draw, **Mutate** to change a few steps, the lock on a lane to keep it while you roll the rest.

6. **Keep it**
   : save with the disk button beside the preset name, or drag the **Export** icon onto a MIDI track.



Steps

The window

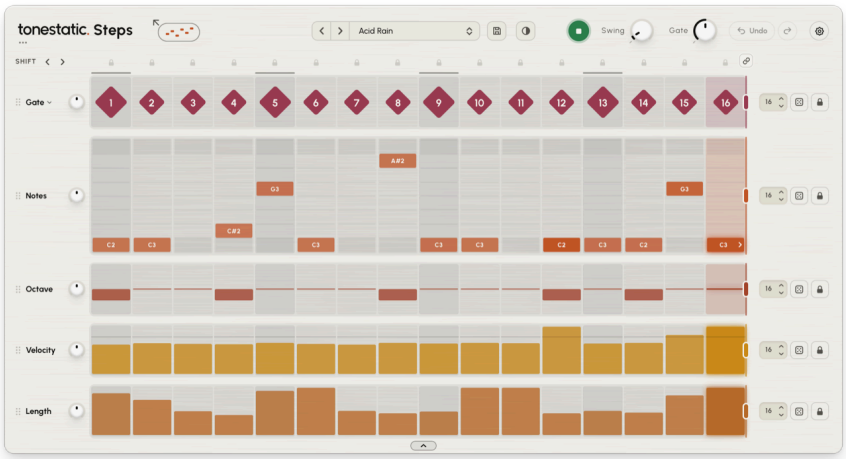
The lanes fill the top of the window, one row per lane. Under them, a strip of controls from left to right: the scale, the generator, Mutate, the patterns, Rate and Direction, and Export. The header has the menu under the name, the preset bar, Save and the theme switch, and on the right:

CONTROL	RANGE	WHAT IT DOES
Swing	50 to 75 %	Every other step played late; 50 % is straight.
Gate	10 to 200 %	Every note's length, against the length its step sets; 100 % at twelve o'clock.
Undo, Redo		Take back the last dice, mutate or edit to the steps, and bring it back. Your DAW's undo covers the knobs; this covers the steps, which are not parameters.
Gear		Settings: Lanes, Theme, MIDI and How to use.

The lanes

Every step, lane by lane.

Each step has a gate, a note, an octave, a velocity and a length, each on a lane of its own with its own length, dice and lock. The Gate turns a step on or off; click its name and make it Chance instead, and each step gets a chance of playing, from never to always - switching never changes what plays. A Ratchet lane, which plays a step as quick repeats, waits in Settings > Lanes. The small Lift knob by a lane's name moves the whole lane up or down together and keeps its shape, so turning it back brings the line back; on Notes it moves every note up or down the scale, down to the root alone. The arrow under the lanes folds the controls away and gives the grid the whole face.



Scale

Which notes it uses.

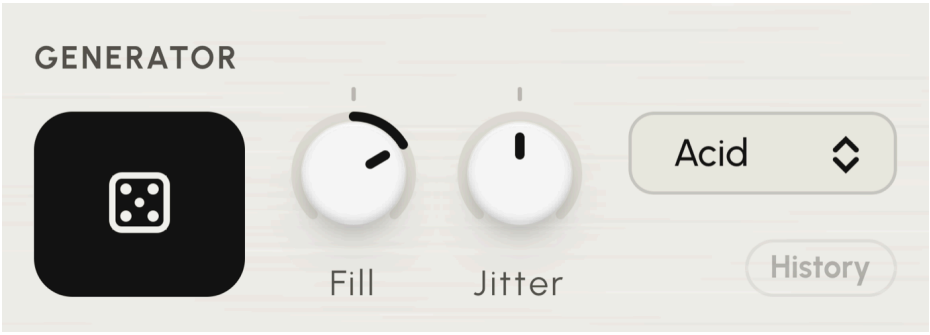
Pick a scale and a root. Every step you draw, every generated pattern and every mutation uses only those notes. Click a key on the keyboard to take a note out of the scale or put it back.



Generator

A pattern to start from.

Choose a style - Acid, Acid 2, Techno, Bass, Arp or Melodic - and press the dice for a new pattern in it. Fill sets how many steps play; Jitter how far the notes spread from the root, down to the root alone. History lists the patterns made this session, so you can go back to an earlier one.



Mutate

Change part of a pattern.

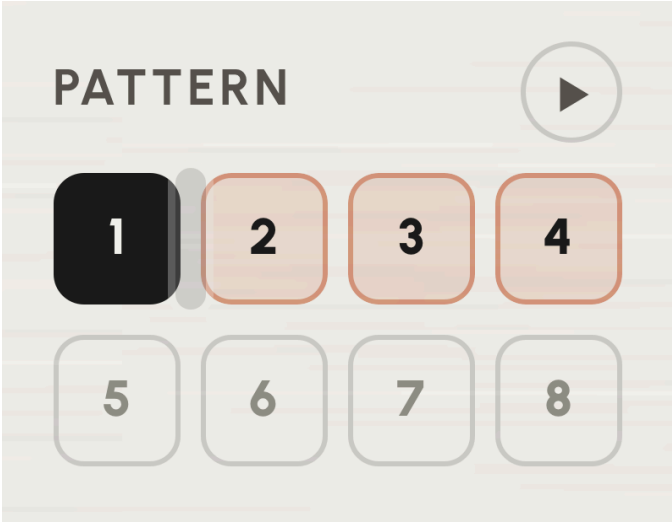
Mutate changes some steps and keeps the rest; Var sets how many. Press the play button beside it and it mutates by itself, every half bar to every 8 bars, so the pattern keeps changing. Lock a step, or a whole lane, and Mutate and the dice leave it alone.



Patterns and the chain

Eight patterns per preset.

Click a slot to switch pattern; each slot's menu copies, pastes and clears. The play button chains them: patterns play in turn from 1 to the end marker you drag, each for whole bars. With Keys on, notes C0 to G0 in a clip switch patterns too.



Rate and Direction

Play in any direction.

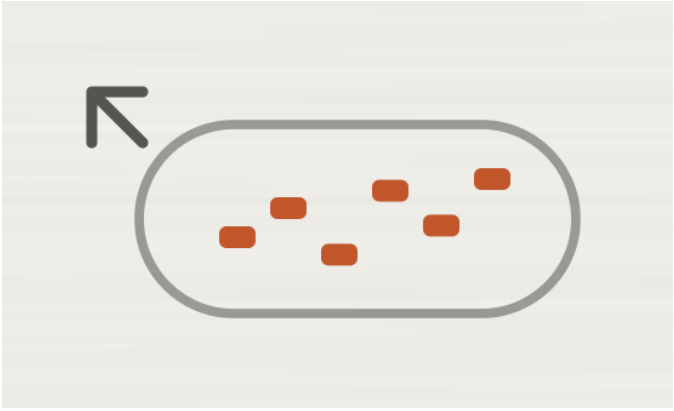
The arrow next to Rate sets which way the steps play: forward, reverse, ping-pong (there and back) or random. Rate sets the length of a step, from 1/4 to 1/32, with dotted and triplet values.



Export

Get the pattern as a MIDI clip.

Drag the Export icon onto a MIDI track in your DAW and the pattern lands there as a MIDI clip - the whole chain, if the chain is on. Clicking the icon saves the .mid file instead.



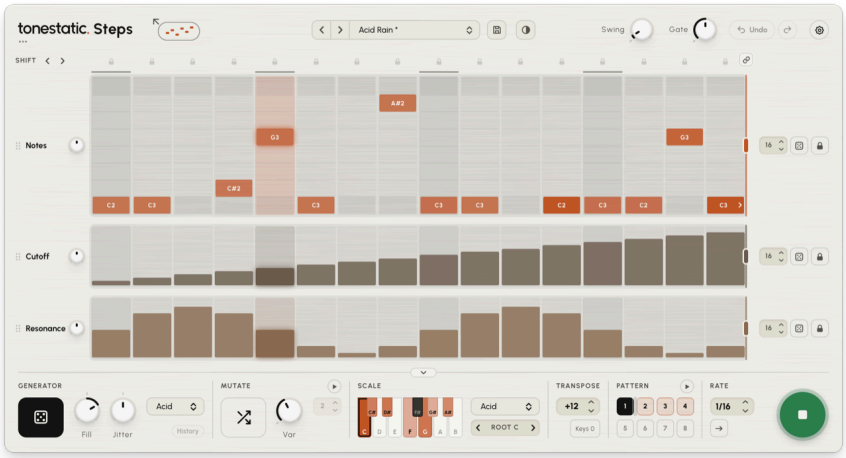
Settings

The **gear button** in the header opens Settings: **Lanes**, **Theme**, **MIDI** and **How to use**.

MIDI and the CC lanes

Any synth parameter, step by step.

Under the notes are two CC lanes, each with a value per step. Each sends any MIDI CC from 0 to 119, so it can move whatever your synth responds to - cutoff, resonance, drive, glide, an LFO's rate - on a hardware synth or a plugin. Draw a rise across the bar, a wave or one accent; each CC lane has its own length, dice and lock, like every other lane.



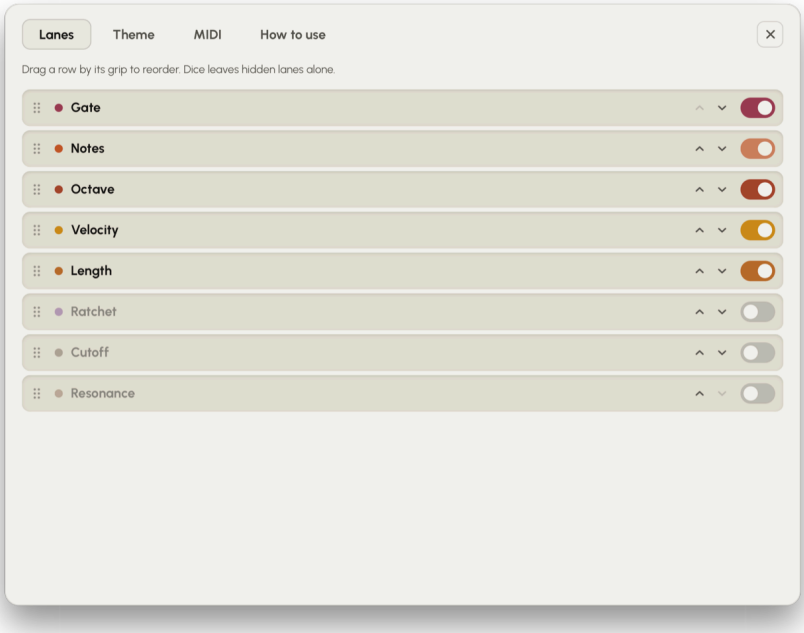
CONTROL	RANGE	WHAT IT DOES
Synth		Pick your synth and the CC lanes show its parameter names. **+ New synth** keeps a list of CCs of your own for one that is not there.
Channel	1 to 16	The MIDI channel Steps plays on.
CC 1, CC 2	0 to 119	What each CC lane moves. **Learn** beside a lane takes the number from the next knob you turn: press it, move a knob on a hardware synth or controller whose MIDI comes into Steps' track (any channel), and the lane takes that CC. Press it again to cancel. A plugin synth's knobs send no MIDI, so pick from its list or set the number with the arrows instead.
Keys	Off, Transpose, Gate	What notes coming in do. **Transpose**: a key transposes the line and stays until the next. **Gate**: the line plays only while a key is held, transposed by it, like an arpeggiator. With either, C0 to G0 (MIDI notes 24–31) pick patterns 1 to 8.

These are about your setup, not the pattern, so loading a preset never changes them. Your computer remembers the last ones you chose for every new Steps; a saved project keeps its own.

Lanes

Show and order the lanes.

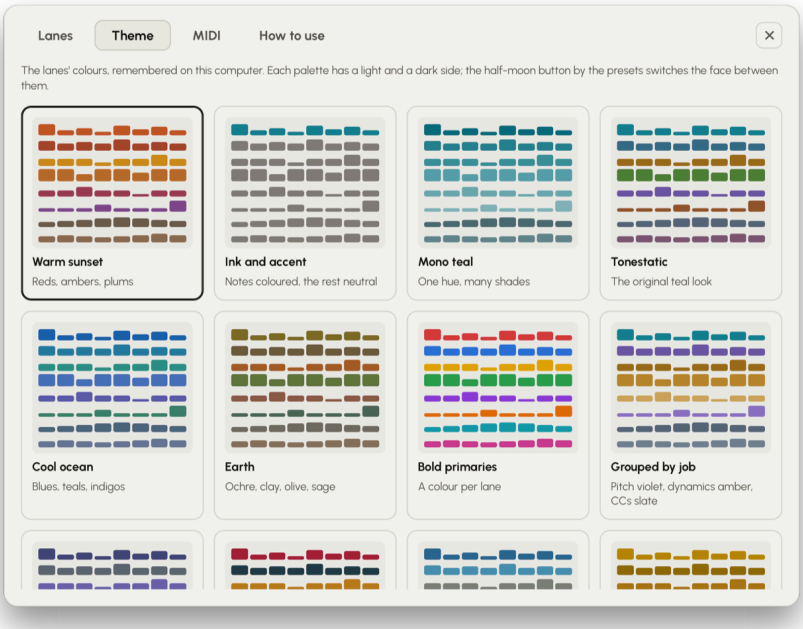
Settings > Lanes lists all eight lanes. Turn off the ones you don't use and drag the rest into the order you want. The two CC lanes and Ratchet start hidden; a CC lane sends only while it is shown, and a hidden Ratchet lane plays one hit per step. The lane setup is saved with each preset.



Theme

Lane colours.

Settings > Theme has twelve colour palettes for the lanes, from one colour per lane to a single hue in shades. Each has a light and a dark version, and the half-moon button next to the presets switches the face between them. The palette you pick is remembered on this computer.


Lanes
Theme
MIDI
How to use
The lanes' colours, remembered on this computer. Each palette has a light and a dark side; the half-moon button by the presets switches the face between them.
Warm sunset
Reds, ambers, plums
Ink and accent
Notes coloured, the rest neutral
Mono teal
One hue, many shades
Tonestatic
The original teal look
Cool ocean
Blues, teals, indigos
Earth
Ochre, clay, olive, sage
Bold primaries
A colour per lane
Grouped by job
Pitch violet, dynamics amber, CCs slate

Working with the controls

Knobs and faders

- **Drag** up or down to turn a knob, or to move a fader. The pointer is hidden while you drag, so you can go as far as you like.
- Hold **Shift** while dragging for fine adjustment.
- **Double-click** to send a control back to its resting position: the middle of its travel for most knobs, unity for the level faders.
- A knob that has been clicked also answers the **arrow keys**, with Shift for smaller steps.
- The value shows while you turn a control. A knob that works either side of a middle position (Tone, for instance) draws its arc out from twelve o'clock.

Switches, steppers and power buttons

Buttons that stay lit — Run, Auto, the chain's play button, a lane's lock — switch on and off with a click. **Steppers** — a value between ‹ and › arrows, like a lane's length — step with the arrows, Shift for bigger steps. **Menus** (Style, Scale, Root, Rate) open with a click. Steps has no power button: **Run** is how it starts and stops.

Automation, undo and the window

Every knob, fader, switch and stepper is a parameter your DAW can automate and map to a controller, under the name it has on the face (inside a module, with the module's name in front: "Delay Feedback"). A move made on the face lands in your DAW's undo history like any other.

Drag the **grip at the bottom-right corner** to make the window larger or smaller; it keeps its proportions.

The **half-filled circle** in the header switches the window between its dark and light looks. It changes nothing in the sound.

The window's size and its theme are saved with your project, so each instance reopens the way you left it.

Presets

Tonestatic Steps comes with 182 factory presets, in 5 categories: Acid, Acid 2, Arp, Bass and Techno. Your own presets sit beside them in the same list.

Browsing

The preset bar is in the middle of the header. Click the name to open the list: **Essentials** first, with Init at the top, then the categories. The ‹ › arrows beside it step through the presets in the order they are listed. Loading a preset changes the sound at once, and you can play through the change; the knobs and faders glide to their new positions over a moment, so you can see what moved.

When you move a control after loading a preset, a **dot** appears after its name: what you hear is no longer exactly the preset. Put the control back and the dot goes. A preset holds the eight patterns, the scale, the generator settings, the chain and which lanes are shown. It does not hold the MIDI settings — channel, CC numbers, Keys — which belong to your setup.

When you reopen a project, the plugin comes back with the preset's name and your changes as you left them. A new instance starts on **Init**.

Saving your own

The **disk button** right of the preset bar opens **Save Preset**. Type a name and save. Your presets are listed with the factory ones and step with the arrows like them. Saving under a name you already have replaces that preset. The factory presets are part of the plugin and cannot be changed: saving under a factory name gives you a preset of your own with that name, and the original is still there.

Each preset is one file, in a folder you can back up or copy to another computer:

macOS	`~/Library/Tonestatic/Tonestatic Steps/Presets`
Windows	`%APPDATA%\Tonestatic\Tonestatic Steps\Presets`

Run, the transport and hanging notes

Steps plays while your DAW plays and **Run** is on. Run is a parameter, so it can be automated to start and stop Steps within a song. Turning it off ends the note that is sounding at once.

Stop Steps with its **Run** button or your DAW's stop, not by switching the plugin off with the DAW's own device or bypass switch: some hosts simply stop calling a switched-off plugin, so the note it was playing never gets its end and hangs on the synth. If one does, press Run twice, or stop and start the transport.

Where a host gives it no transport at all, Steps keeps its own time at 120 BPM while Run is on. Steps adds no latency, and every note lands on its step to the sample.

Files, folders and help

Where everything is

macOS

Audio Unit plugins	`/Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/Components`
VST3 plugins	`/Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/VST3`
Manuals, licence, notices, uninstaller	`/Library/Application Support/Tonestatic`
Your presets	`~/Library/Tonestatic/Tonestatic Steps/Presets`
Licence and update settings	`~/Library/Tonestatic`

Windows

VST3 plugins	`C:\Program Files\Common Files\VST3`, or the folder you chose in the installer
Manuals, licence, notices	`C:\Program Files\Tonestatic`, and in the Start menu under Tonestatic
Your presets	`%APPDATA%\Tonestatic\Tonestatic Steps\Presets`
Licence and update settings	`%APPDATA%\Tonestatic`

`~/Library` is the Library folder in your home folder; in the Finder, hold Option and open the **Go** menu to find it. `%APPDATA%` can be typed into the File Explorer address bar as it is.

When something is not right

The plugin does not appear in my DAW

Restart the DAW, or rescan its plugins (in Ableton Live: **Settings → Plug-Ins → Rescan**). Check that your DAW looks in the folders above — most do, some let you add folders of your own. On a Mac, make sure you installed the format your DAW uses: Logic Pro and GarageBand load Audio Units only.

"Could not be opened" or a failed validation on a Mac

Run the installer again; it replaces whatever is in the way. The plugins are Universal, so it does not matter whether your DAW runs natively or under Rosetta.

The window is blank on Windows

The faces are drawn by Microsoft Edge WebView2. The installer adds it if it is missing, but it can be removed or broken later: install the Evergreen runtime from Microsoft's WebView2 page and reopen the plugin.

The effect does nothing

Check the power button at the top right of the window, and the licence panel: without a running trial or a licence, the plugin passes your sound through untouched. ··· → **Licence** says which it is.

Getting in touch

Questions, ideas or a bug to report: email **help@tonestatic.com**, or choose ··· → **Send feedback** in the plugin. With a problem, tell us your DAW and its version, your system (and on a Mac, Apple Silicon or Intel), the plugin and whether it is the AU or the VST3, and what you did, what you expected and what happened. A screenshot or a short screen recording helps a lot.

The latest version, the changelog and the answers to common questions are at **tonestatic.com**.

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