> "
> This is all very intimidating. But it's actually not complex at all.
> All this shit is no different than a VST. — *deadmau5*
> "

CHAPTER RECAP

In modular synthesis, each of the basic elements of a synthesizer–oscillators, filters, envelopes etc— is represented by its own specialized module, which can all be mixed and matched and patched together in different ways. By messing around and connecting modules together, you can create unexpected sounds that are guaranteed to be one of a kind.

Joel spends hours experimenting at his modular walls, until he stumbles across something that catches his ears. Then he records the patches he likes and saves them in a library for later use.

Voltage : While the average VST or keyboard communicates using MIDI (a digital language in which parameters like pitch and volume are assigned to numerical values), modules in a modular system usually communicate using voltage. You'll have to acquaint yourself with the basics of controlled voltage to get started, and if you're looking to make your DAW send note information to a modular system, you'll need a MIDI to voltage converter.

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TAKE IT FURTHER

Listen to deamau5's remix of "Ice Age", and pay attention to the strange sounds he's generating with his modular system.   How many different patches can you identify? How do you think they might've been constructed?

There are many online resources to learn more about modular systems. Check out these links, and continue to do your own research.

M
MASTERCLASS

▼ Modular Synthesis 101: The Basics
▼ Guide To Choosing A Modular Synth
▼ Purchase Modular Analog Synthesizers

ASSIGNMENT

▸ Create your own library of blips and bloops. Whether you've got access to a modular system or you're using a VST or keyboard synth, spend your next studio session messing around with patches, tweaking until you find some sounds that surprise you. Some might be made of musical notes, some might be more like random noises. Record them into your DAW. Then, export them as audio files, and keep them in your clip bin. Next time you're working on a track, see what they can add for you.

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