

Intellijel – Plonk

- [Manual PDF](#)
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[Plonk Physical Modeling Percussion Synthesizer Manual \(PDF\)](#)

Using Plonk in Full-Length Eurorack Songs: Techniques & Strategies

The Plonk module by Intellijel—based on physical modeling synthesis—offers an extraordinary palette for creating evolving electronic music. However, as you've noted, it's one thing to patch up a striking groove or sound, and quite another to structure a compelling, full-length track. Below are several compositional and technical strategies for exploiting Plonk, within a modular context, to move from cool sketches to finished, album-ready pieces.

1. Dynamic Sound Variation: Evolving Timbral Content

How: - **Preset Step Modulation:** Use the MOD input set to "Preset Step" to select between multiple Plonk presets (percussive kits, tuned percussions, SFX, etc) over the course of your composition. You can sequence these changes via CV generated by sequencers, modulation sources, or envelopes. This lets you switch sound palettes per section—for example, changing drum kits between verse, chorus, and breakdown. - **Morphing:** The MOD input in "Morph" mode lets you interpolate between two very different sounds. For entire track sections, slowly modulate the morph

position with a slow LFO, envelope follower, or manual control. This can make transitions between sections smooth and organic.

Result: Each section of your song can have its own unique drum sound—or even melodic percussion—just like switching kits on a drum machine, supporting arrangement and development.

2. Polyphonic Layering and Chokes: Creating Grooves and Articulations

How: - **Duophony:** Plonk supports two-voice polyphony. This means you can let one sound ring out while another plays without being choked—crucial for organic, flowing grooves. Use this for sustained sounds (like open hi-hats or cymbals) while short hits cut through. - **Choke/Articulation:** MOD input destinations “Choke Res”, “Choke Noise”, “Choke Both” can mute ringing tails on demand. Patch gates from other modules or drum triggers to the MOD input to choke sounds for rapid, DJ-style cuts, staccato fills, or pseudo-sidechain-type effects during transitions.

Result: Adds performative articulation, responsive fills, and dynamic drum machine-style behavior that moves beyond looping patterns.

3. Macro Modulation for Song Sections

How: - **Global Parameter Changes:** Use X/Y MOD assignable controls on Plonk for macro performance gestures: for instance, have one macro change decay, tone, and envelope—short and snappy for verses, long and resonant for breakdowns. - **CV Scene/Presets:** Use a voltage sequencer or keyframe module (e.g. Make Noise's Pressure Points, Malekko Voltage Block, or a programmable LFO) to send pre-set CVs to Plonk's X/Y/DECAY/MOD inputs, snapping your whole drum/percussion character to a new “scene” at every major song section.

Result: Fast, rhythmic, or evolving changes to the entire drum/percussion sound fitting the form of your song.

4. Physical Modeling for Melodic Elements

How: - **Pitched Percussion & Bass:** Plonk shines for pitched content—mallets, strings, marimbas. Sequence melodies and basslines via its 1v/oct input. Use quantizers/melody sequencer modules to feed Plonk with changing musical material throughout your track, not just drums. -

Randomize MOD Destination: At controlled moments (e.g. breakdowns, transitions, bridges), use a manual gate/button, or a randomized trigger to the MOD input, to radically change the timbral identity of an element. This can work as a “surprise” or for improvisational exploration.

Result: Plonk moves from drum/percussion to full, evolving melodic or harmonic instrument—supporting more song-like arrangements.

5. Saving and Recalling Compositions

How: - **Preset Memory:** Save up to 128 unique setup "scenes" for tracks or song sections. With external MIDI via the USB port, you can back up whole banks, exchange settings between projects, and “recall” specific configurations for live sets or in-the-studio song recall. - **Patch**

Organization: Use the naming features to organize song parts (e.g., “verse_kick”, “break_snare”) and use MOD CV to step/preset-select in sync with your master sequencer.

Result: Allows repeatable, performable song structure in a modular environment—something that’s notoriously hard to achieve on patch-memoryless modules.

6. Integration with Other Eurorack Modules

- **Master Clock/Sequencer:** Use trigger/gate/pitch CV from a master sequencer (Hermod, Metropolis, Eloquencer, etc) for full song structures (intro, verses, breakdowns).
- **Modulators:** Send LFOs, envelopes, random sources, or stepped voltages to X, Y, MOD, or DECAY to provide slow (structural) or fast (ornamental) changes over time.

- **Mixing and FX:** Route Plonk into VCA/Envelopes, filters, or external effects for section-based FX (e.g. reverb-washed breakdowns vs. dry, punchy verses).
 - **Other Voices:** Use Plonk as just one layer—paired with analog drum modules, samplers, and classic synth voices, switching focus in the mix as the song develops.
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Example: Song Structure Strategy

- **Intro:** Use Plonk for sparse metallic hits, slowly morphing between presets.
 - **Verse:** Preset Step selects a tighter drum kit. Decay is short, minimal reverbs.
 - **Chorus:** Switch to a fatter, more resonant kit preset. Decay and Tone macros open up for impact.
 - **Bridge/Breakdown:** Use “Randomize” on MOD for glitchy FX. Choke long decays for abrupt drops.
 - **Outro:** Slowly morph back toward intro timbres, fading out with MOD or bitcrusher for a lo-fi finish.
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Further Reading

- [Plonk Official Manual PDF](#)
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