

Erica Synths — Octasource

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[Erica Synths Black Octasource Manual \(PDF\)](#)

Sound Design Strategies with Erica Synths Black Octasource

As a Eurorack musician, the **Erica Synths Black Octasource** offers rich, multi-output LFO capabilities that transcend conventional modulation roles. Its unique features—such as 8 phase-shifted outputs, waveform morphing, FM, CV control over phase and waveform, external sync, and flexible output modes—open up experimental territories for making powerful percussive, bass-heavy, and ethereal sounds. Below are techniques tailored to your interest in **distorted percussion, aggressive basslines, and haunting pads**.

1. Distorted Percussive Sounds

Techniques

A. Audio-Rate Modulation (Turning LFO into Oscillator/Modulator) -

Patch: Crank the *RATE* control into its highest setting (up to 30Hz). Patch one or more outputs into the FM or AM (audio-rate) input of a VCO or a filter. - **Result:** Fast, phase-shifted LFOs create metallic, clangorous, or broken digital percussion when used as FM sources, especially if the waveform is ramp, S&H, or sharply morphs.

B. Multi-Output Rhythm Driver - Patch: Use MULTI mode for different waveforms on each output. Patch 2–3 outputs into several percussion LPGs or envelope generators. Each gets a different rhythmic modulation due to phase shifts. - **Result:** Generates complex, shifting rhythm beds. If used with VCAs and distortion modules, it produces wildly throbbing, glitched percussion textures.

C. Unipolar Percussive FM - Tip: Switch to *unipolar* output (+0V to +5V) for envelope/FM modulation of pitch or cutoff in classic synth drum sounds (see manual: Set *RATE* to 12 o'clock + *MUL/SING* switch 6x). - **Result:** Removes unwanted negative voltage "pop," accentuating the attack phase and sharper percussive snap.

2. Wild Dubstep/Drum & Bass Basslines

Techniques

A. Sync to Master Clock for Groovy Modulation - Patch: Patch your DAW or sequencer clock into *SYNC*. Now the LFO modulates in sync (*RATE* knob freezes modulation except in "freeze" mode). - **Result:** Ensures your wobbles hit exactly on the beat—vital for modern bass music.

B. Eight-Phase Wobble Modulation - Patch: In SINGLE mode, take several outputs (e.g., at 0°, 45°, and 90°) and modulate multiple parameters: filter cutoff, resonance, waveshaper amount, or VCA level. - *Example CV Routing:* Output 1 → Filter cutoff, Output 2 → Oscillator FM, Output 3 → VCA CV. - **Result:** Each parameter modulates with a different phase, yielding morphing, interlocking wobble-bass movement typical of complex dubstep/Drum & Bass lines.

C. FM Feedback for Aggressive Distortion - Patch: Patch an Octasource output into its own *FM IN*. Use another output/CV to modulate *FM LEVEL* knob by hand or via CV. - **Result:** Self-FM introduces pitch warble and chaotic distortion. Tame with downstream filter or distortion for modern, aggressive textures.

3. Haunting Atmospheric Pads

Techniques

A. Multi-Parameter Pad Mod - Patch: Use several Octasource outputs to subtly modulate parameters such as reverb mix, chorus rate, or multiple oscillator levels/panning. - **Result:** The slow drift between outputs (at sub-audio LFO rates) provides an organic, ever-evolving motion in stereo or surround field—perfect for haunting pads.

B. Morphing Ambience - Patch: Choose MULTI mode. Use the *WAVE* knob or CV to morph between outputs, routing them to FM/AM/shaping inputs on digital or analog oscillators. - **Result:** Smoothly morphing waveforms at different phases create unpredictable artifacts—great for surreal modulated textures under pad layers.

C. Freeze for Timeless Modulation Snapshots - Patch: Engage *Freeze* (RATE at 12 o'clock or via external clock). This holds the CV state. Unfreeze for dramatic changes. - **Result:** Create shimmering, frozen modulations or time-suspending transitions in ambient and cinematic builds.

Extra Creative Tips

- **Inter-modulation:** Self-patch the Octasource (output to *WAVE CV*, *PHASE CV*, or *FM IN*) to create evolving feedback LFO patterns.
 - **Waveform Selection via Sequencer:** Route a CV sequence to the *WAVE CV* input to create animated, sequencer-driven modulations.
 - **LED Metrology:** Use the bipolar LEDs not just as indicators—visually “patch” by rhythm/level feedback for syncing with other modules by eye.
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Further Exploration

- Experiment with **external quantizers** after the LFO outputs for modular pseudo-random gating/pitching.
 - Mix outputs for complex modulations (e.g., sum 0° and 180° outputs for balanced, biphasic CV).
 - Use S&H (sample & hold) wave for stepped, glitchy effects—combine with slow morph for unpredictable random voltages.
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