Tiptop Audio — RS808

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Creative RS808 Modulation Techniques for Unique Sounds

As a Eurorack modular synth musician, you can push the Tiptop Audio RS808 far beyond its classic TR-808 Rimshot/Clavs heritage. Here's how you can use CV modulation, external processing, and creative patching to craft **distorted percussion**, **aggressive basslines**, and **haunting pads**.

1. Distorted Percussive Sounds

Although the RS808 is a percussive module at its core, modulation and processing can bring out dirt, punch, and strangeness! - **Overdrive/Distortion:** Patch the RS OUT to a wavefolder, distortion, or audio-rate VCA. Feedback the output into itself using a mixer for gnarly, unpredictable distortion. - **Modulate PITCH with LFO/CV:** Send a fast LFO or envelope into the PITCH CV input (through a CV-to-knob interface module if direct CV isn't supported) to quickly bend the pitch at every hit. This gives short, sharp, pitch-shifted "crack" or "zap" sounds. - **SNAP Envelope:** Use an envelope or LFO to modulate SNAP (if possible via CV). If no CV input is available, try manually riding this knob or sequencing stepped voltage via motorized pots or macro controllers. - **Extreme ACCENT:** Sequence staccato accents with high ACEENT knob settings and varying gate/trigger patterns. Accents not only boost volume but also the "attack" portion, which through saturation/distortion yields a chaotic impact. - **External**

Ring Modulation: RS808 through a ring modulator with another drum/oscillator yields metallic, clangy tones.

2. Crazy Dubstep/Drum & Bass Basslines

Transform the Clavs or Rimshot into heavy, pitched percussion bass hits: - **Low PITCH, Sharp SNAP:** Set PITCH to minimum, SNAP about 25-50%. This gets you closer to a punchy, woody click useful as a bass "transient." - **Modulate PITCH with Envelope:** Envelope-follow a kick or sequencer and mult the envelope to PITCH for a "wow" or "zip" sound. This pitch envelope is classic for dubstep bass one-shots. - **Sub Harmonics:** Mult RS OUT to a suboctave generator (or analog divider) and mix for thick, weighty bass impact. - **Distortion + Filtering:** After overdriving, run the signal through a VCF (lowpass, high resonance) to emphasize the "wub" or "growl" of the bass. - **Accent & Sequencing:** Apply sharp, stepped accent patterns: combine ACCENT modulation with fast triggers/gate burst circuits for cascading stuttered bass.

3. Haunting Atmospheric Pads

While this module is percussive, layering, reprocessing, and creative modulation can repurpose it as a source for strange, evolving pads: - **Long Reverb/Granular Processing:** RS OUT into a big, cavernous reverb or granular texture processor; EQ and filter post-effect for shimmer/air. - **Slow LFO on PITCH & SNAP:** If you have a way to voltage-control these (using macro knob controllers or expert sleepers), very slow modulations waft the tonality for eerie, moving textures. - **Layer and Pan**: Mult the output to several FX processors (delay, reverb, phaser), pan each, and blend for a stereo-scape of hits and tones. - **Gated Accents:** Slowly trigger ACCENT gates so that certain hits emerge from the ambient wash with extra attack —a ghostly, unpredictable emphasis. - **Resample and Stretch:** For even more pad potential, sample a series of processed RS808 hits, resample/granular stretch them (using a sampler module or DAW), then re-inject them into your system as pad layers.

Bonus Modular Patching Tips

- **VCAs Are Your Friend:** Use VCAs to modulate the amplitude of the RS808 dynamically in a patch: chopped, ducked, or sidechained by another percussion sound.
- **Unusual Gate/Trigger Sources:** Clock dividers, random gates, and Euclidean sequencers give extra rhythmic interest to both normal and accent inputs.
- **Quad VCA/Mod Mix:** Summing different modulations (envelope + LFO) for both PITCH and ACCENT exploits the mask of parameter space this drum voice offers.

Combining these techniques, the RS808 can go far beyond its original role —serving as a percussive workhorse, wild bass generator, or even a sinister soundscape source.

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