Mutable Instruments — Clouds

- Manual PDF

Mutable Instruments Clouds Manual (PDF)

Creative Modulation Techniques for Mutable Instruments Clouds

As a Eurorack musician, Mutable Instruments Clouds offers a powerful palette for real-time granular processing. Here's how to push it to its extremes for **distorted percussion**, **wild basslines** (think dubstep/DnB), and **haunting atmospheric pads**, focusing on modulation and patching strategies:

1. Distorted Percussive Sounds

Modulation Tips:

- **Audio Input Drive**: Crank the INPUT GAIN (**G**) above unity (+0dB) for soft-clipping, distortion, and "crushed" artifacts—especially at lower-quality settings (8-bit μ-law / 16kHz).
- **Freeze Manipulation**: Use short, precise triggers (via CV or pressing the button) to "chop" drum hits or transients. Modulate the FREEZE GATE (**1**) input with a clock, gate pattern, or sequencer for broken, retriggered, or glitched percussion grains.
- **Grain Density as Envelope**: Modulate **DENSITY (H & CV 9)** with envelopes or fast LFOs: Fast, random grains yield scattershot, metallic, or noise bursts; slower, synced grains can reinforce percussive hits.

- **Random Positioning**: Mult a noise source (or recycle an output) into **POSITION CV (3)** for unpredictable fragmentation/scrambling of percussive input.
- **TEXTURE to Diffuser**: Turning TEXTURE (I) past ~2 o'clock adds a transient-smudging allpass network—morphing hard-hits into reverberant, "ghosted" echoes.

Example Patch

- Kick/snare sample into audio input.
- Stepped random or noise to **GRAIN SIZE** and **PITCH CV**.
- Fast envelope/LFO to **DENSITY**.
- Set BLEND to max **Feedback** for overdriven, ringing decay.

---

2. Dubstep/Drum & Bass Basslines

Modulation Tips:

- **Audio Input**: Feed in raw, harmonically rich bass (saw, FM, detuned sub). Try resampling your own resampled basses!
- **V/Oct Tracking**: Sequence the **PITCH CV (5)** input with your pitch CV for tightly tuned re-pitched grains. Use variable or stepped modulation for glitched "wobble" pitches.
- **Random Wobble**: Modulate **POSITION (3)** and **SIZE (4)** with random CV, a slow LFO, or a sample & hold. This adds grain "movement"—the core of dubstep growl.
- **Stereo Spread**: Assign BLEND to **Spread**, then modulate it with an LFO. This "throws" grains around the stereo field for wide, jarring bass texture.
- **Feedback/Reverb Abuse**: Blast **Feedback** or **Reverb** with BLEND—especially with FREEZE enabled—for monstrous, smeared, or re-circulating tails.

Example Patch

- LFO to **Blend (Spread)**, stepped random to **Blend (Feedback)**.
- Slow sample & hold to **POSITION**, synced to your bassline rhythm.

- Sequencer triggers the **GRAIN TRIGGER (2)** for sliced, rhythmic grunts.

---

3. Haunting Atmospheric Pads

Modulation Tips:

- **Source Material**: Input a slow-moving pad or stacked chords—Clouds excels at turning boring chords into ever-shifting beds.
- **Freeze Textures**: Momentarily FREEZE a lush, performance-sampled chord/progression; modulate **POSITION** with a slow random LFO to evoke evolution and fade.
- **Long Grains**: Increase **GRAIN SIZE** for smooth, swelling pads—modulate **SIZE** with a triangle LFO for undulating "breaths."
- **Dense/Random Grains**: Turn up **DENSITY** (clockwise for random, counter for steady) for shimmer or cloud-like effect.
- **Envelope Morph**: Sweep **TEXTURE** from square to Hann for envelope morphing; past 2 o'clock for "smearing"—haunted, blurry trails.
- **Reverb & Feedback**: Use BLEND to apply maximum **Reverb**. Conversely, modulate **Feedback** for evolving, almost infinite-layer pads.

Example Patch

- Sustained chord to input, FREEZE engaged after capturing.
- Slow S&H or LFO to **POSITION**, subtle LFO to **SIZE**.
- Modulate BLEND between **Reverb** and **Spread**.
- Blend in external reverb for cavernous soundscapes, or push input gain for a rougher tape feel.

Key Modulation Methods

Destination	Ideal Source(s)	Sound Effect
POSITION CV (3)	S&H, slow LFO, audio-rate chaos	Movement through frozen buffer
SIZE CV (4)	Envelope, random CV, LFO	Grain length stutter, texture
PITCH CV (5)	Sequencer, V/OCT, audio-rate mod, random	Chopped, pitched, aliasing grains
TEXTURE CV (10)	Envelope, random	Envelope morph, transient blur
BLEND CV (6)	LFO, random, sequencer, envelope	Morph between key FX parameters
DENSITY CV (9)	Envelope, patterned gates, clocked LFO	Burst, scattering, or smooth fog

Quick Tricks

- **Noise as Mod Source:** Clouds' internal audio outputs can be routed back as unpredictable CV to mod PARAMS.
- **Micro Sample Player:** DENSITY at noon; drive GRAIN TRIGGER with sequencer/clock.
- **Saving Scenes:** Use buffer save/load for fast recall of wild sound design snapshots.

Generated With Eurorack Processor