

Expert Sleepers – ES-9

- [Manual PDF](#)
-

[Download the ES-9 v1.3 User Manual \(PDF\)](#)

Expert Sleepers ES-9: Creating Full-Length Eurorack Songs

The Expert Sleepers ES-9 is a powerful audio interface tailored for Eurorack environments, combining multichannel audio I/O, robust internal mixing, and flexible MIDI connectivity. While its primary role is often as a bridge to a DAW (Digital Audio Workstation) or iOS device, careful use of its features can play a key part in composing, structuring, and performing complete modular songs.

Below, I'll analyze features from the manual and propose creative strategies—especially for arranging and structuring full-length songs when integrated with other modules.

Key Features & Their Musical Value

Multichannel Audio Input/Output

- **14 DC-coupled inputs / 12 outputs (8x 3.5mm DC-coupled, 2x balanced)**
- **USB audio interface (16 in / 16 out)**
- **Mixers, busses, flexible routing**

How this Helps:

Route multiple voices (e.g. basslines, lead, percussion, effects, CV) into

individual DAW tracks or sum and remix inside the ES-9, allowing you to record and automate multiple stems for advanced song arrangement.

Internal Mixers & Routing

- Two 8x8 mixers (if S/PDIF is disabled)
- Routing between physical IO, USB, busses, and mixers

Song Structuring Tricks: - **Dynamic Song Parts:** Mute/unmute mixer channels, swap between two saved configurations (hosted/standalone), or use MIDI to fade/move sounds between parts (intro, drop, breakdown, etc). - **On-the-fly Remixes:** Change what is sent to the main/phones/aux outs—e.g., drop out the kick, boost the reverb return, add new timbres.

Scene/Configuration Switching

- Push-hold main knob switches between two pre-saved configurations

Arrangement Use:

Instantly switch between two entire routing/mixing setups—perfect for toggling between "A" (e.g., verse) and "B" (chorus/breakdown) patterns for live sets.

MIDI CC Mixer Control

- Remote mix automation from a MIDI controller/sequencer
- Up to 64 CCs for fader/pan/level control

Practical Uses: - Use an external MIDI sequencer (e.g., Arturia Beatstep Pro) to mute, solo, or fade in/out stems over a song's timeline. - Program pattern-based scene changes by sending CCs for arrangement (e.g., silent breakdown, FX send bursts, complex transitions).

DAW & Hybrid Workflow

- Tight integration with DAW/iOS for multitrack I/O
- Immediate resampling and live capture

For Full Songs: - Record modular stems in the DAW, arrange/copy segments, add effects, and then, if desired, send back to modular for hybrid performances or reprocessing. - Automate ES-9's mix via your DAW, essentially treating the modular setup as a DAW-recallable instrument.

S/PDIF Digital & Headphone Out

- Digital expandability; independent headphone cueing

Use for Structure: - Route a special element (click track, cue mix) to headphones only—practice transitions, monitor a sidechain beat, or solo elements for performance.

Practical Song Arrangement Techniques with the ES-9

1. Modular Song Mode Swapper

- Save two radically different routings/mixes:
- **Config 1:** Standard groove/verse structure.
- **Config 2:** Add/drop voices, reverb wash, FX, or switch to a breakdown.
- Use the push-button to fluidly shift between these during a live set.

2. MIDI Scenes & Automated Mixing

- Set up MIDI CC sequences to:
- Gradually transpose synth voices.
- Mute or fade percussion.
- Send CV/LFOs to modulate pan/level of voices in time with the song.
- Use an external MIDI sequencer or DAW to automate structure, “playing” your mix and transitions live or from pre-programmed clips.

3. Hybrid Sequencing

- Sequence voices in the modular.
- Multitrack record into DAW via ES-9, edit/cut/paste to form structure.
- Route DAW tracks back to modular for real-time filter/EQ/FX via ES-9, recompose, and re-record for a hybrid electroacoustic feel.

4. Performance-Ready Live Sets

- Assign:
- Background textures and evolving pads to one mixer.
- Percussion/bass to another.
- Alternate between “mix blocks,” use ES-9’s routing/summing to crossfade, perform drop-ins, or quickly mute/unmute entire voices without repatching.

5. Advanced Song Evolution

- The ES-9’s internal EQ, DC offset, and mix smoothing can be modulated live or via MIDI, meaning your mix can evolve in character (more saturated, filtered, etc.).
 - Use mix smoothing to avoid clicks/pops during abrupt changes, ensuring pro-sounding transitions.
-

Example Song Structure Workflow

1. **Build Modular Patch:** Multiple voice generators and sequencers patched into ES-9 inputs.
2. **Record Modular Jam via ES-9:** Capture stems to DAW, improvising with muting/mixer controls.
3. **Arrange in DAW:** Chop, repeat, and move sections for song length.
4. **Automate Mix (Optional):** Use DAW or MIDI controller to morph the song—fading out the bass, isolating the melody, layering FX, or morphing the structure.

5. **Bounce to Stereo:** Play back through ES-9, reprocess with filters/FX, or perform on stage, using configuration switching for bold changes.
-

Integration Ideas with Other Eurorack Modules

- **Switches/Sequential Switches:** Use with ES-9 mixers for stepping/bursting between sound sources.
 - **Sampler/Looper Modules:** Sample phrases, then remix and re-perform sections through ES-9.
 - **Function Generators/LFOs:** Modulate mixer channel levels for organic, evolving arrangements.
 - **Logic/Trigger Modules:** Program automated scene changes, or even patch triggers to send MIDI through breakout, interacting with external gear.
-

Conclusion

The ES-9 isn't just a transparent digital I/O—it's a compositional and performative tool, able to structure and morph full-length modular tracks via mixing, MIDI, and hybrid workflows. Its flexibility enables you to "play the song" just as much as any voice or sequencer modules in your rack.

Generated With Eurorack Processor