

Bastl Instruments – Dark Matter

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Eurorack Song Structure with the Bastl Dark Matter

The **Bastl Instruments Dark Matter** is a feedback-driven VCA preamp and dynamics processor, uniquely suited to pushing your modular system past traditional sonic boundaries. While it excels at generating wild, unstable feedback and destructive textures, its real artistry lies in sculpting dynamic, evolving movement—essential for building a compelling full-length modular composition.

Below are strategies and concrete patch ideas for integrating Dark Matter into song-length performances, focusing on **variation, transitions, tension/release, and live interaction**.

1. Dynamic Transitions & Song Structure

- **Feedback Crossfading**
- Use the **X-Fade** section to blend between clean and feedback-rich signals. Use CV from sequencers, random sources, or manual controllers to automate progression through sections (e.g. intro/outro swells, bridge-to-chorus risers).
- **Patch Idea:**
 - Patch a stable drum loop and a feedbacking noise patch into X-Fade A and B.

- Crossfade slowly across the span of a song, fading in chaos as tension rises, and dialing back to clarity when you want to "drop" back to groove.

- **Drive and Tone Sculpting**

- **DRIVE** and **TONE** parameters (and their CV inputs) enable dramatic timbral shifts, making it easy to move from clean, punchy passages to saturated, overdriven verse/chorus/bridge sections.

2. Rhythmic Modulation and Gated Chaos

- **Envelope Following with DYNAMICS**

- Route percussive material through Dark Matter's **input**. Use **DYNAMICS** (envelope follower) as a CV source to modulate other parameters or modules, syncing wild effects and feedback level to your drums.

- **Patch Idea:**

- Patch kick/snare loop to INPUT, mult DYNAMICS OUT to modulate FX send or filter cutoff elsewhere.
- Vary DYNAMICS DECAY for longer evolving phrases (breakdowns/build-ups).

- **Gated Feedback/Breakdowns**

- Use triggers or gates (from trackers/concrete sequencers) to open/close the **Drive CV** or **FBK CV**, gating feedback so it only erupts as fills or in transitions.

3. Expressive, Thematic Variation

- **Manual Playability**

- Use the big faders for direct control during live takes, riding **DRIVE** or **TONE** for expressive phrasing, especially during transitions (e.g. morphing basslines, noise sweeps, outro washes).

- **CV Automation**

- Sequence parameters from your main sequencer or performance controller to script sonic "story arcs"—feedback gradually increasing into a breakdown, for instance.

- **Presets via CV Switches**

- Use CV switches (external modules) or manual multis to quickly flip between very different feedback/tone/drive setups, imitating preset changes typical in a DAW-based song structure.
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4. Layering and Thematic Development

- **Parallel Processing**

- Split audio into **Dry** and **Dark Matter**-processed signals (or two Dark Matter chains). Layer for tension/release, verse/chorus contrast.

- **Stereo Drama/Send Effects**

- Use X-Fade OUT and clean output on different returns for dramatic stereo movement.
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5. Patch Examples for Song Parts

Song Part	Patch Concept
Intro	Start with feedback only. Manually fade in DRY signal or use CV to blend in melody/bass as the feedback recedes.
Verse	Use DRIVE and TONE for punchy, clear sound; CV these with sequencer for subtle variations every 8/16 bars.
Build/ Transition	Increase FBK and DRIVE, modulate with LFO or envelope, automate X-Fade to slowly introduce chaos.

Song Part	Patch Concept
Drop/Chorus	Sudden reduction in feedback, increase BASS/TREBLE on TONE, open up X-FADE to bring clarity or distortion punch.
Breakdown	Gated feedback—patch a rhythmic gate sequence to FBK CV, sync with drums, building intensity.
Outro	Gradually raise FBK and reduce DRIVE for a noisy, textural fade-out; or reverse, dialing in clarity to "resolve" the track.

6. Integration with Other Modules

- **Sequencers:** Automate any CV input (DRIVE, TONE, X-FADE, FBK, DYNAMICS), synchronizing feedback evolution to musical events.
 - **Utilities:** Use attenuverters, VCAs, and logic modules to refine modulations and timing of feedback transitions.
 - **Effects:** Feed Dark Matter output into delay, reverb, and granular modules for additional depth.
 - **Envelope Generators:** Mult envelope outs to DYNAMICS CV or FBK CV for even more sculpted song structure movement.
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Final Tips

- **Record Long Takes:** Embrace manual control and the unpredictability of feedback for happy accidents. Arrange long jams into song sections post-recording.
- **Scene Changes:** Use external muters or matrix mixers to shift sound layers in/out for distinct song sections.
- **Evolving Patches:** Design patches that evolve with little tweaks; the interplay of feedback, crossfade, and tonic changes will give a sense of organic development.

A feedback-based module like Dark Matter is not just a texture box—it's a performance instrument. Treat every fader and knob as a live performer in your song, and focus on **movement, contrast, and transformation** for engaging full-length modular music.

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