Earthquaker Devices — Afterneath

- Manual PDF

Manual PDF

EarthQuaker Devices Afterneath (Eurorack) — melodic use analysis

The attached manual is for a single Eurorack module:

- **EarthQuaker Devices Afterneath (Eurorack module)**

So there aren't multiple modules in this PDF to combine with each other directly. But the **Afterneath itself can absolutely be used as a melodic sound-shaping and quasi-pitched voice** when patched with the rest of a modular system.

What makes it melodic?

The key melodic features in the manual are:

- **Drag** changes the spacing of the internal delay lines
- **Mode** changes how Drag responds, including:
- unquantized
- 1V/oct-style response
- quantized scales:
    - chromatic
    - major

    - minor
    - pentatonic
    - octaves + fifths
    - octaves
- **Self-oscillation** can turn the module into a kind of unstable pitched source
- **Drag CV input** can be driven by external CV for note-like movement
- **Reflect Send/Return** lets you reshape the feedback path, which can emphasize resonances and pitch behavior

In short: **Afterneath is primarily a reverb, but it can behave like a melodic processor and sometimes like a strange oscillator.**

Core melodic roles for Afterneath

1. Quantized melodic processor for incoming notes

One of the strongest uses is to feed Afterneath with a sound source that already has pitch content:

- VCO
- plucked voice
- sampled percussion
- short envelopes
- noise bursts through a filter

Then use:

- **Mode 3–9**
- **Drag CV input**
- a sequencer, keyboard, random voltage, or quantized CV source

This lets Afterneath **re-pitch or melodically transform the material in its buffer**.

Best modes for melody

From the manual:

- **Mode 3**: Unquantized Volt/Octave
- **Mode 4**: Chromatic
- **Mode 5**: Major
- **Mode 6**: Minor
- **Mode 7**: Pentatonic
- **Mode 8**: Octaves & Fifths
- **Mode 9**: Octaves

These are the modes most relevant for musical pitch structure.

Musical result

You can play a note or phrase into Afterneath, then use CV into **Drag** to create:

- harmonized trails
- stepped melodic echoes
- scale-constrained shimmer-like movement
- pseudo-arpeggiation from a held sound

This is especially effective when the input is sparse and percussive.

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2. Self-oscillating pseudo-oscillator

The manual explicitly says that with higher **Length** and **Reflect** settings, Afterneath will self-oscillate, and that with CV over **Drag**, this becomes an interesting **voltage-controlled oscillator**.

Important caveat from the manual:

- it is **not a precision oscillator**
- pitch depends partly on the sound fed into it
- harmonic/enharmonic transformations occur in feedback
- Drag responds only to **positive voltages between about 1.6V and 4.1V**

- the **Drag knob acts as an offset** for incoming CV

Musical result

This gives you a voice that is great for:

- ghost melodies
- unstable lead lines
- drone melodies
- tuned feedback motifs
- haunted interval jumps

It is especially good for:

- ambient
- experimental
- soundtrack work
- generative tonal patches

Not ideal if you need perfect tuning over many octaves.

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3. Scale-locked generative melody source

Modes **5–9** are especially good for this.

Patch:

- random stepped CV
- sample-and-hold
- a slow sequencer
- chaotic CV
- a modulation source into Drag CV

Then select:

- **Major**
- **Minor**
- **Pentatonic**
- **Octaves & Fifths**

- **Octaves**

According to the manual, random voltages into Drag CV in these modes produce **random melodies based on the selected scale**.

Musical result

This makes Afterneath a very strong module for:

- generative melodic layers
- scale-safe ambient patterns
- semi-random pitched washes
- evolving background motifs

If you use **Mode 8 or 9**, the pitch behavior becomes more sparse and consonant.

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4. Buffer-based melodic transposition effect

The manual repeatedly refers to audio in the **buffer**. That's important.

Afterneath isn't just adding reverb tail; it's holding and transforming content in its delay structure. This means you can:

- feed in a single note
- let it ring
- modulate Drag slowly
- get warped pitch glides or stepped scale movement

Good input material

For melodic use, feed it:

- short sine/triangle notes
- plucked LPG sounds
- filtered saw stabs
- FM plinks
- vocal-like resonant hits
- tuned percussion

Less dense input usually gives clearer melodic behavior.

Patch ideas for melodic components

Patch 1: Scale-quantized echo melody

Goal: turn a simple note source into a melodic echo line

Patch

- VCO or voice -> **Audio Input**
- Sequence that voice normally
- Set **Mode** to:
- **5 Major**, **6 Minor**, or **7 Pentatonic**
- Patch a stepped CV sequencer or random CV -> **Drag CV In**
- Turn **Drag CV attenuator** clockwise
- Set **Mix** moderately high
- Set **Length** medium
- Set **Reflect** low to medium
- Use **Diffuse** to choose sharper repeats or washier trails

Result

Each incoming note generates a tail whose internal pitch movement follows the chosen scale. This can act like:

- a counter-melody
- harmonized echo
- melodic extension of a lead line

Patch 2: Tuned self-oscillating lead/drone

Goal: use Afterneath as a strange playable voice

Patch

- No sustained input required after excitation, but start by feeding a note or pulse burst into **Audio Input**
- Raise **Length** and **Reflect** above noon until self-oscillation starts
- Select **Mode 3–9**
- Patch keyboard or sequencer CV -> **Drag CV Input**
- Set Drag attenuator full clockwise initially
- Use the manual's scaling method:
- Drag CV attenuator full clockwise
- Drag knob at noon
- choose Mode 3–9
- bring in self-oscillation
- find upper usable Drag range with highest note
- back off Length/Reflect if needed

Result

A playable unstable oscillator-like texture that works well for:

- drones
- eerie leads
- melodic feedback lines
- textured bass motifs

Tip

Use **Mode 7 Pentatonic** or **Mode 8 Octaves & Fifths** first; these tend to produce musically forgiving results.

Patch 3: Generative melody cloud

Goal: create autonomous melodic ambience

Patch

- Send occasional plucks, clicks, or filtered noise bursts -> **Audio Input**
- Set **Dry Kill** on if you only want the effected layer
- Set **Mode** to **5, 6, 7, 8, or 9**
- Random stepped CV -> **Drag CV Input**
- Slow triangle or random smooth CV -> **Diffuse CV** if available in your system
- Another slow CV -> **Length CV**
- Set **Reflect** near the edge of regeneration
- Tune **Dampen** to manage brightness

Result

The module becomes a melodic atmosphere engine: - notes smear into harmony - random voltages become tonal motion - tails turn into motifs

This is excellent for background melodic content that doesn't feel like a conventional sequencer line.

Patch 4: Pseudo-arpeggiator from one held note

Goal: derive a melody from a single sustained sound

Patch

- Hold a steady oscillator note or a long envelope into **Audio Input**
- Set **Mode** to **4 Chromatic** or **5/6/7** for scale-based motion
- Send clocked stepped CV or sequencer CV to **Drag**
- Keep **Length** and **Reflect** moderate

- Adjust **Diffuse** lower for more articulated delay taps
- Use **Mix** to blend with original note

Result

The reverb tail behaves like a broken, magical arpeggiator. Great for:

- melodic ornamentation
- accompaniment lines
- rhythmic pitch motion behind drones

Patch 5: Feedback-loop melodic coloration

Goal: use Reflect send/return to make pitch behavior more pronounced

Patch

- **Reflect Send** -> external processor -> **Reflect Return**
- Good processors:
- filter
- VCA
- wavefolder
- distortion
- LPG
- Use **Reflect** as feedback amount / return attenuation
- Then modulate **Drag** with sequenced or random CV
- Choose a quantized Mode

Result

The feedback loop becomes a tone-shaping resonant network. This can create:

- more pronounced pitch centers
- sharper resonant notes
- unstable melodic overtones
- animated harmonic motion

Warning

The manual notes this can self-oscillate very easily, especially with distortion or resonant filters in the loop.

Best external modules to pair with Afterneath for melody

Since this PDF is just Afterneath, here's what works best around it in a real rack.

1. Sequencer or keyboard CV source

Needed for intentional melodic control of **Drag**.

Best for: - Mode 3 volt/oct style - chromatic melodic lines - scale-based note movement

2. Quantized random source

Best for: - generative melody - ambient tonal movement - pseudo-composition without manual note entry

3. Short-envelope voice source

Because Afterneath responds beautifully to struck or plucked material.

Best sources: - LPG plucks - percussive VCO hits - resonant filter pings

4. Filter in Reflect loop

A filter in the feedback path is especially powerful for melodic shaping.

Use it to: - emphasize a pitch range - tame harsh regeneration - create vowel-like resonances - make self-oscillation more singable

5. VCA in Reflect loop

Lets you dynamically control feedback intensity.

This is useful for: - notes that bloom into melody - ducked feedback - rhythmic gating of the tail - controlled self-oscillation onset

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Control details that matter for melodic patching

Drag CV range is limited

The manual says Drag responds only to **positive voltages from about 1.6V to 4.1V**.

That means:

- some sequencers may not hit the useful range directly
- 0–1.6V may need offset from the **Drag knob**
- bipolar LFOs/random may need external offset before they behave musically

This is extremely important. If pitch behavior seems weak or wrong, it's often a voltage-range issue.

The parameter knob acts as an offset

For CV-controlled parameters, the associated knob acts as an offset.

So for Drag: - external CV provides movement - the **Drag knob** shifts the operating window

This makes calibration crucial for melodic use.

Diffuse changes note clarity

- Lower Diffuse = more attack, more discrete delay texture
- Higher Diffuse = smoother, washier, less articulated pitch events

For clearer melodic lines, keep **Diffuse** lower to moderate.

Dampen affects melodic intelligibility

- Too dark: melodic movement may disappear into murk
- Too bright: feedback can become harsh

For melodic patches, a moderate setting often works best.

Most useful modes for different melodic goals

Mode 3 — Unquantized Volt/Octave

Best for: - gliding pitch effects - continuous melodic bends - experimental tuning - oscillator-like self-oscillation control

Mode 4 — Chromatic

Best for: - semitone-based sequences - compatibility with traditional tonal lines - weird but structured melodies

Mode 5 — Major

Best for: - consonant ambient lines - uplifting harmonic trails - easier generative patching

Mode 6 — Minor

Best for: - darker melodic atmospheres - moody generative passages - cinematic reverb voices

Mode 7 — Pentatonic

Best for: - highly usable random melodies - fewer clashes - modal drones and plucks

Mode 8 — Octaves & Fifths

Best for: - sparse consonant movement - drone accompaniment - power-interval shimmer

Mode 9 — Octaves

Best for: - very stable-feeling interval structure - organ-like octave reinforcement - minimalist melodic architecture

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Practical musical applications

Countermelody generator

Feed your main melody line into Afterneath and drive Drag with a slower or related CV sequence. The tail becomes a second melodic actor.

Harmonic ghost voice

Use Dry Kill and only monitor wet signal. The result is a detached melodic shadow of your source.

Tuned ambient lead

Push into self-oscillation, tune the Drag CV range, and play it like a fragile voice.

Tonal generative bed

Use random stepped voltage with a scale mode to make ever-changing melodic ambience.

Melodic transition effect

Send single notes, chord stabs, or percussion fills into Afterneath and automate Drag for transition sweeps that still remain tonal.

Bottom line

The **Afterneath module is not just a reverb**. According to the manual, it is especially powerful for melody because it can function as:

- a **scale-aware pitch-transforming reverb**
- a **CV-controlled melodic buffer effect**
- a **generative melody source**
- a **self-oscillating pseudo-oscillator**
- a **harmonic feedback instrument**

If you want melodic results, the most effective workflow is:

1. Use **Modes 3–9**
2. Patch a sequencer, keyboard, or random CV into **Drag CV**
3. Carefully set **Drag knob + attenuator** as offset/range calibration
4. Feed it simple pitched sounds
5. Use **Length** and **Reflect** to decide whether it behaves like:
6. an echo voice
7. a harmonic tail

8. a sustaining tonal buffer
9. a weird oscillator

For many systems, **Mode 7 (Pentatonic)** is the easiest starting point for immediately musical results.

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