Intellijel — Metropolix

- Manual PDF

Metropolix Manual PDF

Using Intellijel Metropolix to Create Melodic Components in Eurorack

The **Intellijel Metropolix** is an unusually deep melodic sequencer. Even though it looks like an 8-stage pitch/gate sequencer, it's really a **performance-oriented melodic composition system** with:

- **2 pitch/gate tracks**
- **8 modulation lanes**
- **2 assignable outputs**
- **3 assignable CV inputs**
- **scale quantization**
- **probability, ratchets, slide, accumulation**
- **preset recall and chaining**

If your goal is to create **melodic material**—basslines, leads, counterpoint, arpeggios, evolving motifs, chord movement, and modulation-driven phrasing—Metropolix is extremely capable.

What this module does musically

At its core, Metropolix gives you:

- a set of **8 pitch sliders** for an initial melodic contour

- per-stage **timing and gate behavior**
- two tracks that can reinterpret the same stage data differently
- modulation lanes that can animate pitch, scale, order, length, root, probability, slide, and more

This means one programmed idea can become:

- a **main melody**
- a **harmonic partner**
- a **bassline variant**
- an **arpeggiated extension**
- a **transposing phrase**
- a **self-modulating generative line**

Core melodic building blocks

1. Pitch sliders as melodic skeleton

The 8 pitch sliders define the basic note contour. With **scale quantization**, those slider positions become stable melodic intervals in a chosen scale.

Useful global pitch tools:

- **Scale + Root**
- **Bottom Pitch = C or Root**
- **Slider Octaves** per track (1–4 octaves)
- **Slider Direction** per track (normal or inverted)
- **Transpose** per track

Musical use

Program a simple contour with sliders: - up-step - leap - repeat - fall - resolve

Then let each track reinterpret it differently.

Example: - **TRK 1** = narrow 1-octave melody in C minor - **TRK 2** = same sliders, but transposed up a 5th, inverted, or spanning 3 octaves

That immediately creates melodic relationships without reprogramming notes.

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2. Two tracks for counterpoint and harmony

A big strength of Metropolix is that **TRK 1 and TRK 2 share the main slider/switch structure**, but each track can have different:

- order
- length
- clock division
- swing
- slide time
- gate length
- transpose
- slider range/direction
- per-stage pitch/gate/ratchet/probability/accumulation/CV

Musical use

This is ideal for melodic layering:

A. Melody + bassline

- **TRK 1** → lead voice
- **TRK 2** → bass oscillator

Use: - same slider pattern - TRK 2 lower transpose - slower division on TRK 2 - shorter sequence length on one track for phrase cycling

B. Melody + counter-melody

- TRK 1 = linear forward
- TRK 2 = pendulum or odd/even
- different stage skips and lengths

This creates **interlocking melodic motion** from one shared source.

C. Unison variation

Send both tracks to similar voices: - one dry - one filtered/delayed/slid

Use subtle differences in: - gate length - pitch pre/post - probability - order

This gives “doubled lead” behavior without exact repetition.

Melodic timing and phrasing tools

3. Pulse count creates rhythmic phrasing for notes

Each stage can last **1 to 8 pulses**. That changes how long a note occupies space.

This matters melodically because note duration shapes phrase identity as much as pitch.

Musical use

Use long pulse counts on: - phrase starts - cadence tones - pedal notes

Use short pulse counts on: - passing notes - ornaments - arpeggio-like movement

For example: - Stage 1 = 3 pulses - Stage 2 = 1 pulse - Stage 3 = 1 pulse - Stage 4 = 4 pulses

This turns a plain pitch pattern into a real phrase.

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4. Gate type changes articulation

Per stage you get:

- **HOLD**
- **MULTIPLE**
- **SINGLE**
- **REST**

Melodic applications

- **HOLD** = legato tie across stages
- **SINGLE** = one articulated note even if stage lasts several pulses
- **MULTIPLE** = repeated articulation on the same pitch
- **REST** = silence, space, phrasing

This is excellent for making melodic patterns feel played rather than mechanical.

Example: - HOLD on a note before a slide - REST before phrase restart - MULTIPLE for repeated tonic or dominant pulses

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5. Slide for legato and acid phrasing

Per-stage **SLIDE** with global track slide settings gives expressive transitions.

Slide types: - **Analog** - **Tempo** - **Acid**

Musical use

- Add slide only on selected approach notes
- Use acid mode for classic tied melodic sequences
- Use tempo slide for synchronized lead phrasing
- Use analog for freer portamento feel

Great for: - basslines - legato leads - gliding modal melodies - synthetic vocal phrasing

Advanced melodic variation

6. Per-stage pitch override

The sliders are only the default. Each stage can have a **pitch override**.

Musical use

This is powerful for: - forcing important harmonic tones - changing just one note in a looping phrase - creating call/response variants between tracks - making one track diverge from the common slider pattern

A useful strategy: - use sliders for broad melodic shape - use pitch overrides for “composed” anchor notes

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7. Skip for phrase reshaping

Skipping stages changes both rhythm and note order.

Musical use

A melodic phrase can become: - sparse - syncopated - asymmetrical - alternate-bar variation

Very useful for: - verse vs chorus feel - switching between complete and reduced phrases - turning 8-stage material into 5- or 6-note motifs

Also excellent when modulated with **Skip Invert** for phrase swapping.

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8. Probability for melodic instability and life

Probability can apply at: - **Stage** - **Pulse**

Musical use

Use probability to create: - ghost notes - variable ornaments - occasional melodic omissions - unstable motif repetition

Examples: - 80% probability on passing tones - 50% probability on a decorative upper neighbor - 100% on structurally important notes

This keeps melodies fresh without losing identity.

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9. Ratchets for ornaments and repeated notes

Ratchets subdivide pulses into repeated gates.

Melodic use

Ratchets are not just rhythmic—they create melodic ornament when combined with: - accumulation - slide - CV lane modulation - gate stretching

Good uses: - stuttered repeated note on a climax tone - flutter before resolution - pseudo-trill or mordent effect on one stage - repeated bass pulse under moving harmony

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10. Accumulation is one of the best melodic tools here

The **ACCUM** function cumulatively transposes notes over time by scale degree. This is huge for melodic development.

Per stage you can define: - transpose amount - trigger source (stage / pulse / ratchet)

And with **LIM** options: - positive/negative limits - stage vs track mode - wrap / pendulum / random / hold - unipolar / bipolar - reset behavior

Musical use

A. Sequence evolution

A simple 4-note melody can climb diatonically over repeats.

B. Arpeggiated chord motion

Use chord scales and accumulation to walk through chord tones over time.

C. Canon-like development

Track mode makes one stage's accumulation affect the whole track, causing phrase-wide transposition.

D. Generative tonal movement

Random or pendulum accumulation creates melodic movement that stays musically constrained.

This is one of the strongest features for writing **evolving melodic material**.

Scales, roots, and harmonic movement

11. Scale quantization keeps melodies musical

Metropolix has many scales and chord shapes, plus 100 user scales.

Musical use

You can use scale quantization to make slider movement immediately usable for:

- tonal melodies

- modal melodies
- pentatonic riffs
- chord-tone constrained melodies
- non-Western scalar movement

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12. User scales for chord progressions and melodic harmony

User scales store both: - scale pattern - root

And can be sequenced via CV/modulation.

Musical use

Build a bank of custom scales representing chord tones, for example: - Cmaj triad - Amin triad - Fmaj triad - Gmaj triad

Then modulate **Scale (User)** to move through harmonic centers while the same slider pattern keeps playing.

This is an elegant way to create: - chord-following melodies - arpeggiated harmonic movement - phrase transposition with harmonic constraint

This makes Metropolix unusually strong for **harmonic melodic sequencing** rather than just monophonic looping.

CV lanes and MOD lanes as melodic animators

13. Track CV lanes add one more melodic control stream per track

Each note track includes a CV lane that can be: - continuous voltage - gate toggle

You can route this out through OUT A or B.

Musical use for melodies

Use track CV lanes to animate the voice being sequenced: - filter cutoff per note - wavefold amount per note - FM amount per note - accent/velocity - envelope decay - oscillator timbre

This turns a melody into a phrase with articulation and timbral contour.

Examples: - brighter notes on high melodic peaks - accent every 4th note - longer envelope on cadence tones - timbral rise on phrase build

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14. 8 MOD lanes can modulate melodic behavior internally

Each MOD lane has: - 8 stages - its own order - its own length - its own clock division - assignable destination

Destinations include many melodic parameters: - pitch pre - pitch post - root - user scale - play order - pulse count - probability - ratchet - stages length - stage offset - slide amount - gate length - loopy settings - accumulation settings

Musical use

This is where Metropolix becomes a full melodic ecosystem.

A. Internal transposition

Assign MOD lane to **Pitch Pre** for in-scale melodic motion.

B. Chromatic destabilization

Assign MOD lane to **Pitch Post**.

C. Harmonic movement

Assign MOD lane to **Root** or **Scale (User)**.

D. Phrase restructuring

Assign MOD lane to **Play Order**, **Stages Len**, or **Stage Offset**.

E. Expressive articulation

Assign MOD lane to **Probability**, **Gate Length**, or **Slide Amount**.

This allows melodies to morph over time without external modules.

Performance-oriented melodic techniques

15. Loopy mode for live melodic improvisation

Loopy lets you temporarily loop sub-sections of the sequence or play stages manually.

Musical use

This is outstanding for live melodic performance: - repeat one note as a pedal - isolate a 2–4 note motif - create fills by looping a mid-phrase fragment - manually “play” stages as a mini keyboard when stopped

1-finger and 2-finger loopy can create improvised melodic variation in real time.

This is great for: - techno lead fills - live bassline mutation - breaking a phrase into hooks - performance transitions

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16. CTRL knobs for expressive melodic macro control

The two CTRL knobs can be assigned to melodic parameters such as: - Pitch Pre/Post/Offset - Root - Scale (User) - Probability - Ratchet - Slide Amount - Swing - Stages Len - Clock Div - Trk Out Swap

Musical use

These make excellent melodic macro controls:

- **CTRL 1 → Gate Length**: articulation macro
- **CTRL 2 → Slide Amount**: expressive phrasing
- **CTRL → Root**: harmonic movement
- **CTRL → Probability**: stable to unstable melody
- **CTRL → Stages Len**: phrase contraction/expansion
- **CTRL → Play Order**: melody permutation control

Very playable.

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17. AUX inputs for external melodic interaction

Three AUX CV inputs can modulate internal melodic parameters.

Musical use

Patch external modulation into: - root - scale selection - pitch pre/post - play order - stages length - slide - probability - accumulation behavior

That lets another sequencer, LFO, envelope, random source, keyboard, or pressure CV reshape melody in real time.

Example: - slow random CV to **Root** - envelope to **Slide Amount** - gate pattern to **Skip Invert** - keyboard CV to **Octave**

Now Metropolix behaves less like a fixed sequencer and more like an interactive melodic instrument.

Presets and composition workflow

18. Presets for melodic scenes

Metropolix stores 64 presets.

A preset can store: - track settings - stage settings - scale settings - optionally slider/switch/CTRL/AUX states

Musical use

Treat presets as: - verse melody - chorus melody - breakdown variation - transposed harmonic section - sparse/dense alternate states

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19. Preset chaining for song-form melody

Preset chains let you sequence preset changes over time.

Musical use

Create structured melodic arrangements:

- Preset 1 = intro motif
- Preset 2 = bass enters
- Preset 3 = full lead phrase
- Preset 4 = variation with different root/scale/order
- Preset 5 = reduced outro loop

This turns Metropolix into a **melodic song-form sequencer**, not just a phrase generator.

Practical melodic patch ideas

Patch 1: Bassline + lead from one idea

- **TRK 1 PITCH/GATE** → bass voice
- **TRK 2 PITCH/GATE** → lead voice
- Same slider contour
- TRK 1: lower transpose, acid slide, shorter gate
- TRK 2: longer gate, different order, higher octave

Result: A coherent melodic pair from one gesture.

Patch 2: Chord-following melody with user scales

- Create user scales for progression chord tones
- Lock user scale bank
- Assign MOD lane or AUX to **Scale (User)**
- Program lead phrase on sliders

Result: One phrase follows chord changes without manually reprogramming notes.

Patch 3: Evolving modal melody

- TRK 1 = melody
- MOD lane 1 → Root
- MOD lane 2 → Probability
- MOD lane 3 → Play Order
- CV lane → filter cutoff on voice

Result: Melody stays recognizable but keeps shifting tonally and structurally.

Patch 4: Ornamented generative lead

- Use a simple 4-stage motif
- Add ratchets on one or two stages
- Add stage probability to passing tones
- Add accumulation with pendulum order
- Use slide selectively

Result: A melodic line that sounds composed but continues developing.

Patch 5: Performance hook machine

- Build a strong 8-stage motif
- Use Loopy for live fragment looping
- Assign CTRL knobs to Slide Amount and Root
- Use AUX input for Skip Invert or Play Order

Result: You can “perform” melody rather than merely start playback.

Best melodic strengths of Metropolix

Especially strong for:

- basslines
- acid sequences
- modal melodies
- counterpoint from one source
- evolving repeating motifs
- arpeggio-like melodic figures
- harmonically constrained generative phrases
- live melodic improvisation

Less about:

- piano-roll style step entry
- explicit polyphonic chord sequencing from separate outputs alone

It excels at **musical variation from compact material**.

Summary

The **Intellijel Metropolix** can be used to create melodic components by combining:

- **pitch sliders** for note contour
- **scales/root** for tonal control
- **2 tracks** for harmony/counterpoint
- **pulse counts and gate types** for phrasing
- **slide, ratchets, probability, and skip** for expression and variation
- **accumulation** for evolving melodic transposition
- **CV lanes** for note-by-note articulation
- **MOD lanes** for self-modulating melodic change
- **Loopy** for live performance manipulation
- **presets and chains** for melodic arrangement over time

In practice, Metropolix is best understood not as a simple step sequencer, but as a **melodic performance and composition engine** for Eurorack.
