Erica Synths — Black Multi Mode VCF

- Manual PDF

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Using The Erica Synths Black Multimode VCF In Full-Length Eurorack Songs

Introduction

The **Erica Synths Black Multimode VCF** is a versatile voltage-controlled filter (VCF) module with simultaneous high-pass, band-pass, and low-pass outputs, CV control over both cutoff and resonance, and a built-in germanium diode input overdrive. While the VCF is often seen as a tone shaper, its feature set makes it especially useful for arrangement and song structure within a modular setup—precisely the challenge when building compelling, narrative songs beyond simple jams.

Key Features for Songwriting

- **HP/BP/LP Simultaneous Outputs**: Parallel patching or switching for evolving textures.
- **CV Control of Cutoff & Resonance**: Automation and dynamic filtering essential for buildups and breakdowns.

- **Self-Oscillation**: Can be used as a bass, percussion, or melodic source.
- **Input Overdrive**: Adds character and punch to transitions or climaxes.
- **Attenuverters for CV Inputs**: Precise control over modulation depth.

Strategies for Full-Length Song Arrangements

Below are approaches and patch ideas for using the Black Multimode VCF as a "song structure tool" in a Eurorack system:

1. Dynamic Filtering for Verse/Chorus/Bridge Sections

- **Automate Cutoff/Resonance**: Use sequencers, envelopes, LFOs, or even manual control via performance knobs to sweep filter cutoff/resonance at key sections (e.g., open up LPF for chorus, close for verse).
- **Scene Switching with Multiple Outputs**: Route LP, BP, and HP outputs to a mixer or switch to instantly change the band's frequency content for different sections (smooth pad in verse with LP, bright and cutting in chorus with BP or HP).

2. Transitions, Builds, and Drops

- **Resonance Sweeps**: Patch an envelope or function generator to the resonance CV. Use this to intensify climaxes or irradiate drops with aggressive resonance spikes.
- **Overdrive Circuit**: Increase input drive as you approach a drop, then pull it back for breakdowns for a dynamic timbral shift.

3. CV-Controlled Movement

- **Sequenced Modulation**: Use step sequencers or random sources to modulate cutoff/resonance per pattern or section, creating evolving filter movements that match song structure.
- **Macros and Hands-On Control**: Map attenuverters and knobs as performance macros for expressive, live arrangements—fade in HP while fading out LP, for example.

4. Parallel & Layered Filtering

- **Multitimbral Patching**: Send the same audio through all three outputs and process/filter them differently (e.g., LP to bass channel, BP for mids, HP for rhythmic/texture channel). Switch/mix between these as "instrument layers" in your song.
- **Crossfading Sections**: Use a crossfader module to morph smoothly between filter modes/output sections as your track progresses.

5. Self-Oscillation as a Song Element

- **Filtered Sine as Bass or Lead**: When the resonance is high, the filter self-oscillates. Use this as a sine wave for bass or melodic sections, then blend or replace with standard VCO(s) during other sections.
- **Transition FX/Noise**: Excite the VCF at high resonance with white noise or other sources and modulate cutoff for classic sweep FX, risers, or drops.

Example Patch Concepts

Example 1: Filter-Based Song Structure

- **Verse:** LPF cutoff low, resonance moderate. Dry, mellow sound.
- **Pre-Chorus:** Gradually automate the cutoff higher and increase drive, introducing more frequency components.

- **Chorus:** Switch to HP or BP output, open cutoff, and increase resonance for energy.
- **Breakdown:** Use self-oscillation for a filtered sine melodic solo or sweep resonance with white noise for dramatic FX.

Example 2: Filter Layering For Texture Changes

- **Patch three separate voices to each filter output.**
    - **LP:** Bass.
    - **BP:** Mid-rich melodic layer.
    - **HP:** Percussive or noise-rich channel.
- **Switch or crossfade between these as verse/chorus/bridge sections, or blend all for climactic moments.**

Recommended Module Pairings

- **Sequencer (for automation of CV inputs)**
- **LFO/Envelope Generators (for evolving or rhythmic filter modulations)**
- **VCA/Mixer (for output blending, crossfading, and volume automation)**
- **Switches/Sequential Switch (for instant sound variations/scene shifting)**
- **Noise Source (for percussive/FX excitement with self-oscillation)**

Final Thoughts

The Erica Synths Black Multimode VCF is far more than just a tone shaper. Its multiple outputs, extensive CV routings, and overdrive add up to a powerful tool for sculpting dynamic, evolving full-length songs. By treating the filter as a structural instrument—shaping not just timbre but song form—you can elevate your arrangements beyond simple loops into full, expressive tracks.

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