Moog — Mavis

- Manual PDF

Moog Mavis User Manual (PDF)

Using the Moog Mavis in Composing Full-Length Eurorack Songs

As a modular musician, you'll quickly find that while the Moog Mavis is a powerful, self-contained analog voice, unlocking its true creative potential for full-length tracks means leveraging its flexibility as a patchable, semi-modular system within a larger eurorack environment. Below, I'll discuss both the strengths and the limitations of the Mavis as a song-building tool, followed by **strategies and patch ideas** for integrating it into larger modular arrangements to produce evolving, structure-rich songs.

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1. What Is Mavis Good At?

Core strengths: - Classic analog monophonic voice (oscillator, ladder filter, envelope, VCA) - Powerful patchbay for external CV/audio integration - Unique features like wavefolding, built-in utility mixer, sample & hold (S+H), and attenuator

Limitations (to keep in mind for song construction): - Single oscillator & single envelope generator - No built-in sequencer, clock, or complex modulation sources - No internal multi-channel mixing, effects, or sophistication for polyphony/complex layering

Thus, **Mavis alone is a great building block for individual voices and sounds**. To build *songs*, you'll want to integrate it with: - Sequencers - Modulation sources/LFOs - Clocks & dividers/multipliers - Utilities (VCAs, mixers, switches) - Effects modules (delay, reverb, distortion, etc.) - Additional voices/instruments - Performance controls (touch, MIDI–CV, etc.)

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2. Strategies for Building Full Songs with Mavis

A. Song Structure via Modulation & Control

Problem: Patches can be static; musical "moments" rather than songs.

Solution: Use **external CV modulation and sequencers** to achieve *macro* song structure, not just "looping" patterns.

Ideas:

- **Multiple Sequencers:** Use one sequencer for basic Mavis melodies/basslines and another for controlling filter cutoff or envelope shape to create verses, choruses, bridges, builds, etc.
- **Utilities:** Use voltage-controlled switches, sequenced muting, or sequential switches to activate/deactivate patches or modulation sources in a songlike arrangement.
- **Key Changes:** Use precision adders/quantizers to transpose the Mavis sequence in and out of key centers for different song sections.

B. Layering/Voice Doubling

- Use Mavis as a bassline when layered with a second oscillator voice (another synth or sample) for leads or chords.
- Sequence different sections: e.g., have Mavis play intro and then "move" its sequence to another voice for development, or vice versa.

C. Live Performance & Macro Controls

- Map all-important “macro” changes—filter sweeps, envelope settings, wavefolder amount, etc.—to external CV and perform or automate them.
- Use external clock dividers and mults to change rhythm/tempo between song sections.

D. Dynamic Timbre and Texture

- Use Mavis’s **wavefolder and filter** as an effects processor on other voices (via patchbay).
- Insert S+H or LFO modulation for more generative, evolving patches (e.g. for song bridges or breakdowns).

E. Thematic Variation and Transitions

- Patch S+H or random sources to create subtle variations (melody, timbre) in each song repetition/section.
- Automate switching between modulation sources (LFO, EG) via CV, so each section sounds distinct.

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3. Example Patch Concepts for Full-Song Composition

A. Bassline to Lead Switch

- **Intro/Verse:** Use Mavis as a bass voice via sequencer 1.
- **Chorus:** Via voltage-controlled switch, send sequencer 2 (with higher notes) to Mavis for lead duty, while another voice takes over bass.
- **Use sample & hold** or random modulation for breakdowns/transitional sections.

B. Filter/EQ and Macro Transitions

- Patch the filter cutoff to be modulated by an external envelope/fader/automation for sweeps in/out of new sections.
- Use the attenuator to control the amount of external LFO/EG influence over long periods (slow builds).

C. Texture, FX, and Post-Processing

- Send non-Mavis voices through the Mavis's filter or wavefolder for creative breakdowns (e.g. use FOLD IN input to process drums with dramatic filter sweeps).

D. Randomization and Variation

- Patch S+H output to VCO pitch or filter cutoff for subtle generative "fills" or breakdowns.
- Route random or stepped CV to attenuator for controlled signal "evolutions" during the track.

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4. Sample Patch Integration (with Other Modules)

```
[Sequencer] --1V/OCT--> [Mavis VCO]
               |              |
            [Clock]----> [Other Voice: Drums/Lead/FX]
                            |
          [Function Generator/ADSR] --CV--> [Mavis Filter/Envelope]
                            |
         [Sample & Hold] -------------> [Mavis PWM, cutoff, or VCA
                            |
          [FX Send/Return] <------------> [Mavis Wavefolder/VCF as
```

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5. Songwriting Mindset Tips

- **Perform patch changes, parameter sweeps, and voice switching live** to create sections distinct in both sound and rhythm.
- **Automate or script sequence changes, keys, and modulations**—use matrix switches, preset managers, or scenes if available.
- **Embrace utility/logic modules**—they can trigger, gate, mute, or morph between patterns and textures for "song mode."
- Remember: *Compositional structure comes from change and contrast!* Use Mavis as an expressive *element* in a broader performance system.

For more patching ideas and technical details, see the Mavis Manual PDF.

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