Tiptop Audio — TOMS909

- Manual PDF

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Creative Modulation with the Tiptop Audio TOMS909

The Tiptop Audio TOMS909 is a dense source of classic and experimental tom and percussive synthesis, especially due to its full voltage-control architecture. Here's how you can push it into unique sound territory—especially for distorted percussion, gnarly basslines, and eerie pads.

1. Distorted Percussive Sounds

VC-TUNE Audio-Rate FM

- **Technique:** Patch an audio-rate oscillator (e.g., Tiptop Z3000, any VCO with strong waveforms) into the VC-TUNE inputs of one or more toms.
- **Settings:**
- Set the incoming oscillator pitch for aggressive FM—use square or sawtooth waves for more edge.
- Crank the VC scaling knob to taste (100% for complete range).
- Dial in shorter DECAY for more punch, or extend it for metallic clangs.
- **Result:** The tom circuits will destabilize and create screaming or metallic percussion, ranging from classic 909 overdrive to industrial/noise textures.
- **Pro Tip:** Patch white noise or even drum samples into VC-TUNE for digital mayhem.

Modulate ACCENT with Gates & CV

- **Technique:** Use rapid, irregular gates or a wildly moving CV (LFO or random) into ACCENT IN.
- **Settings:**
- Set LEVEL around halfway, ACCENT to near max for extreme gain jumps.
- Use a fast square LFO or trigger random bursts.
- **Result:** Pumping, distorted, almost “bitcrushed” drum sounds.

Feedback Patch

- **Technique:** Patch the OUT of a Tom back into its own VC-TUNE, optionally passing through a VCA or distortion module.
- **Warning:** Be careful with gain staging, as feedback can get loud/fierce.
- **Result:** Chaotic, broken percussive noise with squelched overtones and crashing distortion.

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2. Crazy Dubstep/Drum & Bass Basslines

Sequencing VC-TUNE at Audio Rate

- **Technique:** Use a sequencer like Z8000 to control an audio oscillator’s pitch, and patch that oscillator to VC-TUNE.
- **Settings:**
- Use large sweeps and rapid pitch bends in your sequence.
- Low-frequency waveforms for wobble (sine/saw) or mid/high for shrill screamers.
- **Result:** The toms become bass synths with rubbery, bending timbres—ideal for reese bass, descending “growls”, and pounding stabs.

Envelopes to VC-TUNE for “Wub” FX

- **Technique:** Patch an envelope generator triggered by a gate sequencer into VC-TUNE.
- **Settings:**

- Short attack/decay for “blip” basses, longer for evolving growls.
- **Mix:** Try layering several Toms for multi-oscillator bass textures.
- **Result:** Deep, modulated “wub” sounds characteristic of dubstep and neuro DnB.

Stackcable Madness

- **Technique:** Feed the same audio-rate modulator (oscillator or noisy source) into multiple VC-TUNE jacks using stackcables.
- **Settings:** Tune each Tom's TUNE knob differently and mix outputs.
- **Result:** Chord-like, detuned bass stabs and warbles.

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3. Haunting Atmospheric Pads & Drones

Slow VC-TUNE Modulation

- **Technique:** Use a slow moving LFO or sequencer into VC-TUNE.
- **Settings:**
- DECAY all the way up for elongated, washed-out tails.
- TUNE each Tom to complementary pitches.
- **Result:** Choral, dissonant, and atmospheric textures. The analog circuits will impart a soft “drifting” quality.

Multiple Envelopes to VC-TUNE & ACCENT

- **Technique:** Patch different envelopes, each triggered by staggered gates, into VC-TUNE and ACCENT IN of each Tom.
- **Settings:**
- High DECAY settings, ACCENT up for swells.
- Adjust LEVEL to set background/foreground “voices”.
- **Result:** Unpredictable pads with organic morphing between timbres.

Noise/Field Recordings as Modulators

- **Technique:** Patch microphone, radio static, or field recording audio into VC-TUNE.

- **Settings:**
- Experiment with modulation depth.
- High DECAY and reverb/delay downstream.
- **Result:** Alien, evolving atmospheres with real-world unpredictability.

Use with Stereo Effects

- **Technique:** Run TOM outs through stereo delays (e.g., Z-DSP PingPong) and/or lush reverbs.
- **Result:** Pads “bloom” in the stereo field, perfect for cinematic or outer-space sound design.

Other Modulation Sources to Try

- **Random Stepped CV (Sample & Hold):** For stuttering, glitching pitch sequences.
- **Complex LFOs (Wogglebug, Batumi, etc):** Long evolving cycles for drifty drones.
- **Audio from Other Drum Modules:** For “cross-modulation” creating splattered, rhythmic FX.

Go deeper by patching CV, gates, audio rate signals, and feedback into the TOMS909—the module’s analog heart responds beautifully to bold and unconventional control voltages!
