

Evolution and Development of Music Remixing

The purpose with remixing is to take an existing piece of work or works and remake this into its own individual composition with a new interpretation of the original work and possibly even change the genre that music originally came from. For instance segments of Dub or jazz could be turned into an R&B, techno, house, Drum & Bass, Ambient, Dubstep and many more. These also can be interpreted into other mix options as well to cater market needs, such as the 12" original mix lasting around 8 minutes, to the Radio Edit which is usually around 3 ½ minutes and with clean language to other mixes like the Dub mix or the instrumental mix.

Other points towards remixing of songs comes down to how to monetise an existing product, which when licenced properly through official channels can be financially beneficial not only for the remixing artist who has released the composition but also the original artists who own the rights. This in turn can expand the market for a song as has been the case the original song used for remixing can be one that is obscure and very little known with the remixed work becoming a popular piece of work, thus leading back to far greater exposure for the original artists on top of the new artist that released the remixed song.

Essentially remixing came about in in 1940's in France with something called Musique Concrete. This was a form of remixing of recorded sounds from a multiple of sources, mainly from natural sources recorded onto tape with one of the first examples of this being made by Pierre Schaeffer and Studio d'Essai (who were big part of the French Resistance radio network during World War 2) with the track called 'etude aux chemins de fer' which was made from the recordings of trains and led on towards Symphonie pour un Home by Yoko Ono (although not in any relation to Yoko Ono who was a partner of John Lennon), which basically sampled many aspects of French life, nature and music. This was an era where due to advances made during the war years with technology it lead to a lot of experimentation with what could be done with sound. This continued into the 50's and branched towards electronically sourced recordings, championed by the likes of Karlheinz Stockhausen that would be stored on magnetic media, thus the start of the music performances without the performer.

In the 60's was the introduction of Dub, a sub genre of Reggae from Jamaica introduced by pioneers of the scene by the likes of King Tubby and Lee 'Scratch' Perry. The style mainly focuses on the instrumental remixing of existing songs where the vocals are stripped out and a major focus is switched to the drum and bass sections of the song.

From a cultural viewpoint this all came about during a time in Jamaica where the Sound System was the in things and trying to make yourself stand out as the place to go came down to who could manage the best sound which tended to be installed onto trucks with generators, decks, speakers and taken to areas for street parties focusing on Rhythm and Blues, although over time this progressed to Jamaican music, in particular to a new genre called Ska which came about after a need to make sure there was fresh music. These tended to be One off presses known as Dubplates which helped towards the popularity of the Sound System.

Another aspect of this is the sound systems followed the migrants to the countries they emigrated to, in particular to the United Kingdom and the USA, where names such as Jah Shaka and Saxon Studio International became known.

The 70's introduced the DISCO scene into music culture, a genre covering the dance music scene that based a lot of elements on funk, soul, pop and salsa. It was something that initially gained popularity within the US Gays and Minority groups before becoming widespread with popularity growing from all groups. DISCO was known for its extravagant fashions, such as white suits, high heeled shoes and medallions, which were just on the men! Other parts to this scene culturally were in relation to drug culture where cocaine use, something that grew massive prominence from high profile celebrities being spotted partaking., which in turn helped lead to another phenomenon of the time, promiscuity and public sex, in an era before HIV and AIDS were heard of, with one of the most famous clubs in the USA, Studio 54 in New York City known for hedonism with the balconies known for encounters.

A great pop culture reference to this is seen in the film Saturday Night Fever starring John Travolta where the fashions, culture and music can clearly be seen and heard.

Music from this era introduced a couple of important aspects, one of which is clearly still referred to today. Tom Moulton introduced something called the 12" Mix, where at this time vinyl was the media of choice for listening to music on, he worked out that if a 12" LP vinyl was played at 45rpm like the smaller SP vinyl's used on singles then it was possible to have an 8 minute single rather than a 3 minute one. Other advantages to using this come into the audio quality as there are fewer grooves cut into the vinyl per inch, meaning the recording has a far larger dynamic range and helped in producing a much deeper bass response which is something that dance music relies upon. Tom also worked with Gloria Gaynor on her album Never Can Say Goodbye as the mix engineer, where he introduced the continuous mix, or more famously known as the Megamix and the extended mixes as referred to earlier with the 12" mix.

Another person of note from the 70's and 80's and even into the 90's is Shep Pettibone who was a prolific editor and remixer over these decades working with some of the biggest names in the industry including Madonna, Diana Ross and Elton John as well as working with Dance Electronica groups such as New Order and Depeche Mode. The sound of the 80's for Dance and Pop music had a sound style that was common over many artists and songs, of which Shep Pettibone being in high demand put his signature sound onto many an artist's song, the other notable sound of the era came from Stock Aitken Waterman (Kyle Minogue, Bananarama, Rick Astley).

As the era moved into the 80's the sound changed with the use of samplers and drum machines, with the use of Roland 808 and 909's featuring prominently within the mixes done by Shep Pettibone and others at this time. The big gain from these drum machines is, they allow you the ability to create procession sounds for compositional work without the requirement of recording a complete drum kit, be it with a sound that is different enough from a drum kit to make them unique instruments on their own.

House music made an introduction from the mid 80's onwards (and continues today in a forever evolving way.) A prime early example of the genre that became very popular is Pump Up the Volume

by MARRS which used samples from the hip hop song 'I Know You Got Soul' by Eric B & Rakim and also applied the scratch techniques that were introduced by Grand Wizzard Theodore in the 70's.

One of the big advances from the 80's was the introduction of the Roland TB-303 that really created the Acid House sound which was continued to be used into the 90's (Roland still make a modern equivalent called the TB-03 as well) where one example where the 303 was used as part of remixing comes from the Pump Panel Reconstruction Mix of New Order's Confusion where they added elements of the bass line and drum beat patterns from this device and used samples from the original song to piece together this new mix. This song in itself was a massive example of how one remix can bridge over to a new fan base as it became popular with a cult following from being used in a main intro scene from the Marvel film Blade.

Culturally the house scene was part of something called 'The Second Summer of Love' in the late 80's with a strong tie into acid house and euphoric MDMA (Ecstasy) fuelled illegal Rave parties, which morphed into the Rave music scene. The era was given its name as it matched in a lot of ways the original Summer of Love in the 60's where hedonism and the feeling of freedom to do what people wished. Also as a fashion trend Tie Dyes made a comeback again hinting back to the 60's and also the smiley logo made itself known and considered a part of this period of time, in particular from the UK. While there was a thriving illegal Rave scene happening the era also produced the start of legal clubs each having by today famous links, with Shroom run by Danny Rampling, Future run by Paul Oakenfold, Trip by Nicky Holloway and possibly the most well known club of the 80's and 90's the Hacienda from Manchester. The Hacienda had quite a history, starting out in 1982 and tied closely with Tony Wilson's Factory Records and their main groups New Order and the Happy Mondays (Shaun Ryder being well known to enjoy the scene far too much) produced quite a large following and turned into a scene called Madchester where its reputation for evolving from the Second Summer of Love into what Madchester became, where extreme heavy use of drugs, ig parties and a lot of police raids dogging the location for a number of years. Over time this took its toll on the Hacienda where it eventually closed in 1997 and now resides as posh housing. The Hacienda's history and fate all ties into the drug culture where it suffered deaths at the club, police raids and even though its popularity was remaining consistently high, it was losing money at a massive rate, with little takings on drink sales as the belief goes everyone was taking illegal drugs.

In 1994 the then Conservative government passed an act called the Criminal Justice and Public Order act in an attempt to curb anti social behaviours with one area considered very heavy handed and badly formed. The one covering Free Party being made as a knee jerk response to a panic over what had happened at the Castlemorton Common Festival in 1992 which hosted between 20,000 to 40,000 people over the space of a week but the act was written that it was illegal to hold out door played music that include "sounds wholly or predominantly characterised by the emission of a succession of repetitive beats" or otherwise, Club and Dance music.

Gatecrasher is another club with a massive amount of history and hopefully one that will continue for the future, but this ones cultural impact played very much into the Trance scene where the likes of Scott Bond, Tiesto, Van Buuren, Judge Jules all played. Trance also has a strong history of remixing as it bases samples from original songs and incorporates those into flowing euphoric rhythms, for example, Thomas Gold's remix of the popular song by Adele, Set Fire to the Rain. This in turn gave rise to a fashion trend called the GateCrasher kiddy, where they would wear very bright neon

colours, have spikey hair, have dummies in their mouths and also wear fluffy arm and leg warmers while taking ecstasy and speed

Some clubs have gone out of business purely due to financial reasons or the business moving onto new things (such as Cream) but a fair number have lost their licence due to deaths at the club, in particular in recent times we have seen the club Fabric close down in London due to two teenage girls dying due to drug related incidents, while at Gatecrasher in Birmingham this closed due to a knife attack within the club and an alleged fight with doormen.

Drugs and violence has sadly been a part of the scene but it could be considered a very heavy handed move by councils in revoking licences to deal with such incidents since if people wish to partake in the above, there will always be ways they can do this. And if licences keep being revoked then the authorities attacks on killing the club scene will likely win, which is a shame as there always needs to be an outlet and superclub events held at one off venues by the likes of Armin Van Buuren, and Tiesto while attracting the numbers only happens once or twice per year in any given area.

Other innovations from this era as it moves into the 90 and beyond and into modern trends is the digital sampler such as the Akai S3000. This allowed producers and remixers the ability to record snippets of audio onto a floppy disk with the drive built into the unit, or onto an external SCSI (pronounced SCUSSY) storage device such as a ZIP Drive (100mb storage) or hard drive (around 800mb was the average of the era). Of note though was also from the same era studios were able to use early computers that were able to handle samples such as the Amiga, Atari Ste and Apple Mac as all had the same capabilities of samplers. In fact Calvin Harris produced his first album on an Amiga with the use of the S3000 Sampler. This form of studio setup really was the start of what we have today in the studio with the use of Digital Audio Workstations running Pro Tools on either Mac or Windows based systems.

One of the main considerations with this is, the cost of producing music at home has become possible as a regular off the shelf computer has enough power in it to handle all the tasks and become a full Digital Audio Workstation (and more). Another piece of software that can be run on modern computers is Ableton which gives you the ability to remix samples, control midi and rework songs as you please, it also allows time stretching of samples changing the way it sounds to a point it adds in a new form of creativity and new ideas to an existing concept. And once these are complete as the files can be saved as Wave or compressed into MP3 or Flac and uploaded onto sites such as sound cloud which basically means you are instantly publishing the song yourself.

Copyright considerations with remixing have to play a big part as basically if an artist is wishing to remix a song and make this into a commercial product for themselves then this requires gaining the required rights and approvals to do so. So this means gaining the permission from the rights holders such as the composition author and the owner of the sound recording, which could be the author but more likely to be the publisher. Once this is obtained then there has to be an agreement on how the revenue would be split between the original artists and new remix artists. If self publishing the remix then an agreement would need to be setup with the original publishing company or artist on how Money that comes back in from sales and playback of the song. One way is that it goes back to the artists via royalty companies, which in the case for Composition/song writers and/or the publishers goes through the PRS and for the Sound Recording, for the record company, author and

session musicians this would go through the PPL which is then divided between the original and new artists at this stage.

If no rights have been received to make a remix and the artists proceeds to produce and release the song then they must be aware of the issues. The first is, they cannot be seen to be making any profit from the composition then there is a strong chance that there could be libel action against the remix artist for loss of revenue and a breach of copyright laws.

Youtube video references

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aL77mHnCrNs> Pierre Schaeffer - Etude aux chemins de fer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1hHKyiJX1bM> YOKO ONO - Symphonie pour un Homme Seul 1

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZvYSYOKFCbk> - King Tubby - Flag Dub

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xK9ADEcP2PI> Gloria Gaynor – Never Say Goodbye Megamix

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kyhCKXBSv_E& Madonna – Into The Groove (Shep Pettibone 12")

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w9gOOgfPW4Y> MARRS – Pump Up The Volume

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ldfc68bxIB8> Josh Wink - Higher State Of Consciousness
Tweakin Acid Mix

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d_Hw_UC314M New Order - Confusion (Pump Panel
Reconstruction Mix)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ss0HAdW1DnY> ADELE - Set Fire To The Rain (Thomas Gold
Remix)