



Curatorial > VARIATIONS

With this section, RWM continues a line of programmes devoted to exploring the complex map of sound art from different points of view organised in curatorial series.

"Variation" is the formal term for a musical composition based on a previous musical work, and many of those traditional methods (changing the key, meter, rhythm, harmonies or tempi of a piece) are used in much the same manner today by sampling musicians. But the practice of sampling is more than a simple modernization or expansion of the number of options available to those who seek their inspiration in the refinement of previous composition. The history of this music traces nearly as far back as the advent of recording, and its emergence and development mirrors the increasingly self-conscious relationship of society to its experience of music. Starting with the precedents achieved by Charles Ives and John Cage, VARIATIONS will present an overview of the major landmarks in Sampling Music, following examples in 20th century composition, folk art and commercial media through to the meeting of all those threads in the present day.

Curated by Jon Leidecker.

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Jon Leidecker was born in 1970 in Washington D.C. to two physicists. Since 1990 he has performed appropriate collage music under the pseudonym Wobbly, aiming for extended narratives spun from spontaneous yet coherent multi-sample polyphony. Selected recent works are freely available online. <http://detritus.net/wobbly/>

VARIATIONS #5

The Discipline

As art and industrial practitioners formally map out the discipline, hip-hop's discovery of digital sampling technology in the mid-80's provided a reintroduction to its original roots in block party DJ collage. The international success of the new genre then prompts a legal backlash against the art form, with a rash of lawsuits filed against both commercially successful pop artists like De La Soul, Biz Markie & 2 Live Crew and left-field provocateurs like the KLF, Negativland and John Oswald.

01. Summary

The audience that had come of age during the era of the studio-produced pop song was ready for a genre of music which made explicit use of earlier recordings to construct new music. A song with recognizable but altered samples reveals to the listener the same editing techniques used by engineers to compose music from disparate elements in the studio. The audience's growing comfort with the definition of a recording as the true site of a musical composition, instead of merely a document of a live performance, gives rise to a music that can now be made from any sound, including those made by any previous artist, sourced from any recorded age.

02. Playlist

- 01 People Like Us "Country Drives", 1996 (under narration)
- 02 John Cage "Imaginary Landscape No. 5", 1952 (under narration)
- 03 James Tenney "Collage No. 1 ('Blue Suede')", 1961 (under narration)
- 04 Grandmaster Flash "Wild Style Kitchen Scene", 1982 (under narration)
- 05 Boogie Down Productions "South Bronx", 1987 (under narration)
- 06 Mark Stewart & Maffia "The Wrong Name and the Wrong Number", 1984 (under narration)
- 07 This Heat "24 Track Loop", 1979 (under narration)
- 08 Bee Gees "Staying Alive", 1977 (under narration)
- 09 Steely Dan "Peg", 1977 (under narration)
- 10 Severed Heads "A Relic of the Empire", 1983 (under narration)
- 11 Sugar Hill Gang "Rapper's Delight", 1979 (under narration)
- 12 New York Scratch Masters "Scratch Master's Jam 2", 1984 (under narration)
- 13 Run-DMC "Peter Piper", 1986 (under narration)
- 14 LL Cool J "Rock the Bells", 1985 (under narration)
- 15 Schoolly D "Dis Groove Is Bad", 1987
- 16 MC Shan "The Bridge", 1986
- 17 Boogie Down Productions "Poetry", 1987
- 18 Eric B. and Rakim "I Know You Got Soul", 1987
- 19 Lonnie Liston Smith "Expansions", 1974 (under narration)
- 20 Stetsasonic "Talkin' All That Jazz", 1988
- 21 Louis Armstrong and his Orchestra "Ain't Misbehavin'", 1929 (under narration)
- 22 Charlie Parker "Cheryl", 1948
- 23 Danielle Dax "Evil Honky Stomp", 1984 (under narration)
- 24 Casio SK-1 Demo, 1985
- 25 Violent Onsen Geisha "Shocking Early Works 83-85", 1985
- 26 Severed Heads "Brassiere, In Rome", 1984 (under narration)
- 27 Severed Heads "Gashing the Old Mae West", 1984
- 28 Age of Chance "Kisspower", 1986
- 29 Coldcut "Beats and Pieces", 1987 (under narration)
- 30 Coldcut "Say Kids (What Time Is It)", 1987
- 31 The Justified Ancients of Mu Mu "All You Need Is Love (Original Version)", 1987 (under narration)
- 32 The Justified Ancients of Mu Mu "The Queen and I", 1987 (under narration)



[Casio SK-1]



[Severed Heads, 1984]



[Marley Marl]

- 33 M-A-R-R-S "Pump Up the Volume", 1987
- 34 Dunya Yunis "Abu Zeluf / Music in the World of Islam Volume 1", 1976 (under narration)
- 35 Bomb the Bass "Beat Dis", 1988 (under narration)
- 36 Eric B. and Rakim "Paid in Full (Coldcut's Seven Minutes of Madness Mix)" 1988 (under narration)
- 37 Jive Bunny and the Mastermixers "Swing the Mood", 1989 (under narration)
- 38 Nurse with Wound "You Walrus Hurt the One You Love", 1985
- 39 Roberto Musci & Giovanni Venosta "Technowaltz", 1987
- 40 Holger Hiller "Hât Vôi Quê Húống", 1982 (under narration)
- 41 Holger Hiller "Whippets", 1986
- 42 Holger Hiller / Ohi Ho Bang Bang "The Two / The Three", 1988
- 43 Scott Johnson "John Somebody", 1983
- 44 Steve Reich "Different Trains", 1989 (fragment)
- 45 René Lussier "Le Trésor de la Langue / Manifeste du F.L.Q.", 1989
- 46 John Zorn "Cobra (Studio Version, Moderato)", 1991 (under narration)
- 47 Naked City "Speedfreaks (Torture Garden)", 1989
- 48 Christian Marclay "Record without a Cover", 1985 (under narration)
- 49 Todd Terry (Royal House) "Party People", 1987 (under narration)
- 50 Todd Terry (Black Riot) "A Day in the Life", 1988
- 51 Rob Base & DJ E-Z Rock "It Takes Two", 1988 (under narration)
- 52 Public Enemy "Public Enemy No. 1", 1987 (under narration)
- 53 Public Enemy "Bring the Noise", 1988
- 54 Public Enemy "Party for your Right to Fight", 1988
- 55 De La Soul "Say No Go", 1989 (under narration)
- 56 De La Soul "Cool Breeze on the Rocks", 1989 (fragment)
- 57 De La Soul "The Magic Number", 1989
- 58 Beastie Boys "The Sounds of Science (Show Vinyl)", 1989 (under narration)
- 59 Alphonze Mouzon "Funky Snakefoot", 1973 (fragment)
- 60 Rose Royce "Born to Love You", 1976 (fragment)
- 61 Diana Ross & The Supremes "No Matter What Sign You Are", 1969 (fragment)
- 62 Rose Royce "Daddy Rich", 1976 (fragment)
- 63 Harvey Scales "Dancing Room Only", 1979 (fragment)
- 64 Alan Moorhouse "Soul Skimmer", 1970 (fragment)
- 65 Paul Humphrey "Super Mellow", 1973 (fragment)
- 66 Ronnie Laws "Tell Me Something Good", 1975 (fragment)
- 67 Rose Royce "Yo Yo", 1976 (fragment)
- 68 Sugar Hill Gang "8th Wonder", 1980 (fragment)
- 69 Rose Royce "6 O'Clock DJ", 1976 (fragment)
- 70 Funky 4+1 "That's the Joint", 1981 (fragment)
- 71 Afrika Bambaataa & James Brown "Unity Part 2", 1984 (fragment)
- 72 Beastie Boys "Shake Your Rump", 1989
- 73 John Oswald "George Martin: Beatles", 1989 (under narration)
- 74 Kondo / Kaiser / Oswald "Moose and Salmon", 1978 (under narration)
- 75 John Oswald "Spoors / Beat", 1982 (under narration)
- 76 Mystery Labs "Mystery Tape x1 v.2", 1983 (under narration)
- 77 Mystery Labs "Mystery Tape x2 v.3", 1983 (under narration)
- 78 John Oswald "Funky X", 1983 (under narration)
- 79 John Oswald "WX", 1983
- 80 John Oswald "Metallica: Net", 1989
- 81 John Oswald "Public Enemy: Brown", 1989
- 82 John Oswald "Michael Jackson: Dab", 1989 (under narration)
- 83 De La Soul "Transmitting Live from Mars", 1989 (under narration)
- 84 Biz Markie "Alone Again", 1991 (under narration)
- 85 Negativland "U2 (Special Edit Radio Mix)", 1991
- 86 2 Live Crew "Pretty Woman", 1989 (under narration)
- 87 Severed Heads "A Relic of the Empire", 1985 (under narration)
- 88 Public Enemy "Final Count of the Collision Between Us and the Damned" 1990 (under narration)
- 89 Public Enemy "Fight the Power", 1990

03. Selected bibliography

Baran, Madeline. "Copyright and Music: A History Told in MP3's", <http://www.illegal-art.org/audio/historic.html>, online, 2003



[Coldcut]



[Prince Paul]



[The Justified Ancients of Mu Mu]

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Dery, Mark. "Public Enemy: Confrontation", in *That's the Joint!: The Hip-Hop Studies Reader*, ed. Murray Forman and Mark Anthony Neal, Routledge, New York, 2004

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UCLA Law Copyright Infringement Project Online (Compiled Court Decisions of Sampling Cases by Various Judges) (<http://cip.law.ucla.edu/song.html>)

Weingarten, Christopher R. "33 1/3: It Takes a Nation of Millions To Hold Us Back", Continuum Books, New York, 2010

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Wikipedia. *Grand Upright Music, Ltd. v. Warner Bros. Records Inc.*, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Upright_Music,_Ltd._v._Warner_Bros._Records_Inc., last modified 9 February 2010

04. Selected links

Bee Gees - "Staying Alive": ctrl+F "Tape loop"
http://mixonline.com/mag/audio_bee_gees_stayin/

Grandmaster Flash & Jam Master Jay Battle
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o9vKAWft9k0>

Ricky Riccardi - "80 Years of Ain't Misbehavin"
<http://dippermouth.blogspot.com/2009/07/80-years-of-aint-misbehavin-1930s.html>

Charlie Parker & Melodic Contrafacts
<http://forum.saxontheweb.net/showthread.php?10653-Charlie-Parker-Contrafacts>

Severed Heads
<http://sevcom.com/>



[John Oswald "Plunderphonics", 1989]

plunderphonics

Tom Elluard - "The Influence of Recording Media on Composition"
http://tomellard.com/album/thesis_backup_the_end.html

Ensoniq Mirage
<http://www.synthmuseum.com/ensoniq/ensmirage01.html>

Casio SK-1
<http://www.casiosk1.com/>

The Justified Ancients of Mu Mu - The Mu-Museum
<http://www.positivevoid.co.uk/>

The Timelords (The JAMS) - The Manual
www.klf.de/home/?p=4681

Holger Hiller
<http://www.holgerhiller.net/index.php/biography>

Kembrew McLeod - "How Copyright Law Changed Hip Hop, an interview with Public Enemy's Chuck D and Keith Shocklee"
http://www.ibiblio.org/pub/electronic-publications/stay-free/archives/20/public_enemy.html

Beastie Boys - Paul's Boutique Sample List
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul's_Boutique

Oswald, John - "Plunderphonics, or Audio Piracy as a Compositional Prerogative"
<http://www.plunderphonics.com/xhtml/xplunder.html>

Campbell v. Acuff-Rose Music, Inc.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Campbell_v._Acuff-Rose_Music,_Inc

Wendy J. Gordon, "Fair Use As Market Failure"
http://detritus.net/rhizome/legal/Gordon-Fair_Use.html

UCLA Law Copyright Infringement Project (Sampling Case Analyses)
<http://cip.law.ucla.edu/song.html>

Illegal Art Exhibition - Articles
<http://www.illegal-art.org/articles/index.html>



[Public Enemy]



[Holger Hiller]

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06. Copyright note

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