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Student Number: 24015171

Module Number and title: JOL734 – Creative Music Remixing



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Creative Remixing Essay

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Throughout recent decades remixing music has become huge and a massive part of music culture, many would assume that it began in the 80s or 90s, however it began back in the 1960's. Two of the pioneers of remixing started it in Jamacia in the late 60's, they were King Tubby and Lee 'Scratch' Perry. They began taking multitrack recordings (a way of recording multiple tracks onto a single tape invented in the mid 40s) of songs and removing parts vocals and instruments to change the feel of the songs. They then moved on to adding some basic effects such as reverb and delay. With all this combined, they began rearranging songs to give them a different groove that better fit a different audience from the original versions by extending some parts or adding vocal hooks. At the same time in the USA a man called Tom Moulton was remixing disco songs to create extended versions for use in clubs. Naturally, these were a big hit, and studios began to take notice even going as far as to hire Tom to professionally create official remixes to be released. These 3 men's creativity and experimentation created remixing and pushed it into the mainstream and without them music would not be where it now is.

Developing technology, new techniques and culture all had significant impacts on remixing. The creation of the digital sampler allowed for even more creativity with remixing as it removed the limitations of tape. The first digital sampler was the Fairlight CMI, however this was too expensive for most people, soon after Akai released their first sampler which was more affordable meaning more people could get one. This allowed those who do not know music theory or how to play an instrument to create their own music. Drum machines such as the Roland 808 and 909 were another technology that allowed non-musicians to make music on their own. These machines had synthesised drum sounds that could be programmed into looping patterns which meant anyone could easily create a drum loop. A technique using two turn tables allowed anyone with the skills to create extended remixes on the go, it involved using two copies of the same album and swapping between each turntable before spinning back the earlier allowing that part of the song to loop infinitely if the DJ wanted. Culture and politics through the decades have influenced the music being created during that time for example many songs created throughout the 60s and 70s was speaking out against the Vietnam War such as 'What's going on' by Marvin Gaye or 'Fortunate Son' by Creedence Clearwater Revival. This trend also happened in a genre which was huge on remixes – Hip Hop. Many of the most popular Hip-Hop songs are speaking out about racism, gang violence and poverty. This has changed the feel of music being created which feels angry and dark such as 'Fight the Power' by Public Enemy and 'C.R.E.A.M' by Wu-Tang Clan. The state of the world massively affects the styles of music being produced and the messages placed within songs.

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There are many reasons to remix a song, but one of the biggest of them all is the financial motivation. Remixing brings a song to a different or wider audience, generating more money than just the one version catering to one audience. A remix of a song may be in a different genre than the original for example, 'Down Under', a pop-rock song by Men At Work was remixed a couple of years ago by a fairly unknown artist called Luude into a drum and bass song which then proceeded to blow up online gathering hundreds of millions of plays. This provided exposure not only to Luude but also to Men At Work and the original song, bringing it to a much wider audience. Remixes can also provide a wider audience internationally. The largest example of this is probably 'Despacito' by Luis Fonsi which was created originally in Spanish. A few months after its release, Justin Bieber released his version with his own vocals added which took off extremely quickly and brought the song to an English-speaking audience, even breaking records on sites like YouTube. This made the song much more popular than it would have ever been had it only had the Spanish version created, but more importantly, it generated an enormous amount of money more than the original did on its own.

Copyright is designed to protect original works and give rights to the author/ authors. It is automatically placed upon any work once it is created ranging from music to software to documents. It prevents any unauthorised usage to the work and provides protection from plagiarism. There are some areas that are excluded from this protection such as use for education or parody. For copyright to be recognised, the work must have a verifiable creation date attached which is easy enough in the digital age with metadata but was more difficult before digital files. Ownership is initially placed with the author, however, it can be transferred along with the associated rights. Copyright provides 4 'Moral Rights' to the owner:

1. The right to be identified as the author or performer
2. The right not to have the work subject to derogatory treatment
3. The right not to have the work falsely attributed
4. The right to privacy

To gain clearance to use a work or part of a work, you must gain permission from whoever the owner of the intellectual property is. The royalties generated by musical works are collected and distributed by collection agencies. The 3 main agencies here are PPL, PRS and MCPS. The agencies have slight differences in what they collect royalties for, but all serve the purpose of ensuring that people receive fair compensation.

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