Re-composing Sounds … and Other Things

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In this article, based on four decades of experience of using samples in diverse ways in experimental, particularly electroacoustic compositions, the author investigates the world of what he calls 'sample-based sound-based music' and suggests that there is a relative lack of scholarship in this important area. The article's contextual sections focus on briefly delineating this world of sonic creativity and placing it within today's sampling culture as well as dealing with two political aspects of sampling, a musician's attitude towards the reuse of sonic materials and the legality of sampled sounds, including musical passages, in the discussion of which current legislation related to sampling is challenged. Following this, a number of categories are presented in terms of the types of sampling material that is being used as well as how sample-based works are presented. The subsequent section is perhaps the most poignant in the article, namely the opening up of this form of innovative composition from a more traditional 'artist creates work' mode of operation to a more collaborative one which is essentially already part of most other forms of sampling culture. The objective here is to suggest that such collaborative approaches will enable sample-based sound-based music to become part of the lives of a much broader group than those currently involved with it.

1. PREMISE

It is my contention that what I call 'sample-based sound-based music' in the present text represents one of the most radical developments and opportunities for increased interest within the broad realm of sound-based music production.[1] The following pages will focus on a combination of the author's personal journey regarding the use of samples creatively in sound-based composition to support the subject's delineation, a number of relevant aspects of today's ubiquitous sampling culture and, most importantly, a premise that collaborative approaches to sampling using any sounds is an excellent means of opening the door to the broad possibilities within sound-based music for people of all ages and backgrounds.

2. TO BEGIN

Having edited this journal from its birth, I have avoided discussing my own artistic work; however, the theme proposed by Manuella Blackburn and Raúl Minsburg has offered me the chance to talk about some of the motivating forces behind my interest in the subject of sampling, not only artistically but also from the point of view of its scholarly study. The discussion of my own personal history is here only to serve the article's key goal as presented in the premise.

In a sense, I became involved with sampling without being fully conscious of it. Student and early works were both electroacoustic and instrumental. Looking back as would a musicologist, a pattern of behaviour calling on reuse commences very early on (in the 1970s) involving a variety of forms of sampling, such as using dictionary definitions in different languages or recordings of pinball machines as source material or the use of transcribed world music whilst including phonetic lyric 'translations' of languages I could not speak. This was to continue in the majority of my works, a number of which were inspired by text-sound composition, often involving the re-composition of texts, the most notable (as in often performed) being *Rock's Music* (1988) based on the re-composition of hundreds of short fragments taken from three lengthy Gertrude Stein texts from the 1910s and 1920s.

Although aware of the fact that I was a good 'recycler' in my artistic endeavours, I was surprised when I was invited to deliver a keynote at the Re-* conference in Berlin in 2009, celebrating sampling culture across all art forms. What inspired me during that event was how literature and particularly the fine arts had often adopted sampling culture towards social and political goals. This included the fascinating tale of the short film *Techno Viking* becoming an international cult and meme over a fairly significant period of time.[2] Between being invited and what I discovered, I realised that sampling with any sounds had been and would always be a key focus in my creative ventures and that

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[1] I believe that the same can be said about DIY electronics which is related to the hacking culture. This combination is the subject of a book currently being completed by the author and John Richards, entitled *On the Music of Sounds and the Music of Things*. The subject of DIY electronics will not be pursued in this article beyond its potential for using samples.

[2] The conference url www.recycling-sampling-jamming.de is no longer active; two urls with incomplete information can be found at: www.adk.de/de/programm/?we_objectID=24422 and www.utakopp.de/printmedien/re. Regarding *Techno Viking* (2000 onwards), see Matthias Fritsch's personal site subrealic.net and, in particular, technoviking.tv.

it is a powerful element within today's sampling culture. The sampling focus in my work is still true today as will be briefly discussed later in section 5.

Parallel with this artistic journey, a second one would evolve from the late 1980s onwards, namely a long-standing dissatisfaction with the relative lack of interest in sonic work and experimental music in general along with the elitist attitude which often supported their continued marginalisation. It is during this time that the words access, accessibility and facilitation entered my scholarly vocabulary, not to mention my subsequent request that sonic musicians offer their listeners 'something to hold on to' (Landy 1994) in terms of the listening experience. As will be demonstrated below, the combination of the use of samples of any kind and the ability to link material to lived experience supported this *causus belli* against marginalisation, instead seeking greater appreciation, interest and participation in the music that forms part of this journal's focus. It was a time of personal rejection of the concept of art for art's sake and a search for its opposite or at least something that could engage the heart *and* the mind in sonic art. These interests will be interspersed within the next two discussions on today's ubiquitous sampling culture and its politics.

3. SAMPLING CULTURE AND SAMPLE-BASED SOUND-BASED MUSIC

Although we musicians might understandably want to take credit for the introduction of the word 'sample' into the arts – when I was a student, it was used more often within the expression sampling-rate or samples/ second – today's sampling culture pervades all the arts and much more. Having embarked on an extended literature research in order to come to grips with sampling culture for the book mentioned in footnote 1, a strong imbalance was discovered between more mainstream (read popular-music based) forms of taking musical samples and remixing them and more experimental versions, despite the fact that electroacoustic music has involved the use of samples for decades not to mention the fact that musique concrète was known for its experimental use of the phonograph. There is sadly insufficient space here to list relevant survey bibliographic citations that are included in the book. Therefore, the following two sections focus on areas of sampling that are relevant within the area of electroacoustic music studies.

It is noteworthy in the call for this issue that the implication is that one musician will involve the use of samples in his or her composition. I, too, am guilty of this and will discuss this briefly in sections 4 and 5 below. This upholds the common view, one that I have disputed in various publications over the last decade, that electroacoustic music has strong roots in the art

music tradition which has implications in terms of the role of the composer. In other words, one of the key aspects that can be associated with sampling in popular music culture is largely disregarded in electroacoustic music-making, namely elements related to remix, to sound swapping and to sequential composition. The subject of collaborative composition will be the focus of the latter half of section 6 below.

Taking this a step further, it is a rarity that sampling culture forms a subject of focus within the realm of electroacoustic music studies. Indeed the concept of reuse of a snippet of music, whether note- or sound-based or any sound for that matter seems to be taken for granted by scholars in this area. However, discussions of sample-based sound-based music are rare, hence my pleasure when the theme was proposed. Scholarly discussions, when they do occur, focus on the more traditional form of the creation of 'the work' above the potential of more communal aspects of sampling.

3.1. Sampling any sounds

For our purposes a sonic sample can range from micro-sound to an entire work as well as including notes and note-based passages. Simply stated, we can sample anything and use this material in electroacoustic works or, as in my own case, sample-based sound-based works. In other words, although we can use samples mixed in with a host of other sounds, our focus here is works that are fundamentally sample-based.

In simple terms, one might situate sample-based work along a line between clearly note-based approaches to clearly sound-based ones. I have always found John Oswald's 'plunderphonics' a wonderful halfway point between note- and sound-based composition and once called it 'music-based music' (in Landy 2007). Music-based music is rather special as it clearly references note-based approaches including the better-known popular varieties due to its source material but uses electroacoustic montage techniques in a highly sophisticated manner thus referencing a sound-based approach to organising sonic material.

Given the scale of potential material to be used and focusing on sound-based works, an obvious first stop in a mini-survey might be soundscape composition. Although such works can focus on rhythmical, pitch and dynamic elements, as does any note-based work, the sonic material is clearly taken from untraditional sources. Most soundscape composition is sample-based, whether the samples are subsequently manipulated or not, and some samples can be extremely long.

A second stop on this unsystematic survey concerns relevant works of sound art. Many works of sound art 'grab' sounds as sonic material and reuse them. In some cases, sounds related to a particular site

(e.g., historically) are re-presented as part of a work in which content and context are mixed, a defining characteristic of many sound artworks.

A third and final example is to do with the repurposing (or hacking) of objects or instruments. Although often associated with noise music, some hacked instruments can produce virtually any sound, whether to do with their original function or involving embedded samples.

What these three examples have in common is that they do not easily fall into the art or popular music traditions although any work can have roots in either or both. They might fall in between categories or are to do with new categories within our highly diverse sound-based musical landscape.

We shall return to this mini-survey when a categorisation of my sample-based works is presented in section 5 below. Although not covering the entire area of sound-based sampling – do we really know about all that we can do with sonic samples yet? – the proposed categories will act as an attempt for others to create a more sophisticated classification system of sampling approaches in the future.

3.2. On the subject of creating experiential links

Before moving on to the next section on the politics of sound-based sampling, it is valuable to present two subjects. The first is related to recognising the use of experiential links as an access tool; the second is to do with an important nuance that acts as a bridge between this section and the politics of the sampling section that follows. Unlike Schaeffer's well-known goal of offering listeners a musical experience by way of reduced listening, sampling tends to honour the clear identification of source. Although manipulation techniques can be used, as they often are in, say, soundscape composition, the original source is nonetheless able to be perceived either generically (e.g., a tree) or specifically (e.g., taken from a particular bird or piece). Although a listener's relationship to a sound may vary in terms of cultural factors or in terms of knowledge about the sample, experiential links with the sample are often created, in particular by inexperienced listeners of sound-based composition. A key reason for the creation of 'the something to hold on to factor' in timbral composition was to offer people without experience in sonic creativity a means to navigate a work. This is important to me and, by implication, introducing this concept suggests that musicians keep this in mind. Although sample identification is by no means a guarantee of having people enjoy a work, it does offer a chance for non-specialists to find a means to enter into a work. It is with this in mind that I consider the use of samples in sound-based works as one amongst many access tools.

As suggested above, sampling culture is a sharing culture, whether this is to do with sharing sounds, compositions (mixes) or anything else. By having samples offer experiential links is another means of sharing as long as the reason for the use of the sample in a given work is clear. This brings us to the next subject.

3.3. The complex relationship between re-composition and re-contextualisation

As a warm up to the following section, two of the many useful words related to sampling will be briefly introduced: re-composition and re-contextualisation. It might seem logical to suggest that when re-composition is the goal in sound-based sampling, then there is a direct link to the original version or the source of the samples. In music, one might think of the famous re-composed scherzo movement from Mahler's Second Symphony in the third movement of Berio's *Sinfonia*. In sound-based music anything from plunderphonics to soundscape to sample-based text-sound composition (using a single source) might come to mind. A focus on re-contextualisation, in contrast, suggests a removal from the original setting. This may be simply the use of artistic freedom to place something known into a separate context, perhaps surrealistically, or an attempt to abstract it. This latter idea reflects a four-part classification system proposed by Eduardo Navas (2012: 20–1) regarding remix culture ranging from representation to abstract. Such choices are aesthetic ones, but they are also political ones. Re-contextualisation can be highly rewarding aesthetically but it can also influence access or involve disconnection or even ignore the relationship with the source. This is an attitudinal action. The discussion on the politics of sampling will consequently focus on the artist's attitude towards samples and will also present the inevitable: the legality of the use of samples.

4. ON THE POLITICS OF SOUND-BASED SAMPLING

This subject is worthy of an article or manuscript on its own. However, given the constraints of a scholarly article, the two most important and obvious aspects will be introduced.

4.1. On the subject of attitude

How are samples treated, not only in sound-based sample-based works, but also in general? As Henry Jenkins has asked, 'Is it appropriate to appropriate?' (Jenkins 2010: 107). Although artists have a licence to do what they please in many nations, the answer to this question is by no means straightforward. The following paragraphs reflect the point in this issue's

call focused on sampling vs quoting vs referencing vs plundering.

A musician may choose a sample due to its source, possibly its sound regardless of its source, something related to function or meaning of the sound or perhaps even another reason; the choice may not be exclusive to one category. Furthermore, regardless of the choice, other aspects may be ignored or even treated with irony or with disrespect. This is to do with the issue of potential conflicts between borrowing and origin. Let's tease this list out a bit taking the attitude of the musician into account in all cases. Although this section can be generalised into all sample-based music, we shall discuss this within the realm of sound-based works primarily.

4.1.1. Sample choice related to source

If one chooses a sample for this reason, the identity of the source is normally relevant within the musical context, that is, the musician wants the listener to include the identification of the source as part of the experience of reception. If a source is being re-contextualised, as is often the case, how is the still recognisable source being treated in the new context? Perhaps the choice of a sample is due to the relationship one has with the particular source. If so, how is this relationship made clear in terms of the reception of the work? If two or more recognisable samples are combined, the same question can be raised. If the source has been chosen due to its source's exotic quality from the musician's point of view, it may be presented like a picture postcard as my colleague Simon Emmerson once shared with me. Will all listeners perceive that sound as a picture postcard? For those who are more familiar with the sound, will its use be given an unintended interpretation? In terms of treatment, although this is not relevant to all samples chosen due to their source, one might consider a spectrum ranging from demonstrating respect[3] for the source's place in a given culture to its being treated critically (see section 4.1.2. directly below). Another spectrum could range from usage related to source recognition to usage related to sonic quality (see section 4.1.3.).

4.1.2. Sample choice consciously related to its function or meaning

This type of sample choice falls within the first one but is, in a sense, more profound. One might assume that there are two obvious choices available to artists who select samples due to their cultural function or

meaning regardless of the type of re-contextualisation: to demonstrate respect (which can be challenging depending on the type of re-contextualisation) or to mock or criticise the source. As art often challenges society, an artist can clearly make a case in terms of mocking or criticising things. An example of careful mockery will be provided below. However, the central question here is: if a sample's function is either ignored or mocked/criticised and offence can be taken, has this risk of causing offence been taken into account by the artist and is it therefore part of the work's dramaturgy? If the answer is yes, things are clear. If the answer is not yes, then one runs the risk of unintended offence, something I believe that those using samples in music should consciously avoid.

4.1.3. Sample choice related to its sonic quality

In this case, if source and function are not of importance, then we are working within the realm of what I call 'musical listening' as opposed to 'contextual' or 'referential listening'. This works at the more abstract end of the application of samples and is related to Schaefferian reduced listening. However, what if the source is identified regardless of the musician's desire to focus on the sonic element of the sample? In some cases it might not matter. Nonetheless, in others, where the recognition of a sample brings either source or function/meaning into a listener's reception of the piece, the inevitable question must be raised: has this sound been presented with respect? Stated differently, if a sample has been de-contextualised and thus re-contextualised into this musical context, does one run the risk of the listener, who is aware of the function and associated meaning of the sample, discovering that the cultural values connected with the sound are being ignored or treated without respect? As someone who has dealt with samples for many years, I consider this to be undesirable and potentially offensive to certain listeners.

4.2. Illustrating my view regarding the attitude issue: two brief examples from my own work

I have been involved with two series of sample-based music in recent years: one related directly to various nations' radio broadcasters and another, and this is a leap, to traditional Chinese music practice. Together they offer the opportunity to walk through the three categories presented above and demonstrate sometimes-complex relationships with a wide variety of sounds as related to the original culture and to our lives, how we can 'understand' and eventually comment on things on many levels.

As a student I spent a great deal of time studying ethnomusicology, which is important here for two reasons: first, it introduced me to the wealth and diversity

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[3]Respect is being used in this case to suggest that a) the musician is aware of the function/meaning of the sample within the relevant culture and, therefore, b) the use of the sample does not cause offence, in particular to people within that culture. It is not essential that a listener from another culture is aware of this.

of world cultures and music which is relevant to both series; second, it demonstrated the musical potential of the inclusion of cultural aspects within musical discourse.

The *Radio Series* is one in which a substantial number of broadcasts are recorded from a single nation (or, in the case of the isle of Ireland, both nations inhabiting the island) over a relatively short period of time, mainly two weeks or less. The more diverse the broadcasts chosen, the greater the opportunity to reflect a multitude of aspects of a culture's daily lives. This material is recomposed without modification, creating the series' individual works.

Of course many aspects of daily life on the radio are similar internationally and that message is clear to the listener of the works, in particular if they listen to more than one of them. But each piece is to celebrate and, yes, where relevant, slightly mock aspects of our quotidian radio media existence and thus daily life. The sonic material includes speaking voices, logos, advertisements, musical items and any sounds that happen to occur during the broadcasts. Clearly people from the nation in question will identify more sources (e.g., broadcasters' voices) than others and, of course, there is the issue of language. Not understanding one of these works forces musical listening on an audience. All non-English language works therefore have a movie projected with a translation (other translation movies could be made for other cultures).

What is relevant to this discussion is the fact that source, function (of a broadcast, of a radio station) and meaning are all very much consciously chosen from the dozens of hours of source material for each work. Nonetheless, as a composer of what I call 'the theatre of sound', I am equally interested in the musical characteristics (the sound) of these pieces, the spatial aspects (all involve surround sound) and the specific content, in particular related to words or iconic sounds. All three aspects are entirely interwoven. There is no (conscious) overt criticism of any broadcast or person or cultural value although there are some ridiculous samples in all of these surrealistic works that, as it were, speak for themselves. The most controversial aspect of these works is related to their legality as will be presented below.

The *Chinese works* of which there are only a few are largely based on music-based approaches. Here the challenge is 'squaring the circle' between source, function and meaning on the one hand, and the sonic on the other. As these works are clearly rooted in Chinese culture, they are received quite differently between Chinese audiences, who are aware of the fact that a non-Chinese musician made the work, and listeners elsewhere. Awareness of this variance in reception forms an essential part of my composition.

In fact, just like children's animation films that can be interpreted on several levels (think of parents laughing at different times from the children), sample-based works can be received on many levels as well. In this case the intention is to address those who are acquainted with the sources and the related functions in one manner and those who do not and could not be concerned about such things in another. (Again the spectrum from referential to musical listening comes to mind.)

In one of these works, recordings of a wide variety of Chinese instruments, ensembles and Chinese opera were used. Although it would be presumptuous to claim that I was aware of the social significance of each and every recording, I was acquainted with the societal role of virtually all of them and where texts appeared and samples had been pre-chosen, translations were made to ensure that nothing odd or critical was being communicated. Another work focuses on a single instrument, the Chinese ocarina known as the xūn. In this case I worked closely with a master musician who played various xūns in different registers demonstrating both techniques and traditional tunes, all of which were thoroughly discussed at the time. Although clearly notes play a significant role in both works, the 8-channel immersive surround sound piece with its theatrical and play-like musical and spatial qualities (e.g., wondering where the next sound is coming from) offer an experience focusing on the sonic as well as the musical, thus right in the middle between note-based and sound-based composition. In short, the source of the sounds was an essential focus here. In the former case, the highly diverse spectrum of Chinese instruments played a role and in the latter the amazing breadth of sounds emitted from the world's oldest pitched instrument. The sonic quality of the musical result was of central importance; however, this occurred in the full understanding of both source and musical function/ meaning at least given my knowledge of Chinese musical and cultural traditions.[4]

The question deserves to be asked after introducing these two examples. Have I committed plagiarism in these two works? The question is easy to ask but more difficult to respond to. Most samples in the radio works (with the exception of the Czech radio work where their broadcaster has the rights to all of its broadcasts) are not legal for use in my works. The reuse of some of the Chinese recorded samples, depending on their length, represents borderline cases (although this would be to do with the recordings as the music in general was not under copyright). Does

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[4]Ironically as young Chinese people are in general moving towards less traditional and more 'here and now' forms of music, the younger members of the audiences who heard the works were hardly likely to protest about a Westerner's re-use of their traditional instruments.

one just abort a work given those antiquated aspects of sonic rights legislation? Many sampling artists do not use their own names given their involvement with various aspects of illegality. In my case it is a question of calculating risk. Let's therefore investigate some of the legal issues related to sample-based sonic composition.

4.3. On the subject of legality

Again assuming that others will cover this topic in this issue as I do in the book, in sampling work the situation is as follows: one uses non-copyrighted material (e.g., field recordings – although some urban sounds do have copyright as does, for example, Big Ben, the use of websites such as Freesound[5] and the use of Creative Commons copyleft material) or the use of samples that given today's legislation can be used without paying a fee (in music normally less than eight measures of copyrighted works but be aware that, for example, James Brown's scream is much shorter and is under copyright) or the illegal use of copyright material. As John Oswald placed on the 'Plunderphonics' CD booklet, 'If creativity is a field, copyright is a fence' (Oswald 1989; the CD was withdrawn due to a copyright issue to do with the cover, not the largely illegal musical content).

With this in mind I have had difficulty coming in contact with experimental figures working in this area, as they prefer to work anonymously, an interesting place to be in today's 'celebrity culture'. Relative anonymity does not guarantee avoiding being offered a subpoena or other form of notice of copyright abuse but it is one means of minimising risk. In the case of the works discussed above and in the next section, other than the few times where rights had been declared with authors of various texts that have been re-composed, I have simply decided that the risk is found to be worth taking and, in consequence, the inference about the need to change copyright laws is present as a form of protest.

There are dozens of publications written over the last decade covering the superannuated state of copyright legislation in terms of sampling culture in general (see, for example, right2remix.org; McLeod and Di Cola 2011; Lessig 2004, 2008). Open source, which is being fought for so rigorously in terms of publications, is hardly penetrating into today's commercial music world. It is true that within contemporary and particularly sound-based music many people place their works onto SoundCloud or YouTube. Although those sampling artists in sonic creativity are less likely to be discovered by the sample chasers, there is much work to be done to open up

legislation regarding sonic sample use in today's digital society.

5. MY WAY

I am a bit more comfortable with 'Art is what happens when you take an object out of context and give it a new thought' (Duchamp in Tomkins 1997: 176) than I am with 'A good composer does not imitate; he steals' (attributed to Stravinsky). In this section, on the basis of a review of all of my sample-based music, the vast majority of which is sound-based, a first step is proposed in terms of classifying what you can do with samples. This brief overview involves how samples are employed and how the works are presented. In fact this section is not about the works themselves, but instead simply how they were created and executed. Remarks related to attitude have largely been covered already in the previous section. What is important to say at this point is that I am a firm believer of a so-called sonic signature. What that means in this case is that as different as the works are in the Chinese and radio series, the same composition approaches and techniques are common to both. A few keywords worthy of mention would be: the '1 per cent tilt' (my version of Duchamp's 'new thought'), surrealism, speech, musical diversity, humour, the 'What?! Factor' as well as offering listeners those things to hold on to.

Sampling-based approaches in my work – sample-based works fit into the following categories:

- *text-based* (whether recomposed lengthier texts or snippets from many texts including those works with texts from Gertrude Stein);
- *music-based* (in which music is borrowed with respect and undergoes the 1 per cent tilt; this may form part of a larger work that is less sample-based or an entire work);
- *sound-based* (using any sound ranging from a heartbeat to those pinball machines to sounds in nature, etc.);
- *combinations of the first three* (e.g., the radio series);
- *method-based* (where techniques of composition are borrowed from musical traditions or text-based ones such as the playful approaches to making associated with the French group Oulipo);
- and even *movement-based* (where choreographic snippets are incorporated into a performance work or the movements associated with a performer are recycled).

Presenting sample-based music – performative elements can be combined with any of the above. These range from:

- fixed medium;
- live (including real-time triggering of samples on laptops, hacked instruments and so on);

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[5]www.freesound.org.

- mixed performances;
- the use of interactivity (in my case usually coming from dancers who 'conduct' their work);
- and, of course, improvisation.[6]

Clearly both lists above can be expanded upon. Looking again at the mini-survey in section 3 above, most works can easily be placed into these two groups of categories. I am quite interested to discover what might be missing that could be added to these short lists in the future.

Returning to the few biographical points made early on in this text, it is important to note that I simultaneously consider these works to be experimental and accessible to an audience wider than an élite one. I also consider it important to consider for whom a performance is intended and choose works that best relate to that audience.[7]

If I am to cite a 'weakness' in what I have done thus far, it is that I have approached my outreach, whether in educational or community arts contexts, slightly differently from my own work in terms of collaboration. Although I have collaborated often with other musicians and, more often, other artists particularly in the other time-based arts, I have not collaborated with them in terms of sharing samples, remix, sequential composition and the like. This should be added to the presenting sample-based music list as *works available for remix*. However, I have done this regularly in my outreach work and have learned a great deal from that. This is the subject of the next section.

6. COLLABORATIVE SOUND-BASED SAMPLING CREATIVITY

6.1. Sample-based sound-based music *is* accessible or How I came to learn to be collaborative with my samples

Ever since publishing my first book, *What's the Matter with Today's Experimental Music?*, in 1991 I have felt that it is an obligation to practise what I preach. In that book, I found three types of people/organisations guilty of ensuring that most experimental music remains of marginal value in contemporary culture. They were: the communications media (too little attention paid to the music in print and on broadcast media); educational organisations, mainly, although not only, at pre-university level (the music is largely ignored, perhaps more so in a time of STEM, not STEAM); and the musicians themselves, many of whom left awareness creation to others and just

continued churning out new work – sadly there were few others then and still today to do that job for them.

As a musician this meant taking some responsibility in terms of widening interest in the world of sonic creativity. Influencing the communications media is clearly a challenge too great for a single person or even for an experimental musicians' lobby (whatever form that could possibly take). The most important and potentially powerful step that could be taken would be to offer means of introducing young people, and, beyond this, interested people of all ages, to become acquainted with and eventually participate in sound-based musical creativity. But are they interested? This short discussion demonstrates that they are and how the use of samples is an important key to success. What became clear to me later on was that collaborative making was at least as important as the use of samples. It is this combination that has led to this text's premise.

How was it discovered that not only is this music accessible, but it is also something that especially young people enjoy making? First concrete data were needed. The Intention/Reception project (I/R) has been written about elsewhere, including in *Organised Sound* (see Weale 2006 and also Landy 2006). Through an introduction of carefully chosen electroacoustic works, we (and subsequently many others) have demonstrated that the potential audience for sonic works is much greater than the one that it is reaching.[8]

With this knowledge, something concrete needed to be offered to the uninitiated, in particular school children. With this in mind, the EARS 2 pedagogical site (www.ears2.dmu.ac.uk – see Landy, Hall and Uwins 2013)[9] with its associated creative software, Compose with Sounds (CwS – cws.dmu.ac.uk) introducing sound-based creativity to those with no experience, was created. CwS's starting point is making music with samples.

During the initial period of development of CwS, which was originally and continues to be supported by the European Union's Culture programme, colleagues representing the six partners and associate partners went into schools to work with classes and within them individuals to demonstrate the potential of the software (examples of works made during this period can be found on the CwS site). Some colleagues, in particular in France and Norway, worked with entire class groups who jointly made works feeding off one another, recording together, composing together and evaluating together. Although CwS was originally developed for single users, the enthusiastic reports by

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[6]What I know is missing here is: works intended to be remixed (see below).

[7]A list of my works that fall under the sampling base approaches can be found at: llandy.dmu.ac.uk/sampling-approaches.

[8]In the I/R tests, between *c.* 50 per cent and 80 per cent of listeners of all ages said they would like to hear the works that we carefully chose or one similar to them again, far higher than we had originally thought.

[9]EARS 2 is inspired by the book *Making Music with Sounds* (Landy 2012); the site is currently being translated into several languages.

the leaders and the class groups I met demonstrated something of great importance, namely that (young) users employing sounds they had chosen together and with which they were familiar (e.g., their own voices), working with them, remixing them and creating performable works with them proved a virtually instant means of offering access to them.[10]

Furthermore, and this is a crucial point, a major difference between sound-based creativity and traditionally taught instrumental work is that no music literacy (score reading) or particular virtuosity is needed. From the initial workshops onwards, digital natives discovered the intuitive approach to CwS very quickly and ran with it![11]

6.2. Moving from all sounds to (just) samples; moving from single users to collaboration

One of the most poignant, although not totally unexpected bits of knowledge acquired through the I/R project and the EARS 2/CwS and similar workshops that followed it is that most novices, including young people, find abstract sounds (whether generated or manipulated sonic material) more difficult to grasp and thus enjoy than sounds they feel they find familiar. Like wine, some sounds are an acquired taste. Furthermore, as they tend to find unidentifiable sounds and abstract works somewhat difficult, they normally attempt as they do with often-unknown contemporary instrumental music, to link it to the known, thus often leading to links with science fiction or horror film music and sounds. These experiences have led many a workshop leader to the conclusion that adventures in sonic creativity work best when starting with something known and shared, supporting the discussion earlier in this article, whether it is a sound, a rhythm, a story or something else.

In a sense the header for this discussion might be read as a formula for opening up sound-based music to new listeners and future artists. Although still today there are those who consider many forms of experimental (sound-based) music to be 'not music', that does not take away the fact that they can engage with sonic creativity as a form of artistic endeavour. Following on from the theme of 'shared experience' introduced above, one might note that in cultures around the globe, music 'of the people' is often a) a type of music with which people already have some connection through experience, and b) a collaborative experience whether

there is a single musician and others clapping and dancing along or a music performed by many.

Projecting this pair of points onto the area of making music with sounds, and drawing from the workshops that have been taking place in recent years (beyond EARS 2, see, for example, www. interfaces.dmu.ac.uk/activities/hacking-and-sound-based-creativity-in-schools/) an access formula has evolved. From both workshop leaders and teachers, it has become clear that, starting with a short introduction of sound-based musical creativity, initial activities might include a sound walk in which participants focus on listening, having participants become aware of sounds that they may normally ignore, place them within 3D space and describe them both in terms of their real-life nature and their musical qualities (e.g., pitch, sound quality, dynamic). After this introduction, or alternatively by using the EARS 2 projects that cover more ground, participants are then able to move on to collecting sounds. This can be done using any recording device: either dedicated recording equipment or perhaps a mobile phone. An alternative to this collection is to seek sounds on sites such as Freesound or from the CwS site. It is our experience that the more hands-on the workshops or classes are, the more the participants 'own' the sounds that they use. As previously mentioned, young people in particular love to record their own voices using words or other utterances as source material.

For CwS, each sound can be isolated and given a corresponding image thus creating what we call a sound card as part of their source material. Sounds that belong together are called sound card packs that can be imported into a session. Similarly they can be exported and made available for others to use. Participants can then work on composing with sounds literally whether using them in their 'as is' state or modifying them using sound manipulation tools. Beginners often enjoy making loops of short sequences which introduce them to rhythmical and perhaps pitch elements. The more experience they have, the more sophisticated the tools or compositional challenges can be with which they engage; if left unguided, the choice can be overwhelming. Both EARS 2 and CwS employ levels thus increasing the amount of knowledge/tools on offer. A central theme or a storyboard can be extremely helpful in terms of creating a framework for such creative endeavour and this is relevant to the choice of sounds recorded up until the creative phase.

In terms of collaboration, small groups can work together to record their sounds, discuss them, discuss what they would like to do with them creatively within the framework of a creative assignment and subsequently make a (short) piece or study. Once they feel that they have achieved the desired results, a potential remix phase

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[10]At present Compose with Sounds Live is being completed which allows for several participants to perform sound-based works at once together, another important collaborative opportunity.

[11]One can only dream that one day there will be sufficient number of interested people involved with sample-based sound-based music that the communications media would want to support it much more than is currently the case as more and more schools adopt the subject. Time will tell.

can kick in. In this way, those involved in all processes should feel a certain level of ownership and achievement.

Given the fact that tools such as CwS are available for free, this means that it is accessible to many. Furthermore, the ability to store sounds, mixes and pieces online should be attractive in terms of community forming. The one obvious caveat is to do with the ever-present issue of the legality of the samples. In a controlled environment, such as at schools or community art settings, this particular aspect must be taken into account.

After a few experiences, people can start initiating creative work on their own. When working collaboratively or within a community of interest, the way of creating, sharing and developing such works is interestingly similar to that of traditional folk music based on the two points mentioned above. It is my belief that this type of sample-based music making (and its analogue in the DIY world) offers a pathway towards a potential twenty-first-century folk music culture, one that resides outside the popular/high art cultures but can be as innovative as any other form of music-making to those who are interested, including fully trained (sound-based) musicians.

7. TO CLOSE

Another disputed citation has been attributed to Mayakovsky and to Brecht, not to mention Trotsky, which goes as follows: 'Art is not a mirror to hold up to society, but a hammer with which to shape it.' Not all sample-based music is involved with challenging society although I do believe that some of my works have done so in a diplomatic way. However, and this was clearly not the intention of whoever came up with the statement originally, the hammer in sampling is to change the legislation in our countries to enable sampling and payment where payment is due on a much more equitable and realistic basis than it is currently in our digital age. Although that debate regarding how best to improve things falls outside the scope of this article, suffice to say that the celebration of a snippet of an advertisement or of a musical gesture on a Chinese instrument should not be cause for a lawsuit.

Instead let's return to the premise of the current text. The ability to create sample-based sound-based music has been revolutionary in terms of opening up the reuse of material in a wide range of manners: in terms of offering links of lived experience into an essentially experimental form of sonic creativity; in terms of creating new means to open up the world of sound-based music to a broader group of interested communities and to a broader range of participants; and, subsequently, in terms of having people work together with existent and re-contextualised sonic materials. This area offers substantial opportunities for development and this author, at least, expects much to occur in this field in this still young century. However, these developments deserve to be accompanied by a body of scholarship to offer various means of greater understanding in order to make it seem less marginal and more accessible to new audiences and participants. Hopefully this issue of *Organised Sound* will play a role in opening up the subfield of sample-based sound-based music studies for years to come.

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