

SAMPLE THIS!

by Blebiru

What is ok to sample? What is plagiarism? Is the art of sound-collage stealing? How can you make music out of non-musical sounds? How do you get from Plunderphonics to Michalis Siganidis? How far can the brain go in making sense out of two unrelated sounds playing at the same time? From beautiful and emotional music to simple “Wwwwwhat?!”, this is a collection of sample-based music. Enjoy!

1. Fortyone – A warm welcome
2. Blebiru – Οι γλωσσούδες και οι άλλοι
3. Blebiru – Η νεανική μονοκοπανιά
4. The Books – The future, wouldn't that be nice?
5. People Like Us & Wobbly – The Working Title for our Opera
6. Entgleisen – Mr. Moniker's Knack of Going Along with Someone Else's Song
7. Μιχάλης Σιγανίδης – Πρέπει να πας στη Μπέτυ
8. Kid Koala – Nerdball
9. The Books – An Animated Description of Mr. Maps
10. The Bran Flakes – Everybody Pay Attention Now
11. People Like Us & Ergo Phizmix – Ghosts Before Breakfast
12. Fortyone – Let's Take a Trip to the Country
13. Kaja Draksler – Tennis Stołowy
14. Carl Stone – Baroo
15. Entgleisen – Κι έρχονται εδώ
16. Secret Mommy – Kool Aid River
17. The Books – It's Musiiiiic!

The use of pre-recorded sounds in compositions dates back to the '40s. Since then, artists have come up with multiple ways of incorporating non-musical sounds, field recordings, raw audio footage and more in music making but not only that. With John Oswald coming up with the term “Plunderphonics” starts the history of sampling other people's music, rearranging it, cutting it up and using it in different ways or simply reproducing it in a slightly edited way. This resembles in a way what Marcel Duchamp did with his readymades in the beginning of the 20th century, but also Brion Gysin and William Burroughs' cut-up technique in literature.

Already with Oswald's case, questions were raised concerning the ethical but also the legal side of sampling other people. Without getting into too many details here, let's say that although there are specific laws around the subject and numerous court cases and lawsuits, artists continue doing it. Some of them use “cleared” samples (that are royalty free/in the public domain or have the permission from the original artist) and others dig deeper in more obscure sources to sample stuff.

In this collection I avoided obvious examples of sampling, like in hip-hop beats etc, and tried to focus on music that is really heavily sample-based. Music where the sound collage is not just a medium/tool but is more or less...the music! What I find interesting about works like these is that they show how far our minds can go in making connections between completely unrelated things and try to make a “story” out of it. Specially when there's human voices involved, I've found that it's an element so familiar to us that even when combined with freaky, noisy, experimental stuff, our brain still manages to follow. In many cases, this music is more easy listening than it initially appears to be.