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Sound Unbound: Sampling Digital Music And Culture



Synopsis

If Rhythm Science was about the flow of things, Sound Unbound is about the remix -- how music, art, and literature have blurred the lines between what an artist can do and what a composer can create. In Sound Unbound, Rhythm Science author Paul Miller aka DJ Spooky that Subliminal Kid asks artists to describe their work and compositional strategies in their own words. These are reports from the front lines on the role of sound and digital media in an information-based society. The topics are as diverse as the contributors: composer Steve Reich offers a memoir of his life with technology, from tape loops to video opera; Miller himself considers sampling and civilization; novelist Jonathan Lethem writes about appropriation and plagiarism; science fiction writer Bruce Sterling looks at dead media; Ron Eglash examines racial signifiers in electrical engineering; media activist Naeem Mohaiemen explores the influence of Islam on hip hop; rapper Chuck D contributes "Three Pieces"; musician Brian Eno explores the sound and history of bells; Hans Ulrich Obrist and Philippe Parreno interview composer-conductor Pierre Boulez; and much more. "Press 'play,'" Miller writes, "and this anthology says 'here goes.'" The groundbreaking music that accompanies the book features Nam Jun Paik, the Dada Movement, John Cage, Sonic Youth, and many other examples of avant-garde music. Most of this content comes from the archives of Sub Rosa, a legendary record label that has been the benchmark for archival sounds since the beginnings of electronic music. To receive these free music files, readers may send an email to the address listed in the book.

Contributors: David Allenby, Pierre Boulez, Catherine Corman, Chuck D, Erik Davis, Scott De Lahunta, Manuel DeLanda, Cory Doctorow, Eveline Domnitch, Frances Dyson, Ron Eglash, Brian Eno, Dmitry Gelfand, Dick Hebdige, Lee Hirsch, Vijay Iyer, Ken Jordan, Douglas Kahn, Daphne Keller, Beryl Korot, Jaron Lanier, Joseph Lanza, Jonathan Lethem, Carlo McCormick, Paul D. Miller aka DJ Spooky that Subliminal Kid, Moby, Naeem Mohaiemen, Alondra Nelson, Keith and Mendi Obadike, Hans Ulrich Obrist, Pauline Oliveros, Philippe Parreno, Ibrahim Quaraishi, Steve Reich, Simon Reynolds, Scanner aka Robin Rimbaud, Nadine Robinson, Daniel Bernard Roumain (DBR), Alex Steinweiss, Bruce Sterling, Lucy Walker, Saul Williams, Jeff E. Winner.

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Photography > Music > History & Criticism

Customer Reviews

I just finished this one. If you're looking for insight from the myriad influential contributors, you'll find that and much more here. The book's themes run deep, weaving together music history and theory with meditations on technology, perception, and cultural zeitgeist. I went in curious how the ideas of Brian Eno, Bruce Sterling, Cory Doctorow, and Chuck D would cohere under the editorial hand of DJ Spooky. Color me surprised - it's an enlightening trip! A must-read!

This book shows off Paul Miller aka DJ Spooky's two biggest strengths, the mashup and the teamup. The big name roster didn't deliver scraps; they all provide thoughtful and entertaining essays, for example Jonathan Lethem's essay also features the key to that same essay showing where he "plagiarized" just about every phrase in the preceding few pages. Saul Williams, provides a pensive meditation on words as magic, something I was more used to hearing out of Grant Morrison or Alan Moore, but Williams is sincere and smart. And the inclusion of unsung geniuses like Alex Steinweiss, the inventor of the record jacket (before him there was no art on albums, you only saw their spine at the store) pushes it over the top and into the zone. The included CD is way cool in and of itself; it's easy to poopoo such ambitious works, but Spooky lays it all down with love not pretense, throwing snippets of James Joyce, Gertrude Stein, Allen Ginsberg, William Burroughs -- all actual spoken word from the Sub Rosa archive over some avantgarde classical like John Cage, and then enriched by textured groovy beats... Spooky's having a ball and sharing the fun

this book gives a multilayered analysis of sound, music, space, and video allusions (not to be mistaken for hallucinations). very thought provoking and forward thinking as far as the art of music is concerned. still plowing through the seismic space of text. but so far so good.

This book is excellent. It comes with a CD of some really excellent mashup too. I've really enjoyed the different writing styles and the great anecdotes that present themselves in this compilation of what is essentially a book of post-graduate papers on music and its evolving relationship with the world. Delightfully rich with first person experience and gives you something to listen too in the background. Yummy for my sonic tummy.

Sound Unbound brilliantly details the explosion of cultural diffusion in the 21st century as a result of advancements in technology. The book consists of several excellently written essays whose authors range from rappers to scientists, sampling various viewpoints from one another. DJ Spooky successfully conveys how both in the past and today, now more than ever, art is naturally derivative; stemming from one source after another.

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