

Longtime ECC fan Steve wrote with a good question, and I thought I'd post the answer here:

Q: How did people describe [Whipped Cream Mix] Rebel Without A Pause when it first came out, before terms like Bastard Pop or Mash-up? Was there a term for it, or did people just explain how you put it together? Or maybe they called it a remix?

A: In many ways I'm *incredibly* pleased that there's finally a term now... before, in the 80's and most of the 90's, it was very tough to convey or describe some new sample-happy ECC song to someone, especially someone unfamiliar with its cousins: collage, cut-ups, or remixes. "Remix" was an obvious first choice, but "remix" doesn't convey the use of multiple sources in a work, and remixes are often less complex works artistically. "Collage" tends to have art world connotations, which could be limiting if you'd like to be booked outside of a gallery. Other art terms have also been used, including "appropriation" (Duchamp) and "recontextualization". Other terms attempted to describe sample-based music were born of the 1960's era of tape music, another very experimental/academic world, and many of the terms couldn't shed those connotations/limitations. (Interestingly, the term "Cut and Paste" is also born of this era, and it only escaped thanks to computers taking over the world).

"Sampling" was a good word to use -- it described music specifically, it had digital (non-tape) connotations, and wasn't an art term. Still, "sampling" only described the technique, and not the result. For a long time there weren't many results/bands to compare, so this was good enough, and "sample-based/sampling music" was a somewhat acceptable (although clunky) term I used. But it still sucked.

So, we started making up our own. John Oswald probably did the best with his 1990 ["Plunderphonic" album](#)

. The term was also backed by a pretty good [essay](#)

he wrote, and I still occasionally hear people talk about [plunderphonics as a genre of music](#)

. I wish I could remember who, but one person coined "collage rock" (with an A, instead of "college") which I quite liked, but it was destined to be misread. My attempt was "Plagiarhythm" (Plagiarism + Rhythm) and so I titled one The Evolution Control Committee album "Plagiarhythm Nation"

"Plagiarhythm Nation", which did well enough that [we got our word in the dictionary!](#)

Where did the term "mash-up" come from?

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I'm thrilled to have "Mash-Up" as a widely-recognized term to use now, but of course it comes with its limitations too -- since thousands if not millions can now make their own mashups, I risk using the term and having my music mistaken for some lame, half-baked mashup their 12 year old cousin put on YouTube. But I'll take the risk... as a new term in the lexicon, it's got a lot less baggage than many of the other terms... a welcome switch from the other side.

- TradeMark G.
16-Feb-09

Thanks to Steve for asking, and thanks to OCCII for republishing this!