



Godfathers of Mash-up? Plunderphonics? Bastard Pop? Plagiarhythm? Collage? Many of those terms suggest a boring laptop show coming up, and yet nothing could be further from the truth. For nearly 20 years, The Evolution Control Committee has been combining new technology with old-fashioned showmanship to produce internationally acclaimed performances. Long before the sampler and computers made it easy, The ECC was infringing copyright laws the hard way.

“COPYRIGHT VIOLATION FOR THE NATION.”

When was the last time you saw a whole show performed by a guy wearing 10 ordinary sewing thimbles wired into some electronics, triggering the whole show? The ECC performs with custom-made equipment and videos to give the audience a truly original show. As for the music, in the world of The ECC Public Enemy duke it out with Herb Alpert while Dan Rather is the new frontman for AC/DC. It's fun without being comedy, sample-based without being techno, and brainy without being arty.

Art gallery or concert hall, The ECC has played them all.

Past Releases: “Plagiarhythm Nation v2.0” (Seeland / ECC), “Rocked By Rape” 7” (Eerie Materials), “The Whipped Cream Mixes” 7” (Eerie Materials), etc.

Compilation Appearances: Cookbook Compilation (Eenie Meenie), Deconstructing Beck (Illegal Arts), Illegal Art Festival CD, etoy.LULLABIES (etoy), etc.

Live Performances: The Influencers Festival (Barcelona), IDEAL Festival (France), Illegal Art Festivals (NYC & Chicago), Royal Festival Hall (London, England), TINA/ElectroFringe Festival (Newcastle, Australia), Germany, Holland, WFMU-FM, Tonic NYC, San Francisco, Columbus OH, and hundreds of otherwheres

Recent Press/Airplay: Entertainment Weekly, CMJ, US News & World Report, Rolling Stone, Spin Magazine, Wire, NY Times, NPR's All Things Considered, Cool & Strange Music, Columbus Dispatch, C-SPAN



P.O. Box 10391 • Columbus, OH 43201 • USA
ph: +1 614 262 0654

Web: <http://evolution-control.com>

Email: booking@evolution-control.com
ecc@pobox.com

Contact: TradeMark G.

Has Remixed: *Legally:* The New Bomb Turks, DJ Spooky, Realistic, Data Bank A, etc.
Illegally: AC/DC, Public Enemy, Herb Alpert, Beck, Queen, etc.



**These and other b&w and color publicity photos available as hi-res, 600dpi scans online at:
<http://evolution-control.com/press>**

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

A beat all your own

Music-editing software lets you match tempos, cut tedious riffs, and build new songs

BY ULRICH BOSER

NEWS
 YOU
 CAN
 USE

Her DJ moniker is "MadameFLY," but she is no beat-bopper, spinning LPs in smoky clubs. A 56-year-old Florida technical writer, Gayle Moore remixes dance music on her home computer, matching the beats and fading songs into one another. She broadcasts her mixes on the Web or burns them onto CDs, to play during her commute

grams also allow you to layer separate tracks to create a new song. MixMeister 3 (\$40) lets you start slowly: After about 20 minutes of orientation, a user can import two or more songs, stretch or shrink them to match the tempo, or even insert sounds like clapping.

Get it together. The next step might be deleting sections of a commercial track or superimposing canned drum loops. If you are into dance music, you can create your own song by scouring the Internet for a vocals-only track and then adding background beats and bass tracks. Getting the sounds together is the fun part, says

Mark Gunderson of the group The Evolution Control Committee. Then comes some tedium: "Synthesizing tracks to the same tempo so that they fit together will take 80 percent of your time."

Sonic Foundry, which created a popular music-editing program called Acid, has released an easy-to-use, free version that allows users to toy with up to 10 tracks at once. A \$70 version comes with an extensive library of drum and other instrumental loops. Other popular music-editing software includes Cakewalk's Plasma (\$49) and, for Macs, Digidesign's Pro Tools (free).

Using more powerful software, like Syntrillium's Cool Edit Pro (\$250), you can put yourself into the song by plugging a mike into the computer and singing for the machine. The software lets you delete mistakes and add digitized sounds and effects like reverb.

Once you've honed your digital music chops, you can try remixing Ashley Slater's new release "Big Lounge." Slater, an ex-bandmate of Fatboy Slim, released the vocals of five songs at www.phonogen.com/biglounge/english.html. Send in a remix by the end of January and Slater might include it on his next remix album—a showcase for homegrown talent. ●



Gayle Moore bikes while listening to tunes she mixed on her PC.

or on her bike. "It's invigorated my relationship to music," she says. "And I never have to listen to a song that I don't like."

Until recently, most listeners had to make do with the mixes created in production studios or dance clubs. Now you can edit songs to your liking at home. Music-editing software will run on almost any relatively new PC with a sound card. It can remove a snare drum riff from a Beatles song or create an entirely new tune—with you as the solo voice. U.S. sales exceeded \$140 million last year, according to the International Music Products Association. But devotees face a learning curve. "Ten years ago, these may have been the same guys learning to play the guitar," says Susan Kevorkian of IDC, a market research firm.

Pull a song from the Internet or from your CD collection, and the software will turn it into a visual signature—a strip of peaks and valleys that represent sound. Click on a section to edit it. Most pro-

Spreading by the Web, Pop's Bootleg Remix

By NEIL STRAUSS

The song may sound familiar at first, thanks to the unmistakable guitar riff from Nirvana's classic "Smells Like Teen Spirit."

But, suddenly, the recording changes course when, instead of the gravelly voice of Kurt Cobain, the smooth R&B harmonies of a Destiny's Child hit appear on top of the grunge music. As the recording moves on, it is clear that the song is neither fish nor fowl; it is a crossbreed that neither band ever intended, or even dreamed of.

...

Making new songs out of existing works, of course, is nothing new. There are precedents in everything from 20th century classical to cartoon music, and it is the cornerstone of hip-hop, be it early pioneers like Grandmaster Flash or later innovators like Dr. Dre. In the 80's and 90's, avant-garde sound artists like Plunderphonic, Negativland and the Tape-Beatles (as well as the pop pranksters the KLF) challenged copyright law with collages made of everything from found sounds to top 40 hits. But many musical observers trace the official beginnings of the British bootleg scene to **The Evolution Control Committee**, which in 1993 mixed a Public Enemy a cappella with music by Herb Alpert.

Today, there is a glut of such artists, and Mr. Mannion said that his Web site, Boom Selection, may receive as many as dozen new ones a week. Does that make it a fad or something here to stay?

"I dont know what will happen next," Mr. Mannion said. "When people hear this stuff so much, they can get bored of it. But to me, I'll never get bored with this stuff, because that's like getting bored of music itself."

The Odds on 'American Idol' | Hilary Duff's Debut

1998 - May 9, 2002

Entertainment Weekly

Halle Berry And Hugh Jackman




EVOLUTION CONTROL COMMITTEE
Plagiarhythm Nation
[Seeland]

→ Some blame "The Whipped Cream Mixes"—ECC's 1993 7" that fused Public Enemy with Herb Alpert & the Tijuana Brass—for spawning the computer-collage "mash-up" movement. But Committee spokesman Mark Gunderson, a record geek from Columbus, Ohio, is less interested in Frankenstein popcraft than in culture-jamming slapstick. Exhibit A: his follow-up single "Rocked by Rape," which arranged countless Dan Rather sound bites into an apocalyptic rap riding a sample from AC/DC's "Back in Black." It's the money shot on this long-brewing second album, which turns garage-sale detritus, voice-mail jabber, and pop shrapnel into a musical comedy record where the absurd and the sophomoric duke it out. **EMBED MATES** We hope ECC are working on a postwar "Rocked by Rape" sequel, featuring CNN's Aaron Brown. **B**

NEW Favorites

CMJ CORE ESSENTIAL

The Evolution Control Committee
PLAGIARYTHM NATION



EVOLUTION CONTROL COMMITTEE
Plagiarhythm Nation (Seeland)
Mash it up! Evolution Control Committee likes to take a song you know and change the lyrics with some creative editing and/or sampling to create a "mash up." Dan Rather becomes AC/DC's frontman, our nation's anthem is turned into a freakin' belegen commercial and you'll love every second of it. Most of the disc's tracks clock in between 30 seconds and a minute-and-a-half, so you'll want to squeeze as many of them on the air as you can. Plagiarhythm Nation is 29 tracks of inspired surrealism that's funny, yet somehow thought provoking. After debuting at No. 33 last week, ECC moves to No. 23 this week, thanks to support from KALX, WZBC, WMBR and WNUR, among others.

R.I.V.L.: Negativland, Avalanches,
2 Many DJs
Contact: Mark Hosler
Email: mark@negativland.com
Current Core Position: No. 23



TASTY CD-LITE
If the Naked Chef and Nigella Bites have done little to sate your Happy Wok addiction, *Cookbook* might very well tempt you into the kitchen for something more than the yellow pages. This collection of healthy music and healthy recipes was amassed by Mario Hernandez, of the band From Bubblegum To Sky, who asked his musician friends each to contribute a song and a vegetarian recipe. (In case you're wondering: Yes, this is a predominantly California-based project.) We particularly dig the track "Magnetize Your Food" by the Evolution Control Committee but are still trying to find that function on our microwave. *Cookbook* is out on Enie Meenie Records (www.eniemeenierecords.com).

On Location

ETHER FESTIVAL: JEFF MILLS/PEOPLE LIKE US/ CORNELIUS
LONDON SOUTH BANK CENTRE
UK
BY KEN HOLLINGS

ETHER review, The Wire - June 2002

Evolution Control Committee's Mark Gunderson gave a lecture presentation on the ECC's activities like a Sesame Street presenter on coke; his homemade thimble-trigger system providing visual stimulus as he refashioned food and drink ads, Public Enemy raps and TV voiceovers into (a)musing infobursts.



17
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Sat 04/13 **Wobbly** at 8pm, \$12 Triple Bill
Jon Leidecker has been producing music under the name Wobbly since 1990. Wobbly concert appearances involve no laptops, no sequencers, no midi; edits are manually executed in real time using a mixer and several inexpensive samplers.

Evolution Control Committee
Sound collage, media pranksterism, a cavalcade of sampling... in the world of The ECC, Public Enemy duke it out with Herb Alpert while Dan Rather is the new frontman for AC/DC.

People Like Us
People Like Us is the plunderphonic project of Vicki Bennett. Dadaist samplings and reshuffling of cultural oddities from long-discarded LPs is a recurrent theme, as is the use of intercepted radio broadcasts gutted and completely recontextualized.

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MAGNET

REAL MUSIC ALTERNATIVES

EVOLUTION CONTROL COMMITTEE

Plagiarhythm Nation

Last year's mash-up/bootleg craze (wherein DJs "mashed" disparate songs to create jokey new ones, resulting in Christina Aguilera fronting the Strokes and other such wackiness) had its start way back in 1994, when Ohio's Evolution Control Committee released—on cassette, no less—a pair of tracks that combined Herb Alpert instrumentals with Public Enemy vocals. Unlike the thousands of mash-ups they pre-dated, the so-called "Whipped Cream Mixes" were part of the beginning of a larger vision in the same vein as John Oswald's amazing *Plunderphonics* and the cultural musings of Negativland. So it's not surprising there's nary a mash-up to be found on *Plagiarhythm Nation*, ECC's first decently distributed CD. Instead, it's funny, weird and sometimes incisive sound collage, carefully constructed and gleefully copyright-ignorant. One of the album's best tracks already pricked up lawyers' ears a few years ago: "Rocked By Rape" pits a depressing Dan Rather cut-and-paste ("Dying of a heart attack/Dying of cancer/Dying of a Japanese nuclear bomb") against the unmistakable guitar riff from AC/DC's "Back in Black." But the well-known voices on *Plagiarhythm Nation* aren't the only things that make it provocative: ECC mines an array of sounds and voices—from an assertiveness-training record to messages on the group's own answering machine—to create something new and relevant out of the pop-culture ether. It's successfully fun and artful, a difficult combination to execute well. [See land.com/nmol]

—Josh Modell

NO. 59 JUN/JUL 2003



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REVIEWS BY
KENNETH
GOLDSMITH

The Disintegration Loops

WILLIAM BASINSKI
(2062 RECORDS)

x10R.1/x10R.2

DAVID SCHAFER
(TRANSPARENCY RECORDS)

Chart Sweep

(MP3)

ABOUT A YEAR AGO on a plunderphonic music listserve I'm on, a message was desperately sent out

plundered the vast archive of American commercial Muzak and turned it on its ear in ways that Ives could only have dreamed of.

Finally, on that plunderphonic listserve, a post was recently sent from the Evolution Control Committee's DJ Pantshead informing everyone that he had digitized a legendary, obscure piece of patched-together music of dubious origins called *Chart Sweep*. It's a chronological collage featuring a tiny fragment of every number-one U.S. chart hit from 1956 to 1990, evidently spanning the complete age of the 45 rpm single. It starts with Elvis' "Heartbreak Hotel" and ends with Whitney Houston's "I Will Always Love You" and sounds like one of those commercials on tv where they're selling a Time-Life collection of music, with only samples of the "good" or "recognizable" parts of the song. It's a stunning monument to pop culture, once thought to be disposable, but after listening to all 45 minutes' worth and blushing at how you know every single song, it's obvious that your head is so crammed with this stuff that you never need listen to the radio again—it's all in stored there in your head.

Chart Sweep is available at the Evolution Control Committee's website: www.evolution-control.com/sounds.html.



00h00 Evolution Control Committee (San Francisco, U.S.A)

Evolution Control Committee travaille le recyclage sonore et visuel. C'est un laboratoire sans et les qui utilise les rythmes des sons qui nous environnent pour composer ses chansons, et les objets de quotidiens pour fabriquer ses instruments électroniques. Le nouveau projet qu'il nous fera peut-être la surprise de découvrir à I.D.E.A.L - est "The Kitchen of the future", soit un programme quand on imagine les sons présents par un bon vieux grille-pain ou une cafetière associés à la musique électronique ! Ça qui est sûr, c'est qu'il nous avec le "Théâtre", soit des gants blancs avec un dé à coudre à chaque doigt qui fonctionnent en interface avec le laptop pour créer la musique. Une performance qui a déjà fait nombre d'adeptes dans les plus grands festivals internationaux.

01h00 Wire (ca)

Wire est un groupe cable. Entre 1976 et 91, Bruce Gilbert, Colin Newman, Edward Graham Lewis

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Vendredi 21 mars / grand atelier

- 19h00 Deserte des parties
- 19h30 Massine / Staalplaat Sound System
- 20h30 Bleu Piscine
- 21h30 Messer Für Frau Müller
- Messer Chups & Lydia Kavina
- 22h30 FM Einheit
- 23h30 Azirko
- 00h30 Glass Bronco - Quartet
- 01h30 Gold Chains
- 02h15 Heug Kerg Counterfeit

Samedi 22 mars / grand atelier

- 18h30 Deserte des parties
- 19h00 Geens
- 20h30 Jean-Jacques Perrey + Chazam
- 21h00 Quinton
- 22h00 Topsy
- 23h00 Alec Empire
- 00h00 Evolution Control Committee
- 01h00 Wire
- 01h45 Thomas Brinkmann
- 03h15 Ural 30 Blicstars



dusted



Dusted Features

The Resident Language

today features

reviews charts

labels writers

info forum



Dusted Features

Dusted's Ben Tarasg reacts to and interacts with Plunderphrenists Evolution Control Committee and discusses the nature of sampled sounds.

The Resident Language

In Columbus, Ohio, home of shopping malls and college football, the Evolution Control Committee (ECC) make audio collage with homemade equipment and a caustic, aware sense of humor. They may be out of place amidst 711,470 Buckeye fans, but their musical approach is familiar to anyone within 20 miles of a freedom radio station: spindly catridges of aural re-education, concave radio jingles, great songs, terrible songs, sound bites, interviews, 99-cent bin records, field recordings, and noise? In short, anything audibly perceptible is ground up into tiny words, letters perhaps, and then rearranged to form words and sentences in the language of garish audio composition. ECC, like most groups working under the rubric of "Plunderphrenics," tend to use this language of collage. The corporate media in particular are singled out for criticism, and the recombined highlights of aural output (commercials, monologues, the evening news) is meant to mockingly highlight both the beneficial and destructive potential of mass media. Ever in this vein, ECC's most recent album, *Plagiarhythm Nation*, is available now on the *Sweland* label. In a recent conversation with *the Onion*'s G, co-founder of the radio division of the ECC, we discussed the group's artistry, humor, and political goals.

Briefly: Mark and the Evolution Control Committee seek to provoke outrage, attention, laughter, and frequently legislation through the intelligent and unskillful use of...

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Evolution Control Committee

The Onion: Why should anyone buy your record?

TradeMark: [submitted via e-mail] You should buy our CD because of the creepy-looking caricature of Dan Rather looking like he's about to deck you, though fans of sample-heavy, plunderphonic-style, mash-up, "plagiarhythmic" music might like the tunes, as well.

O: Do you think your record will help people?

TM: Like all releases of the Evolution Control Committee's varied departments, it is designed to help navigate the future. Our *Plagiarhythm Nation v2.0* should be viewed as a roadmap for the future of music.

Mike: Are there roadmaps in the CD booklet? I'm driving to Vanuatu soon.

O: Do you think your record could save lives?

Pantshead: If it's mapless, it'll save Mike from trying to drive to an island on the Pacific Rim.

TM: As the RIAA has stated time and time again, countless lives have been lost to peer-to-peer file sharing and Internet music piracy.

Yet few people know that RIAA is an acronym for "Really, I Am Alive." The balance between anonymous life and asynchronous death is delicate. To stop the RIAA before they kill

again, listen to our CD. Tragedy will be delayed by 52 and a half minutes.

O: Is this record your ticket to heaven?

TM: One man's heaven is another man's 7-11.

We recommend that each listener start the CD playing, close their eyes, and imagine heaven. Imagine the pearly gates swinging open for you. You waltz inside, walking past the serene, smiling faces of your deceased relatives and loved ones. As you approach a golden throne, you kneel reverently and peer into the face of God. As you study the face, you realize that it is the face of Jamie Farr, from the TV show *M*A*S*H*. And he has a big zit on the side of his nose that you can't stop staring at. "I'm just filling in," he says soothingly. "Do you have to stare at my nose like that?"

M: In heaven, everything is fine. Maximum fine \$500.

Evolution Control Committee's newest album is titled *Plagiarhythm Nation v2.0*.

Stephen Thompson



CUT & PASTE

MUSIC

THE EVOLUTION CONTROL COMMITTEE MIXES A NEW FUTURE FOR POPULAR MUSIC

BY STEPHEN SLAVEN



SPRING IS NEW FUTURE IN OLD MUSIC: THE EVOLUTION CONTROL COMMITTEE

length on *Evolution Records*, the label run by *the Onion*, another group who makes sample-based music and that has seen its share of legal threats over the years.

"We think the sample-oriented music may have come to the point where it's not as much of a risk as it once was," *the Onion*'s says. "Obviously it is a risk because we did get a cease and desist letter from the lawyers of CBS over this, but now we're seeing things like *David Byrne* and *Mad* pop and make up. It's becoming much more popular, and this may be leading a path towards the state of music being seen, if not as litigation, then on its own. I don't see the need 'legitimate' as being a bad word—I think it's perfectly fine—it's just evolution."

Another sign the ECC sees music evolving is the creation of recorded music. With the proliferation of file sharing on the Internet, *the Onion* believes that the CD will go the way of the eight-track, only now to be replaced by a new format, but with a greater emphasis on live performance.

At last, the ECC is developing its own instruments to perform its music. "For so long, we've been using many instruments, like my old kit, which were very abused as being laptop music, but showed up on stage with just the laptop. It just isn't very interesting to watch," he says. "What we want is playing instruments in a live setting, like the *Wig* presentation artists, because they all looked like they were preparing their music. I couldn't agree more. It really is the most boring thing to watch."

To prepare for the post-CD era, *the Onion* has the only way musicians can make money, the ECC has been developing its ability to perform on stage.

"To us, there hasn't been a good way to present electronic music," *the Onion* says. "We're going to arrive at a point where it's going to be necessary and we don't want to present electronic music left in the cyber-dim. It would be very ironic that the more where music has become so portable because of the Internet it grows could be the more laid out of music's future because they have no way to perform it."

To the other, the decision has already caused the conditions, an instrument con-

necting the music out of samples from a wide range of sources, making electronic instruments out of outdated and broken appliances, and continuing to conduct activities in the face of attorney the Evolution Control Committee has been exploring the future of popular music in relative secrecy, sporadically releasing its expressions upon an unsuspecting world.

Not really a band, the group that releases music under the ECC identifier is actually the musician of a larger worldwide operation that, unbeknownst to most, uses the evolution of politics, art and human life in general.

The music division is a fluid organization of an unknown number of members with varied specialties and which operate out of an underground location in Columbus. (In this interview, I was taken to the ECC's operation area, but was not allowed into the main headquarters.)

What is known is that ECC's music division was founded in 1996 by *the Onion*'s *the Onion*, his brother *the Onion*, and a driving force known as *the Onion* *the Onion* *the Onion* who now goes by DJ *the Onion*. The larger ECC organization designed the construction of the division out of a desire to answer the question, "What's next for music?"

The group has focused on releasing together old recordings to create new music, an attempt that has been given greater credence recently with the rise of mash-up. Jumping distance from popular songs to create new works, mash-up has been discovered via the Internet and has become music in England in particular.

"The *Wig* *the Onion* *the Onion* came out on a

alive

April 24, 2003

FREE

music, art and culture in Columbus



ECC mixes a new future for music

17 Latin-American Gothic
Adrian Lopez's band
is dressed "Gothic"

23 ACME Moving Co.
Stewart Short North
gallery picks up stakes

32 Dote Chick-od
Joe-McCarthy's songs
in American tradition



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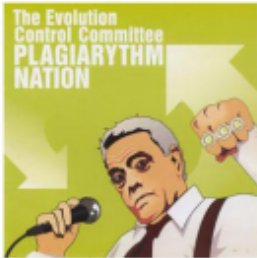
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THE SQUID'S EAR

Heard In

Reviews of artist releases: cds, books, magazines, &c.

Evolution Control Committee Plagiarhythm Nation Vol. 2.0 (Seeland)



Clevelandian Mark Gunderson follows in the mold of Negativland, whose Seeland Records have nobly put out this collection of dance beats, lounge sounds and plundered vocals. The best of the nearly 30 tracks here (most from the previous Plagiarhythm Nation which was only available at ECC shows) combine recognizable riffs (Public Enemy, AC/DC) with lifted and twisted vocal tracks from self-help records, sermons, news broadcasts and the like. Some of the tracks run a little goofy, but the ones that work -

like Dan Rather edited to recite a litany of horrors on the track "Rocked by Rape" - more than make up for the lesser attempts.

It was this track that won Gunderson a cease-and-desist from CBS. Seeland has valiantly re-released cds of questionable legality, most notably putting out two discs of John Oswald's Plunderphonics in an oversize box with a thick

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The Evolution Control Committee Plagiarhythm Nation (Creations/Seeland) BY JOHN LA BRICOLA

Today's mash-up craze, where artists graft the a cappella version of one popular tune to the well-known instrumental backing of another, inspired a "band" like Columbus, Ohio's Evolution Control Committee to up the ante beyond anything that London's Freelance Hellraiser introduced to dance floors last year. Simply pasting Christina Aguilera's voice over the Strokes ("Genius in a Bottle") might be fun for fans of interchangeable pop culture, but in the end, it's about as artistically significant as that parody of Edward Hopper's late-night diner with Elvis, Marilyn and James Dean all sitting around, looking cool and eating



The Evolution Control Committee elevates the mash-up to high art.

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Sakada

Never Give Up On The Margins Of Logic AN006/LS002

Exploratory and beautifully restrained micro-improv.

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The Caribbean "William of Orange" Out Now on Hometapes

TODAY ON STYLUS REVIEWS

RJD2 Since We Last Spoke

The Evolution Control Committee Plagiarhythm Nation V2.0

Seeland 2003 {8}

For the uninitiated, these longtime audio pranksters are schooled in the art of Negativland lawsuits and cut-up collages. By releasing influential reconstructions like the Whipped Cream Mixes, a single combining Herb Alpert and Public Enemy that helped found the modern genre mash-up craze, they have garnered their own devoted, independent fan base. Culled primarily from songs previously available from their website and painfully obscure compilations, Plagiarhythm Nation serves as a veritable resume of what the Evolution Control Committee have been up to during the last seven years since their



NAPSTER NUGGETS

LORDS OF THE FILES

THERE'S COLD, GENUINE LUNACY HIDDEN IN AMONG ALL THOSE NAPSTER DOWNLOADS

mark_blacklock.txt

So the Napster party is over. Come time we'll have to pay to use it and the deal with RMG will ensure that the service is monitored more closely. They've sold out and sold us down the line. Should they have fallen on their swords in the name of freedom? Probably. But

free). Freenet (http://freenet.sourceforge.net/), the file-finding protocol designed by Scotsman Ian Clarke, is worth your support. More on that in the future.

Now for some fun and japes with Napster. We've mentioned the Evolution Control Committee (http://evolution-control.com) a number of times, applauding their

Who's Hot
Profile

THE EVOLUTION CONTROL COMMITTEE

INTERVIEW

BY JEFF CHENAULT

The Evolution Control Committee is the epitome of everything that is Cool and Strange in the music world. Try imagining what Spinal Jones, Bruce Haack and Negativland would sound like mixed into an audio blender and this will give you some idea of what to expect from this audio prankster from the Midwest. From his use of Napster Nuggets, and inventions like the Thimbletron to threats from CBS for his "Rocked by Rape" single, the ECC is a tour de force in audio depravity and culture-jamming.

I had been asked up at a pre-arranged meeting point, (obscured), and then transported via bus to the headquarters of The Evolution Control Committee — some where in, or nearby Columbus, Ohio. It was an uneasy feeling. "Okay Jeff, you can take your coat off now" (gesturing to the dresscode lighting, my first sight was that of Mark Chesbrough, a tall, lanky man with a slightly crazed expression. He looked like he should be the son of Christopher Light from Back To The Future. The man who used to teach me the



tailed job as part of the local staff. Since then, we've spent 10 years selecting, manipulating, and creating sounds." "Where's Mike now?" "He's right over there. See that tall guy in the lab coat?" I spotted a tall, lanky man working on... according to me a device with many knobs and a digital readout, but the man was open and Mike seemed to be having a problem with it. "You two are related, right?" "Yesss." "Ah." "But I'm the taller. I usually end up doing the interviews and most of the performances.

The Columbus Dispatch

VOL. 131, NO. 135

MONDAY, JUNE 3, 2002

50 CENTS



Mark Chesbrough with the glasses of the musical instrument called the Thimbletron

Eva Shindler/Dispatch

The Columbus Dispatch
Monday
JUNE 3, 2002

E8

Bootleg boom

10 years after Columbus man mixed some music, HYBRID TUNES are sizzling

10 years after Columbus man mixed some music, HYBRID TUNES are sizzling

By Erik Matheson
for The Dispatch

A hot musical trend exploding in England and spreading around the world began in Columbus.

radio and draws international interest via the live Internet feed at www.eccc.com. (The show airs from 1 to 4 p.m. Fridays.)

The scene began to explode here last year after a bootlegger known as the Professor (Chesbrough) produced

probably the first bootleg when he raised the angry, attitude-soaked vocal track from Public Enemy's "Bring the Noise" to a new level with a white-knuckled, baggy go-back-by song by Herb Alpert & the Tijuana Brass.

"That picked up the new records at a North

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The Evolution Control Committee
Plagiarhythm Nation
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combination that is passing here and undeniably impressive.

I'm not really going to have to sell you on this disc's surreal brilliance. I'm just going to have to point you in the direction of the *Bozenbox*, where you'll find "Rocked By Rape." After you recover from the combination laughing fit and shellshock that the track engenders, you'll find yourself pulling out the old credit card in no time at all. Dan Rather over AC/DC — it sounds like a great topic of conversation for a room full of people who are whacked out of their minds on drugs, but to have the patience, skills, and sheer balls to pull something like that off... if ever any group of artists deserved support for their art, it's The Evolution Control Committee.

Given this group's modus operandi, it's hardly surprising that their brilliantly subversive and questionably legal work is being distributed by the darlings of Fair Use (and the sons of U2 and Casey Kasem), Negativland. ECC has close ties to those other infamous copyright-ignorers, but while the two groups' styles are similar, ECC's style and whacked-out presentation (live performances involve one group member manipulating an instrument called a Thimbletron, consisting of thimbles on wires that play samples on cue) more than allow them to carve out a unique niche.

High points abound, including "I Want A Cookie" (a self-help tape manipulated to reveal an underlying Me-generation self-obsession), "Don't Miss The Great Stretch" (which only upon reflection becomes the words of an evangelical preacher, and not the come-on of a porno Barker), and "Star Spangled Bologna" (the "Oscar Meyer Weiner" song to the tune of the "Star Spangled Banner"). Each of these is enough to induce both giggling fits and reflection, a

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Bob & David of
R. SHOW

The Evolution Control Committee
Plagiarhythm Nation
(Seeland)



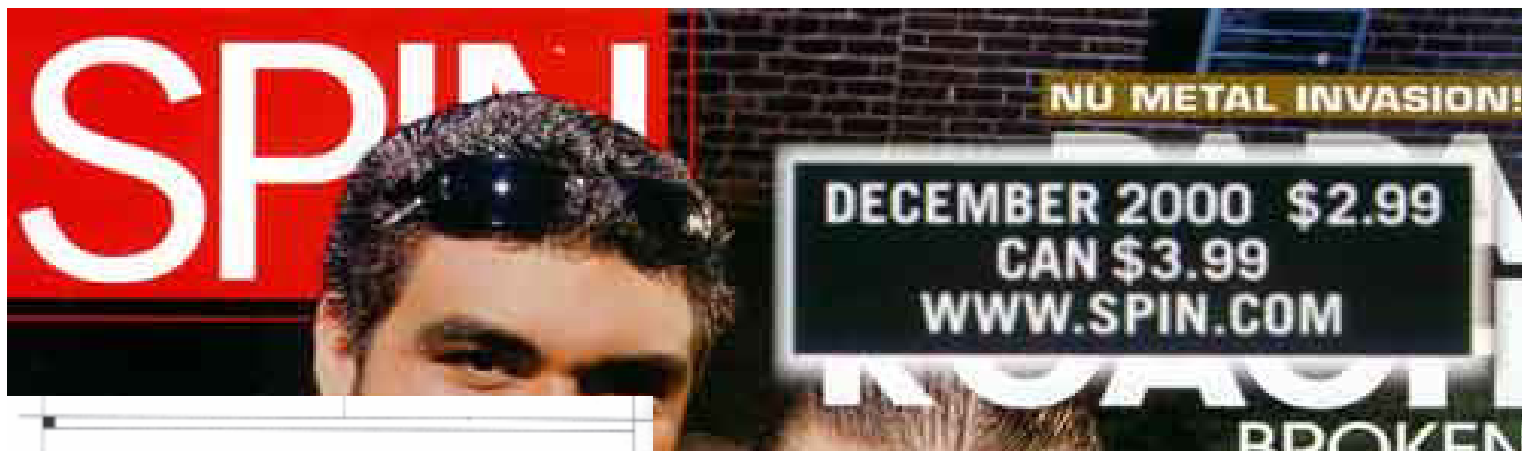
This is what sampling should be all about — making something new with it, not just stealing a Police bassline to rap over because you're not talented enough to write one of your own. ECC hijacks songs and other sounds from various media to create cuts that are subversive, original and a whole lotta fun. Famously, ECC laid Dan Rather soundbites over AC/DC's "Back in Black" to create the egghead rap "Rocked by Rape," and it appears here along with more than two dozen other mashups that combine the Oscar Mayer singalong with our national anthem ("Star Spangled Bologna"), Public Enemy with a kids' anti-drug record ("No Time for Yes") and, across various tracks, the Muppets, Sammy Davis Jr., Gloria Estefan, Vincent Price and Spandau Ballet. I also loved the reworking of Nat King Cole's Christmas classic ("The Christmas Wrong") and the rearranged sex education record ("Sex Re-Education"), but hell, I loved it all. Don't mistake it for novelty; this is art. It just happens to be a wonderful joke, too.

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Sound Files by Douglas Wolk

Dummies for Napster

Tired of the same old Napster (or Gnutella, or whatever) grind? Use these tricks to give file-swapping a refreshing dose of randomness!

• **Play toy soldiers** Just enter any well-known artist into a Napster engine, followed by the word *vs.*, and you'll discover, for example, this Spice Girls/Nine Inch Nails "collaboration": "I wanna—I wanna—fuck you like an animal!" The reigning champion of these home-edited battle tracks is Britney, who even emerges victorious from "So Fucking Crazy," her tussle with Metallica. On the undercard: TLC vs. Christina



Rocked by rapier wit: Evolution Control Committee

Aguilera, 2Pac vs. Phil Collins, and Eminem vs. everyone.

• **Feed your favorite rapper some syrup** DJ Screw has effectively worked over a ton of hip-hop tracks in the file-trading circuit, simply by slowing them down from the equivalent of 45 to 33 RPM. "Bling Bling"—now 30 percent blingier! "Back That Azz Up"—now with 30 percent more azz!

• **Impersonate a celebrity** If you've ever thrilled to comedian David Cross' impression of a certain famous wheelchair-bound physicist trying with a prostitute, you'll love the ridiculous computer-generated voice of "MC Stephen Hawking." Best of his oeuvre: "Fuck the Creationists."

• **Make a political statement** Some civic-minded individual has been posting the likes of Fatsy Cline's "I Love You, Honey," retitled to include the message "China OWNS AI Gore" in Napster client windows. But wouldn't the Ross Perot anthem "Crazy" be more appropriate?

• **Mix everything together really well** Thanks to Joshua "Jukebox Culture" Clover for pointing out these killer megamixes: DJ Loe sifting a capella verses from DMX, RZA, Ice Cube, and Eminem onto the Prodigy's "Firestarter," and "DJ Skiczo vs. Everyone," a jam on the "It Ain't My Fault" riff that features the sounds of DMX, Mos Def, Britney, Christina, and that guy whose initials are alternately M.M. and S.S.

• **Mix everything together really badly** The "Britney Spears, Christina Aguilera, Backstreet Boys, LFO, Jessica Simpson, Ricky Martin, etc. Megamix" appears to be an 11-year-old girl switching CDs in her boom box while singing "oh bay-beh bay-beh."

• **Fake out the oversager** Earlier this year, the sonic pranksters in Ohio's Evolution Control Committee uploaded copies of their "Rocked by Rape" single, disguising the files to look like unreleased nuggets by famous artists. Anti-Napster musicians soon created similar "Napster bombs." Last summer, something purporting to be a leak of the new U2 album turned out to be a bunch of Peter Gabriel tracks. We at Sound Files, along with other Radiobest fans, were overjoyed to discover a *Kid A* "bonus track" and got what we deserved: 40 seconds of Styx's "Mr. Robot." All right already, computer! ■

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THE EVOLUTION CONTROL COMMITTEE "Rocked by Rape" / "Racked by Rope" (Eerie Materials)

Network news has gone the way of mother-in-laws as far as comedic relevance, but these fans of Negativland collage plunge the knife hilariously deep into anchor/stiff Dan Rather. Notorious for writing his own crude rhymes, the CBS hairpiece intones about "fraudulent drug thugs" and "hidden Nazis next door," and the ECC splice it all into a wicked language poem, backed by an endless AC/DC drone.

Address: Eerie Materials, PO Box 420816, San Francisco, CA 94142; eerie@crl.com

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The mash-up revolution

Destiny's Child vs. Nirvana! Britney vs. Chieftan! The Ramones vs. ABBA! How pop's hottest DJs are creating those wild bootleg remixes -- and why they're so hard to find.

By Roberta Cruger

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Aug. 9, 2003 | In the 1993 club hit "Rebel Without a Pause," Chuck D. raps over Herb Alpert's chirpy trumpet: "A rebel in his own mind/Supporter of a rhyme/Designed to scatter a fine/suckers who claim I do crime." That incongruous hybrid of hip-hop and bouncy pop, created by the group **Evolution Control Committee**, sounds as startling and amusing today as it did a decade ago, and still ripe with meaning.

The wacky juxtaposition spawned its own kind of revolution, inspiring legions of the club remixes now called "mash-ups" -- with one classic example being "Smells Like Booby," in which The Roots' Phil Dwyer uses Whiz's classic theme and chorus. Also referred to as "Remixes.com."



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NAPSTER OFTEN CATCHES USERS WITH THEIR PANTS DOWN.
BIZARRE MEETS THE PEEPING TOMS OF THE MP3 SCENE

mark_blacklock.txt

As promised last issue, we follow up our piece on the phenomenon that is the Napster nugget with an interview with The Evolution Control Committee's Mark Gunderson. If you find any tasty nuggets, please send them to the *BizArre* email address. And remember to check out our nugget chart at the *BizArre* website: www.bizarremag.com.

How did you discover the concept of searching for 'mic in track'?

Total accident. I was searching for the song 'Amen Brother' by The Winstons, which is the source of the drum break used for much of the jungle music you've probably heard. I ended up finding a track that a guy named Winston recorded, and brainstormed my way out of the search results list to figure out that other people's home recordings could be found in a similar way. I've been a slave to the search ever since.

Apart from their amateur sound, what is the appeal of Napster nuggets?

It's a multi-pronged interest, really. Part of it is purely voyeuristic, of course: we all have this subtle urge to spy on people and want to know what they're doing when we're not looking. But there's also the appeal of

'outsider art' — in other words, the person making art isn't trained to do it. There's a certain honesty that those people have to take the risk of recording themselves expressing themselves in whatever ways they do. Most people are so trained to be receptacles — holding bins, input only — that it's surprising when you find evidence, so much evidence, that there are people who want to make some output. Lastly, my selfish motive is that I feel quite disconnected from things that I'm really not sure what's up half the time. Hearing the things that other people feel are worthy to record cues me in to what's important to people these days. Unfortunately, it turns out that the most important things seem to be gangsta rap and Britney karaoke tragedies.

Have you found anyone else who is collecting them?

Nope, nobody except those we've turned on to the idea. If anybody else has discovered this independently, we'd love to hear from them.

Is the "Default's greatest hits" comp likely to happen?

One way or another. We have an hour-long prototype compilation of our in-house faves, but we have yet to find a home for it. Personally, I can't see why anyone would

hesitate — I haven't heard a more honest reflection of the current state of amateur audio art for decades.

What's your top nugget of all time?

There are so many great ones. I think my favourites are the ones I've heard from kids singing songs about how fat the ice cream truck driver is or about how they don't like chicken pot pie. But, without hesitation, the top scorer is the Nirvana guy. There's a nugget which weighs in around one-and-a-half minutes, leading off with the opening bars of Nirvana's 'Smells Like Teen Spirit'. You hear the microphone rustling after the intro finishes and the lyrics start, you hear the true beauty. Instead of the usual lyrics — "Load up on guns/bring your friend..." — you get something like, "Luh uh ah guh/ bree yuh frehz..." The pinnacle of the recording happens at the end, right after the main chorus, where there's an instrumental break where the guitar tweaks a high note, and the guy vocalizes that one tweak. I honestly don't know whether the poor guy is stoned or retarded.

ADIOS NAPSTER (IT LOOKS LIKE). HELLO...

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