

Make: technology on your time

'70s Soapbox Saga



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MARK GUNDERSON SHOWS OFF HIS INNOVATION device.

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SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

A beat all your own

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

BY ULRICH BOSER

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Her DJ moniker is "Madame-FLY," 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."



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

Sonic Foundry, which created a

The New York Times ON THE WEB

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 [...]

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. [...]