

Fragmenting the archive for creativity: developing digital sample packs of Indian musical instrument sounds

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Abstract:

This presentation will discuss the process of curating digital sample packs for commercial distribution from the larger Instruments INDIA sound archive. The Instruments INDIA archive was established in 2013 and contains over 5 hours of sound recordings of Indian musical instruments stemming from a collaboration between the researcher and Milap (the UK's leading Indian Arts Development Trust). This digital resource was created to support music education initiatives (in website and downloadable tablet form) and to enhance audience development for Indian classical music performances in the UK.

Developing sample packs for end users in music production (in collaboration with music industry partners, Ableton, Loopmasters and Symphonic Distribution) provides a new opportunity to consider more generally how cultural diversity on digital platforms is represented and how sound archive material is altered through fragmenting processes when making sample packs (via the creation of one-shots and loops). Deciding what to offer in sample packs from the larger archive through sifting is a process we wish to undertake collaboratively in conjunction with musicians of Indian classical music who contributed to the archive in order to reflect aspects of integrity and authenticity. The presentation will also contemplate the use of these digital fragments beyond the construction of the sample packs and speculate upon the uptake and wider issues associated with dissemination and access of archived materials, such as considering diversity within the context of sample pack creation and challenging labels and terminology norms within sample pack classification and distribution systems.