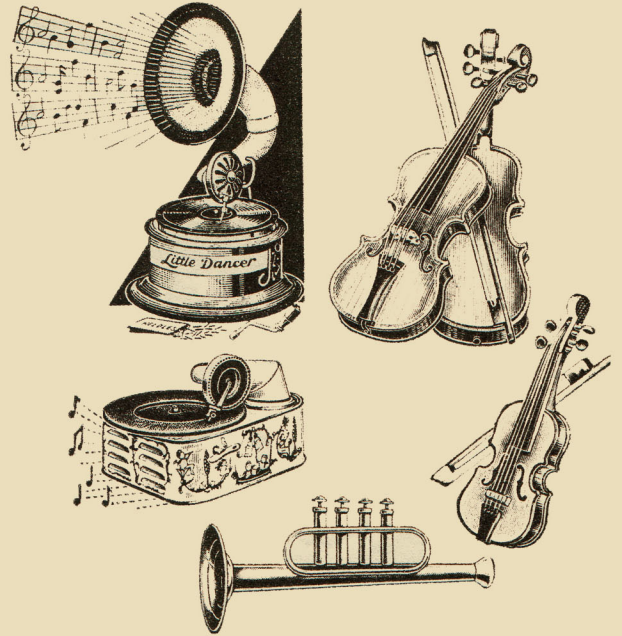# Banjos, Pots, Pans and Squeezeboxes

In which Vicki and Ergo discuss the combination of sampling, live instrumentation and voices. Features Wendy Carlos, Sun Ra and Esquivel, amongst others.

One of the fundamental misunderstandings of the term "collage composer" is the idea that the artist only takes the work of others and mixes & mashes it into new contexts and juxtapositions. The reality is that a collage can include any number of elements, both found and "original". It is not uncommon, for example, for visual collagists to also paint and draw on their compositions. In the same way it isn't unheard of for collage composers to use their own voices or instruments in the sonic constructions.

The point here is that collage is a technique for putting sounds, images, or words together, rather than a philosophy that involves plundering materials and recontextualising them - this approach is a part of the collage world, but isn't the fundamental basis of it.

The German composer Vernon Lenoir once spoke to me about the music he makes and that of many of his contemporaries, referring to it as "music without limits". This means that people are working outside of a strict philosophy or set of rules, using the huge possibilities of the digital composition and editing environment, allowing the whole world of sounds and techniques for sound-creation into the compositional process. The collage-factor (which may well be a new TV show hosted by a cut-up Simon Cowell) comes in through the arrangement of the different sources, so a composition entirely constructed using recorded instruments can be equally a collage-composition as a piece made out of a number of found or plundered sources.

The other huge benefit of recording and editing instruments in the digital environment is the extent to which these sounds can be manipulated and transformed. Once introduced into the computer environment a recording of, say, a violin becomes immediately a completely malleable sound source that can be bent and twisted into endless shapes and contortions.

In the digital environment there is no need to limit sounds to a particular ideology or philosophy, which was one of the major hurdles for composers in the 21st century to get over after a century so full of musical and artistic cliques. A samplist will equally sample his own sources as those of others.