



## **Electronic Dance Music and Academic Music: Genre, Culture and Turntables**

### **Introduction**

Prior to entering the academic world of music, I was unaware of any major dichotomy between genre and culture in relation to Electronic Music. As a turntablist and electronic musician, I was (and still am) interested in sound/music as an art form, a means of expression and a communicative force, regardless of genre, context in which it is appreciated, or culture associated with it. As I progressed through the world of academia and 'became' a composer of academic music (electro-acoustic/acousmatic music) or partici-

ginning for electronic in

sitions with technical processes such as scratching and beat juggling. The ethos of the counter culture instilled by genres such as Hip-Hop followed through to the early nineties and was helped by the production of pieces of hardware such as the Akai range of samplers and Roland's hugely influential range of synths and drum-machines such as the TB 303 or TR-808. The make-up and desires of the artist were changing.

The focus begin to shift from the pioneering electronic artists and composers of the early 1900s, whose revolutionary research and inventions changed Electronic Music. Now, artists and producers had machines to make the sounds for them and cared little for the inner workings of their machines as Matt Black (see Shapiro 2000, p. 190), of Breakbeat artists Coldcut, explains

'We want to lie down and let the machines get on with it. We want to slack off a bit. We've got the acronym DNA-ROM which stands for "do no art – run our machine".'

This contrasts greatly with the earlier reference to the art involved in making Tape Music and the meticulous technical processes involved in the composition of early Electronic Music.

Throughout the last three decades, it seems that as the hardware became more accessible to the commercial market, one did not need to know the concepts behind the device. Regard



*Eoin Smith: Electronic Dance Music and Academic Music:  
Genre Culture and Turntables*

*Eoin Smith: Electronic Dance Music and Academic Music:  
Genre Culture and Turntables*

In: Motje Wolf & Andrew Hill (Eds.)  
Proceedings of Sound, Sight, Space and Play 2010  
Postgraduate Symposium for the Creative Sonic Arts  
De Montfort University Leicester, United Kingdom, 2-4 June 2010  
<http://www.mti.dmu.ac.uk/events>

This restates the instrument's uniqueness and conveys its cultural mediating qualities, as an engaging instrument for aficionados of the music world, academic and electronic dance cultures, and the general public alike.

**The Turntable in an Adaptive Synthesis System: A New Model for**



as DJ Sniff, Daito Manabe and a selection of students from academic institutions worldwide are embracing this hybrid and are fusing an instrument which they have used for many years in a different context with more institutionalised styles of music and production processing on the computer.

### **Conclusion**

The divide between electronic dance music and academic/institutionalised music is most obvious in the early days of the genre. Financially, Electronic Music was not accessible to the public until the commercialisation of the synthesizer, toward the end of the sixties. Institutions such as GRM or the Cologne Electronic Music Studio allowed for research into the science of Electronic Music by established composers and young enthusiasts

