

Notes

2013

# GarageBand Projects: Remixing Session 2

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Midnight Music

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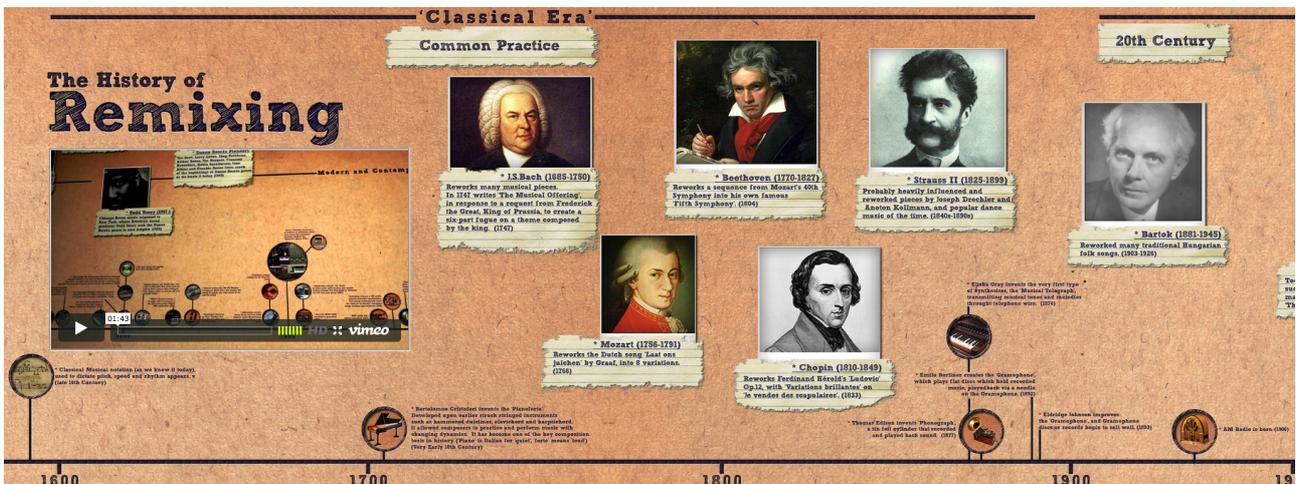
# Introduction

## What is remixing?

A remix is an new work made from existing musical material that is edited or altered in some way. Remixing has been around for centuries: composers have always “borrowed” ideas from one another to make new musical pieces.

The art of remixing as we know it today involves taking all or part of a **recorded work** and using it to create something new. Remixing extends to other art forms too: film, images, artwork and literature can all be remixed to create something new.

Take a look at the History of Remixing website (pictured below) for examples that date back to the Classical Era and beyond: <http://www.historyofremixing.webs.com>



## Who makes a remix and why?

Remixes are usually created by DJs and/or music producers. There are many reasons for remixing, some of which are:

- to create a new song for artistic purposes
- to create a dance mix for clubs
- to make a song conform to a specific musical genre
- to create new versions of “back catalogue” items

## How remixes are made

The DJ or music producer sources the original recording of a song - preferably all the separate recorded tracks (known as stems) - so that they can chop them up, add a new drum beat, change the tempo or add new harmony.

Sometimes the DJ or music producer will create their own samples from a recording (a little snippet of sound) which might become the basis of a new melody or rhythm.

Almost any musical element of a song can be changed in a remix:

- drum beat

- style or “feel”
- tempo
- key
- instrumentation
- the vocal line can be “chopped up” into snippets
- song structure

## Remixing examples

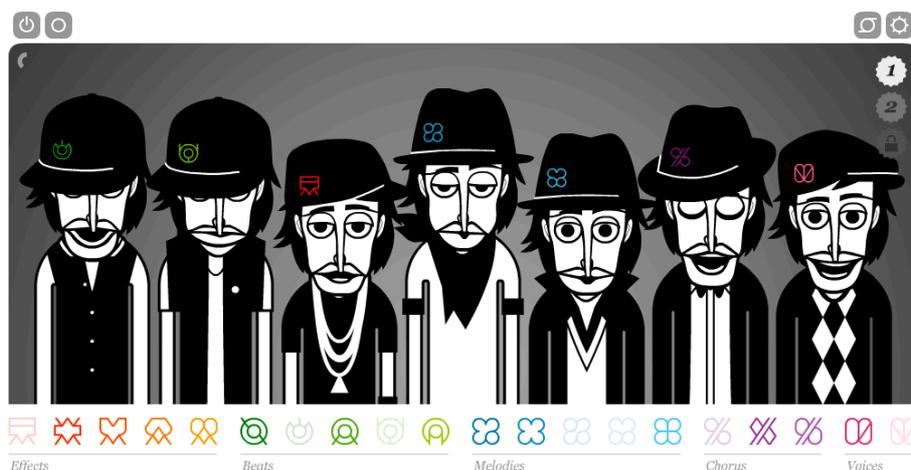
There are thousands of examples available! Good places to look:

- Youtube: search for a song name with the word “remix” after it
- On Youtube, take a look at the work of Pogo who has remixed sounds from many of the Disney and Pixar movies. He samples spoken lines, music and sound effects and puts them together to create a completely new song
- DJ Kutiman: also on Youtube, search for “The Mother of All Funk Chords”. DJ Kutiman found a series of unrelated music videos on Youtube and put them together to create a new piece
- iTunes: search for a song and check all of the results. Chances are that someone has created a new version

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## Introducing basic remixing with Incredibox

Incredibox is a free online music resource which is lots of fun to use (and very simple). At first glance, it can appear to be a bit of a novelty website, but there are many ways you can frame it for use in the music classroom. Introducing the concept of remixing is one option.



To use Incredibox, go to [www.incredibox.com](http://www.incredibox.com)

### Which musical concepts can Incredibox teach or reinforce?

- Arranging skills
- Layering

- Solo and tutti
- Rhythm
- Texture and timbre
- A cappella part-singing and beat boxing

### **Project: to create and record a 30-second arrangement**

- Spend some time experimenting with the sounds available - drag an icon to an empty (undressed!) dude to start playback of a sound
- Choose up to 7 of the 20 sounds that you would like to include in your arrangement. Include a variety of rhythmic and melodic patterns
- Fill up your Incredibox screen with your 7 chosen sounds
- Play around with the mute and solo buttons to test out different combinations of dudes in varying-sized groups
- Practice clicking on each dude at the right time
- Plan your arrangement so that it has a beginning, a middle and an end
  - Beginning - use layering to bring in all or some of the parts
  - Middle - create some interest by using the solo and/or mute buttons to vary texture. Some sections may have all dudes on, and others just one or two
  - End - layer the parts out at the end
- Get ready to “perform” your mix: mute all of the dudes (quickest way is to solo one and then click his mute button)
- Hit the record button (top left) and perform your arrangement!
- When finished, email your arrangement to your teacher and/or copy and save link

### **Assessment and feedback**

- Students will each play their arrangement for the class
- Other students offer constructive feedback and comment on the choice of sounds, use of layering, use of solo and tutti sections, the ending

### **Extra tips**

- Double-click on a dude to delete him
- Click once to mute
- Long click to solo (solo occurs on release of mouse button)

See the article on my website for more details:

Using Incredibox To Introduce Remixing - <http://www.midnightmusic.com.au/2012/08/using-incredibox-to-introduce-remixing/>

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## Remixing terminology

- **Stems** - individual audio tracks from a recording, ie. the lead vocals, the bass, guitar, keyboard, backing vocals and so on
- **Acapellas** (yes, spelt that way!), also known as *a cappellas*, *capellas* or *pells* - vocal stems; the vocal track without any accompaniment
- **Beat** - used in the remix world to describe the entire drum pattern or musical style, rather than just the underlying beat of a song

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## New Clothes For An Old Song (using MIDI files)

### Easy ways to start remixing

- From Scott Watson's book *Using Technology to Unlock Musical Creativity* (OUP)
- Take a MIDI file of a classical piece (or any other style piece) and reinvent it by changing the tempo, instrumentation, form and so on.
- Example of student work: [http://psdweb.parklandsd.org/watson/phs\\_mp/Solfeggietto.mp3](http://psdweb.parklandsd.org/watson/phs_mp/Solfeggietto.mp3)
- **What is MIDI?** An article I wrote (on another website): <http://www.musescoretips.com/2011/01/what-you-should-know-about-midi/>

### Project overview: give a classical work an extreme makeover

- Find a MIDI file of a classical piece (Google a song or piece name and add "MIDI file" at the end)
- Import the MIDI file into your DAW (ie. GarageBand or Mixcraft)
- Then alter any of the following:
  - Timbre: experiment with different instruments for each track.
  - Split up regions: consider splitting up regions into smaller bite-sized pieces so you can move them to new tracks and give them a different playback sound
  - Loops: add existing drums, bass, guitars, keyboards, horns loops
  - Doubling/mixing: double tracks and assign complimentary sounds on each one. For instance, maybe a breathy, sustaining synth sound could be doubled by a plucked string sound, or maybe a pan flute would compliment a rock organ
  - Mixing: set each track's volume level so that the mix is pleasing
  - Experiment with song form: consider altering the current form of the song, and adding an Intro and/or Outro
  - Tempo: experiment with changing the tempo of the piece to create a different mood (a fast piece could become slow and vice versa)

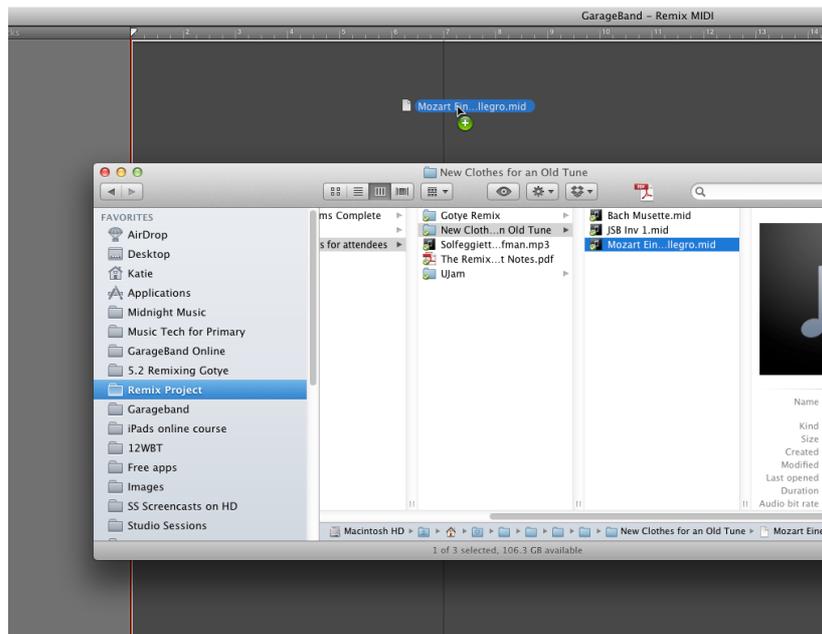
### More information

- Dr Scott Watson's project description on the Parkland Wiki: <http://parklandmusic.wikispaces.com/MEDIUM+PROJECT,+New+Clothes+for+an+Old+Tune>
- Grading rubric for this project: [http://psdweb.parklandsd.org/watson/phs\\_mp/NewClothes%20rubric.pdf](http://psdweb.parklandsd.org/watson/phs_mp/NewClothes%20rubric.pdf)

# Remixing MIDI files in GarageBand

## Importing a MIDI file into GarageBand

- Start a new project in GarageBand using the Loops template. Give the project a name.
- Open the Finder (over the top of GarageBand) and locate the MIDI file you want to import
- Drag the MIDI file on to the main GarageBand project area (you should see a green plus sign) and let go.



- The MIDI file will load in GarageBand and you can click on the GarageBand window to return to GarageBand
- When MIDI files are imported, they often end up starting at bar 3 or later. You can select all the regions (press Command+A to select everything) and then drag them back to bar 1
- I also often end up with an extra track (usually "Pop Flute") which contains a short empty region. You can select that track and delete it

## Play the MIDI file

Press play and listen to the MIDI file. While you're listening, think about the sorts of things you might like to change: tempo, instruments, add a drum pattern etc.

## GarageBand skills

Now you can begin to have fun! Here are some of the ways you can remix your MIDI file:

**Change tempo** - use the Project window of the LCD display at the bottom of the screen

**Delete tracks** - consider deleting some of the tracks to vary the piece. Select the track and then go to **Track > Delete Track**

**Timbre** - experiment with different instruments for each track. Select the track and then use the Info Pane on the right to change the instrument.

**Timbre part #2** - you can even use the Edit panel of the Instrument info pane to further adjust the sound of the instrument (or create your own instrument)

**Split up regions** - consider splitting up regions into smaller bite-sized pieces so you can move them to new tracks and give them a different playback sound. Select the region and then place the Playhead/Cursor where you'd like to make the split. Press Command+T. You'll end up with two separate regions.

**Loops** - add existing drums, bass, guitars, keyboards, horns loops to spice up your piece. Adding or changing the drum style can have a dramatic effect on the entire piece

**Doubling/mixing** - double tracks and assign complimentary sounds on each one. For instance, maybe a breathy, sustaining synth sound could be doubled by a plucked string sound, or maybe a pan flute would compliment a rock organ. To double (duplicate) a track, select the track and go to **Track > Duplicate Track**

**Mixing** - set each track's volume level so that the mix is pleasing. Use the volume sliders on the track header

**Song form** - consider altering the current form of the song, and adding an Intro and/or Outro. You can make use of the **Arrangement Track** in GarageBand to help you manage all of the sections. Go to **Track > Show Arrangement Track** (the arrangement track will appear just below the timeline area). Click and drag the mouse horizontally to create a section.

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## Remixing Gotye

### About Gotye

Belgium-born Australian artist Gotye - born Wally de Backer - is a fascinating artist who makes heavy use of sampling in his music. He also creates remixes - including remixes of remixes of his own songs!

You can find more information about Gotye on my Pinterest Gotye board where I have collected links to articles, music videos and documentaries: <http://pinterest.com/katiewardrobe/gotye/>

### Stems for Somebody That I Used To Know

A couple of years ago, Gotye made available the original stems from his best-known song *Somebody That I Used To Know* and it has been remixed hundreds (thousands?) of times.



## Remix examples

The first three were from the album *Somebody That I Used To Know (Remixes)*

iTunes Store link: <https://itunes.apple.com/au/album/somebody-that-i-used-to-know/id535782568>

1. M-Phases Remix
  2. Gang Colours Remix
  3. Miami Nights Remix
  4. Time-poor edit (on Soundcloud here: <https://soundcloud.com/gotye/somebody-time-poor-edit> )
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## Step-by-step creating a remix from stems

When you have the original stems to play with, there are many ways to approach a remix. One good way to get started is to listen to each of the stems separately and identify short sections that you might like to use in your own version.

### Find stems (or other source material)

- Locate the stems for a song you love (you'll be listening to it a lot!)

### Prepare 1: Beat-map the stems

- It's very likely that you will need to beat-map (beat-match) each stem (each audio file that makes up the song)
- This is a process by which you import each individual audio file into your software program and make sure that it conforms to a metronome beat
- Carrying out this process will save the tempo (and key) data to the audio file which means that if you adjust the tempo or key of your project, the audio file will automatically adjust as well
- This step is crucial - particularly if you want to add other existing loops to your project

### Prepare 2: Create your musical "palette"

- Select short (or long!) sections that you like - a few important bits that define the song
- It can be useful to edit the stems at this stage - chop up each one, or exporting each selection as a separate snippet or loop

### Plan your remix

- Think about the style of remix you want to create: will it be slow, fast, dreamy, wistful, or dance-like?
- Will you adhere to the form of the original song, or do something different?
- Will you alter the key, or time-signature

### Start remixing!

There's no right or wrong order here - do what feels right and remember that you can always change things later if you don't like them. Some options:

- Lay down a beat in your chosen style. You might like to choose an existing stem from the song, part of a stem or another rhythmic loop altogether (ie. one that came with your DAW program). It's

a good idea to create some sort of beat to work to - you can always change it, or remove parts of it later on

- Start adding your stem snippets (and/or loops) into your project. Think about using short musical phrases.
- Repetition works well, as does overlapping short sections
- Don't be afraid to mix up the order that the instruments start playing
- Consider adding your own original instrumental parts to your remix: you can record yourself playing electric guitar or bass guitar, or record via a MIDI keyboard
- Add effects to tracks
- Mix your finished project

## Share

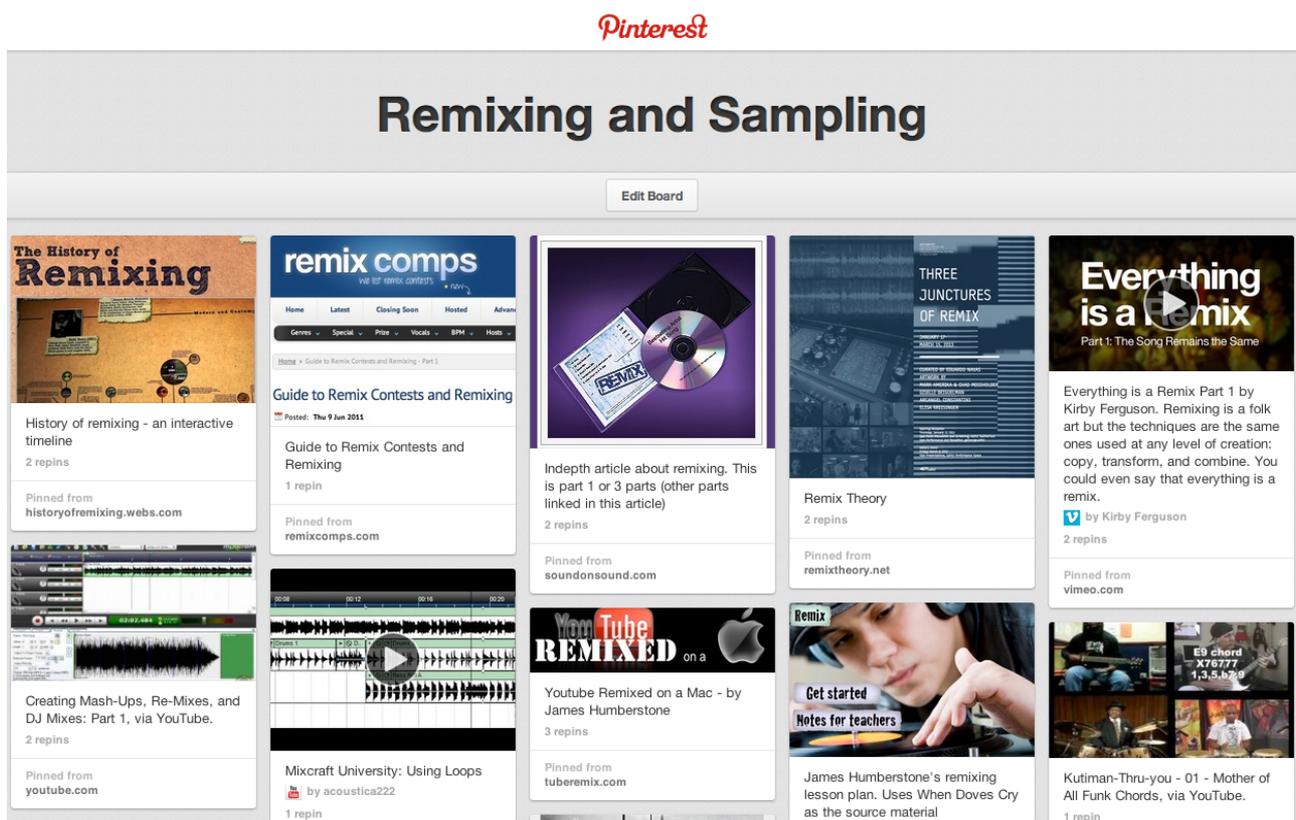
- Export your final version and share it

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## Remix Resources

### Remixing links on Pinterest

<http://pinterest.com/katiwardrobe/remixing-and-sampling/>



## Gotye links on Pinterest

<http://pinterest.com/katiwardrobe/gotye/>

The image shows a screenshot of a Pinterest board titled "Gotye". At the top, there is a red "Pinterest" logo and the name "Gotye" in a large, bold, black font. Below the name is an "Edit Board" button. The board contains several pins, each with a thumbnail image and a caption. The pins include:

- A video pin titled "Gotye--Somebody That I Used To Know (Gang Colors Remix)" by KavIt Sumud, pinned from youtube.com.
- A video pin titled "Gotye Somebody that I used to know Miami Nights 1984 remix" by MrRossoCorsa, pinned from youtube.com.
- A video pin titled "Gotye - Somebody That I Used To Know (M-Phazes Remix), via YouTube.", pinned from youtube.com.
- A video pin titled "Gotye: 'I Like A Lot Of Time To Myself' : Mess+Noise", pinned from messandnoise.com.
- A text pin titled "NFSA Connects with Gotye // National Film and Sound Archive, Australia.", pinned from nfsa.gov.au.
- A text pin titled "Mixing Gotye - an in-depth article about the mixing process for Gotye's albums with additional info", pinned from youtube.com.
- A text pin titled "Gotye - Somebodies: A YouTube Orchestra, via YouTube. Gotye's own remix of covers of Somebody That I Used To Know", pinned from youtube.com.
- A text pin titled "Gotye, Beyond the Basics - Page - Interview Magazine", pinned from interviewmagazine.com.
- A text pin titled "Gotye - Somebody That I Used To Know (feat. Kimbra) - official video, via YouTube.", pinned from youtube.com.
- A text pin titled "Gotye article in The Age - Sept 30, 2011", pinned from theage.com.au.

## Places to find stems

- CCMixer <http://ccmixter.org/>
- Archive.org <http://archive.org/index.php>
- Indaba Music <http://www.indabamusic.com/> Look under **Opportunities**. Big name artists frequently make stems available here (and other websites like this one). You can download 3 lots of stems for free, but then you'll need to pay to gain unlimited access
- Google "remix competitions", "stems", or "remixing". Look for *legal* sources of stems

## Further reading

1. *Making Music with Garageband and Mixcraft* (Cengage) - Hodson, Frankel, Fein & McCready
2. *Teaching Music Through Composition* (OUP) - Barbara Freedman
3. *Using Technology to Unlock Musical Creativity* (OUP) - Dr Scott Watson

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# Homework

The best way to get a feel for these projects is to do them yourself:

## **MIDI file remix**

Search for a MIDI file or two on the internet. Classical ones work well because they're easy to make drastically different, but you could also download pop, rock or jazz songs.

Import it into GarageBand and do your own remix using the steps above

## **Remix from stems**

I have provided a small collection of the Gotye Somebody That I Used To Know stems (snippets of each) on the course materials page. Download them and import them into GarageBand (you can drag them all on to the loop library area).

Use the snippets to put together your own remix of the song. Don't forget that you can use other loops from the existing loop library and/or record original material to go along with the stems

## **Explore other available stems**

Take a look at the types of stems available on the reputable websites (like Indaba).