

THE STORIES BEHIND THE SOUNDS: PERSPECTIVES ON SAMPLING AND REMIXING PERSONALLY MEANINGFUL SOUNDS WITH AI

Jon Gillick, Creative Computing Institute, University of the Arts, London

Noura Howell, Digital Media, Georgia Institute of Technology

Wesley Hanwen Deng, HCII, Carnegie Mellon University

Julia Park, School of Information, University of California, Berkeley

Kimiko Ryokai, School of Information, University of California, Berkeley

ABSTRACT

Recent advances in methods for controlling and customizing AI-generated music and sound point toward a future in which personalized music may become increasingly prevalent, yet the ways in which listeners perceive deeply personalized sound and music remains unexplored. How might listeners experience music generated by AI that uses familiar, personally meaningful samples from their favorite records or recordings from moments in their own lives? We use first-person design research to explore the processes of collecting and sharing sound samples to serve as source material for sampling and remixing with the help of AI. We create personalized tracks built around those samples for each participant, listening to these tracks individually and then together in a group. We study experiences throughout with journaling and discussion, focusing on emotional experiences as well as perspectives on the role of AI in the process. Our findings include surprising emotional sensitivity and wide-ranging feelings, the importance of backstories behind sounds, and potential for remixing and sampling as ways to reinterpret those stories. We discuss implications for how, when, and why AI might or might not be used to create personalized music. Our work highlights opportunities and challenges for AI in creative and emotion-laden activities to envision a more human-centered future for musical human-AI interaction.