

SONGLINES

Addictive TV

Alexandra Petropoulos talks to the duo about their latest project that saw them recording musicians from every corner of the globe

Mark Vidler and Graham Daniels have been working together for a while now, so they may not need introducing. In 2005 VJ Daniels was brought in to make a video for a track on Vidler's album, *Mashed*, the first fully legal mashup album. Capitalising on an obvious synergy and mutual love of film, the two began touring their eye-catching audiovisual show as Addictive TV, creating music by cutting up and remixing video clips, mined from blockbuster films like *Slumdog Millionaire*. But it was while touring their show internationally that they had the idea for their latest project, a unique collaboration that showcases a collage of musicians from around the world – *Orchestra of Samples*.

"We were always curious about music and meeting people," Daniels tells me. "So we thought of spending a bit more time in every place that we were travelling and recording musicians all over the world."

By arranging pop-up recording sessions in many of the places they visited, they built up an archive of samples – from musicians in Romania or Turkey to more experimental sounds like car-exhaust percussion. They aimed to keep each session unique, asking musicians to express their own musical individuality rather than playing along to something pre-recorded. Vidler explains, "we liked the chance and serendipity of it all. Great accidents can happen from improvisations."

It was only once they began listening back to the moments they had captured that they discovered the full extent of the serendipity. "You'd suddenly find people playing very similar things that were recorded three years apart from completely different sides of the planet," Daniels says. "As we got more and more samples, you started to see patterns of arrangement," Vidler adds.

Perhaps the most impressive aspect of this project is that the duo strictly refused to alter any of the recordings.

This means no time stretching or pitch alteration; everything was sifted through in order to find genuine, accidental musical conversation. Daniels emphasises that "the whole idea is about musical serendipity, possibility and probability." Vidler continues: "We tried to keep things as natural as possible. Otherwise, what's the point in recording them if you're just going to re-pitch everything, and put it together in a very ham-fisted way."

Thus, *Orchestra of Samples* was born. The album features a patchwork of musicians, but the duo stress that it wasn't about anonymous samples from faceless musicians. Daniels clarifies that "these people have given their time and their skills to us, allowing us to record them and trusting us to do it justice." All the musicians are clearly listed in the album notes, but the *Orchestra of Samples* website is a veritable treasure trove of information. There you can find blurbs about each track, blog posts about the recording sessions and links to the musicians' websites. "There are stories behind every musician, track and session," Vidler says.

But Addictive TV's strength is in their audiovisual shows and *Orchestra of Samples* is no different. The recording sessions were all taped, and using those visuals, the duo have put together a show that appeals as much to the eyes as the ears. On a big screen audiences will see the remixed footage. The project tours throughout the summer, when various musicians will join them live onstage, making each show a unique experience. ♦

- + ALBUM *Orchestra of Samples* will be reviewed in the next issue
- + DATES Addictive TV tour *Orchestra of Samples* until October, see *Gig Guide*
- + ONLINE orchestraofsamples.com

