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**PLUS:** D. TRAISS, RIVA STARR, MASTERS AT WORK, FRITZ KALKDRENNER, MWX, DANIEL MILLER  
ADDICTIVE TV, BILL CONVERSE, GIORGIA ANGIULI, OC & VERDE, EAST END DUBS...



## STRINGS ATTACHED

After seven years and a journey around the globe, VJ dons Addictive TV discuss their new 'Orchestra Of Samples' project...

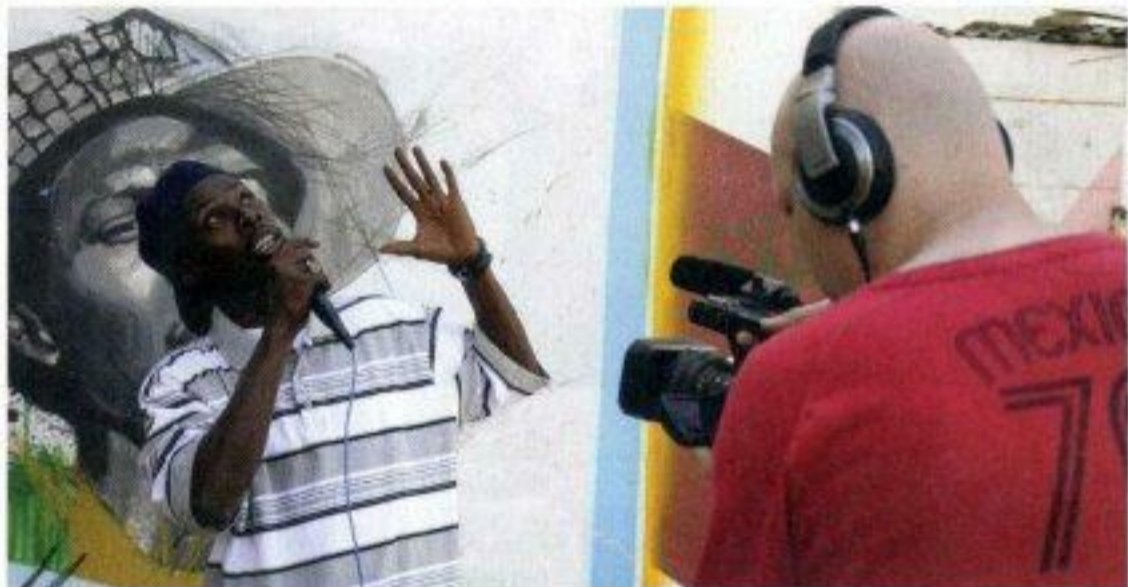
Words: MICK WILSON

**A**ddictive TV are VJs with a love for technology, combining it with the audio and visual world to deliver some unique projects. Their latest offering is the ambitious album 'Orchestra Of Samples'. It's a musical, visual live show/album featuring a super-group of international musicians who've never met but who have all been brought together to play in the digital domain, the realisation of seven years of work. DJ Mag Tech wanted to know how Addictive TV went about putting together such a grandiose project...

**How did you come up with the idea for 'Orchestra Of Samples'?**

**Graham:** "The idea came partly from travelling so much, but also from wanting to create something more than just a show or an album — a truly global project that brings people together regardless of musical or cultural background, who they are or where they're from, something that illustrated how we're all connected by music. It now seems such an obvious idea, recording musicians everywhere we went, I'm not sure why we hadn't thought of it before!"

**Mark:** "There have been similar projects that may contain a basic element of what we've done with



'Orchestra Of Samples', but in no way have they even scratched the surface of how far we've taken things."

**What was the production process?**

**G:** "Firstly we had to record and film lots of musicians, so over five years while touring and playing in different parts of the world we filmed

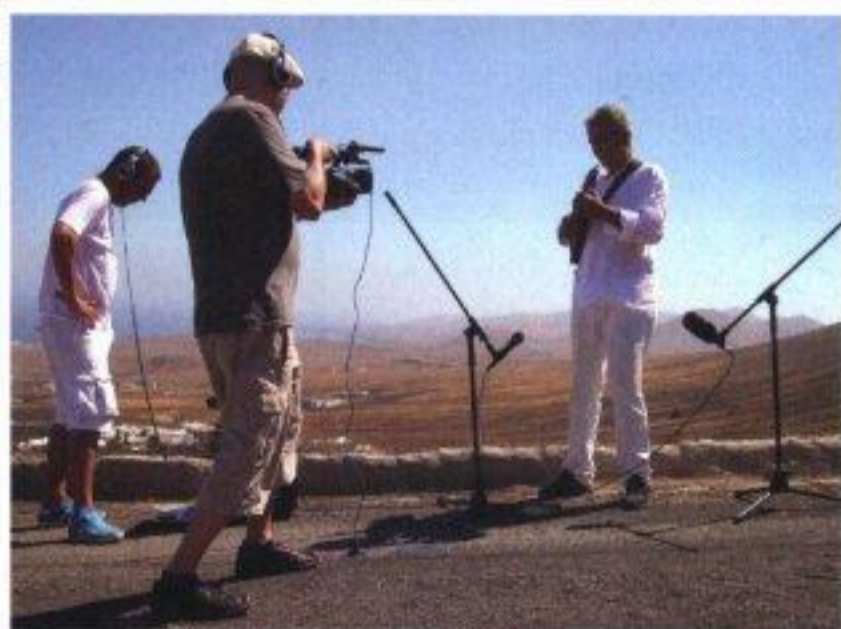
impromptu recording sessions with musicians everywhere we went, and we recorded it all ourselves. No camera crews or teams of people with us, just ourselves and our manager Francoise, who set things up. Our production process was then just sampling all the sessions and seeing which samples worked together. The whole idea is an exploration into musical probability and serendipity, it's about bringing together really different musicians who wouldn't normally play together, and more to the point their instruments, which wouldn't normally be heard together."

**M:** "There was a slow and painful process of going through all the samples and noting their keys and tempos, and then a large amount of trial and error to see which samples worked. 'Orchestra Of Samples' is far more than just different people in different countries playing together, and personally I've found working in this way fascinating, especially as I'm also a guitarist. Working outside of normal musical conventions has really opened my eyes, especially finding really unexpected combinations of instruments we didn't know about."

**What sort of kit and technology did you use to record and produce the album?**

**G:** "We recorded with both a small TASCAM DR-40 and with an SM57 mic direct into a Mac. The audio recordings were initially cleaned using a variety of WAVES noise reduction plug-ins in Sound Forge





and Audacity. And video was shot on a Sony HD V1 camera at the time, and later cut in Adobe's PremierePro and also AfterEffects."

**M:** "We primarily used Sony AcidPro for compositional arrangement and Ableton Live for certain FX. The list also includes an M-Audio Axiom-49 MIDI keyboard in conjunction with all manner of VSTs: Native Instruments' Massive, Korg Polysix and MonoPoly synths, Roland CR78 drum machine samples, PSP Reverbs and FX."

#### How did you put it all together?

**G:** "Firstly it was the sampling, just simply going through all the recordings on video and pulling out all of the useful material. Then extracting the audio from all the samples, and followed that with a practical bit of prioritising, keying and tempoing all the sessions, which was the necessary groundwork before any constructive composition could happen. Initially, we spent time throwing samples around the timeline in terms of the same or harmonic keys or tempos, building grooves, melodies and riffs and seeing what came out — and that's where serendipity played its part."

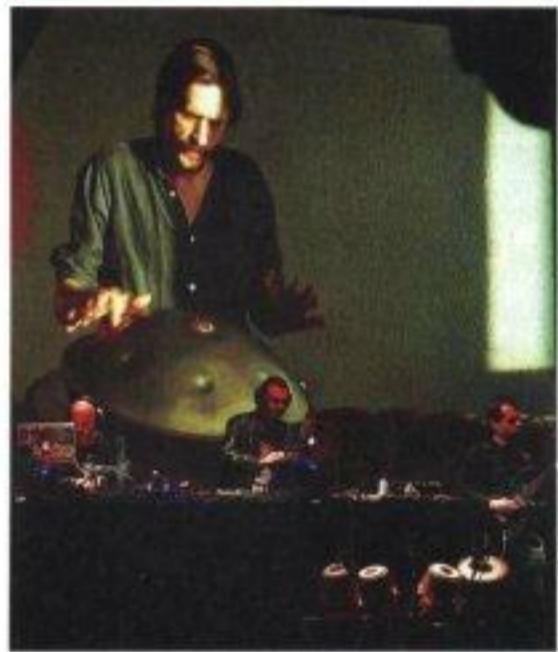
**M:** "Early ideas came together by a healthy mix of happenstance and seeing what settled well on the canvas, so to speak. Better results arrived once we got to know the samples well after a period of time living with them. We tend to work in sections, building around classic song structure ideals: a strong intro, verse, chorus, breakdowns and so on, groove sections and joins, plus a few 'Addictive TV-style twists and turns'. We also worked with layering unexpected instrument groups to create new and different sounds. And once a coherent arrangement was nailed, we would then embellish it with our own beats,

synths and FX. All the while we're doing this process, we're also editing the video to see how things look: for us, audio and video is a tandem process."

#### Tell us more about the recording sessions and how they went?

**M:** "Very well to be honest, and all were very different. Some sessions were outdoors in a park, on a rooftop, and some under the confines of recording studios with a queue of musicians waiting to jump in and do their thing. All very challenging, but highly rewarding. Challenging from the point of view that we were recording and filming at the same time, so it wasn't just a simple case of setting up mics and pressing record, we were also setting up lighting, getting angles sorted and also directing the musicians and helping them feel comfortable in front of the camera. As the project developed, we were doing more and more guerrilla-style sessions outdoors in interesting locations, at the mercy of the elements and all manner of interruptions. But it was all very relaxed and creative. It was helped by the fact that many of the musicians really got the vibe of the project and immersed themselves completely, making for exciting sessions and great samples."

**G:** "There was a lot of thinking on our feet and decision-making on the spot. There had to be, we had no choice. There was little time to survey a location, and we had to use what was there. Recording and shooting in public spaces isn't easy, it draws attention and quite often we'd soon gathered crowds on some of the recording sessions. But that can also be useful. Once, in Dakar in Senegal, we were recording Samba Diop, tama drummer to Senegalese world music star



Baaba Maal, and loads of curious kids gathered and kept giggling, so we got them to all clap in time and recorded it — and it's now on the album! We were always ready to record and take the opportunities given to us — in fact, one of the best things was the spontaneity and impromptu aspect of the pop-up sessions. A great example was while recording guitarists Nick Feldman and Jack Hues from '80s band Wang Chung. Jack asked if we'd be up for recording a friend of his, instrument inventor Henry Dagg, who collaborated with Björk on her 'Biophilia' project with his giant two-and-a-half tonne Sharpsichord (like a cross between an enormous music box and a gramophone). 'Absolutely!' we replied, so he phoned him, and an hour or so later we were recording him in his workshop."