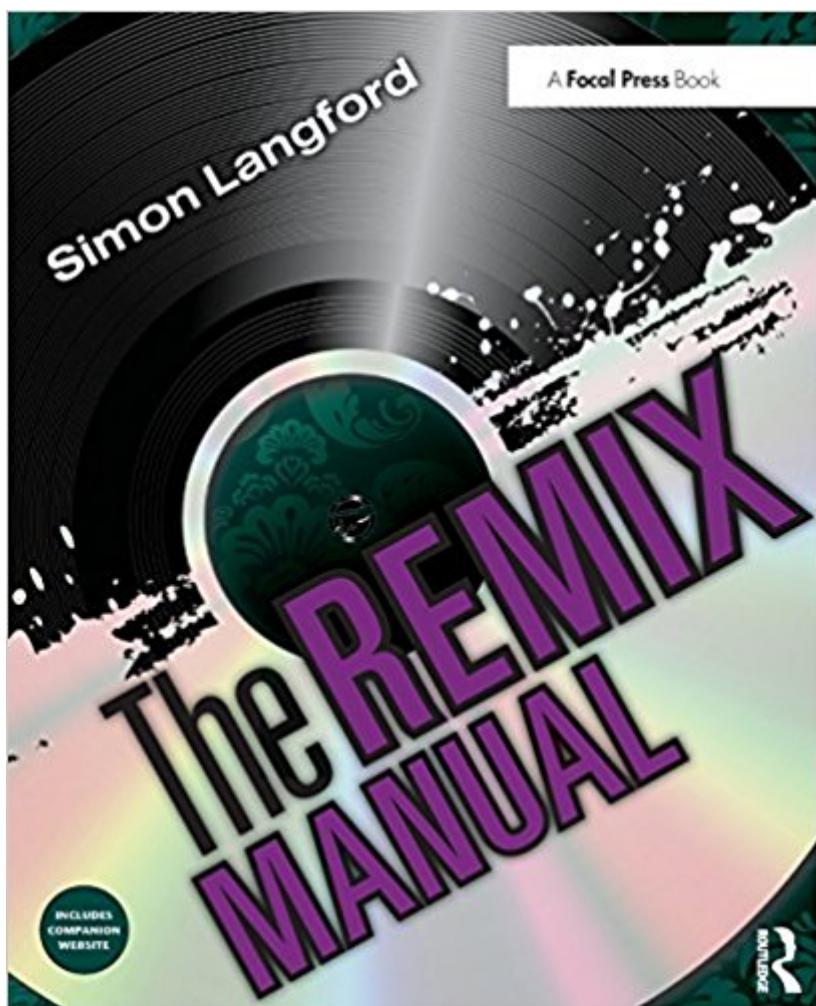


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# The Remix Manual: The Art And Science Of Dance Music Remaking With Logic



## Synopsis

Can you turn a soulful ballad into a hit dance track, or make any Billboard hit your own? With this all-in-one guide to remixing, you can! Whether you're a professional DJ or producer, or are just beginning to mix tracks, this step-by-step guide will bring you through the entire process of making your own professional-quality remixes. Author Simon Langford, a renowned producer/remixer with over 300 remixes and chart-toppers under his belt, shares his years of experience and expertise in the most in-depth guide on the market. The Remix Manual covers creative processes, technical, legal, and contractual issues, and includes a unique remix "walk-through," and useful contacts and links. The companion website provides source files that illustrate all stages of the remix, as well as additional interviews, additional "walk-throughs," a "Buyer's Guide," and video tutorials and demo versions of the hottest mixing software. A working musician and remixer, Simon Langford provides up-to-the-minute information on all aspects of the remix process, from the latest software tips and tricks to timeless artistic advice. While technical aspects are explained in detail, you also get a pro's advice on how to produce outstanding tracks by being aware of the original's message, style, and emotion. The creative side of remixing is explored from all angles, as a wide variety of industry insiders weigh in on key issues in exclusive interviews and quotes. A one-stop guide to remixing from making creative choices to understanding contracts Author has chart-topping remix experience and over 300 remixes to his name; get a pro's advice on how to produce outstanding tracks Website includes samples and example tracks, illustrating the various stages of the remix.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Exclusive: A Letter from Simon Langford on The Remix Manual

Dear Reader, It sometimes

saddens me to hear remixing referred to in a way that presents it as some kind of "poor cousin" to writing and producing your own material. Of course there are financial benefits to working on your own material but the implication that remixing is somehow inferior simply isn't true. In almost all ways the technical process involved in a remix is equally as complex and requires virtually all of the same skills. In fact, in some ways, a remix presents additional technical challenges that original material doesn't. And to say that a remix isn't as creatively challenging as original material is equally unjust. Over the course of my career I have spent far more time working on remixes than I have on original material yet I don't feel that I have missed out. On the contrary, working on all of the remixes that I have done has given me perhaps a greater and wider understanding of music than I would have had if I had worked purely on my own songs. Anything that you learn while remixing is instantly usable in your own productions. This isn't speculation; it is simple fact. Over the last 12 years I have worked with a number of amazing people who have shared their "insider knowledge" with me and shown me great kindness. I have also been very fortunate to have had the success that I have had but, when all is said and done, I am no different from any of you that are reading this. We all have our own unique skills and that is what gives such amazing and inspiring diversity in music. We all need a little inspiration from time to time though and, with that in mind, I would be truly honored if you would allow me to share with you what I have learned along the way in the hope that it can perhaps light a few dark corners in your knowledge. To all of you about to embark on your musical journey I wish you success, fulfilment and, above all else, the happiness that comes from creating something that moves others. *Dimidium facti qui coepit habet* "He who has begun has the work half done." --Horace --Simon Langford Simon Langford's Top Ten Tips from The Remix Manual Always known when to let it go. As hard as it may be, as much as you feel that just a couple more hours would make things better, there will always come a time when you just have to say "enough is enough." It gets to a point where you aren't making things better, just different. And besides, Leonardo da Vinci said it best: "No work of art is ever finished." You could work on things forever but one of the biggest skills I have picked up over the years is knowing the balance between letting it go too soon and obsessing about things. You shouldn't adopt an attitude of "ah well . . . it's good enough," that's not what I am saying at all. But I just mean that you really do have to know when you aren't actually making things better any more. Every single piece of music that I have ever

worked on I can listen back to and feel that I would change things. But you can't and you have to learn to live with that. Learn from it, but live with it. Listen to the song you are remixing and try to understand what it is about. Remixing is, perhaps, unique in the sense that you are working with somebody else's "baby." If you were a decorator you wouldn't装饰 somebody else's house the way you wanted to. You take cues from what they say and perhaps make suggestions. But it is their house after all! I have gotten a lot of respect from my clients in the past because I have always tried to make a remix that is

"sympathetic" at least in some way to what the song is about. Depending on your style of production this may be more or less of a factor but there should always be at least one part of the "message" of the original song which you base the feeling of your remix on. Check your work on as many different systems as possible. There is no one single perfect monitoring system so be sure to check your mixes on as many different systems as possible to ensure that you are getting the best possible compromise. And it is a compromise. You can't make a mix that will sound perfect on all possible playback systems so you should aim for one that sounds the best in can on the most likely playback system (radio, MP3 player, club system etc) and then make sure it still sounds good on the others. Whatever monitoring system you have you will, over time, get used to its idiosyncrasies and begin to automatically compensate for its shortcomings. Never make important mix decisions at the end of a day spent working. Our ears can become fatigued quite quickly and it's easy to keep adjust EQ and levels in order to try to rebalance things, but the truth is that our hearing perception changes over time. The louder you are working, the worse this is. So I always leave any important level or EQ decisions until first thing in the morning to make sure that I am listening with "fresh ears" to get the most accurate perspective of how things sound. Sometimes I come into the studio in the morning and play back what I was working on the night before and am shocked by how different it sounds to how I remember. Always make sure to listen to other tracks while you are mixing as a "reference." We all have tracks that we listen to and think "Wow . . . that sounds amazing!" Use these tracks as a benchmark for your own mixes. Try to figure out what it is that makes the tracks sound as good as they do. Perhaps even use a "matching EQ" type plugin to get an idea of how the overall spectral balance compares to your track but don't hope to simply put a "matching EQ" over your whole mix to make it sound like another track. Use the resulting EQ curve suggestion to figure out what you need to change in your mix and then adjust the individual sounds and parts to achieve the same result. Try to create your own "sound" and not slavishly follow whatever is big at the moment.

Music trends change so quickly these days that if you try to follow what is going on you will always be at least one (and possibly more!) step behind what is going on. It would take time for you to master the production techniques of any particular sound and by the time you have done that and worked on a few tracks or remixes of your own there is a good chance that things will have started to move on. Of course you should listen to the general trends to make sure you are still contemporary but always try to put your own spin on things and you will, ultimately, have a much longer shelf life. Remember that great tracks can be produced even on relatively simple equipment these days. There is often a misconception that you need the biggest and best equipment to produce professional sounding tracks. Now while this may have been true 20 years ago (or perhaps even 10 years ago) it certainly isn't true now. A simple laptop and a few basic plugins along with a good soundcard and speakers/headphones should enable you to produce tracks and remixes of equal quality to those you regularly hear in clubs and on the radio. Of course better equipment will improve what you do, but it really is about knowing how to use whatever you do have to the best of your ability. I have worked on remixes using just my Mac, the plugins included in Logic, an Apogee soundcard, and my headphones and they have ended up being played on National UK Radio. I really can't explain it any better than that! Try to learn at least a little music theory as it will help you enormously. When you are working on your own tracks you have a lot more freedom (musically speaking) so you can, if you don't really know any music theory, simply work on feel and how things sound to get it right. When you are remixing that approach is much more difficult because you are working within a melodic framework already provided by the original song. I'm not saying you need to take a music degree in order to be able to remix well, but some basic knowledge of chords, scales, and harmony will mean that you can get things done a lot quicker and, unfortunately, it is very rare to be given a long time to do a remix. Most often you will get less than a week so anything you can do to save time will help. Acknowledge your strengths and weaknesses and consider working with somebody who has complementary skills. We all want to be totally autonomous, to be able to do everything from sound design to mixing, arranging to mastering, but the truth is that there are very few (if any) people out there that can truly claim to be a "top level" in all of those. By being honest with yourself about what you can do well and can't do quite so well you will not only give yourself a clearer picture of where, perhaps, you should be looking to improve, but you will also have a better chance of getting the best out of your tracks and remixes. If mixing really isn't your strong point then consider collaborating with somebody who is great at mixing. Okay, you will have to split the money that you earn, but your work will be better and you will

probably earn as much if not more in the long run. Always try to enjoy what you are doing. We all start out with the absolute joy and thrill of making music foremost in our minds but then, over time, and if your career goes well, there will always come a point when it becomes more of a "job" than a passion. It's normal and you shouldn't feel bad. The key point is to remember that some people do actually enjoy their jobs! Just because you do the same thing every day, just because you don't necessarily feel that thrill and spark on every track you work on, doesn't mean that you should feel like you are somehow "selling out." I hear that so much and it saddens me, because you are getting paid (hopefully!) to do what you love doing. There will always be good and bad days and there will undoubtedly be times when you don't feel that you have done your best work. But not every track can be your "best work." Always strive to make each track the best that you can and I am sure that you will continue to enjoy making music for a long time.

Can you turn a soulful ballad into a hit dance track, or make any Billboard hit your own? With this all-in-one guide to remixing, you can! Whether you're a professional DJ or producer, or are just beginning to mix tracks, this step-by-step guide will bring you through the entire process of making your own professional-quality remixes. Author Simon Langford, a renowned remixer/producer with over 300 remixes and chart-toppers under his belt, shares his years of experience and expertise in the most in-depth guide on the market. The *Remix Manual* covers creative processes, technical, legal, and contractual issues, and includes a unique remix "walk-through," and useful contacts and links. The companion website, [www.TheRemixManual.com](http://www.TheRemixManual.com), provides source files that illustrate all stages of the remix, as well as additional interviews, additional "walk-throughs", a "Buyer's Guide", video tutorials and demo versions of the hottest mixing software. A working musician and remixer, Simon Langford provides up-to-the-minute information on all aspects of the remix process, from the latest software tips and tricks to timeless artistic advice. While technical aspects are explained in detail, you also get a pro's advice on how to produce outstanding tracks by being aware of the original's message, style, and emotion. The creative side of remixing is explored from all angles, as a wide variety of industry insiders weigh in on key issues in exclusive interviews and quotes.

This book gives a tremendous amount of insight on the subject of making a "remix," from defining what a remix might be, to the genres the results may fit, to the gathering of materials and creating new content, the (software) tools of the trade, the major phases and steps within them, to even insight into the business aspects of doing this for a living. As a consumer of all kinds of music for a

few decades, and as someone who occasionally enjoys meddling with the music, I had hoped that the book would help me take the leap and get into this more deeply. The problem is, I am not a professional, and I don't have the time and money to put into this work that I think would be required to take advantage of the book; I am a hobbyist. I am no stranger to technology, yet I was impressed with just how technical this book is. So who is the book for? Certainly it helps to have an understanding of the structure of melody and rhythm the way a musician does. Knowing your way around synth equipment (hardware, software, or both) will be essential if you are creating new music to go with your creation. Being familiar with a music studio, mixing boards, and correction is part of it. And if you already have Apple Logic 9, you're probably the target audience. Though the book description says the audience includes those starting to remix tracks, I have to disagree with that point: this is definitely NOT a beginner's guide. Beginners can buy it, read it, scratch their head, try things out, read again, and perhaps eventually understand what he's talking about. PROS Plenty of in-depth information to solve a variety of problems that you will encounter in creative remixing. Insight into the business of remixing, the history of remixes, genres, etc. Discusses several software packages. The author seems very knowledgeable and experienced, knows what he's talking about. CONS Assumption that you are doing this on the Mac, and using Apple Logic; no discussion of equivalent software for PCs or Linux, perhaps because there isn't much for those platforms. A wide gap between very basic information and jumping into complex discussions, with terms that are not explained. Focus is more on creating an alternate music track and fitting samples to it, compared to creating a new mix that is based mainly on original elements but in an altered arrangement, the kind of remix I prefer. SECTION 1 has 8 chapters on The Art of Remixing. History, being a remixer, choosing a style, music structure, arrangements, and anatomy of a remix. I got a much better feel for the types of remixes, the role of the DJ, and the strategy of getting your music played. All was pretty understandable until suddenly in Chapter 5 (Tempo, Groove, and Feel) he dove deeply into "Note Quantization" without explaining exactly what it meant. This discussion feels like it belongs in SECTION 2 (see below). As I was reading SECTION 1, I was thinking: wouldn't it be great if he were to give examples of actual remixes and explain it in terms of them? And that's when I got to Chapter 7, in which he considers two case studies in detail. SECTION 2 dives deeply into The Science of Remixing, with a lot of technical description of actual procedures. How you might build up new instrumentation, and how you might take your samples and stretch to fit your desired tempo. SECTION 3 is The Reality of Remixing, with a walkthrough of the steps involved, in detail. SECTION 4 is The Business of Remixing, something you'll need to deal with if you are trying to make this a career. Overall I think this book will be especially valuable to someone who is going

deeply into the art and science of remixing with the aim of having it as a career; the book is like visiting an expert for a few days and having him talk you through a lot of what he does. But even for a sound geek who loves music but is not as deep into all the subject required to do this as a career, it is a very interesting read and bound to teach you something about modern music production, especially Section 1. I consider this an imperfect, uneven book, but I can only give it five stars, because for its minor flaws, there's really nothing much else out there that tells you so much.

I requested this book for review for an ulterior motive. I am not actually interested in Remixing per se, but just wanted to learn about various studio techniques that are now available even to the home recorder on a small budget. There is a lot of great information here. I learned a lot, and I won't complain that Simon Langford talked too much about Remixing, because that is what the book was supposed to be about. It is called *The Remix Manual*, so what did I expect? The *Remix Manual* is divided into four sections: The Art, Science, Reality, and the Business, of Remixing. In the Art section he gives the history of Remixing, and there is even a bit about keys, scales, chords, and notes. I think that it was nice of him to mention the music portion of the art of Remixing. That whole aspect of Remixing tends to be ignored. In the Art of Remixing section it begins to get into tempo, groove, and feel. Then it talks about arrangements, the main ones that a Remixer is concerned with being the all important Club Mix, The Radio Edit, and the Dub Mix, among others. The Art of Remixing section finishes with a round table discussion of other Remixer. It was a window into a whole 'nother world, of DJ s, nightclubs, and the world of Remixer, but not why I came to the party. For me, the meat of the book is in the sections about the Science and the Reality of Remixing, especially the Science. That gets into the mathematics and physics of sound and how it is designed and manipulated with studio equipment costing millions of dollars--or nowadays software equivalents at a fraction of the cost! Langford covers High and Low Pass Filters, Parametric EQ, LFOs (low-frequency oscillators), Subtractive and Additive Synthesis, Compression, and Modulation Effects. In the Reality of Remixing section he takes you through a few remixes step-by-step. Finally, there is a section on the Business of Remixing, which I confess I just skimmed through because it didn't really pertain to me. The parts on using Social Media were kind of intriguing, though. Langford did recommend reading books about studio production, as he felt that you could pick up a lot of valuable tips and insight into Remixing. I was doing kind of the reverse. One of the books he could have recommended was *Here, There and Everywhere: My Life Recording the Music of the Beatles* by Howard Massey. There were also links to you tube videos of original songs and examples of Remixes so you could compare the two. A few things that irked me were the Summaries at the end

of the chapters weren't really summaries at all. More like Post Scripts, things he wanted to add, different tangents he wanted to run down. Fine, if you don't want to summarize, but call it something else, please. Simon Langford was also guilty of over using exclamation points! Does anyone remember the episode of Seinfeld where Elaine got into a spat over this? The Bottom Line is that this was a good book on Remixing that would also be useful to someone interested in studio production as well. Though over 400 pages long, I read it cover-to-cover, but highlighted certain passages, and will keep it as a reference.

Professional Widow by Tori Amos

Professional Widow Remixes

Deja Vu by Beyonce

Recording the Beatles by Kevin Ryan & Brian Kehew

Here, There and Everywhere: My Life Recording the Music of the Beatles by Howard Massey

The Complete Beatles Recording Sessions: The Official Story of the Abbey Road Years 1962-1970 by Mark Lewisohn

The Beatles: The Ultimate Recording Guide by Allen J. Weiner

All You Need Is Ears: The inside personal story of the genius who created The Beatles by George Martin

The Rolling Stones' Exile on Main St. (33 1/3) by Bill Janovitz

Sessions with Sinatra: Frank Sinatra and the Art of Recording by Charles L. Granata

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The Square Dance and Contra Dance Handbook: Calls, Dance Movements, Music, Glossary, Bibliography, Discography, and Directories

The Message Remix Bible: Complete Bible

The Message Bible Remix Psalms & Proverbs

Remix Strategy: The Three Laws of Business Combinations (Harvard Business School Press)

Message Remix Bible: Psalms & Proverbs

The Message//REMIX Solo: An Uncommon Devotional

Dance and Music of Court and Theater: Selected Writings of Wendy Hilton (1997)

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