

Brimful of Asha

ByteNoise

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Artist

Cornershop

Label

Wiiija Records

Year

1998

Summary

Not only is this a great song in

its own right, but it's also a perfect example of how to remix.

It is an unfortunate fact that the majority of contemporary songs are written not just for the pleasure of composing, but also for money. The music industry is just that: an industry, like any other. Given that writing and remixing songs is currently more of a paying job than an art form, Norman Cook stands out amongst his peers as being very good at his job. With no pretense of creating art, he has honed his craft over many years, constantly evolving his style into something more popular, professional and catchy. Under the monikers of Beats International (Dub Be Good to Me), Pizzaman, Mighty Dub Katz (Magic Carpet Ride), Freakpower (Turn On, Tune In, Cop Out), and most recently [Fatboy Slim](#), he has released many songs over the years. What makes him stand out even more than the sheer number of songs he has released, however, is his ability to remix, a task few other musicians do well. Even his original work often contains so many samples of other people's songs that the line between an original work and a remix is blurred. When remixing, however, he takes the best parts of just one song, throws away the rest, adds a lot of his own ideas, changes the genre (invariably to big beat), rearranges it and turns it into a hit. Brimful of Asha, a song written by Cornershop, and remixed by Norman Cook, is a perfect example of his Midas like ability to seemingly turn any song into gold.

Brimful of Asha was originally released as a single in 1997. No one seemed to notice. It was rereleased in 1998, including the Norman Cook remix as a B-side. This is the version that became popular.

Cornershop's original "Single Version" of Brimful of Asha is a nice song, but it doesn't stand out from the crowd. It's laid back

and happy pop music, and reminds me of Stealers Wheel's Stuck in the Middle with You more than anything else, with its fun vibe -- at least, until the violins make an appearance at the end. It's a nice enough song, but it's also utterly forgettable. Sorry, Cornershop.

Then there's the "Norman Cook Remix Single Version." The tempo's been sped up. A sine wave provides sub-bass. The light, playful drums have been replaced by a much heavier kit. The vocal has been made more repetitive. Last of all, samples of unidentifiable noises have been added as much needed hooks. The song has been sampled, modified, remixed and rearranged into an instant hit set firmly in the big beat genre.

Then, after another forgettable Cornershop song, comes the best track: the "Norman Cook Remix Extended Version." This starts off with a looped noise. More rhythmically played samples of noises are then added over the top one at a time before the main beat kicks in and the song gets into full swing. This was clearly written by someone who finds beauty in [sounds](#) themselves. When the vocal starts, it has been cut up so that no recognisable words are uttered. Once again, Norman Cook proves that the [sampler](#) is not just an emulator but a valid instrument in its own right. Only after a full two minutes does the recognisable vocal start.

This version of the song also features a lengthy bridge where, after something noisy is played in the style of a ripping guitar solo, the song is broken down to just a simple rhythm and the vocal. It is then slowly built back up again, a small sample of the main guitar riff almost teasing the listener, then the sub-bass returning, then Norman Cook's trademark sampler-with-increasing-cutoff-point technique adding another layer before the main beat returns and the -- now very repetitive

-- vocal gets into full swing. A constant semiquaver length retriggering of samples of the vocal on its own serves as an interesting break to finish this section and head back into the chorus.

These mixes serve as a great example of how to arrange a song. When the extended version finally finishes, after seven and a half minutes, it feels like hardly any time has passed. This is not only a great song in its own right, but also a perfect example of how to remix. The Norman Cook versions quite rightly went on to become much more popular than the original ever was.