SAMPLE PACK GUIDANCE FOR CULTURALLY DIVERSE
AND NON-WESTERN INSTRUMENT CONTENT

REPRESENTING DIVERSITY

Sample packs are the building blocks for creative communities
in music production. We have the opportunity to share and
promote sounds from the breadth of musical activity around us.
Let's strive to curate, represent and distribute diverse samples in
positive and respectful ways.
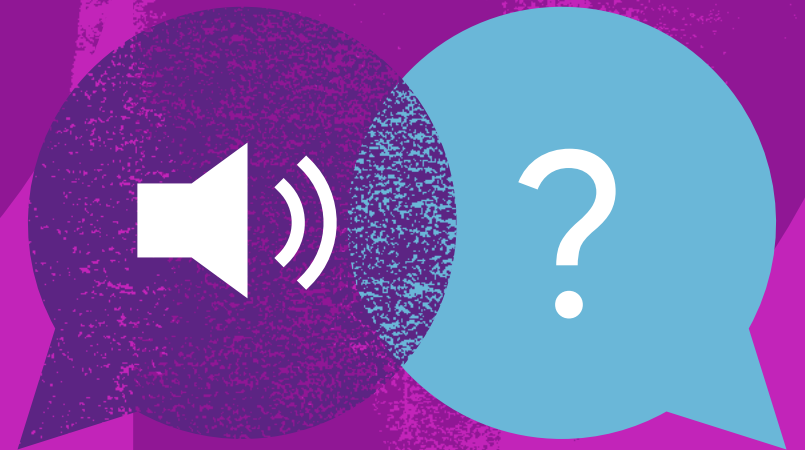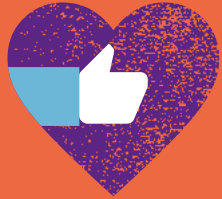
CREDIT MUSICIANS

1 Give credit where credit's due. Naming all artists, musicians and producers who contributed to the sample pack provides recognition for all parties involved. When sampled, musicians may go uncredited, becoming faceless and unknown by end-users. We need to create a culture where distributors, producers and end-users begin to care more about the origin of the samples.
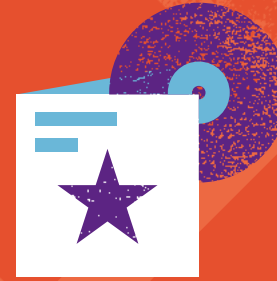
CREATING ARTWORK

2 Be aware of visual stereotypes and don't play into them when selecting sample pack artwork. Inappropriate imagery includes visuals which make assumptions and incorrect depictions of cultures, races, genders and music traditions, which can be received as offensive. Assess where your influences are coming from and question the connection you are building between image and sound.

PROFILING CONTENT

3 Profile the context and stories behind the sounds that feature in the sample pack so that end-users can engage with the culture and not just the artifact. Add detail about the featured instruments and the associated culture within the sample pack description. Include hyperlinks to musicians' websites to support and platform their contribution where possible.

SAMPLE PACK TITLES

5 Consider the titles of samples pack with care. Steer clear of titles which diminish or reduce the sample pack's content to 'exotic', 'mythical', 'ethnic', 'tribal' or 'world', which don't do these samples justice and often obscure and misrepresent the diverse content end–users engage with.

LABELLING SAMPLES

4 Consider the labelling of individual samples and question whether your labels describe the instrument / tradition / sound accurately and respectfully. Provide specific instrument names instead of using broader terms like 'strings' or 'reeds' for non–Western instruments that have their own names.

SAMPLE PACK DESCRIPTIONS

6 Aim for a blend of language that music producers and end–users will understand. Adopt the correct music terminology of the culture being represented alongside explanations if needed. Keep in mind that sample pack descriptions can have an educational function for end-users who are unfamiliar with these sounds and/or music practices.

CONSULT THE COMMUNITY

8 Avoid guessing or making assumptions regarding terminology for culturally diverse content. When in doubt, consult with the community / culture the sounds are associated with to ensure correct representation for the musicians and content.

ACCESSIBILITY AND LANGUAGE

7 Sample packs are downloaded by users all over the world. Consider how a culturally diverse / non–Western instrument pack might be perceived and received in other countries and cultures. Make sample packs accessible to both producers who are well versed in a culture's music, and also to those who are being exposed to it for the first time.

CONFIRM AUTHENTICITY

9 Use your international networks to confirm the authenticity of culturally diverse sample packs. Distributors may ask you about your connection to this genre / sound in order to verify its credibility.

MORE
INFO

SPECIFIC CATEGORISATION

10 Avoid lumping non-Western music and culturally diverse sounds into the 'World' category. Add specific categories for regions, countries, music styles and genres. Be specific about where this music is from. For example, 'world' is often used to categorise a wide variety of sounds from all around the world, without specifying which country / region / culture they come from.

SEARCHABLE SAMPLES

11 The labelling, metadata and tagging of samples has an impact on how users search, find and purchase non-Western instrument samples. Test out if these samples are searchable using the information retrieval systems you employ. It's great to have culturally diverse samples available, but if they are not searchable, your end-users won't find them.

CHECK METADATA

12 Make sure the samples' metadata is correct when working with non-Western instrument samples – add more categories if needed (e.g. tagging an instrument as a 'guitar', when it's a 'sitar' misrepresents the instrument and may cause issues with search functions. Expand your metadata tagging options to include non-Western instruments and sounds.

MORE INFORMATION

13 Consider a 'more info' button or section when hosting non-Western or culturally diverse content to feed the curiosity and interest of your end-users in the background of these sounds and cultures. Utilise the sample pack description to add detail about the featured instruments, cultures and musicians that it came from.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS