Introduction

AMANDA BAYLEY

Since the beginning of the twentieth century the recorded artefact has undergone considerable transformation. Developments in technology have ushered in ever-new forms of sound reproduction, which have led from the acoustic to the electric, and from analogue to digital recording. The cylinder phonograph has given way to the vinyl record and cassette tape and, more recently, the compact disc (CD) and digital tape are beginning to cede to the intangible, downloadable file. This technological progression has been paralleled by an increase in the accessibility of the machines on which the artefact or sound file is played back. Economic and social factors driving these developments have largely determined the changing role that recorded music has played in our everyday lives over the last hundred years. In this volume, rather than providing a history or chronology of recordings in relation to technology (a number of books already trace this fascinating story),[1] they are considered from various sociological, philosophical and musicological standpoints.

Some important questions arising from these different perspectives include: who are recordings made for? What do recordings tell us about a performance? How do we listen to recordings? What are we actually hearing when we listen to recordings? How are live recordings different from studio recordings? How do these differences vary from artist to artist? How do we analyse what we hear? What do recordings show us about how musicians teach and learn? What can we learn from historical recordings? These questions and more are explored through this collection of essays which display a range of strategies for engaging with recordings. With a view to appealing to a wide readership, these strategies extend from informative approaches surveying a broad subject area to specific case studies on discrete topics.

This book presents some of the increasingly diverse research currently being undertaken in the field of recorded music and attempts to redress the balance between theory and practice, methodology and application, and technological means and knowledge. From the varying contexts in which recordings are listened to by music lovers, performers, teachers, composers

and musicologists, it is important to evaluate the purpose they serve; the way they have been used in the past; how they are used now; what meanings they have; and how they are written about. In addressing these issues the book could have been structured according to genre but this would have perpetuated a division between subdisciplines already evident from studies of recordings.[2] As an alternative, chapters are broadly organised within thematic areas so that different genres are represented in each section, in order to promote new correlations between conventionally separate disciplines. When studying music as recorded sound, the concepts of process, product, text, context and creativity are inevitably fluid, and even controversial, often being interpreted differently for different genres. The reader is therefore warned against interpreting the section headings of the book too narrowly: some chapters could be placed in more than one location and a different ordering of chapters and sections would be equally viable. There are various paths that might be taken through the text, often guided by the consideration of concepts across genres; these are either identified below or indicated by cross-references in the main text or in endnotes. Since this book is not intended to be all encompassing (radio, television and film being significantly under-represented) readers are urged to explore further connections for themselves.

Given the varied economic and social factors surrounding different music genres, each has tended to establish its own approach to recordings as tools, as texts or as processes, reflective of social practices. Yet traversing these boundaries can provide fresh insights into different repertoire, the attitudes of performers, ways of listening and methods of analysis which all contribute to our understanding of recordings as musicological documents. For example, the study of recorded sound in Western classical music – which has only recently emerged from a paradigm shift away from notated scores – can share with and learn from ethnomusicology, jazz and popular music whose histories and practices have evolved principally from recordings.[3] Stephen Cottrell's opening chapter indeed critiques the disciplinary nature of recordings within musicology, providing an academic framework that encapsulates the specific directions taken in this volume. He explores the relationships between process and product, proposing a model for articulating the association between recording technology, musical performance and creativity for different genres. Intersecting these three areas are the underlying cultural attitudes, social contexts and changing listening practices that form important subtexts to the book, as outlined below.

The history of recording technology has itself instigated different functions for recordings. At the beginning of the twentieth century, parallel to the use of

the phonograph as a source of entertainment which fuelled an industry in popular culture, 'as a tool [it] expanded the range, focus, and methods of academic engagement with the scientific study of culture' thus fulfilling a significant role in preserving oral traditions.[4] This role is represented by John Baily and Jonathan Stock, who demonstrate how ethnomusicologists have used recordings as a primary resource to inform their studies of non-Western and Western cultures, and by Amanda Bayley, who develops this functionality in relation to contemporary music. In their respective contexts Stock and Bayley illustrate the importance of recordings as tools for documenting field research whose full potential is still to be recognised. The evolution of oral music traditions has been strongly influenced by the role of recordings in enabling performers to hear what they have sung or played. Stock's investigation of recordings as research tools in ethnomusicology exemplifies the field research methodology that Baily promotes to improve our understanding of the nature of music and its role in society. Drawing upon his experiences Stock examines the various functions of recordings at each stage of a research project and how they can subsequently be evaluated and interpreted. Extending this research beyond the boundaries of established oral traditions, Bayley makes a case for adopting an ethnographic approach to recordings more widely, arguing for a redefinition of what the end product represents beyond the artefact as simply the outcome of performance.

The function of recordings as research tools rests on an obvious yet crucial attribute – their repeatability – which allows the immediate (or distant) past to be revisited and re-evaluated, and which has had, and continues to have, significant ramifications for music scholarship, pedagogy and the recording industry. The 'regressive listening' practices that result from listening repeatedly to the same recordings have been widely documented and are re-assessed by the film-maker, writer and teacher, Michael Chanan.[5] The problematic nature of this negative charge, originating from the writings of German philosopher Theodor W. Adorno, has recently been recognised by Eric Clarke:

> Though he briefly touches on jazz listeners, Adorno's analysis is premised entirely on the values and practices of the Western art music tradition, infused with a deep pessimism about the totalizing domination of the culture industry and the false-consciousness of its 'victims.' … An engagement with music's social content and context, with its ideological allegiances, and with the cultural work that it performs, are conspicuously absent from any of the listening categories that he describes.[6]

The following pages attempt to address some of these shortcomings. For example, from a historical perspective, recordings have served as informative,

educational tools: the gramophone had a basic role in education in the 1920s, providing practical assistance for the study of subjects such as music, modern languages, shorthand and typewriting. Recordings have continued to aid beginners learning to play an instrument or to sing (whether in their own or other cultures – as Stock describes) but they have also acquired a more prominent status as texts, which have proved particularly inspirational for players, students, teachers and musicologists.

Learning to play from recordings is an area of contention for score-based musical traditions. The pianist, Peter Hill, warns that a recording can all too easily become a 'lazy shortcut' for learning a piece of music: 'simply copying the way others play is an admission that what we have to offer is second rate'.[7] He advises that the study of recordings 'should be kept to a later stage of study when one is better placed to make an independent critical assessment'.[8] Some pedagogic practices, however, promote learning the notes from a recording (rather than from a score). For jazz, Gabriel Solis has explained that recordings:

> are important because people learn to play from them, because people earn some portion of their living from them, and because they constitute resources of a shared past – resources which are used in various contexts to construct social or collective memories.[9]

Used in the appropriate way recordings are valuable study documents: for example, David Patmore draws upon interview evidence from performers, critics and record producers who have worked closely with Sir Simon Rattle, to reveal the different functions that recordings can serve for a professional conductor; and, in a jazz context, Catherine Tackley shows how recordings contribute towards determining a history of performance. She engages with the concept of recordings as texts in relation to a history of jazz that has essentially been defined by recordings. She argues strongly for greater consideration to be given to the contextualisation of these recordings, from the position of listeners and other musicians contemporary with the recorded performances. Focusing on iconic contributions to the jazz canon (the Original Dixieland Jazz Band and Miles Davis) she shows how specific recordings are able to influence perceptions of jazz when evaluated in different ways.

Adopting an alternative stance, Peter Elsdon argues that 'canonic' jazz recordings render the concept of recordings as 'texts' problematic, especially when considering live as opposed to studio recordings. With detailed reference to John Coltrane's work he shows how performances represented by recordings act as a window on to the ever-changing performance traditions of

a musician or group of musicians. He cultivates a critical awareness of the social and technical forces involved in the recording process in order to discover more about what a recording actually represents, rather than the image that it appears to construct. At the beginning of the section on the recording process, James Barrett lays the foundations not only for the other essays in that section but also for the last section of the book, sonic creations and re-creations: the reader may indeed prefer to read this last section as a continuation of the second.

Barrett investigates the way in which the production process presents the recording within an aurally encoded cultural context, exploring the extent to which this is either dictated by the technology or chosen by the producer. He traces the non-linear process of technological development through examples that relate to the areas of interest covered in the rest of the book. He demonstrates how the role of a producer depends in part on the music genre but also identifies conventions of representation that appear to cross repertoires. The listener's perception is influenced by the record producer; the created virtual space encodes the producer's cultural assumptions within acoustic phenomena. Examples of these acoustic phenomena are presented in extracts on the website for this book which can be found at www.cambridge.org/recordedmusic.

The other three chapters in this section detail the artistic rather than the engineering perspectives on production: in addition to jazz (represented by Elsdon), case studies from classical and world music reveal the implications that the production process has for commercial and academic viability. Patmore explores the specific relationship between producer and orchestral conductor, evaluating Rattle's role in the recording process as well as the significance of the resulting recorded product for the subsequent success of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. As with other chapters that potentially span different sections of the book, its content reveals as much about the information recordings provide as texts as about the recording process itself. Rattle's insistence on recording in a concert situation (or at least after numerous concert performances of a work) resonates with the 'in-context' recordings that Baily describes (following John Blacking's definitions) for ethnomusicologists, as opposed to a 'test' (or 'out-of-context') recording in which a piece is performed solely for recording purposes, often in a studio. Musicians have been able to learn from the different experiences that a studio and a concert hall offer but there are a number of contentious issues regarding the relationship between the two. Many artists work in both spheres, from which they can benefit in different ways, often having personal preferences; yet Glenn Gould famously rejected the concert platform

in order to pursue his career in the recording studio. He described recorded 'live' performances as 'events which straddle two worlds and are at home in neither'.[10]

The distinction between a recorded (live) performance and a studio recording has an interesting historical precedent in the early nineteenth-century pianistic culture where an analogous polarity existed between the work-as-performance and the work-as-text.[11] This association between the act of performing and the object, or documentation, of performance remains intriguing and sometimes contentious. For example, the extent to which live recordings allow access to social interaction between musicians and audience (advocated by Peter Elsdon but disputed by Peter Johnson) sparks a debate to be continued beyond these pages. Here, the distinction between a recorded performance and a studio recording invites a re-evaluation of illusion and aura such as that provided by Peter Johnson and Andrew Blake. Johnson considers the social function of recordings of Western art music from a philosophical perspective, arguing that they should be valued not as copies or imitations of live performance but as a distinct and valuable medium for the propagation of music. Recordings in general create a simulation of live sound in order to promote the live event and/or document it for wide circulation. For example Patmore reports how recordings can increase audience expectations, even though, from a conductor's perspective, they are only a means to an end and should not be a substitute for live performance. However, for popular music, Allan Moore selects examples (of John Lennon in 1967 and King Crimson in 1969) to show how recording no longer functions to publicise a live performance or to disseminate it, but becomes the end in itself: live performance became subsidiary to recording when, during the 1970s, tours began to serve the function of advertising recordings, the profits from which subsidised the costs of live performance. Additionally, owing to the manipulation of timbre and location that took place in the studio, it became impossible to reproduce the same sound in a live performance.

Johnson's argument for the proliferation of music through recordings is further strengthened when extending the context to include Baily's examination of recordings of non-Western cultures, which shows how their widespread distribution has subsequently had an impact on the recording industry. Through a survey of the history of world music recordings, and reflections on his own field and studio recordings, Baily encourages ethnomusicologists to examine their own activities in relation to the creation of numerous musical hybrids in the recording studios of the West. He highlights the different functions of recordings according to the differing

agendas and priorities of ethnomusicologists and producers, and exposes the issues surrounding the new contexts and meanings to which their projects give rise.

During the last hundred years the recorded medium has enabled ethnomusicologists to develop sophisticated descriptive notations that have only recently led to progressive research in other genres. For popular music and jazz, where the use of prescriptive notation is minimal or non-existent, transcriptions have proved to be a valuable method for analysing performance,[12] and are often supplemented or superseded by spectrum or frequency analysis (as discussed by Cottrell). Serge Lacasse undertakes such an analysis – in this case of recorded popular vocal music – as a means of exploring the interaction between the subtleties of expressive vocal performance and the recording process. He shows how paralinguistic features of the recorded voice contribute to the mediation of emotions and then explores how, in the context of a recording, these vocal performances are phonographically staged through different technological parameters. His interdisciplinary approach, aided by spectrograms, refines the processes for analysing the expressive, timbral subtleties in the singing of Tori Amos, Alanis Morissette and Peter Gabriel.

Moore explains how timbre and other techniques of sound manipulation are akin to the development techniques of notated music. He examines the working practices of producers and the role they play in creating the 'track' which has come to replace the more conventional popular song, constituting harmony, melody and lyric. The studio came to be preferred to the live venue because of its compositional resources. Sonic landscapes are considered by Albin Zak for rock and roll music where producers experimented freely with technologies of sound-recording and manipulation. His chapter traces the historical development of electronic mediation techniques as elements of a creative process that encompasses musical ideas, musical actions and sound sculpting, which subsequently influence musical style.

Exploring the increasingly blurred division between composer and producer, Virgil Moorefield provides a means of understanding the technological processes involved in the re-creative acts that result in covers, remixes and mash-ups. He shows how a particular song may be rendered into a different form, its sound designed in response to current musical fashion. The argument for the value of listening to covers against one another resonates with the production of multiple versions proposed by Bayley and encourages a new level of creativity in performance, though this in itself is not a new proposition.[13] This new dimension to creativity brings with it problems of its own: Blake examines the threat that copying – in the

form of internet technologies and file-sharing – brings to the recording industry. He exposes the legal, cultural and ethical debates surrounding the global use of different formats. The new interactions facilitated by digital technology require reconsideration of the concepts of place and genre as well as a redefinition of music itself.

Eric Clarke has observed that 'the preoccupation with creativity in performance in the Western tradition is the result of a specific aesthetic outlook, and (in more recent times) commercial pressures'.[14] Compared with the improvised traditions to which Clarke refers, the examples provided by Moore, Zak and Moorefield show how creativity has been facilitated by recording technology to an extent that brings into question the whole notion of 'performance'. To emphasise his point Clarke gives examples of 'other [that is, non-Western] musical traditions in which the preservation of *identity* is the overwhelming imperative', explaining that there is 'a tendency to overlook these because of the concentration on music as art, rather than music as it is involved in a whole variety of other social functions'.[15]

Placing side by side essays that focus on different genres helps to draw attention to the characteristics that Clarke highlights. At the outset the distinction between creativity and identity is accommodated by Cottrell's grid (mentioned earlier) in relation to performance and technology. While commercial pressures, symptomatic of Western capitalist society, can be identified as partly responsible for a preoccupation with creativity in performance, they are also responsible for the commodification of music leading to recordings being regarded as fashion accessories. Adam Krims broadens the context of recorded music by considering a variety of its social functions interpreted in relation to fashion and in relation to place. He investigates the impact of the design of sound in social spaces. With design emerging as a major cultural and economic goal, he argues that the spatial and temporal aspects of musical recording fuse with other poetic aspects of built social space, whether interior retail space, the privacy of a car or the descriptive landscapes of television drama. Krims opens up these new lines of enquiry regarding shared or individual listening practices in the first section of the book, although changing listening practices that result from the different ways in which recordings are consumed and manipulated appear consistently throughout, either explicitly or implicitly.

Within the last section John Dack presents Pierre Schaeffer's theories which originate from studio practices of the 1960s and encourage all musicians to 'hear better'. Dack shows a way in which recording technology led to thinking embodied in electroacoustic compositional practice. In this context, where recording assumes the central role in the compositional

process, the listening conditions of repeated aural analysis are responsible for new theoretical concepts for sound description and classification that can be more broadly applied to contemporary music. Dack demonstrates the potential of Schaeffer's theories for pursuing further directions in music analysis.

Schaeffer's idea of 'reduced listening' (whereby the listener perceives the sound for its own sake, as an object isolated from its source) lies at the opposite end of the spectrum from the location and design of sound in space explored by Krims, although new contexts can also dissociate sounds from their original sources. Each extreme mode of listening contributes to the concept of the autonomy of recordings, another theme that runs through the book, sometimes viewed positively and sometimes negatively. The sociologist Simon Frith has acknowledged that 'the twentieth-century threat to musical autonomy is not the rise of mass music … but the development of recording technology'.[16] For popular music, as is often the case with jazz and traditional or non-Western musics, courtesy of the recorded medium, 'there can be "a specific performance which constitutes the work"'.[17] Where performance is surpassed by production practices, however, the separation between creation and re-creation is dissolved and the ontological status of recording changes from being a product to a process of transformation. Technology is responsible for altering the relationship between composer, performer and producer, which continues to need redefining in an age where the consumer can be all three. Recording can be used as an object of re-creation, returning to the idea of decontextualising sound advocated by Schaeffer, or, alternatively, recontextualising sound.

The analysis of sound has much to offer developments in the musicology of recordings because of its attributes that notation cannot capture. Rather than being in any way conclusive, this collection of essays aims to inspire ongoing investigation into the complex relationships between sounds, contexts and meanings. Future applications and implications of recording technology in the twenty-first century, presented in the epilogue by Tony Gibbs, can be merely speculative, the only certainty being that the ever-changing relationship between performance, culture and technology will remain in a fascinating state of high flux.

Notes

1. For example, Michael Chanan, *Repeated Takes: a Short History of Recording and its Effects on Music* (London: Verso, 1995); Pekka Gronow and Ilpo Saunio, *An International History of the Recording Industry* (London and New York: Cassell,

1998); Erika Brady, *A Spiral Way: How the Phonograph Changed Ethnography* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1999); Timothy Day, *A Century of Recorded Music: Listening to Musical History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000).

2. Different genres of music tend to attract different audiences so this division between disciplines is somewhat inevitable. For example, articles on jazz recordings tend either to appear in books devoted to jazz – such as Jed Rasula, 'The Media of Memory: the Seductive Menace of Records in Jazz History', in Krin Gabbard (ed.), *Jazz among the Discourses* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995), pp. 134–62 – or in journals dedicated to jazz. Exceptions to this trend include Gabriel Solis's article, '"A Unique Chunk of Jazz Reality": Authorship, Musical Work Concepts, and Thelonious Monk's Live Recordings from the Five Spot, 1958', unusually published in a journal of a different discipline – *Ethnomusicology* 48/3 (2004), pp. 315–47 – and Evan Eisenberg's book, *The Recording Angel: Music, Records and Culture from Aristotle to Zappa*, 2nd edn (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), which juxtaposes performance and listening practices and aesthetic contexts for all musical genres.
3. Robert Philip's landmark book *Early Recordings and Musical Style: Changing Tastes in Instrumental Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) is widely recognised for having directed musicology towards studies of recordings rather than just scores. A recent manifestation of this development is evident from the Arts and Humanities Research Council Research Centre for the History and Analysis of Recorded Music (CHARM) directed by Nicholas Cook at Royal Holloway, University of London (www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/index.html) (last accessed 26 June 2009).
4. Brady, *A Spiral Way*, p. 2
5. Michael Chanan, 'The Microphone and Interpretation', in *Repeated Takes*, pp. 116–36. See also Lee Brown, 'Phonography, Repetition and Spontaneity', *Philosophy and Literature* 24 (2000), pp. 111–25; and Theodor W. Adorno, 'On the Fetish Character of Music and the Regression of Listening' ['Über den Fetischcharakter in der Musik und die Regression des Hörens'], *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* 7 (1938), reprinted in J. M. Bernstein (ed.), *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 29–60.
6. Eric F. Clarke, *Ways of Listening: an Ecological Approach to the Perception of Musical Meaning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 142.
7. Peter Hill 'From Score to Sound', in John Rink (ed.), *Musical Performance: a Guide to Understanding* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 133.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 143, n. 5.
9. Solis, '"A Unique Chunk of Jazz Reality"', p. 343.
10. Tim Page (ed.), *The Glenn Gould Reader* (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), p. 340.