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# The Concept of ‘Radio Music’

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In the late 1920s, young composers and musicians turned towards new fields of activity and new media in order to reach a larger audience.<sup>1</sup> In Germany, this effort was part of the movement of *Neue Sachlichkeit*, and for a short period of time, *Radiomusik* was considered the ideal means for a democratic, educational and didactic effort which would enlighten all of society. For a while it seemed that radio music was considered a genre of its own. To fulfil its function, radio music had to consider technical limitations as well as the educational level and listening modes of the new mass audience. Public radio, as discussed by Kurt Weill and Paul Hindemith, was at first greeted with great expectations, but soon a more realistic attitude prevailed. Weill, himself a radio critic as well, composed *Der Lindberghflug* (1929) as a piece of ‘radio music theatre’, but then changed some of its features in order to turn it into a didactical play for amateurs, a so-called *Lehrstück*.<sup>2</sup> The article will present the concept of ‘radio music’ developed within German *Neue Sachlichkeit* and discuss the relevance of such a concept for current research in the field of radio and music.

German public radio was established in October 1923 and it rapidly became a nationwide net of regional radio stations.<sup>3</sup> Since the very beginning, the journal *Der deutsche Rundfunk* was published in Berlin with nationwide radio programmes and comments on the broadcasts.<sup>4</sup> Kurt Weill, one of the young composers who around 1927 played a crucial role in the attempt to redefine the role of the artist according to the ideas of *Neue Sachlichkeit*, was employed as a music critic by this journal from the end of 1924 until May 1929, writing forecasts and reviews, mainly on broadcasts of operas and music theatre. From September 1927 onwards, he mainly wrote forecasts and comments on a range of topics.<sup>5</sup> Thus, he was well-prepared, when he in 1927

1 This article is a revised version of a paper at the LARM conference ‘Digital Archives, Audiovisual Media and Cultural Memory’ at the University of Copenhagen, 14–15 November 2013.

2 For a discussion of Weill’s *Der Lindberghflug* in the context of Danish musical life, see Michael Fjeldsøe, *Kulturradikalismens musik* (The Music of Cultural Radicalism) (Copenhagen, 2013), 592–99. My argument below on Weill’s changing attitudes towards this piece is partly based on that section of my book.

3 29 October 1923 is considered the birthday of German public radio, marked by the first broadcast of an entertainment programme with live music and wax records by the Funk-Stunde Berlin. Cf. the programme sheet at <http://www.dra.de/rundfunkgeschichte/75jahreradio/anfaenge/voxxhaus/index.html> (accessed 14 Oct. 2013).

4 The first issue was published on 14 October 1923, and after a short time it was changed from a biweekly into a weekly journal; <http://d-nb.info/012990337> (accessed 14 Oct. 2013).

5 Kurt Weill, *Musik und musikalisches Theater. Gesammelte Schriften. Erweiterte und revidierte Neuauflage*, ed. Stephen Hinton and Jürgen Schebera (Mainz, 2000), 208–11 (‘Editorisches Vorwort’) and 412–34 (‘Verzeichnis sämtlicher Beiträge von Kurt Weill für die Zeitschrift “Der deutsche Rundfunk”’).

– as a composer – turned to the possibilities of ‘radio music’ as one of the means to get access to a larger audience for modern music.

‘Radio music’ in this sense was considered a specific genre, supposed to fit the technical and social demands of broadcasts. Early radio equipment had a number of technical limitations, both in the recording technique, the transmission equipment, and the receivers, which had to be addressed. It was a general belief that technical progress would eventually make such considerations obsolete, but nevertheless many composers wanted to contribute to the genre despite the difficulties of the current state of art.<sup>6</sup> This was a typical attitude of *Neue Sachlichkeit*; musicians strived to fulfil a task of relevance to a contemporary audience.

Social changes were discussed in different ways. At first the fact that the listener could not see the performer was considered the major change, and in public discourse radio music was classified as ‘mechanical music’ in opposition to ‘live music’ of traditional concerts. Later, along with the emergence of early radio theory, attention turned towards the composition of the mass of listeners. Paul Hindemith was among those thrilled about being able to reach ‘everyone’. In the booklet accompanying the 1929 contemporary music festival in Baden-Baden, one of the first venues for a presentation of commissions of radio music, Hindemith stated on behalf of the programming committee: ‘Radio music does not address a specific social stratum, it addresses man as such – it reaches also a group of listeners, in whose lives only the radio impart spiritual and artistic values.’<sup>7</sup> At the same time, Kurt Weill gave an account of the possibilities and difficulties presented by this situation. On the one hand, he considered it a major step towards democratization, as music could now be heard by all social classes, not just those who could afford concert tickets. On the other hand, this meant that one could not presuppose any level of culture or education on behalf of the listeners:

Radio confronts the serious musician of our times for the first time with the task to create works to which a possible large circle of listeners is receptive. Content and form of these radio compositions must thus be able to be of interest to a large number of people of all kinds, and also the musical means of expression must avoid any obstacles for the primitive listener.<sup>8</sup>

6 Michael Stapper, *Unterhaltungsmusik im Rundfunk der Weimarer Republik* (Tutzing, 2001), 125–29.

7 Quoted in Josef Häusler, *Spiegel der Neuen Musik. Donaueschingen. Chronik – Tendenzen – Werkbesprechungen* (Kassel, 1996), 103: ‘Die Rundfunkmusik wendet sich nicht an eine bestimmte Gesellschaftsschicht, sondern an den Menschen schlechthin – sie erfaßt auch eine Hörerschaft, in deren Leben erst durch den Rundfunk geistige und künstlerische Werte getragen werden’; all translations by the author. Cf. *ibid.* 102–7; Stapper, *Unterhaltungsmusik*, 136–43. Except for a few singular experiments, commissions from radio stations were initiated during 1928 and the results broadcast from the beginning of 1929.

8 Weill, ‘Notiz zum “Berliner Requiem”’, *Der deutsche Rundfunk*, 17.5.1929, in Weill, *Musik und musikalisches Theater*, 410: ‘Der Rundfunk stellt den ernstesten Musiker unserer Zeit zum ersten Male vor die Aufgabe, Werke zu schaffen, die ein möglichst großer Kreis von Hörern aufnehmen kann. Inhalt und Form dieser Rundfunkkompositionen müssen also imstande sein, eine große Menge von Menschen aller Kreise zu interessieren, und auch die musikalischen Ausdrucksmittel dürfen dem primitiven Hörer keine Schwierigkeiten bereiten’.

Michael Stapper, in his book on popular music in the radio during the Weimar Republic, concludes by listing a number of criteria characteristic of radio-specific musical works. These criteria are mainly a reply to technical obstacles. One is the smaller size of the ensemble, as it was very difficult to handle the sound of large orchestras. Another is the composition of the ensemble, where the *sinfonietta* became a kind of model with its solo strings and predominance of wind instruments. Often saxophones were added and the ensembles tended towards the composition of a jazz band. A third is instrumentation and compositional technique. Often musical lines are presented in a few solo instruments, or played unisono by the ensemble; contrapuntal settings of musical lines are preferred to blended chords; *pizzicato* and distinct articulation are preferred, and special attention is focused on keeping bass lines audible; shorter and clear-cut forms are used, like suites or oratorios, or like those used in popular dance music. Other features contributing to a radio style were predominant rhythmic features, 'catchiness', and the choice of texts, and last but not least: a culture of interpretation demanding for strict, *sachlich*, or objective, unsentimental modes of playing, shunning all kinds of virtuosity or romanticism.<sup>9</sup> One could argue that all these features are common features of *Neue Sachlichkeit*, and to a certain degree that is true. What does count for maintaining the category of 'radio music' is that these features are accentuated: they are *necessary* features due to a specific challenge.

How these kinds of considerations on how to arrange the score in order to provide successful broadcasts were internalized can be seen from a quite different case. In 1950, Erik Tuxen was responsible for a new edition of Carl Nielsen's Symphony No. 5. Tuxen was appointed chief conductor of the Danish State Radio Symphony Orchestra (today called the Danish National Symphony Orchestra) in 1936 and thus had considerable experience in this field. Remarkably, even with such a work, which one would suppose was sacrosanct – a major symphony by the most revered Danish composer – Tuxen made changes in the score. Some melodic lines were reinforced by adding additional instruments, phrasing and articulation were subject to changes, and even notes were changed in order to provide less blurred and less dissonant harmony. And most remarkably, Tuxen stated in an interview that these changes were made because they had proved to be appropriate for radio broadcasts and recordings: 'If Carl Nielsen is becoming world famous, it is an achievement of radio and gramophone, both of which *requires* thinning out the instrumentation'.<sup>10</sup> It is rare to find such a frank statement and a published score to go with it, but it is possible to

9 Stapper, *Unterhaltungsmusik*, ch. 4.5: 'Kriterien rundfunkeigener Musik', 158–282.

10 Erik Tuxen in William Haste: 'Carl Nielsen ominstrumenteret før festspillene i Edinburgh af komponistpræsten Leif Kayser' (Carl Nielsen re-orchestrated before the Edinburgh festival by the priest-composer Leif Kayser), *Ekstrabladet*, ??..11.1950, emphasis in original, quoted in Michael Fjeldsøe, 'Carl Nielsens 5. symfoni. Dens tilblivelse og reception i 1920'erne', *Danish Yearbook of Musicology*, 24 (1996), 51f. In the published score, Tuxen gives a different explanation and plays down the significance of the changes: '... we have made quite a number of dynamic alterations, which have proved to be suitable at performances with a modern orchestra with its great number of strings' (Remark in the full score, *Carl Nielsen. Symfoni no. 5*, Skandinavisk Musikforlag (Copenhagen, cop. 1950)).

use this to indicate that this was a common production practice by radio orchestras at least into the 1950s and to point to orchestral parts and conductors' scores in radio orchestra archives as source material for further investigation.

Let us get back to Kurt Weill. In a short article written in 1929 on the occasion of the upcoming broadcast of his piece *Berliner Requiem*, a commission from the Frankfurt Radio station, he described his way into the field of radio music.

When I, in the fall of last year, received a commission from the Frankfurt Radio station for a piece for the radio [*Berliner Requiem*], I decided to create a vocal composition of the kind that I had tried out a year earlier in the little Songspiel *Mahagonny* [1927]. We are dealing with a genre which can be performed in the form of a cantata in a concert hall, or, as well, due to the spiritual content and the clearness of its form, can be shown in a theatre. Such a form which contains both the possibilities of concert and theatrical performance would easily be equipped for the requirements of radio.<sup>11</sup>

He argues that since this piece can be performed as a concert piece, without sets or acting, it can easily be transformed into a radio play. He states that until now, 1929, he had written three pieces of this kind: *Mahagonny Songspiel*, which is the 1927 version of what was developed into the full scale 1930 opera *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*, 'the cantata *Das Berliner Requiem* and the musical tableau or radio play [he uses the German term *Hörbild*] *Der Lindberghflug* ... . Both of the latter are specifically intended for the radio'.<sup>12</sup>

What is of interest here is that he talks about these pieces as belonging to a specific genre which is related to the genre of 'music theatre turned into a concert performance', that is, the genre cantata; one step further we find the radio piece, the genre of unseen, or just-heard, cantatas. Further, it is of interest that he talks about 'the demands of the radio' and of 'radio art': a play so convincing that one does not need to see it, but can still perceive due to 'purely musical features', the scenery and the moves of the characters.<sup>13</sup>

He specifies the technical demands but regards them as obvious at this stage of his development, in 1929: One must know the acoustic demands of the studio, the possibilities of the microphone in regard to orchestra and instruments, the

11 Kurt Weill, 'Zu meiner Kantate *Das Berliner Requiem*', *Südwestdeutsche Rundfunk-Zeitung*, 1929, no. 20 (16.5.1929), in Weill, *Musik und musikalisches Theater*, 90–92, at 90f. 'Als ich im Herbst des vorigen Jahres vom Frankfurter Sender den Auftrag erhielt, ein Stück für den Rundfunk zu schreiben, da entschloß ich mich, eine Vokalkomposition in jener Art zu schaffen, wie ich sie ein Jahr vorher in dem kleinen Songspiel *Mahagonny* versucht hatte. Es handelt sich hier um eine Gattung, die im Konzertsaal in Kantatenform aufgeführt werden kann, die aber ebensogut auch durch ihren gestischen Gehalt und durch die Anschaulichkeit ihrer Form auf dem Theater darzustellen ist. Eine Form, die gleichermaßen konzertante und theatralische Möglichkeiten in sich schließt, mußte mit Leichtigkeit für die Erfordernisse des Rundfunks auszugestalten sein'. The text of this article is very similar to the article quoted above, 'Notiz zum "Berliner Requiem"'. Kurt Weill's *Berliner Requiem* had its first (and only) broadcast on the Frankfurt Radio on 22 May 1929.

12 Ibid.: 'die Kantate *Das Berliner Requiem* und das musikalische Hörbild *Der Lindberghflug* ... . Die beiden letzteren Werke sind ausdrücklich für den Rundfunk bestimmt'.

13 Ibid.

distribution of high, low, and middle voices and harmonic limits required for radio compositions.<sup>14</sup> At this point his main considerations are the listeners or audiences. The most important thing for him was to try out an art form which actually met the requirements of 'what radio of today is in need of. First of all one must consider that the audience of the radio is composed of all strata of the population. It is impossible to apply the conditions of the concert hall to radio music'.<sup>15</sup> This leads to the statement already quoted: that one has to create works that are available to as large an audience as possible, choose topics which can interest most people and find a form which will create no or few difficulties to what he describes as 'primitive listeners'.

As a radio critic, Weill was already well aware of the suitability of certain pieces for broadcast. In 1925, he commented on a concert of the German *Novembergruppe*, a Berlin group of artists associated with *Neue Sachlichkeit*.<sup>16</sup> Considering some small pieces for string quartet by Max Butting, he remarked, 'The secure mastery of the small form met the demands of the microphone'.<sup>17</sup> Also the piano pieces by Heinz Tiessen 'had passed the test of broadcasting with honours'.<sup>18</sup> As both pieces were composed as early as 1923 they were hardly conceived as 'radio music'.<sup>19</sup>

In 1926, in an article called 'The radio and the transformation of musical life', Weill was considering how this new media was about to develop into a new genre: 'A specific technique of singing and playing for the aims of radio will be developed, ... special instrumentations and compositions of orchestras for the acoustic demands of the radio studios will be invented ... there is no doubt that the grounds for an independent and equal genre are established here'.<sup>20</sup> A similar stand was found in Denmark, where Knudåge Riisager in 1928 wrote a feature on radio music, suggesting that one should take on the challenge of providing 'a *specific radio music*' along such lines: 'It might at first sound strange that a composer should write for the radio, but is there a major difference between writing for that specific means of communication, the radio, and that specific instrument, for example, the

14 Ibid. 91.

15 Ibid.: '... was der Rundfunk heute braucht. Dabei war hauptsächlich zu berücksichtigen, daß das Publikum des Rundfunks sich aus allen Schichten der Bevölkerung zusammensetzt. Es ist unmöglich, die Voraussetzungen des Konzertsaaus auch auf die Rundfunkmusik anzuwenden'.

16 Nils Grosch, *Die Musik der Neuen Sachlichkeit* (Stuttgart/Weimar, 1999), 42 ff.

17 Kurt Weill, '[Abend der Novembergruppe]', *Der deutsche Rundfunk* 3 (1925), No. 21 (24 May), 1323, in Weill: *Musik und musikalisches Theater*, 258: 'Die sichere Meisterung der kleinen Form kam den Erfordernissen des Mikrophons entgegen'.

18 Ibid.: '[Heinz Tiessens Klavierstücke op. 31] bestanden glänzend die Feuerprobe der Übertragung'.

19 This was the first broadcast of the *Novembergruppe*, which had until then organized 12 'ordinary' concerts; cf. Martin Thrun, *Neue Musik im deutschen Musikleben bis 1933* (Bonn, 1995), 606–8.

20 Kurt Weill, 'Die Rundfunk und die Umschichtung des Musiklebens', *Der deutsche Rundfunk*, 4 (1926), no. 24 (13 June), 1649–50, in Weill, *Musik und musikalisches Theater*, 312: 'Es wird sich eine besondere Technik des Singens und Spielens für Funkzwecke entwickeln, man wird ... beginnen besondere Instrumentationen und neue Orchesterkombinationen eigens für die akustischen Erfordernisse des Senderraums zu erfinden. ... es unterliegt schon jetzt keinem Zweifel mehr, daß hier die Voraussetzungen zur Entstehung einer selbständigen und ebenbürtigen Kunstgattung gegeben sind'.



piano?<sup>21</sup> At this stage, both Weill and Riisager considered the technical demands (or lack of quality) of the broadcasts and the fact that there was no interaction between musicians and audience to be the main concerns. And also in Denmark, radio or ‘mechanical’ music was often perceived as a threat to concerts with live audiences.<sup>22</sup> But another, more optimistic note is also to be seen: Weill regarded radio as a media which can reach ‘that utmost broad public which is the future audience for art’ with ‘a valuable and genuinely productive mass art.’<sup>23</sup> This was a pedagogical project targeted at the audience and meant to create a new audience able to appreciate valuable music, including contemporary music.

*Der Lindberghflug* was Weill’s most ambitious attempt to fulfil this optimistic prospect, but it was also a sobering experience which eventually made him change his strategy and abandon the idea of being able to reach ‘everyone’ through the means of radio.<sup>24</sup> Instead, Weill’s final version of this piece became his first attempt in the genre school opera or *Lehrstück*, and it was followed up by the paradigmatic ‘school opera’, *Der Jasager*, which was premiered in June 1930.

*Der Lindberghflug* was a commission for the 1929 Baden-Baden festival, which, as already mentioned, had radio music as one of its featured themes. In the call for the festival, the category of radio music was subdivided into chamber music, music for chamber orchestra, vocal music, and ‘musical radio plays’ [musikalische Hörspiele], and *Der Lindberghflug* was intended for this last category.<sup>25</sup> The text was provided by Bertolt Brecht. It is the story of the famous Charles Lindbergh who as the first pilot ever made a one-man, non-stop flight from America to Europe. In later versions of the text, Brecht changed his attitude towards Lindbergh, who in the 1930s supported pro-fascist views, but in this first version Lindbergh was presented as a hero along with the other protagonist, his airplane. Initially it was planned that

21 Knudåge Riisager, ‘Radiomusik’ (Radio music), *Radiolytteren*, 4, no. 1 (22 Sept. 1928), 1: ‘Det lyder muligt i første Øjeblik mærkeligt, at en Komponist skulde skrive for Radioen, men er der større Forskel mellem at skrive for det særlige Meddelelsesmiddel Radioen og for det særlige Instrument, f. Eks. Klaveret?’ He suggested a competition to supply such pieces, but that came to nothing. Stapper provides an appendix with quite a long list of radio music by mainly German and Austrian composers, but such an investigation regarding Danish music has not yet been performed. There are examples, though, of Danish ‘radio music’, for example a piece by Otto Mortensen, *Ouverture for Kammerorkester (Radiomusik 1934)* (Overture for chamber orchestra (Radio music 1934)).

22 See, for example, Karl Larsen, *Levende musik. Mekanisk musik* (Live Music. Mechanical Music), (Copenhagen, 1929), which reprinted a number of newspaper chronicles by Karl Larsen and added comments by Finn Høffding and Jørgen Bentzon and a foreword by Carl Nielsen, published by Dansk Tonekunstnerforening.

23 Weill, ‘Die Rundfunk und die Umschichtung des Musiklebens’, 313: ‘jener breitesten Allgemeinheit, die das Kunstpublikum der Zukunft bildet’; ‘eine hochwertige und wirklich fruchtbare Massenkunst’.

24 This is not the place to work out the differences between the strategies of Brecht and Weill; it is during this period around 1930 that they part ways. For a discussion of Brecht’s position, see, for example, Peter Groth and Manfred Voigts, ‘Die Entwicklung der Brechtschen Radiotheorie, 1927–1932’, *Brecht-Jahrbuch*, 1976, 9–46, or Dieter Wöhrle, *Bertolt Brechts medienästhetische Versuche* (Köln, 1988), esp. 45–60.

25 Grosch, *Die Musik der Neuen Sachlichkeit*, 210.

Weill would compose the music alone, but in the end Kurt Weill and Paul Hindemith each composed half of the music for this version, which was premiered on stage on 27 June 1927 and broadcast on German radio two days later.

Already prior to the premiere, Weill found Hindemith's contribution 'superficial' and 'too tame for Brecht's texts' and thus he decided to present his own full version.<sup>26</sup> This second version of the piece was presented to the public at a concert in Berlin on 5 December 1929. In the process of composing this second version, Weill made it *less* a piece of specific radio music. Working over already composed numbers as well as composing the remaining parts, he removed some of the most 'radio-specific' features of instrumentation by enlarging the ensemble and giving the sound a more symphonic touch by removing the banjo and the saxophone and giving the strings a more prominent role.<sup>27</sup> This makes it a textbook case for identifying how Weill rearranged a specific sample of 'radio music' into a piece intended for other purposes, first as a concert cantata, then as a school opera for pupils.

In the second version, it was a piece intended for concert performances. He wrote to his publisher that it was 'a distinct concert piece' and that he was convinced that it would be performed by a large number of orchestras in Germany and abroad, but at the same time he stressed that he was keen on bringing this piece into the schools as well.<sup>28</sup> At this moment, though, this was more of a declaration of intent than a fact. What he presented in Berlin was a fully professional concert performance at the Berlin Kroll Opera House conducted by Otto Klemperer. Still, his text for the programme leaflet is revealing because it presents his (and Brecht's) new line of thought, promoting the idea of providing *Lehrstück* school operas, that is, didactical plays for pupils, intended to be performed in a group for the sake of educating the group members rather than being delivered to an audience. Thus, the concert version is a momentary form for a certain purpose, open for further adaptations. It is worth noting that he at this point talks of the radio play as a former version:

*Der Lindberghflug* by Brecht, which in a former version was composed as a radio play [Rundfunk-Hörspiel], is here present in a musical version which ultimately is intended for performances in schools. In that case the part of Lindbergh must be sung by several boys simultaneously in order to avoid the appearance of a single Lindbergh-performer's personal attitude ... The play in this form is, regarding the music, deliberately designed so simple that the music with sufficient time can be rehearsed by pupils. For this reason, the orchestra, too, is composed in a way which makes it possible to re-

26 Letter from Weill to Hans Curjel, 2.8.1929, quoted in David Farneth (ed.), *Kurt Weill. A Life in Pictures and Documents* (New York, 2000), 95: 'Hindemith's work on Lindberghflug and on the [Hindemith] Lehrstück was of a superficiality that will be hard to beat. It has clearly been proven that his music is too tame for Brecht's texts. What's amazing is that the press has discovered this as well, and they now present me as the shining example of how Brecht should be composed'. His decision to compose the full version was made already in the beginning of June, cf. letter to his publisher, 4.6.1929, in Kurt Weill, *Briefwechsel mit der Universal Edition*, ed. Nils Grosch (Stuttgart/Weimar, 2002), 168.

27 Grosch, *Die Musik der Neuen Sachlichkeit*, 212.

28 Weill, *Briefwechsel mit der Universal Edition*, 205.

arrange it according to the possibilities of a school orchestra. The concert hall is turned ... into a sort of showroom. Thus shall for example *Der Lindberghflug* be 'exhibited', that is: the performance shall prepare for that other application where the piece is no longer presented to an audience but instead is satisfying its practical didactic aim.<sup>29</sup>

Although signed by Weill, this statement resounds with the diction of Brecht. This is, in fact, the point where Weill and Brecht part, at least regarding *Der Lindberghflug*. Brecht reworked the text several times, stressing the *Lehrstück* features, first as *Der Flug des Lindberghs*, referring to the 'collectivization' and typification of the part of Lindbergh mentioned by Weill, and later in a version called *Der Ozeanflug*. Weill, however, did not compose any of these later texts, nor did he publish any arrangements for school orchestra.

Instead one must regard the next Brecht-Weill piece, the school opera *Der Jäsager*, composed in the spring of 1930, as a piece working out those intended simplifications. *Der Jäsager* is in fact drawn up in a way, which can be handled by musically trained pupils and a school orchestra, and, contrary to *Der Lindberghflug*, it was used for a large number of amateur performances, also in Denmark.<sup>30</sup> But still, the use for radio broadcasts was not ruled out. Actually, it should be noted, *Der Jäsager* was premiered as a live broadcast on 23 June 1930 and given its first stage premiere the next day.<sup>31</sup>

In a radio broadcast discussion on school operas in the spring of 1930, Weill reflected on the reasons for turning towards school opera, and it is remarkable that a major argument was his loss of faith in radio music. He no longer considered it possible to reach and, which is the crucial point, to influence such a large and diverse radio audience:

Exactly because the school is composed by different elements, circles and talents, which are compelled to influence each other, schools are in a more advantageous position. It is difficult but it is indeed worth engaging such a pool of maturing attitudes and positions at a meeting point, and while they are still developing. This is why, when I was listing different possibilities for dissemination of music, I left out the radio. Because in the radio you are approaching an anonymous community of adults from highly

29 Kurt Weill, 'Notiz zum *Lindberghflug*', programme note for the concert 5.12.1929, in Weill, *Musik und musikalisches Theater*, 100–1: 'Der *Lindberghflug* von Brecht, die in einer früheren Fassung als Rundfunk-Hörspiel komponiert worden war, liegt hier in einer musikalischen Fassung vor, die in ihrem Endzweck für Aufführungen in Schulen gedacht ist. Dabei soll der Part des Lindbergh von mehreren Knaben gleichzeitig gesungen werden, um die private Haltung eines einzelnen Lindberghdarstellers auszuschalten. ... Die musikalische Anlage des Stückes, wie sie jetzt vorliegt, ist aber mit voller Absicht so einfach gehalten, daß die Musik bei genügend Studierzeit von Schülern gelernt werden kann. Auch das Orchester ist aus diesem Grunde so besetzt, daß es den Besetzungsmöglichkeiten eines Schülerorchesters entsprechend arrangiert werden kann. Der Konzertsaal wird ... zu einer Art von Ausstellungsraum ... So soll zum Beispiel der *Lindberghflug* durch die Konzertaufführung gewissermaßen "ausgestellt" werden, d.h. die Aufführung soll jene andere Verwertung vorbereiten, in der das Stück nicht mehr einem Publikum dargeboten wird, sondern in der es seinen praktischen pädagogischen Zweck erfüllt.'

30 Fjeldsøe, *Kulturradikalismens musik*, 564–72.

31 Farneth (ed.), *Kurt Weill. A Life in Pictures and Documents*, III.

different circles, to which there is hardly anything to be done. ... There is no point of connection there and development is no longer possible.<sup>32</sup>

It is this disappointment, following the high hopes for radio just one or two years earlier, that gives Weill's (and Brecht's) efforts to influence an audience a new direction. But this should not lead to the conclusion that the idea of providing specific radio music had no consequences.

What seemed to be the beginning of a new genre eventually dissolved into other genres defined not by the media, radio. But still, the awareness of the technical difficulties and the urge to overcome such problems in order to be able to communicate to a large audience point to the dialectics of production practices within the radio and the work of composers. It is interesting to note that Knudåge Riisager pointed to the production practice of gramophone recordings, when he was looking for a model for specific radio music – it was common practice in 1928 to rearrange musical scores in order to provide good recordings. One must adapt the technology to the music, he stated, or, if that is not possible

one must in similar ways as it is the case with gramophone recordings, rearrange and adapt existing scores for the specific purpose of radio broadcast. I am aware that it will be considered heresy to interfere here but on second thoughts one might admit that on the contrary it is suggested to find an adequate representation which exactly covers the original idea.<sup>33</sup>

It is revealing that such practices were still considered acceptable in 1950 when Erik Tuxen commented on his new edition of the Nielsen symphony. Thus, it seems that the concept of radio music does have relevance, not just as a genre that did not really succeed; to music radio research it might be more significant to consider it a concept that provides *criteria* for compositions meant for radio broadcast and thus points to the field in which the production practice and the work of the composer are mediated.

32 'Aktuelles Zwiegespräch über die Schuloper zwischen Kurt Weill und Dr. Hans Fischer' (Apr. 1930), in Weill, *Musik und musikalisches Theater*, 447–54, at 449f.: 'Gerade weil die Schule aus verschiedenen Elementen, Kreisen und Begabungen zusammengesetzt ist, die gezwungen sind, aufeinander einzuwirken, hat sie die größten Vorteile. Es ist schwer, aber sehr lohnend, eine solche Vielheit der allmählich ausreifenden Meinungen und Ansichten im Schnittpunkt und noch in der Entwicklung zu treffen. Deshalb nannte ich vorhin, als ich die verschiedenen Möglichkeiten zur Verbreitung der Musik aufzählte, nicht den Rundfunk. Denn im Rundfunk ist eine anonyme Gemeinschaft von Erwachsenen aus verschiedensten Kreisen vorhanden, mit der wenig anzufangen ist. ... Da ist kein Schnittpunkt mehr vorhanden und keine Entwicklung mehr möglich.'

33 Riisager, 'Radiomusik': '... eller ogsaa maa man paa lignende Vis, som Tilfældet er med Hensyn til Grammofonindspilningerne, instrumentere og tilrettelægge den bestaaende Litteratur for det specielle Radioformaal. Jeg ved godt, at det vil blive betragtet som Helligbrøde at gribe ind her, men ved nærmere Eftertanke vil det dog sikkert indrømmes, at der tværtimod er Tale om at finde en Gengivelsesform, der netop dækker den oprindelige Tanke'. Cf. Mark Katz' argument that also early jazz recordings adapted to the limitations of recording technology and required bands to alter their instrumentation and playing styles. As records became the main source for disseminating jazz, these adapted versions came to define how jazz was expected to sound; Mark Katz, *Capturing sound. How technology has changed music* (Berkeley/Los Angeles, 2004), 81–84.

## SUMMARY

In the late 1920s, young composers and musicians turned towards new fields of activity and new media in order to reach a larger audience. In Germany, this effort was part of the movement of *Neue Sachlichkeit*, and for a short period of time *Radiomusik* was considered the ideal means for a democratic, educational and didactic effort which would enlighten all of society. For a while it seemed that radio music was considered a genre of its own. To fulfil its function, radio music had to consider technical limitations as well as the educational level and listening modes of the new mass audience. Public radio, as discussed by Kurt Weill and Paul Hindemith, was at first greeted with great expectations, but soon a more realistic attitude prevailed. Weill, himself a radio critic as well, composed *Der Lindberghflug* (1929) as a piece of 'radio music theatre', but then changed some of its features in order to turn it into a didactical play for amateurs, a so-called *Lehrstück*. The article presents the concept of 'radio music' developed within German *Neue Sachlichkeit* and discusses the relevance of such a concept for current research in the field of radio and music.

# Radio Within and Across Borders

*Music as national and international in interbellum*

*Danish radio*

MORTEN MICHELSEN

Between the two world wars radio landed like a UFO in the midst of cultures more or less nationally defined all over the world.<sup>1</sup> The beginnings were quite humble, but as the new medium caught on after 1925 it grew with an almost feverish speed. Radio came about mainly due to private initiative, but from 1922 onwards still more European countries defined radio as state monopolies (France and Spain being exceptions) and channelled huge sums into the new broadcasting corporations in order to develop the medium. By the mid-30s national broadcasting corporations had become the all-powerful cultural institutions in their countries.

In Europe this UFO landed in a large number of countries, many of which were only a couple of years old.<sup>2</sup> One of the important driving forces behind the Great War had been nationalism, and the peace treaties did not really alter that, even though the political context had changed a lot, especially in the Eastern parts of Europe. On the other hand, international cooperation grew immensely in the wake of the war. Internationalism was important to the workers' movements, and at the Paris peace negotiations US president Woodrow Wilson argued for establishing the League of Nations (1919–1946) to prevent future wars.

Radio became part of these struggles, mainly supporting the nation-building forces, but also engaging in European collaboration through the IBU (International Broadcasting Union, 1925) following the lead of the League of Nations. In the following I will discuss some aspects of interbellum radio's double nature with regard to supporting nationalizing and internationalizing tendencies and how music and the principle of transmission contributed to this. It seems that radio could easily support the heightened sensitivity to both nation- and continent-building and, by presenting 'the other' acoustically, make the world a little less strange. My comments are based on an analysis of the Danish Broadcasting Corporation's (DR) daily radio programmes, especially the ones from the first week of November 1925–40, and other contemporary written sources.<sup>3</sup>

1 This article is a revised version of a paper delivered at the LARM conference 'Digital Archives, Audiovisual Media and Cultural Memory', University of Copenhagen, 14–15 November 2013.

2 Ireland (1919), Finland (1917), Estonia (1918), Lithuania (1918), Latvia (1918), Poland (1918), Hungary (1918), Czechoslovakia (1918), Yugoslavia (1918), Austria (1918) became individual nation states, while Denmark regained parts of Southern Jutland (lost to Germany in 1864).

3 Recently, the research infrastructure of LARM made it possible to access detailed information on all DR radio programmes since its first broadcasts. Surviving recordings of programmes have become available to students and researchers as well. This only amounts to approximately 150 recordings for the period in question, though (see <http://larm.sites.ku.dk/>).

There was an abundance of discourses linking music and nationality or music and universality, and they were propagated in various radio programmes. Such contextualisation often marked music as national or international, and if you look at programming in general, there is no doubt that the DR applied both discourses. Series of programmes celebrating the nation's great musical and literary sons and the playing of the national anthem at the end of each day were two obvious examples supporting the national perspective, while the many music transmissions from other countries supported the international perspective. In between was a large grey area where questions of national belonging could be answered in different ways according to circumstance. For example, does the large repertoire by Austro-German composers led by Johann Strauss Jr. indicate an internationalising tendency? The answer to this question is probably yes, as it mirrors the centre-periphery structure of musical life which developed in the nineteenth century and was accepted by most European countries. But this is a general convention; it does not apply to radio in particular. On the other hand, radio saw to it that this convention became more widely known. Dreaming of a blue, musicalized (and maybe slightly exoticized) Danube became possible for most Danes during the 1930s. If listeners knew this waltz – and they probably did, because 'An der schönen, blauen Donau' was played at least once every fortnight on average in the years 1930–1935 – we may presume that they had been introduced to it several times and, thus, that they at least knew the title and maybe stories about waltzing, Vienna, the river, or the Strausses.

From the other side of the national fence we may question whether anyone would have recognized Danish Strauss sound-alike Hans Christian Lumbye's music as Danish if they were not already familiar with it. Lumbye's music is primarily a part of the great European tradition for what DR labelled 'old dance music'. But then again, Lumbye was one of the most popular composers on Danish radio; one of his works was played at least once every three days in the same five-year period. Thus, most listeners would have been aware that Lumbye was Danish and able to make the connection between Lumbye's music and Danishness, even if the music did not in any way support such associations.

The main point here is that radio in a broad sense created new, different, and more communicatively effective types of contexts for stressing and understanding more music than ever before in national and/or international perspectives/frames. I am thinking of verbal explanations on the air, the pontificating style of address, written explanations and pictures in print (dailies and radio magazines), the staging of the medium as world-encompassing, and the ability to transmit in real time from specific places, be they within or outside of Danish borders. All this contributed to the contextualisation. The last example, transmission, points towards a main media specificity of radio: its ability to relay.

Heikki Uimonen has developed the concept of transphonia as the positive equivalent of R. Murray Schaefer's concept of schizophonia. Both concepts address the division of sound from its source, and transphonia refers more specifically to the 'mechanically and electroacoustically relocated sounds' that emphasize 'how sounds

are being used individually and communally?<sup>4</sup> Different versions of the phonograph became the first medium for such mechanical relocations, and the telephone could transport sounds from one place to another in real time. Radio took all of this to another level by combining the two and by doing so with no strings attached, so to speak, from a single place to many places simultaneously. In time, radio also performed such transphonia at a low price.

In radio's early years the 'trans' of transphonia became concretized in transmissions, first from point to point, then from point to many points (the idea of broadcasting). Indeed this became the great marvel of radio: through the air it transmitted live sounds made by someone in one place to someone in another place. As radio developed and the signal chain became more complex, point-to-points transmissions were joined by point-to-point-to-points transmissions. That is, the popular meaning of the term transmission changed from transmission from the studio to listeners to transmission from events like football matches, concerts, or bridge openings attended by the royal family and the cabinet *via* the radio to the listeners. This notion and practice of transmission became an important means for nation-building and for opening up towards the rest of the world (mainly Europe, but also faraway places like Australia or the US).

I would argue that despite being placed at specific locations the radio studio was not localized in an actual or genuine sense. It was an abstract place, the place of ether and radio waves from where named voices without bodies sounded. Transmission, on the other hand, became a mediation of a concrete place inhabited by concrete people. Even if hardly any listeners had actually been there, the point of a transmission was to mediate for example a specific evening in a specific restaurant with Kai Ewans and his orchestra. Via the radio system you listened in on what was happening somewhere in the world. Transmission made places and spaces meaningful. The radio cliché 'and now back to the studio' illustrates the movement from existing places and people to the abstract space of radio.

Paradoxically, radio and transmissions both established and transcended distance, often at the same time. Geographically, the paradox could be experienced in (re)transmissions from the US, which came from far away, but could nevertheless be heard in your living room. Socially, the paradox could be experienced when the king or the prime minister would speak to you in the privacy of your living room. In both cases you could hear many of the details of the sound production, perhaps even more than if you had been present in the room with the speaker. The experiential schema for sound and distance broke down; or rather it was complemented by a completely different electro-acoustic sound schema.

4 Heikki Uimonen, 'Senses and Soundscapes' (PowerPoint presentation), [https://noppa.aalto.fi/noppa/kurssi/01247/materiaali/01247\\_senses\\_and\\_soundscapes.pdf](https://noppa.aalto.fi/noppa/kurssi/01247/materiaali/01247_senses_and_soundscapes.pdf), accessed on 10 Nov. 2013, p. 34. R. Murray Schafer, *The New Soundscape: A Handbook for the Modern Music Teacher* (Ontario: Don Mills, 1969).



## RADIO'S STRUCTURING OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SPACES

At a national level radio defined centre and periphery along the lines of capital versus province. Such structuring was hardly new, but as the number of listeners grew it became much more effective than any previous efforts at creating a national and hierarchical, imagined community. Until 1928 Copenhagen was at the absolute centre of radiophonic space. Dialect, musicalized time signals, and general discourse in news and cultural programmes stressed that. After 1928 it became easier to transmit from the province, as a net of local radio studios was built all over the country and the number of music transmissions from the province increased. Having been granted radiophonic existence the province also got a voice, although a small one. The net of studios and transmissions together with the playing of the national anthem each night, the radiophonic and -genic construction of a canon of great Danish musical and literary artists, and finally the proximity of the voices of king and cabinet ('the state') were among the main building blocks in the renewed branding of the Danish nation.

At an international level (mainly Europe) the emerging radio structures did not adhere to the centre-periphery principle, but to a network principle. The IBU was established in 1925 and soon saw it as its main job to coordinate the construction of a European radio infrastructure.<sup>5</sup> Contrary to nation-building this 'continent-building' was new and followed in the footsteps of the League of Nations, which had been founded in 1919. It was based on technological coordination and distribution (e.g. transmitting frequencies) and the ideology of the peaceful modern man.<sup>6</sup> In this sense Europe became ordered geographically according to frequency. In addition, having a national radio station was important to the new post-war countries in Europe. Like the older countries they got an ether voice and could partake in the democracy of the air.

The ordering became visualized on the radio dial. It could be round (Europe as a globe) or a horizontal line (Europe as a scale). Well-known cities were lined up on the dial together with rather obscure places (e.g. Königs Wusterhausen, Kalundborg, Monte Ceneri), which thus became new European geographical points of reference. Also, in local news-related radio programmes (news, weather, shipping, market) the strangest places might be mentioned (e.g. Utsira), and on the short wave band you could pick up foreign languages you had never heard before. Such orderings were accidental, but via transmissions the national radio stations could also transport you to well-known places (the US or Australia), demonstrating that the world was becoming still smaller and that people actually existed 'out there'.

In the early years the radio medium as such was considered international. Using crystal sets young men roamed the airwaves searching for signs of life. 1920s-radio

5 Andreas Fickers and Suzanne Lommers, 'Eventing Europe: Broadcasting and the Mediated Performances of Europe', in Alexander Badenoch and Andreas Fickers (eds.), *Materializing Europe: Transnational Infrastructures and the Project of Europe* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 314.

6 Suzanne Lommers, *Europe – On Air. Interwar Projects for Radio Broadcasting* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012), 84–85.

amateurs were thrilled if they could find a clear signal, and written documentation of contact was an important trophy. In *Radiolytteren's* mast head the listener listened to two worlds (the West and the East), and the Blaupunkt advertisement below stresses the notion of world-embracing radio waves and radio products emanating from one point (see Ill. 1).



Ill. 1. The front page of Danish radio magazine, *Radiolytteren* (The Radio Listener), 15 Sept. 1928. Notice also the male listening to the world in the logo.

RADIO PRACTICES DELIMITING AND TRANSCENDING BORDERS

Throughout the interbellum period the IBU organized series of concerts produced by one member station and transmitted to the others (*Nuits Nationales* 1926–31, *Concerts Européens* 1931–39).<sup>7</sup> The logistics of the technological aspect of these transmissions was extremely complex, and the concerts became major tests of practical European cooperation. They also contributed to the mapping by giving specific places within Europe a sound and/or a music. The IBU transmissions were quite spectacular, but more simple binational transmissions took place almost on a weekly basis. Acoustically Berlin, Stockholm, and London became well-known places, and through retransmissions via the BBC even North American radio stations reached Danish homes.

From the point of view of Danish radio programming it was a fact that international musicians were better than the Danish. Special concerts became special because of foreign performers. For example, Martin Granau has documented how the conductors Nicolai Malko, Fritz Busch, and Egisto Tango supplanted local conductors at more prestigious concerts.<sup>8</sup> Such performers demonstrated that Denmark (i.e. the national radio) was part of an international circuit of musical stars, and by being part of international concert life Denmark earned its place among its peers – the other European countries.

As indicated in connection with the remarks on Strauss and Lumbye above it is hard to decide whether or not music has national marks. Questions of context and reception are more important than nationally defined styles or composers' and performers' national backgrounds. This is also true of the interbellum years, but it does not reflect how the radio programmers thought about music. To them music reflected nationality to a very high degree (even though it might be universal as well), as can be gathered from the numerous Italian, French, German, and Danish nights. From this point of view it makes sense to point out that the majority of the music played on the radio was not Danish. Danish music was used, among other things, to stress national pride, and the international repertoire complemented this by stressing Denmark's place in a larger community.

Language was, of course, the most important indicator of nationality. But this was complemented by the frequent broadcasting of foreign tongues, mainly German, English, and French. Early on language tuition became a main stay in Danish radio. Most days there would be tutorials around dinner time. What is more surprising to a contemporary listener is that in the early years you could even find full 20–30-minute lectures in the language in question.

Radio magazines and newspapers also contributed to radio's international dimension by publishing the programme schedules of several European radio stations throughout the period. This contributed to the feeling that you could entertain the whole of Europe in your living room, if you wanted to. It is difficult to say how

7 Fickers & Lommers, 'Eventing Europe', 309–24.

8 Martin Granau, *Holms vision. Radiosymfoniorkestret 75 år* (Copenhagen: DR, 2000), 71–137.

many actually listened to foreign radio stations and whether the double-spread articles of *Radiolytteren* with pictures of the buildings and announcers of foreign radio stations were intended for existing or future listeners.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, receiving radio signals from faraway places confirmed their existence in other ways than written reports could do, as you could actually hear them speak in their own tongue.

Internationalism came just as naturally to Danish radio producers as did nationalism. I have mentioned radio's contribution to the Danish infrastructure. Apart from that, DR carried on the musical nationalism of the nineteenth century and pointed to the discursively constructed national music heritage, which included symphonies by Gade, Hartmann, and Nielsen and art songs with Danish lyrics (especially Lange-Müller). Such music was played in programmes that combined literature and music, using the affective aspects of music and the semantic aspects of literature to create an effective message concerning the nation's great sons.

More popular music traditions took up broadcasting time as well. Popular songs from the folk high school tradition (a word not used by the radio) were quite frequent, while popular music with lyrics from the North American tradition did not emerge until the 1930s. Folk music, the radio's term for small instrumental bands performing traditional dance music repertoire, could be heard as well.

Daily transmissions (sometimes even twice a day) from a relatively small number of Danish restaurants contributed to a sense of everyday Danishness not based on the 'nation's best', but on popular culture. Danish conductors and their bands played one to two-hour shows, at first only from Copenhagen, but soon restaurants in provincial towns also became involved. Transmissions from other music localities (i.e. the music conservatory in Aarhus, the regional symphony orchestras, the Copenhagen music societies) also appeared, creating general knowledge about what was going on in bourgeois music circles.

Music was also used to mark the passing of radio time. The national anthem closed each day, while the Copenhagen Town Hall carillon marked when the clock had struck noon, six pm and midnight.<sup>10</sup> The pause signal, the first station indicator (the jingle), appeared in 1931. The signal was the allegedly oldest notated Danish melody: 'Drømte mig en drøm' ('I had a dream').<sup>11</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

Through its programming practices the Danish national radio sometimes stressed the national, sometimes the international. It was not a question of either or. Both discourses made sense, maybe even at the same time. I have pointed to a few central programme activities to support the claim that radio music (and other) contributed extensively to a heightened sensibility towards the national and the international.

9 One example is 'Stationer vi hører I: Berlin-Zeesen', *Radiolytteren*, 3 (1931), 24–25.

10 The carillon played a watchman's song pastiche composed by P.E. Lange-Müller (cf. <http://www.kb.dk/da/nb/tema/fokus/raadhus.html>, accessed on 3 Dec. 2013).

11 Torben Sangild, 'Jingler – radioens lydige indpakning', *Seismograf/DMT* (special issue on radio), 2013, <http://seismograf.org/artikel/jingler-radioens-lydige-indpakning>, accessed on 20 Oct. 2014.

I have also argued that a specific radio format, the transmission, was an important reason for this heightened intensity.

Like the Internet today, interbellum radio made it possible to listen to immense amounts of music, but unlike the Internet it became contextualised – not necessarily explained in detail, but at least framed by the programme flow, institution, presenter, and newspaper publicity. Radio helped people (i.e. license holders) make sense of a world which many considered to be modern. The apparatus was welcomed into the home as entertainment, as newsagent, as teacher. Furthermore, radio helped listeners take part in public life, or rather to follow its development, and radio presented ‘the other’ within the nation state, taking on many different forms: other provinces or completely different cultures. In this way certain genres of music and radio in general helped build the imagined community of the nation and, at the same time, to view this community as part of something even larger.

#### SUMMARY

Politically, Europe was dominated by both renewed national movements and tendencies towards internationalism in the decades following World War I. As a new and strong medium, radio became a tool for supporting nation-building in individual countries and for developing international relations, for example through the International Broadcasting Union (IBU). In this article I look at this apparent paradox by investigating a few aspects of the Danish music repertoire and the principles for radio transmission. I demonstrate how the Danish Broadcasting Corporation (DR) practised both principles in their programming without seeing it as a problem in any way. The enormous amount of music, which radio made it possible to listen to, contributed to this – not least because the music always became more or less contextualized thanks to radio’s many metatexts. In this way music in early radio contributed to a certain understanding of the modern, the ‘other’, and the new, making them less strange. At the same time radio articulated a well-known, ‘homely’ music background as the basis for understanding the new.

# Sounds and Voices from the Past

## *Using archive material in radio music shows*

MIKKEL VAD

This article is written from two points of view, as I am a musicologist who also happens to work as a radio presenter.<sup>1</sup> Naturally, radio presenters are notoriously preoccupied with what they say on air, just as scholars are notoriously preoccupied with critical investigations into discourses of music. In this article I hope to use this degree of self-awareness and critical thinking in a positive way and to combine these two points of view to reflect on my work at the Danish Broadcasting Corporation (DR). I will focus on the two shows I produced on DR's two music genre channels P2 (which is the station for classical music) and P8 Jazz. Both shows make extensive use of archive material and this article will analyse how music and, more particularly, archive material with music and musicians are presented on radio. As such, I wish to investigate how the imagined value of archive material is connected to the values of the music presented.

Basically, both of these shows are concerned with moving recordings from what Aleida Assmann calls storage memory to functional memory.<sup>2</sup> The realm of storage memory is 'uninhabited memory', which is disembodied from time, and which has lost its living relevance to the present. These are the unheard sounds on the recordings – 'memories of past memories' that exist like an 'amorphous mass'. Functional memory, on the other hand, is 'inhabited memory'. It builds bridges between the past and the present by investing memory with cultural meaning and relevance. This is music of the past that flows from the loudspeakers and is reinterpreted by the listeners in the present. Assmann describes these two types of memory:

On the cultural level, storage memory contains what is unusable, obsolete, or dated; it has no vital ties to the present and no bearing on identity formation. We may also say that it holds in store a repertoire of missed opportunities, alternative options, and unused material. Functional memory, on the other hand, consists of vital recollections that emerge from a process of selection, connection, and meaningful configuration ... . In functional memory, unstructured, unconnected fragments are invested with perspective and relevance; they enter into connections, configurations of *meaning* – a quality that is totally absent from storage memory.<sup>3</sup>

1 This article is a revised version of a paper delivered at the LARM conference 'Digital Archives, Audiovisual Media and Cultural Memory', University of Copenhagen, 14–15 November 2013. Mikkel Vad was employed as a radio presenter at the Danish Broadcasting Corporation until 2014.

2 Aleida Assmann, *Cultural memory and Western civilization, functions, media, archives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 119–34.

3 Ibid. 127; Assmann's italics.

Storage memory, however, does not represent a contrast to functional memory. In fact, the strength of this theoretical duality is that it not only allows us to identify the contents of the different areas of memory, but also to track the processes in which storage memory crosses over and becomes functional memory. In Assmann's words, these are not two dimensions of a binary opposition, but should be conceived of as 'creating a perspective, separating a visible foreground from an invisible background'.<sup>4</sup>

The two radio shows analysed in the present article are examples of how the dynamic relationship between functional memory and storage memory is performed, as it were, by the radio presenter. The two shows are highly aware of and rely on the archive material's position as cultural memory. Thus, the presentation on the shows constitutes a performance of historical consciousness, where the most important role of the radio host is to frame the archive material in a time space. In other words, the goal of the presentation is to create a perspective in which the relationship between the foreground of functional memory and the background of storage memory is heard.

However, the two shows use somewhat different strategies to highlight or eliminate the historicity of the recordings they present. In the following these different ways of presenting archive material in music shows will be analysed in order to show how memory is performed.

#### THE 'P2 GOLD CONCERT'

*P2 Guldkoncerten*, literally the 'P2 Gold Concert', presents and broadcasts historical concert recordings. These recordings may come from the archives of DR or the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) or from commercially released concert recordings. The 'P2 Gold Concert' is broadcast once a week as part of continuing daily series of concerts on the classical station P2 (*P2 Koncerten* or the 'P2 Concert'). However, while a typical show will include a live transmission or recently recorded concert (often produced 'quasi-live' or live-to-tape, i.e. presented as if it were live), the 'P2 Gold Concert' always constitutes a historical recording.<sup>5</sup> The fact that the concerts are from the archive and not contemporary, let alone live, is of course the premise of the show. This is also made clear in the presentation which stresses the

- 4 Ibid. 126. Here I should also mention that while Assmann may be correct in arguing that the dual structure of functional memory and storage memory is only thinkable if it uses writing, I will for the purpose of this article view the recording as a form of text or, perhaps more correctly, as a 'script', cf. Nicolas Cook, 'Music as Performance', in Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert, and Richard Middleton (eds.), *The Cultural Study of Music* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 184–94.
- 5 Although interesting, the problem of determining when a recording becomes 'historical' is beyond the scope of the present article. It will suffice to remark that discussions among editors and presenters on the issue have not arrived at a conclusion, but there is nevertheless a practice of excluding recordings which are less than ten years old, as they are regarded as non-historical, so to speak. To avoid confusion I will refer to these so-called 'historical' concerts as 'archive concerts' for the remainder of this article.

historical importance and context of the concert and its performers. However, in the presentation we also find elements that are usually reserved for live transmissions. Before we return to this point, we must therefore briefly consider an important aspect of P2 concert presentations: the so-called ‘ringside presentation’.

In the working editorial concept description of the P2 Concert used by the editors and the presenters it is continually stated that ‘focus is on the unique character of the live concert ...’.<sup>6</sup> It is important to note that emphasis is firstly on the concert and only secondly on the works and their historical context. The most important element in achieving this goal is the ‘ringside presentation’, where the radio presenter is situated in the concert hall and, much like a sports commentator, ‘conveys the particular concert’s special energy and intensity. ... The presentation is characterized by the particular host’s personal style and by improvisation based on the mood of the moment and the specific events that characterize each concert’.<sup>7</sup> While this concept is developed mainly to describe the presentation of live concerts, it is nowhere stated that the ‘P2 Gold Concert’ is not subject to these guidelines. In reality there are some obvious differences, seeing as the ‘P2 Gold Concert’ is not live and the presenter is not present in the concert hall. On the other hand, though, aspects of the ‘ringside presentation’ can be found in the presentation of archive concerts (and in many ways these recordings are no different from when we are ‘quasi-live’, i.e. record a concert and presentation live-to-tape, or broadcast a concert from a venue abroad, where the Danish host presents the show from a studio in Copenhagen with an incoming transmission link).

Most importantly, the *liveness* of each concert can be evoked in the presentation of the concert. As Phillip Auslander has suggested,<sup>8</sup> Walter Benjamin’s notion of mass desire for proximity and its alliance with reproduced objects is useful in understanding the interrelationship between the live and the mediatized. Paraphrasing Auslander I will say that with our radios turned on we are trying to achieve the kind of aural intimacy that can be obtained only from the reproduction of sound. The kind of proximity and intimacy we can experience through the radio, and which has become a model for close-up perception, but which is traditionally absent from these performances, can be reintroduced only by means of their audio reproduction in the radio.<sup>9</sup>

One of the most obvious ways of indicating liveness is for the presenter to change from the past to the present tense. In the following example my colleague, Mathias Hammer, does so within a single speak leading up to a concert recording of Sviatoslav Richter:

And then he entered the stage. Slowly, treading with an introvert gaze and a concentration so powerful that the world could tumble down around him without him noticing.

6 Esben Tange (ed.), ‘Koncept P2 Koncerten 2013’, (unpublished editorial guidelines; Copenhagen: DR, 2013), 2; my translation.

7 Ibid. 1–2; my translation.

8 Philip Auslander, *Liveness, performance in a mediatized culture* (London: Routledge, 2008), 37–40.

9 Ibid. 39.



He sits down. He takes a deep breath and begins, in the most difficult manner, with a sonata by Haydn, so transparent and light-footed that it will fall completely apart if one does not keep the hands steady.<sup>10</sup>

We are not only presented with a historical, canonical recording; we are encouraged to witness a live performance. That is not to say that the listener is made to believe that he or she is actually listening to a live broadcast, but it is evident that the simple shift from the past to the present tense in this commenting is a way of changing the perspective of the listener. By presenting the music like this the presenter is moving Richter's performance from stored to functional memory. It is no longer only a shadow of a past performance; it has become a palimpsest, where the aesthetic values of the live performance are reinvested into the recording.

It is also telling that Hammer uses our general knowledge of Richter as a performer to create a picture of his entry onto the stage. Hammer has no way of knowing how Richter in fact entered the stage on that particular day, but he nevertheless constructs a small narrative to create a sense of iconic presence and embodiment. This is made possible by the recording, but this at the same time feeds into a discourse of liveness where technology may be considered the antithesis of an experience of autonomous art.<sup>11</sup>

Much the same can be said of the next example, which is one of my own speaks. It follows a performance of Verdi's *Requiem*. You will notice that I have some slips in this speak, where I accidentally refer to the concert as a past event (ironically this is due to the fact that I improvised this speak in order to achieve a greater sense of liveness than would have been possible from a written manuscript). However, my overall aim here was to convey a sense of presence and almost give the listener the impression that he or she is listening to a live broadcast:

A roaring applause to the National Symphony Orchestra and Choir under the direction of Lamberto Gardelli. And not least to the four soloists: Sylvia Sass, soprano; Julia Hamari, alto; Peter Lindroos, tenor; and Yevgeny Nesterenko, who sang the bass part. The air is electric, the atmosphere ecstatic. The music in Verdi's *Requiem* has filled the old hall in the Radio Hall on Frederiksberg. And the audience, they love Lindroos, the Finno-Swedish tenor, who was almost considered a Dane, because of his successful roles at the Royal Theatre. Lamberto Gardelli, the experienced opera conductor, who also has a Danish connection. He was married to a Danish singer. At rehearsals he communicates in half-Italian, half-Danish to the orchestra. At the concert here, he of course hasn't said a word. He has been standing on the podium and has led singers and musicians safely through Verdi's *Requiem*. Outside, the December frost is biting, but inside the hall the warmth flows towards the stage. An enormous applause fills the Radio Hall, here on the 19th of December 1979.<sup>12</sup>

10 Mathias Hammer presents the P2 Gold Concert, *DR P2* (DR, 05.12.2013); my transcription and translation.

11 This is my paraphrase of Tony Whyton, although he is concerned with jazz: Tony Whyton, *Jazz Icons, Heroes, Myths and the Jazz Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 42.

12 Mikkel Vad presents the P2 Gold Concert, *DR P2* (DR, 10.06.2013); my transcription and translation.

Here I in fact did have eyewitness accounts that informed some of the things I said. I could have interviewed those people to tape and let them appear in the show, but instead I used the information they gave me to create a presentation that was similar to true ringside presentations. Furthermore, some of the things I said were guesswork and assumptions, at best, and other things were made up: all for the sake of adding a sense of liveness to the recording.

By using a presentation form that emphasises the liveness of the concert and, to a degree, eliminating the historicity of the recording by framing it as functional memory we try to solve the problem Benjamin described when he wrote that '[t]he whole sphere of authenticity eludes technical ... reproducibility'.<sup>13</sup> Although I do not necessarily agree with Benjamin in this regard, it nevertheless seems to be a premise or at least a paradox of the particular show: how to insist on the unique character or 'aura', so to speak, of a particular 'live' concert, while relying on technical reproducibility to broadcast it? In this case the answer is to insist that we are broadcasting a concert and not a recording. It nevertheless remains a paradox, because this is only possible because of the recording, and the presentation reinvests the archive concert with a constructed 'aura' and liveness of the live event. The lines between the live and the mediated are blurred, as are the lines between storage memory and functional memory.

#### 'FROM THE ARCHIVE'

*Fra arkivet*, literally 'From the Archive', is a show on DR's jazz station P8 that re-airs material from DR's archives. Originally the show was meant to be similar to the 'P2 Gold Concert', only with jazz music, but due to issues of copyright almost none of DR's concert recordings could be rebroadcasted. However, interviews, reports, features, and ordinary DJ shows are not covered by the same copyright limitations. Accordingly, the concept of the show was changed to showcase these types of archive material, and consequently, the historical focus of the show also changed. In 'From the Archive' it is not the music in the form of performances or recordings of music which is at the centre. Instead it is the people talking about the music on the archive material that are of interest. Thus, the show has also become a sort of media history project, where a piece of archive material is seen in the light of intellectual or political views on jazz in Denmark and in DR in particular, or it emphasises the role of specific radio presenters. Seeing as the series of shows are only connected by the fact that they are recordings from the archives, these radio personalities have become the recurring stars of 'From the Archive' rather than the jazz musicians they interviewed or the music they presented.

What we may call the historicist economy of the archive also appears to hold sway in the show. Because preserved recordings in general and jazz material in particular

13 Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Technological Reproduction', in Michael W. Jennings, Brigid Doherty, and Thomas Y. Levin (eds.), *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2008), 21.

become rarer and rarer the further you get from the present, the oldest material found in the archive more or less automatically gains value; the older it is, the better it must be. Even if much of the material found in the archive may actually be there by chance or because of choices unknown to us today, this material gains authority because of its rarity, rather than because of the quality of its content. As Arved Ashby has pointed out, this is based upon a linear conception of history, where the paradox is that rarity is ‘prized according to its chronological distance from the present yet at the same time must be made available to the here-and-now’.<sup>14</sup>

I find myself caught in this paradox and subscribing to this belief in the value of archive material when I plan and present the show. If I find something old and rare I am more likely to air it, even though it is not of a quality that is desirable. It may be incomplete or unedited, or it may simply fail to meet the overall profile of the particular station (P8 Jazz), e.g. it may contain too much talk against the ratio of music. Nevertheless, it gets re-aired on account of its rarity simply because it is available in the present. I even find myself feeling some pride in rescuing the almost lost material from the scrap piles of history and presenting it to the listeners.

The following example is exactly such a case. In my presentation you will hear me emphasizing that the recording is incomplete, as if this was a virtue.

As mentioned [previously], we are now going to listen to an interview from ... I’ll just check the year on the tape box ... We are going back to 1964. Monica Zetterlund talks about a production of *The Threepenny Opera*, Bertolt Brecht’s play, which is being staged in Stockholm, where she sings ‘Pirate Jenny’. And among other things, it [the interview] will be about ‘Moritat von Mackie Messer’, which you may know as ‘Mack the Knife’. And unfortunately we jump into the middle of the show, where the radio presenter is talking about the position of this song in jazz history.<sup>15</sup>

Here you may also notice another key element in ‘From the Archive’: the soundscape or *mise-en-scène* of the show (unfortunately the transcription does not do justice to the point I am trying to make). Before and after each speak, clip, or piece of music the sound of rolling tapes and machines indicates that what you are hearing is being played on old, non-digital machines. Furthermore, background noise from the reel-to-reel tape machine fills the soundscape and the presenter talks about the archive as the place from where the show is actually broadcast; this is evident from the following example:

[Blow of air, cough] Woo, well it’s been a long time since someone has had their hands on this. The dust settles between the books, boxes, and tapes down here. I haven’t used a broom here in the archive of P8 Jazz recently. [Cough/clears throat] My

14 Arved Ashby, *Absolute Music, Mechanical Reproduction* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2010), 71. While Ashby is concerned with classical music, I believe that jazz’ position as an art music, which as an aesthetic idea can be traced back to at least the forties, makes this observation applicable to jazz as well.

15 Mikkel Vad presents ‘From the Archive’, *DR P8 Jazz* (DR, 06.22.2013); my transcription and translation.

name is Mikkel Vad and luckily the dirt does not prevent me from finding this super cool programme for today. And I think I have brushed the worst bits of dust off this old programme and now I can put it in the tape machine. [Sounds of tape going into the machine] Today it [the show] will be about music and words, jazz and poetry. It will be about beat literature. More precisely, the author Allen Ginsberg. In 1983 he visited Denmark. The jazz staff [of DR] was on the spot, and not only did they get a nice long interview with Allen Ginsberg, who actually knows quite a bit about jazz, they also got a poetry recital or performance or whatever you might call it, and this is where the show begins. [Sound of tape machine being turned on].<sup>16</sup>

However, the archive that you hear in ‘From the Archive’ does not exist outside the sounds of the show. The entire soundscape is created with an editing programme on the computer. This not only serves the function of giving the show a distinct sonic identity, it also creates a sense of nostalgia by using the sounds of rolling tapes and old (i.e. non-digital) glitches. The sonic *mise-en-scène* of an archive quite literally amplifies its status as a site of memory,<sup>17</sup> not only by virtue of using actual archive material, but by creating an imaginary archive around the sound artefacts from the archive.

The historicity of the recordings is stressed in a way that speaks to the *retromania* and nostalgia of jazz, in a way that parallels the fetish character that jazz aficionados give to recordings. Even though improvisation is considered one of the defining features of jazz, recordings fix performances in time. It is a paradox that recordings are the primary means of canonizing jazz, which Jed Rasula has called ‘the seductive menace of records in jazz history.’<sup>18</sup> While he was correct in his criticism of the undertheorized role of recordings in jazz historiography, his analysis points to the fact that jazz culture relies heavily on recorded material to form the basis of its history. In this light, the particular use and editing of the archive material in ‘From the Archive’ speaks directly into that ideology.

In ‘From the Archive’ the use of a virtual soundscape mimicking the technology of the past also serves to create a disjuncture between past and present. In this way not only the recorded music becomes disembodied,<sup>19</sup> but also the voices from the past. This may place ‘From the Archive’ firmly within the framework of storage memory. On the other hand, the very sounds that aim to give the listener the sense that the voices that appear on the show are well-preserved relics from the past also point to the opposite fact: that the archive material presented on the show is heavily edited. The tape begins and ends at a particular point, which consequently means that something is left out. Something happened before and after the time

16 Mikkel Vad presents ‘From the Archive’, *DR P8 Jazz* (DR, 04.06.2013); my transcription and translation.

17 This concept was coined by Pierre Nora, but I refer to it here in the broader and more flexible sense of cultural memory studies; see e.g. Astrid Erll, *Memory in Culture* (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave, 2011), 22–27.

18 Jed Rasula, ‘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), 134–62.

19 I take my cue here from Tony Whyton’s analysis of Coltrane and the disembodied voice: Whyton, *Jazz Icons*, 38–56.

captured on tape. While the material used in 'From the Archive' may not yet have fully entered functional memory, it is important to note that the show is not in itself a process of storing. It is a process of remembering, and as such it represents the perspective in which the relationship between storage memory and functional memory can be seen. The design of the show reveals a central characteristic of memory: 'Remembering is basically a reconstructive process; it always starts in the present, and so inevitably at the time when memory is recalled, there will be shifting, distortion, revaluation, reshaping.'<sup>20</sup> The sounds of rolling tapes and machines are in fact signs of forgetting.

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS

Although the strategies regarding archive material in these two music shows are quite different, they both use performative rituals in the presentation which rely heavily on the archive material.

Through the presentation and conceptualisation of the 'P2 Gold Concert' as a live event it seems to resist its own historicity, but it is exactly through this mediated process that a move from stored to functional memory is made possible. The ritual of liveness that is performed by the presenter helps place the 'P2 Gold Concert' in the category of 'cultural memory'.<sup>21</sup> As opposed to the everyday-like and informal manner of 'communicative memory', the ritualized presentation in the formation and organisation of the archive material as a live concert establishes the almost timeless character of the 'P2 Gold Concert'. Benjamin may have believed that the 'technological reproducibility emancipates the work of art from its parasitical subservience to ritual'.<sup>22</sup> In this case, though, it seems that technical reproduction makes the reappropriation of such rituals possible. That is not to say that this ritual of liveness in the framing of archive concerts aims at giving the listener the impression that he or she is listening to the concert 'as it actually happened'. Such insistence on the liveness of archive concerts is a construction. This should also be evident from the way the presenter more or less elegantly alternates between the position of the historian, as it were, who comments on the storage memory of the archive material and the position of the ringside journalist who engages with the concert event. Of course, this is not wholly unproblematic, because such journalistic ambiguity might confuse the listener. However, neither the 'P2 Gold Concert' nor 'From the Archive' has been subject to qualitative evaluations by the listeners (e.g. focus group analyses or other research conducted by DR), and it is beyond the scope of the present article to do such research.

Much like the presenter of the 'P2 Gold Concert' performs a ritual of liveness made possible by the mechanical reproduction, the presentation and *mise-en-scène* of 'From the Archive' are highly performative. The show subscribes to a belief in the

<sup>20</sup> Assmann, *Cultural memory*, 19.

<sup>21</sup> Jan Assmann, 'Collective Memory and Cultural Identity', *New German Critique*, 65 (1995), 125–33; Erll, *Memory in Culture*, 27–37.

<sup>22</sup> Benjamin, 'The Work of Art', 24.

intrinsic value of these archive artefacts and it constructs an imaginary archive with a soundscape of old technology. Here it is the technology itself that is used in a ritualized performance of the mediatized dialectic between stored and functional memory. This dialectic may not be unproblematic, though, because it relies on the producer's (i.e. my) construction of the sound of the archive that is in fact just that, a construction, and as such the listener may perceive of it as fake and inauthentic if he or she discovers the digital production processes of creating such a *mise-en-scène*. Using such fictional strategies the presentation may strengthen the dialectic between storage and functional memory. On the other hand, these mediatizing, fictional strategies may compromise the perceived value and authenticity of the archive material.

While both shows present archive material that seems to be storage memory, the strategies used in the presentation of this material and the mediatized nature of that material and the context of its broadcast show that it is on the path to crossing over into functional memory.

#### SUMMARY

The article is a critical engagement with the construction of cultural memory and performance of liveness when using archive material in radio shows and is based on the author's experience as a radio presenter. Theoretically it is framed by Aleida Assmann's concepts of storage memory and functional memory.

Firstly, a show presenting historical concert recordings of classical music, the 'P2 Gold Concert', is analysed to show how radio presenters emphasize liveness to eliminate the historicity of the recording. However, such evocation of liveness is only possible because of the recorded nature of the archive material. Secondly, a show presenting archived interviews, reports, features, etc. of jazz music and musicians, 'From the Archive', is analysed with particular regard to how a virtual soundscape or *mise-en-scène* of 'old' technology is created to perform an imaginary archive and how the archive is fetishized. Again, this presentation and the values it holds is only possible because of the recorded, mediatized nature of the archive material.

Thus, in both shows the presenter uses fictionalizing strategies of performance to present the archive material, and these strategies in fact highlight the disjunctures and connections between storage memory and functional memory.