

Abstracts

The sound document as a source

Paolo Zavagna

Can sound documents be ‘written’? and can they be ‘read’? The beginnings of the history of sound recording give useful elements to understand these processes and these terms and to clarify their peculiarities. History and music disciplines have considered the role of sound documents as sources, with different ways and in different times. A definition of *sound document* will be attempted based on the process of sound recording, of which an outline will be given. The document, being an object, is the result of the union of a *carrier* with a *format*. The matter of ‘decodification’ of a sound document from a technological point of view will be considered: from here the importance of the technical devices used in the process of reproduction and re-recording. In the end the central topics of originality, authenticity and integrity of sound documents will be considered, taking some examples among the music repertoires without notation: music of the oral tradition, improvised, electroacoustic, phonographic.

Physical Problems, Sonic Implications. A discussion of the ethics of preservation treatments and audio recordings

Kevin Bradley

Conservators have traditionally operated under a particular set of ethical constraints. The AIC code of ethics, for example, states “The conservation professional should only recommend or undertake treatment that is judged suitable to the preservation of the aesthetic, conceptual, and physical characteristics of the cultural property”. However, when treating sound recordings the situation may well arise where a physical treatment will alter the physical characteristics of the audio carrier, though simultaneously restore or improve the ability of the carrier to reproduce the sound it carries. Where does the responsibility of the sound archivist lie? This paper considers some of the ethical issues surrounding treatments of audio recordings and considers just what it is that we are trying to preserve.

Raiders of the Lost Record

Vittorio Castelli

Hereby we will consider in particular the relations between jazz and record experts. The search for “hidden treasures”, such as unpublished live recordings, has brought to the growth of collections of records which are very interesting from a musicological point of view. We will examine various types of collectors, from those who relate to the record as an object, to those who are interested in its “musical message”. The exemplary story of the collector Dick Rieber has inspired the latter. The relation between collector and music producer has always been fruitful prolific and very often the two characters are the same person. Both theoretical and material contributions of collectors to discography are always very interesting. In the end we will examine the situation in Italy and we will show the personal story of the author who contributed to the production of plenty of music brands.

Afro-American musicology and the sound document. Disciplinary and foundation aspects

Luca Cerchiari

After an introduction about the production of sound documents, both written and recorded, within Afro-American music, the author considers the importance of the subject of jazz documentation in terms of sound and the basic contribution to discography within these repertoires. The contribution given by the sound document to Afro-American musicology and its didactics, in addition to the transmission of contents, has a primary importance: transcriptions of solos and improvisations, analyses and comparisons, these are the basis of studies done directly on sound documents. Mentioned are also other types of documents, such as pianola rolls and mechanical instruments. The contribution to ancillary information connected to sound documents is considered (record envelopes, containers, illustrated booklets, cover notes) as well as the importance of the whole production process to the creation of collections and sound archives, both public and private ones, based on that repertoire, giving birth also to restoration and retrieval activities.

Research on the field and sound recording: theoretical and technological interactions

Nicola Scaldaferrì

The paper deals with the presence and the use of technology during fieldwork and its theoretical implications. Two special cases are discussed. The first one is the fieldwork done by Milman Parry and Albert Lord in the Balkans in the '30, and preserved at the Harvard University in the Milman Parry Collection; Parry and Lord used special machines with aluminum disks in order to record and analyze the long performance of the epic singers. The second one is the research by Steven Feld in Soutehr Italy in 2004 for the realization of the cdbook *Santi, animali e suoni*; Feld used DSM

microphones to record bells and other instruments during some rituals, and edited them with Protools in order to create a soundscape composition. In both cases, we can see a strong relationship between the theoretical aim of the researcher, and the choice and use of specific technological devices.

Sound documents of electronic music

Alvise Vidolin

After a short introduction about the history of sound memory the transformations that were introduced by the birth of sound documents, which were brought also in society, especially within the electroacoustic music repertoire, are described with a particular attention to the interaction of acoustical and electronic instruments, and therefore to the performance aspect. The magnetic tape is the object of work for the composer and for the performer. The study of the case that we are considering right now concerns the retrieval and restoration of tapes to set up a performance, such as *A floresta è jovem e Cheja de vida* by Luigi Nono, stored partly by the Editor Brand Ricordi in Milan and at the Luigi Nono Archive in Venice.