WHY I LIKE RECORDINGS

Lainie Fefferman

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This essay and the piece “Here I Am” together constitute the dissertation but are otherwise unrelated
Abstract

This dissertation will explore the merits of treating the recording as a musical object and goal unto itself, both from the angles of music creation and analytical thought. I will discuss the phenomena of recording as documentation of a different object as opposed to the paradigm of recording as object in its own right. I will refute claims that recorded music lacks the “aura” required of a work of art. I will discuss a style of recordings analysis that makes most sense for composers living in a highly fractured world of music making and listening, and lastly I will do a specific case study where I take several recordings of Schubert’s Winterreise and discuss them as individual art objects in and of themselves, similar in the traditionally acknowledged score-based sense, but widely differing in affect and reception. As an epilogue, I will issue a quick, but earnest rallying cry to my fellow composers and listeners everywhere.

The original piece that completes my dissertation, “Here I Am,” is an oratorio in nine movements for violin, cello, electric guitar, clarinet and b. clarinet, soprano, vibraphone, keyboard, and drum set, with two additional soprano voices. It was written for ensemble Newspeak with Caroline Shaw and Martha Cluver. Here I Am is my deeply personal meditation on nine perplexing but often ignored portions of the Hebrew Bible. The music, set to the Jewish Publication Society’s plain and literal English translation of the Hebrew text, uses disparate musical genres and techniques (power chords, dreamy minimalism, folk-balladry, and performance art) to recontextualize the familiar biblical narratives in fresh light. This piece received two wonderful live performances (first in Taplin Auditorium, then at Roulette in Brooklyn)
and there were good live recordings of both, but I will only feel truly satisfied with the trajectory of this work when I have facilitated its transition to a recorded object.
Acknowledgements

I have loved my time at Princeton. I can’t imagine being given a greater gift as a composer – being welcomed in to the supportive, risk-taking, hilarious community of music-makers in the Princeton program changed my life forever. I am a better composer, performer, collaborator, colleague, and friend, because of the good tunes and good vibes pouring out of Woolworth. I am grateful to the whole faculty and graduate student body, but particularly: to Paul Lansky, my wonderful advisor, for examining every note in my scores and talking me through a lot of future-pondering; to Dan Trueman, for urging me to dive right in to a world where humans and their computers make music together (which I did and will keep doing forever); to Scott Burnham for teaching me to love the analysis of music since I was a tween; and to compcoll (AKA Sean Friar, Cameron Britt, and Jascha Narveson) who entered this crazy PhD ride with me, and remain the finest folks you could ever share a beer with.

Beyond Princeton, I must thank Karl Schrom, my favorite boss of all time, the recordings librarian at Yale where I did my undergrad. Without his guidance, the passion for this research would not have existed. He is a great soul.

As ever, with every step I take, I have my family to thank for the power I take it with. Without my wonderful father, mother, sister, and brother inspiring me, supporting me, and tugging at my sleeve to finish what I start, I couldn’t have gotten this degree off the ground or landed it on the runway. I love you guys.

And finally, to my beloved husband, Jascha Narveson: thank you forever.

You’re quite a strudel.
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Why I like recordings

Sometimes it’s hard for me to identify and feel where the “end-product” of my work really lies. My composer days and nights are spent working on scores – I have always created music prescribed by coded information in a written document. My process is a product of my formal education: I began composing late in high school, under the meticulous guidance of my theory teacher, Randall Bauer, himself a professional composer (he went on to study composition in the Princeton PhD program to which I submit this dissertation). Happily emulating his example, composing by score-creation was the obvious course for a young woman spouting countless hair-brained musical ideas. With this style of music-making squarely ingrained in me, I easily located the finalized (bound!) score as the signifier of my completed work. Not only was every parameter of imagined music considered and labeled and prescribed, but the visual aesthetic of the document was questioned and attended to. The ivory color of the card-stock cover was the herald of a job well done.

A weird thing about this paradigm: my “finished” product was merely a set of instructions for a theoretical performance – a finely detailed roadmap to a purely imagined country. I find it heartily unsatisfying now, thinking of a bunch of pages of notation as the culmination of near all of my early work; but back then, in high school and at college, with the encouragement of a small, but earnest crowd of composers around me raising the importance of the pristinely planned score to heights near-divine, my heart was full with every well-aligned dynamic marking or properly angled slur line. I’d agonize over the font of my title, tempo indication, and performance
instructions (truth be told, I still do, but for quite different reasons, which I’ll outline below). I often created entire large ensemble works with no specific performers or performance in mind, but with little concern for that vacuum. That could all come later – creating that opportunity for the music to be heard was much less my job than the pristine task of score authorship I’d just completed. The “thing” was the score, and I’d done it.

A few years out of college, I began asking myself: why should a roadmap top my hierarchy of musical creation? When I go exploring for the music of others, I don’t spend hours in music libraries perusing scores (though I know some do). I don’t define the work of other composers by their completed score-documents. When considering the works of George Crumb or Brian Ferneyhough, two names I strongly associate with visually dazzling scores, it’s the sounds they elicit from performers, not the curve of their staves that I label their ultimate product. With this in mind, I decided to refocus my energies on live performance. I shifted my attention to a sequence of projects, collaborations with specific performers with set concert dates in mind. I’d still create a score, but its function became far more utilitarian. I’d think about the individuals for whom I was making the piece and what I thought they would most desire within a given notational style. My aesthetic of score manufacture changed – I was focused on the specific commissioners, their needs and wishes, rather than satisfying only my own. There were groups for whom writing “slow, like a bluesy ballad tempo” would make more sense than marking “adagio,” and, of course, vice versa. I now placed the score squarely in the category of communication rather than art-object purely of itself – a means rather than an end. In some ensemble pieces,
that would sometimes mean going as far as creating highly realized parts, but with bare-bones, ugly scores. “Who’d really look at the score?” I thought to myself. Other than the awards and competitions to which I rarely submitted my work, I could see no benefit in the fetishization of a score from which no one would be extracting detailed information. The score was a way of keeping my own ideas and schemas in private order. And did I really need to impress myself?

A few years ago, I came to an even more surprising self-realization: I am also not satisfied by elevating live performance to the top of my creative food chain. Live performances for a young composer are often terribly anti-climactic. Even with the best performers/collaborators in the best of circumstances, the economic realities of the scene in which I live and work precipitate the ever shrinking swaths of time in which performers can learn and develop a work before its premiere. I have found myself sitting through most performances of my music thinking “well, I guess this is it” rather than feeling the sated emotions of a creator at her pinnacle of artistic completion. In a lovely conversation with Paul Lansky about why he went into the field of computer music, he cited his dissatisfaction with the traditional concert-oriented model of a composer’s process: “I always hated performances because people could just hear the piece once and then pat you on the back and say nice job and you’d sort of just wonder what they meant.” I have the very same qualms with this structure: the community and shared experience that are generally assumed by the concert-oriented model often come up lacking – substantial thoughts and criticism from audience members are more the exception than the rule. I want to share my
musical ideas with a community of interested and invested listeners, but perhaps the concert hall isn’t the best place for that activity.

Not only is the whole concert experience ephemeral by definition, but the generally uncontrollable parameters that form the acoustic experience of each individual listener differently in a given venue can highly color the qualities and/or success of a piece. Questions of balance or timbre, volume or dryness, all aspects of music that contribute enormously to its identity, are more often answered by the whims of fate and architecture than by the dedicated choices of the composer or performers in a specific situation. Even when a performance makes use of technology, the specific acoustics of a hall are inescapable and often work against a composer’s ideal. A magnificent piece can be rendered spineless by a dead venue. Examples from history exist of composers using, to brilliant effect, the specific qualities and capabilities of a venue in their compositional process, and even as a vital element in the formation of their voice and style (examples that quickly come to mind are Perotin and Notre Dame, Wagner and Bayreuth, La Monte Young and his Dream House) but how many of us can boast that kind of control, or even necessarily want to take on that task in this climate of New Music that prizes the mobility of new works, allowing them to be heard by an ever increasing number of people? So many composers measure success by the number of performances a piece has received in as large as possible a number of venues and geographic areas. Even if that is not a desirable metric, the portability of a given performance is often a priority for performers and who wants to deny the performer the possibility of as many performances as she desires in as many venues as present themselves for her taking?
So what do I need from a musical goal to feel it fully satisfying as a culmination of my work? Determining this question from the emotional and intellectual ground up, prioritizing neither score nor performance as the obvious or ultimate priority, I examine what I need and want out of a musical endeavor to be satisfied as an artist: I need to feel confident that my final object includes an experience of the totality of musical ideas I’ve developed over a work’s incubation, both the tiny details (like articulations, inflections and subtle structural cues) and large-scale structures (like form and instrumentation) of my imagining appearing in this end product; I want the overall aesthetic and tone of the work to be consistently present; I want the individual interpretive decisions of my performers, discussed and examined collaboratively, to be included as obviously as my own original prescriptions for their actions; I want the acoustic properties of the final object to be as consistent as possible, guarding against harmful inhibitions as much as I can; and finally, I want to be able to share this object with as many interested, invested listeners as possible. I want to be able to point to my end product and say, with confidence, that I pride myself as the author of this musical object and sanction any experience it engenders in the listener.

This left me with a new personal paradigm: The tape’s the thing.

A good recording of a work is now my most satisfying goal at the onset of any new project. A good recording has so much of what I need from my art-making: the idealized work, so painstakingly developed as I fashion out a score and parts, is realized with care, but without the immediate pressures of live performance. Surface
issues like bungled accidentals and sour notes no longer pass without the luxury of a do-over. Bigger musical risks (pushing instrument ranges, unpredictable extended techniques, etc.) are all more palatable with this luxury now available (yes, recordings as end-objects allow composers greater risk-taking and affords us the envelope-pushing that make our art more fresh and daring!). And now another whole layer of compositional decision making opens up – as Virgil Moorefield catalogued extensively in his book, *The Producer as Composer*, the boundary between the roles of composer and producer are increasingly blurred (though he was largely discussing the pop world, I will outline below how I feel this applies to the “New Music” scene as well). Microphone placement and reverb and compression and stereo imaging (and in some cases, video editing and effects) can now all present themselves as new, important colors on the composer’s palette. (In the coming chapters I will go into great depth about the implications and potential effects of this extended palette.) The unpredictability of the live concert hall performance experience is replaced with a more reliably consistent object: a recording approved by all the collaborators involved in its production.

When I review my list of composer-life-priorities above, the recording meets them very well: the details and structures of my work are in my recording; I have maximal control over the tone and aesthetic of the piece with my new palette of tools to help me achieve them; and I can have more useful discussions with a performer in a shorter period of time when we both have the focus of the recording in question to consider, resulting in a greater amount of performer interpretation and input present in the final musical product. In the few times I have been able to experience this kind of
studio recording process, I have felt maximally fulfilled and deeply musically potent. Though music is experienced by the listener ephemerally, this kind of collaborative music production has the feeling of being freed from the yoke of linear time – the vision of the music need not bend to accommodate the pressing needs of immediacy. As a composer, I end up with a product far closer to my ideal vision and a process far more collaborative over far more of the work’s trajectory. The old model of the composer “handing off” a piece and watching it take on its own life is traded for a more total creative experience. Rather than having discrete events for which I pray for sizable audiences of excited listeners, I can find my listeners one by one as interest and circumstance arises. Allowing my audience to be ever increasing, listening on their own terms and timetables, I have actually had far more profitable comments and conversations about my work. The “nice work,” blandly supportive phenomenon of post-concert chatter is much less the norm in the discussion of recorded music. In my experience, people are much more likely to take risks both in their observations and their questions when they feel the immediacy of the musical experience has only applied to them in their personal listening. The internet and social media sites allow for this kind of discourse and the larger formation a modern critical audience, freed to experience the piece on their own terms in their own time.

I love this model and I don’t think I’ll ever go back to thinking of live performance as the culmination of my work.

When I share this view with my peers, I get a highly varied response. Some agree with what I’ve described above, prizing the recording, or even the album as their
beloved goal for which to toil. Others have very violent reactions against this kind of
priority structure. “The magic of a great live performance can never be recreated by
recording!” many counter. Though I’m not sure I agree with that proposition, I can
quickly respond: “So? The magic of a great recording can never be recreated by a live
performance!” I propose a devaluation of live performance, or rather an increase in
the proposed value of recordings in the default conception of the “classical” music
world. Recordings don’t have to replace live performance for every composer and
performer as their ultimate priority, but the assumption that those who do have chosen
a paler experience, a weaker relative as their artistic goal, I feel is outdated and
unnecessary at best (at worst, detrimental to the progress of music making). (As a
reference on this question, see the Facebook thread that I began on this issue on
December 26, 2013, containing the thoughts of many of my contemporary composer
and performer colleagues. This thread can be found at url:
https://www.facebook.com/lainie.fefferman/posts/10100413154761344)

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object and goal unto itself, both from the angles of music creation and analytical
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score-based sense, but widely differing in affect and reception. As an epilogue, I will issue a quick, but earnest rallying cry to my fellow composers and listeners everywhere.

As a companion to the pages below, I will close this introduction with the following questions: why did I fall so deeply in love with Christine Schäfer’s Teldex recording of Winterreise? If I had attended a concert where Christine Schäfer and Eric Schneider were performing Winterreise, would it have had a comparable effect on me? In what similar or disparate ways should I evaluate those two experiences? As a composer, performer, and listener, what can I learn from the answers to these questions?
Why recordings are great

A light went on when I read the following in Andrea Mazzariello’s dissertation The Sonic Object: Music in/as material:

"…that the record may, in fact, be the thing itself, emphatically not a stand-in for the duo from Rochdale dropping the beat in your living room. It doesn’t represent or imitate or account for anything at all; it’s simply its glorious self. Indeed we might prefer it to actually beaming the performers into our home. We encounter the sound on our time, on our terms, and in so doing invest in the object that conveys it a much more significant role than a provisional, somewhat inadequate substitute. We can watch it move, can imagine its physical contours becoming waves that literally hit us. Rather than substitute for human beings in our private space, the record and player come alive in their own right, singing and dancing before our ears and eyes and triggering novel sympathetic responses, unique to the medium itself, not to whatever the medium is supposed to represent."

Most of my musical life had carried with it the assumption that a recording of a classical work was indeed a representation instead of a presentation – a record in the dictionary sense: a thing constituting a piece of evidence about the past. Benjamin Britten summarized well what I assumed to be gospel truth in the classical music world:

“[Listening to recordings] is not part of true musical experience. Regarded as such it is simply a substitute, and dangerous because deluding.” [Benjamin Britten, Address on Receiving the First Aspen Award (London: Faber and Faber, 1964), p. 20]

When an avid piano student, my teacher cautioned against listening to recordings too often. The idea of conquering the danger of live performance had been the pinnacle of my definition of success as a performer. Delivering flawless, impassioned live interpretations of Beethoven or Bach or Debussy, under the ever-present threat of error, was the meat and cream of my chosen endeavor. (I still
remember the mandates of my audition tapes for college applications: “no editing or studio effects should be used in your tape!”) Seen through this lens, recordings were cheating – their creation involved a safety net of redoing flawed passages or employing buoying studio effects. They existed, as Britten suggested, to delude.

Now as a composer, I cringe with that idea of music’s essential character existing only in the precariousness of live performance. Instead of idolizing the shallow, if palpable tension I now see as inherent in the immediacy of live performance, by prizing the production of a good recording, one can enjoy a document that has been (presumably) approved by all artistic contributors involved in the work – a work’s listener can react to a more considered artistic vision instead of the approximation of that vision possible within the demands of the live performance moment. As a listener-composer, eager to hear new interpretations or modes of musical communication realized to their truest potential, why should I give greater heed to the precarious performance over the polished, approved, recorded vision? Yet still, I hear and read so many claims that music’s beauty and magic lie primarily in its placement in the realm of the ephemeral. Even granting that assumption, there is no need for ephemerality to be rigidly defined as exclusively residing in live performance: experiencing music linearly forward through time is universal (though sound installation artists might disagree with this characterization), and each unique moment of listening can never again be exactly recreated, whether in a concert hall or in a car or a living room. The fresh ears that hear a recorded musical moment will never be the same ears again on re-listening. Being able to take in a recording again and again, however, allows the listener something in addition to ephemerality – the
thinking room allowed a viewer in an art gallery: one can re-experience and re-think over and over with the ease of pushing a play button. Especially for a musician on the path to crafting a voice, this kind of reexamination can be vital to creating a lasting relationship with a work. Questions can be created, answered, or put away for later contemplation. So why, again, was this medium, so richly endowed with possibility, so lowly placed in my musical hierarchy for so long?

Well, album art had been a strong cue for me to consider the “real work” to lie in live performance – a large percent of the classical records and CDs I saw bore cover photos of the recording artists in what appeared to be the middle of live performance (or posing, in a stately concert-etiquette manner, in tux or gown beside their given instrument). In our classical environment, this seems a completely natural choice for classical producers, but looking at the pop albums in my collection, the same is almost never true – how many photos of bands mid-concert grace their album covers? Though most of my favorite pop artists tour extensively, it is not a snapshot of their live-concert persona that the album covers seek to evoke, but instead an image that will contribute to the recorded music listener’s aesthetic experience of the album in its own right. Consider The White Album or Ok Computer – these bands, The Beatles and Radiohead, gained huge notoriety through their concertizing, but these albums don’t need to refer to that provenance to gain legitimacy. The albums are the objects: they are not struggling to recreate the magic of live performance, but rather using and celebrating every aspect of the recorded-music medium. The album art contributes to that feeling of record as object.
A further contribution to my impression of where the “thing” of classical music lived was that the avid classical album collectors I knew judged the very medium of their beloved collections to be obviously inferior to the live concert listening experience. The best recordings were given praise like “it sounded just like I was in the audience” or “I could close my eyes and pretend I was in the hall.” Evan Eisenberg, in his marvelous book *The Recording Angel* quotes one of his audiophile subjects, “Saul,” describing his pleasure in listening to recorded music on his much prized and pristinely maintained hi-fi stereo (pp.220-221): “…the pleasure I derived from recordings was independent of any pleasures I may have derived from the real thing…The ideal was to overwhelm [myself] with the realism of imagining that it is a true reproduction of a live performance, which is of course very subjective and probably unattainable.” Though many of these audiophiles’ intention was to sing the praises of the album, comments like these served the same function as the album art – to indicate that the highest aim of a recording should be to simulate the concert-going experience. As Albin Zak says in his chapter of Amanda Bayley’s incisive book of essays *Recorded Music*, “Painting the sonic canvas: electronic mediation as musical style”:

“…because classical music had already attained the perfect sounding form in the natural sound world, it gave the project of recorded representation something to aim for as recordists sought to push the electronic wizard ever further behind the veiling curtain.” (P311)

The “wizardry” of the studio and medium as a whole was to be used and then masked, giving the listener as little awareness as possible of her situation outside the concert hall. Thinking from my current vantage point, however, in a post-Mazzariello
dissertation world, I assert that though of course classical music was (and largely still is) written for the “natural sound world,” who’s to say modern technology doesn’t expand the music’s potential to include an identifiably “artificial” sound world? Who’s to say where the classical music sound engineer’s ideal should lie or if there need be one single ideal at all? In advocacy of more widespread use of technology in classical music, I use a keyboard instrument analogy: pianos today are wildly different from the harpsichords and fortepianos of yesteryear, but that does not stop classical pianists from performing and recording classical pieces on modern instruments. On the contrary – recording Mozart and Haydn and Bach on the instruments the composers originally wrote for is relegated to a sub-field of the musical genre: “historically informed players” or “period players” generally get the attention of nerdy audiences of composers and musicologists, but rarely (if ever?) reach the iconic status of a Toscanini, Bell, or Ma. Weirdly then, we have conflicting messages: recordings must emulate the live concert experience as best they can, though that experience need not best heed what the composer (presumably the author most responsible for the work) would have envisioned. When dogmatic, those two ideas exist in spiritual conflict. Arguably, the change from fortepiano to Steinway D will alter a work’s presence in the “natural sound world” as envisioned by the composer far more than a tasteful application of the variety of studio techniques generally applicable to recorded acoustic music, but ultimately: who need care? If musicians and audiences crave a certain “anachronistic” sound, why should we balk? The Steinway and the studio can both serve to translate an artistic vision into something that, even if distinct from its origin, can create joy and beauty forever increasing audiences.
I advocate for a full removal of any stigma associated with the greater use of post-production in classical music recordings. The application of studio techniques has already been entering the sonic profile of the classical album in certain “respectable” ways – as Chion points out in his book *Audio-Vision*:

“In the ‘natural’ world sounds have many high frequencies that so-called hi-fi recordings do capture and reproduce better than they used to. On the other hand, current practice dictates that a sound recording should have more treble than would be heard in the real situation (for example when it’s the voice of a person at some distance with [his or her] back turned). No one complains of nonfidelity from too much definition! This proves that it’s definition that counts for sound, and its hyperreal effect, which has little to do with the experience of direct audition.” (M. Chion: *Audio-Vision*, (trans. C. Gorbman), 98–99; 1994, New York, NY, Columbia University Press.)

Though his example is perhaps an oversimplification, the “hyperreal effect” he describes is acceptable, desirable, not because it mirrors the actual sound waves received by a concert audience member, but because it emulates what we intuitively perceive as being so. In his thesis, *Histories of the Invisible: Technology Discourses in the Age of Phonography*, Reuben de Lautour argues that even if one were to assume “fidelity” as an engineer’s ideal, that fidelity’s meaning has more to do with cultural standards than absolute standards. Reality and what is perceived as reality become blurred, and through this loophole many post-production effects may be slipped by without reproach. When an album crosses that line, however, and uses studio effects that in no way feed into our perception of what is “pure” reflection of the concert hall experience, it is now making evident other values – values that a composer could take as her own in the creation of music specifically for recorded music audiences.
By accepting recorded music as its own medium, divorced from any need to emulate the concert hall sound world, the musician suddenly has not only new colors on her palette, but has an entirely new palette to draw from. Recordings of music needn’t just be instructive as to what kind of notes and instrumental techniques a composer or performer may want to explore next in a piece for live performance, but also what kind of studio techniques she may want to deploy in the service of conveying her musical meaning. This can occasionally have ramifications back in the live performance world – if the technology of a hall will allow amplification and/or live processing, a similar palette might be employed, but ultimately, with a shift toward album as end goal, not documentation or teacher, we could elevate the creation of albums as a new focus in compositional pedagogy.

Prejudices again this kind of hierarchy would persist, however, as Jonathan Sterne notes in his article “The Death and Life of Digital Audio.” He notes the abundance of worries that exist among critics and academics concerning the “loss of being” that exists in the many technologic transformations that exist between performance and the recording with which a listener is eventually given to experience.

But that “loss of being” depends on where you believe the being to lie. If the “being” is synonymous with the live creation of music, perhaps this is a valid concern. Why should we, though, define musical “being” this way in an entire medium devoted to the transmission of sound divorced inexorably from live performance? Isn’t that just needlessly setting us up for disappointment? Setting an unattainable goal for recorded music, then striving for it, only makes sense if your particular fetish is that
act itself: the quest for better and better simulation of the live experience. It seems, however, that a less frustrating, more satisfying artistic goal, might lie in a redefinition of where the “being” of a recording lies: why not let it lie in the sonic experience of the recording itself? Or perhaps more precisely, in the act of listening to that recording.

“We’ll get it in post” - why shouldn’t the studio be as viable a compositional tool as counterpoint? To contemplate balancing a solo harp and an orchestra is madness in the live acoustic concert world, but if the object of the composer is the track, and good mic’ing is available for recording, why not make use of new technology and a new medium to make a given musical vision viable? Suddenly, who cares if it isn’t possible (or easily possible) in a live situation? After generations of composers studying carefully the lessons of countless orchestration books on the recommended combinations of instruments in specific registers, do we not have a tool by which countless new unrealized combinations become available? A brave new shore!

Classical music may come to this technical liberalism later than other genres, but different musical worlds have grappled with this question in their turn. When Les Paul recorded his wife, Mary Ford, culminating in the release of “How High the Moon” in 1951, he described: “the unwritten rules stated that a vocalist should be placed no closer than two feet away from the microphone, but I wanted to capture every little breath and nuance in Mary’s voice; so I had her stand right on the mic’, just a couple of inches away,” (Mark Cunningham, Good Vibrations: a History of
“unwritten rules” in Les Paul’s case were similar to overt rules of tonmeisters who seek the “concert hall” sound with every technological resource at their disposal. Les Paul had a musical goal, a musical vision, that trumped the conventions of recording technique, thus creating a track that would less closely emulate the live experience but more faithfully record those clearly desirable aspects of his wife’s musical character.

Compression especially is an effect viewed with trepidation and disdain by the classical community, (see Sterne, p. 345), but why? Like any other performance or production technique, generous compression can deliver a richer musical product when used effectively in the service of a particular artistic vision. When a soprano whispers, then wails over her piano accompaniment in a recording, why would it be nobler to keep “natural” amplitude ratios between sections than to let the listener experience both sung volumes with immediacy and clarity thanks to the aid of clever mixing and good compression algorithms? If it is admissible for a singer to employ “stage whispers” in the hope of projecting a quiet moment, why can’t we use the compression knob in the same pursuit? The effect is only ignoble when its use runs counter to the desired sonic profile of the artist. Compressing away the volume difference in Haydn’s “Surprise” Symphony would likely harm the artistic intent of those making the recording. Compressing lied tracks to enable the listener’s forging of an unbroken emotional connection with the music seems noble to the utmost – did not each composer in his day use whatever new technology might best serve the musical mission he hoped to achieve? Again, Bach and Beethoven did not discard the newly expanded capabilities of the respective keyboard instruments of their day as
being unnatural or harmful – they used the new tunings or dynamic ranges to stunning
effect, allowing for newfound musical and affective possibilities. Post-production
techniques can fall easily into this line of the progress of a musician’s arsenal. Any
sound-making techniques and technology stand to serve in the quest for artistic
communication – any “moral” limitations imposed on that arsenal are arbitrary.

Brian Eno, though he was mainly discussing the collaging of pre-existing
tracks, described beautifully how the composer could use the studio as an integral part
of musical process in his article for *Audio Culture*:

“You’re working directly with sound, and there’s no transmission loss between
you and the sound–you handle it. It puts the composer in the identical position of the
painter—he’s working directly with a material, working directly onto a substance, and
he always retains the options to chop and change, to paint a bit out, add a piece, etc.”
(Eno, “The Studio As Compositional Tool”, from *Audio Culture*, p. 129)

Eno is full of hope and enthusiasm, seeing the directness of transmission and
ease of change as a newfound freedom. A facet I’d add to this viewpoint is that any
performers heard on a given track can (and probably should) have a role in
determining the qualities of the album. In this way, the spark of human collaboration
and joint creativity is not only preserved, it is enhanced – the composer and the
performer can discuss, reevaluate, and tweak as long as their studio time remains. As
opposed to the idea of a composer working in isolation, then handing off a score to a
performer, who will take on that score’s interpretation alone in concert, this recording-
focused model allows for far more joint decision-making and synergetic creation
among composers, performers, and recording engineers at various points in the
process.
When recording the music of dead composers, performers and recording engineers can similarly take on this empowering studio role that Eno describes. Microphone choice and positioning, studio effects, mixing, mastering – these decisions can determine the impact of a recorded work just as much as (if not more than) traditional choices of rubato or voicing. Eno’s vision of the creation of new music, if tweaked just a bit, can be fully relevant to the exciting new tools one might employ in the creation of a new recording of Winterreise. Who’s to say what radical EQing might do to help us feel the hopelessness of “Der Leiermann” or what eerie reverb may do to add to our sense of nostalgia and distance in “Der Lindenbaum?” In the same vein as the appropriation of a Steinway’s power, the adoption of these modern technologies might help listeners find new emotional connection with old material.

Glenn Gould boldly embodied this new paradigm of music making. Eliminating live performance from his plate entirely, Gould found freedom in the full adoption of the recording as his medium. Though some of this change in his practice was influenced by his hermit-like proclivities and anxiety (see Hecker, “Glenn Could, the Vanishing Performer”) his decision was based in ideology, not pragmatism. He saw studio recording as a grand opportunity for music, just as cinema provided a grand new opportunity for theater. He admired Jean-Luc Godard and his contemporaries for using film to the medium’s greater potential, apart from a sense of documentary or “naturalism.” In a parallel sense, Gould envisioned the studio recording departing from a documentary representation of the concert hall experience. The rich use of available technology so accepted in the realm of film was, in Gould’s time, and to a
large extent still is, rejected in the classical music recording world. Though it seems silly to think of faulting cinema for not setting as its highest goal a simulation of live theater, this same prejudice remains in the work of tonmeisters and critics the world over. Though the medium of cinema being its own goal and object is taken for granted, classical music recordings are still valued for their perceived simulation of an entirely separate musical world or concert experience.

All this in mind, discarding old prejudices, as both a composer and a listener, I now even more heartily choose to treat recordings as texts in and of themselves. Recordings have their own birth and life. They are received increasingly as the end product of a musician’s labor, not a means to a different end, but as an end in and of themselves. Recordings allow musicians, ever plagued and inspired by the ephemerality of their art form, to create a relatively static object, able to be experienced multiple times in multiple contexts by a virtually limitless number of listeners. The particular experience of an album is far easier to control than that of a live performance and far more satisfying than the abstraction of reading a score. Defining album as object provides a modern composer with a tangible goal, a medium by which to communicate with a growing audience, even as live concert attendance can dwindle and disappoint. Defining album as object provides a modern performer with a new way to bring time-honored classics to new life for the ages to come.
How recordings gain aura

Adorno and Benjamin talk about the loss of the aura in recorded music and filmed theater – about how removing the sounds from the scene of their physical and temporal generation necessary causes them to lose the uniqueness of musical experience. If you can’t be in the concert hall, see the performers sweat, smell the dust on the velvet curtain, or imagine that the performer’s eyes are staring right back into yours, Benjamin says that the sound-art no longer carries with it that halo of qualities and meaning that it would when received in a live context where you know its very existence is fleeting.

Benjamin talks about this perceived loss in the context of theater and film in his *Illuminations* (p. 229):

“The aura which, on the stage, emanates from Macbeth, cannot be separated for the spectators from that of the actor. However, the singularity of the shot in the studio is that the camera is substituted for the public. Consequently, the aura that envelops the actor vanishes, and with it the aura of the figure he portrays.”

Here’s the thing: why can’t we chose a new aura? Why should uniqueness and ephemerality dictate the magical parameters of aura? Why can’t we treat a specific record as an art object unto itself and endow the experience of *it* with all of the glorious associations our already record-fetishizing culture can create? The morning light in the room when we press play on our stereo, the smell of coffee coming from the kitchen, and especially, looking at the album art and reading the liner notes: all of this can create a new collection of sensory information, creating an exciting tapestry of
experiences making up a rich aura in its own right. When writers speak of the loss of
the aura in recordings, I wonder if a Cagean answer wouldn’t fit my reaction best: the
aura is what you chose to make it. Given the contemporary recording technology of
Benjamin’s time, perhaps he was waging an internal battle with his statement of loss:
the aura he could construct for himself from his listening experience was unable to
simulate his beloved theatrical aura – perhaps his expectations of what music is and
does colored the aura he allowed himself to make. The individual has so much control
over the creation or destruction of aura: if you are predisposed to separate your
simultaneously sensed experiences, for instance, perhaps you can label a recording as
existing in a pristine vacuum, unattached to the world in which it is heard. Similarly,
though, could we not choose to separate any “extra-musical” elements from our
experience of music in a concert hall? In live performance, haven’t we all at some
point sat next to the audience member shutting her eyes, head buried in her hands,
obviously seeking to cut herself off from any stimulus but that of the sequence of
pressure waves hitting her eardrum each in their turn? She is choosing to create her
own paucity of aura, just as we may or may not chose to do in our homes, listening to
our stereos. What style of perception you crave in your listening will structure the
elements that contribute to your ultimate reality and reaction.

Especially the site and situation in which one hears a record for the first time
can take on monumental significance. In just the way a performer’s facial expression
can potently color our impression of a new piece or interpretive decision, even if that
physical movement of muscles has no spectrally measurable effect on an emanating
sound wave, the look of a room, or car, or nature trail could potentially color that same
new sound with equal strength. Indeed, why should sole priority of aura be given to the musician in his or herself? A performer’s hand gesture fits into a conventional definition of aura-in-live-performance just as much as the light in the room or the smell of the theater does, if we listen to Benjamin. The light in a theater or the smells of the patrons are in no way directly, physically tied to the object/person making the sound, but physical proximity in time and space make us often deem these qualities inherently tied to one specific live performance, and by the transitive property, to the “music” itself, but it needn’t be uniquely so. It is empowering for the listener to take on a larger role in choosing and creating the aura that she will end up giving that piece in her mind’s assessment. In this way, a modern listener with no musical training can take on a huge creative role in the crafting of musical experience. The potential is enormous!

This potential is already being realized when listeners heed recommendations like “listen to it on headphones – it’s better” or “this is great music for the subway.” A composer’s vision for a work might include it being enhanced by conditions completely outside the controllable parameters of the medium of the recorded object/file itself. It might require the listener to take action – to take ownership in the creation of a recorded music listening experience. Betsey Biggs, in her unpublished dissertation “Everyone Play: Sound, Public Space, And The (Re)Making Of Place” talks about the engagement of the audience member as an active listener in public sound art. Installations and soundwalks are explicitly composed for specific environments and conditions, easily designated as existing in an entirely different genre from, say, a recording of Schubert or Bach. Of course this delineation makes
sense in many aspects, but allowing the essential nature of recordings to be musical objects in themselves, necessarily making their own auras wherever the listener listens to them, is something Deutsche Grammophon listings can share with the Conflux Festival of sound walks – in both cases, the outside world can take on a monumental role in the creation of listener experience.

This idea of listener agency is a much more mild version of Glenn Gould’s vision (Gould even thought of recordings as alive and performances as dead). Gould envisioned rabidly active listeners - he pictured every listener home splicing up their copies of pre-existing tapes to make their own new music.

“For Gould, this inspired, ethical paradigm of interactivity would liberate listeners from the burden of the cult of the author in artistic creation by ceding creative interpretation to those listeners and affecting the diminution or even erasure of the artist-as-genius.” (Hecker, “Glenn Gould, the Vanishing Performer and the Ambivalence of the Studio”, p. 79).

Though his vision is seductively utopian, the same blurring of authorship in musical experience can be as simply accessed as a listener’s ability to change a volume knob or an eq control, listening on the subway or in a park. The delegitimizing of recordings as necessarily lacking some aspect of a work’s information, either by missing visual information, “live energy,” or simply by necessitating a certain sample rate, takes a purposefully narrow view of both the medium of recorded music and the experience of live music. It is true, for instance, that bad data encoding can take have a huge negative impact on the perceived sound of a track, but a bad acoustic concert space can produce comparably disastrous effects on the frequency spectrum heard by some or all concert attendees (anyone who has
struggled to hear the strings in an orchestral tutti moment or wished there were more power to the bass line in a piano recital knows this pain!). In fact, a concert hall’s failings scare me more – the effect of a room is an oft-forgotten villain (or protagonist) of the concert experience, rarely making an appearance in my mind’s immediate evaluation of a work. The recording as dynamic sound object generally receives a greater scrutiny in this regard – musical content is easily deteriorated with poor data encoding or harmful eq-ing. We’re more aware of the mediation present in the playing of a recording than in a performance in a concert hall, simply because we’re used to having control over the sound ourselves; the volume knobs and eq buttons in our stereo not only give us the power to change what we’re hearing, but remind us that mediation is present. It’s a potentially active listening experience.

With this, Gould’s inviting attitude, we can simply extend the constellation of what contributes to a work’s aura to include the facets and qualities of recorded-music listening. I offer the following memory to show how strongly this idea can shape one’s musical tastes and consciousness:

The first time I heard Gorecki’s Third Symphony, it was by accident. It was the winter of 1999, and I had just gotten my drivers permit that summer, which meant I was able to offer to drive my mother to an emotional meeting she was about to have with an old friend. It was a freezing night, and it had snowed, and I was worried that, being distracted, my mother would not be on the watch for icy patches along her way. So I drove her across town and waited in our parked Volvo while she went in for an intense talk. I was cold, but I was worried about the car battery and prized listening to
the radio above employing the heat. So I was alone in the car, bundled in sweaters and coat, and staring out onto a freezing clear night of black sky and brilliant stars aside the shining icicles. It was a bit after 11pm, and that was magic hour - John Schaefer’s “New Sounds” on WNYC’s 93.9FM. I was too late to hear what was playing – all I knew was I was hooked. It was a thick sea of strings and a melting crystal voice crying out alone. I barely knew time passed. The intensity of the sounds grew and grew until finally a cathartic release came as a flood of resolving strings that poured over the car. I first became aware of my own crying when I heard my inhale over a quieter passage. When my mother came in just minutes after the movement had ended and my hero John Schaefer had told me what I’d just heard, she found a puddle of teenage tears instead of her intended steady, noble chaperone. We made it home just fine.

Though I didn’t hear this piece in a concert hall, the stamp of time and place is firmly associated with my experience. I can’t hear this piece now without being brought back to the intensity of the cold, shining winter night. Though I don’t have a visual memory of the Dawn Upshaw’s eyes or David Zinman’s shoulders, I felt an emotional directness of transmission in a way that a live performance may not have enabled. There are many reasons why this is true:

First, The recording itself has no “room” in it. I was able to have an experience divorced from the formality of the concert hall, since there were no sonic markers of a live concert experience. The stereo image is integral to this kind of reception: the voice feels far in front of the speaker, just inches from my face, and the
orchestra is in a nebulous cloud surrounding me. Dawn Upshaw is singing directly into me. There is no way this mix and this feeling of proximity could be achieved by a live audience member. (I will discuss this type of effect later on when examining recordings of “Der Leiermann.”)

Second, the placement of this music outdoors on winter’s night seems perfect to me. The laments seem truer in this dramatic setting (what could be more allowing of drama than a freezing starscape?). What might be read as over-the-top or indulgent in a more prosaic context felt natural and resonant in a dark, lonely Volvo interior.

Third, and perhaps most importantly, being alone in the car (and, as I recall, on the street) had a huge part to play in my experience. I had no need to consider decorum, true, but there was an effect beyond that – I was able to lose myself in my experience, lose consciousness of my own outward behavior. It’s true that I didn’t experience Benjamin’s magical depiction of the electricity between performer and audience, but it was replaced with a different kind of intensity – an introspective, solitary reaction that is difficult to achieve sitting in a concert hall. When you are a seated body (or standing body, depending on the venue) at a live concert, you are generally surrounded by other audience-bodies, emulating your receptive pose. This can act as a visual reminder of the formal construct of the performance in a way that poses an obstacle to a direct communication between artist and individual audience member. We have all experienced or heard people talk about the magic of an entire audience having energy and reacting to an event, but that palpable energy is generally (and perhaps increasingly?) rare, and I would argue that in that situation, to any one
attendee, the surrounding audience comes closer to the realm of effect-producer than that of fellow effect-receiver in that experience, and thus becomes a facet of the creation of the experience, rather than a fellow audience member. It is not “the energy of the audience” then, but the sights and sounds of all of the humans in the room – whether playing violins on stage or breathing deeply in chairs – that create the full, aura-ed experience. When I listen to a recording, I am generally either literally alone or “alone in a crowd” and can lose awareness of myself to varying degrees. I am in large control over my experience – I control the volume, I control my physical position (again, to varying degrees, depending on whether I’m playing a CD in my home stereo or listening from my iPhone on a Brooklyn walk), and I control how lost in the moment I allow myself to be. The swell of car horns leading to my raising the volume or the wind pressing my face a bit harder during a quiet passage can contribute to that singular magic in the way that a rapt audience can effect transcendence in a live-performance setting.

I had absolutely no thoughts of the “performance” or the “real actors” of the recording, or whether studio editing and mixing was a leading force behind my perception (see Gibbs and Dack, “A sense of place : a sense of space” from Recorded Music: Philosophical and Critical Reflections, p. 174). “Authenticity,” when taking in a recording (whatever one deems that to mean in this context), is a level of concern that can hopefully be avoided in place of losing yourself in the artistic message of the work. Imagine the analogous questions in live performance: is that singer taking advantage of the acoustics of the space or does she, herself have an amazing reverb-tail like dynamic control? Is the Steinway D that woman is playing creating the grand
effect of this passage, or is it her own physical impact on the keys? Such questions, though askable, seem pedantic in an initial level of reception if your point of entrance to the experience is primarily as a consumer rather than as an analyst.

These questions of how a recorded experience is created does (and should!) certainly become relevant to the composer, however, when assessing and analyzing music in the service of investigating what merits being emulated and what can be emulated. It is with this idea in mind that I make a study of a wide variety of recordings of Schubert’s Winterreise below. After the bliss of being lost in my favorite recordings, I can analyze these objects, picking apart the qualities they possess (and how those qualities came to be!) that contributed to the formation of my opinion and preference or lack thereof. My composerly education can have no greater teacher than this practice – I can relive these beautiful experiences again and again, listening for new dimensions in an unchanging work - the album. They are not stand-ins or documents of a different, truer expression – they are artistic works of merit to be judged on their own terms. As opposed to a Schirmer score or Lincoln Center performance, the objects of my study here are vibrant, static, and limitlessly accessible: the best of all worlds in a world unto itself.
How I think about recordings

With this idea in mind of recording as art object, the question arises: how should we examine it? Past the all-consuming aesthetic experience, what should our vocabulary and tools for analysis be in our discussion of recording artists and albums?

It seems basic that examining a piece of recorded music should involve (at least) an initial attention to the affect and effect of the recording as a whole unit: this naturally means considering not only the information conveyed by a score, or the performers’ musical decisions, but the decisions of recording engineers, available technology, the mixing/mastering aesthetic, album art, and any other aspects of the recording that contribute to its reception as a singular object. Especially for the composer, starting with the large scale question of overall artistic impact of a recording can be endlessly helpful in identifying which aspects of the work function in which ways to create that impact. For example: tracing the gain of a track may lead to interesting observations, but starting out with a question like “how did this recording achieve a feeling of anger?” can serve to focus our analytic skills on the identification and analysis of how changes in gain, among and in concert with other parameters, may contribute to that impression – a more obviously pragmatic analytic pursuit from the music-maker’s point of view. With this feeling of pragmatism, a natural sense of egalitarianism quickly emerges. How does a given track impress a listener as angry? That answer can involve discussions of scored pitches and rhythms, idiosyncratic performer technique, microphone placement, and studio effects, all examined in varying proportions, appropriate to their relative contributions. In this way, the roles
of the composer, performer, and tonmeister can be considered in combination, all working in the service of a greater artistic goal.

Again, with this pragmatic, composerly spirit, the analysis of “pieces” as having specific impacts may not be as useful as the examination of specific “tracks” as creating certain impacts. This goes back to how the modern musical thinker will define a work: in what ways is it useful to define Winterreise as a thing unto itself, successful or unsuccessful, divorced from any instance of a specific performance of recording? If the emotional impact and intellectual reading of a “single piece” is dramatically different between two performances or two recordings, in what ways is it useful to deem those two instances as one work to be analyzed? We’re used to calling performances or recordings instances of a single piece when they share a reliance on the same score, but interesting to see how wildly different in impact the “same piece” can be. Outside of the classical music world, a useful model could be the concept of the “cover.” Typically, covers are not referred to as being two instances of the same piece – a cover has its own unique profile and impact, often quite distinct from the original on which it’s based. Consider the Dolly Parton and Whitney Houston recordings of “I Will Always Love You.” In a very real sense, these two recordings do not present the same song, even though they share the same melody and harmony. They are made so different by so many factors (the radically different vocal personas of Parton and Houston, the adaptation from Country to Smooth Jazz ballad, the greater use of studio mixing, etc.) that to discuss the impact of “I Will Always Love You” without referring to a specific version will cease even to be possible with only a moderately deep level of examination.
How might an effect-driven examination of “Gute Nacht,” Winterreise’s opening song, prove similar to or different from an analysis of “I Will Always Love You?” Traditionally, a analysis of the score of Gute Nacht is classified as an analysis of the effect of the “piece” itself, but perhaps the score will only serve one facet of that discussion, provide one piece of the puzzle for any given instance of its performance or recording. Moore (from Bayley, p. 260) offers an opinion from Albin Zak: “For Zak, the ‘song’ is just that set of melodic/harmonic/lyrical data which can be extracted from the ‘track’ to enable other musicians to create a totally different ‘track’ (and hence experience) from the same ‘basic’ material. The ‘track’ includes all matters of timbre, texture and virtual performance to which we listen. In this sense, perhaps, the ‘track’ is heard, the ‘song’ can be seen, because notated.” [Albin J. Zak III, The Poetics of Rock: Cutting Tracks, Making Records (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001). p. 24.]

Two recordings of “Gute Nacht,” recorded in wildly different manners (such as a close-mic’ed studio recording of a soprano, drenched in reverb and a “live-style” recording of a baritone in a hall) could elicit more widely varied listener responses than would two different pieces (say, “Gute Nacht” and Wolf’s “Im Frühling”) recorded in a similar style. The two Gute Nacht recordings may be the same song, in Zak’s sense, but they are certainly different tracks. So where is the real essence of the piece and its specific power? The recording style and the mixing and mastering may have just as much impact on the reception and effectiveness of a track, so why are those aspects so often considered to live in a separate realm from note-choice and dynamic, etc. (the traditional score-writing decisions)?
Maybe we need to start differentiating more clearly between Schubert songs and Schubert tracks. The greater ownership of tracks in the classical world can start mirroring the concept of covers in the pop and jazz and folk worlds. It may become less and less relevant to talk about “Winterreise,” for example, as one Platonic ideal of a musical artifact – what could be more fruitful is to consider a given album’s qualities (especially its outlying qualities) on its own musical terms, evaluating communicative effectiveness as each set of parameters is shifted and swayed in new recordings. Is a blanket statement like “I hate Winterreise” or “I love Winterreise” really meaningful on its own? Without the specific stylistic and sonic profile of a given album, at least for me, those two boolean statements can flip with passionate vehemency. With pop music paying more attention to the singularity of a given performance for a given song or work, it seems possible for the classical music recording industry to respond in kind: treating scored works as templates for action, not as a single ideal to be sought and reached. If one compares Hans Hotter’s Winterreise from 1945 to Christine Schäfer’s Winterreise from 2006, though (the overwhelming majority of) the note contours are the same, the emotional profile of the listening experiences are vastly different.

Audiophiles do this all the time: an hour with any passionate collector of classical music will yield quotes about the tone of the Callas crescendo in Traviata or the brusque bow strokes of Rostropovich in a Shostakovich cello concerto. It’s not the abstract essentials of the piece that make up the pleasure derived from the recording, but the particular idiosyncrasies of the specific recording itself that can take the listening experience anywhere from dismal to transcendent. Audiophiles discuss
recordings, not pieces. The Toscanini Beethoven symphonies with the NBC Orchestra are in a different constellation altogether from the Furtwangler recording with the Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra. The appraisal of one or the other as more to one’s taste will necessitate the appraisal of separate qualities of each recording. Tempo, in this case is huge: Toscanini’s breezy tempos yield a lighter, con-brio air next to Furtwangler’s grandeur and weight. Though the tracks and performances of Bruckner I’d encountered up through college had left me cold (to the extent that I would classify my taste as Bruckner-free), when I heard L’Archibudelli’s recording of the quartet and quintet, played on period instruments and closely mic’ed in the highly resonant Raphaelkerk in Amsterdam, I wondered if my Bruckner-free taste had been substantially formed by factors other than the ideas indicated on Bruckner’s scores, or whether there were qualities of a recording that could determine my level of interest in its content that carried even more weight than whatever decisions the composer had indicated in a score.

In analyzing tracks with these pragmatic priorities of a working composer, objective data studies may not be clearly helpful. If, for instance, I want to talk about what elements contributed to my perception of quiet or loudness in a given passage, what does it really matter what the measurable amplitude of the signal is? A hugely amplified whisper and a quiet, muted scream might be experienced as comparable volumes - the whisper will probably be perceived as quieter, even if their relative gains might say otherwise. There is interesting research being done in perception studies, largely that uses statistical approaches to large amounts of “objective” data and spectral analyses of recorded music (much of it coming out of CHARM, The
but what I’m interested in for the scope of this dissertation, and in my musical analysis in general, is mining my own personal experiences and impressions of tracks for the properties and techniques I may seek to emulate in the future to create similar reactions to my own in the hearts and minds of new listeners. I am inspired by the writing of Serge Lacasse in his analysis of Peter Gabriel’s “Darkness.” (Bayley, p.242):

“During the first two lines, the phonographic staging effects reveal how the character is starting to explore his own mind, gradually becoming aware of his fears. Here, the introspective character is ‘heard’ in extreme close-up (low performance intensity at a higher dynamic level in the mix, with sounds in the background (including a distorted cry heard at a very low dynamic level). Furthermore, Gabriel sings with minimum energy and minimal pronunciation, just as if the inhibited character was somehow trying to quiet down this emerging, yet unrestrained sentiment of fear.”

He describes the unfolding of the track’s narrative in just the way that interests me: using performer practice, recording practice, and mix all in the same conversation, pointing out how they each, in turn, contribute to a potent affect.

In this dissertation, I will look at 14 different Winterreise albums – I will discuss what kind of dramatic effect they each have on me and how I believe these different effects to be created. I’m not analyzing scores for new theoretical epiphanies, nor sifting through spreadsheets of numerical data. I’m talking about the emotive effects I perceive, and which elements and techniques I have come to realize most contribute to my experience of those emotions. The comparison of these recordings can help me hear the uncommon ground, what exists in each outside the
score’s purview. It’s a seductive pursuit – if I find and label important elements that can exist in their effectiveness only in the recorded medium, it is exciting within the new paradigm of training myself as a recorded-music composer. In this endeavor, I’m uncovering personally relevant facts about recorded vocal music as its own genre - recorded vocal music as the thing itself. If I identify influential track-specific decisions, translatable to live performance as well, so much the better. It is all in the service of making me a better composer!
How I think about Winterreise recordings

In taking on this case study in recording analysis, I noticed the following aspects of my own developing thoughts and process:

First, I assumed my analysis of these Winterreise recordings would, to a large extent, differ from the type of analysis I would employ for recordings of purely instrumental music. A song cycle almost universally entails the combination of text and narrative, or at least of dramatic character, and I assumed this baggage would substantially alter the way I would experience and evaluate a musical work. With further reflection, though, after close listenings to many, many Winterreise recordings, I think the ways in which I parse these songs do not vary wildly from the ways in which I parse instrumental music. This may be a consequence of the relatively low priority I assign by default to text in my own listening practice (often I don’t understand sung text, even if it is in a language I understand well). More grandly, it might be an indication that “music is music” and vocal or instrumental, texted or untexted, the same principles of creation apply to both. I generally notice the following in all my critical listening experiences:

My taste leans toward the understated performance.

My need is always for a sense of direct communication from performer to listener.

My pet peeve is a show of virtuosity of any kind for its own sake alone.

My understanding of a work is dramatically (and sometimes irrevocably) altered by the interpretive decisions of the performer/s and/or album producer.
I will not try to hide these facets of my musical taste in this discussion – hopefully with this explicit labeling of my preferences, my biases can be accepted as premises from which the directions of my observations take inspiration.

The text and narrative of Winterreise are important to my current analysis of the work only in as much as it is important to me that a given singer convey his or her meaning with the direct communicative skill mentioned above. The dramatic element of the work is important to my study only as an easy way to evaluate where a recording may lie on the continuum from under- to overstated. In Winterreise, opportunities for interpretive indulgence abound; performers will often take advantage of them in the name of the Romantic Period in which the piece was written. To a modern ear, however, a sense of the genuine is easily ruptured by moments of reckless over-romanticism. Respect for perceived period performance style is by no means an inherently inferior interpretive choice, but in my experience it is a priority that can result in decisions that turn the listener’s experience from emotional connection to academic appreciation.

Second, I thought styles of microphone placement and the priorities of recording engineers would have changed dramatically over the 8 decades or so of Winterreise recordings. Actually, it is mostly the physical technology that has changed, not the aesthetics or priorities of those who use it. The overriding priority all along has been, as discussed above, simply to recreate as perfectly as possible an “idealized” concert hall experience for listeners at home. Rather than using available technology to create another layer of musical interpretation (as seen in pop music all
the time), this certain kind of verisimilitude has been the chief goal and concern. (Moorefield further discusses this disparity in his introduction.) In recordings like those of Hans Hotter or Peter Anders from the 1940s you can hear the higher noise floor and the relative flatness of tone and volume, but this is a difference due to outdated equipment and the needs of radio broadcasting, not recording philosophy. (I’ve noticed that I am especially attracted to recordings that remove as much of a sense of place as possible. I’ll be discussing this at greater length below.)

Third, I really did think it would be hard to think critically about music without reference to a score. As it turns out, the kinds of issues I’ve been grappling with have only provoked questions of score-following a few times. In general, what is interesting to me has little to do with score markings (recording quality, tempo decisions, breath quality and frequency, etc.) and as such I refer very little to measure numbers or chord names. In reference to specific events, I’ll use the singer’s text and the large-scale structure of each song (“the beginning of the second strophe,” or “the lead-up to the climax,” etc.).

Acknowledging these surprises, I decided to go ahead and set down my thoughts on about fifteen different recordings. I tried to choose representatives from many different times and places. My earliest recording is Peter Anders from 1942 and my last is Christine Schäfer from 2006; I have chosen recordings from Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Holland, England, and France; I have sopranos, tenors, and bass-baritones; I have pianos and fortepianos. Rather than compare rigorously only within
type, I thought a more rewarding way to think would be to compare effects and see which factors contributed at which times to certain types of successes or failures.

For an initial discussion, I focused only on the song “Die Krähe,” one of my favorites and an often-neglected short song in the second half of the cycle. I chose it for its modest scope: its length mostly lies in a range of 90-120 seconds (depending on the performance), the piano part is spare, and it is an easily identifiable (if approximate) ABA’ form. Thanks to its relative simplicity, I can make statements about the recordings that might not be as immediately apparent in songs that are more involved. Once I clarify my salient points in this initial discussion, I will apply some of the same ideas to Winterreise’s final, most famous song, “Der Leiermann.”

Again, my immediate goal is to form logical categories that may prove useful to my future work as a composer, listener, and thinker. While it is true that by focusing on one or two Schubert songs I lose authority in a discussion of general “classical music” patterns and effects, but the types of distinctions I draw will show familiar tropes of musical characters: the singer, the pianist, and especially of the recording engineer, with an acceptable loss of generality.

And now I’ll get to making those points:

MY CATEGORIES OF “DIE KRÄHE” PERFORMANCES:
In listening to and opining about the many different recordings of this song, (and the cycle as a whole), I began to notice myself sorting my appraisals into somewhat distinct groups. I settled on these four categories:

I. The “Singerly” Narrator  
II. The “Singerly” First-Person Actor  
III. The “Speechy” Narrator  
IV. The “Speechy” First-Person Actor

By assigning myself the task of explicitly placing each recording into one of these four categories, I forced myself to discover what aspects and features inspired the creation of my personal definition of each group. As opposed to the CHARM style analyses that more closely resemble data mining, I chose to find these features “by ear.” Again, if I perceived “quiet” in a section of a track, the actual amplitude of the waveform is less important to me as a listener and composer. Were I to embark on a musicological search regarding perception, I would probably opt in to that style of analysis, but for my current purposes and goals, I found no need to employ spectral analyses or tempo detecting software. My own perceptions were enough to deal with for the present.

Before discussing the recordings themselves, I’ll clarify what factors I determined most pertinent to my attributions of the terms “singerly” and “speechy,” “narrator” and “first-person actor.”

SINGERLY
“Singerly,” according to my own definition, implies an audible indulgence by the singer in texture and technique that force the listener (on some level) to acknowledge the voice as musical instrument. It often is comprised of some subset of the following factors: liberal use of vibrato, excessively legato texture, excessively staccato texture, exaggerated (and/or prolonged) consonants, and stylized vowel coloration. I considered labeling this “operatic,” but I think there are implications in that word of scale and style that are undesirable in this context. Opera is called to mind, however, for the relative heaviness of the vocal technique built into its pedagogy and practice. Lieder singing is a different world with different physical and stylistic demands, but singers visiting from other worlds will naturally bring their own sensibilities and predilections to any project.

The benefit of a singerly performance is that it often shows the singer’s instrument to its greatest advantage. Gorgeous round tones and virtuosic dynamic levels are sometimes the most pleasurable parts of a performance and can best be achieved by deploying tools like steady air pressure (usually effecting a strong legato) or “unnatural” vowel coloration (as in darkening or brightening in a way one wouldn’t in speech). Much of classical vocal pedagogy is meant to prepare singers for just this sort of project.

A disadvantage of this sort of performance is that, when used in excess, I find “singerliness” can prevent me from being submerged in the emotional environment of a song. The appreciation of a beautiful tone or a perfectly executed phrase, when obviously the focus of a passage, makes me aware of my own appreciation of the
music as an art object. Microphone placement can be crucial in complementing this style of singing – if too much of the room is audibly present, this style can instantly call to mind the weight and trappings of classical vocal tradition. I can draw a useful, if imperfect analogy to my experience of virtuosic, hyper-realist paintings: I generally find it hard to focus on and be subsumed by the content of the work when the obvious and astonishing skill involved in its creation is so glaringly apparent – my mind is taken out of the art and into the artist.

In essence, though a singerly performance can produce painfully pleasurable moments of listening ecstasy, an excess of singerliness can result in an erosion of the sense of direct communication a good performance can create between artist and audience.

SPEECHY

I define “speechy” as a quality of performance that lacks the obvious vocal shine and polish I described above. Again, it is often comprised of some subset of the following factors: straight tone (lacking vibrato), breathy tone, a lack of textural extremes, and vowels and consonants typical of unsung speech. Recordings that I deem speechy include some that I would say have moments of great technical display, but ultimately I don’t end up processing these performances in the way I would those in the singerly group. The conveyance of a specific emotion or narrative seems, in these performances, to be a higher priority than the delivery of a traditional “purely musical” beauty. Again, this is not to say that they are necessarily not beautiful
recordings, but that the musical choices might not always showcase the performer’s vocal prowess for its most classically virtuosic potential.

Speechy recordings tend to be more communicative in an everyday sense. I am more likely immersed in the emotional atmosphere of these recordings. Sometimes there is a conversational effect -- as if the singer is actually speaking to you, telling his or her story to you. These albums were generally marked by closer microphone placement and greater stereo separation between voice and accompaniment, making for a generally drier mix. Phenomena like audible breaths could cause associations with speech and the physical presence of the person as communicator. The less obvious the recording is as a concert-style performance, the more likely I am to process it as more closely colloquial communication.

The obvious disadvantage of these kinds of recordings is that sometimes you really want to revel in the glorious vocal feats that come out of abstractly musical decisions. The singer who overly skimps on phrase endings or seems to restrain his or her natural singing voice would be an example of the less successful outcomes of the speechy recordings.

NARRATOR

Labeling a recording in “narrator” style implies simply that I interpret the singer’s role as that of narrator, not as the protagonist of the cycle. Present in the performance is less a sense of personal urgency and desperation and more that of a storyteller describing those emotions with rhetorical tools. Factors that contribute to
this appraisal seem to include one or more of the following: a relatively narrow
dynamic range, a lower voice (no female recordings that I’ve heard fall into this
category), and generally slower tempos.

The limited dynamic range and the slower tempos are easy to read as a lack of
emotional urgency, but sometimes there is an ambiguity between narrator-style
performance and a performance that seeks to convey personal desolation and despair.
Perhaps to resolve that ambiguity one could think of a narrator either as telling the
story of another or as telling the story of his own passion, now as an emotionally
hollow outsider.

The role of the low voice in this grouping I attribute to its association with age
and wisdom. A bass baritone will almost unavoidably connote visions of an older
man, which does not immediately fit with the hyper-dramatic, young and passionate
tone of the cycle. (Schubert originally wrote the cycle for a tenor voice.) When a rich
baritone sings the final song, “Der Leiermann,” it is difficult to process it as the first-
person account of a young man broken by the trials of a passionate unrequited love.

FIRST-PERSON ACTOR

I apply “first-person actor” description to recordings that achieve the effect of
conveying the stories and emotions of the songs as being in the singer’s own
immediate experience. Rather than being told the story of the cycle by an outsider, or
by the protagonist of himself from an outside perspective, it is as if we have crawled
inside the heart and head of the boy and are walking with him as he stumbles in the
snow and pines for his lost beloved. These recordings tend to be characterized by one or more of the following: generally quieter dynamic choices, dramatic dynamic shifts, occasionally large dynamic range, high singer level in the mix of the recording, and primarily the use of speech-like vowels and consonants (as opposed to the often altered vowels and consonants of common vocal practice). These recordings call to mind an actor playing a role as opposed to an orator relating a text.

The more out-front the voice is in the mix, the more likely I am to place a rendition in this category. By creating such a distance between voice and piano, similarity to the real-world chamber music environment dims and a new kind of perceived space is created. If the performer’s choices align in a certain way, this kind of hard focus makes us feel as though we are experiencing the protagonist’s own introspection.

A voyeuristic atmosphere (where we are peeping into the boy’s inner narrative) is brought about by certain dynamic patterns -- long quiet or moderate intervals with quick bursts of volume. This pattern evokes the inner monologue of most any person in times of brutal frustration.

Further to illustrate these terms, I’ll offer brief descriptions of the specific Krähe recordings in the context of their placement in each of my categories. This will set up a tone and vocabulary with which I will explore versions of “Der Leiermann” below.
In order to facilitate a discussion of certain interpretive decisions, I’ll first clarify the context of this particular song:

THE PLACE OF “DIE KRÄHE” IN THE CYCLE:

This song comes 15th (the third song of the second half of the cycle). Over the twenty-four songs of the piece, we hear the protagonist (or at least, the character speaking to us) tell his sad story:

He fell in love with the daughter of a family with whom he had been living at least since May. Though her mother had even spoken to the boy about marriage, the girl is now, in winter, married to someone else -- a rich man. (All of this is explained in the first song “Gute Nacht” and the second song, “Die Wetterfahne.”) We don’t learn how or why the engagement was broken off, but through the text and tone of the music we hear the bitter despair of the protagonist, his resentment at the fate that has befallen him.

Throughout the first six songs, we hear the protagonist wander the town where his beloved lives. He has left her house, but he wanders seemingly aimlessly, wracked with pain and brimming with nature metaphors. The last of the six songs ends with a painful reminder of the geographical beginning of the cycle at his beloved’s house:

You [Flood water] will flow through the town with it,  
In and out of the busy streets;  
When you feel my tears burning,  
There is my sweetheart’s house.
The setting of the final words is gigantically intense -- a huge rise in volume and register as the text of the last line is repeated in minor cadential arpeggiation, making it one of the most dramatic moments of the cycle. Right after that, with the songs “Auf dem Flusse” and “Rückblick,” we first hear that the boy is on his way out of town. He goes through snowy roads and cavernous mountains, propelled by his need to flee the scene of his romantic tragedy.

By the beginning of the second half of the cycle, the protagonist has arrived in a new town, but is still thinking of his beloved back home. The first three songs of the second half present something of an affect-rollercoaster. “Die Post” is an energetic, vigorous song; he hears the posthorn and thinks of his old town and his beloved, but in a major key with the robust rhythms of galloping horses heard both in voice and accompaniment. By contrast, the next song, “Der greise Kopf,” (“The Old Man’s Head”), is as tragic and epic as an operatic aria. The rhythm is expansive and the tone of the setting exhausted as the boy now curses his youth, horrified by how long he has to wait for old age and death to relieve his misery.

“Die Krähe” comes, then, after these two opposite extremes, as an affective catharsis. The plain, little adorned, steady eighth note rhythm of the voice and the perpetual triadic triplets of the piano first hit the ear as a sublime Schubertian sorbet -- a straightforward way to cleanse the palate after the pungent sweet and sour of the previous two songs. The text, however, continues the bitter death wish of “Der greise Kopf”: 49
Die Krähe

Eine Krähe war mit mir
Aus der Stadt gezogen,
Ist bis heute für und für
Um mein Haupt geflogen.
Krähe, wunderliches Tier,
Willst mich nicht verlassen?
Meinst wohl, bald als Beute hier
Meinen Leib zu fassen?
Nun, es wird nicht weit mehr geh'n
An dem Wanderstabe.
Krähe, laß mich endlich seh'n
Treue bis zum Grabe!

The Crow

A crow has accompanied me
Since I left the town,
Until today, as ever,
It has circled over my head.
Crow, you strange creature,
Won't you ever leave me?
Do you plan soon as booty
To have my carcass?
Well, I won't be much longer
Wandering on the road.
Crow, let me finally see
Loyalty unto the grave!

Soon after the sweetness of the simple, scalar first strophe, chromatic tensions and modal ambiguities strike. Quickly, the B section jumps from key allusion to key allusion, major feel to minor reference and back again (in the C minor score, the heard harmonic progression is approximately Eflat-C-F-D-G, outlined in the ascending high notes of the voice line, Bflat-B-C-Csharp-D). The ambiguity of tonal center highlights the question portion of the text – the least declamatory, most vulnerable text of the song. All of this slippery harmonic play is done with polished finesse, ultimately causing the plain stability of the home minor key in the return of the A section to be newly fraught with the shadows of complexity and tension. After a brief allusion to
the subdominant, and with a shaky climax that goes from strong tonic and dominant chords to a resulting diminished seventh, the little song ends on a quiet low resolution.

THE CLASSIFICATION OF KRÄHE RECORDINGS:

I. THE SINGERLY NARRATOR

A good example of what characterizes this group is Peter Anders’s recording from 1945. His voice is universally smooth; he scoops and slides and glisses through much of the song (which perhaps has mostly to do with a 1940s Germany style of singing). His liberal use of vibrato and operatic crescendo to the climax on the final line of text places him squarely outside the speech-like realm. His voice and interpretation are grand; each phrase is sung through with steady air and confident, strong consonants. Nowhere to be heard is the desolate confusion of a dejected boy – Anders presents the story as a powerful orator relating epic tragedy. The recording style plays an interesting role as well in creating this effect: even in Anders’s quietly sung first few lines, the voice level is solidly and vastly on top of the piano. There is nothing that relates any weakness or frailty in this recording.

Similarly, the Hotter recording from 1942, with its eerily steady tone and rich, velvety baritone (Hotter sings it in A minor, not the original C minor), conveys more the masterful telling of a tale than a real-time account of the experience itself. Here occasional abrupt tempo changes (as in the moments of rushing during the third line of the song “Ist bis heute…” and the last line “Treue bis zum…”) precede unexpected
strong breaths. These breaths are neither implied in the score nor used by the vast majority of singers, but they do allow him to connect phrases ordinarily broken: he sings the last bit of the third line and fourth line together as one long luxurious phrase, he connects the repeat of the eleventh line to the first word of the twelfth line to stunning effect. These unexpected phrasings, though possibly chosen for reasons of text painting (did he wish to set apart the final “bis zum Grabe,” “from the grave,” from the rest of the line?), serve to sever any connection to informal speech rhythm with their jarringly dramatic pauses.

Other recordings that fall in this group are Ian Bostridge’s rhetorically and technically indulgent version from 2004, Thomas Quasthoff’s light, but velvety bass-baritone version from 1998, Peter Schreier’s athletically executed version from 1991, and Fischer-Dieskau’s stately, smooth version from 1979 with Barenboim on a heavily pedaled piano, high up in the mix.

II. THE SINGERLY FIRST-PERSON ACTOR

A perfect illustration of this group is Brigitte Fassbaender’s recording from 1988. Her voice is ripe with sporadically strong vibrato and operatic color. Through that thick medium, however, her emotional frailty remains clear. Her near-warble and dramatic dynamic shifts, in the context of this song, go so far as to evoke hysteria. Her vowel choice for the word “Wanderstabe” in the return of the A section is bright and nasty, which sounds in her low register like the ugliness of an angry sob. The breathiness she adds on the words “Meinst wohl” in the B section make her sound as if
she is out of breath from the teary telling of her own tale. There is nothing detached or narrator-like in her performance. (Christa Ludwig’s recording from 1986 is comparable in warbly drama, but the steadiness of her tone and the more “artful,” smooth phrasing she deploys could also plausibly place her in the singerly narrator camp.)

Christoph Prégardien’s rendition is also in this group, though the overall sound of the recording is quite different. It was recorded in a studio usually reserved for radio broadcasts (Westdeutscher Rundfunk in Cologne), then heavily drenched in dreamy reverb. Though Fassbaender’s recording was also studio produced (at Abbey Road), Prégardien’s sounds studio produced (Andres Villalta, Audio Specialist in the Princeton Music Department, in conversation, confirmed that Teldec, the recording’s label, generally employs a liberal amount of reverb in post-production). The reverb is excessive to the point where it becomes a sonic phenomenon unto itself. Listening to his consonants decay like a sparkling cloud in the sun is equally as distracting as would be a gratuitous display of vocal virtuosity.

An advantage of this studio recording, however, is that his voice is pleasingly up in the front of the mix. The fortepiano accompaniment by Andreas Staier is light and able, but its background placement allows us a greater feeling of direct communication between the protagonist and ourselves. The role of the fortepiano is that of an unearthly commentator. The combination of this type of mix and the generous amount of reverb makes this recording difficult to “place.” It doesn’t sound like a concert hall, a church, a living room or an internal monologue – it sounds like a
studio recording. Many others from across the four categories fall into this studio placement – the Bostridge, or perhaps most notably the Schäfer. An ambiguous sense of place in the recording can be among the most important factors in determining my relationship with it.

III. THE SPEECHY NARRATOR

The only recording that I feel falls squarely into this category is that of Robert Holl from 1996. His rich, full baritone (he sings the song down in A minor) and his limited dynamic range give the interpretation a feeling of wise detachment, easy to read as a narrator telling a story.

The speechy quality of the recording is created by a synthesis of several factors. Holl makes certain key interpretive decisions that contribute strongly to this effect. His notes are generally detached – his breath doesn’t travel through the phrase with a sense of driving, singerly motion. He employs minimal vibrato that only makes itself heard on longer note values. His phrase endings are casual and sometimes noticeably clipped. His tempo through the song is a little unsteady which, to my ear, actually makes the song sound more genuinely communicative in a colloquial sense (who among us speaks her most intimate thoughts in steady, even beats?). These choices come together to provide a delightfully “natural” sounding performance.
The sound engineer’s decisions figure prominently in this categorization. Though the album was recorded in a church (the Evangelisch Lutherse kerk in Haarlem, Holland), it is surprisingly dry. The church only seats about 120 people and is made of wood, not stone. The resulting low reverb lets Holl’s speech-like qualities come through as intimate much more strongly than they would with greater levels of decay (such as we hear on the Prégardien or the Bostridge). It doesn’t feel like a studio or concert hall or church recording -- it is, again, a disembodied story for us to consider without a sense of architectural context. We can graft on it the place we give it in our own hearts and ears and minds. The mix also helps this speechy-narrator categorization: Holl being so far in front of the piano again creates a sense of direct communication between himself and the listener (just as it did in the Prégardien).

IV. THE SPEECHY FIRST-PERSON ACTOR

Ian Partridge’s recording from 1988 shares many traits with the Holl. His breath is light -- no driving legato. His breath sounds are occasionally audible. His performance is practically all straight-tone, and with his airy tenor, that produces a young, honest affect. He has no giant dynamic swells, but his light touch somehow conveys a sense of restrained emotional frailty. It is as though we are hearing the young protagonist talking to himself as he walks along, or as if we are in his head hearing his intimate thoughts.

The mix in this recording again places singer squarely on top, but not heavily so. Here the choice of using fortepiano is the major contributor to the sense of
intimate singer-listener communication. A heavier piano sound might easily put this recording into the world of chamber music performance. It was recorded at Finchcocks, a Georgian manor in Kent that houses a vast period instrument collection; the reverb seems to support my guess that the performance was in a large-ish wooden hall. Ultimately, the lightness of instruments, performance, and recording make this what I would classify as one of the most plain (in the best sense) sounding recordings.

Christine Schäfer, in her Teldex Studio recording from 2006, also values lightness in sound and affect. Her voice is generally small and breathy, sometimes sounding like a young child (at times she even sounds out of breath). She uses bright vowels, but is not artificially nasal. Her tempo is fast, which allows the pacing of the song to mimic speech more closely. The ends of her phrases are often casual, conversational, or clipped. She is obviously singing quietly, but thanks to the artful studio mix we hear her perfectly above the piano. Once again, Teldex (a close relative of Teldec) indulges in a generous amount of reverb, but Schäfer’s restraint trumps any feeling of distance that can be created by this technique. (This combination of decisions will be explored in greater length when her Leiermann is discussed below.)

The performance is decidedly intimate. It is as though she is talking to herself and we are right there listening in. Her great misery comes through only on the final climax (the only note for which she uses significant vibrato!). This general restraint with one highly contrasting emotional peak gives the sense of a voyeuristic view of the desolate inner monologue of a person enveloped by despair.
A QUICK DISCLAIMER:


“Here, again, is an interpretation inflamed by wartime. Listen to the way Anders italicizes the words ‘Kampf’ and ‘Sturm’ in the song ‘Rast,’ to how desperately he stresses the wanderer's stinging pain. In fact, his is a virtually operatic ‘Winterreise,’ meaning not that Anders is histrionic but that he less describes than inhabits the wanderer's miseries; that he sings full voice; that the vocal weight of his delivery produces hefty cadential retards associated more with arias than with art songs.”

and of the Hotter:

“This is not the only way to convey the authenticity of the wanderer's suffering. In fact, the most powerful ‘Winterreise’ I know -- also recorded in Germany during World War II, also with Raucheisen as pianist -- is an interior reading devoid of special pleading. This is a 1942 recording by Hans Hotter, who has the courage simply to sing what he feels. And what he feels -- far more potently than when he re-recorded ‘Winterreise’ with Gerald Moore in London in 1954 -- is an ineluctable fatigue of the spirit, remote from any madness or degradation.”

Though Horowitz exactly disagrees with my interpretation of Anders and Hotter as narrators vs. first person actors (“less describes than inhabits the wanderer’s miseries”), his delineation of potential effects (interior vs. exterior, etc.) is quite similar. This even further proves to me how subjective these assessments are, even to like minded listeners, and how the temptation to use concrete digital data to make general statements about reception is a precarious endeavor – I can only speak to my hearings and my interpretations of how they came to be, with a hope that my experience and the lessons I take away will inform the quality of my creative composerly decision making in a way that will make my work more clearly define its message. With that in mind, I will go on to examine how three different recordings of
“Der Leiermann” leave me three unique sets of questions and impressions and memories of what that monumentally famous finale is and does.
How I think about Leiermann recordings

THE PLACE OF “DER LEIERMANN” IN THE CYCLE:

Leiermann stands last and quite alone in the cycle. Twenty-fourth of twenty-four, it has the spare simplicity of Krähe in melody and accompaniment, but there’s something modern in Schubert’s spare treatment of Müller’s text. The two opening fifths stand singly in their mystery, getting the street-organ idea in our ears with those unprecedented appoggiaturas. After the stately, more sophisticated, fuller sounding of grief in “Die Nebensonnen,” these lonely gestures, with their elemental force, act like rousing jabs, awakening the listener’s ear for a freshly haunting farewell. (Interestingly, Müller’s original ordering of the poems has “Mut!” in penultimate position, but Schubert’s reordering includes a switching of Mut! and Nebensonnen - plausibly exactly to create this juxtaposition between lush and spare while staying in the realm of grief and resignation.)

The text avoids any literal mention of death, or of the protagonist’s beloved, or in fact any reference to what has come before in the cycle, (except for its temporal placement in bitter wintertime):

**Der Leiermann**

Drüben hinterm Dorfe  
Steht ein Leiermann  
Und mit starren Fingern  
Dreht er was er kann.

**The Hurdy-Gurdy Man**

Over there beyond the village  
Stands an organ-grinder,  
And with numb fingers  
He plays as best he can.
Barfuß auf dem Eise
Wankt er hin und her
Und sein kleiner Teller
Bleibt ihm immer leer.

Keiner mag ihn hören,
Keiner sieht ihn an,
Und die Hunde knurren
Um den alten Mann.

Und er läßt es gehen,
Alles wie es will,
Dreht, und seine Leier
Steht ihm nimmer still.

Wunderlicher Alter !
Soll ich mit dir geh'n ?
Willst zu meinen Liedern
Deine Leier dreh'n ?

The Leiermann could be an incarnation of our protagonist or perhaps his grief.

He could also show us our hero’s death in metaphor, a succumbing to ignored pain
and nostalgia for a better time. In “Schubert and the Sound of Memory,” an article by
Scott Burnham for Musical Quarterly, he describes the feeling Schubert evokes
generally, which so fits my impression of these final moments of the cycle:

“Music, we like to say, is about time. Whereas a Beethoven can seem to enlist
time in a glorious ride to the future, Schubert makes us feel its irrevocable passing. We
hear the sound of memory, the sound of mortality--and it is beautiful. For Schubert
leads us to no Beethovenian vision of what we could be, but finds us time and again in
that hallowed, terrible place where we remember what we are.”
The following three recordings each, in their own combination of tools and affects, take us to that hallowed, terrible place where we hear youth and passion wither in defeat and despair.

CHRISTINE SCHÄFER, soprano | ERIC SCHNEIDER, piano | WOLFRAM NEHLS, tonmeister:

For Christine Schäfer, this transition from Nebensonnen to Leiermann marks a glaring change in singerly technique. For Nebensonnen, she deploys a classical style vibrato throughout the song – light but clearly identifying the track as existing squarely in the common contemporary take on appropriate lied singing style. For Leiermann, even more than in her Krähe, Schäfer abandons an identifiably lied-style voice and takes on a tone more familiar to accomplished indie rock sopranos, nearly void of vibrato. Her masterful command over her instrument allows her to create the aforementioned speech-like effect while showing the gorgeous simplicity of Schubert’s lines with dazzlingly clear intonation. In contrast to the bold, lush piano introduction Schneider declaims (lush thanks both to his indulgent pedaling and the generous addition of reverb on the track), Schäfer’s entrance is small and flat. In our perception of dynamic, we process her singing as quiet but, again as in Krähe, her decidedly high placement in the mix ensures her whispery tone rests effortlessly on top of the Steinway’s powerful playing.

Wolfram Nehls, tonmeister on the album, describes his job on his website:
“How does music reach the audience? Who affects and shapes the sound on its way from the concert hall via microphones, cables, and mixing desks through to the listener? What is a Tonmeister? Is he a recording producer, a sound designer, a musician, an organizer or even a care-taker for the artists? All of this is right, because Tonmeister work in a very specialized business, but have to be allrounders at the same time.”

Indeed, Nehls’s contributions to this album are just as essential to its success as the other musicians involved. The mixing and reverb on this final track is critical to its ultimate intimate effect – a “live-style” recording, with more aural presence of the physical space in which the musicians exist, would put our consciousness on the outside of the work, observing Schäfer’s grief from the safe, familiar distance of audience member. By having such a close-mic’ed, studio-reverb sound, we’re right next to her in the cycle’s time of heightened drama: the audible breaths and quiet singing provide the intimacy, the swells of the piano and the glowing reverb provide the cues of momentous emotional strife. Schäfer can be so flat in affect and still read as tragic because of this multitiered support system: unlike an interpretation like Anders’s that features a theatrically mournful vocal style, complemented by a mechanical, hurdy-gurdy inspired fortepiano accompaniment (to be discussed below), Schäfer and Schneider and Nehls are able, by collaboration in the studio, to invert these roles. Schneider’s dynamic and tempo swells are tastefully, but surely covered by Schäfer’s icy calm. We are left feeling the piano to be the evidence of Schäfer’s own emotional urgency that perhaps she, the protagonist herself, is beyond acknowledging. Her calm thus reads as a frightening lack of attachment to the world or to her own emotions in the wake of romantic disaster – a perfect sign of resignation to the Leiermann’s beckoning towards death. The affect of the track can be
summarized in the text itself: “Und er läßt es gehen, Alles wie es will,” (And he lets it go on, all as it will). Our attention is specifically drawn to that line, in fact, by Schäfer’s dynamic decisions: for the line “Keiner sieht ihn an,” she takes a dramatic shift into fully whispered technique, the rest of the strophe being in the smallest, most desolate tone. For her telling of his (read as her own) resignation at the onset of the next strophe, she comes back a bit in volume, as if interpreting the just-passed lines for us as her own unimportance to the world.

Another benefit of the close mic’ing is the miraculously clear and airy “W”s that mark the onset of the first and third lines of the last strophe. At the risk of revealing my own reveling in this track, I will declare these exaggerated, drawn-out consonants to be brilliant. They sound at once the eerie removal to a non-speechy world, past colloquial communication and connote, either consciously or unconsciously for the listener, the wintry wind our protagonist is feeling on her face as she follows her vision unto her icy death.

Her final note on “dreh’n” is a climax for which the listener is unprepared – seemingly out of nowhere, Schäfer unleashes a sudden crescendo, then stops short, right on the last beat, exactly where indicated in Schubert’s score. It seems a herald that, after all of that detached description, eerily outside of herself, the protagonist has now, in a fleeting moment of swelling misery, summoned the courage to end it all abruptly with a clipped, sharp “n.” (In my mind’s eye, I see in this moment her casting herself off a snowy cliff, perhaps in sight of the graveyard of “Das
Wirtshaus.”) But whether literal or metaphoric, Schäfer’s journey has surely met its startling end.

Live in a hall, the creation of this epically intimate experience would be all but impossible. No matter how small or grand the hall, this specific cocktail of whispery soprano tone and glorious reverb, close mic’ed consonants and lush pianistic swells, would be impossible in a classic concert context: for Schäfer to maintain such whispered, flat affect, Schneider would never be able to expand to such swells; for Schäfer to communicate each idiosyncratic consonant with such control, a far dryer acoustic environment would have been necessitated. It requires the talents and skills of Schubert, Schäfer, Schneider, and Nehls to create this particular musical vision. The magic of the studio is what facilitates the other artists’ creation of this profoundly powerful track.

PETER ANDERS, tenor | MICHAEL RAUCHEISEN, piano |
BERLIN RUNDFUNK, studio:

The Winterreise recorded by tenor Peter Anders and pianist Michael Raucheisen was made in Berlin in January and March 1945. According to a note in the CD booklet, the Third Reich's broadcasting studio in the Masurenallee, where the recording was made, the ReichsRundfunkGesellschaft “rose above smoldering ruins. Berlin's theaters, concert halls and opera houses had been leveled. Air raid warnings increasingly disrupted Raucheisen's ‘Songs of the World’ project, in which the Anders ‘Winterreise’ was a late installment.” This is a swan song of a now-blackened golden
age of broadcasts: Rauscheisen brought together some of the Third Reich’s most talented musicians to record and broadcast a wide catalogue of German language songs. Further, the Nazis funded extensive projects that sought to improve the fidelity of recording to tape, which led to innovations in bias that would later be adopted the world over.

With all of the Rundfunk’s advances, however, the noise floor on this record still places it squarely in its time: the prominent layer of hiss that extends over this track, and indeed the whole album, acts like a patina, making the track richer with its clear historical placement. Imagine this track without the hiss – the scooping vocal technique and romantically indulgent interpretive decisions would be suddenly bare, awkward next to more temperate modern style choices. The hiss is what allows me to take this musical language seriously and lovingly, in the context of a bygone era. The hiss acts like both a scrim and voltage converter, warmly distancing and delicately amping down the direct emotional affect of the track. (I am excited to imagine a compositional context in which a manufactured hiss could be of interesting, similarly impacting use to me in the creation of a track of Lainie music!)

The Berlin Rundfunk provides an interesting historical backdrop for this recording, often described as relating the pain and anguish of a civilization on the eve of destruction. This song, so imbued already with dark meaning and resignation, fits perfectly into the narrative of the defeat of a war-weary people – this track’s context only further darkens and chills our preconception of the song. It was recorded ambiently, prizing some sense of space and evoking a more traditional concert-going
balance in this radio broadcast-ready work than did the Schäfer. Anders’s voice is cutting, highlighting his declamatory, operatic style and technique in sharp relief (in conversation with Andres Villalta, he confirmed that the recording at Berlin Rundfunk would probably have been made with a Telefunken microphone, famous for its strong response to high frequencies). He is considerably higher in the mix than Raucheisen’s piano, likely because he is simply closer to the single microphone that would have been employed for the broadcast-ready recording. As opposed to the effects of Schäfer’s close mic’ing, the listener is not in an unfamiliar stereo space while listening to this track – the studio does what we expect it to do for a classical radio broadcast.

What results is an album teeming with theater. The mix evokes the image of a soloist, costumed and made up, unfurling his beautiful arias center-stage while a pianist faithfully accompanies off to the side or down below. Being unavoidably confronted by Anders’s technical ability on a conscious level, hearing his powerful tone solidifies his place in the listener’s mind as a wise orator, guiding us through the particulars of his urgent descriptions. Anders’s uniformly proud rhetorical style is only disrupted for the final lines of the song, when the text has the protagonist address the Leiermann directly. Anders dips down into an exaggerated whisper and adopting a staggering rubato, only to pick up suddenly in tempo, dynamic, and fervor for his final appeal to his subject “Willst zu meinen Liedern / Deine Leier dreh’n?” His rupture from the consistent, steady tone he employs in the rest of the track makes for a shift in our relationship to the song and a reassessment of Anders’s role as a magical narrator of a tragic tale. I am reminded of Schubert’s use of layered voicing in Der Erlkönig: the alternation between singer as narrator or character that Schubert achieves with
range separation in Erlkönig, Anders suddenly achieves with dynamic and tempo shifts. By diving down to a glacial whisper, then shooting up to a distraught wail, he briefly takes on the emotional persona of the protagonist speaking to the ghostly organ-grinder, not the colorful orator narrating the sad tale of a distant soul. In this way he draws us closer to him, closer to the story, to wring our hearts for the final, melodramatic moment of the journey.

Throughout the track, Anders’s propensity to dote on every consonant places his conservatory training and larger artistic purpose squarely in the realm of live opera performance. Especially startling are his “r”s, which, though rarely rolled in spoken German, are here uniformly rolled with gusto surpassing any other singer I surveyed. In a hall or theater, this style of excessive enunciation might mean the difference between clear and unintelligible text, but in this studio recording, the technique is distancing: it serves an absent purpose to ill effect. We’re made aware of the awkwardness that can exist in live-performance-minded music heard through a recorded medium. Another album in which I hear the potential conflicts between live-performance values and recording-musicianship principles is the Teldec recording of tenor Christoph Prégardien and Andreas Staier.

CHRISTOPH PRÉGARDIEN, tenor | ANDREAS STAIER, fortepiano | WERNER STRASSER, engineer:

I’ll lastly take a quick look at this track that, in some important ways, stands apart from all of the other recordings I surveyed in this project.
In a larger review of several Winterreise albums in *La Scena Musicale*, Prégardien is described as perhaps being better suited for live performance than for recorded music: “The wonderful intensity that makes Prégardien an incomparable concert recitalist sometimes seems overwrought on disc, especially his shocking swells to forte, mercilessly captured by the Teldec engineers” (*La Scena Musicale*, Volume 3, Number 5, February-March, 1998 [see http://www.scena.org/lsm/sm3-5/sm3-5winterreise.htm]). Two aspects of this description seem immediately relevant: first, I love the use of the word “mercilessly” to describe Teldec’s engineering of the album – it highlights the huge role Teldec plays in creating the listener’s experience of this album; and second, this comparison between recital and recording contexts, discussed at greater length in my look at the Anders recording above. It strikes me here as remarkably similar to questions actors routinely engage with on the different demands and penchants of stage acting and movie acting. The “intensity” of stage actors was a mantle often cast off by Hollywood legends who professed as gospel the practice of “acting” as little as possible for film. “Don’t let anybody catch you at it. Don’t act. Just behave,” said Spencer Tracy as his best advice to the young Burt Reynolds (taken from a Turner Classic Movies tribute to Tracy by Reynolds). Tracy understood the intimate view of the camera and its separate set of demands – it captures every flick of an eye with the same merciless clarity as the microphones of the Teldec engineer. It’s not only the distance between singer and audience in a typical concert hall, but the construct of the recital itself that lends its environment to heightened interpretations and the techniques they require. For a modern listener, the Glenn Gould vision of an artist creating a recording as its own object might require a
significant alteration of interpretation and technique for the same ultimate goal of listener connection to be attained and kept.

Though I do agree with La Scena for many of Prégardien’s tracks on this album (perhaps most notably in “Irrlicht,” where the eerie lightness of the text is erased in the end by his fierce, singerly resolve), I don’t think their appraisal rings true for Der Leiermann. His interpretation is decidedly first-person, free of a feeling of oratorical rhetoric. Though we do hear the occasional breath noise to remind us of his humanity, Prégardien gives a performance near superhuman in its control. His flawless swells and smooth as silk vowels force us to appreciate his vocal prowess, his singerly virtuosity, almost to the point of again getting in the way of one’s emotional connection with the literal narrative of the song. Here, unlike in the Anders track, however, this phenomenon is less detrimental, since it has far more of a feel of instrumental chamber music to it. The fortepiano, close mic’ed in sharp and stinging clarity (by those merciless Teldec engineers!), is high up in the mix, less an accompaniment (as it was in Krähe) and more a member of the ensemble. Prégardien’s tone is reminiscent more of David Shifrin’s than of Peter Anders’s or Fischer-Dieskau’s or of any tenor’s in my survey. Studio, tenor, and fortepiano thus combine to make this track more of an abstract musical experience and less an overtly theatrical journey. The tale of the Leiermann is tragic, but the poignancy of Schubert’s lines brings out my tears here more than Müller’s words. A quiet night with a laptop and good headphones is all I need to experience Schubert’s pervasive tone of mortality in this pristinely painful track.
Epilogue: What I learned about recordings

In living with these Winterreise recordings for so many years now, I can say in perfect confidence that the studio has as much of an impact on my impression of these tracks as do the performers involved – perhaps more, depending on the particular vision of the recording. Though my training was not in engineering, I know now that when I record my music, I will have to conduct the engineering myself or serve as a watchful, fully engaged advisor in the process. Schäfer’s recording, perhaps the one with which I find most resonance with my musical taste and emotional character, would be awkward and distant without Teldex. It’s not enough to create scores of music I believe in for the performers I trust: to commit fully to the idea of recording as end-goal, I must use this new parameter to the different depths my pieces will require, leaving no studio technique unconsidered in my quest. Unlike Winterreise, where dozens of recordings abound, for the foreseeable future, my works will be recorded only once, presenting a single vision to the world of what they do and are. In this environment, the music creator, listener, and analyst all need to be aware in turn of the many different studio decisions that each feed into our appraisal of the success or failure of a new work. Creators must be ready to employ the studio in ways still considered unconventional or even taboo. Though a score may hold promise for great success, a track can easily fail if the studio is not fully realizing the extent of the composer and performers’ vision. The sooner we, as a community of musicians, become more comfortable with that fact, the sooner our listeners will be enjoying a far wider swath of the recorded music world.
Bibliography


Centre for the History and Analysis of Recorded Music, [http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/projects/p2_2.html](http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/projects/p2_2.html) (accessed 8/26/2014)


DIE WINTERREISEN:


All translations of song texts used in this dissertation are the work of Celia A Sgroi and can be found at: http://www.gopera.com/winterreise/songs/
Lainie Fefferman

here I Am

A rock oratorio for
3 sopranos & countertenor
clarinet/b. clarinet, electric guitar, piano
percussion, electric guitar, violin, & cello

Score

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Here I Am | 1: Lot’s Daughters

Lainie Fefferman

Bass Clarinet in B♭

Drum Set

Glockenspiel

Vibraphone

Electric Guitar

Voice

let everything ring unless indicated otherwise

motor off - lots of pedal

rock ballad strength!

Two angels arrived in Sodom, in the evening, as Lot was

Keyboard

Violin

Violoncello
sitting at the gate. When Lot saw them he rose to greet them
and, bowing low with his face to the ground, he said: "Please my lords,
turn a side to your servant's house and spend the night"
Sudden change: $= 80$
orthernly - quiet as this range can get

But they said: "No, we will spend the night in the square"

"No, we will spend the night in the square"
But he urged them strongly, so they

Lainie Fefferman: Here I Am | Lot's Daughters

Back to $j = 100$
turned his way and entered his house. He prepared a feast for them and
Lainie Fefferman: Here I Am | Lot's Daughters

B. Cl.

Dr.

Glock.

Vib.

E. Gtr.

Voice

they ate

Kbd.

(Don't "arrive" on downbeats)

Vln.

Vc.
They had not yet lain down when the townspeople, men of Sodom,
young and old, gathered about the house.
And they shouted to Lot:
Shout (like a giant, drunk, horny lunatic):

Where are the men who came to you tonight?
Bring them out to us that we may LAY with them!
So, Lot went out to them,
to the entrance, shut the door behind him and said:
I beg you, my friends, do not commit...
such a wrong.
Look, I have two daughters, who have not known a man.
Let me bring them out to you, and you may do to them as you
please; but do not do anything to these men.
Lainie Fefferman: Here I Am | I: Lot's Daughters

The screaming Sodomites:

But, they said

This fellow Lot came here as a stranger, and already he acts the ruler! [shout/laughing]
Now we will deal worse with you than with them!

STAND BACK! [mocking]
Lainie Fefferman: Here I Am | 1: Lot’s Daughters

B. Cl.

Dr.

Glock.

Vib.

E. Gtr.

Voice

Kbd.

Vln.

Vc.
And they pressed
Lainie Fefferman: Here I Am | I: Lot’s Daughters

hard against the person of Lot and moved forward to break the door.
But the angels stretched out their hands and pulled Lot in-
ff to the house and shut the door

rock diva moment!

to the house and shut the door
And the people outside, men of Sodom, young and old, they
(as much of a fade out as possible in this range)

struck with a blinding light!

Lainie Fefferman: Here I Am | Lot’s Daughters
Here I Am | 2: The Nephilim

Bass Clarinet

\[ j = 40 \]

come in with cello:

pitchless air noise throughout movement (peppered in quiet key clicks very sparsely)

Drum Set

come in with cello:

brush cymbals in long, smooth swells. (with 1 cue later on)

Electric Guitar

come in with piano: remove line from guitar output - fondle it with fingers to create quiet, constant crackly noise.

Voice

straight, sweet tone (a bit of vibrato is fine)

Keyboard

(continue the B from last movement)

cue cello at start of movement

Violin

Come in 5 secs after violin cue: quietly as possible, gliss up and down through natural harmonics for the duration of the mvmt (sul ponticello)

(OR, IF THAT'S TOO HEAVY): Pepper in pizz'ed natural harmonics in e minor every 2 or 3 seconds... occasionally in clumps of 3 or 4
It was then, and later too, the Nephilim appeared on earth. When the divine be-

Cued by soprano entry:
Bow random pitches in e minor every 3 or 4 seconds
(let ring) ==> Go to end of movement.

Pluck string inside piano
ings lay with the daughters of men who bore to them

It was then

Pluck string inside piano

Here I Am | 2: The Nephilim
cued by sop's "nephilim" (the second time): while still swhooshing...
lick your finger and get that roar sound on floor tom

on Earth When the divine beings

Here I Am | 2: The Nephilim
lay with the daughters of men who bore to them

offspring

Here I Am | 2: The Nephilim
They were the heroes of old -
the men of renown.

"They were the heroes of old -
the men of renown."
And he that presented his offering the first day

was Nahash the son of Ammihud of the tribe of Judah; and his offering was:
Here I Am | 3: Offerings (Trio)

\[ \text{MC} \quad J = 120 \]

Golden, gorgeous Martha tone

\[ \text{MH} \quad \text{Rock Melly voice} \]

one silver dish

\[ \text{CS} \quad \text{Folky McFolk Folk} \]

one silver basin

the weight thereof was a hundred and thirty shekels

\[ \text{MC} \quad \text{of seventy shekels} \]

one young bullock

\[ \text{MH} \quad \text{sin} \]

of ten shekels full of incense

\[ \text{CS} \quad \text{one golden pan} \]

one golden pan

\[ \text{MC} \quad \text{one male goat for a sin of fe- ring} \]

\[ \text{MH} \quad \text{one he-lamb for a burnt of fe-ring} \]

\[ \text{CS} \quad \text{two o-xen} \]

five rams
five he-goats
one silver basin

one he-lamb of the first year

one silver dish

one young bullock

ty she kels

one ram

one golden pan

one he-lamb of the first year

one male goat

one he-lamb of the first year

two oxen

one silver dish

year

five rams
Here I Am | 3: Offerings (Trio)

the weight there-of was a hundred and thirty she-kels

one silver basin

of seventy shekels

one golden pan
Here I Am | 4: Deuteronomic Rules

Totally free - all gestures cued

Violin
Violoncello
Singer
Keyboard
Vibraphone
Drum Set

You shall not sow your vineyard with two kinds of seed;
you shall not plow with an ox and an ass together;

All cued by drums

(If on piano, deaden string with finger. If keys, find brittle percussive sound.)

strike hard, (hard mallet), but mute bar with palm

cue all hits after each singer's text box

cow bell

bass drum

(wait for perc hit)
you shall make tassels on the four corners of your garment;
you shall not wear cloth combining wool and linen;
you shall not marry your father's former wife;
No one whose testes are crushed or whose member has been cut off shall be admitted into the congregation of the lord;
Here I Am | 5: Sword on Thigh

- Bass Clarinet in B♭
- Drum Set
- Glockenspiel
- Vibraphone
- Electric Guitar
- Voice
- Keyboard
- Violoncello

Symbols:
- \( \text{slap tongue} \)
- \( \text{hard mallet, mute with hand} \)
- \( \text{rowdy rock sound} \)
- \( \text{dampen strings if on piano} \)
- \( \text{if on keys, find wooden percussive sound} \)
- \( \text{pizz.} \)
Soon as Moses came near the camp and saw the calf and the dancing,

B. Cl.

Dr.

Glock.

Vib.

E. Gtr.

Voice

Kbd.

Vc.

gritty - growly?

smokey rocker voice

plain overdrive
he became enraged and he hurled both the tablets from his hands and
Here I Am | 5: Sword on Thigh

15

B. Cl.  

Dr.  

good ride

Glock.  

Vib.  

E. Gtr.  

Voice  

shattered them at the foot of the mountain.  He took the calf

Kbd.  

Vc.  

mf

stop dampening
that they had made and burned it; he ground it to powder and strewed it upon all.
Here I Am | 5: Sword on Thigh

22

B. Cl.

Dr.

Glock.

Vib.

E. Gtr.

Voice

Kbd.

Vc.

low ride

the wa-ter and so made the Is-rae-lites drink it__

zeppelin type voice
Moses saw that all the people were out of control since Aaron had let them
get out of control so that they were a menace.

deaden with mallet

Here I Am | 5: Sword on Thigh
Here I Am | 5: Sword on Thigh

Mo-ses stood up in the gate of the camp and said "Who-e-ver is for the Lord"
Here I Am | 5: Sword on Thigh

35

B. Cl.

Dr.

Glock.

dampen

e. Gtr.

Voice

come here

Kbd.

Vc.

p (match glock)
Here I Am | 5: Sword on Thigh

And so all Levites rallied to him:
He said to them, "Thus says the Lord G+d of Is - rael: each of you,
Here I Am | 5: Sword on Thigh

B. Cl.

Dr.

Glock.

Vib.

E. Gtr.

Voice

put sword on thigh and go slay brother, neighbor and kin

Kbd.

Vc.

rock out moment

sub. mp

sub. mf

sub. mf

Here I Am | 5: Sword on Thigh

135
Here I Am | 5: Sword on Thigh

B. Cl.  

Dr.  

Glock.  

Vib.  

E. Gtr.  

Voice  

Kbd.  

Vc.  

The

apocalyptic

F

ff

The

137
Le-vites, they all did as Mo-ses had bid-den and some

Work up to high crazy over-driven noise solo!
(attaca to next movement)
three thousand of the people fell that day.
And Moses said "Dedicate yourselves to the Lord this day that he may bestow a blessing upon you, for each of you has been against son and brother."

Say, flatly (in sync with Mellissa, once she is on stage with Caroline and Martha)

bow high cymbal after "Dedicate yourself..." (let ring)
Here I Am | 6: Innocent Men

Martha

\( \text{Harsh, bright tone} \)

\( \text{A - bra-ham came for-ward and said} \)

\( \text{clap} \)

Percussion

\( \text{A} \)

Joyful!

Mellissa

\( \text{Harsh, bright tone} \)

\( \text{A - bra-ham came for-ward and said} \)

\( \text{clap} \)

Percussion

\( \text{Folky McFolk Folk} \)

Caroline

\( \text{Harsh, bright tone} \)

\( \text{A - bra-ham came for-ward and said, "Will you sweep a way the} \)

Percussion
Voice

Perc.

Voice

Perc.

Voice

Perc.

Voice

Perc.

Here I Am | 6: Innocent Men

in - no - cent a - long with the guil - ty?

What if there should be fif - ty in - no - cent with - in the
Voice

Perc.

Voice

Perc.

Voice

Perc.

Voice

Perc.

Voice

Perc.

Voice

Perc.

Voice

Perc.

Voice

Perc.

Voice

Perc.

Here I Am | 6: Innocent Men

will You then wipe out the place and not for-

city;

clap

give it for the sake of the innocent fifty in it?

stomp

stomp
Shall not the judge of all the earth deal justly? And the Lord answered:

2+3

Voice

Far be it from you to do such a thing!

Perc.

Heavy

Voice

Far be it from you to do such a thing!

Perc.

Heavy

Voice

Far be it from you to do such a thing!

Perc.

 mf

 Voice

And the Lord answered:

Perc.

 mf

 Voice

And the Lord answered:

Perc.

 mf

 Voice

Shall not the judge of all the earth deal justly? And the Lord answered.

Perc.

 C\(\downarrow\) = 40

 with somber weight
"If I find within the city of Sodom fifty innocent ones, I will for

give the whole place for their sake." A-braham spoke saying

And A-braham spoke saying,
"Here I venture to speak to my Lord, I who am but dust and ashes:

What if the fifty innocent should lack five?

Would you destroy the
whole city for lack of the five?"

And the Lord answered: "I will not destroy..."
Voice

Perc.

If I find forty-five there." But Abraham spoke to the

But Abraham spoke to the

But Abraham spoke to the

Voice

Perc.

Lord again and said "I will not

Lord again and said

Lord again and said

Voice

Perc.

Lord again and said "What if forty could be found there?"
Here I Am | 6: Innocent Men

Voice

Perc.

Voice

Perc.

Voice

Perc.

Voice

Perc.

Voice

Perc.

"Let not my Lord be angry if I go on:

Far be it

"What if thirty should be found there?

Far be it
from you to do such a thing! "I will not do it if I find it.

thirty there.

"Again I venture to speak my Lord,

getting sweeter

"What if"
Here I Am | 6: Innocent Men

72

"I will not destroy..."

76

"Let not my Lord..."
What if ten should be found there?"

"I will not destroy for the sake of the ten."
Here I Am | 7: And Their Bloodguilt Shall Be Upon Them

Speak to the Israelite people, and say to them:

The Lord called to Moses and spoke to him, saying:

Lead to the Israelite people, and say to them:
Here I Am | 7: And Their Bloodguilt Shall Be Upon Them

Spoken! (like a raging evangelist)

Command$to$be$done.”

Moses said to the community,

Spoken! (now in a calmer voice)

“an offering by fire of pleasing odor to the Lord.

The priest shall turn the whole of it into smoke on the altar as a burnt offering, an offering by fire of pleasing odor to the Lord.

If your offering to the Lord is a burnt offering of birds, you shall choose from the turtledoves or the pigeons. It is a burnt offering, an offering by fire of pleasing odor to the Lord.

Spoken (like a raging evangelist)
S. Solo

E. Gtr.
B. Cl.
Kbd.
Vib.
Vc.

Speak in a whisper, spring, brief
Although the scene has true firs, with the firs suffused, it does not chew the cud You shall not eat of their flesh or touch their carcases; they are unclean for you.

molt! with hand

p

speaking (sings exultant, but now soon whistled)

Anything that has horns and a tail—these you may eat. But anything in the seas or in the streams that has no fins and scales, they are an abomination for you, and an abomination for you they shall remain.

Any sound other than those of the "Ye's"

bit on the left arm, for all the "Ye's"

They are an abomination, for you and all abominations...

...and as you shall eat...

begin this after Mellissa's "...among the birds"...
...the hoopoe, and the bat.

Come in after Melissa's...

...the hoopoe, and the bat.

They shall not be an abomination for you.

But of these you may eat among them:
Here I Am | 7:And Their Bloodguilt Shall Be Upon Them

[Music notation image]

162
Screaming! A WARNING FROM ABOVE

Here I Am | 7: And Their Bloodguilt Shall Be Upon Them

Your shall not defile yourselves through them: I am the LORD your God!
If a man marries a woman and her mother, it is DEPRAVITY;
both he and they shall be put to the FIRE, that there be no depravity among you.
If a man has CARNAL relations with a BEAST, he shall be put to DEATH and you shall kill the beast.
If a woman approaches any BEAST to mate with it, you shall KILL the woman and the beast; they shall be put to DEATH—their bloodguilt is upon them.

If a man commits adultery with a married woman, committing adultery with ANOTHER MAN'S WIFE, the adulterer and the ADULTRESS shall be put to DEATH.
If a man lies with his father's wife, it is the NAILEDNESS of his father that he has uncovered; the two shall be put to DEATH—their bloodguilt is upon them.
IF a man lies with his daughter, both of them shall be put to DEATH; they have committed INCEST—their bloodguilt is upon them.
If a man lies with a male as one lies with a woman, the two of them have done an ABHORRENT THING; they shall be put to death—their bloodguilt is upon them.

You shall not let your cattle mate with a different kind;
Speak plainly (kind of beautifully?)
you shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed;
You shall not put on cloth from a mixture of two kinds of material.

You shall not eat anything with its blood.

You shall not eat anything with its blood.
Here I Am | 7: And Their Bloodguilt Shall Be Upon Them

If a man marries his SISTER, the daughter of either his father or his mother; so that he sees her NAKEDNESS and she sees his nakedness, it is a DISGRACE. He shall be EXCOMMUNICATED in the sight of their kinsfolk. He has uncovered the nakedness of his SISTER, he shall bear his guilt.

If a man lies with a woman in her INFIRMITY and uncovers her nakedness, he has laid bare her flow and she has exposed her BLOOD FLOW; both of them shall be CUT OFF from among their people.

You shall not uncover the NAKEDNESS of your mother’s SISTER or of your father’s sister; for that is laying bare one’s own FLESH; they shall bear their guilt.

If a man lies with his uncle’s WIFE, it is his uncle’s nakedness that he has uncovered. They shall bear their guilt: THEY SHALL DIE CHILDLESS.

If a man marries the WIFE of his brother, it is INDECELUTY.

It is the nakedness of his brother that he has uncovered; they shall remain CHILDLESS.

You shall not make gashes in your flesh for the dead; in your flesh for the dead, or incise any marks on yourselves.

I am the Lord.
As the Lord commanded Moses, so did he number them in the wilderness of Sinai:

Of the children of Simon:

Folky McFolk Folk

Hold till breath gives out

Of the children of Gad:

Hold till breath gives out

Three thousand and five hundred

Of the children of Judah:

Five thousand six hundred and fifty.

Of the children of Simon:
three score and four thousand and six hundred fifty and
Of the children of Issachar

four thousand and four hundred fifty and seventy thousand
Of the children of Zebulun

sand and four hundred. forty thousand five hundred.
Of the children of Joseph

thirty and two thousand two hundred.
thirty and five Manasseh.
Of the children of Benjamin

thousand four hundred.
Of the children of Dan
score and two thousand and seven hundred.  

hold till very end of breath  

mp Of the children of

Asher forty and one thousand and five hundred.  

wait till Martha is right before the very end of her breath  

but definitely enter before she's done!

Naph-ta-li fifty and three thousand and four hundred.
Here I Am | 9: Take Your Son

- Clarinet in Bb: breathe out on pitchless vowels (match singer when possible)
  straight into microphone - start when strings do
- Glockenspiel: move finger up and down G string without stopping / playing a note. (squeaky noise!)
  go up and down continuously and rapidly keep going till I say to stop
- Electric Guitar: when unmetered, make each phrase last as long as your breath can hold it unless otherwise indicated. (sing only on the vowel of the word)
- Voice: sing in quiet straight tone
- Violin: gliss through harmonics on E string - continuously and rapidly (flautando) etc...
- Violoncello: pp (or maybe just air noise on G string)
Here I Am | 9: Take Your Son

Cl.  
Glock.  
E. Gtr.  
Voice  
Vln.  
Vc.

(y)OU(r) o(n) - (l)y (s)O(n) I - (s)AA(c)

stop squeaking

...keep glissing...

B

(wh)O(m) (y)OU (l)O(ve) (t)A(ke) (y)OU(r) (s)O(n) (y)OU(r)

...keep sprinkling...

...keep glissing...

...keep glissing...

...keep glissing...

...keep glissing...

...keep glissing...

Here I Am | 9: Take Your Son

Cl.  
Glock.  
E. Gtr.  
Voice  
Vln.  
Vc.

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...keep glissing...

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...keep sprinkling...

...keep glissing...

Here I Am | 9: Take Your Son

Cl.  
Glock.  
E. Gtr.  
Voice  
Vln.  
Vc. 
fade out a second after singer hits high D

cut out when singer hits high D

hold this phrase until your breath shakes

12ish secs

cut out when singer hits high D

10 secs

cut out on sop's second "whom you love"

C

sprinkle throughout the reading

When ready, cue violin and tell the Akedah Story

whispery ($q = 100$)
D = 60

Cl. (D重大)

Dr.

Glock.

E. Gtr.

Voice

Vln.

Vc.

with singer

quiet as possible cymbal roll (soft mallets)

come in with singer
come in with singer

e tc...

bowed (l.r.)

bowed (l.r.)

when not playing

what's written,

improve e minor

harmonic sprinkles

clean and sweat 1.r.

sung (in boychoir angel voice)

You start

the section

serene

Take your son, your only son,

Take your son, your only son,

Take your son, your only son,
Here I Am | 9: Take Your Son

50

Cl.

\[ j = 88 \]

barely tongued

Dr.

end roll on this measure

(fade out)

Glock.

sim. (come in with singer)

E. Gtr.

Voice

l.r.

clean l.r.

Vln.

Vc.

I _ saac____ , Take your son____ , your
Here I Am | 9: Take Your Son

Cl.

Glock.

Voice

Vln.

Vc.

73

F

with violin pizz

mf

Take your son, your only

violin: pizz.

spic.

80

G

Cl.

with soprano's "son"

Glock.

with keyboard

E. Gtr.

Voice

Kbd.

Vln.

Vc.

Your son, I saac, whom

with guitar

not strummed

with soprano's "son"

sweetly sprinkled

178
Here I Am | 9: Take Your Son

with glock

keep going till breath runs out completely

with clarinet

get everything ringing as much as possible!

arco

ff
Here I Am | 9: Take Your Son

-ly son

Take your son

clean (roll very slowly!)

p*antly sweet

lyrical

with guitar

Take your son

I

Take
Here I Am | 9: Take Your Son

Cl.

Glock.

E. Gtr.

Voice

Kbd.

Vln.

Vc.

painfully sweet

with guitar

lyrical

Take your son

your only son

heartbreaking

Red

Take your son

your only son
Here I Am | 9: Take Your Son

quiet as possible
cymbal roll (soft mallets)

122
Cl.

Dr.

Glock.

E. Gtr.

Voice

Vln.

Vc.

130
Glock.

Voice

Vln.
Here I Am | 9: Take Your Son

Cl.

Glock.

Voice

Vln.

make them gasp!

make them gasp!

whom you love, whom

L

= 88

1 = 88

whom
Here I Am | 9: Take Your Son

153

Cl.

Dr.

Glock.

Voice

Vln.

bow cymbal
(unless we decide this is too cheesy)

you love whom you love

you love