

Radio in the United States *began* with opera when inventor Lee de Forest made experimental operatic broadcasts over radio waves in 1910s.¹ Timothy Taylor has shown how uplift and democratization rhetoric tying together radio with opera predominated in the 1920s, from ads for Magnavox radio sets to statements that radio would enable listeners to hear “great music” for the first time to using art music to justify radio as a public good that should be subsidized by the US government.² Early opera on the radio came in fits and starts in the 1920s, including various Chicago initiatives and one-offs such as a *Fliegende Hollander* from Manhattan Opera House. Yet clamor for opera on the radio was primarily aimed at America’s grandest operatic institution—the Metropolitan Opera.³

After a protracted negotiation period, in May 1931 the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) agreed to pay the Metropolitan Opera \$120,000 for exclusive broadcasting rights to a 24 week radio season.⁴ Commencing with that year’s Christmas Day transmission of *Hänsel und Gretel*, the radio broadcasts became a media phenomenon—by the end of the decade, more than ten million listeners tuned in every weekend.⁵ Gradually cycling through the major commercial radio networks—NBC, ABC, and CBS—the Saturday broadcasts were thoroughly enmeshed in American capitalism via corporate sponsorships from American Tobacco, Listerine, and a sixty-four-year partnership with the Texas Company (Texaco).⁶ While my focus is earlier, I should note the Met broadcasts—now underwritten by Toll Brothers—are today the longest-running classical music program in American radio history.

From their beginning, Met broadcasts highlighted the entanglements of capitalist enterprise, radio rivalries, the record industry, and what Alex Sayf Cummings broadly refers to as “unauthorized reproduction.”⁷ Early Met stars such as Enrico Caruso helped swell the coffers of

Victor Talking Machine Company (later RCA Victor) in the 1910s and '20s before commercial radio.⁸ By 1931, the initial contract about the Saturday radio broadcasts stalled over NBC's request for a "franchise," i.e. a fee for exclusive radio broadcast rights to concerts or recitals by Met artists. NBC ultimately purchased this franchise for several years, but it caused endless headaches due to contracts Met artists had with other radio companies—tenor Nino Martini, for example, had a preexistent agreement with NBC rival Columbia Broadcasting Company.⁹ These muddled relationships between performers, phonograph and radio companies, and the Met amplified arguments over reproduction—authorized or not—of the radio broadcasts.¹⁰

Thus, the Met's first radio contract expressly forbade NBC from "reproducing" radio broadcasts on phonograph.¹¹ Occasionally third parties—such as "Speak-O-Phone" aluminum records—made recordings directly from Met broadcasts, but this practice ultimately led to a landmark case in American copyright history: *Metropolitan Opera Assn. v. Wagner-Nichols Recorder Co.* (1950).¹² In the lawsuit, Columbia Records, the Metropolitan Opera, and ABC's radio network sued Wagner-Nichols for selling Met broadcasts copied off the air, arguing the recordings unfairly competed with Columbia releases of Met performances.¹³ Though performances and recordings were not yet protected under American copyright law, the Met and its co-litigants ultimately won the lawsuit by arguing Wagner-Nichols was "unfairly exploiting their commercial advantages" because of all the capitol they had invested in producing these performances."¹⁴ Nonetheless bootleg opera recordings exploded during the hi-fi era of the 1950s and '60s. The first "authorized release"—the "Metropolitan Opera Historic Broadcast Series"—only came in 1974.¹⁵

Before analyzing Met radio bootlegs through two specific case studies, I'd like to briefly touch on three broad concepts connecting opera, radio, and unauthorized recordings—concepts hovering around the Ehrenreich collection. In his work on the historical contingencies of “liveness,” Philip Auslander reminds us that distinguishing live from recorded performances “arose as an ethical (and quasi-legal) obligation of *radio* broadcasters...since listeners could not be certain the sounds they were hearing were being produced live.”¹⁶ Early “live” opera broadcasts were positively compared to the perceived “deadness” of the phonograph; as Sarah Thornton puts it “the word ‘live’] soaked up the aesthetic and ethical connotations of life-versus-death, human-versus-mechanical, creative-versus-imitative.”¹⁷ This narrative of live authenticity versus recorded artifice permeates bootleg discourse, but where do radio *opera* broadcasts stand on this spectrum? Was a line recording off the radio *always* somehow “less valuable” than the same performance captured “live” in the Metropolitan Opera House?

Moreover, extant scholarship on unauthorized recordings primarily studies specific popular musics, leading us to ask how *much* readily maps from that constellation of genres onto opera. As an art music genre, opera intersects rather uneasily with preexistent pop stereotypes about bootlegging; liveness, for example, signifies differently in opera than rock 'n' roll.¹⁸ How opera's repetition of canonic works—or owning twenty different versions of *Figaro*—might compare to different pop concert recordings is similarly complex. Pop music scholars have suggested collecting recordings is both a “commodity fetishism of physical objects” and an obsessive-compulsive ritual of anticipation, catharsis, and let down”—is this precisely the same for operatic collecting?¹⁹ How does rarity or an archival impulse to preserve ephemeral or unreleased works play into operatic bootlegging?²⁰ And within the political context of late 1960s

pop bootlegs that Alex Sayf Cummings describes as “mashed together New Left radicalism and countercultural liberation,” is such a politics—or anti-capitalism—possible within opera’s cultural milieu?²¹ Finally, operatic bootlegs often obsessively catalogue specific performers; not just *a* recording of *Lucia di Lammermoor*, but a recording of a particular soprano on a specific day. Mitchell Morris famously analyzed the aesthetic stance of “opera queens” as privileging the performance of the female singer, noting pointedly that an opera queen will defend all of the prima donna’s performances, “legally recorded or pirated.”²² Laura has noted that Ehrenreich self-identified as a “pirate queen.”²³ Pop bootlegging seems primarily male-dominated, but how might our emerging knowledge about operatic bootlegging illuminate new connections between gender, sexuality, and the practice of making unauthorized recordings?²⁴

With these more general thoughts in mind, I’d like to turn now to my main case studies, which analyze Met radio bootlegs through two specific lenses: intimacy and racialized listening.

Colloquially, intimacy means many things: closeness, emotion, familiarity, eroticism, dichotomies such as public/private.²⁵ Critically, feminist and queer scholars such as Ara Wilson understand intimacy “as a domain of power” and “a productive means of looking at relational life.”²⁶ Though the term’s multivalence is challenging, “intimacy” in both its colloquial and critical senses connects to radio recordings of opera, which is connected with intimacies through a) listening and the blurring of binaries such as public/private, b) networks and community, and c) touch and materiality.²⁷

As early radio penetrated the domestic sphere, Michelle Hilmes notes it was both praised as “exposure to the public in the privacy of one’s home” and condemned as a threat to the “private, feminine domain distinct from the masculinized public sphere.”²⁸ **Listening** in these

private spaces to newly soft voices tantalized American radio audiences in the 1930s, leading to cultural panic over the transgressive masculinity of crooners such as Rudy Vallee.²⁹ Due to close microphone techniques, quiet volume, informal speech, and the disembodied performer, Michael Channon notes radio produced “*an effect of artificial intimacy* as if the singer and the song are transported into the presence of the listener.”³⁰

But if early radio’s connections with intimacy are clear, listening intimacies in broadcast opera and bootlegging are complex. Opera typically eschews microphones, but microphones were needed to broadcast over the airwaves.³¹ Operatic vocal styles, though, did *not* noticeably change to emphasize close microphone techniques. Whether radio listeners felt a different sense of aural intimacy than in a hall is an open question. And though radio audiences and bootleggers alike listened to opera in intimate domestic spaces, was the aural ghosting—the audible presence of the cavernous Metropolitan Opera House itself on radio broadcasts—a potential barrier to intimacy? Listening to Ehrenreich’s radio bootlegs offers us little glimpse of his interiority, of course, but analyzing the volume, echo, and mic techniques of these tapes could illuminate broader questions about intimate listening.

Intimacy also suggests community— a 1924 commentator noted that through bridging physical distance, radio could help achieve a “sense of intimacy.”³² Benedict Anderson famously described an “imagined community” as individuals who through media consumption—like reading a newspaper—connect themselves to larger groups such as nations. Michelle Hilmes applies Anderson’s concept to radio listeners; as early radio explicitly attempted to create communities from these “vast, invisible publics,” it could “assert and communicate meanings” through the unifying power of simultaneous experience.³³ Lauren Berlant resituates Anderson as

well through her concept of “intimate publics” as “disperse groups for whom intimacy is generated and mediated by consumer goods,” but Berlant finds intimate publics specifically among marginalized groups who long for shared experience and acceptance.³⁴

How, perhaps in a challenge to the apparent primacy of the live concert bootleg, might such imagined communities—constructed through radio and tape media—extend in significant ways beyond the bounds of the opera house into the intimate life of someone like Lee Ehrenreich? Do Berlant’s marginalized groups and “intimate publics” seem particularly relevant for operatic bootleggers, through the marginalization of bootlegging itself, of opera, through perhaps the questionable legality of the practice, and perhaps through their own (perhaps outsider) identities?³⁵ As just these few images demonstrate, like many bootleggers Ehrenreich seems to have exchanged tapes through networks of other operatic collectors. Did these networks—presumably disperse groups whose connections were mediated by *non-consumer* goods—constitute something akin to Berlant’s intimate publics or something altogether different?

These images from Lee Ehrenreich’s collection likewise illuminate ties between material objects, intimacy, sensory experience, and memory. In their work on intimacy, Geraldine Pratt and Victoria Rosner single out “the significance of objects for narrating memories,” and Andy Bennett and Ian Rogers similarly note that for pop music fans material objects such as ticket stubs connect the past with the present as “palpable objects for writing of personal histories.”³⁶

Rather than the playful or satirical covers sometimes found in pop bootlegs,³⁷ Ehrenreich’s tapes feature a rich loam of newspaper clippings, concert programs, reviews, and other contextual debris. For the live opera bootlegs, he tucks in ticket stubs, which Bennett and Rogers have analyzed “as a prompt to re-enter the narrative or memory” of an experience.”³⁸

Ehrenreich's ticket stubs likely reminded him not just of specific performances but very particular spaces and sounds, such as a 1993 evening spent in seat A132 in the New York State Theater.³⁹ We might be tempted to discount the material culture of his radio bootlegs as less meaningful. I would argue, though, that these tapes' connection to material culture, memory, and intimacy remains significant. Though the musical material of Ehrenreich's tapes tends to lure us toward the aural rather than the tactile, we might insist on considering the texture of the tape cases, the crinkle and smell of aging newspaper, the physical labor of making bootlegs—starting up equipment, finding and copying other recordings, listening for audio problems, cutting out newspaper articles, typing up cast-lists, making labels.⁴⁰ Through this laborious tactility and sensory invocation to memory, these objects potentially create an intimate space of memory, emotion, and connection.

Today's second case study connects to a larger project of mine analyzing the role of race in listening to Metropolitan Opera broadcasts in the 1950s-'70s, an era which encompassed both the cataclysms of the civil rights movement *and* tentative steps to integrate Black singers at the Met.⁴¹ But as I engaged on the work for *this* conference, these two projects began to intersect in my mind, leading me to ask what operatic bootlegging and collectors like Ehrenreich might contribute to an analysis of listening, opera, and race. Very much still a work in progress, I'll suggest two preliminary ways—through identity and through listening—that we might connect these threads with operatic bootlegging.

Due to the extra-legal nature of unauthorized reproduction, bootleggers operate on a spectrum of discretion to invisibility, making any reliable census notoriously difficult.⁴² Scholarship on pop music—and 1960s rock and jam bands in particular—suggests bootleggers

are prototypically white and male. Lee Marshall underscores that bootleggers are likely the most dedicated *fans* of a specific artist or genre, so operatic bootleggers would likely come from a specific subset of the operatic audience, which is predominately white as well.⁴³ Identities connected to gender and sexuality seem murkier—we have already noted potential “intimate publics” of marginalized subgroups such as gay male bootleggers. Is there an invisible community of female bootleggers as well, or is the lingering boys club of mid-century hifi technologies a contributing barrier to female bootleggers? The economic profile of operatic bootleggers is similarly complex, highlighting a tension between potential anti-capitalist sentiment for bootlegging and the requisite economic privilege to buy opera tickets and technology.⁴⁴ *Would* the radio opera broadcasts actually democratize bootlegging's economies? And much like Jennifer Stoeber has discussed in terms of the “*known* presence of black radio listeners when traditional archives seem to turn up nothing,”⁴⁵ are there “extra-invisible” Black operatic bootleggers—especially radio bootleggers? (We might also note here opera’s historical investment in colonialism/Orientalism, and the Met’s specific iteration of white supremacy as factors here). None of these are easy questions to answer, but they demonstrate a particularly nuanced space around opera, bootlegging, and identity.

Turning to listening: as a sound one hears without seeing the source behind it—what Pierre Schaeffer dubbed *musique acousmatique*⁴⁶—radio was an especially transgressive force in American culture. Analyzing radio voices “playing” their others across racial, generational, and gender lines in the 1920s-’30s, Michelle Hilmes noted that “radio’s ability to escape *visual* overdetermination had the potential to set off a virtual riot of social signifiers,” or to dangerously upend racial, gender, and class distinctions.⁴⁷

This sound-without-a-body is precisely where Nina Eidsheim's work on race and sound is situated. In her recent book *The Race of Sound*, she argues that the acousmatic question “Who is this?,” tells us nothing about the singer, only about the listener.⁴⁸ For US listeners, concepts about race are constructed through an essentialized misunderstanding of timbre. Though operatic style insists on “narrowly defined conventions of timbre, pronunciation, style, etc,” listeners still seem to try to locate an essence, a biological determinism in timbre that they can unproblematically equate with race—in other words, that they can easily describe as a “Black” voice.⁴⁹ Underscoring that a racial group does not share similar vocal morphology, Eidsheim argues US white listeners are activating what she calls a “phantom genealogy activated by non-sonorous cues.” This is an old history: white American listeners see Black singers, project their sight of those bodies *onto* sound. These listeners then imagine a stable concept of “sonic blackness” and associate later generations of Black singers with this “phantom genealogy.”⁵⁰ For singers such as Leontyne Price and Martina Arroyo, their vocal timbres were continuously contextualized by critics and audiences within this phantom genealogy.⁵¹

Operatic bootleggers such as Ehrenreich present a complex sub-community within this racialized listening frame. As they pieced together mountains of critical discourse to include with their collections, bootleggers may have been among the most intense participants in the “phantom genealogy,” contextualizing voices through reception history and the preexistent frameworks of sonic blackness. As an extreme fan who both visited the opera house and listened to *musique acousmatique* on radio and tapes, Ehrenreich likely knew famous operatic singers such as Leontyne Price so well that he could identify them through listening alone yet also easily visualize the particular body generating that sound. For bootleg pirate queens, even more than

other listeners, the acousmatic question “Who is this?” may have always seemed stable and answerable.

Returning to our earlier discussion of material culture, perhaps one of the pleasures of the tapes was the summoning of a visual memory of a particular concert, of a particular body onstage. In the case of music split from its source—whether via tape, or radio broadcast, or tape of a radio broadcast—did pirate queens such as Ehrenreich still imagine a particular singer’s body? For me, this brings to mind that most famous film about operatic bootlegging—Jean-Jacques Beineix’s *Diva* (1981) —where it seems meaningful that the white postman Jules illicitly records a live opera performance because he yearns to possess (and obsessively revisit) the voice of a soprano of color.⁵² Though Ehrenreich’s and other operatic bootleggers surely didn’t live lives anything like the chaos of Jules in Beineix’s film, it does beg the question of how we should read the bootlegger’s desire to collect voices alongside theories about race and opera such as Eidsheim’s.

These are preliminary thoughts; a huge amount of labor remains in considering how to assess this vast collection. I have a lot of listening to do, but these tapes seem strikingly relevant to me this summer, as we’ve questioned the nature of media, intimacy, the bridging of physical distance, the experience of opera *so very far* from the hall, and the ways race inflects every aspect of our understanding.

¹ Timothy D. Taylor, “The Role of Opera in the Rise of Radio in the US.” In *Music In the World: Selected Essays*, 121-152. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017. Taylor cites Lawrence Levine and the sacralization of culture. De Forest successfully broadcast Pietro Mascagni’s *Cavalleria Rusticata* and Ruggero Leoncavallo’s *I Pagliacci* from the Metropolitan Opera House on January 13, 1910—heard only by a few hobbyists and reporters. De Forest also did this in May 1910 with Mariette Mazarin; as she sang Strauss’s *Elektra* in his NYC laboratory, people could hear her about 20 miles away.

² See especially some of the commentary around the early Chicago opera broadcasts in 1919-1921, that “the day of universal culture has dawned at last, no longer can Gopher Prairie say ‘Nothing ever happens in this town.’ There is now culture for all.” (Hart 1922). Cited in Taylor, *Music in the World*, 86.

The desire of some inventors and some proponents of high culture to broadcast opera on the radio was a powerful motivating force in the development of broadcast technologies(— Lee De Forest). See Taylor, *ibid*.

A lot of early music appreciation was also aimed at getting new radio listeners to understand opera.

Taylor notes on page 82 that “the advertising of radios attempted to capture the prestige of opera. A Magnavox advertisement from 1924 depicts a radio horn with different figures emanating from it. Featuring favorite operatic characters, the ad’s copy begins, “opera—one of the many events enjoyed by Magnavox owners. Another manufacturer, AMRAD, named a series of radios “Symphonic,” with an “Opera” model, which combined a phonograph and a radio. A 1924 advertisement features a picture captioned, “The OPERA, Paris.”

³ Taylor notes these broadcasts from Chicago Civic Opera were underwritten by the National Broadcasting Company. See Taylor, *Music in the World*, 87.

I believe that 1927 was the first nationwide opera broadcast from Chicago (see Paul Jackson). Jackson also notes a *Fliegende Holländer* done on 17 February 1923 from Manhattan Opera House in NYC and lots of local, non-professional radio performances in the 1920s.

⁴ See Paul Jackson, *Saturday Afternoons at the Old Met: The Metropolitan Opera Broadcasts, 1931-1950* (Portland Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1992, Chapter 2. Jackson notes that not all performances initially took place on Saturdays and that the series started with incomplete operas, transitioning to complete works around 1933-1934.

⁵ In contrast to the few thousand who might see a production in person—Jackson makes this point at the beginning of his work. See *Saturday Afternoons at the Old Met*, xiii.

⁶ American Tobacco had paid nearly \$100,000 to the Metropolitan Management for the 1933-34 season (Jackson). The Lambert Pharmaceutical Company paid NBC \$375,00 to sponsor the season for Listerine in 1934-35. Radio fundraising for the Met broadcasts began in 1932-33 season. Sherwin-Williams Paint Company funded the Met auditions in 1936-36. Texaco began supporting the Met in 1940 and after the long association between Texaco and the Met ended in 2004, the Toll Brothers building company took over, who continues to fund the Met broadcasts today.

From the second season of the broadcasts, the Met also used the radio programs to fundraise for their own coffers.

⁷ Cummings notes this is called piracy, bootlegging, or counterfeiting among other terms. Alex Sayf Cummings, *Democracy of Sound: Music Piracy and the Remaking of American Copyright in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1.

The first Metropolitan Opera broadcast to appear as an “official, authorized release” was the 7 December 1940 performance of *Le Nozze de Figaro*; this 3-LP set was issued by the Metropolitan Opera Guild in 1974. The “Metropolitan Opera Historic Broadcast Recordings” series was established the following year in 1975, and ultimately released 29 recordings in 34 years. “The Metropolitan Opera in the American Century: Opera Singers, Europe, and Cultural Politics.” *Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* 33, no. 4 (Winter 2004): 298-315.

⁸ Marsha Sieffert notes that “the links between the early sound-recording industry and Enrico Caruso, along with other Met stars, beginning in 1906, helped to build the business and reputation of what became RCA Victor in the 1920s. The symbiotic relationship between recording contracts and Met stars continued into the 1930s. Thus, not surprisingly, early commercial radio, also located in New York City, began live broadcasts of the Metropolitan Opera performances on Christmas Day 1931. “The Metropolitan Opera in the American Century: Opera Singers, Europe, and Cultural Politics.” *Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* 33, no. 4 (Winter 2004): 298-315. While some record companies thought radio performances would raise sales, broadcast opera was also a potential competitor, since it offered longer selections and better audio quality than phonographs. Recording an entire opera on 78 rpm discs was a massive undertaking. See Taylor, *Music in the World*.

⁹ Jackson, *Saturday Afternoons*, 40. Martini’s disagreement came when the contract was renegotiated in 1933. Notably, these arguments over the franchise continued throughout the 1930s.

¹⁰ Note institutional control—it’s not just the record labels and certainly not the artist who have control of this system, it’s the institution.

¹¹ By 1940 was NBC allowed to make “line recordings for reference purposes or delayed broadcasts.” See Paul Jackson, *Saturday Afternoons at the Old Met: The Metropolitan Opera Broadcasts, 1931-1950* (Portland Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1992, Ch. 14.

¹² See Paul Jackson, *Saturday Afternoons at the Old Met: The Metropolitan Opera Broadcasts, 1931-1950* (Portland Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1992): 56-57. Speak-O-Phone was operating in the 1930s.

In 1940, tensions arose over whether playing recordings over the radio airwaves constituted “publication”—for about a decade, some record labels even sold recordings labeled “only for non-commercial use in phonographs in homes.”

It remained for a 1940 ruling to address the unclear status of sound recordings on the air. Common law had long provided creators with a de facto copyright for their unpublished works that protected them from appropriation prior to their release to the public. Only published works could be formally registered for federal copyright protection. The definition of “publication,” though, was unclear. Recording a performance and pressing it as a record for sale to the public would seem to constitute publication, just as much as printing and selling a novel in the marketplace. But was a radio broadcast of a performance a publication of it? Did the artist forgo his “common law copyright”—his right of ownership for works that had not yet been distributed to the public—when a disc was pressed or a performance was broadcast? These questions emerged with the large-scale dissemination of sound through the new medium of radio, and neither the jurisprudence of music nor the legal negotiations of the songwriters through ASCAP addressed the curious status of sound. Some record manufacturers had for years marked discs with labels like “Not licensed for Radio Broadcast” or “Licensed...only for Non-Commercial Use on Phonographs in Homes.”⁵² They believed that the consumer who purchased a product with these provisos attached was bound by a license to use the record accordingly. Like record piracy, though, radio could make a recorded performance available to the public without the permission of the original artist or production company. Cummings, *Democracy of Sound*, 45.

¹³ The Met had this contract with Columbia from 1947 through 1955. See *NY Times* article noting “Opera Disk Pact Ended: The Metropolitan and Columbia Records Cite High Cost.”

¹⁴ Alex Sayf Cummings, *Democracy of Sound: Music Piracy and the Remaking of American Copyright in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 48.

Wording in second part of the sentence comes from the lawsuit decision; the protection of giving them a “property right” in the resulting artistic creation.

Some pretty interesting language/ideas in the decision for this lawsuit:

The fostering and encouragement of fine performances of grand opera, and their preservation and dissemination to wide audiences by radio and recordings are in the public interest. The Metropolitan Opera, over a period of sixty years, has developed one of the finest, if not the finest, opera companies available to Americans. Through the media of recordings and broadcasts, an avenue of culture has been opened to vast numbers of Americans who have been able to enjoy the fruits of this great enterprise. To many, it is the only available source of grand opera. To refuse to the groups who expend time, effort, money and great skill in producing these artistic performances the protection of giving them a “property right” in the resulting artistic creation would be contrary to existing law, inequitable, and repugnant to the public interest. To hold that the broadcasts of these performances, making them available to a wider audience of Americans, deprives the Metropolitan Opera of all of its rights in this production and abandons the production to anyone to appropriate and exploit commercially, would indeed discourage the broadcasting of such operas and penalize not only the Metropolitan Opera but the public which now benefits from these broadcasts. Equity will not bear witness to such a travesty of justice; it will not countenance a state of moral and intellectual impotency. Equity will consider the interests of all parties coming within the arena of the dispute and admeasure the conflict in the scales of conscience and on the premise of honest commercial intercourse

¹⁵ Other operatic bootlegs of the period included Eli Oberstein’s 1954 pirate copy of Regina Resnik’s *Ring des Nibelungen* and numerous bootlegs of Carnegie Hall concerts released in the 1960s by a man named Roland Ernst. See Cummings, *Democracy in Sound*, 76.

The 7 December 1940 performance of *Le Nozze de Figaro* was the first issue; this 3-LP set was issued by the Metropolitan Opera Guild in 1974. Gary Galo, “The Metropolitan Opera Historic Broadcast Recordings.” *ARSC Journal* XL ii (2009): 195-225.

Gary notes this first issue was chosen because it was the first performance sponsored by Texaco. Intriguingly, the special edition issue did attempt to replicate certain aspects of the opera-going experience—there was a cast list (reproduction of the original program), photographs, plot synopsis, libretto. Gary notes that 2008 was the last release of the Historic Broadcast recordings series and that historic Met broadcasts are now available on Sirius Satellite Radio and Rhapsody internet. Galo, “The Metropolitan Opera.”

¹⁶ US government agencies in the 1920s strongly urged radio stations to showcase live music rather than play recordings, Full quote is: “In the U.S., the Department of Commerce [the government agency that first oversaw radio] granted preferential licenses to stations that didn’t use recorded music, since there was a feeling that playing records was a rather inferior style of broadcasting—mainly because live music gave far superior sound reproduction. In 1927 the industry’s new governing body, the Federal Radio Commission, reemphasized that phonograph performances were “unnecessary.” See Bill Brewster and Frank Broughton, *Last Night a DJ Saved My Life: The History of the*

Disc Jockey (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 24. Quoted in Philip Auslander, “Digital liveness A Historico-Philosophical Perspective,” *PAJ A Journal of Performance and Art* 34(3):3-11.

Auslander’s more famous earlier work notes “there is no clear, ontological distinction between the live and mediatized, but that the differences should be explored as “historical and contingent.” Philip Auslander, *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

Auslander borrows the term ‘mediatized’ from Jean Baudrillard (1981), who coined it to indicate the important part played by dominant social and economic codes of mass media technologies in so much modern cultural production. Mediatized performance, then, is not just performance mediated by a microphone or television camera (for instance), but is performance whose very identity is, at least in part, shaped by those mediating processes. See Paul Sanden, “Virtual Liveness and Sounding Cyborgs: John Oswald’s ‘Vane’,” *Popular Music* 31, no. 1 (01, 2012): 45-68.)

For an intriguing study of radio and liveness of a different genre, see Christina Baade, “Airing Authenticity: The BBC Jam Sessions from New York, 1938/39.” *Journal of the Society for American Music* 6, no. 3 (08, 2012): 271-314.

¹⁷ The full quote is: Sarah Thornton describes as a “conventional ideology of liveness,” a binarism where “the word ‘live’ soaked up the aesthetic and ethical connotations of life-versus-death, human-versus-mechanical, creative-versus-imitative ... Liveness became the truth of music, the seeds of genuine culture. Records, by contrast, were false prophets of pseudo-culture” (1995:42). Liveness, at least as historically constructed, signified the authenticity of human musical production and performance, always considered in contrast with the artifice of electronic reproductions. Quoted in Paul Sanden, “Hearing Glenn Gould’s Body: Corporeal Liveness in Recorded Music,” *Current Musicology* (Fall 2009): 7.

Timothy Taylor specific notes the ways broadcasting—and opera on the radio—took part in this discourse in the 1920s and 1930s. “Broadcasting brought the frisson of liveness to high culture, an appetite cultivated by the phonograph, with its ‘dead’ or mechanical or canned performances all epithets used in this era. ... similarly, now opera was available to all, broadcast live and not recorded as “mechanical” or “canned music,” against which there was a strong bias in the early radio era: “no longer will their ‘canned’ opera consist solely of phonographic selections. Taylor, *Music in the World*, 78 and ?

¹⁸ Opera as a genre has conflicted relationships with commerce and authenticity, but it does privilege liveness and specific performances and particular casts

¹⁹ Record collecting has often been characterized as a form of commodity fetishism focused on the accumulation of physical artefacts and the development of specialized knowledge (Bennett and Rogers 2016; Shuker 2010, 2014; see also Pearce 1992, 1995, on collecting more generally). See Chris Anderton, “Sonic Artefacts: ‘Record Collecting’ in the Digital Age.” *Journal of the International Association for the Study of Popular Music* , 6, no. 1 (2016): 86. Roy Shuker, *Wax Trash and Vinyl Treasures: Record Collecting as a Social Practice* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010).

Shuker (2014: 168) refers to these activities as forms of “secondary involvement”, typified by fans who do more than collect the core releases of an artist. Their engagement includes the collecting of rare or unusual releases (including singles, mispressings, and alternate packaging), in addition to unofficial bootleg live recordings, and the reading, collection or production of fanzines, biographies, discographies, reviews and so on which may be published in print or online. This contrasts with “primary” forms of fandom which are focused on “the persona and public life of a star” (ibid.), hence connected to their celebrity status. There may be crossovers between the primary and secondary forms of fandom. In this article I will discuss and explore a third form of fandom, which concerns not the collection of physical artefacts produced by the music industries (often classified as traditional collecting practice), but the collection and archiving of audio recordings as sonic artefacts: as digitized music files that are collected and distributed through the Internet.

²⁰ One of my original questions was “What kind of engagement does bootlegging offer fans and collectors?” Fans and collectors often desire “daily engagement” with stars—this has a special role vis-à-vis opera (especially with a repertoire house like the Met)

²¹ Cummings, “The most famous such bootleg was Bob Dylan’s *Great White Wonder*, the “basement tapes” that the folksinger recorded with the Band in 1967 but opted not to release. When the recordings leaked in 1969, they touched off a flurry of piracy, as bootleggers embraced a flamboyant rhetoric that mashed together New Left radicalism and countercultural liberation.” see book and also <http://americanhistorynow.org/2014/02/17/bootlegging-as-material-culture/>

My original question: is there an anti-capitalist element here (as for some pop bootleggers in the 1960s onward) or is that reading even possible within operatic culture in general and the Met in particular?

²² One problem with applying Mitchell's theory to bootleg opera is that Mitchell argues that tenors and basses hold less appeal for opera queens and that seems not quite true for bootleg collections. See Mitchell Morris, “Reading as an Opera Queen,” In *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship*, ed. Ruth A. Solie, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 184-200.

²³ I’d be curious what kinds of details Laura has about this, does Ehrenreich go into more detail?

²⁴ Indeed we might survey collecting the genre versus collecting a specific artist versus collecting a specific institution when looking at bootlegging....

²⁵ This is cobbled together from a number of sources on intimacy, including Jessica Barr, *Intimate Reading: Textual Encounters in Medieval Women’s Visions and Vitae*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2020).

²⁶ Ara Wilson “The Infrastructure of Intimacy,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 2016, vol. 41, no. 2:

²⁷ Feminist ethnographer Ara Wilson notes that the flexibility of the term “intimacy” may be a strength. Ara Wilson, “INTIMACY: A USEFUL CATEGORY OF TRANSNATIONAL ANALYSIS.” In *The Global and the Intimate*, ed. Geraldine Pratt and Victoria Rosner, 31–56. New York: Columbia University Press, 2012.

²⁸ Here’s the full quotation:

Here the diminishment of physical distance and penetration into private spaces is linked explicitly to the spread of culture—and cultural hierarchies. Radio promised simultaneity of experience without direct contact, exposure to the public in the privacy of one’s home. It would be twenty years before this privatized experience would begin to seem itself something of a threat; for radio’s early decades, isolation was the condition that broadcasting promised to alleviate, not create, and many a paean was composed (and preserved) to celebrate this anticipated aspect of the brave new radio world.

However, this rhetoric of physical connection had some formidable obstacles to overcome. The erasure of distance and separation held a threat as well as a promise. In a society built on structured segmentation and social division as much as on its rhetoric of democratic equality, connectedness posed a danger to the preservation of those physical and geographic divisions supporting social distinctions, such as the separation of racial and ethnic neighborhoods, preferred leisure and cultural sites for different classes and social groups, the insulation of traditional rural society from “corrupting” city influences, and the home as private, feminine domain distinct from the masculinized public sphere.

See Michelle Hilmes: “Radio and the Imagined Community.” In *Sound Studies Reader*, ed. Jonathan Sterne. New York: Routledge, 2012.

²⁹ Allison McCracken, “‘God’s Gift to Us Girls’: Crooning, Gender, and the Re-Creation of American Popular Song, 1928-1933.” *American Music* 17, no. 4 (1999): 365-39.

³⁰ Cited in Allison McCracken, “‘God’s Gift to Us Girls’: Crooning, Gender, and the Re-Creation of American Popular Song, 1928-1933.” *American Music* 17, no. 4 (1999): 365-39.

See also Laura Tunbridge, “Scarlett Johansson’s Body and the Materialization of Voice,” *Twentieth-Century Music* 13, no. 1 (2016): 139-152.

Jennifer Stoeve also notes “intimacy” is a key term used by critics describe radio’s uniqueness both in the 1940s and in our contemporary moment, whether referring to the “warm, personal feeling” of the announcer’s voice or the “relationships to radio entertainers and programs characterized by intimacy and loyalty” that often blurred boundaries between public and private space.” Jennifer Stoeve, “Black Radio Listeners in America’s ‘Golden Age,’” *Journal of Radio & Audio Media* 26, no. 1 (2019): 119-133.

³¹ This is a huge oversimplification/overgeneralization and of course some operas are designed with amplification. There were some technical difficulties in even miking early radio. Timothy Taylor notes: “in early radio, the number of microphones required for opera broadcasts presented a problem. Symphony orchestras could be broadcast with a single microphone, but since opera singers moved about the stage, multiple microphones were required, as well as an efficient means of controlling and coordinating them.” Taylor, *Music in the World*.

³² Cited in Michelle Hilmes.

³³ My original question was: how does that make it seem like not listening alone?

Hilmes’s full quote is: “radio, more than any other agency, possessed the power not only to assert actively the unifying power of simultaneous experience but to communicate meanings about the nature of that unifying experience....Echoing Anderson’s description of the effects of print culture, several kinds of unity were envisioned as inherent in the spread of this new medium: physical, cultural, linguistic, and finally institutional. Radio technology, though adaptable to many uses that were not pursued, promised at the very least the same bridging of physical distance over time as other modern media of communication. This physical connection, now addressed not to individual recipients but to a vast, invisible audience at large, would most assuredly, it was felt, provide cultural unity as well. As the English language spread into every corner of the nation, “homogenization of the American mind” would follow. And even before 1926, the recognized necessity of setting up well-regulated institutional controls over this kind of power led to the formation of network broadcasting as we know it. As the nation found a voice through radio, the “imagined community” of the twentieth-century United States began to take shape.” See Michelle Hilmes: “Radio and the Imagined Community.” In *Sound Studies Reader*, ed. Jonathan Sterne. New York: Routledge, 2012.

³⁴ Berlant's idea is interesting to apply to radio or bootlegs, though her original case study concerns 19th and 20th century mass market literature. Berlant's work has been applied in other cases, though, including my quoted text, which is from Jessica Barr, *Intimate Reading: Textual Encounters in Medieval Women's Visions and Vitae*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2020).

Barr continues: The intimacy that they experience is a perceived intimacy between human subjects with a shared identity of set of experiences. Berlant shows how intimacy can be produced through texts' ability to construct imaged interpersonal relationships among a community of readers. Such communities, which Berlant calls "intimate publics," are created when narratives evoke or presuppose "a commonly lived history" among their consumers, a history that they convey by "expressing the sensational, embodied experience of living as a certain kind of being in the world." These narratives offer "a place of recognition and reflection," where emotional contact, of a sort, is made."

³⁵ My original question was: Does the the illegality of bootlegging encourage community or isolation?

³⁶ My original thought about all this was how it was both capitalist and not....

Geraldine Pratt and Victoria Rosner, Introduction to *The Global and the Intimate: Feminism in Our Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012). Pratt and Rosner note "objects brings us in close, to the tastes, smells, and touch of everyday life."

Andy Bennett and Ian Rogers, "Popular Music and Materiality: Memorabilia and Memory Traces." In *Popular Music and Society* 39, No. 1 (2016): 28–42. Bennett and Rogers here study physical playback media, manifestations of materiality, linking of past and present, tickets stubs, etc.

³⁷ Alex Sayf Cummings, "Bootlegging as Material Culture" <http://americanhistorynow.org/2014/02/17/bootlegging-as-material-culture/>

³⁸ Andy Bennett and Ian Rogers, "Popular Music and Materiality: Memorabilia and Memory Traces." In *Popular Music and Society* 39, No. 1 (2016): 28–42. Bennett and Rogers turn to the work of Susan Stewart on the souvenir here to ground their analysis.

³⁹ This is now the David H. Koch Theater, part of Lincoln Center—has been home to the New York City Ballet since 1964 and housed New York City Opera from 1964–2011. It is opposite David Geffen Hall on the south side of Lincoln Center.

⁴⁰ Chris Anderton discusses this in relation to popular music and the transition to the digital era in "Sonic Artefacts: 'Record Collecting' in the Digital Age," *Journal of the International Association for the Study of Popular Music* 6, no.1 (2016): 85–103.

⁴¹ After being exclusively a white venue for 72 years, Marian Anderson famously appeared at the Met in 1955 (though in a very racially inflected role). Nina Eidsheim notes the "surge of American operatic divas who entered the scene during the 1960s and 1970s. It's also the high water mark of the American civil rights movement—(Eidsheim notes Marian Anderson's appearance at the Met in 1955 coincides chronologically with Rosa Parks). See Nina Sun Eidsheim, *The Race of Sound: Listening, Timbre, and Vocality in African American Music* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019).

⁴² Neumann and Simpson note: "Because unauthorized recording is primarily illegal, bootleggers travel through a world bordering on invisibility. Although some groups like the Grateful Dead allowed and encouraged fans to tape their concerts, bootlegging is generally a clandestine operation. For many tapers and collectors this means trading and buying through friends, under- ground distribution networks, record conventions, and catalogues distributed from post office box addresses."

See Neumann, Mark, and Timothy A. Simpson. "Smuggled Sound: Bootleg Recording and the Pursuit of Popular Memory." *Symbolic Interaction* 20, no. 4 (1997): 319–41.

⁴³ Lee Marshall, "For and Against the Record Industry: An Introduction to Bootleg Collectors and Tape Traders." *Popular Music* 22, no. 1 (2003): 57–72.

⁴⁴ My original thought and question was "National versus International: A tension between the national profile of the Metropolitan Opera and the United States's specific frame of racialized listening versus the Met's international radio listening audience (and indeed the dissemination of operatic bootleg tapes)."

⁴⁵ Stoever argues that “radio was an audible force of racialization” in this period, not a neutral soundtrack of anesthetizing balm for racialized wounds.

Jennifer Stoever, “Black Radio Listeners in America’s ‘Golden Age,’” *Journal of Radio & Audio Media* 26, no. 1 (2019): 119-133.

⁴⁶ Schaeffer defined it as “acousmatic, adjective: referring to a sound that one hears without seeing the causes behind it”.....comes with the introduction of recording technology, which made it possible to sever the link between a sound and its source.” See Nina Sun Eidsheim, *The Race of Sound: Listening, Timbre, and Vocality in African American Music* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019).

⁴⁷ The full quote is “Yet radio’s efforts toward linguistic control masked a basic transgressive quality of the medium itself, one that posed a less obvious but even more dangerous threat to social hierarchy and order: its ability to transcend the visual. In a society based on visual cues, where appearance superseded almost every other social indicator, radio’s ability to escape visual overdetermination had the potential to set off a virtual riot of social signifiers—indeed, this is one of radio’s most fascinating attributes. Adults played the roles of children and animals, two-hundred-pound women played romantic ingenues, and ninety-pound men played superheroes; whites frequently impersonated blacks, though rarely vice versa; and one of America’s most popular entertainers was a wooden dummy. Women could masquerade as men and, much more often, men as women—and further, men could enter the home to entertain the woman of the house seductively over her morning coffee; women had the potential to enter the public sphere and assume the voice of authority, evading the customary physical and social barriers. How could one be sure a person belonged to his or her purported racial or ethnic group over the radio? How could class distinction be maintained without its usual context of visual cues?”

See Michelle Hilmes: “Radio and the Imagined Community.” In *Sound Studies Reader*, ed. Jonathan Sterne. New York: Routledge, 2012.

⁴⁸ Nina argues part of the reason this is so powerful is that we assume that the voice can tell us something unmediated and truthful about identity, the voice as “stable and knowable” and as a “cue to interiority, essence, and unmediated identity.” She argues that this answer is actually never possible, and we must keep asking the question over and over again. See Nina Sun Eidsheim, *The Race of Sound: Listening, Timbre, and Vocality in African American Music* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019)

⁴⁹ Why does this matter? When we think of a distinct timbre as an essential quality that can be produced only by a human body of a particular race or gender or sexual orientation—when we believe that only African American women or white gay men can sound like our preconception of what African American women or white gay men sound like—we discount the vocalizer’s stylistic and technical choices as well as the biases and idiosyncrasies of our own perceptions, due in part to the enormous influence of culture, or “entrainment” and “enculturation” in Eidsheim’s terms, on both vocalizers and listeners. The entrainment of vocalizers according to a given culture’s or subculture’s conventions and expectations around voice influences—though it does not determine—each vocalizer’s stylistic and technical choices, as well as our perceptions of the person’s voice. And our confidence in our perceptual, essentialist judgments of voices helps create and regulate musical genres.

as well as the careers and creative potential of singers and musicians, especially those who challenge racialized and gendered expectations about vocal timbre and particular musical genres. The assumption that race and gender are cultural constructions, not essential identities based in biological difference, is now an article of faith in the academy. But, Eidsheim argues, because of “unexamined listening practices,” many listeners still seem to believe that vocal timbre is an essential, biologically determined, easily detectable quality that correlates with the vocalizer’s apparent race, gender, or ethnicity.” See Eidsheim, *Race of Sound*.

⁵⁰ “Visual blackness was projected onto auditory timbre, resulting in the perception of sonic blackness.” See Eidsheim, *Race of Sound*.

⁵¹ After Anderson’s debut at the Metropolitan Opera, a relatively large number of African Americans won operatic roles. Dorothy Maynor, Leontyne Price, Martina Arroyo, Grace Bumbry, and Shirley Verrett triumphantly sang on both American and European stages. However, the majority of the roles they were asked to sing perpetuated the association of their voices with othered, racialized characters, and as much as they were recognized as divas, attitudes toward color always haunted them. For example, critics credited Price’s voice with “an unmistakably individual fragrance—husky, musky, smoky, misty (on a bad day foggy!)—and palpitating pagan sexiness. It is not the voice of a good girl.” Like Anderson, Price ultimately lamented, “Whenever there was any copy about me, what I was as an artist, what I had as ability, got shoveled under because all the attention was on racial connotations.” See Eidsheim, *Race of Sound*.

⁵² The character Cynthia Hawkins is played by Wilhelmenia Wiggins Fernandez. If we read this as possession, how does collecting scan differently in the knowledge of the phantom geneology? Also mention Jennifer Stoeber with “listening’s erotic implications, for the dominant white listening ear, its racialized sounds and black listening practices raise the specter of radio’s sonic transgression across spatial cosines and gendered lines in the sand.”