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Music, Sound and Technology in America: A Documentary History of Early Phonograph, Cinema and Radio.

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Music, Sound and Technology in America: A Documentary History of early Phonograph, Cinema and Radio. Timothy D. Taylor, Mark Katz, and Tony Grajeda, eds. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012. 432 pp. \$27.95 paperback.

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Music, Sound and Technology in America: A Documentary History of Early Phonograph, Cinema and Radio, edited by Timothy D. Taylor, Mark Katz, and Tony Grajeda, provides a fascinating glimpse into a transitional era in America, before it was obvious what the usefulness of capturing sounds and replaying them might be, before it was conceivable to hear music without being in the presence of the musicians, before movies and sound were assumed to go together naturally as they do today.

The editors, leading scholars in their fields of musicology and/or cultural studies, have compiled a powerful collection of primary sources showing the history of recorded sound in America, preserving a sense of the uncertainty of the technology as it unfolded. Well-researched collections of primary sources such as this one inevitably evoke Gordon Craig's adage that "the duty of the historian is to restore to the past the options it once had." Grajeda, Katz and Taylor do just that, highlighting each fragile triumph, each slight advance in technology, and many false starts and forgotten detours, complete with an array of predictions (some prophetic, some amusingly off the mark) as to how the technology could be applied in the future.

The 123 primary sources in this engaging book are organized first by technology: Sound Recording, selected by Mark Katz; Cinema, selected by Tony Grajeda; and Radio, selected by Timothy D. Taylor; then the selections are arranged by themes, such as The Listener and the Phonograph; Technologies of Sight and Sound; Radio in Everyday Life; etc. Each editor contextualizes his selections with a thoughtful introduction that sets the scene, links the technology to all the others and guides the reader through the selections, adding value in the same way a handout might be enriched by classroom discussion. In addition, Taylor provides an overarching introduction that further links all three technologies, underscores their importance in the emergence of music as the ubiquitous, personalized form of entertainment we interact with today, and reminds readers of the revolutionary technological and social advances that took place between 1877 and 1940 which ushered in the media structures, fully formed by the 1940s and 50s, that are still with us today. Taylor points out that the advent of sound recording, talking pictures, and radio did in fact lay the groundwork for the digital revolution of our own generation. The concerns apparent in many of the sources as to what changes these technologies might mean for their daily lives and values continue to be issues that resonate to this day.

The majority of the sources date from the first two decades of the twentieth century. The selections consist of articles from period journals (both trade and academic), articles and advertisements from popular magazines and newspapers, internal memoranda from the archives of major companies, selections from autobiographies, transcribed recorded interviews, lyrics from popular sheet music, radio scripts, and more. Particularly in the case of archival documents and other novel items which might only ever be accessible on-site, this book does readers quite a service by offering all those resources in one book. The selected entries contain nuggets of

obvious interest to a variety of topics, even while often spanning less than a page. There are extensive endnotes for each section and a bibliography provides supplemental reading for interested readers. For those interested in following the editors to the original sources, a full citation of each primary source appears in the text.

Each source, with a few exceptions, has been transcribed from the original printing. These transcriptions allow for ease of reading (and for ebook readers the text is easily searchable). In some cases a facsimile of the original would be preferable, but understandably including many more facsimiles and illustrations would result in a thicker, more costly publication. The book is large but not unwieldy at 6"x9" and 1" thick. It was printed on acid-free paper (ensuring that this publication will no doubt long outlast the original sources).

There are 21 illustrations, all black and white. Consisting primarily of photographs and advertisements, the illustrations are good quality, but scholars and enthusiasts alike might want to see more. The book does benefit from a well-designed cover featuring a whimsical archival image which shows the early radio technology as well as its early popular appeal (Evelyn C. Lewis, Miss Washington 1921, listens to the radio. © Bettmann/CORBIS). On the back cover of the book, readers are provided with a link they can visit for more pictures, audio, and additional information. This added media, particularly the inclusion of videos and color images, are a definite boon to this publication, making up for any perceived lack of illustrations within the book itself. Each example on the website points the viewer/reader back to the relevant page numbers in the book.

Particularly when viewed in contrast to other scholarly works on similar topics, the editors' method of arranging the vast amount of primary material so that themes and contradictions become readily apparent provides refreshing context and seems easily tailored to readers' own interests. Intended primarily as a scholarly source, this book would be valuable to scholars of cultural studies, musicology, television and radio, film studies, and communication, indeed any scholar interested in the role of technology in popular culture or the social aspects of music and mass media. Casual enthusiasts, collectors, and fans of film, radio, or early recording technology would also find much to enjoy about this publication and its online media component.