

Disruptive Spatiality and the Experience of Recordings of Bach's Solo Cello Suites

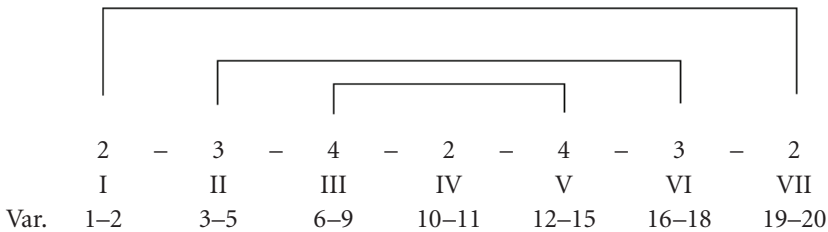
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Antechamber: Bach and Space

Architecture, so the saying goes, is “frozen music.” Music, conversely, is “liquid” architecture.¹ This aphorism, popular in the early nineteenth century, soon became a cliché. “Should one perhaps speak of ruins,” quips Schopenhauer in 1844, “as a ‘frozen cadenza?’” ([1819/44] 1977:534). However maligned, though, the cliché persists in Bach studies. It is still commonplace to speak of the “architecture” of Bach’s music (Wolff 1969; Schulenberg 1992; Corten 1995), and even the composer himself has been labeled an “architect” (Joseph 1992). The very structures of this music, we are frequently told, are “architectonic.” While discourse on Bach has tended to adopt this architectural metaphor as an unquestioned, and at times tacit, assumption, there is little evidence to suggest that his music corresponds with any degree of precision to concrete examples of architectural theory or practice. Nor have commentators drawn consistent parallels between Bach’s music and any one architectural style, let alone a single historical period. The analogy between high Gothic architecture and Bach’s counterpoint was common in the first half of the nineteenth century, and articles and books on Bach continue to be peppered with pictures of Gothic cathedrals. Other commentators, however, claim to detect stylistic parallels with the architecture of Baroque Rome: Raymond Court, for instance, writes that “we place the music of J. S. Bach opposite this grand Baroque architecture of papal Rome as in a mirror in order to discover analogous stylistic traits” (1989:15).

It is easy to see how images of tall Gothic spires, lofty vaults, and slender columns summon up a widespread—and often explicitly theological—image of Bach. Yet most detailed and concrete attempts to unearth an architectural principle behind the music evoke the ideals prized by Renaissance architects of “exact proportion, suitable disposition, and harmonious order” rather than the asymmetrical excess of the Baroque (Joseph 1992:83). As commentators track symmetries and reveal the elegant proportions of Bach’s forms, their analytical diagrams begin to look like blueprints, such as Wolff’s (figure 1).

Figure 1: Structural analysis of the Passacaglia in C Minor, based upon Wolff (1969:167).



Analyses which claim to detect an architectonic structure in Bach’s music usually aim to elucidate geometrical designs and numerically conceived hierarchies and patterns. When Ulrich Siegele asserts, for example, that the formal dispositions of Bach’s concerto movements reveal a marked tendency towards proportional shaping (1997), he subscribes to a long-standing analytical paradigm which has tended to dominate literature on Bach, especially in studies of his ritornello forms. There is also widespread support for the idea that Bach demonstrates a strong interest in symmetrical design in certain passages of his large-scale choral works, including, for instance, the *Symbolum Nicenum* of the B Minor Mass (e.g., Butt 1991 and Stauffer 1997). Eduard van Hengel and Kees van Houten (2004), for example, rely on considerations of symmetry to argue that, contrary to established scholarly opinion, the “*Et incarnatus*” had been planned from the outset.² They suggest that a “quick look at the facades of Baroque and Classical palaces, churches, residences, and other large, multisectional buildings” would corroborate their claims (2004:93). In short, to liken Bach’s music to architecture is to say that its structure exhibits some kind of symmetry or that its formal arrangement is governed by proportions.

Because the analogy between musical structure and architectural design hinges on the mathematical principles and ratios which are said to underpin both, it is, unsurprisingly, often closely associated with numerological analysis. Much doubt, however, has been cast upon the interpretative value of readings which center around number symbolism, as well as their historical validity as a guide to pre-compositional thinking.³ Bach was likely to have been familiar with the contemporary theoretical debate between Lorenz Christoph Mizler and Johann Mattheson over music and mathematics, and while there is evidence to suggest that his sympathies lay with the former (Bach joined Mattheson’s Corresponding Society of the Musical Sciences in 1747 where it was maintained that “mathematics is the heart and soul of music,” Mizler [1739–54] 1970, 2:54), the association hardly justifies an uncritical recourse to numerology in analyzing Bach’s music. Still, even when musicologists such as Ulrich Meyer (1979) are alert to the dangers of symbolic interpretation, the assumption that Bach’s forms are governed

by architectonic proportions and the conclusions about the significance of such arrangements go unchallenged.

Nevertheless, such architectural associations, Christoph Wolff warns, are “not without their dangers” (1969:183). For Charles Joseph, they risk “opening a Pandora’s box,” allowing “a clutter of meaningless metaphors” to escape (1992:83). The connection should fill the analyst with anxiety. It “will not tell us much about either the Strasbourg Minster or the St. Anne Fugue,” complains Thomas Grey. “With respect to music,” he continues, “architecture [is] insufficiently metaphorical” (1992:95–96). Laurence Dreyfus (1996:27–28) argues that focusing on supposedly architectural aspects, such as the ordering of musical events and their arrangement into patterned blocks of time, deflects attention from Bach’s talent for inventing and manipulating his raw material. The metaphor of “paradigmatic maps” (1996:182) which Dreyfus substitutes for the architectural analogy, however, borrows a distinction from modern linguistics between paradigm and syntagm which is itself conceived spatially as two perpendicular axes.⁴ Thus the spatial metaphor seems unshakable. One could, of course, explain away Dreyfus’s adherence to spatial thinking by noting that spatial modes of representation are indispensable for discourse about music in general: conceiving of the horizontal and vertical elements of contrapuntal lines is already to think spatially, as much of Dreyfus’s terminology to describe the mechanical operations—inversion, rotation, array—demonstrates.

The striking recurrence of spatial language in discussions of Bach’s music should not be dismissed so quickly, however. Even if the architectural analogy itself proves problematic, there is still an unmistakable urge to put this music in a space, whether within a cavernous cathedral or through the motions of mechanistic rotation and inversion. If Bach’s music seems to lend itself to spatial thinking, the idea of space, I claim, assumes its signal importance when it is taken beyond its limited use as a metaphor for structural relations and into the realm of performance and the listener’s experience.

There is one group of works in particular, I believe, which demands to be heard in a certain kind of space. The solo cello suites, by virtue of the fact that they are written for a solo instrument and yet still aspire to the illusion of counterpoint, require a certain degree of resonance from both the instrument and the acoustic so that the pitches can overlap and be heard as harmonies, and so that the voice leading can be audible. These works form the focus of my study. Of course, the six sonatas and partitas for solo violin likewise exploit these instruments’ capacity for polyphonic effects, and critics frequently mention both sets of works in the same breath, but, as Baroque cellist Anner Bylsma suggests, Bach approaches this compositional challenge differently in each case:

Bach wanted to demonstrate that it was just as possible to compose four-part fugues and other counterpoint for a single violin as it was for the organ. In the cello suites this idea seems to be enlarged still further as if to pose the question: how many notes can one take away and still leave a complete suite in the mind of the listener, harmony and counterpoint included—not forgetting the many dissonances and syncopations in this case which exist only in the memory of the audience! (Bylsma 1992:5)

Whereas in the solo violin works there is greater continuity in the two-part textures, even sparser textures in the cello suites demand a more powerful aural memory, a generous acoustic, and the greater natural resonance of the larger instrument. The opening of the Prelude of the C Minor Suite (example 1) not only exploits the resonant open C string to create the impression of a continuous tonic pedal point, but also relies on notes ringing on after the cellist has stopped playing in order to create the effect of a two-part texture. To begin with, the notated sustained half-notes at the beginning of measures 3 and 4 can only be suggested in performance: the E \flat must be released after a quarter-beat to play the low C, and the B \natural is usually held only for a dotted-quarter-beat in performance and not reiterated with the bow-change on the fourth eighth-note. In other places, it is necessary to hear certain notes beyond their literal duration in order to follow the voice leading: the smooth alternation between E \flat and F in mm. 4–7 is interrupted, while the B in m. 2 is separated from its resolution by an entire measure. The lower voice especially in m. 6 depends on acoustic resonance to be heard because the F is dampened as soon as the player shifts to a higher position on the same string to play the sixteenth-notes.

This example illustrates the extent to which acoustics determine a listener's grasp of the implied contrapuntal lines in the suites. Bylsma's 1992 recording of the work leaves much to the listener's imagination because of the relatively dry acoustic. One notices a trade-off in recordings of the suites between the clarity and the warmth of the acoustic; Baroque cellists, including Bylsma (1992) and Nikolaus Harnoncourt ([1965] 2001), privilege the former. Reviewers of recordings of this repertoire comment with surprising frequency on the relative merits of the acoustic. Critic Lindsay Kemp, for example, describes Susan Sheppard's (1999) period instruments as "surprisingly resonant (a fact which seems to have given the editor a few problems). . . the recording seems rather murky at first" (Kemp 2000:84). While the aesthetic ideals of immediacy and clarity of tone are often upheld in recordings, it is not uncommon to read reviews which find a lack of resonance disconcerting. The nature of the acoustic seems to influence Kemp's impression of tone quality when he compares Marc Coppey's (2003) "burly sound in the rather unyielding surroundings of IRCAM's Paris studios"

Example 1: Bach, Prelude, Suite V in C Minor for Violoncello Solo, BWV 1011 (notated for normal tuning), mm. 1–7.



with Sergei Istomin's (1997) "lean and flexible tone, recorded in the more forgiving acoustic of an Ontario church" (Kemp 2005:76). Stephen Plaistow likewise prefers the acoustic of the Evangelical Church in Seon, in which Heinrich Schiff recorded the suites in 1984:

Judging from the ease of Schiff's playing and from its variety of colour, the acoustic must have been sympathetic to him. Maisky [(1985)] recorded in a hall in Bamberg, also sounds well but I don't have such a strong impression of the contribution made by a good acoustic. He could be anywhere. There is a little more space around the sound, but that is all. Maisky's style of playing needs the space. It is grand, sonorous, imposing. (Plaistow 1985:657–58)

Other listeners echo Plaistow's claim that Maisky's performance "needs the space" when they object to closely miked recordings. Nalen Anthoni's comment regarding Antonio Meneses's (2004) recording is typical: "The claustrophobic miking seems to create a uniformity of sound that in turn introduces monotony" (Anthoni 2004:96). Aside from the common complaints about loud breathing and finger-tapping, closely miked recordings can often be unsettling because they give little sense of ambient space. To a CD-era listener, well accustomed to the warm sound of many of the recordings available today, the sound of Casals's ground-breaking recordings of the late 1930s or Tortelier's 1989 radio broadcast from the extraordinarily dry acoustic of the Pebble Mill studios can seem uncomfortably dead. Other listeners, though, might claim that closely miked recordings lend a sense of immediacy unequalled even in live performance.

Churches are popular recording venues for the suites, and not just for theological reasons. Pieter Wispelwey (1998), Mstislav Rostropovich (1995), Yo-Yo Ma (1994–97), and Ralph Kirshbaum (1993), as well as Schiff (1984) and Istomin (1997) number among those who opt for a church acoustic. Wispelwey's second recording of the suites (1998) in the reverberant acoustic of the fifteenth-century Valkkoog Church in the Netherlands deftly combines

clarity with resonance: the close miking lends a vividness to the sound and at the same time the recording engineers manage to give a striking sense of the performance space. Rostropovich, whose 1995 recording I shall discuss at greater length below, takes pride in the time and effort he took to find the best venue before settling on the Basilique Sainte Madeleine in Vézelay, France, as “the right place” (1995:23). Paolo Beschi (1998) even devotes 150 words of liner notes to the famous Villa Medici-Giulini in Briosco near Milan where he recorded the suites; sadly, on that recording one hears very little of what has been described as a “dream space” for musicians.

Perhaps the most striking statement made by a performer about the issue of space in connection with this music is Yo-Yo Ma’s film, *The Sound of the Carceri* (1997), which features a performance of the second suite. The cellist appears to play in the shadowy depths of a series of computer-generated, three-dimensional recreations of Giovanni Battista Piranesi’s *Carceri d’Invenzione* (a series of etchings of architectural fantasies first issued in 1745 and which depict subterranean vaults with huge flights of stairs and various instruments of torture). Documentary sections of the film follow the recording process in a church in Rome, where, having studied the etchings, Ma closes his eyes in an attempt to conjure up the prison-space. The film here stages a conflict between the real space of the church and the imaginary space of the *Carceri* as Ma struggles with the contradiction between the space he sees around him and is physically present within and the technologically engineered space he hears via headphones as he plays—a moment that provokes us to think in new ways about how we experience space in relation to recording technology.

This study explores how listeners might experience recordings of Bach’s solo cello suites specifically in terms of space. What kind of space might this be, and what is its significance? By considering not only how music-analytical and performance-related issues shape a listener’s sense of space, but also the role played by recording technology, this article is an attempt to develop a theory of how we listen to recordings of these works in space more than it is an analysis of the spatial characteristics of Bach’s music. I argue that this repertoire can scarcely be thought of without reference to space, and that, with the advent of recordings, the need to find a space for this music has become more acute. To explore the spatial possibilities of experiences of these recordings means drawing on a combination of sociological research into listening practices, music-analytical findings, and the responses of record reviewers, as well as on numerous and detailed “close listenings” to the recordings themselves. Furthermore, a number of philosophical concepts of space not only suggest a theory of listening but also help to elucidate the *ethical* implications of each paradigm. To what extent can listening to

recordings, rather than simply reinforcing false consciousness, actually effect a genuine (if fleeting) transformation of our relation to our world? By reading Heidegger's theories of space and the uncanny, I develop the notion of a disruptive spatiality within the experience of recordings, arguing that understanding the transformative potential of listening experiences more generally can illuminate the significance and fascination the cello suites hold for listeners and musicologists alike.

Room 1: Recordings, Space, and Subjectivity

As a discipline, the study of recordings has grown out of the broader field of performance studies, and most of the literature written to date reflects this origin. The overwhelming majority of studies focus on issues relating to performance style, whether to questions of historical developments, tempo, or expressivity; work on Bach recordings is no exception. As one would expect, questions of authenticity and historically informed performance (HIP) that have been high on the agenda when considering Bach performance have also come under the spotlight in recent discussions of Bach recordings. John Butt (1999) explores a number of post-1980 recordings of the Brandenburg concertos and Goldberg Variations to mount a critique of Richard Taruskin's theses on HIP (1995:90–152). A lengthier study by Dorottya Fabian (2004) takes recordings of the same works, together with the St. John and St. Matthew Passions (all from the period 1945–75) as its focus, again considering performance practice in the context of the early music movement. Uri Golomb's comprehensive review (2004) of recordings of the B Minor Mass touches upon similar concerns and at the same time explores modes of expression across a wider variety of performance styles. In the absence of an autograph score, performance-related discussions of the cello suites mostly center around debates over articulation and ornamentation. One study (C. Johnson 1999) uses recordings to analyze rhythm, phrasing, and rubato in performances of the first Bourrée from the third suite.

Recordings are seen to be useful in so far as they provide the raw data from which deductions about performances can be made; in fact, there is a widespread tendency to talk about recordings as if they were merely performances, thereby leaving the specific contribution of the recording technology and engineers out of consideration. For example, Peter Johnson's otherwise detailed and sensitive discussion of the experience of listening to Bach's "Erbarne Dich" (1999) fails to differentiate between the impact of live performances and recordings. Even when musicologists consider recordings as a phenomenon in their own right, separate from the performances they represent, a certain hierarchy emerges whereby technological reproduction

produces a mere disembodied echo of the materiality of real, flesh-and-blood performance. The implication is that, in the case of recordings, the listener's experience is severely impoverished because the separation of sound from its physical production leads to a feeling of alienation. But scholars must find an alternative way to distinguish the experience of recordings from that of live performances which recognizes that listening to recordings can potentially enhance rather than diminish the potency of musical experience and that this form of listening has its own set of possible effects which are distinct from (and not simply pale imitations of) those belonging to live performance.

The difference, and the source of recordings' ethical potential, can be felt most sharply in the experience of space they engender in the listener. A number of philosophical and sociological notions of space and of spatial representation can illuminate the way in which we experience space while listening to recordings. Offering a critique of the limitations of these models, I propose an alternative paradigm which is able to take into consideration what I describe as a certain disruptive spatiality within the listening experience. The first of these notions of spatial experience emerges directly out of the tendency to see recordings as faded replicas of real performances.

In Rostropovich's (1995) recording in the Basilique Saint Madeleine of the C Minor suite, the final chord of the Prelude continues to reverberate for a full four seconds after the bow has left the string. During the echo the listener becomes intensely aware of the acoustic space: one could imagine shutting one's eyes and being transported for one brief, pregnant moment into an old French church. If the acoustic properties of Rostropovich's recordings create an impression of vastness and distance, at the other extreme are older recordings, including the ones made by Casals during the late 1930s, which foreground space on an altogether different scale. Rather than conjuring up an ambient space, they operate on a micro-level, collapsing the distance between the listener and the instrument. Especially in the quicker dance movements which demand more agile fingerwork and virtuosic bow crossings, and in which the movement of the fingers on the strings and the rasping of horse hair with each fresh attack is clearly audible, the listener's ear comes impossibly close to the action. What makes both these recordings compelling in their own way is that the space they conjure up is tangibly less—or, in some instances, seemingly more—than real.

This unreal quality corresponds to the ontological status typically accorded to recordings: they are counterfeits. The "phonygraff," as Gus Elen suggests in his song, "The Finest Flow of Langwidge Ever 'Eard," was a tortured parrot stuck in a box (quoted in Leach 2004). Elen's analogy hints at the dialectic traced by Carolyn Abbate (2001) whereby the double threat

of disembodiment and mechanical capture is offset by the utopian Orphic fantasy of a voice which never fades however far it travels from its origin. The flipside is that the dreaded ghostly echo offers a measure of fixity as a defence against the whimsical, ephemeral immediacy and unsustainable surplus materiality of live performances. For Theodor Adorno, it is through such reification that music most closely approaches its true character as writing (1990b:59): the process of inscription which grounds musical works in grooves on vinyl is a defensive strategy designed to allay our fears about music's impermanence or—and it amounts to the same thing for Adorno—our own mortality. If Bach's music once appeared to resonate as one with the heavens, the only illusion of security that Bach on record can offer is the reverberation of the ego in one's own living room. Adorno was quick to spot the narcissistic reassurance the gramophone provides. Recordings, he notes, are "flattering photographs." They have a "mirror function." "What the gramophone listener actually wants to hear," remarks Adorno astutely, "is himself, and the artist merely offers him a substitute for the sounding image of his own person, which he would like to safeguard as a possession" (1990a:54).

Sociological studies of listening practices support Adorno's claims: they too suggest close links between the experience of listening to recorded music and the construction of subjectivity. Tia DeNora, for instance, concludes from her ethnographic research that listening to music serves as "a building material of self-identity" (2000:62), playing an important role in "the 'reflexive project' of the self" (2000:46). Sociologists, moreover, suggest that the step from listening to music to self-consciousness frequently entails a construction of space. Michael Bull, whose study of personal-stereo users examines the role of sound reproduction technologies in the production of identity, finds that recordings act as signatures: they are "familiar soundscapes" which "maintain a sense of identity" against the backdrop of alien, impersonal environments. In effect, one never has to leave "home" (2000:24).

Bull's theory of listening has its roots in phenomenological discourse. "Phenomenology," says the philosopher and poet Gaston Bachelard, "should... say how we inhabit our vital space, in accord with all dialectics of life, how we take root, day after day, in a 'corner of the world.'" "All really inhabited space," he ventures, "bears the essence of the notion of home." The home is "a body of images that give mankind proofs or illusions of stability." The imagination builds "walls of impalpable shadows" and comforts itself "with the illusion of protection" (1994:4–5). Bachelard reaches his utopian conclusions through a study of metaphors of enclosure in poetry. Personal-stereo users may not be poets, but their accounts of "living inside" their stereos, says

Bull, echo this discourse. Bull's findings suggest that, via sound reproduction technology, listeners use music to transform social space. Recordings played on portable listening devices such as MP3 players or iPods project the home onto the city, acting like "invisible shells" (Bull 2000:22); foreign surroundings acquire associations of familiarity and security. Music thereby "colonizes" space. It domesticates it.

Bull describes how the soundscape suggested by the recording's acoustic properties becomes the medium through which the listener encounters her environment, as she inflects her surroundings according to the imagery or narratives she associates with the music. Recordings, however, produce a space which is more than a figment of the imagination. They carry more than vague spatial associations and the listeners' memories of other spaces once filled with the same music. This technology puts spaces in our ears, not just our minds. Space is inscribed in the physical properties of the sound; the echo after the final chord suggests a specific place. Such a place, of course, may never have existed on earth. It is a space mediated by technology and dreamt up by a sound engineer, emerging as another world from speakers or headphones. The listener's "own technologically mediated sound," explains Bull, "constitutes their 'inhabited space' which correspondingly transcends the sounds of 'geographical space'" (2000:159). Thus recordings tempt listeners to abandon the "real" world for a dream. Recall the end of the C Minor Prelude in Rostropovich's recording, where the sudden prominence of the acoustic space allows the listener to be transported fleetingly into the old French church. The imaginary, says Bachelard, "flees the object nearby and right away it is far off . . . in the space of elsewhere" (1994:184). In this reading, the experience of recordings is escapist, the space they produce a sanctuary. The church obscures the living room; a technologically engineered, virtual-reality space supplants lived space.

The First Threshold (Between Rooms 1 and 2): Transforming Space

According to this model of spatial escapism, the space produced in the experience of recordings is an ideal space in more than one sense. It is a space of the imagination—the mere *idea* of space. Indeed, Bull's findings suggest that listeners frequently imagine themselves in fantasy spaces which are strictly impossible alternatives to reality. This ideal space is a utopia: both a no-place (*ou*-topia) and a better place (*eu*-topia). While listeners often use metaphors of escape to describe the experience of listening to music, another model of spatial experience emerges from Bull's investigation, however, which suggests that real and imaginary spaces may actually interact with one

another. The experience of recordings does not necessarily provoke a retreat from real, lived space; it can also transform or aestheticize one's surroundings according to what one hears (Bull 2000:85–90). Listeners, he claims, frequently use recordings to re-imagine their environment: they give their surroundings a subtext such that imaginary space inflects and reshapes real space. Thus the relationship between the two appears more complex than the straightforwardly escapist notion of a “space of elsewhere” implies.

Bull's simplistic focus on imaginary space risks undermining its alleged transformative impact by failing to account for the source of this capacity to transfigure real space. The casualty here is the sounding-space of the recording. Bull's concern with the imagery and narratives emanating from listeners' imaginations overlooks the fact that the technologically produced spaces we hear are more than mere fictions or memories: they may not have the visual, tactile, or olfactory presence of the listener's surroundings, but they possess a striking auditory one. This third space—space, in other words, as it is experienced—is neither a simple projection of the acoustic space suggested by the recording nor a straightforward fantasy, but instead is the result of a complex interaction between the space we hear and the space we perceive with our other senses.

Michel Foucault and Henri Lefebvre attempt to capture something of this transformative impact with a mirror-based theory of space that considers the possibility of distortion inherent in reflection. Their theories, furthermore, resonate with Bull's findings: personal-stereo users often describe the space they experience as a perfected representation or distorted mirror-image of their surroundings (Bull 2000:85–96). For Lefebvre, if space is experienced “as duplications, echoes, reverberations . . . and doublings-up,” these repetitions always introduce a minimal difference (1991:184). In the mirror, explains Foucault, “I see myself where I am not, in an unreal space that opens up potentially beyond its surface; there I am down there where I am not” (1997:352). In seeing oneself “in there,” however, one finds oneself absent from one's actual location in space; with this move, Foucault opens up the possibility for “a come-back effect” in real space. “Starting from that gaze which to some extent is brought to bear on me, from the depths of that virtual space which is on the other side of the mirror, I turn back on myself . . . turn my eyes on myself and reconstitute myself where I am in reality.” Foucault calls the space on the other side of the mirror's glacial surface a “heterotopia.” On the one hand, heterotopias are utopias insofar as they are places without a place, while on the other they are “real and effective spaces,” “counter-arrangements of effectively-realized utopia” which coexist alongside real arrangements so as to challenge them.

Nonetheless, Foucault's model cannot adequately account for the spatial experience of recordings because it overlooks the irresolvable ten-

sion between acoustic and lived space. The idea that the sounding-space overlays and thereby masks one's surroundings may appear to describe some listening experiences, but a conception of two spaces which inhere uneasily within one another is surely more apt. Whenever one listens to a recording, one is confronted with contradictory sensory cues: the space that one hears and the space that one sees and feels are starkly juxtaposed, jostling and vying with one another in an irreconcilable antagonism. One of the listeners interviewed by Bull likens the effect to the juxtaposition of dissimilar elements in surrealist art. Listening to recordings

makes everything surreal . . . because without the sound to go with your vision . . . [it] disorientates everything and there's a different sound to the visual side . . . the world around. It just doesn't fit in with it . . . It's strange. (Bull 2000:83)

The effect, the listener explains, is to make her at once more distant and more visually aware of her environment. The contradiction exists, though, even if one closes one's eyes in an attempt to block out the surroundings; there is the sudden jolt when one returns to reality and becomes aware of the discrepancy between acoustic and lived space. Take, for instance, the pregnant moment at the end of Rostropovich's recording of the C Minor Prelude: just as one begins to open one's eyes, the space of the Gothic church seems to linger within the living room. The effect resembles a visual paradox, where the two sides of a picture cannot add up to make a coherent whole.

Moreover, a Foucauldian theory of the experience of recordings leaves little scope for understanding such experiences as anything more than ethically impotent to the extent that, because the spatial counter-arrangements remain distinct, the autonomy of real space remains intact. This goes without saying for the model which conceives of the sounding-space as an ideal dream space functioning merely as an escape from, rather than a transformation of reality. But one should be careful not to overestimate the come-back effect which Foucault describes. Jacques Lacan would respond that the State has already factored in the presence of an imaginary subtext which can, therefore, continue to shadow real space without disrupting its fundamental structure (see Žižek 1999:247–69). While Foucault supposes that the subject is eventually able to reconstitute her identity and her surroundings after “coming back,” the politico-ethical conclusion to be drawn from Lacan's psychoanalytical insights is that such transgressions remain entirely within the logic of fantasy—that power systems already allow for their own straightforward subversion. In other words, for Lacan it is naive to think that, just by using recorded sound to re-imagine the space of the subway car, a commuter could escape the power relations which shape her

everyday life. As a supplement to real space, the imaginary reconfigured space in fact ultimately sustains the status quo.

When one listens to a recording, however, the spaces (auditory and visual-tactile) are brought into much closer proximity to one another; in fact, the listening experience necessarily contains moments, however fleeting, in which both spaces come together in a single, simultaneous act of perception. The resulting intermingling of and complex oscillation between spaces means that one cannot be said to simply overlay the other, and it is from this spatial antagonism that recordings acquire a certain ethical impact. While in the Foucauldian model both imaginary and real spaces retain relative autonomy, the mutual interruption of and frequent interchange between auditory and visual spaces inherent to the experience of recordings threatens even a minimal degree of totality and closure. It is because neither space can become all-encompassing that the listening experience opens up even the slightest possibility that reality might be otherwise. The ethical potential of listening to recordings derives, therefore, from a spatiality that is less affirmative than it is disruptive.

Room 2: Spatial Antagonisms

Yo-Yo Ma's film with director François Girard plays out precisely this spatial antagonism. *The Sound of the Carceri* is one of six collaborative projects in which Ma seeks to enrich his interpretations of the suites by engaging with other leading artists from other disciplines and media, including ice dancers and landscape gardeners. Based around a performance of Bach's D Minor Suite, Ma's second installment in the series of six films sets out to explore the common ground between music and architecture. Space emerges as the film's primary preoccupation, and the conflict between real and imaginary space comes to the fore.

An article in *Stereophile* explains that "During the late 1950s, when high fidelity exploded into a multimillion-dollar industry, product advertisements bragged about bringing the orchestra into your living room" (Holt 1988). While many listeners continue to fetishize this illusion of an immediate presence in their own home (especially in recordings of small-scale chamber or solo repertoire), today "the goal of high fidelity is quite the opposite: to transport the *listener* into the room where the recording was made" (Holt 1988). If monophonic recordings opened up a window in the listening-room wall through which listeners could eavesdrop on the performance space, stereo expands this window across the entire wall behind the loudspeaker and provides a sense of direction and spaciousness. "But it's still only a window," complains Holt. "We're not *in* [that space], we're still just looking

(or hearing) into it.” It is only with surround sound, he claims, that one can actually break through the window and move into that space. Since the listener’s experience in the concert hall most closely resembles eavesdropping through a window onto the stage, surround sound’s extension of the soundfield behind the listener as well creates an impossible relation to the sound image.

Ma’s project, though, is not simply to put the viewer/listener into a technologically mediated performance space within the surroundings of the home cinema; his aim is to put the performer in a space which “doesn’t even exist except in our minds.”⁵ The film puts the cellist in the shadowy, cavernous spaces of a series of three-dimensional, computer-generated simulations of Piranesi’s *Carceri d’Invenzione* created by Pedro Pires.⁶ The documentary sections of the film between each movement of the suite show Ma playing in the Santa Maria del Priorato church in Rome designed by Piranesi and built in the 1760s. While playing, Ma tries to imagine what it would be like to play in the spaces extrapolated from the drawings. With the mere turn of a knob, movement of a microphone, or shifting of the cello’s spike by less than a quarter of an inch, recording producer Steven Epstein simultaneously sets about “creating a space to match the invented spaces of our imagination.”⁷

Much has been made of the fantastic quality of Piranesi’s “caprices” or “games of the imagination” as they are described on the title page of the first published edition of the etchings ([1745] 1994): the endlessly unfolding spaces of the *Carceri* are cyberspace *avant la lettre*. Correspondingly, the film occasionally descends into embarrassing pseudo-metaphysical speculation on the imagination or the difference between representation and reality. The film’s insight lies elsewhere. In a key scene, the cellist is seen playing in the church wearing headphones through which he can hear the sound of the prison-space fashioned by the recording engineers. As Ma battles with the conflicting sensory information, the camera focuses at length on his face: a picture of extreme concentration with odd flickers of confusion and discomfort. In contrast to his customary relaxed behavior in performance, Ma is unusually still, and after a few seconds he is forced to shut his eyes so as to summon up the imaginary space. The experience is similarly unsettling for the viewer who likewise experiences the persistent contradiction between visual and audio space: while watching Ma in the church, the listener hears the sound which is fed to Ma through the headphones and which creates the sonic illusion of a performance in the *Carceri*.

With their Baroque illusionistic devices, the *Carceri* are themselves impossible, antagonistic spaces. Nightmarish worlds of irreconcilable perspectives, inexplicable areas of light and shadow, and staircases existing

simultaneously on different planes or leading nowhere plunge the viewer into a frenetic optical journey over stairs, ramps, and bridges. The sinister machinery of pulleys, cables, and levers among the grilles and joists entraps the viewer in a mesh of visual snares. In the DVD's radical reworkings of the eighteenth-century copperplates, the spatial imagination runs riot: instruments of torture abound and the arches and parapets of the middle ground proliferate, turning into extended sequences of vaults, galleries, and staircases that recede with vertiginous complexity. Columns loom over tiny, scarcely recognizable figures to suggest a vast, boundless prison-space which spills over into the city of Rome. With its dizzying accumulation of disparate objects, the seemingly infinite labyrinthine space of the *Carceri* is at once claustrophobic and voluminous.

At first blush Ma's project appears to temper the subversive thrust of Piranesi's etchings. Sound engineers domesticate the unruly, never-ending space of the *Carceri*: the acoustic frame confines this infinite space within a bounded, measurable space. Of course, the acoustic space of recordings is more often than not an imaginary space which defies the laws of Euclidean geometry. During the performances in the simulated prisons, however, gradations in reverberation and variations in the mixture of direct and reflected sound work in conjunction with the camerawork to create a comparatively realistic effect. As the vantage point of the camera switches during the Prelude from high above the performer to just in front of the instrument, for instance, the viewer correspondingly hears less of the reverberant acoustic and more of the direct, closely miked sound. Thus Ma's project does not simply put Bach or the D Minor suite in a space. Each of the suite's movements are set in distinct spaces derived from different etchings, and each phrase acquires its own particular spatial signature as it is heard from a given location within that space. These performances thereby highlight the significance of *place* in our spatial experience of recordings. In other words, recordings do not simply put the listener in the space suggested by the ambient acoustic, but locate them in a specific position within that space relative to the sound source.

The film's camerawork is closely linked to interpretative decisions—of phrasing, dynamic change, and articulation—such that the acoustic space plays an important role in the performance. The use of soundspace, in fact, becomes a dramatic gesture in its own right, shaping the experience of climaxes, large-scale progressions, and even the entire suite. The spaces of Piranesi's etchings are so vast and continuous that interior and exterior become indistinguishable, but when the film of the Prelude constructs an opposition between inside and outside, creating spaces partially enclosed by archways and pillars, it eliminates this indiscernibility. The result, however, is

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Example 2: Bach, Prelude, Suite II in D Minor for Violoncello Solo, BWV 1008, mm. 44–48.



to give the movement a definable contour: a gradual move “inwards” toward the climax at m. 48 (example 2) is followed by a more rapid withdrawal “outside” in the final ten measures. The impact of the climax is heightened, moreover, by a sudden retreat to a distant vantage point in the second half of the descending sequence immediately before the climax (mm. 46–47). During the held chord itself the camera suddenly switches to a close-up shot just as Ma changes bow to crescendo through the upper two notes of the triple stop. At this moment, the engineers combine the direct, closely miked quality of the “inside” sound with the resonance and spaciousness of the “outside” sound to create a paradoxical sonorous image that in reality could not be heard from any one point within that space. They generate a Herculean cello whose up-bow crescendo has an intensity and resonance that could never be matched in live performance. In the next three movements, the soundspace becomes increasingly claustrophobic—the Sarabande is tightened to a peak of intensity with the camera spiraling in closer to Ma with each turn. Its final measure, however, breaks free and the final chord is allowed to resonate in an expansive space. The Minuets that follow sound much more spacious, and the Gigue offers a buoyant gesture of leave-taking as Ma fades into the distance.

The Second Threshold (Between Rooms 2 and 3): Acts of Resistance

Ma’s project points to a certain kind of spatial experience which depends upon a series of oppositions between a predominantly visual space and an acoustic one, between space-as-experienced and virtual space, between a traditional church-space and a mysterious prison-space. In each case, a second, Other space cuts through the space of the everyday, and it would be easy to reduce the impact of this Otherness to ineffective escapism. To do so, however, would be to ignore the frequently unsettling quality of such spatial contradictions and their potential for a genuinely disruptive—and hence properly ethical—dimension. The Foucauldian heterotopia ultimately remains complicit with spatial arrangements allowed by the reigning power systems, for its spatial infringement is already presupposed. This is precisely where Lacan gains the upper hand over Foucault, for psychoanalysis is able to conceive of the intrusion of another space whose disruptive force exceeds

that of false resistance. As Slavoj Žižek explains, Lacanian ethics “in no way entails that every utopian imagination gets caught in the trap of inherent transgression: when we abandon the fantasmatic Otherness which makes life in constrained reality bearable, we catch a glimpse of Another Space which can no longer be dismissed as a fantasmatic supplement to social reality” (2000:158). Žižek’s example, in fact, involves a recording: when in a scene from *The Shawshank Redemption* one of the prisoners puts on a record of the act 2 duet from *Le nozze di Figaro*, it seems to Žižek as if “all the men listening were, for a brief moment, free . . . What we have here is the effect of the sublime at its purest: the momentary suspension of meaning which elevates the subject into another dimension in which the prison terror has no hold over him” (2000:158).

Žižek carefully distinguishes this “magic moment” from straightforward escapism: its power stems in part from the fact that the man who puts on the record is the one who has rejected any false dreams about life outside. Furthermore, the sublime effect, he claims, depends upon a contrast not simply between the horrifying world of the prison and Mozart’s aristocratic universe, but between the duet’s trifling content and the beauty of the music. While Žižek says little (at least in this particular passage) to explain the significance of this contradiction, the philosophical tradition upon which he draws can contribute significantly towards a theory of how we experience recordings spatially. The remainder of this study is therefore an exploration in largely philosophical terms of how this Other space obtains its transformative potential precisely as a result of the spatial antagonism entailed in the experience of recordings.

If Bach’s music can put the listener into another space, it is, in the first instance, worth asking what kind of space this might be. The reception of Bach’s music has left it straddling an epistemic rift between the ancient and modern worlds and their respective modes of rationality: his music is at once divine and mechanical. One strand of Bach reception locates his music in the vast space of the entire cosmos, reverberating throughout earth and heavens alike. Bach’s music is one of the last vestiges of a “platonized” Christianity; in its resonance linger the dying echoes of a world which still functioned within a magical episteme where music structured and harmonized the whole universe according to the Pythagorean ratios and where strict counterpoint was the harbinger of the heavenly concert.⁸ Thus, when analysts sketch the proportions of Bach’s forms, they draw the structure of the universe.

The epistemic shift from ancient to modern is often thought to be the result of increasing rationalization and mechanization, but the two epistememes should not be starkly opposed: in the ancient world music was *ratio*-nality itself (Chua 1999:15) and no less rational than the instrumental reason

which superseded it. That the divine and the mechanical are enmeshed is evident from discussions of Bach's music: strict counterpoint, with all its quasi-geometrical operations and permutations, evokes the precision of the machine as much as it does the heavenly concert.⁹ The difference between ancient reason and modern, instrumental reason has to do with a shift from acoustic to visual space—with what Edward Jan Dijksterhuis calls “the mechanization of the world picture” (1986). Instrumental reason makes music particular, dragging it out of the heavens down into empirical reality. Whereas only God could glimpse the totality of the ancient universe, neo-Platonist rationalization attempts to harness the cosmic order to make it perceptible to the human eye. Music thus becomes an object in space to be perceived by human vision, and space becomes an infinite, geometrical container. The visual logic of linear perspective collapses the ancient cosmos into its unified grid. Conceived as infinite extension, space becomes homogeneous and uniform, the subject's place nothing more than a viewpoint: the linear coordinates of perspectival space converge at one end onto a vanishing point and at the other onto the human eye.

But contrapuntal lines, insists Daniel Chua, cannot be reduced to those of a geometric grid. And Dreyfus laments the syntagmatic approach of much Bach analysis which, from a bird's-eye perspective, partitions the music into blocks of time and space, trapping it in the rationalized spaces of gridlike diagrams. Indeed, if music resists confinement in the systematic grid of perspectival space, it is in no small degree due to its status as a *performing* art. The performing body even escapes the strictures of notation's bar and staff lines. “Embodiment” has become a well-worn trope within cultural studies and the social sciences, and although the performing body has long been a preserve of ethnomusicology, other areas, especially eighteenth-century music studies, have recently begun to feel its vibrations (e.g., Le Guin 2002; Sutcliffe 2003). Surprisingly, questions of bodily experience have been conspicuously absent from much of the performance studies literature; Daniel Leech-Wilkinson's work on expressivity in Lieder performance is typical in considering questions of bodily experience only tangentially and instead privileging psychology.¹⁰ If musicologists have largely eschewed the body, its significance is felt more strongly in record reviews and listeners' comments. Alongside praise for immediacy of sound, reviewers of recordings of Bach's cello suites often bemoan the intrusive presence of the performer's body: finger-tapping or heavy breathing draw unwanted attention to both the performer's proximity to the microphone and the physical, kinaesthetic space of the body.

The films of Ma and Rostropovich highlight the space of the lived body in different ways. On the DVD of his recording of the cello suites (1991),

the sixty-three-year-old Rostropovich, in collar and tie, is restrained in his movements, and this model of self-discipline, which makes the playing seem effortful, is even more suggestive of confinement than is Ma's virtual imprisonment. In Foucault's analysis (1991), both the architectural plan and the disciplinary regime of the prison—and above all, the Panopticon—characterizes the space of linear perspective. The prison combines seriality and carcerality: "A line of cells, a set of segmented but contiguous and isomorphic positions." It is a "segmented, immobile, frozen space," the fixed location of the "disciplinary individual," of "calculable man" (Casey 1997:184). The elementary location or *partitioning* incarcerates individuals, producing "docile bodies" (Foucault 1991:135–69 and *passim*). Performers are no strangers to disciplinary regimes: through the material practices of ritual and repetition the cellist's body is trained and stamped into being within the confines of the practice cell. Every wearied sniff, exhausted inhalation, and labored triple-stop, the salivating mouth and the panting tongue—all turn the space of the performing body into the space of domination. Rostropovich's film almost seems to rehearse the shift from the divine order to modern mechanization by allowing a prison-space to emerge within the church. By contrast, Piranesi's *Carceri* paradoxically combine a sense of confinement and frustration with one of spaciousness. These vast, labyrinthine halls confound one's expectations of a prison. Similarly, when Ma's body comes under the lens, it points less to constraint or exhaustion than to virtuosic energy. During the *Courante*, the camera works with the sound to gradually bring the body-at-work into focus: switching back and forth from shots of Ma's left-hand to shots of the bow, the viewer correspondingly hears more finger-tapping and breathing, and more rasping of horse-hair against the strings.

The Open: Heidegger and Uncanny Spatiality

A heightened sense of kinaesthetic space is a striking feature of the experience of recordings, and the experience of bodily space gives the impression that the performer is present within one's living room. Recording technology allows the listener to come into impossible proximity to the cello and to feel the instrument's vibrations with an inflated intensity that could never be replicated in the concert hall. When the camera focuses on Ma's left-hand, the viewer is, as it were, put into the place of the performer with her ear against the neck of the cello and the vibrations of the strings under her fingers. With recordings, one can paradoxically be both near and far at the same time, as Wispelwey and Ma's performances demonstrate. To examine these phenomena, I turn to the philosophical work of Heidegger, whose

preoccupation with “nearness” is developed in terms of the “uncanny,” a relationship that is useful for understanding the spatial disruptions of the listening experience.

Heidegger’s concept of Being is inherently spatial: by using the term *Da-sein* (“Being-*there*”), Heidegger suggests that existence always already entails being one’s own “there” (1962:171). This “Being-in-space” is “in turn possible only *on the basis of Being-in-the-world in general*” (1962:82). Thus spatiality is inseparable from the fact that *Dasein* is absorbed in the world. This leads to a pragmatic conception of space, one that has more to do with the instrumental values of modernity and visuality. *Dasein*’s spatiality is intimately bound up with its “dealings *in* the world and *with* entities in the world”; it therefore understands the world as a vast “wherein” structured by pragmatic relations such as “in-order-to” or “for-the-sake-of-which” (1962:95, 97, and *passim*). “*In Dasein*,” writes Heidegger, “*there lies an essential tendency towards closeness*” (1962:137). But, in order to go beyond the idea of one’s environment as a uniform, measurable space, he must reformulate the notion of “closeness.” *Dasein*’s Being is “de-distancing” (*Ent-fernung*). It “makes the farness vanish” (he cites the radio as an example). Entities that are “ready-to-hand” have “a different closeness, which is not to be ascertained by measuring distances” (1962:135). Spatiality is determined not by literal metric distance or pure dimensions, but by “concernful circumspection” and “directionality” or orientation.

The significance of Heidegger’s notion of closeness for the understanding of the experience of recordings is evident: a distinguishing characteristic of recording technology is that it collapses the literal distance from the sound source which remains fixed in live performance and thereby transforms the listener’s experience of space. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger tends to think of whatever is to hand as a form of equipment, and his formulation of an instrumental spatiality relates closely to the physical, kinaesthetic space of the performing body. This could, of course, be said of the performance of any musical work: Bach’s C Minor cello suite, however, provides an unusual example of pragmatic space. The suite calls for a scordatura tuning whereby the cello’s top string is tuned down a tone to G to facilitate a wider range of multiple stopping and to create a darker tone color. The result is an unsettling contradiction between sounding pitch on the one hand and notated pitch and hand-position on the other. The familiar relationship between fingering and sound collapses as the disproportionately large distances open up between the fingers—and with them greater cellistic possibilities. The scordatura thereby undoes the idea of an oriented space in which one’s experience of space (the extension of the hand) maps directly onto some practical goal (the sound to be produced). At the same time it makes the all-too-familiar physical space of the fingerboard uncanny.

The uncanny turns out to be the key concept upon which Heidegger's attempt to rethink space hinges, and, moreover, the notion on which it founders. Heidegger himself confesses that *Being and Time* ultimately leaves spatiality unthought, in that "space in itself, so far as it embraces the sheer possibilities of the pure spatial Being of something, remains proximally still concealed" (1962:147, translation adapted). The connection between this aim and the concept of the uncanny emerges during a discussion of anxiety (1962:232–34): Heidegger describes this fundamental "mood" (*Stimmung*) as an ontological, not a psychological state, in which "one feels 'uncanny' . . . 'not-at-home.'" The uncanny is the abyss of nothingness, the nowhere, from which "we flee into the 'at home' of publicness." Uncanniness, though, is "the more primordial phenomenon": it is only in anxiety that Dasein experiences itself as pure possibility. Thus the strand of Heideggerian ethics upon which I wish to draw—an ethics at the heart of which lies the idea of disclosing man as pure potentiality-for, as simply being-possible—depends upon conceiving of spatial experience as uncanny.

Heidegger's work represents a constant struggle to maintain this openness of pure potential against the headlong rush of destiny and the finality of history—in other words, to preserve the discomfiting uncanny against the lures of a reassuring and familiar homeliness. This difficulty threatens to undermine his new and specifically antagonistic understanding of space developed in "The Origin of the Work of Art," an essay dating from the mid-1930s in which he sets out thoughts with direct relevance for a notion of listening as an ethical experience.

The work of art, Heidegger contends, sets up a world in the Open, in "the lighting-clearing of the There" (1993:186). At the expense of simplification, its truth emerges in part out of an antagonistic relation between the world set up by the artwork and the earth in which it resides. Whereas the world is characterized by expansiveness and spaciousness, the earth—the ground of man's dwelling—shelters. This conception of intersecting spaces does not suffice, however, as a model for the experience of recordings. However "belligerent" the strife between world and earth, Heidegger ultimately resolves it into a precarious repose. The divisive "rift" between them becomes a "common cleft" and the earth comes to provide something like a home for the world set up by the artwork.

It is implausible, however, to think that the acoustic spaces summoned up by recordings could in every instance be easily assimilated into the listening environment. When listening via headphones, the sound of the recording does not merge in any way with the acoustic of the environment. But, even when the sound we hear is mediated by the space in which the speakers are placed, the recording still maintains its own distinct acoustic signature. Rather than a single, homogenous space, the effect created is of

a space within a space—a situation that is more unstable suspension than perfectly blended solution. The transformative impact of recordings is not limited to the mere conjuring trick of turning the cramped subway car into a huge cathedral. Rather, it consists in their ability to make the listener acutely aware of space itself—not any particular space marked by any trace of belonging, but the simple medium in which we live our lives and yet which frequently remains hidden behind each of the guises it assumes. Recordings thus radically alter our relation to space, revealing it beyond this or that pre-determined environment as pure opening and possibility.

By contrast, an appeal to the homely and to belonging, by reappropriating the uncanny Other space, undervalues the way in which the experience of music can shatter our lives. Listening to recordings of Bach's solo cello suites can reveal our world as partially hidden in all its possibilities and thereby restore to us the potential to exceed that which is given in the everyday. That this uncanny space can intrude into our everyday lives suggests that we need not be entirely determined and imprisoned by the spatial confines of our existence, whether they be literal walls or barriers erected by socio-economic structures. For one brief moment Heidegger glimpses such a possibility:

The more solitarily the work stands on its own . . . seeming to let go, cleanly, all ties to human being, the more simply does it strike into the open that such a work *is*, the more essentially is the monstrous thrown open and what was long-familiar overthrown . . . the more easily does it throw us into this openness and, simultaneously, out of the commonplace. To submit to this displacement means to transform accustomed ties to world and earth and, henceforth, to keep oneself from all well-known ways of acting and assessing, knowing and viewing, in order to tarry with the truth occurring in the work. (1993:191, translation adapted)

The promise of hope contained within the experience of recordings is perhaps greater than Adorno would allow. Hope, for Adorno, is strictly u-topian: it is not there. The other acoustic space whose intrusion ruptures the space of the everyday is indeed an illusion, but, in arguing that recordings simply affirm one's sense of self and that they offer a mere escapist fantasy which maintains the status quo, Adorno underestimates the impact of this radical Otherness. While Abbate's study (2001) has sparked an increased interest in the uncanny within musicology, the transformative potential of this disquieting moment tends to go overlooked.

In order to go some way towards explaining how this uncanny space might have a come-back effect, one could adapt Emmanuel Levinas's critical reading of Heidegger, and specifically his notion of the "uncanny Other" as that which questions the very "Da of our Da-sein" (Levinas 1999:23). Ma's film, in which the uncanny prison-space constantly challenges the

church-space, is preoccupied with this Heideggerian problem: Being-one's-there is always also a Being-outside-oneself, an *ek-stasis*. In listening to recordings of Bach's cello suites, I suggest, we can experience a heightened ecstatic moment as this Other, purely acoustic space ruptures everyday space. Whereas Heidegger ultimately appropriates this ecstatic uncanny space as humankind's own dwelling-place, recordings of Bach's cello suites resist such reification. During the fleeting, pregnant moment at the end of Rostropovich's C Minor Prelude, as the church-space lingers uncomfortably within the living room just long enough to disturb its coherence, a fragile hope flashes up. As an ephemeral passing—a fading echo of what is already gone—this sounding-space is always ungraspable and, as such, remains unhomely, im-proper. Paradoxically, though, this moment is also the “persistence of the transient” (Adorno 2002:84), such that the apparent horror and boredom of the everyday is constantly negated by the fleeting intrusion of the non-existent.

Bach's cello suites inscribe within their contrapuntal design a need to be heard in a certain space, and recordings of these works have responded to this demand, making them supreme examples not only of the importance of space to the experience of recordings, but also of the transformative potential of this experience. This study has sought to theorize the role of space and its attendant ethical significance in experiences of these recordings. Recordings of Bach's cello suites, however, simply thematicize a latent possibility within recorded music more generally—a topic with which the musicological study of recordings has only begun to grapple. The discipline (in both its performance-based and more sociological forms) must reckon with this disruptive impact of an uncanny space which ruptures lived space and, in doing so, disturbs our homely, habitual existence. Only once this Other space is no longer dismissed as an escapist aberration, once its monstrous presence is instead allowed to persist and resonate throughout the space of our everyday lives, will the power and significance of recordings be fully recognized and their true ethical force emerge.

Notes

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1. Schopenhauer ([1819/44] 1977:534), among others, traces this much-cited aphorism to Goethe (Eckermann 1884:88).
2. Hengel and Houten refute the claim that Bach had assigned the text beginning at “Et incarnatus est” through “homo factus est” (previously included in the duet “Et in unum”) to an additional choral movement once he had already completed the *Symbolum Nicenum*. Part of their argument is that the function of symmetries in focusing attention upon a centerpiece suggests that Bach would have conceived of the *Symbolum* as a nine-movement structure from the outset.

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3. See Tatlow (1991).
4. Syntagmatic relationships concern the positioning and combination of signs in a temporal sequence (the horizontal axis), while paradigmatic relationships involve the possibility of substituting alternatives from a set of interchangeable signs (the vertical axis).
5. Ma makes this characterization during the film.
6. An Italian etcher, archaeologist, and architect born near Venice in 1720 and active in Rome from around 1740, Piranesi is renowned for his poetic views of ancient and contemporary Rome and his dramatic, imaginary interiors. The most haunting and nightmarish of these architectural fantasies are the *Carceri*.
7. This explanation comes from the trailer which is included on the DVD.
8. See Chua (1999:14–16) and Yearsley (2002:18–32).
9. See Yearsley (2002:173–208).
10. Unpublished seminar series at King's College, London (Autumn 2004) and conversations with the author.

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