

Hans-Joachim Braun (ed.)

‘I Sing the Body Electric’

Music and Technology in the 20th Century

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PREFACE

This book has its origins in a two day session on 'Technology and Music' which I organized as part of the 23rd Symposium of the 'International Committee for the History of Technology' (ICOHTEC) in Budapest, August 1996. The topic has interested me since the late 1980s. The idea was to bring scholars together from two different fields, the history of technology and musicology. It was not the intention to deal with the topic exhaustively, but to concentrate on selected aspects. Most important were two fields: musical depictions of technology and changes in the production process of music with its aesthetic implications. Reproduction can, to an extent, be included in production.

One of the shortcomings of dealing with the relationship between music and technology is departmentalization: there are musicologists on the one hand and historians of science and technology on the other. There are those who deal only with 'art music' while looking down on 'popular music', and others who like their music 'unplugged' while denouncing those who prefer it 'plugged'.

It is not surprising that these – artificial – boundaries have prevented communication between the disciplines for quite some time. During recent years, however, the situation has improved. Another session on 'Technology and Music' took place as part of the 26th ICOHTEC Symposium in Belfort/France in 1999 and conferences like those organized by the 'Institut für Neue Musik und Musikerziehung' in Darmstadt or the bi-annual 'Klangart' in Osnabrück organized by Bernd Enders and others have advanced the cause. A pleasant byproduct of the 1996 ICOHTEC Symposium in Budapest was the foundation of an ICOHTEC Jazz group. Considering the technological theme and the fact that the annual coordination of repertoire is done by e-mail, the group is appropriately called 'E-Mail Special', a variation of the swing tune 'Air Mail Special', made famous by Benny Goodman. The group is still going strong, growing, and, hopefully, improving.

I am extremely grateful to several colleagues and friends for their advice during the preparation of this book: Mark Katz, Alex Magoun, Andre Millard, Helga de la Motte-Haber, Susan Schmidt Horning, Rebecca McSwain, Trevor Pinch, Emily Thompson and Ed Todd. I would also like to thank my research assistants in Hamburg who helped me in various ways: Reinhold Bauer, Iris Boysen, Maja Dow-

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Thanks are also due to Peter Mischung of Wolke Publishers for pleasant cooperation. Finally, I thank my family for their understanding that I spent less time with them than I should have done. But after this....