Music, Radio and Liveness

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This part of Ramund investigates the changing understanding of music in Danish Radio by way of the notion of liveness in DR’s radio programs and programming policies. Choosing a broad institutional perspective, the analysis seeks to understand DR’s production mentalities (Corner 1999), i.e. the internal processes of cultural mediation formed by personal and institutional dispositions, values and production practices as well as by formal policy making in relation to music. The aim is to understand such institutional changes as they unfold in the dynamics between actual radio programming and institutional strategies. As media-audience researcher Martin Barker puts it, the notion of liveness is often used to evoke a ‘strongly normative position, horrible aware of unstoppable change’ (2013: 40) and as such, liveness serves well as the prism through which the changing roles and values of music in relation to radio is understood.

The relation between ‘the live’ and ‘the recorded’ is one of the most recurring discussions in the history of music and radio. From the critique of ‘mechanical music’ in the very early days of radio through negotiations of the size and composition of DR’s discotheque and to the role of the many affiliated ensembles within the institution, questions of liveness have been addressed continuously both qualitatively and quantitatively during the history of Danish Radio. Taking this as the starting point, the project seeks to understand how the notion of liveness inflects other parts of radio programming, enlarging the focus from matters of physical co-presence and temporal simultaneity to impressions of perceived nowness, eventness, presence and proximity.

The material for analysis will be 1) the actual broadcasted output and 2) formal as well as informal programming policies and contemporary discussions hereof. The study draws on recent discussions of the conceptualisations of liveness within performance studies (Auslander 1999, 2000; Fischer-Lichte 2008, Holt & Lapenta 2013) as well as from the perspective of media studies (Hepp & Couldry 2010, Bennett 2011, Barker 2013, Scannell 2013).