

The evil twins of 'mechanical music' revisited – DR and phonographic music before World War II

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In 1931 Danish radio engineer Frederik Heegaard began to build an archive of in-house recordings of live concert broadcasts at Danmarks Radio (DR) – apparently on his own initiative. When this illegal recording practice was curtailed in 1935 due to inherent copyright issues, his production of matrix stampers reportedly numbered around 1000 sides. Among these are approximately 150 recordings with the Danish State Radio Symphony Orchestra (now the Danish National Symphony Orchestra), practically the only recordings by this key Danish orchestral institution in the entire interwar period, plus samples from more popular repertoires.

Curiously, despite the historical coincidence of the founding of DR and its orchestra and the introduction of electrical recording, which would boost phonographic mediation of not least classical music and promotion of orchestras and conductors elsewhere, this dynamic played out somewhat differently in Denmark, where the social and musico-cultural pros and cons of the 'evil twins' of mechanical music, i.e. recorded and broadcast music, were hotly debated. While Frederik Heegaard's enthusiasm for exploring the synergetic potential of mechanical music produced a largely overlooked DR heritage collection, the very making and unmaking of this collection implicate broader and so far unexplored issues concerning the early and in Denmark somewhat uneasy co-existence of two major media institutions, commercial phonography and state broadcasting, begging an exploration of their key roles in processes of mediatisation within Danish music culture during the interwar period.

This research project will explore various themes and debates pertaining to the role of recorded (and live) music in early Danish broadcast and radio listening cultures by addressing three different constellations or interactions of phonography and broadcasting in relation to DR, each focused on representative case studies:

- **DR's non-commercial phonographic production:** Particularly Frederik Heegaard's 'pirate' recordings (1931-1935) and their reflection of early phonographic production and archive culture within DR.
- **The broadcasting of commercial recordings by DR:** Primarily the character and role of early gramophone programmes, instigated by popular demand in September 1929, and the successful legal action by record companies against DR in 1935 over copyright infringement.
- **DR in Danish commercial phonography:** The production of commercial recordings by radio owned and/or related orchestras and ensembles, including Danish dance bands used regularly for *in situ* live transmission, and other commercial phonographic activity from which DR could benefit.