

# Authenticity in the twentieth century: Listening to composer's own recordings

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The aim of this paper is to question the concept of both “authenticity” and “historically informed performance” by means of analyzing recordings of music composed in the twentieth century. Moreover, it attempts to shed light on the use of historical recordings for performance practice. Examples with recorded music by Grieg, Webern, Shostakovich, and Messiaen were analyzed, forming the basis for ascertaining how close from the composer's intentions one might get. Recordings by several performers were chosen following a hierarchic model of “authority” by Robert Philip. The results indicated that the biggest differences between the composer's interpretation and the interpretations by other performers occur when modern techniques of composition were used by composers whose interpretative style was rooted in the romantic tradition of performance. Generation gaps between performers were also observed as far as expressive deviation was concerned. It is concluded that both musical and cultural background play a fundamental role in the way works are performed and surpass the realms in which musical analysis can have an impact in performance practice.

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