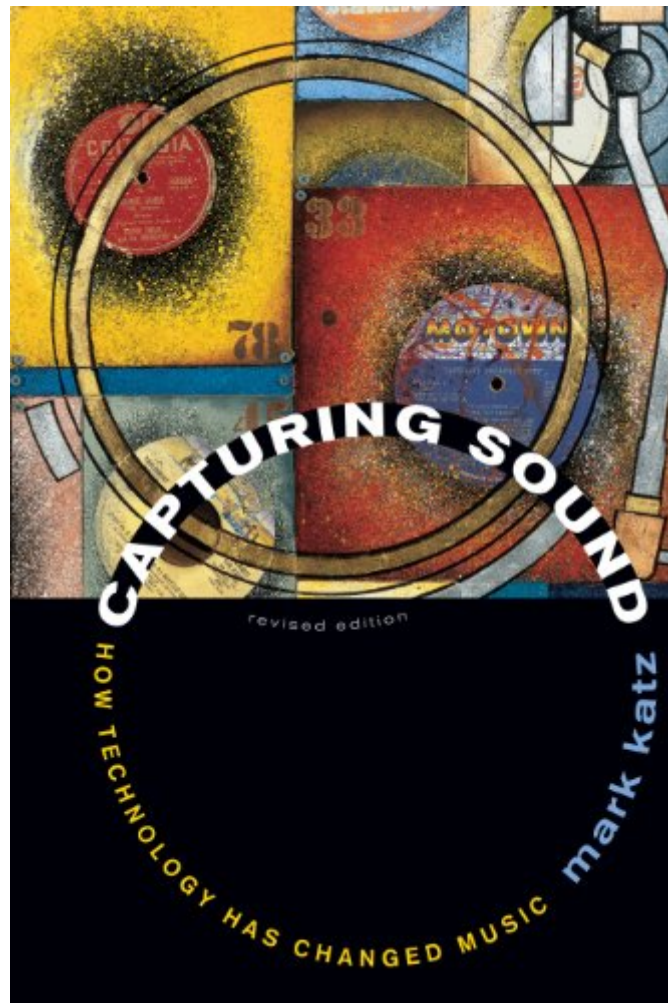




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# Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music



## Synopsis

There is more to sound recording than just recording sound. Far from being simply a tool for the preservation of music, the technology is a catalyst. In this award-winning text, Mark Katz provides a wide-ranging, deeply informative, consistently entertaining history of recording's profound impact on the musical life of the past century, from Edison to the Internet. Fully revised and updated, this new edition adds coverage of mashups and Auto-Tune, explores recent developments in file-sharing, and includes an expanded conclusion and bibliography. Find illustrative sound and film clips on the new companion website at [www.ucpress.edu/go/capturingsound](http://www.ucpress.edu/go/capturingsound)

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## Customer Reviews

I use this book as a central text in music education courses I teach at the University of Illinois (undergraduate through doctoral), and my students overwhelmingly find it fascinating and readable. The author brings a wealth of primary sources that really convey how sound recording and music making co-evolved over the twentieth century. This spring (2012) I had a chance to read the revised edition with a doctoral seminar, and I was very impressed with the number of refinements,

extensions, and additional references. The revised edition reads as though Katz spoke with admirers and critics--some sections students found less convincing in the first edition have been greatly improved, and the best parts are untouched or improved. Given that many second editions today are cranked out simply to allow the publisher an opportunity to cut down on book reselling, a revision this extensive is uncommon and very welcome. There are many wonderful books that deal with sound recording today, and having read many this remains the book I recommend most frequently.

I recommend!

thumbs up

This is a book written by an academic for academia. Unless that describes you, I would stay away. In general the writing style is very dry but I think the material he chooses is even worse. For example, how much really needs to be said about the increased use of vibrato in classical music? He devotes more than just a few pages to the topic. With such a wide range of topics to choose from, I would have liked to see much broader coverage. Instead we get excruciating detail on a very small number of topics. Before I gave up on the book, I realized the author probably did not set out to write a book on how technology has changed music. He more likely took his prior work and repackaged it into a book.

I greatly enjoy reading books that cover ground that I think I know well, then proceed to reveal insights far deeper than any I'd yet contemplated. Mark Katz has done this with some of my favorite subjects, music, records and recording technology, and then proceeds to add an entirely new dimension to my understanding of how these all relate (and continue to evolve together). To do this, he remixes a great number of insights coming from previous works I have come to know and love, including *Remix: Making Art and Commerce Thrive in the Hybrid Economy*, *The Rest Is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century*, and a widely eclectic appreciation of recorded music that I also share. And I am not alone in my appreciation for this book. In 2007 it won the Hacker Prize, which provided the following citation: The Hacker Prize rewards exceptional scholarship that reaches a broad audience. The audience so captured by *Capturing Sound* is primarily an undergraduate one, thus Katz has presented the Committee with a welcome opportunity to reward pedagogical writing. Textbooks are a genre that always challenge, and usually defeat, even the best of writers. Breaking

the mold of the seemingly objective, chronologically-impelled narrative, Katz has produced a very different kind of work that succeeds on three different levels, all of which are important to historians of technology. I agree, and I think it will give other readers a new-found appreciation and understanding of their musical tastes and collections. And with the knowledge it imparts, you may find yourself discovering new evidence of the book's primary thesis: the phonograph effect. Even in today's world of CDs and MP3s (which, do not fear, Katz treats thoroughly).

Although being a scholarly work, fully footnoted and with a complete bibliography this book, unlike much of academic production, is a great read. I enjoyed it immensely. It is a good companion to Michael Channan's book on the same topic, "Repeated Takes: A Short History of Recording and Its Effects on Music". If you are interested in the history of recording or just curious about how what we listen to came to be the way it is this book will delight you.

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