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History of Jazz and Popular Music

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MUSIC OBJECTS OF POPULAR CULTURE. FUNCTION AND MEANING OF INSTRUMENT TECHNOLOGY AND AUDIO MEDIA IN CHANGING SOCIO-CULTURAL CONSTELLATIONS

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Subproject: Saving and collecting. Sound carriers as music storage and collector's items in changing sociocultural constellations

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The aim of the collaborative project is to investigate music objects in popular culture in Germany from 1945 to the present day in terms of their technical-historical and consumer-aesthetic diversity and to understand their functions and meanings within changing sociocultural constellations; this comprises three groups of objects: electronic musical instruments and drumset, sound carriers and auditory reproduction media. The project follows a culture-analytical approach, according to which the role and the meanings of the objects are addressed and interpreted within their respective cultural and historical context. The expected research results are achieved through three

methodological approaches: the interpretive description of music objects, the analysis of contemporary texts on these objects and their handling, and oral history interviews. The research results are intended to create viable frameworks for the scientific interpretation of music objects, their archival documentation as well as their museum presentation.

The sub-project aims at investigating sound carriers and sound carrier collections in regard to their potentials for experience and meaning. The fixation of music on sound carrier objects and the possibilities of collecting and owning them led to ways of dealing with music which are new in a cultural-historical sense. The related questions focusses on materiality and multimodality (sound, image, text, haptic qualities) of various sound carrier formats (vinyl recording, tape, cassette, CD, audio files), the new cultural type of the sound carrier collector, a growing institutionalization of sound carrier collections during the investigation period as well as processes of individualization of sound carriers by several kinds of self-made productions.

The project's cultural science approach is realized through an interpretative description of music objects and modes of usage, an analysis of contemporary texts on these objects and on the corresponding ways of usage and, finally, through interviews (oral history) with manufacturers, musicians and collectors. In doing so, questions on the cultural-historical, technological and aesthetic dimensions of object usage are pursued.

The realization of the project is divided into a preliminary phase and four work packages, which start consecutively and then (at times) proceed simultaneously. In the preliminary phase, the collections of the Lippmann+Rau-Musikarchiv are sighted and the exchange among the project members is initiated. Work package 1 deals with the history of sound carrier formats and sound carrier collections after 1945 including paratexts (literary works, advertisement etc.), the thick description of selected objects (artefact analysis) and the generation of object dossiers. Work package 2 is dedicated to creating the interview guide, contacting the interviewees and, finally, conducting and analyzing the interviews. In Work package 3, the preliminary results of the three sub-projects are continually brought together, scientifically processed and prepared for a public dissemination (incl. internet presentation). One main focus of the sub-project is the presentation of results in scientific journals and conferences as well as, in the final year of project runtime, both in the organization of a scientific conference in Weimar and in writing and editing the project publication as well as a manual for archival documentation and museum presentation of music objects (work package 4).