

Spatial and subjective points-of-audition in binaural recordings

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Binaural microphones worn in the ears of the recordist and plugged into a portable recording device are a discrete and portable way to capture audio recordings. The binaural audio, when heard over headphones, ideally presents an externalised and immersive recreation of sounds as heard by the recordist.

Amongst the potential uses for this recording and playback method is the vivid presentation of a subjective point-of-audition meaning the listener hears events from the perspective of an active participant in the soundscape. In recordings of music this means that the listener can hear the performance ‘through the ears’ of a performer. Editing can be used to move between the points-of-audition of different performers or to incorporate recordings from spatial points-of-audition (where the listener perceives the soundscape from the perspective of a non-presence as in most audio recordings).

As with Michel Chion’s explanations of spatial and subjective points-of-audition in film sound in his 1994 book *Audio-Vision*, the presentation will clarify these terms using comparable examples of camera shots. The creative use of subjective and spatial points-of-audition will then be illustrated using audio examples of free improvisation, found sound composition and soundscape composition and their use in other areas of mainstream and non-mainstream music will be discussed.