

Live performance versus studio recordings

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Live Performance versus Studio Recordings The nature of music takes on many forms. Even a single song can be expressed in many ways. One considers that a song, when performed by a different musician, can take on an entirely new theme or meaning. Still, perhaps the most prominent way that a single song's expressive potential is altered is through differences in the live or studio sound. There is a multitude of ways that live and studio recordings differ. One considers that the very nature of the recording space is the most noticeable aspect. This difference, however, extends into the very forms of artistic potential the songs hold. These differences are highly noticeable in a studio vs. live recording of the Beatles' 'Love Me Do'. The live recording was captured at the BBC, while the studio recording was featured on the album 'Please, Please, Me'.

One of the advantages of studio recordings is that the band and the producer have the luxury of recording the different musical elements at different times and then mixing them together. This ensures that the greatest quality recording is possible. This is definitely noticeable with the Beatles' studio recording as one notices the crisp drums and harmonica sound that is produced from the song's introduction. Just as instruments can be recorded on different tracks, so can vocals. This is a highly noticeable feature for the Beatles' music as they are prone to singing in harmony. As the harmony begins one again recognizes the pure crisp sound they are able to achieve. Undoubtedly this sharp sound was achieved through many hours in a studio perfecting the exact vocal elements of the song.

There is the recognition that while the studio environment is able to achieve a sharp and crisp sound, the live environment is generally more free-form. In

this way, the live environment lacks the ability to record the instrumentation and vocals separately and as such may contain some errors. While this rough sound may perturb some, for others live recordings may be fuller of life as they constitute a singular performance. The Beatles' BBC performance of 'Love Me Do' contains many of these elements. While the harmonica and drum track of the studio recording achieve a high level of musicianship, one recognizes that there is a messier and rough feel in the BBC track. While the Beatles are consummate musicians, one recognizes this difference is slight; however it functions as one of the major differing elements between the songs. In terms of vocal elements, it appears that the studio recording was more successful in bringing out the particular vocal elements of the Lennon and McCartney. The recognition in these regards was that the studio recording potentially placed microphones in different areas as a means of more effectively capturing these vocal elements. While both tracks largely stayed within the same general structure, including metre, rhythm, and harmony, there seemed to be a slight willingness to explore improvisational potentials with the harmonica. Ultimately, then the live recording featured a greater degree of looseness than the studio recording.