RESOUND
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From the Director

This is the third column in a series on sound archives, and it treats the question of public access to sound recordings at institutions such as this one. Changes in technology and increased service to the public who cannot use our listening library inevitably raise questions over who has what rights over sounds.

Who owns the music in our collections? Who should have access to it? The romantics among us might argue that no one owns art and we all should have free access. Such a position is naive about our own society, and ethnocentric as well. Musicians may depend on their royalties; some other societies have even more rigid ideas of music ownership than we ourselves. Some of our field collections contain sensitive data. As a result of the heterogeneity and size of our collection, access involves many intricate problems.

While the copyrighted material is ruled somewhat ambiguously by the copyright law, much of our material is from small domestic and foreign record companies. The records are often rare examples of a given music. A legitimate researcher would benefit from a copy; a reissue may be in the interest of a native group. However, we must struggle with what constitutes educational use and how responsible we are for pirating of the tapes we provide.

Field collections are just as complicated. Before they become depositors, researchers usually believe everyone should have free access for non-commercial uses. Once they deposit their own tapes, they change their minds. This is usually because they are aware of the sensitivity of some of the things they have recorded, and because nobody likes to confront their friends who have just listened to a pirated version of their singing on the local radio station without getting any credit. It is not always even possible to argue that members of the society recorded should have free access. Should members of a clan who never hear another clan's music be able to obtain a copy from the Archives?

These problems have no easy solution for us, and we rely on the collectors and depositors to decide on the type of access we give to their collections. We are going to have to refine that classification in the future, and perhaps establish a degree of access for each tape or side of a tape. This should allow us to better respond to requests from legitimate investigators and members of the different societies who should have a right to the materials, but also protect the agreements, implicit or explicit, made by the collector with those people he recorded.

From the Field

The Tamburitza Tradition

When studying musical traditions, folklorists and ethnomusicologists tend to select for objects of study the older and rarer forms of traditional music, perhaps still actively practiced by but a few elderly people, or found in isolated areas among tribal peoples whose way of life seems to face imminent and drastic change. This justifiable proclivity to wrest rare or disappearing musics from oblivion has had certain consequences in terms of methodology; often the very paucity of material to study helps limit the parameters of one's investigations.

As a folklorist, I found myself in an unaccustomed position, and was forced to make unusual decisions, when I chose to undertake a broad-scoped study of the little-examined tamburitza tradition as it is practiced in Yugoslavia and among Croatian- and Serbian-Americans. First, I found that tamburitza music is not at all rare; the various subgenres making use of this family of fretted lutes constitute the most widespread and well-known folk music in Croatia and in Voivodina, the northern autonomous region of Serbia. Secondly, tamburitza is not fading; the tradition seems to be burgeoning everywhere, growing, evolving and entering new cultural contexts while remaining largely in the old ones. Furthermore, tamburitza is complex socio-culturally; for more than a century, the instrument has been singled out as a symbol of Croatian or South Slavic national identity. Academic composers have penned tamburitza symphonies, ethnologists have included it in festivals of "authentic folklore," and spirited intellectual debates have been waged regarding the "proper" way to play the tamburitza. All the while, peasants have continued to play their handmade solo tamburitzas—*samice, dangube* or *sargije*—or have spirited the orchestral tamburitza instrument out the back door of the concert hall for use in small combos at village weddings or holiday celebrations. As a result, the tamburitza tradition encompasses a broad range of musical styles and practices, so diverse that I found myself examining musics as distinct as is a Great Dane from a Chihuahua, and so common that I found, during my first weeks in Yugoslavia, that practically everyone I spoke with had a grandfather, aunt, uncle, or nephew who was a tamburitza player.

With such abundant and varied data, I was faced with the task of making