



RESOUND

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Archives of Traditional Music

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From the Director

Ruth M. Stone

Beginning Again at the Archives

Amid boxes still being unpacked, I have started to work in my new position as director of the Archives of Traditional Music. Though the Archives appears somewhat different through a director's eyes and I am seeing and hearing it in ways I had not experienced earlier, I have known it from other perspectives.

In 1970 I first contacted the Archives to find out what field recordings made in Liberia might be available for me to study as I prepared for a field research trip to that country. I still remember my thrill at receiving a tape with some of the early recordings made by Packard L. Okie in the 1950s, and I listened to the tape repeatedly to savor the sounds it contained.

Then in the fall of 1972, I arrived in Bloomington to begin graduate study in ethnomusicology at Indiana University. During that first year, I worked as a graduate assistant for the African collection in the Archives under the directorship of George List and the associate directorship of Frank J. Gillis. One of my first tasks was to create a sound track to accompany the African textiles exhibition which Roy Sieber, Rudy Professor of Fine Arts, helped to mount at the Museum of Modern Art. Alan Merriam, as I recall, had selected the examples to be recorded.

Later in the year, I made tape copies of African-derived music from Cuba, recorded "inside-out," from the label to the rim. I worked on collections of music from David Ames, Robert Armstrong, and Frank Speed. I met and talked with some of the scholars who came to the Archives. Among them were Richard Price, a researcher near the beginning of his career and George Herzog, then in retirement. During that first year, my apprenticeship at the Archives proved as much of an education as the courses in which I was enrolled. The opportunity to inspect the details of the recordings and notes of

seasoned professionals taught me a great deal, not only about the mechanical principles of sound recording, but also about the analytical interpretations of the people who had made those recordings.

During the next two years of my graduate study, though not formally employed by the Archives, I worked to complete the volume I co-edited with Frank J. Gillis, *African Music and Oral Data: A Catalog of Field Recordings, 1902-1975*. Through this project I contacted collectors from around the world who had studied the music and word, ritual and customs of Africans.

Beginning in 1979, as an ethnomusicology and folklore faculty member, I was able to draw on the Archives as a teaching and research resource. I brought my classes to the Archives and found it an invaluable institution for my own study. I learned first-hand why the Archives has, through the years, been the nurturing heart and soul of ethnomusicology at Indiana and how many of the ephemeral moments of performance that we try to understand are contained here.

The visions of the past directors have built this institution in different ways. The Archives' founder, George Herzog, brought to it a nuclear collection of cylinders and recordings from the American Museum of Natural History. George List expanded the holdings and developed the Archives as a teaching institution at the center of the ethnomusicology program. Frank J. Gillis developed a cataloging system and incorporated Western music, including some major jazz collections, into the Archives' holdings. Ronald Smith, as an acting director, began to plan the move to Morrison Hall and worked on a grant to clean, repair and rerecord the wax cylinder recordings. Anthony Seeger presided over the move to Morrison Hall, obtained the cylinder preservation grant, as well as grants to rerecord the acetate disc collection and catalog the field collections on the OCLC database. Also under Seeger's direction, funding was received for a multi-standard videotape laboratory.

The various directors have received dedicated support from staff members. I think particularly of Marilyn Graf, the present administrative assistant who was here when I first came to the Archives and continues to provide us with the all-important institutional memory. Louise Spear, now the director of the Ethnomusicology Archives at

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UCLA, worked for many years as both librarian and associate director.

Today the Archives stands at an importance juncture. The past struggles to find adequate physical space are over. No more do the steam pipes of the Maxwell Hall basement caverns threaten to destroy the priceless wax cylinders or the paper-based tapes of early recording history. Climate control is routine and constant, and sophisticated fire protection is assured.

This is the time for some new initiatives. During the next few months, with the faculty and staff, I will be implementing plans in several areas. In the spring of 1990 the Archives of Traditional Music will sponsor the first of a series of biennial *research conferences*, in order to focus on the ideas and work of researchers for whom archives are so important. While the topic of this conference will be announced later, I would be interested in hearing from you about issues that you think would constitute appropriate themes. At this conference, we will also award a *prize for outstanding research* and invite the winner to address the conference.

Another initiative will center on *advising archives and training archivists from diverse areas*. We will, for example, assist in the development of an archives at the Zimbabwe College of Music by training an archivist at Indiana University and by sending faculty and staff to assist in setting up the archives in Harare.

Another area of focus will be the *production of sound recordings and related publications* based on the Archives holdings. This continues the series of recordings initiated by George List in 1963.

A final emphasis will be on the *creation of a sound and visual analysis laboratory* that will allow faculty and students at Indiana University to utilize the burgeoning technology, much of it computer-based, for aiding human interpretations of performance.

Aside from these special initiatives, I am committed to maintaining the highest levels of processing field recordings, to offering an easily accessible public listening facility, and to providing reference advice on the topics related to the holdings of this Archives.

One of the special pleasures of becoming the director of the Archives of Traditional Music is the fine people who bring their dedication to our many projects. Dorothy Sara Lee, associate director, and assistant professor of Folklore, is in charge of the day-to-day operations of the Archives and supervises the graduate students and other assistants who work with the collections. She also teaches one course each year in the ethnomusicology program. Mary Russell, librarian, directs the listening library and the cataloging on the OCLC system. She is developing a course for our teaching program in ethnomusicology bibliography. Marilyn Graf, administrative assistant, organizes the work of the office and edits RESOUND. Other staff members include Brenda Nelson-Strauss, sound recordings cataloger, Glenn Simonelli, sound technician, and Marlena Frackowski, an experienced research assistant. We look forward to the addition of seven new research assistants in the fall.

The Archives is not complete without the ethnomusicology faculty who support and help sustain it, the other faculty on campus who find its materials especially useful, and the Archives advisory committee,

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which takes time to offer counsel on long-term plans. Finally, we are pleased that Dr. George List still comes in regularly to his office at the Archives of Traditional Music and is here as one of our valued elders.

Since the Archives serves a far-reaching constituency, may I encourage you to write us about your ideas for this treasure of an institution. Are there collections that may not be in an archives that we should know about? What is a fitting topic for our research conference?