

RESOUND

A QUARTERLY OF THE
Archives of Traditional Music

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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 sub-genres 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

severe choices in trying to record some good examples of each of the numerous important sub-types of tamburitza music. In Bosnia and Kosovo I recorded the players of pear-shaped, long-necked *tambure*, quite similar to the original types which were brought into the Balkans in the fifteenth century by the Ottoman invaders from the Middle East. In mountainous western Croatia, the Lika and Kordun provinces, I recorded the music of small, homemade, diatonic

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tamburitzas. In the hilly country of Central Croatia and on the Slavonian plains, I taped village combos who play for rural dances. In classy restaurants and dives in Voivodina, I recorded gypsy tamburitza players who entertain with an eclectic international repertoire.

In addition to soloists and small ensembles, I recorded large tamburitza orchestras, orchestras of school children who play classical-influenced tamburitza compositions or sentimental popular music from the late nineteenth century, and adult amateur orchestras who play a combination of folk, popular and classical music, partly from scores and partly by ear. I also recorded the music and songs associated with the performances of village folk dance groups who present the earlier traditions of their hometowns at regional and national folklore festivals.

The tamburitza has entered new contexts provided by modern technical

changes; there are tamburitza records, and the music is broadcast in live and recorded form on radio and television. Tamburitza players and enthusiasts tape record each other's performances, and copies of cassettes circulate from person to person. I observed these phenomena and attempted to ascertain the influence of these developments upon the tamburitza tradition.

The collection I deposited at the Archives of Traditional Music is quite het-

erogeneous.* Although the collection comprises only that portion of the research which was done in Yugoslavia, it includes a wide variety of instruments and musical styles. The results of the study are described and analyzed in my dissertation, "The Tamburitza Tradition," Indiana University, 1983.

Although the study I have conducted is far from flawless, it is becoming increasingly apparent that as traditional musics become all the more influenced by various technological, musical, and political elements in modern societies, it will be necessary that ethnomusicologists undertake more research of this sort.

* Archives accession number 83-353-F

Richard March, Milwaukee Public Museum

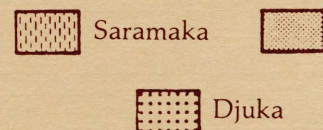
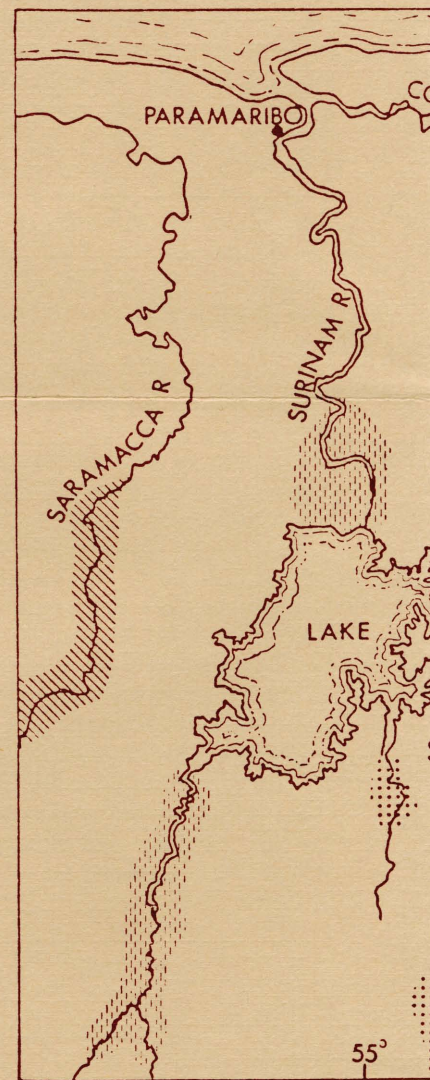
From the Vault

The Surinam Collection of Melville and Francis Herskovits

The anthropologist Melville J. Herskovits shared with his wife and co-author, Frances, an intense life-long interest in African and Afro-American cultures. The substantial retention of elements of African culture by blacks in the New World especially intrigued the Herskovitses and led to their earliest field work outside the United States. During the summers of 1928 and 1929, while Melville Herskovits was the sole professor of anthropology at Northwestern University, the Herskovitses set out to study the folklore and music of blacks from the coastal city of Paramaribo, and from two so-called "Bush Negro" tribes, the Saramaka and Djuka. These rural tribes lived then and still remain in isolated areas far inland from the capital

city. The Saramaka and Djuka peoples, descendants of slaves who fled from the plantations on Surinam's coast beginning in the late seventeenth century, managed, unlike many other such groups, to survive in a cruel physical environment, and to avoid extinction by government troops or assimilation into the general population. With peace treaties of 1760, the Surinam government recognized the former slaves and their descendants as a political entity, today "the hemisphere's largest maroon population, boasting the most highly developed independent societies and cul-

Bush Negro tribes of Surinam



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Amy E. Novick, Editor

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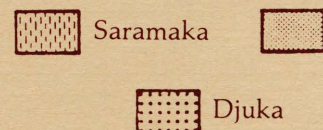
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tures in the history of Afro-America." (Price 1973:293)

To record the music of Surinam's blacks in the bush and in the city, the Herskovitses took with them a German-

They feared placing themselves in spiritual jeopardy; an edict of the ancestors prohibited a man from ever telling more than half he knew.

made cylinder recorder, recommended to them by Erich M. von Hornbostel, and a good supply of Edison wax cylinders. They recorded 255 songs on 99 cylinders during the summer of 1929. These cylinders, along with recordings

made on later field trips to West Africa, Trinidad and Brazil, were deposited at the Archives of Traditional Music by Frances Herskovits after the death of Melville Herskovits in 1963.*

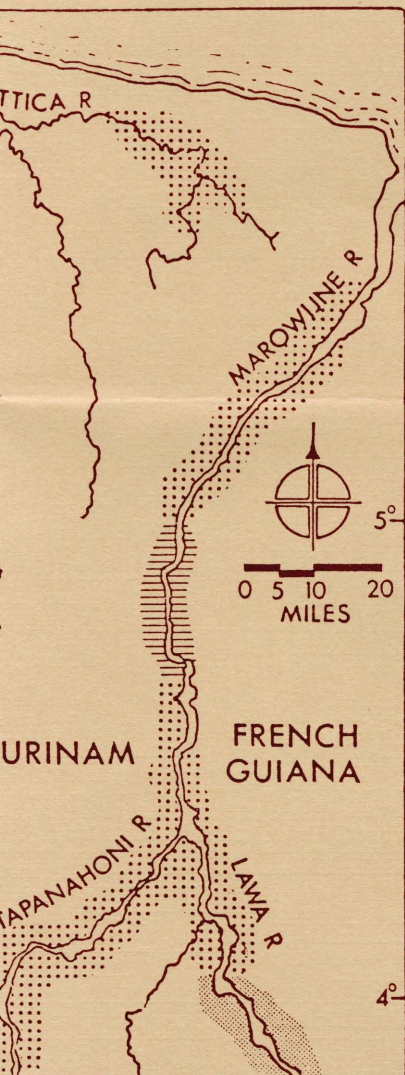
The Surinam collection contains various religious, secular and ancestral cult songs, most of which were transcribed and analyzed by Mieczslaw Kolinski and published in the Herskovitses' *Suriname Folk-lore* in 1936. Impressed by the cul-

tural integrity of the songs he analyzed, Kolinski observed:

For as the present study discloses, the songs of the Suriname Negroes are in large part typically African in their entire tonal, rhythmic and formal structure. This means that in spite of the sudden uprooting of the Dutch Guiana Negroes from their native soil, the decisive change that took place in their conditions of life, and their contact with foreign races, this element of their culture has been preserved partially unchanged for centuries. (Herskovits 1936:491)

The first five cylinders of the Surinam

and French Guiana, ca. 1970



end
Aluku
Paramaka
Matakai

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I would like to become a *Friend of the Archives* for 1983 and help ensure the continued publication of *Resound*. Enclosed is my check for:

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collection contain thirteen Haitian songs, recorded at Port-au-Prince when the Herskovitses' ship docked there on the way to Surinam. Kolinski transcribed nine of these songs for *Suriname Folk-Lore* and noted that the songs were then the only examples of recorded Haitian music, and as such were valuable for the comparative study of Afro-American music. (Herskovits 1936:703)

The Herskovitses had little trouble finding individuals willing to sing into the horn of the recording machine, but the Saramakan and Djuka singers were always reluctant to provide accurate information about what they had sung. They feared placing themselves in spiritual jeopardy; and edict of the ancestors prohibited a man from ever telling more than half he knew:

The singing was often prefaced with a spoken explanation to the ancestors, or to a man's personal spirits, that he was conceding nothing of his heritage in thus performing for the White man's machine. Often, too, the singer made peace with the spirits by mis-

naming the songs he sang. (Herskovits 1936:525)

This reticence presented serious problems for Melville and Frances Herskovits, but they succeeded in verifying the name and nature of the songs by playing them repeatedly to people in other villages. The townspeople of Paramaribo did not share with the Saramaka and Djuka the beliefs which caused them to withhold or distort information, and readily identified their songs and dictated the texts to the Herskovitses.

The Herskovitses did not return to Surinam after 1929, but pursued their interest in African cultures in the New World with fieldwork in West Africa (1931), Haiti (1934), Trinidad (1939), Brazil (1940-41), and Sub-Saharan Africa (1953, 1957), where they continued to collect recordings on cylinders and discs.

Melville Herskovits joined the faculty of Northwestern University in 1929 and remained there to see the creation of the Anthropology Department and a program of African Studies, of which he be-

came the first chairman in 1951. He also established the Laboratory of Comparative Musicology for the study of African and Afro-American music, whose holdings were transferred to the Archives of Traditional Music during the 1960s. The collection of recordings begun in Surinam and expanded by fieldwork done by the Herskovitses elsewhere, along with the materials transferred from the Laboratory, helped form the core of the Archives' holdings of black music.

* Archives accession number 67-151-F

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