

# ARSC New York Chapter

## JUNE 2018 Meeting

**7:00 P. M. Thursday, 6/21/18**

→At the CUNY Sonic Arts Center←

West 140<sup>th</sup> Street & Convent Avenue, New York

Or enter at 138th Street off Convent Avenue

Shepard Hall (the Gothic building) – Recital Hall (Room 95, ground floor)

An elevator is located in the center of the building

### **Dwight Fiske and the birth of the Party Record**

*Presented by David N. (“Uncle Dave”) Lewis*

For many collectors, the legacy of the 1930s-1950s Party Record is a mixed one; in their era, these under-the-counter novelties enlivened many a dull evening with a sudden shock of scurrilousness through phonographic misbehavior, raising the eyebrows of unsuspecting prudes and bringing a new level of hilarity to go with one’s cocktail. Despite their age, Party Records can still shock through their crudity and sexual candor, yet today they are often viewed as the kitschy by-products of a repressed society and the fastest way that a phonograph can drag one’s mind down into the gutter. However, the father of the Party Record, Dwight Fiske (1892-1959), was anything but lowbrow; he was a ferociously talented pianist and aspiring modernist composer who had set himself along the same course taken by Cole Porter and Aaron Copland. Yet Fiske abandoned this course once he began to entertain expatriate Americans with smutty tales of amoral royals and high class citizens in the saloons and nightclubs of between-the-wars Paris. The Party Record industry happened because Dwight Fiske had the nerve to go forward in recording his naughty routines despite the threat of censorship. Nevertheless, in just two decades he was a relic, his contribution forgotten in the rush towards a revolution in American comedy.

Three decades of research went into the paper on Fiske published in the fall 2017 issue of the ARSC Journal by David Diehl and David Neal Lewis, and in this presentation “Uncle Dave” will expand on the research, sharing examples of Fiske’s recordings and excerpts from his early compositions.

**David Neal** (“Uncle Dave”) **Lewis** is a native of Cincinnati, Ohio and a recognized expert on its media history. He is also a writer, composer and musicologist now based in Virginia. In the 1980s he was one of the figureheads of an underground music movement in Cincinnati and co-host of the pioneering avant-garde radio show “Art Damage” and ran the Hospital Records label. Based in Los Angeles in the 1990s he worked as a classical buyer for the Tower Records and Virgin Megastore chains, but saw the writing on the wall with the arrival of the internet. From 2001-2010 he was an in-house editor for the All Music Guide, and since then has worked for the UCSB Libraries’ Discography of American Historical Recordings project and at the Library of Congress. The summer of 2018 finds him back in the record business, working at Switz-Mix Records in Luray, Virginia and freelancing on articles and CD liner notes.

**Our next meeting will be on September 20, 2018**

## **ARSC NY CHAPTER WISHES EVERYONE A PLEASANT SUMMER**



### **DIRECTIONS TO THE SONIC ARTS CENTER**

**Subway:** Take the 1 train to 137<sup>th</sup> Street City College and walk north to 140<sup>th</sup> St. & Broadway, then go east to 140<sup>th</sup> St. & Convent Avenue. Take the A, B, C, or D trains to 145th St, go south on St. Nicholas to 141st St, (one long block), then west one block to Convent Avenue, and south one more block to 140th & Convent Avenue. **Bus:** M4 and M5 on Broadway; M 100, 101 on Amsterdam Ave. (one block West of Convent Avenue)



*The Sonic Arts Center at CCNY offers 4-year Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees in Music with a concentration in Music and Audio Technology. Their program provides an in-depth curriculum emphasizing real-world skills with a project-based approach. Students enjoy a well-rounded program, with emphasis on audio technology, music theory, orchestration, and history to help them compete in a field that today demands an ever-growing and highly diverse skill set.*

All ARSC NY Chapter meetings are free and open to the public.  
**Voluntary contributions to help defray our expenses are welcome!**

To join ARSC, visit <http://www.arsc-audio.org>

