

2007 ARSC Conference

Program Abstracts

An asterisk (*) indicates that an abstract is not yet available.

OPENING SESSION

MILWAUKEE'S JACK TETER: GET HEP & GET HAPPY!

Cary Ginell (Origin Jazz Library, Thousand Oaks, California)

It isn't often that a performer with a background in country music becomes a successful dance band vocalist, but such was the case with the versatile Jack Teter (1902-1987). Born in the Ozarks, Teter moved to Wisconsin in the 1920s, playing banjo for Bill Carlsen's Orchestra, a popular ballroom dance band in the Milwaukee area. However, during the time he was recording with Carlsen for Paramount, he was also pursuing his country roots by performing as a soloist and with the prolific hillbilly team of Frank Welling & John McGhee. He was a friend of Alfred Schultz, Paramount's pressing foreman, and became well acquainted with Paramount's recording activities in the late '20s and early '30s. During the Depression, Teter ceased recording, but continued as a well-known local radio host in Wisconsin known as "The Song Doctor." Keeping himself before the public, Teter was the surprise hit of 1950 with a vocal version of an old jazz standard, "Johnson Rag." With his group, the Jack Teter Trio, Teter's career was rejuvenated and he enjoyed further success in the early 1950s at a time when musicians half his age were on the charts. Teter's warm vocals, rhythmic work on guitar and tenor guitar highlighted the series of records he made for Sharp and other local labels. He also dabbled in acting and other endeavors. Thanks to daughter Beverly, we are now able to examine Jack Teter's life in full with never-before seen photos and documents from his long career.

PRE-HISTORY OF THE NBC CHIMES

Michael Biel (Morehead State University, Morehead, Kentucky)

It is a well known Urban American Myth that the world famous NBC chimes began as GEC which stands for General Electric Company. WRONG. Modern research into the very few sound recordings that exist of the earliest examples of the NBC chimes, coupled with studying the actual models of Degan Chimes used by NBC, have shown that the chimes originally were of four through seven notes, and that the pitches GEC were rarely used. In this presentation we will play every known example of early NBC chimes on original recordings and recreate them on the same models of Degan Chimes either live or via modern recordings. Recordings of earlier types of station identifications from 1924 and 1925 will also be heard. Of special interest to the Milwaukee location will be the earliest known WTMJ Milwaukee station ID, complete with chimes.

ARSC INITIATIVES

ARCHIVAL CYLINDER BOX: AN ARSC DESIGN AND ENGINEERING PROJECT

Bill Klinger (ARSC Cylinder Subcommittee)

Commissioned by the Library of Congress National Recording Preservation Board, the Cylinder Subcommittee of the ARSC Technical Committee is developing an Archival Cylinder Box. The objective of the project is to define, design, and specify an optimized, low-cost, archival-quality container for use in safely storing and transporting a single "standard-size" cylinder phonograph record. This informal talk presents 3-D models and renderings that illustrate the advanced tools and materials employed to meet the technical challenges posed by the box requirements, and outlines the next steps to deliver a low-cost box to collectors and archives.

COPYRIGHT COMMITTEE REPORT ON RECENT ACTIVITIES AND DEVELOPMENTS*

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ROUNDTABLE:

SMALL SCALE AUDIO PRESERVATION STORAGE AND MANAGEMENT ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS

For both large and small institutions, insufficient resources or a limited IT infrastructure may dictate a small scale preservation storage solution and a transitional storage strategy. In this session we will explore small scale approaches through case studies of the Vermont Folklife Center and the New York Philharmonic archives that will outline current challenges while contemplating solutions. We will then develop the idea of a transitional repository that provides safe, interim storage until trusted, mass storage-based preservation repositories are available to smaller institutions. Finally, the session will include a respondent with experience in the development of digital libraries and preservation repositories who will raise larger issues and help answer questions. There will be time at the end for a discussion of issues.

- **The Best-You-Can-With-What-You-Have Practices: Digital Audio Preservation in a Small Non-Profit Institution.** Speaker: Andy Kolovos, Archivist/Folklorist, Vermont Folklife Center.
- **The Bits That Bite at the New York Philharmonic: The Long-Term Storage Conundrum.** Speaker: Adrian Cosentini, Audio/Preservation Manager, New York Philharmonic
- **The Transitional Repository: A Safety Net for Small Digital Preservation Projects.** Speaker: John Spencer, President, BMS/Chace.
- Comments. Respondent: Jon Dunn, Associate Director for Technology, Digital Library Program, Indiana University.

IRISH AMERICANS ON RECORD

IRISH AMERICANS IN THE ACOUSTIC ERA*

Mick Moloney

THE GOLDEN AGE OF IRISH MUSIC RECORDING

Harry Bradshaw

During the 1920s, Irish musicians and singers in the United States recorded hundreds of discs for the immigrant record-buying market. Some of these recordings became highly influential back in Ireland and played an important role in shaping Irish traditional music during the remainder of the 20th century.

A selection of remastered 78 discs from the '20s, research interviews with musicians who recorded during the era and contemporary photographs combine in this presentation to tell the story of this fascinating chapter of Irish folk music history.

COLLECTION CASE STUDIES

THE SOUND DIRECTIONS PROJECT: BEST PRACTICES FOR THE DIGITIZATION AND LONG-TERM PRESERVATION OF ETHNOGRAPHIC AUDIO COLLECTIONS

Mike Casey (Archives of Traditional Music, Indiana University)

Sound Directions is an on-going collaboration between Harvard University and Indiana University to develop interoperable audio preservation systems, procedures, and products based on standards and best practices. Phase I was funded by NEH as a research and development project charged with developing best practices and testing emerging standards for audio preservation in the digital domain. In this session, we will report on the findings of Phase I as detailed in a forthcoming publication. Topics covered will include digital file types and uses, target file format, working with broadcast wave files, technical metadata, data integrity, interim storage, quality control, workflow, the creation and exchange of preservation packages, and long-term preservation storage.

WHERE DID YOU FIND THAT?: HOW NPR AND THE CBC AUDIO COLLECTIONS SUPPORT ENGAGING, NON-COMMERCIAL RADIO PROGRAMMING - ON DEADLINE!

Hannah Sommers (NPR), Lorne Shapiro (CBC)

Performing audio research to support a deadline-driven media operation presents challenges for librarians and archivists. Reporters' and producers' needs change with the news cycle - the request may be for sound from yesterday's press conference, a live jazz recording from 1957, or a muckraking campaign ad that just got pulled from air. And, as media platforms expand there is more content to preserve in the archive. Join us for a look inside NPR and the CBC to see how our collections are changing along with new strategies to meet these demands. Projects including digital music catalogs and the challenge of working with large uncataloged collections of production audio are two topics we'll discuss.

VERSATILE FIGURES IN THE RECORDING INDUSTRY

NATHANIEL SHILKRET: A MOST PROLIFIC AND DIVERSE CREATOR OF RECORDED SOUND

Niel Shell (Nathaniel Shilkret Archives, Franklin Square, New York):

The question of whether pre-1940 recordings made in the United States primarily for use by foreign speaking people was dominated by a few artists leads to consideration of about half a dozen people, surprisingly, all closely connected. The most prolific and influential of these was Nathaniel Shilkret, who possibly made more recordings than anyone else in the history of the 78 rpm era (over thirty-five thousand was the estimate he made midway through his career).

We briefly sketch the life of this child prodigy, clarinet and piano player, conductor, composer, arranger, A&R executive, and musical director for Victor, RKO, and MGM. The discussion includes information taken from the Shilkret autobiography related to foreign recordings and to the Shilkington transcriptions. The presentation will include excerpts of Shilkret recordings, some of which, to the best of our knowledge, are available only from the Shilkret archives.

ARTHUR PRYOR: A STUDY IN VERSATILITY

David Sager (Library of Congress)

In Louis Armstrong's 1954 autobiography, *Satchmo, My Life in New Orleans*, he his pride when as a teen-ager he came to be hired by a prestigious brass band: "When I played with the Tuxedo Brass Band," he wrote, "I felt just as proud as though I had been hired by John Philip Sousa or Arthur Pryor."

When these words were written, Arthur Pryor had been dead for a dozen years and largely forgotten except by top musicians like Armstrong who knew the musical force that Pryor had once been – an internationally acclaimed trombone soloist, the leader of one of America's greatest concert bands, a composer of hit melodies, and perhaps the first internationally acclaimed musician to become a steady and consistent recording artist.

Though he is primarily remembered today (primarily by trombonists) for a dozen or so compositions for the trombone that feature rapid-fire arpeggios and other pyrotechnics, as well as charmingly sentimental airs, Arthur Pryor's mantle during his lifetime was immense and diverse.

This talk will focus on Arthur Pryor's many talents and his largely successful application of them – including his 25 year affiliation with the Victor Talking Machine Company. It will feature excerpts from Pryor's solo and band recordings as well as excerpts from his 1938 radio interview.

David Sager is a professional trombonist, historian of early twentieth century popular music and collector of early sound recordings. He is also author of the notes to the compact disc "Arthur Pryor and his Band: Echoes From Asbury Park" and co-producer of "King Oliver Off the Record: The Complete 1923 Jazz Band Sides."

AURAL LEGACIES

1957: AN AUDIO NECROLOGY OF THE VARIED AND IMPORTANT MUSICAL FIGURES LOST DURING THAT YEAR

Dennis D. Rooney, New York

The year 1957 remains memorable for the large number of important musical figures who died during that year:

Ralph Benatzky (c)
Gösta Björling (v)
Dennis Brain (i)
Joseph Canteloube (c)
Serge Chaloff (i)
Eric Coates (c)
Jimmy Dorsey (i, Cd)
Beniamino Gigli (v)
Joseph Hofmann (i)
Erich Wolfgang Korngold (c)
Charles Pathé
Ezio Pinza (v)
Carson Robison (v)
Othmar Schoeck (c)
Jean Sibelius (c)
Arturo Toscanini (Cd)
Erik Tuxen (Cd)

c = composer; Cd = conductor; i = instrumentalist; v = vocalist

The seventeen names listed above suggest how significant were the deaths in the world of music during 1957. Each of the singers, instrumentalists, conductors and composers listed left recorded documents, which will be interspersed in the presentation together with photos and graphics to enrich a brief discussion of each member of the roll's unique contribution to music. The only non-performer, Pathé, is remembered for his important contribution to the formation of the commercial recording industry.

THE JAZZ THAT MADE MILWAUKEE FAMOUS: NEWLY DIGITIZED TAPES FROM THE JOHN STEINER COLLECTION AT THE CHICAGO JAZZ ARCHIVE

Deborah L. Gillaspie (Chicago Jazz Archive, University of Chicago Library):

When Milwaukee native and noted jazz collector John Steiner passed away in 2000, it took four moving van loads to bring his massive early jazz collection to its new home in the Chicago Jazz Archive at the University of Chicago's Regenstein Library.

The collection includes thousands of commercial recordings, including recordings made by John Steiner on two of the record labels owned by him, *S/D* and *Paramount*. However, his least known recordings hold some of the greatest promise for researchers: his taped interviews with Chicago's early jazz pioneers, and performances from Chicago jazz venues, both on-site and via live radio broadcasts.

In 2006, the Chicago Jazz Archive received a grant from the Women's Board of the University of Chicago for preservation transfer of 100 reels of tape from its collections, most of which came from the Steiner collection. It would be my great pleasure to present excerpts from some of John Steiner's tapes in his hometown during ARSC 2007.

NEW APPROACHES TO RECORDED SOUND

WRECK UP A VERSION: KING TUBBY, DUB REGGAE, AND THE ROOTS OF SAMPLING

Brandon Burke (Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University):

Osborne Ruddock (AKA King Tubby) is widely considered the chief innovator behind dub; a sub-genre of Jamaican reggae that, over time, proved to be both a profound influence on several seemingly disparate popular musics (top-40 dance, 80's art punk) and a seedling from which other, newer genres (hip hop, house, techno) spawned. This presentation explains the cultural and aesthetic environment from which dub emerged, Tubby's role in the music's origins and direction, his recording methods, and, ultimately, how a local electronics whiz ushered in an era wherein previously recorded pop songs are manipulated by engineers and issued again as altogether different pop songs. The emergence of this particular form of post-production – one in which signifiers are often re-evaluated, re-contextualized, and typically employed in a manner inconsistent with their original meanings – was undeniably a watershed moment of aesthetic, cultural, and technical proportions. Among the Pan-African music canon, we have seen cases of this before; the use of classical instruments as vehicles for improvisation being one example. In this case, however, already recorded (i.e. “legacy”) documents of our cultural heritage become instruments in and of themselves. Likewise, in the hands of dub engineers, the faders and knobs of a mixing console proved no different than the 88 keys of a piano. Contrary to the Puff Daddy album of the same name, King Tubby *literally* invented the remix.

THE POTENTIAL FOR USE OF VOICE RECOGNITION SOFTWARE IN APPRAISAL OF ORAL HISTORY TAPES Sonia Yaco (University of Wisconsin, Madison School of Library and Information Studies)

Voice recognition software can transcribe spoken word tapes. The purpose of this focus session is to discuss the results of a pilot study done at University of Wisconsin Madison that tested two different kinds of voice recognition software on oral history tapes to determine the usefulness of this software in the archives appraisal process.

COULD AUDIO ARCHIVES BE THE NEXT HOT LOCATION FOR FIELD RESEARCH?

Aaron M. Bittel (Belfer Audio Laboratory and Archive, Syracuse University)

For many years field-based ethnographic research has been the *sine qua non* of ethnomusicology under an anthropological paradigm. Archives, on the other hand, have been stigmatized by the discipline in terms of their suitability to true, legitimate ethnomusicological research. Part of this stems from anxiety among social scientists over the old ghosts of colonialism and imperialism in their disciplinary past. Some archivists and ethnomusicologists have described this state of mind and questioned its rationality, calling for increased attention to archives as serious field research venues.

Meanwhile, leading scholars in the discipline have been actively questioning the nature and locus, physical and conceptual, of the research field. More and more, studies are being undertaken in urban locations, at multiple sites often separated by great distances, over the Internet, and even in libraries and archives. While the opportunities for ethnomusicological and music folklore research in an ethnographic archive might seem obvious, it is perhaps more difficult to imagine doing this kind of research in an audio archive of mostly commercially-oriented recordings.

By surveying the diverse collection at Syracuse University's Belfer Audio Archive and highlighting points where it might align with the discourse about the “new field,” I will address the questions: What kinds of fieldwork can you do in an archive? What vital data and insights can you gain by doing part of your ethnographic research in an archive, that you might not find in the external “field”?

FOLK MUSIC

POLKABILLY: HOW THE GOOSE ISLAND RAMBLERS REDEFINED AMERICAN FOLK MUSIC*

James P. Leary (University of Wisconsin at Madison)

THE MASTERS OF FINNISH FOLK MUSIC: RELEASING ERKKI ALA-KÖNNI'S HISTORICAL FOLK MUSIC RECORDINGS

Lari Aaltonen & Pekko Käppi, Department of Music Anthropology, University of Tampere, Finland

Since the very early days of the introduction of portable recording equipment, Finnish researchers have been recording folk music and oral traditions. As a result there are tens of thousands of hours of recorded folk tradition stored in various archives.

One of the most influential and active of all was Erkki Ala-Könni (1911-1996) Head of the Department of Folk Tradition at Tampere University. Ala-Könni was Alan Lomax's contemporary and compiled one of the largest collections in Finland, approximately 8000 hours of folk tradition. He began his life-long journey to the realms of folk tradition in the early 1940's and continued until his death in 1996.

The project at hand – The Masters of Finnish Folk Music – aims to release a carefully edited and researched selection of Erkki Ala-Könni's field recordings from the early 1940's to 1980's as a series of CDs. The project can be compared to the publication of Alan Lomax's collections. One of the main purposes of the project is to promote the rich diversity of Finnish folk music heritage to an international audience. The CD-series will be edited and compiled so that they will also provide a rich and valid source of scientific methods and study. As a complimentary element of the project, a series of written articles will be published in various scientific and popular folk music-oriented media. Up-to-date information on the progress of the project will be presented on-line at www.aitorecords.com/alakonni. Throughout the project, the editors will be lecturing on the subject, as well as attending international archive conferences. The first phase of the project includes the editing and release of two CDs. This project is being funded by the Finnish Cultural Foundation and the releases will be published by the award-winning Finnish world-music label Aito Records. The first two releases will be out in the beginning of 2008.

Project manager for The Masters of Finnish Folk Music project is Ph.D. candidate Lari Aaltonen and the content manager is Pekko Käppi, M.A., both of the Department of Music Anthropology at the University of Tampere.

CLASSICAL RARITIES

NADIA BOULANGER: THE POLISH RELIEF BENEFIT CONCERT – APRIL 4, 1941

Gary Galo (Crane School of Music, SUNY Potsdam)

On April 4, 1941 famed teacher/conductor Nadia Boulanger conducted a benefit concert in Carnegie Hall for the Polish Relief; the concert was presented in honor of Polish pianist Ignace Jan Paderewski. Boulanger invited The Potsdam State Crane Choir, under the direction of Helen M. Hosmer, to join members of the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York and fifteen distinguished soloists for this performance (Miss Hosmer was director of the Crane Department of Music at the State Teacher's College in Potsdam, NY, and a former pupil of Boulanger). The concert was recorded on five 16-inch, 33 1/3-rpm lacquer discs by the Carnegie Hall Recording Company, and the original discs are held in the archives of The Crane School of Music at SUNY Potsdam. The recording of this concert is particularly valuable that it preserves several works not otherwise recorded by Boulanger, including the complete *History of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ* by Heinrich Schütz, "Fac me tecum pie flere" from the *Stabat Mater* by 20th-century Polish composer Karol Szymanowski, and the 14th century Polish Hymn *Bogurodzica Dziewica*. The *Requiem* of Gabriel Fauré, a staple of the Boulanger repertoire, concluded the concert.

This presentation will include recorded excerpts, commentary on the performances, plus a description of the technical characteristics of the original lacquer discs. No copies of this recording have ever circulated, and thus the set of discs preserved at The Crane School is a unique document of the work of a major 20th century musician.

ARTURO TOSCANINI: IN MEMORIAM 1957-2007

Seth B. Winner (RHA/NYPL for the Performing Arts)

2007 marks the 50th anniversary of the famed conductor, Arturo Toscanini. This paper will highlight the 2 presentations that will have been given at Lincoln Center in January of 2007, highlighting the audio treasures that are part of the Toscanini Legacy, which is part of the New York Public Library's Rodgers and Hammerstein Archives of Recorded Sound. This presentation will include major rarities, such as a 1926 La Scala rehearsal excerpt, a 1935 performance of Bruckner's 7th Symphony with the N.Y. Philharmonic, rehearsals with the NBC Symphony, and radio programs concerning his final concert and a memorial program that was broadcast the day after his death.

This paper has been culled from over 450 hours of rehearsals, as well as from every surviving known N.Y. Philharmonic and NBC Symphony Orchestra broadcasts and non-broadcast concerts.

TECHNICAL TOPICS

TAPE DEGRADATION FACTORS AND PREDICTING TAPE LIFE

Richard Hess (Vignettes Media, Aurora, Ontario)

From 1947 through the 1990s, most of the world's sound was entrusted to analog magnetic recording tape for archival storage. Now that analog magnetic tape has moved into a niche market, audio professionals and archivists worry about the remaining lifetime of existing tapes. This paper defines the basic type tapes and the current state of knowledge of their degradation mechanisms. Conflicting prior work is reviewed and correlated with current experience. A new playback method for squealing tapes is described. Illustrations of various types of tape degradations and a survey of many of the techniques used for tape restoration are included. Suggestions are made for further research and archival practices.

THE BIRTH OF THE INTRAVENOUS DRIP MACHINE

Marie Azile O'Connell (www.cupsnstrings.com, Santa Monica, California):

In 1994, when I first started working at Radio New Zealand Sound Archives/Nga Taonga Korero, I encountered my first set of squeaky tapes (SSS). It was from that moment I began searching the WWB for information regarding this syndrome. But, in my mind's eye, I had an idea of inventing a machine, capable of making my life easier, in the archival sense. And so, the birth of the Isopropyl Drip Machine evolved. For the story of my invention, minus a few "special trade secrets," please join me to view photographs, a short video and some humour.

HOW TO PLAY A RECORD: A METHOD FOR OPTIMIZING THE STYLUS/GROOVE INTERFACE

Doug Pomeroy (Pomeroy Audio)

- Reasons for stereo xfer of mono recordings
 - channels editing (draw/cut/swap)
 - re-balancing of L & R levels
- Importance of "tuning" mono mix
 - noise reduction (works for both vertical and lateral)
 - evaluation of stylus/groove fit
- Explanation of in-phase & out-of-phase signals
 - description of balanced lines
 - configuration of sum & difference mixer
- Tuning a mono mix
 - independent control of L & R channel levels
 - superior audibility of L-R over L+R
- Monitoring
 - when is mono really mono?
- Equipment considerations
 - phono preamps
 - software programs
- Other uses for sum/difference mixing
 - find proper pb levels of any stereo tape
 - align two track pb of mono tape

ASK THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE SESSION

Conference attendees are invited to bring technical problems, questions, issues or concerns to ARSC Technical Committee members for discussion. This will be an informal session that will hopefully produce some answers but may also generate further questions!

FACETS OF PHONOGRAPHY

PHONOGRAPH DOLLS AND TOYS

Robin and Joan Rolfs (Hortonville, Wisconsin):

Phonograph Dolls & Toys. They talk, they sing, they play. Thomas Edison's invention of the phonograph in 1877 paved the way for an industry that thrived on the public's appetite for musical entertainment. Yet the very first application of this technology for public consumption was in the form of a toy intended to entertain children. Although the idea of a talking doll may have its merits, the practicality of such an early phonograph application had its shortcomings and ended as a tragic failure. It was left to other inventors to perfect the technology of talking dolls and phonograph toys.

Somehow, introducing the public to the technology of the phonograph proved more difficult than first anticipated. Although the initial interest and curiosity was very high, the cost of a quality product was well beyond the reach of most individuals. The appeal of a child's toy employing minimum cost and sonic quality seemed the direction of greatest acceptance.

Our talk will discuss phonograph dancing toys and give an overview of phonograph dolls. A DVD will show the toys in action and dancing to the songs of yesterday and today.

We wrote a 224 page book titled "Phonograph Dolls & Toys." It is a history of talking toys from Thomas Edison's first talking doll in 1890 to digital talking dolls and toys of the 21st century. The book contains over 500 color photographs illustrating talking dolls, children's records and phonograph toys over the years, many never before published. We would like to share our knowledge of phonograph dolls and toys with the members of ARSC.

VAN GOGH'S EAR, WHAT THE GREAT PAINTERS HEARD

Tim Fabrizio (www.phonophan.com, Henrietta, New York)

The observer sees what the artist sees. It may be impossible to comprehend the precise relationship of the artist to the canvas, but the on-looker at the very least views the same color, line and application that proceeded from the artist's brush. Yet, what about the other senses? How did Van Gogh's paint *smell* when it was freshly applied? And, furthermore, what was the environment of *sound* in which artists such as Picasso, Matisse or George Bellows existed? Whether sitting in a café, visiting a friend, waiting for a train, or painting in the studio recorded music was *everywhere*. Music, songs, comic monologues, all were a lost part of the painter's world during the 1890s and early twentieth century. You will hear what Chagall heard, reproduced by original century-old talking machines. Enter the world of the great painters as you never have before. Fill your senses visually *and* aurally. Be sure to attend this revolutionary presentation: *Van Gogh's Ear, What the Great Painters Heard*.

"FOR PRIVATE EDIFICATION AND INSTRUCTION": PHONOGRAPHIC INDECENCY IN THE VICTORIAN AGE

Patrick Feaster and David Giovannoni

In 1896 humorist Russell Hunting was sentenced to three months in prison for "spreading indecency" via the phonograph, but he wasn't the only popular performer making "bad records" – even Cal Stewart of Uncle Josh fame dabbled in the genre. For a brief but significant period in the 1890s, the nascent phonograph industry profitably yet discreetly promoted to a receptive segment of listeners "very wrong and improper" songs, stories, and sketches – or, as a more sympathetic critic characterized them, recordings best "reserved by purchasers for private edification and instruction."

Victorian mores kept these recordings underground, and successful prosecution under obscenity statutes ultimately deterred their production. A century later these pioneer recordings remain virtually unknown and unstudied: few examples survive, scant contemporary documentation exists (apart from outraged condemnations and arrest reports), and their content remains objectionable in civil company even today.

Here we trace the earliest history of phonographic indecency. We bring to light surviving specimens via prudently selected sound samples. We explore the phenomenon of the "vulgar" brown wax cylinder and its presaging of similar content in subsequent mass media. Finally, we assess the challenges modern researchers face in studying and presenting such material.

STUDYING AUTOMATIC MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

SOUND RECORDINGS AS A TOOL FOR MUSICOLOGICAL RESEARCH INTO MUSICAL AUTOMATA

Helmut Kowar (Phonogrammarchiv, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna, Austria):

Since 1980 the Phonogrammarchiv of the Austrian Academy of Sciences has been running a project which focuses on the documentation of mechanical musical instruments. This adventure turned out to be most rewarding, as musical automata, though surprisingly popular with all social classes since the Renaissance, have been widely neglected in musicological research. Making and collecting recordings not only proved to be essential in preserving this part of our cultural heritage; it is also an indispensable tool for doing research into musical automata and their music. Producing a sound recording of musical automata results in the creation of a document of both the instrument and the music; it is independent of the future fate of the instrument – a crucial point in the history of mechanical musical instruments – and makes the information on the instrument and its music available for further investigations. However, during the recording process – to give just an example – essential aspects concerning the acoustic characteristics must be considered: the musical perception of the instrument, for instance, will vary, depending on whether a musical box is played with the lid closed or open, with the movement built into the base of a clock or dismantled, or whether it is placed on a resonant wooden table or some other surface. More questions arise with the possible and available performance qualities of the automaton, its actual status, the quality of its restoration, or its historical setting. Also doing videos will add considerably on the amount of information. Thus, eventually, one will be able to research the music and deduce from it favourite styles and sound characteristics, the musical phrasing and the techniques of arrangements. With the help of the sound recording we can study the musical repertoire, the authentic performance, and the musical perception of decades and centuries ago preserved on musical automata.

The paper will discuss the relationship of musical automata and sound recordings as well as the problems arising with locating and recording mechanical instruments, and will give a critical evaluation of the information provided on such recordings. Audio and video-examples will illustrate some of the aspects mentioned and will provide insights into musicological investigations.

MECHANICAL MUSIC OF THE RICH AND FAMOUS: ORCHESTRIONS, PITTSBURGH PLUTOCRATS AND MUSICAL CULTURE

Philip C. Carli, Eastman School of Music, Rochester, New York

Before the widespread advent of the phonograph, the grandest domestic music machines were orchestrions: large mechanical pipe organs with percussion effects actuated by pinned cylinders or perforated paper rolls -- the latter being the first “long-playing” music media. Many wealthy Americans in the 1890s and 1900s who owned orchestrions were cultural benefactors, underwriting symphony orchestras and other musical institutions. The orchestrion music enjoyed at home perhaps reflected what was encouraged by concert attendance and civic patronage, but what did American industrial “nobility” actually hear in their capitalist castles? Did millionaires’ mechanical music reflect the repertoire of human musicians they supported?

Most large domestic orchestrions are gone, but three notable Pittsburgh sources deriving from the prominent German builders M. Welte and Sons give a clear idea of American industrialist orchestrion listening habits: an 1870s pinned-cylinder instrument originally belonging to the Mellon family, an 1893 No. 6 Concert Orchestrion (with its original roll collection) still at the Frick mansion, and a library of rolls for a now-gone gigantic 1905 No. 10 Concert Orchestrion bought by the Snyder family. Also, contemporary documents survive which chronicle purchasing, maintaining, and enjoying the Fricks’ Welte, uniquely detailing a Victorian family’s relationship with music machines. Comparing these sources with the rich variety of music listed in Welte roll catalogues, plus hearing the instruments themselves, may illuminate the private musical preferences of Victorians who could buy, for themselves and others, whatever music they thought “best.”