

Preserving Vintage and Historic WNYC Broadcasts

Andy Lanset

In September 2010 the New York Public Radio Archives embarked on a two-and-a-half year project to preserve, digitize, catalog, and post on the web at least 660 hours of vintage and historic WNYC broadcasts (on lacquer disc and tape) from the New York City Municipal Archives WNYC audio collection. Along the way, at least 100 items would be singled out for more extensive write-ups as part of a blog series known as Annotations. The project was made possible by the generous support of a Preservation and Access grant provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities.



Digitization was done according to IASA (International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives) TC04 *Guidelines on the Production and Preservation of Digital Audio Objects*.

(Continued on page 2)

Inside this issue:

Playback in Reel Time	3
Michael Feinstein Initiative	3
RHA Cylinders at NYPL	4
AVID at U of Florida	8
Organ Recordings at Oklahoma	10

Editor: Jack Falk

Continued from previous page

Broadcast wave files (BWF) with a sample rate of 96 kHz/24 bit were created and stored in our digital asset management system for every catalog item. While both discs and tapes were physically cleaned, there was no signal processing done so that we would have a proper baseline archival transfer.

The project has been completed with some 700 hours of material now searchable and streaming on the web with a carefully constructed taxonomy, more than 100 blog posts and an automated Twitter feed sending out timely posts pegged to the respective broadcast anniversaries and another Twitter feed aimed specifically at publicizing audio material from former Mayor Fiorello H. La Guardia's famous *WNYC Talk to the People* broadcasts during World War II.



The broadcasts also include *New York Herald Tribune* Books and Author talks, Overseas Press Club addresses, civil defense programs, American Music Festival concerts, media commentaries by Gilbert Seldes, and receptions at City Hall by visiting dignitaries. Some of the voices heard in this project are Jane Jacobs, Rachel Carson, Vance Packard, General Eisenhower, Will Durant, Jimmy Durante, S.J. Perelman, Robert F. Kennedy, Van Cliburn, Joseph Papp, Jackie Robinson, Carol Channing, Leadbelly and Robert Moses.

The bulk of the preservation, cataloging and project work was done by two talented archivists, Haley Richardson and Emily Vinson, both University of Texas School of Information graduates. While they also did some blogging, the bulk of this work was done by contract writers and researchers with input from NYPR Archives staff. To read and listen to the featured blogs: <http://www.wnyc.org/blogs/neh-preservation-project/>

For more information about the overall project: <http://www.wnyc.org/archives-and-preservation/neh-project/>

To browse through and listen to the posted programs: <http://www.wnyc.org/municipalcollection/>

Playback in Reel Time

Eric Cartier

At the University of Maryland, work is underway to mount an exhibit about WMUC, the freeform college radio station that will celebrate its 70th year on air in 2013. Special Collections in Mass Media & Culture, as well as University Archives, have delivered an array of sound recordings and other materials to the Digitization Center. We have a robust audio equipment rack, fit to transfer formats such as reels, cassettes, DAT, ADAT, MiniDiscs, and

cartridges, but some of the archival items have given us serious trouble.

Besides that problem common to audiovisual materials—insufficient, incorrect or nonexistent metadata—one reel tape presented numerous time-consuming challenges. The half-track tape contained multiple segments recorded at *different speeds in two directions*. It required four passes to acquire intelligible preservation masters,

contingent upon sound levels that did not dramatically rise or fall (keep in mind that these are amateur recordings).

Our patience was further tested when, on the first pass, unseen internal splicing tape snapped, and everything stopped while we made repairs. How much time we'd devoted to one reel, even before making derivatives and digital edits!

And yet, once we completely converted the tape, we celebrated our efforts, because we knew it contained cool student deejay banter that might be used in the exhibit, some of which would fit nicely alongside many other golden WMUC moments.

To learn more: <http://www.lib.umd.edu/special/collections/massmedia/home>.

Michael Feinstein Initiative Receives Preservation Grant

Lisa Lobdell

The Michael Feinstein Great American Songbook Initiative (Carmel, Indiana) has received a \$5,000 grant from the GRAMMY Foundation for a preservation assessment of its collections. Working with consultant George Blood, the Feinstein Initiative will determine necessary storage, rehousing, remediation, conservation, preservation, and digitization of its audiovisual collections that document the music of songbook legends such as Rudy Vallée, Meredith Willson and the Andrews Sisters.

For more information: <http://www.feinsteininitiative.org>

RHA Cylinder Collection Exhibit at NYPL

Nicole Wallace

The Rodgers and Hammerstein Archives of Recorded Sound at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts currently houses a collection of more than 3,000 wax and celluloid cylinders. The collection is primarily comprised of cylinders produced by American manufacturers such as Edison National Phonograph Company, Columbia Phonograph Company, Indestructible Phonographic Record Company and the U.S. Phonograph Company, and French manufacturers Pathe and Lioret. These cylinders range from very early non-commercial white and brown wax cylinders, to commercial moulded black wax cylinders, to Indestructible moulded celluloid cylinders and, finally to one of the latest incarnations of the format, Edison Blue Amberol celluloid cylinders.

As an intern at the RHA, my interest in acoustic recording formats led me to work most extensively with the cylinder collection. Provided with the terrific opportunity to curate an exhibit using the collection last spring, my primary goal was to showcase the range of cylinders found within the RHA's collection, as well as select cylinders that had not yet been digitized elsewhere, if possible. The exhibit, which is currently on display on the third floor of the Library for Performing Arts at Lincoln Center, features 11 cylinders from the RHA's collection, along with related print ephemera and catalog supplements. In addition, audio from each of the featured cylinders has been digitized and made available for listening by request.

Acoustic Recording and Early Cylinders

The 11 cylinders selected for the exhibit were likely manufactured between 1890 and 1926 and were recorded acoustically, or without the use of electricity. *Encyclopedia of Recorded Sound* describes acoustic recording as, "The method of recording in which all energy comes from the sound waves themselves [...] Sounds to be recorded were sung, played, or spoken into a horn, which activated a diaphragm attached to a stylus. This stylus transferred the vibration patterns on the surface of a cylinder or a disc." This recording method was first employed by early disc and cylinder manufacturers, Emile Berliner and Thomas A. Edison. In 1877, Edison invented

the Tinfoil Phonograph which could be used to acoustically capture and playback a recording made on, or impressed upon, a piece of tinfoil wrapped around a brass drum; an early incarnation of what would later become the wax cylinder.

Edison originally envisioned the cylinder's primary success as a dictation format. Instead, cylinders became the first commercially successful recorded sound format, bringing popular songs, vaudeville sketches, opera and other recordings into the home for the first time. Never before did people have the ability to capture live sound and then play it back — over and over again. Cylinders and home phonograph players were the first audio for-

(Continued on next page 5)

Continued from previous page

mat and playback technology to revolutionize the way people experienced, listened to and accessed recorded sound.

Cylinder Conservation and Digitization

Audio from each of the featured cylinders was digitized using NYPL's Archeophone. The Archeophone, developed in 1998 by Henri Chamoux, is able to safely play and digitally transfer all formats of wax and celluloid cylinders. The weight of the Archeophone's stylus is variable and can be adjusted for safe playback and audio retrieval. Additionally, the playback speed of the Archeophone can be adjusted between 44 and 248 RPM and an assortment of mandrels are available to fit a range of cylinder sizes and formats.

For the digitization of the wax cylinders included in the exhibit, the Archeophone's

variable weight stylus was used and set at a weight of 2 grams. For the celluloid cylinders, whose surfaces are more resilient than wax-based cylinders, the Archeophone's variable weight stylus was used and set at a weight of 4 grams.

Before digitization, the cylinders were gently cleaned to remove any surface dust, dirt or debris. Particles left on the surface of a cylinder can cause further surface degradation during playback and create interference during the digital transfer of the audio. The wax cylinders, fragile and prone to mold growth, were "dry" cleaned using compressed air to remove any dirt, dust and debris, followed by a careful dusting with a photo conservator's brush. To complete the cleaning of the wax cylinders, compressed air was again used to remove any leftover particles. The surface of the

celluloid cylinders were cleaned using a solution of distilled water combined with a commercially produced cleaner, also used for cleaning shellac records, at 25% of its strength and then applied to the cylinders using cotton q-tips. Distilled water was then used to remove any excess solution and the cylinders were dried using compressed air. They were then left out of their boxes until completely dry and then digitized using the Archeophone.

Featured Cylinders from the Collection

Brown Wax Cylinder

"Village Orchestra" Issler's Orchestra (ca 1890-1900); Consolidated Phonograph Co.

This is earliest wax cylinder featured in the exhibit. Thomas Edison's "white wax cylinders," were manufactured around 1887 and made from a blend of plant and animal waxes.

The Edison Company later switched to a standardized metallic soap composite for their two-minute brown wax cylinders, which were produced until 1902.

Lioret Cylinder

"Il Pluet Bergire" unknown (ca 1895); Phonographe System Lioret

While Edison was still experimenting with wax cylinders, Henri Jules Lioret of Paris had already pioneered the celluloid-based cylinder, the most durable of all cylinder mediums, by 1893. Following Lioret, The Lambert Company of Chicago introduced celluloid-based cylinders to the American market as early as 1900. Edison, however, did not release his celluloid-based cylinders, known as Blue Amberol Cylinders, until 1912.

Edison Gold-Moulded Cylinder

"The Philippines" Non-musical recording William H. Taft (1908); National Phonograph Co.

After 1902, Edison developed the Gold Moulded process, which greatly improved the efficiency of wax cylinder duplication and further contributed to the cylinder's commercial success.

Columbia "Twentieth Century" 6-inch Cylinder

"I Pagliacci, Prologo" Italian - Baritone Solo (ca 1905-1908); Columbia Phonograph Co.

Known as Twentieth Century Talking Machine Record cylinders, Columbia 6-inch cylinders could play for approximately 3-3.5 minutes, longer than the standard 4-inch cylinder of the time. Approximately 187 were issued between 1905 and 1909.

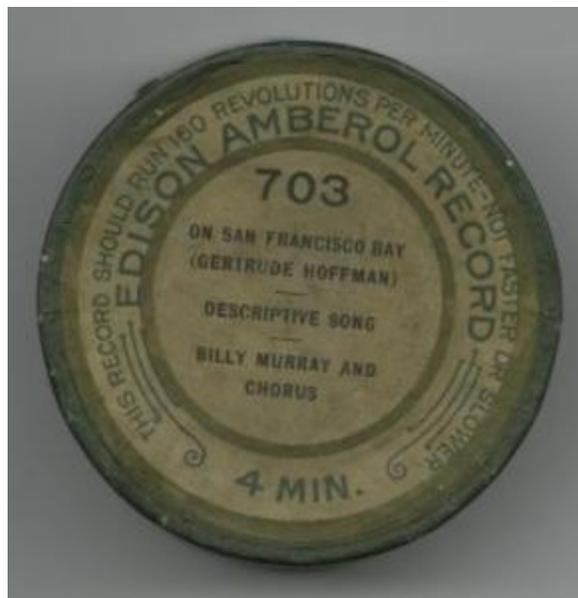
Indestructible Cylinders

"Chimmie & Maggie At The Table D'Hote Dinner" Ada Jones & Len Spencer (1908); Indestructible Phonographic Record Co.

"I Never Knew I Loved You Till You Said Good-Bye" H. Ellis (1909); Indestructible Phonographic Record Co.

Celluloid-based cylinders marketed as "Indestructible" records were produced primarily by the Indestructible Phonograph Co. of Albany, New York from 1907 through the 1920s.

"Indestructibles," made of moulded black celluloid, were commonly sold under the Oxford label in department stores such as Sears Roebuck and Co.



Continued from previous page

U.S. Everlasting Cylinder

"They Always Pick on Me" Miss Mabel L. Howard (1909); U.S. Phonograph Co.

Everlasting Cylinders, black celluloid-based cylinders with a thick paper-mâché core, were produced from 1908 to 1912 by the U.S. Phonograph Company. They were distributed under the U.S. Everlasting label, as well as the "Lakeside" label for Montgomery Ward department stores.

Edison Amberol Cylinder

"On San Francisco Bay" Billy Murray and Chorus (1911); National Phonograph Co.

Amberol cylinders, introduced by Edison in 1908, like earlier Gold Moulded cylinders were also made of black wax, but could play up to 4 minutes as opposed to the standard 2 minutes of the time.

Edison Royal Purple Amberol Cylinder

"Eviva la Francia" ("Daughter of the Regiment") Frieda Hempel (1919); Edison

Royal Purple Amberols, essentially Edison Blue Amberols dyed purple, were marketed by Edison as "higher-end" recordings and featured classical and operatic selections. In total, 77 Royal Purple Amberols were issued between 1918 and 1921.

Edison Blue Amberol Cylinders

"Don't Let the Deal Go Down" by Vernon Dalhart (ca 1920s); Thomas A. Edison Inc.

"When the Work's All Done This Fall" by Ernest V. Stoneman (1926); Edison Blue Amberol

First manufactured in 1912, Edison's celluloid-based Blue Amberol cylinders were the last of the cylinder format in production, with manufacturing finally ceasing in October of 1928.

For further information on the featured cylinders and/or to view images of other ephemera included in the exhibit, please visit: <http://www.nypl.org/blog/2013/01/28/rhacylinder-collection-exhibit>

For more information on the history and development of cylinder recordings, visit tin-foil.com and the Cylinder Preservation and Digitization Project at UCSB (<http://cylinders.library.ucsb.edu>), which features a collection of over 8,000 digitized cylinder recordings.

[This article is adapted from Nicole's original blog post, January, 2013.]

AVID: a Tool for Audiovisual and Image Collections

Cathy Martyniak

In the Fall of 2012 I was named the Audiovisual and Image (AVI) Archivist at the George A. Smathers Libraries at the University of Florida after 15 years as the UF Preservation Librarian. One of the first tasks I undertook was a review of the materials in the AVI collections, along with an exploration of available tools and mechanisms to support discovery and usage of this content by staff and patrons. I learned that we held fantastic materials in many distinct physical formats, but they were not clearly organized, nor easily found by staff, and were difficult for patrons to discover and access.

I quickly came to the conclusion that I needed an instrument to help me organize and track tasks related to these AVI materials. This tool needed to do many things, including but not limited to:

- Track objects in the collection by physical format
- Relate physical objects with a 'parent' collection or series-level record
- Associate physical originals to any reproductions, both analog and digital
- Support a complex, multi-stage workflow
- Allow description of AVI materials at collection or individual levels
- Import data into the tool from external sources such as archival data management software
- Export data for use in other systems, such as digital library applications
- Perform time tracking functions by collection, format and time period
- Help establish and track priorities for current and future digitization
- Generate customizable reports by collection, format, time period, etc.

I examined our archival data management system, Archivist Toolkit (AT), hoping that it could accommodate my needs. AT was able to perform many of the tasks but had trouble with reporting and work flow management.

Next, I queried members of several audiovisual email listservs about the databases they used. Based on these responses, I was able to interview numerous AV colleagues across the country. Nothing that they sug-

gested could do what I needed.

The AvSAP tool from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (http://www.library.illinois.edu/prescons/projects_grants/grants/avsap/) was wonderful but focused on preservation at the expense of workflow management.

Another issue to consider was cost. I had no budget to purchase a commercial solution. After speaking with the local AT expert and staff with our in-house digitization unit, I decided to build my own tool using MS Access.

Code-named AVID [Audio, Visual and Image Database], the tool is coming together well. I am working to ensure that it will be compatible with AT and future archival data

(Continued on next page 9)

Continued from previous page

management software platforms. AVID can accept data from an AT resource record and associate that data with multiple objects at a physical carrier level. I am including fields for minimal pointers to digital files in external repositories. I am adding fields to allow for

tracking of materials out for digitization as well as the creation of packing lists and metadata for those same materials. In a second phase, a mechanism to track the amount of time spent on each collection/series will be developed.

As development on AVID continues, I welcome feedback from members of the SAA Recorded Sound Roundtable community. Please feel free to contact me at cmook@ufl.edu with any questions, comments or suggestions.

Collections

highest level title:

Curatorial Unit:

Highest level number:

Collection status:

Use restrictions:

Portion AVI:

FA exists?:

FA published?:

View Physical Materials

Collections - Physical Material:

Format level A	Format level B	2nd level #	Extent	
Photo	Color		50	...
Photo	Black and White		200	...
Moving image	DVD		1	...
Moving image	VHS	1	1	...
Moving image	VHS	2	1	...
Moving image	VHS	3	1	...
Moving image	VHS	4	1	...
Audio	Reel to reel		3	...
				...
				...
				...
*				...

Record: 1 of 11 | No Filter | Search

Public Access to a Unique Organ Recording Collection

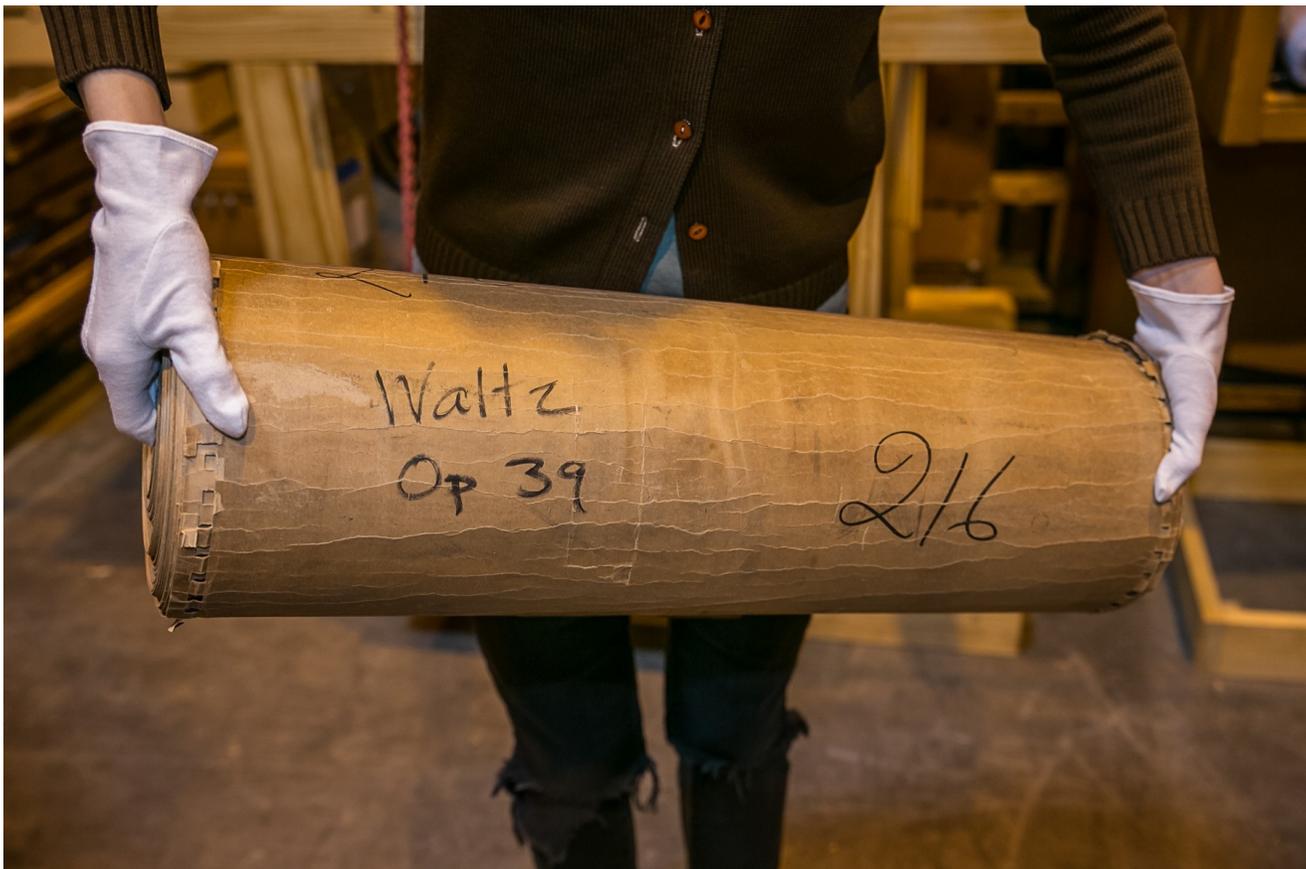
Bailey Schreier

The University of Oklahoma's American Organ Institute Archive and Library will preserve and provide public access to a unique organ recording collection with a first-ever grant from the GRAMMY Foundation. With this funding, the Institute continues its contribution to the legacy of organ music and the GRAMMY Foundation's mission to preserve the nation's vast recorded heritage.

"This grant is another example of the national and international stature of OU's American Or-

gan Institute," said OU President David L. Boren. "It plays a crucial part in the preservation of the role of organ music in our society."

The \$20,000 grant will allow the Institute to restore the collection's most treasured items, some of which are made of paper. The collection consists of 760 original and irreplaceable master organ player rolls (weighing in at 16 tons) produced by the Möller Pipe Organ Co. in the early 1920s, including organ arrangements by notable performers of the 20th century.



Continued from previous page



“...to preserve the musical tradition of the pipe organ and reintroduce it to modern audiences in new and exciting ways...”



“This grant from the GRAMMY Foundation recognizes the extreme cultural and musical value of the Möller master rolls held by the American Organ Institute at the OU School of Music,” said Institute Director John Schwandt. “This is an important part of our mission to preserve the musical tradition of the pipe organ and reintroduce it to modern audiences in new and exciting ways, and we look forward to the time when we are able to present the finished product of this project to the public.”

The collection also includes a one-of-a-kind perforator mechanism used to create daughter rolls from master rolls. The master rolls are made of heavy bonded paper and were cut by hand. They are significant for their musical content and value to the history of the *process* involved in making this music. Many well-known artists of that period recorded for Möller. Classical, jazz, popular, patriotic and religious music of the early 20th century can be reproduced in full fidelity. The specific technology used in creating the master rolls was proprietary and cannot be duplicated, Schwandt said. If they are not restored, the technology and the music will be lost, he said.

The technology for player rolls had been around for hundreds of years before Möller perfected the art form. The player rolls produced from these

master rolls were fed into Möller’s Artiste roll player mechanisms for performances on pipe organs in private residences, music halls, funeral parlors and churches. The Möller system is recognized by many as the best roll player system ever created by an organ firm.

The Institute is restoring an Artiste player to be installed on the Möller Municipal Symphonic Organ Opus 5819 in OU’s Paul F. Sharp Concert Hall. In this way, modern audiences can hear live performances of music created more than 80 years ago.



“... The Möller system is recognized by many as the best roll player system ever created by an organ firm...”



Nearly forgotten for decades, the rolls are in delicate condition – each roll is needing conservation work as soon as possible. The preservation and digitization of these rolls will result in much greater access to the rolls and the music contained within them. The Institute regularly offers opportunities for the public to view the entire collection, the restoration of the one-of-a-kind Möller perforator mechanism and ongoing organ restoration work.

Led by Schwandt, the Institute’s program has grown in number of students and stature. The academic program emphasizes organ performance, church music and organ technology, and a theatrical organ and silent film accompaniment curriculum is being designed. The pipe organ workshop is home to the restoration of the Möller Opus 5819, acquired in 2006 for the Paul F. Sharp Concert Hall at the OU School of Music.

OU is the only university in the nation with a complete working pipe organ shop devoted to teaching.

For more information about OU’s American Organ Institute and opportunities to view the ongoing restoration work, visit the website at <http://aoi.ou.edu>.

THANKS TO
NANCY MAYSMITH
FOR PROVIDING
THE LOGO FOR
OUR ROUNDTABLE.
[WWW.MAYSMITH
DESIGN.COM](http://WWW.MAYSMITH
DESIGN.COM)



THE ROUNDTABLE
SERVES AS A FORUM
FOR DISCUSSING
ARCHIVAL ISSUES
RELATED TO THE
CREATION,
MANAGEMENT,
PRESERVATION, AND
USE OF AUDIO AND
AUDIOVISUAL
RESOURCES IN
ARCHIVES AND OTHER
CULTURAL HERITAGE
REPOSITORIES.