ARCHIVING MUSICAL HERITAGE
GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP, LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND THE PLACE OF MUSIC IN INTERGENERATIONAL CULTURAL MEMORY

A London-based project, aiming to create sustainable, inter-generational music archives for the future.

PROJECT AIMS

The aim of this project is, firstly, to demonstrate how easily accessible digital technology, notably apps readily downloadable to mobile phones, can be harnessed to encourage young people from diverse ethnic backgrounds to engage with their cultural and musical heritage, and particularly through connecting them with older generations for whom such technology may be unfamiliar or disconcerting. Secondly, the project aims to build new collections that will be added to the British Library’s Archival Sound’s website (sounds.bl.uk), representing and relevant to local schools and communities: the library’s future users. Taking place in November-December 2011, the project will be carried out with a group of Key Stage 3 students from City of London Academy, Islington, building upon existing links between the school and City University, one of its sponsors. City of London Academy’s students represent a diverse range of ethnicities including Turkish, Bangladeshi and Somali.

The project seeks to encourage students in Year 7 (aged 11-12) to conduct sound recording projects in their own homes, recording and uploading the musical memories of older generations using their mobile phones, enabling both sustainable archiving and the simultaneous exploration of mobile phone as ‘archive’. Participants will talk to parents and particularly grandparents, about the musics (traditional and other) which older generations take to be representative of or meaningful within particular culture groups. The outcomes of these interviews, together with musical examples (where possible and appropriate), will be uploaded to an online platform and made available for sharing amongst the group using free software. As a way of creatively engaging with these recordings music workshops will then be conducted during which students will reflect upon their recordings and use these as inspiration for collaborative musical compositions. The workshops will be led by professional musicians who will draw out themes related to individual and group cultural heritage, identity and citizenship. This process will culminate in a performance in front of families and the school community, which will be documented, recorded and archived for posterity. The project will therefore enable participants to explore, in a practical and creative way, concepts from their Citizenship and Music curricula.

BACKGROUND TO PROJECT

In recent years ethnomusicologists have demonstrated an increasingly proactive approach to the dissemination of archival recordings, developing innovative and collaborative methods of sharing recordings with ‘cultural heritage communities’ (Barwick 2004: 253) whose cultures are represented within archives’ collections. The British Library’s World and Traditional Music Section holds one of the world’s largest collections of recordings described as traditional, folk or ‘world’ music. Building on two
pioneering doctoral research projects,¹ both in collaboration with the World and Traditional Music Section, the proposed project seeks to advance the field of proactive archiving by empowering communities local to the British Library and City University to record, archive, share and engage with their own musical heritages.

**NATIONAL CURRICULUM KEY STAGE 3**

**Citizenship Key Stage 3**

This project will enable young people to investigate their own cultural heritage and learn more about their diverse community and its connections with the wider world. It will explore the Citizenship Key Stage 3 concept ‘Identities and diversity: living together in the UK’. Specifically, participants will consider:

‘That identities are complex, can change over time and are informed by different understandings of what it means to be a citizen in the UK’

‘Diverse national, regional, ethnic and religious cultures, groups and communities in the UK and the connections between them’

‘The interconnections between the UK and the rest of Europe and the wider world’.²

**Music Key Stage 3**

In addition the project will enable participants to experience ‘a range of live and recorded music from different times and cultures’ and ‘make links between music and other subjects and areas of the curriculum’.³ The creative workshops will enable participants to develop the following skills as stipulated in the National Curriculum:

‘Participating, collaborating and working with others as musicians, adapting to different musical roles and respecting the values and benefits others bring to musical learning’

‘Understanding musical traditions and the part music plays in national and global culture and in personal identity’

‘Exploring how ideas, experiences and emotions are conveyed in a range of music from different times and cultures’

‘Exploring how thoughts, feelings, ideas and emotions can be expressed through music’

¹ These were conducted by Carolyn Landau (2006-10) funded by City University, London and Emma Brinkhurst (2008-12), an AHRC collaborative doctoral award with Goldsmiths College and the British Library - see Landau 2010 and Brinkhurst forthcoming.
THEORETICAL CONTEXT

According to the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, the raison d’être of an archive is to ‘tell the story of our past, showing us and future generations how we came to be and what we are as individuals, as communities and as a nation’. Sound archives, therefore, can help to document and unpack the complex, sonic diversity of society – both past and present. In this way, archives can be viewed as ‘active and interactive tools for the construction of sustainable identities’ and as deliberate sites ‘for the production of anticipated memories by intentional communities’ (Appadurai 2003: 25). By making deliberate choices in collection, acquisition and outreach policies, archives' holdings can become ‘representative of the whole diversity of society’ (Flinn 2007: 168) and the archives themselves ‘part of social processes, rather than just national repositories or research institutions’ (Seeger 1999: 2). This project will interrogate notions of ‘the archive’, ‘community’, ‘global citizenship’, ‘identity’, ‘memory’ and ‘transnationalism’ in the context of a twenty-first century European capital city.

KEY PARTNERS

City University

Principal Investigator will be Professor Stephen Cottrell, Professor of Music and Head of the Department of Creative Practice & Enterprise at City University. Professor Cottrell, whose research interests include ethnographic approaches to musicians and music-making, has recently founded a centre for urban ethnomusicology at City University, to which this research project would bring increased visibility and funding.

British Library

Dr Janet Topp Fargion is Lead Curator of the British Library’s World and Traditional Music Section. Dr Topp Fargion will oversee the archiving activities that will run in conjunction with the project, ensuring that all recordings are preserved and documented so that they are accessible for future generations. Within the larger project a website will be developed in consultation with the British Library, presenting the outcomes of the project in an interactive format.

City of London Academy, Islington

The City of London Academy - Islington opened in September 2008. It is jointly sponsored by the City of London Corporation and City University London. The Academy is a mixed, non-selective Academy, with no religious affiliation, committed to providing excellence in education and opportunities for all. The Academy promotes excellence in the areas of critical thinking, creativity, leadership and Business and Enterprise.

4 http://www.mla.gov.uk/about/work_with/mla/archives
FREELANCE PROJECT WORKERS

Researchers/facilitators:

Emma Brinkhurst
Emma is a doctoral candidate in the Music department at Goldsmiths College, University of London. She is in the writing up phase of her PhD, which is a Collaborative Doctoral Award in association with the British Library, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Her research focuses on the continuation of oral traditions in the Somali community of King’s Cross (Brinkhurst forthcoming). Through her research she has been facilitating community engagement with archival sound recordings at the British Library. From 2003-2007 Emma was Project Manager for the arts education charity Create.

Carolyn Landau
Carolyn Landau is Leverhulme Early Career Fellow in the Department of Music, King’s College London where she is conducting a project on the role of music for different Muslim communities in London. She completed her PhD in Ethnomusicology from City University, London in 2010, which explored the role of archival sound recordings held by the British Library for different generations of Moroccans in Britain (Landau 2010). From 2002-2006, Carolyn worked as Ethnomusicology Documentalist and Content Specialist in the British Library’s World and Traditional Music Section and Archival Sound Recordings project team.

IT Coordinator:

Alex Monk

Alex Monk of children’s development organisation Plan International will oversee the technological aspects of the project, devising the model for uploading and sharing recordings, guiding teachers and students through the use of technology, moderating the sharing of online content and ensuring consistency and compatibility with the BL’s existing online platforms and archiving systems.
REFERENCES


BRINKHURST, E. Forthcoming. Music, memory and belonging among the Somali community of London’s King’s Cross, PhD thesis, Music Department, Goldsmiths College, University of London.


FURTHER INFORMATION

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