

THE BULLETIN OF THE NATIONAL SOUND ARCHIVE

# playback

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PLAYBACK is the bulletin of the British Library National Sound Archive (NSA). It is published free of charge three times a year, with information on the NSA's current and future activities, and news from the world of sound archives and audio preservation. Comments are welcome and should be addressed to the editor at the NSA.

We have a special mailing list for PLAYBACK. Please write, phone, fax or e-mail us, or complete and send in the tear-off slip at the end of this issue (if you have not done so already) if you wish to receive future issues through the post.

The National Sound Archive is one of the largest sound archives in the world and is based at the British Library's new building at St. Pancras.

*For further information contact*

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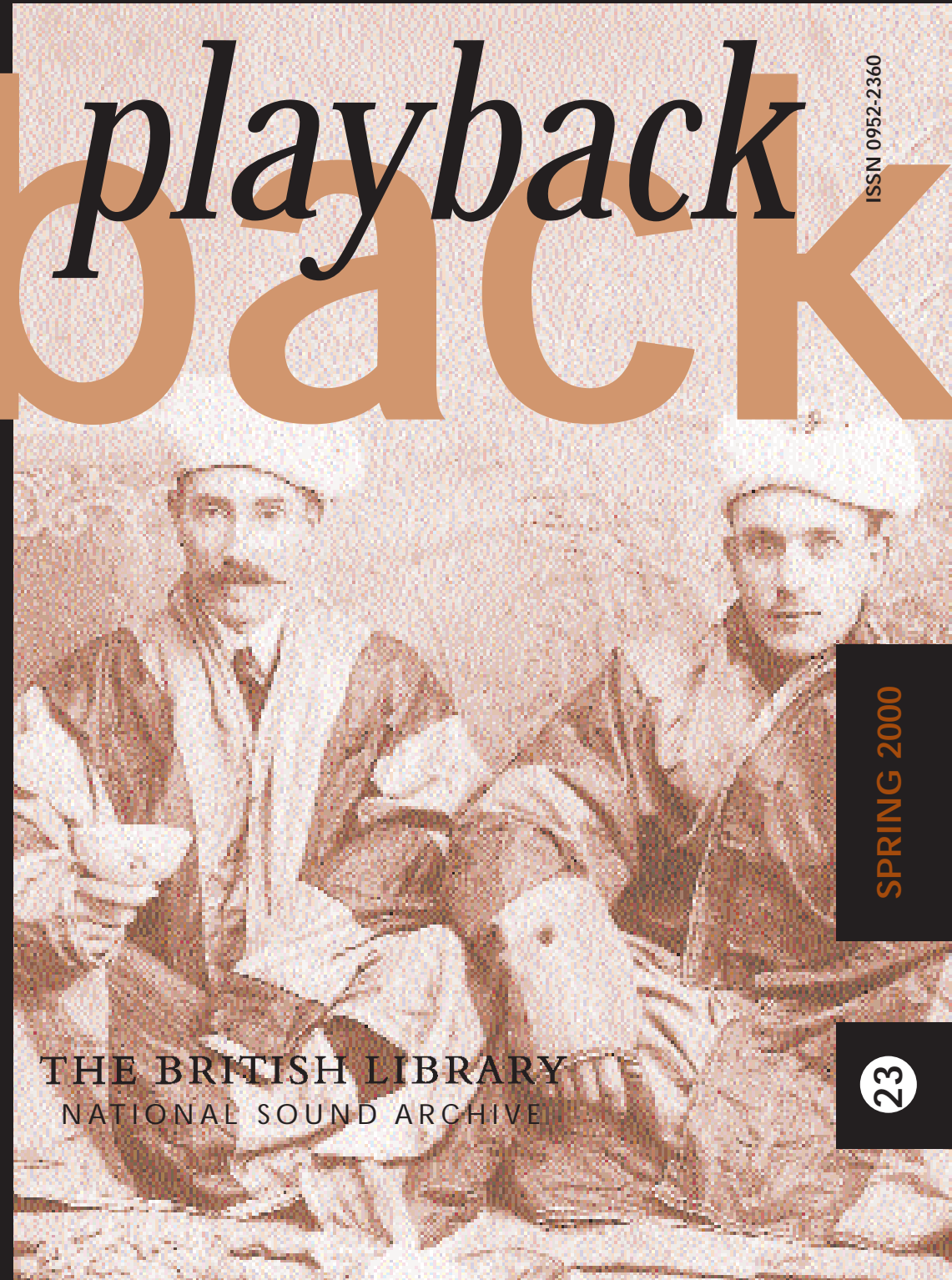
E-mail: [nsa@bl.uk](mailto:nsa@bl.uk)

Website: <http://www.bl.uk/collections/sound-archive>

*Front cover photograph: Two English recordists working for the Gramophone Company in Tashkent 1913*

PLAYBACK: Editor Alan Ward, Production manager Richard Fairman, Layout Julie Rimmer

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NATIONAL SOUND ARCHIVE

SPRING 2000

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## what's happening



The NSA's former home in South Kensington

■ The British Library has sold 29 Exhibition Road, London SW7, the former home of the NSA, to a private buyer for more than £3 million. The property, a fine Grade II listed building close to the Royal Albert Hall, was built in the 1870s and from the 1950s housed the British Institute of Recorded Sound, which became the National Sound Archive when it was incorporated into the British Library in 1983. Proceeds from the sale will be used to implement the development plans of the NSA, which include the digitisation of historic recordings and improving access using digital technology.

■ The founder of the Saga Record Company, Marcel Rodd, transferred the company archive and copyrights to a trust some years ago, and generously provided that any proceeds should be devoted to supporting the educational work of the NSA's Western Art Music section. As a result the first of a series of events took place in Autumn 1999. Three very successful seminars, named after the founder of the British Institute of Recorded Sound, Patrick Saul (see obituary in this issue) were held on aspects of performance style and practice as illustrated by recordings, while talks in a series *Performing Britten* were held in November. Details of the next series of seminars appear on the back page of this issue.

■ With the help of funding from the Collections and Preservation Directorate, the NSA has been copying the most vulnerable items in its collections on to modern media, largely through the use of external contractors. By this means work on the collection of acetate discs is almost complete. C&P funding was increased under the Library's 'Collections First' initiative, enabling the copying project to move on to acetate-based quarter-inch tape. Most of these tapes will have been identified and copied by the end of this financial year. In addition rapid progress is now being made on our collection of ethnographic wax cylinders.

■ In conjunction with Holocaust Survivors' Centre/Shalvata (Jewish Care), the Wiener Library, the Holocaust Educational Trust and the Shoah Centre (Manchester), a major conference 'Taking Testimonies Forward' was organised at the Library by the oral history section in November. The aim was to bring together representatives of all organisations and individuals in Britain engaged in Holocaust oral history, in order to discuss issues for the future.

■ At the conference of the International Association of Sound and Audio-visual Archives in Vienna, Chris Clark, NSA head of cataloguing, was re-elected IASA editor. He gave a report on metadata for sound archives and chaired a session on 'Music-making and recording'. Crispin Jewitt, Director of the NSA, was elected president of IASA for the next three years.



Tony Engle of Topic Records and Crispin Jewitt, NSA Director, with Janet Topp-Fargion, NSA international music curator

■ On November 24 the NSA signed an agreement with Topic Records Ltd to publish a series of recordings from the International Music Collection on CD. The first six items are already in the pipeline and are expected to include discs of music from Zanzibar, Baluchistan, South Africa and India.

■ Antony Gordon, senior cataloguer, attended the International Association of Music Libraries' conference in Wellington, New Zealand and gave papers on Australasian music in the NSA's collections, and on the CADENSA catalogue with a live connection via the internet. He was elected chair of the IAML Audio-Visual Commission. Rob Perks, oral history curator, presented a plenary paper on the Millennium Oral History Project at the Oral History Association of Australia national conference in Melbourne, and chaired the archiving session. Andrew Simons, jazz curator, gave a talk on black British swing musicians at the International Association of Jazz Record Collectors' annual conference in Hamburg.

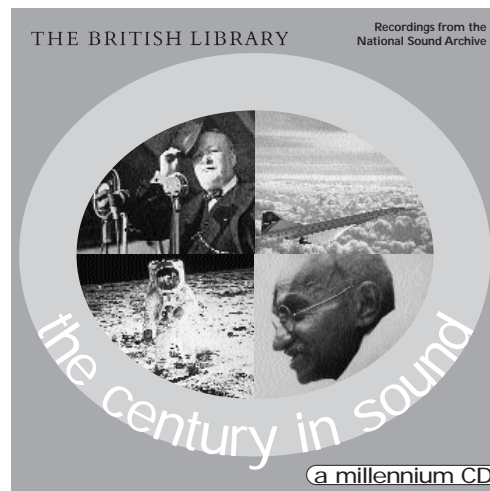
■ The Century Speaks – Millennium Oral History Project press launch on 8 September produced some excellent national and local publicity, and the broadcasts began on 12 September to critical acclaim (see *Playback* 20). The oral history curator Rob Perks was involved in several media interviews including a long piece for a radio documentary for ABC in Australia. A BBC 2 link-in documentary (partly shot at the British Library) was screened on 18 September, boosting listeners of the radio series.



Chris Lee

# the century in sound

a new CD release from the NSA



Regular readers of *Playback* will know that the NSA occasionally issues its own audio publications. The enormous interest in history generated by the millennium seemed too good an opportunity to miss and our new CD, 'The Century in Sound', provides a survey of an entire century of sound recordings.

All the seven curatorial sections of the NSA are represented by at least one track: popular music, classical music, jazz, the International Music Collection, drama and litera-

ture, wildlife sounds and – the most important source of the recordings – oral history. There was so much important historical material among the oral history section's 400-plus themed collections of interviews and reminiscences that it was difficult to know what to choose.

Some of the recordings are among the most famous of the century; others are rarities, long forgotten or never published before. Among those dug out from the vaults are George Bernard Shaw and Albert Einstein together in 1930, Paul Robeson as Othello live at the Royal Shakespeare Company, a 1930s 'Blackshirts' rally led by Sir Oswald Mosley and the sinking of the 'Titanic' as remembered by the senior surviving officer. A full listing of the 47 tracks is shown alongside.

'The Century in Sound' is a CD with a 12-page booklet and is available price £8.99 (catalogue number NSA CD8). Postage is free in the UK but £2.00 for overseas deliveries. Orders by post should be sent to the British Library Bookshop, The British Library, 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB, and should enclose a cheque made payable to The British Library Bookshop. The Bookshop also accepts telephone orders with payment by Access, Visa and American Express. The telephone number for orders is +44 (0) 20 7412 7735.

- 1 1901 First performance of Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance March No.1* (rec. 1932)  
Performers: the BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir Edward Elgar
- 2 Expedition to the South Pole (rec. 1909)  
Speaker: Sir Ernest Shackleton
- 3 Votes for Women (rec. 1908)  
Speaker: Christabel Pankhurst
- 4 Speech on the budget (rec. 1909)  
Speaker: David Lloyd-George
- 5 The sinking of the Titanic (rec. 1936)  
Speaker: Comd. C.H. Lightoller
- 6 Gas shell bombardment (rec. 1918)  
Royal Garrison Artillery
- 'It's a long way to Tipperary' (rec. 1914)  
Performer: John McCormack
- 7 'With our boys at the front' (rec. 1915)  
Speaker: Sgt. Edward Dwyer
- 8 The First World War Homefront (rec. 1990-1)  
Speaker: Sir Hugh Casson
- 9 Opening of the tomb of Tutankhamun (rec. 1936)  
Speaker: Dr Howard Carter
- 10 The General Strike (rec. 1994)  
Speaker: Jack Gaster
- 11 Election speech on unemployment (rec. 1929)  
Speaker: Ramsay Macdonald
- 12 G.B. Shaw and Albert Einstein (rec. 1930)  
Speakers: George Bernard Shaw and Albert Einstein
- 13 'The story of my flight' (rec. 1930)  
Speaker: Amy Johnson (pilot)
- 14 His spiritual message to the world (rec. 1931)  
Speaker: Mahatma Gandhi
- 15 First royal Christmas Day broadcast (rec. 1932)  
Speaker: King George V
- 16 Fascists' rally at Olympia (rec. 1934 and 1994)  
Speakers: Sir Oswald Mosley and Lou Kenton
- 17 'Tonight at 8.30' Scene from *Shadow Play Part 1* (Coward) (rec. 1936)  
Performers: Noel Coward and Gertrude Lawrence, accompanied by The Phoenix Theatre Orchestra, London, conducted by Clifford Greenwood
- 18 Abdication of Edward VIII (rec. 1936)  
Speaker: King Edward VIII
- 19 Hindenburg air disaster (rec. 1937)  
Speaker: Herbert Morrison WLS 'Prairie Farmers' Station'
- 20 Declaration of war (rec. 1939)  
Speaker: Neville Chamberlain
- 21 Air raid siren (rec. 1940)
- 22 'This was their finest hour' (rec. 1940)  
Speaker: Sir Winston Churchill
- 23 Night raid on London (rec. 1941)
- 24 'A broadcast message to children' (rec. 1940)  
Speaker: Princess Elizabeth
- 25 V1 bomber (rec. 1944)
- 26 'White cliffs of Dover' (Burton/Kent) (rec. 1942)  
Performers: Vera Lynn accompanied by Mantovani and his orchestra
- 27 Foundation of National Health Service (rec. 1959)  
Speaker: Aneurin Bevan
- 28 Jazz Club Theme (rec. 1948)  
Performers: Reg Arnold (trumpet), Johnny Dankworth (alto sax), Ronnie Scott (tenor sax), Victor Feldman (vibraphone), Jack Fallon (bass), Ralph Sharon (piano), Carlo Krahmer (drums), Announcer: Mark White
- 29 Shakespeare: *Othello* (rec. 1959)  
Speaker: Paul Robeson (*Othello*)
- 30 Coming to Britain (rec. 1986)  
Speaker: Gilli Salvat
- 31 'Sweet Jamaica' (Roberts) (rec. c.1948)  
Performers: Lord Kitchener (aka Aldwyn Roberts) accompanied by unknown group
- 32 'The Wind of change' (rec. 1960)  
Speaker: Harold Macmillan
- 33 *Lady Chatterley's Lover* goes on sale (rec. 1960)
- 34 'The white heat of technology' (rec. 1963)  
Speaker: Harold Wilson
- 35 Assassination of President Kennedy (rec. 1963)  
Speakers: reporters from KBOX Radio, Dallas
- 36 Football World Cup Final (rec. 1966)  
Speakers: Brian Moore and Maurice Edelston
- 37 Roll-out of first UK Concorde (rec. 1968)
- 38 Apollo 11 moon landing (rec. 1969)  
Speakers: Buzz Aldrin, Neil A. Armstrong, Charlie Duke
- 39 Mary Peters wins Olympic gold (rec. 1997)  
Speaker: Mary Peters
- 40 Endangered nature (rec. 1988)  
Speaker: Sir David Attenborough
- 41 Argentina invades the Falkland Islands (rec. 1982)  
Speaker: Margaret Thatcher
- 42 Fall of Berlin wall (rec. 1989)  
Speaker: Graham Leach
- 43 The joint declaration on Northern Ireland (rec. 1993)  
Speakers: John Major and Albert Reynolds
- 44 Diana, Princess of Wales (rec. 1995)  
Speakers: Diana, Princess of Wales, and Martin Bashir
- 45 Funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales (rec. 1997)  
Speaker: The Earl Spencer
- 46 Britain and Europe (rec. 1999)  
Speakers: Tony Blair and William Hague
- 47 The next century (rec. 1999)  
Speakers: pupils from Dagenham Priory Comprehensive School, Dagenham, Essex



# the gramophone goes east

recordings from central Asia

by Will Prentice

For six months I worked voluntarily for the NSA International Music Collection (IMC), helping to transfer the card-based catalogue on to computer. Scattered among the 10,000 or so 78rpm discs held by the IMC, I discovered 46 ten inch records which have come to hold a particular fascination for me. Each was recorded and released prior to the First World War, some in the Caucasus and some in Russian Turkestan (now known as Central Asia), by the Gramophone Company's regional office in Tiflis (now Tbilisi). The company began operations there in 1901, continuing until the war forced their departure in May 1918, a departure made permanent by the spread of the Russian Revolution. Each record stands as a tantalising

artefact in its own right, and when considered together, they help construct a cultural picture of the region during its final pre-Soviet years.

As they were sold originally in their 'home' region, it's no longer known how most of them came to be in the IMC. We do know that ten were donated by the daughter of M Philips Price, an economist, traveller and journalist who based his 1912 book *Siberia* on his trip across that land, through what is now Tuva, and into Mongolia. He accompanied Douglas Carruthers, who went on to



write the definitive early account of the region, *Unknown Mongolia* (1913). It's quite likely that Price picked his records up on this trip. With one exception from 1907, the remaining 36 discs all feature at least one side recorded in 1909 and none were recorded later, suggesting that they were purchased within a relatively narrow timespan, possibly by only one or two collectors.

Thanks to the systematic approach of the Gramophone Company, the matrix numbers stamped into the run-off grooves on each side tell us in coded form, who

recorded the song, approximately when, and in what order. We know therefore that one of the sides was recorded by the American W Sinkler Darby in 1901 (the year ten inch records first appeared), three were recorded by Franz Hampe from Berlin in 1903-4, thirteen by his brother Max in 1907, 75 by Franz Hampe in 1909 and two by the Englishman Edmund Pearse in 1911.

By arranging the 75 recordings made in 1909 in chronological order, the locations stated on the labels show us the route taken by Hampe: starting in the northern Caucasus, then to Tiflis in Georgia, down to Alexandropol (Gyumri) in Armenia, through Azerbaijan and across the Caspian Sea to Merv (Mary) in Turkestan, heading East to the border with Chinese



Bagrat Bagramov



Dzhabbar Kariagdiev



Peasant in 'His Master's Voice' pose from 1909 catalogue

Turkestan (Xinjiang) via Bukhara (at that point still the capital of a nominally independent emirate), Samarkand, Tashkent, and various other smaller towns. The precise route through Turkestan seems somewhat haphazard, until considered on a contemporary map, where we can see that he was following the only extant railway in the region.

Having arrived in Tiflis for the beginning of his expedition, Hampe faced a round trip of over 3,000 miles with extremely delicate equipment, through difficult and no doubt sometimes dangerous circumstances. T.J. Theobald Noble, who recorded for the Pathé company in the same region, described in a contemporary account travelling for eight hours on horseback through the Caucasus mountains to audition a single choir, only to be ambushed and robbed by bandits on the return journey.

Although towns along the railway route through Turkestan were their main market there, the company were keen to expand. A letter from Fred Tyler, the manager in Tiflis, to the London Head Office in 1911, explains that an employee was being sent to the more remote regions, taking horses and donkeys loaded up with gramophones and records. He was instructed to travel from town to town, giving demonstrations and making sales where possible.

The labels of the discs also state the culture group to which each song belongs. From the northern Caucasus for example, the IMC holds recordings of Chechen, Ingush, Kumyk, Kabardin and Ossetian music, as well as Georgian, Armenian and Persian-Tartar (Azeri) recordings. All of the major Central Asian cultural groups are represented, as well as musicians from

Afghanistan who were recorded in Merv, and from Chinese Turkestan, recorded in Margelan.

Hampe's route in 1909 was typical of that taken by the other recordists, and he recorded several musicians who had been recorded before and would be again. Bagrat Bagramov, a singer from Tiflis for example, had already proved himself popular through records made on previous trips, and so in 1909 recorded 30 titles, significantly more than most other musicians. Accompanied by two duduk players and known simply as Bagrat, he recorded four instrumentals, with himself playing hand-drum, and 26 songs; nine are sung in Armenian, seven in Georgian and ten are Persian-Tartar. Tiflis was known as a particularly cosmopolitan city at this time, and the collection bears this out. Armenian and Georgian musicians were willing and able to play Armenian, Georgian or Azeri music, as

musicians such as Bagrat demonstrate. Azeri musicians on the other hand, such as the incredible singer Dzhabbar Kariagdiev, apparently concentrated on Azeri music. Like Bagrat, Kariagdiev was obviously highly regarded by the Gramophone Company, recording 25 titles in May 1909, twelve of which had appeared on record by October of that year, according to a contemporary catalogue. The IMC holds six recordings of Bagrat, and two of Dzhabbar Kariagdiev.

Altogether, Hampe recorded 60 hours' worth of music in the region between April and September of that year, over 55 hours of which were released on ten and twelve inch 78rpm discs. Solo male vocalists with instrumental accompaniment proved to be most popular in the Caucasus and Russian Turkestan, followed by choirs in the former and vocal duets and trios in



The Gramophone Company shop in Tbilisi

the latter. The recordists were aware that the acoustic technology of the time could pick up and reproduce strong voices much more effectively than it could most musical instruments, and so relatively few instrumental titles were recorded. The relative lack of female vocal recordings, at least in Turkestan, may be partly illuminated by the following excerpt from Fred Tyler's memoirs: 'To obtain women's voices it was sometimes necessary to make records in their own quarters, as, being Mohammedans, they could not visit a public caravanserai with propriety. In order, therefore, to avoid scandal, we sometimes packed all our equipment on a cart and set out after dark to set up our studio in the woman's house.'

From Bukhara, during his 1911 recording trip, Edmund Pearse wrote home that 'in Samarkand we made some records of harem women, a thing that has never been done before. We had to take the machine to the house of the chief magistrate and set it up there, who thereupon brought forth the women, and gave them permission to uncover themselves (only their faces however). It was quite romantic, especially as it all had to be done after ten o'clock at night.'

The Gramophone Company's motives for recording in the region were purely commercial.

In recording such a vast catalogue of indigenous music, their first thoughts were of the increased sales of gramophones it would encourage. Nonetheless, in deliberately setting out to record a representative selection of local music, they created what would later become an invaluable resource for different cultures who, following the break-up of the Soviet Union, feel a strong need to reconnect with their pre-Soviet heritage.

It is not known how many of these discs have survived in their respective localities, but it seems unlikely that many have. Over the past few years, researchers from former Soviet territories including Georgia and Adygea (Circassia) have visited the NSA and the British Library, consulting the discs and microfilmed documentation relating to the Gramophone Company. Some of those musicians recorded have become national folk legends, such as Magomet Khagaudzh, an Adygean accordionist recorded on several trips, who, along with all the adult males in his village, was shot by the Russian Army during the war in 1918. One recording of his survives in the IMC (NSA Ref 1CS0055110). His story, and those of a great many others are waiting to be researched and told, and there has never been a better time to unearth them.

*Photos (page 5) courtesy of EMI Music Archives*

# obituary

Patrick Saul (1913–1999)

One afternoon in 1930 a young music-lover went into the London gramophone shop in Cranbourn Street run by Mr Wilfrid Van Wyck and Mr W. Rimington and asked for Dohnányi's Violin Sonata in the arrangement by Lionel Tertis. To his amazement he was told that the record was 'out of print'; it had been deleted. So he walked on to the British Museum determined to hear the recording at least, even if he couldn't buy it. But he was told that there were no gramophone records at all at the British Museum. The realisation that such performances could be snuffed out, that they seemed to be disappearing for ever was, Patrick Saul said later, like a child hearing about death for the first time, and he resolved to try and do something to prevent the death, or at least the disappearance, of these living performances. He made an appointment to see the director of the British Museum, but then, on being summoned into the presence of the great man, the teenager was seized with fright and rushed headlong out of the building. He retired to a Lyons corner-shop to consider the situation further; a telephone call seemed altogether more appropriate, so the music-lover harangued Sir George Hill for several minutes from the safety of a public call-box. Sir George agreed with him on the desirability of keeping a

collection of gramophone records and he advised his caller 'to go away now but come back when you are older and more experienced.' And that's what he did.

Patrick Saul was born in 1913, the son of a dental surgeon, whose house overlooked the seafront at Dover. His earliest musical memories were of the band on the seafront and its endless serenades on summer afternoons. He was educated formally at Dover College, whose rigorous regime of games and officer training corps parades he found not to his taste, but his musical education was provided by gramophone records and by what he heard on European radio stations, which constituted, he thought later, a kind of musical university for him. After school he worked for a short time in a bank and then after the war – when he was allocated work as a conscientious objector – he took a degree in psychology at University College, London. He now discovered that there were in existence a few big collections of gramophone records abroad but the general lack of enthusiasm of most cultural organisations in America and Europe for preserving recordings was more notable than any sustained endeavours to create archives of sound. By the middle of the century it was no longer an

eccentric thing to do, to collect records, but neither were records regarded as objects of great cultural significance, certainly not by those professional scholars in England who were at that time creating the new profession of musicology. Patrick Saul was convinced otherwise.

As he began to press publicly for the creation of a national collection of sound recordings, he was met with expressions of polite interest and gestures of support, but with few pledges of financial assistance. In the early 1950s Decca gave £200 and then, just as it seemed the attempt would fail, a Quaker trust in Birmingham gave £2000. The philanthropist and patron of the arts, Sir Robert Mayer, guaranteed the rent and rates on a building owned by the British Museum in Russell Square and in 1955 the British Institute of Recorded Sound opened its doors to the public as a registered educational charity. An appeal for public support through donations of discs – this was a time when music-lovers were replacing their collections of shellac discs with vinyl LPs – resulted in the acquisition of thousands of discs from private collectors. When the Institute announced that its acquisitions policy would be to reject nothing ‘on aesthetic grounds’, that the director ‘wanted everything’, eyebrows were raised, apparently, ‘in some quarters’. One of the governors of the Institute defended the decision: the aim was to be comprehensive, as the British Museum Library was

comprehensive. ‘We cannot tell just what will interest posterity; we ourselves should like to know the taste of the Ancient Greeks in light music as well as in Olympian hymns. The only safe rule is to be omnivorous.’ And so not just western music but the classical music traditions of India and China, and jazz and folk musics from all round the world found their way into Saul’s collection, and recordings of dialects and accents and the oral testimonies of ‘ordinary’ people. And not just human sounds; animal sounds of all kinds he insisted should be preserved. He always maintained that his own favourite recording in the Archive he created was of the mating call of the haddock.

With the support of a group of musicians which included Sir Adrian Boult, Dame Myra Hess, and Yehudi Menuhin, the Institute approached the Treasury in 1960 and between 1961 and 1983 received an annual grant-in-aid from the government. In 1966 the Institute moved from Russell Square to larger accommodation in an elegant Queen Anne house in South Kensington, 29 Exhibition Road, just round the corner from the Albert Hall and the Royal College of Music. The Archive’s premises were formally opened in 1968 by Jennie Lee, who was then Minister at the Department of Education and Science, and Saul presented her on that occasion with an anthology of recordings of speeches by her husband, the late Aneurin Bevan. The Department of Education put out a press

release, but they spoil the effect a little by putting ‘gramophone’ each time. Several early visitors were extremely disappointed, for the basement of No 29, which had become the cool, silent and chaste repository of thousands and thousands of gramophone records, had formerly been a house of ill repute. Slowly and doggedly Patrick Saul built up another kind of reputation for 29 Exhibition Road and by 1983, five years after he himself had retired, the organisation had become so respectable that it was gathered up into the bosom of the British Library, henceforward known officially as the National Sound Archive; in 1997 it moved into the new Library building at St Pancras as one of the world’s largest sound archives.

Anthony Patrick Hodgins Saul, who was created OBE in 1971, died on 9 May aged 85. He was a large, rather gruff, donnish-looking gentleman who often wore a quizzical expression and had the abstracted air characteristic of visionaries. But he had an enduring sense of fun, and beneath a thoughtful exterior there was a strain of kindness and great kindness, and an unsleeping sense of the absurd. On his retirement in 1978 Lord Boyle of Handsworth, who was the music-loving Secretary to the Treasury when the Archive made its successful appeal for government funding, described Saul’s as a career ‘of quite exceptional modesty and humility on the one side and ruthless determination on the other.’



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ADDRESS

## the Saul seminars

### studies in recorded music

#### Tuesday 18 January Singing the Blues

Anthony Rooley and members of the Consort of Musick

This haunting lament from Eastern Hungary turns out to be a coquettish love song, and these animated, vibrant sounds are in fact a funerary rite from Eastern Serbia. But the past also is another country. Would Dunstable and Monteverdi have been shocked or mystified by the tone quality late twentieth-century English singers employ in expressing pain and sadness in their music? How have singers this century set about developing particular timbres considered appropriate for expressions of melancholy in sixteenth-century music? To what extent is it possible for singers to develop different timbres for different repertoires? Can singers in western concert traditions learn from the mournful alaps of Parween Sultana or the blues of Muddy Waters or Brownie McGhee or Sonny Terry? And what effect should expressions of melancholy in musical art have on the listener?

#### Tuesday 22 February Whose record is it anyway?

Christopher Bishop (formerly EMI)  
Michael Haas (Decca)

The performer in pop music may be the star but the record producer is often acknowledged as the true creator of the recording, his role analogous to the director's in a film. In classical music this has never been so: both producers and artists, so many of them have averred, work to serve the composer's vision. It's certainly true though that throughout recording history most classical performing artists haven't had a detailed understanding of editing techniques, microphone placing or post-production balancing and mixing procedures. What has been the nature of these collaborative endeavours in the recording studio? To what extent is an artist's recorded performance an accurate reflection of his interpretative ideals?

#### Tuesday 21 March In search of the true Bach: milestones in Bach performance

Martin Elste (Staatliches Institut für Musikforschung, Berlin)

From Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy to John Eliot Gardiner, from Wanda Landowska to Gustav Leonhardt, from Albert Schweitzer to Ton Koopman... Bach's musical oeuvre can be seen as 'work in progress', evolving for 250 years through arguments about such concepts as 'Urtext' and 'Werktreue', as well as through changing performance traditions, romanticism, protestantism, 'New Simplicity', 'Objectivity', and alleged 'authenticity'. Martin Elste presents and discusses important sound documents in the dynamic development of Bach performance practice since 1900, and shows the gains and losses of historically informed yet aesthetically modern approaches which would be unrealizable without the possibilities of modern sound recording.

### Spring 2000 Series

Time: 18.15

Venue: Meeting Room 4, The Conference Centre, The British Library, 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB

Admission: by ticket, without charge

Contact: The British Library Events Office. Tel: 020 7412 7222. E-mail: [boxoffice@bl.uk](mailto:boxoffice@bl.uk)

Each seminar will be illustrated with recordings from the National Sound Archive

After each presentation and discussion wine will be served

## events

#### ■ Oral History training courses

One day courses in oral history techniques

Contact: Rob Perks, NSA

Tel: 020 7412 7405. Fax: 020 7412 7441

E-mail: [rob.perks@bl.uk](mailto:rob.perks@bl.uk)

At the British Library training suite, 96 Euston Road, London on February 18

At the Museum of Welsh Life, St Fagans, Cardiff on March 21

At the Department of General Practice, University of Glasgow on April 10

#### ■ Cheltenham Recorded Music Society

A talk entitled 'What does the performer think he's doing?' by Timothy Day, NSA curator

At YMCA Vittoria Walk, Cheltenham

Tel: 01242-232427

February 21

#### ■ Friends of Wildlife Sounds at NSA

Talks on 'Regional Accents in Frog Sounds' by Julia Wycherley and 'Vocal Communication and Social Behaviour in Lions and Elephants' by Dr Karen McComb

At the British Library Conference Centre

Contact: Richard Ranft, NSA

Tel: 0171-412 7402. Fax: 0171-412 7441

E-mail: [nsa-wildsound@bl.uk](mailto:nsa-wildsound@bl.uk)

March 4

#### ■ Oral History Society Annual Conference

A conference on 'Pleasure and Danger in the City'

At the Birmingham & Midland Institute, Birmingham

Contact: Rory O'Connell, Museum of London, London Wall, London, EC2Y 5HN

Tel: 0171-600 3699 ext. 285

E-mail: [roconnell@museum-london.org.uk](mailto:roconnell@museum-london.org.uk)

April 1-2

#### ■ Wildlife Sound Recording Workshop

A one-day workshop that is part of the

Biodiversity training week. At the Royal

Geographical Society, London SW7

Tel: 0171-591 3030

April 10-14