

ISSUE 32 **playback** >
Winter 2004

BRITISH
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**SOUND
ARCHIVE**

playback >

PLAYBACK is the bulletin of the British Library Sound Archive. It is published free of charge twice a year, with information on the Sound Archive'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.

We have a special mailing list for PLAYBACK. Please write, phone, fax or email 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.

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Front cover photograph (left to right):
Victor Feldman, Bill Le Sage and Peter Newbrook, c1953



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FROM MOULDY FIGGES TO JAM The Peter Newbrook collection by Paul Wilson

One of the Sound Archive's long-term ambitions – to find and preserve all extant British jazz radio sessions – made an exponential leap forward recently with the acquisition of the colossal Peter Newbrook Collection.

It has long been a source of frustration that a vast body of professionally-recorded material – radio and TV programming effectively documenting an alternative history of jazz in Britain – had apparently been lost. Of over 1,500 *Jazz Club* programmes transmitted from 1947 to the mid-1970s, only a handful remained in the vaults of the BBC. The possibility that much of this 'lost' history might survive in a dusty attic has long intrigued and challenged archivists, rumours persisting of a lock-up garage in Norwich, stuffed to the rafters with tapes and acetate discs dating back to the mid-1940s. Investigation by past jazz curator Andrew Simons finally bore fruit with the Sound Archive's acquisition of the once-mythical Carlo Kraemer recordings.

Newbrook, a film cameraman by profession, and Kraemer, a virtually-blind jazz drummer, are best known in jazz circles as the 1947 founders of Britain's earliest independent jazz label, Esquire, which set about

documenting the new generation of British mainstream and 'modernist' groups of the 1940s and 50s. Esquire's legacy to jazz in Britain is well known, but the pair's collection of thousands of unpublished radio and TV-audio broadcasts may prove of equal importance. Both men had independently acquired professional disc-cutters and as early as 1945 had begun documenting the jazz and blues output of BBC radio, a practice which Kraemer would obsessively continue until his death in 1976.

Back in the late 1940s, Kraemer was a voracious collector of American imports and radio transcriptions, hosting late-night listening sessions at his central London flat, where many of his musical friends first became acquainted with the revolutionary 'bebop' sounds being originated across the Atlantic. This period is documented in many British and American Armed Forces Network programmes on transcription discs, V-Discs and off-air recordings, featuring such giants as Duke Ellington and Dizzy Gillespie. There are also unpublished recordings of Kraemer's own groups, one featuring a youthful and then-unknown Humphrey Lyttelton on trumpet, and private recordings from important European

events such as the Paris Jazz Festivals of the late 40s and 50s, where the transatlantic jazz worlds collided.

But the real treasure of the collection is the British radio and television audio recordings, the bulk of which may now be unique and constitute invaluable artefacts of musical heritage. In addition to the long-running *Jazz Club*, many other session-based BBC radio series are represented, such as Kenny Baker's popular *Let's Settle for Music*, *The Ted Heath Show* and *Music in the Modern Manner*, as well as programmes of the BBC's Overseas Services and Radio London. Many of the groups featured in these broadcasts never released records commercially; some never performed again.

Kraemer's catholic taste and objectivity ensured that all styles were covered, ignoring the war of words between the modernists and 'mouldy figges' (traditionalists). They range from jam sessions by trad revivalists to ambitious 'third stream' works for large ensembles and, eventually, explorations of the avant garde and fusion. Finally, a wealth of spoken/interview material from magazine-format series such as *The Jazz Scene* adds a vital complement to the Sound Archive's 'Oral History of Jazz in Britain' project.



Photo: Carlo Kraemer on drums with Claude Bampton's All Blind Orchestra, 1938

WHAT'S HAPPENING

■ In July and August the British Library hosted a series of free weekly concerts of world music in the piazza. The concerts reflected the vast array of world music held by the Sound Archive, from Kurdish, traditional Irish and North Indian music, to Afro-Cuban jazz and cutting-edge Klezmer. Janet Topp Fargion, the Sound Archive's curator of world and traditional music, described the series as 'a wonderful series of concerts that should encourage people to come and listen to the music and visit the Library's free exhibition galleries.'



Summer music in the piazza

■ The Sound Archive has secured £1 million funding from the JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee of the Higher Education Funding Council for England) to provide on-line playback access for teaching, learning, and research within the UK higher and further education communities. Four thousand hours covering music, spoken word, and natural sounds will be licensed (where necessary), digitised, and served via the web to teachers and students authenticated as HE/FE users. The project is scheduled to complete in September 2006. To read more about this visit www.bl.uk/collections/sound-archive/archsoundrec.html

■ Reflecting the increasing use of the web across all Sound Archive activity, we have acquired nine hours of talks and interviews featuring author Colin Wilson, by downloading charged MP3s from the web site of Maurice Bassett Publishing. The majority of these recordings are unavailable in any other format.

■ An important milestone was reached with the publication and launch in July of a new DVD in partnership with the South East Film and Video Archive, Wessex Film and Sound Archive, and the South East Museum, Library and Archive Council, as part of the British Library's 'Reaching the Regions' initiative. Entitled *Reel Life: Saturdays in Film and Sound*, the DVD blends archive film, video, oral history, music and sound effects with new interview material and expert commentary on the subject of Saturdays over the past century. Rare footage and oral history feature hop-picking in Kent, surfing in the 1930s, the 1972 Reading Rock Festival, roller-skating and family birthdays. The DVD will be distributed free to HE and FE libraries, local history centres, archives and a selection of secondary schools in the South East.



a good attendance at the event and Alan Powers gave an excellent speech about the value of oral testimony in architectural history. Copies will be on sale in the British Library bookshop and through the National Trust's own outlets.

■ On 13 May we launched a CD publication *Passionate Rationalism: Recollections of Erno Goldfinger*, produced in conjunction with the National Trust, at Willow Road, Goldfinger's house in Hampstead. There was



Virginia Berliner presents the Oliver Berliner 'Maker of the Microphone Award' to Crispin Jewitt, head of the Sound Archive

■ It was a great pleasure to receive Oliver Berliner's 'Maker of the Microphone Award' on 20 May. Oliver is the grandson of Emile Berliner, inventor of disc recording, the microphone, and much else besides. He is patron of the City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society and his wife, Virginia, came to the British Library at St Pancras to present the award, which Crispin Jewitt accepted on behalf of the Sound Archive. The annual award recognises excellence in the field of the history of sound recordings.

■ The Sound Archive was represented at the 2004 joint conference of the Association for Recorded Sound Collections and the Society for American Music held 10-14 March in Cleveland, Ohio. Topical and lively sessions included discussion on music downloading and file swapping. Industry and academic representatives discussed strategies varying from educational initiatives and legal action brought against 'egregious users', to software which can detect and block the transfer of copyrighted material. Cleveland's contribution to early

ACQUISITIONS 2003-4

■ World and traditional music

We were fortunate to fill a gap in our Peruvian holdings this year with the purchase of over 40 CDs from the Peruvian-based company IEMPSA, and the donation of a prestigious collection of coastal Peruvian music made by ethnomusicologist William Tompkins (C1119) in the 1970s. The collection includes recordings of the coastal Afro-Peruvian *jarana* tradition made in 1958 by the well-known Peruvian literary scholar Jose Durand Flores. (These recordings will be issued as part of our series with Topic Records in October.)

Other notable ethnographic acquisitions include a collection of 135 audio tapes and seven video recordings made in the 1970s by Sanskrit scholar John Smith (C1123). These recordings document the Rajasthani Pābūjī epic in detail and complement his book *The epic of Pābūjī: a study, transcription and translation* (Cambridge University Press). We were also able to add to our Indian collections with an addition of 36 digital video recordings made by Rolf Killius (C815) among villagers in Majuli (Assam) and among the Saora community in Orissa.

Last year we began to acquire unreleased recordings made by the world music publishing company Globestyle (owned by Ace Records; C1061). The first recordings were from Vietnam, the second from South Africa. This year's acquisition comprises 17 CD-Rs of recordings made in 1988 of *taarab* music from Zanzibar. Some of these recordings were issued by Globestyle in 1989/90 on four LPs that launched Zanzibar on the world music scene. Among the featured performers is the orchestra Culture Musical Club, which performed this year at the Reading WOMAD festival, where we recorded roughly 60 hours of music over the three days. This was our 20th anniversary at WOMAD, during which time we have amassed over 1200 hours of recordings (C203).

Last, but not least, we acquired a collection of English traditional music and songs made during the 1970s and '80s by Vic Ellis (C1128). We were pleased to receive the collection as it has been identified for inclusion in our Traditional Music in England project but for various reasons could not be acquired in time.

recording science and industry was highlighted by papers on the work of Dayton C. Miller, The U-S Phonograph Company, Ken Hamann, and others. Noel Cohen and Steve Albin described and demonstrated a new discographic software programme which is freely available from www.jazzdiscography.com. Sam Brylawski of the Library of Congress discussed the American Vintage Record Labelography, www.avrl.com, which is an official ARSC project involving a great number of institutions and individuals. Excursions to University Circle, which lies at the heart of the cultural and academic life of Cleveland, and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum, helped to make this an enjoyable and memorable conference.

■ Our annual recording expedition to the UK WOMAD festival was the occasion for the first live testing of a new generation of field recording equipment. R-DAT, our reliable collecting platform for over ten years, is becoming obsolescent and we have decided to re-equip with solid-state recording devices. The trial was a success, and we are re-engineering our processing techniques and workflows to gain maximum advantage from this new development.

■ Peter Cooke, long-term supporter of the Sound Archive and ethnomusicologist with a particular interest in Africa, visited the Sound Archive's technical services in January to collect a Revox B77 tape machine that he left with us last year. Peter received funding from the American Embassy in London to purchase the second hand machine and the Embassy is shipping it out to a sound archive in the Gambia where it will be used in a tape transfer project. By arrangement with Janet Topp Fargion, curator of world and traditional music, our engineer Hugh Mash fitted a couple of spare parts (provided by Peter) to the machine so as to further a spirit of co-operation between the Sound Archive, Peter Cooke and the sound archive in the Gambia.



■ Drama and Literature

Highlights of the Sound Archive's live theatre recording programme were the epic six-hour adaptation of Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*, David Hare's political drama *The Permanent Way*, Alan Bennett's *The History Boys*, and the complete Shell Connections season of new plays for youth theatre groups – by Patrick Marber, Simon Armitage, Snoo Wilson and others – all at the Royal National Theatre. At the Royal Court Theatre, we recorded the complete 'Cuba Real' season of new writing from Cuba, and new plays by Ayub Khan-Din, Rebecca Gilman, Vassily Sigarev, Conor McPherson and Joe Penhall.

Other location recordings of note included PEN International Writers' Day, which this year took place at the Salvation Army Hall, Oxford Street, London, and featured Turkish novelist Orhan Pamuk in conversation with Maureen Freely, Louis de Bernières and biographer Adam Feinstein on Pablo Neruda, Will Self reading a short story from his new collection, and a talk by Maggie Gee, newly appointed first female Chair of the Royal Society of Literature.

Recordings of Royal Society of Literature events included talks and readings by Jonathan Bate, Douglas Dunn, Mick Imlah, Jon Stallworthy, Jacky Kay, Shena Mackay, Candia McWilliam, and new Professor of Poetry at Oxford Christopher Ricks on 'the Dorset poet' William Barnes. Courtesy of the Courtauld Institute, talks by performance artists Franko B, Marisa Carnesky and Bobby Baker were recorded.



British Library events included the Orange Prize for Fiction readings, and Josephine Hart's series of poetry evenings – a highlight being Harold Pinter reading the poetry of Philip Larkin.

Donations included the almost complete set of Lannan Literary Videos, totalling 82 video recordings of writers and poets such as Wallace Shawn, Adrienne Rich, Czesław Miłosz, Michael Ondaatje, Richard Ford, Kazuo Ishiguro, Amiri Baraka, Seamus Heaney and many others in performance and conversation.

Commercial acquisitions ranged from the Naxos Audiobooks unabridged production of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, read by Jim Norton over 22 CDs, and described by Sue Arnold in the *Guardian* as 'the quintessential audio against which all other serious talking books will be measured', to the video and DVD archive of Survival Research Laboratories, the San Francisco based creators of violent machine performances using robots and military hardware.

Photos (left): Niamh Cusack in *His Dark Materials* by Philip Pullman, adapted by Nicholas Wright (above): *The History Boys* by Alan Bennett
The Royal National Theatre. Photos by Ivan Kyncl

■ Classical music

Recent donations of new non-commercial CDs include Volume 3 in a series of Salisbury Cathedral Choir & Organ Archive Recordings, and a disc from the Royal Academy of Music of works by Sir Harrison Birtwistle, including the first recording of *17 Tate Riffs*, played by students of the Academy. Among recent donations of commercial discs are a number of limited edition 78rpm shellac discs and test pressings formerly owned by the composer Roger Quilter. Two of the cases are the original limited edition cases signed by Quilter.

Donations of non-commercial recordings include about 320 cassettes of live and broadcast orchestral and operatic performances dating from the 1970s to the 1990s conducted by Sir Charles Mackerras. This follows an earlier donation of more than 200 reel-to-reel tapes from the earlier part of his career. There has also been a donation of three recordings of live performances by Jacqueline du Pré, not held by the Sound Archive and not yet issued commercially, on tapes belonging to a private collector in Geneva. These include a performance at the Royal Festival Hall, London in February 1973 of Elgar's Cello Concerto with the New Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Zubin Mehta and performances of Beethoven trios with Daniel Barenboim and Pinchas Zukerman recorded in The Dome, Brighton, in May 1970.

The papers of Sir Malcolm Sargent recently donated to the British Library included recordings of a concert he conducted in 1957 with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, various talks, and the conductor's memorial service at St James, Piccadilly, London, in March 1968. Finally, two singers who recently gave Saul Seminars – countertenor James Bowman and tenor Nigel Rodgers – have given private recordings of themselves singing as trebles.

TELLING THE TIME

A recording of Big Ben by Steve Cleary

Few artistic phenomena are as ephemeral as the site-specific sound installation. A typical work will exist only for a short time, and thereafter will be forgotten or continue to exist only in the memory of the individual gallery-goer.

Occasionally an artist or gallery will produce a CD after the event and the Sound Archive attempts to acquire these products. Whether, thus stripped of context, they have more than souvenir value is debatable, but while the jury is out we continue to collect. And, as in this case, to make recordings ourselves.

For the period 8-12 March this year the Works of Art Committee at the Houses of Parliament commissioned a week-long trial of a sound installation by California based artist Bill Fontana, probably the most renowned practitioner in the field.

Microphones were placed within the clock tower, close to Big Ben, the 13-ton bell that strikes the hour, and the sound then relayed to a series of speakers discreetly mounted in the colonnade of the New Palace Yard, directly below and within hearing range of the bells. Thus, every quarter of an hour, the sound sculpture would interact with the natural unmediated sound of the bells, producing what the artist has described as 'a musical deconstruction of our normal sense of telling time'. In the intervening periods passing MPs and Palace of Westminster staff would hear only the dislocated and amplified sounds of the clockwork mechanism.

The Sound Archive acquired a CD (1CDR0009486) of specially recorded samples made for promotional purposes and was given permission by Bill Fontana to make a short in-situ recording, at dusk on 11 March 2004, one day before the installation was taken down. It is unlikely that it will be installed again, so all that remains now is the recording (C1121/1). The sight of Kenneth Clarke MP pacing hurriedly past, and the blustery spring weather, must be supplied by the listener's imagination.

■ Popular music

During 2003 more than 11,500 albums and 6,500 singles were released in the UK, the vast majority of which fall into our loosely-defined 'Popular' collection. Thanks are extended to the British Phonographic Industry and all the record companies, large and small, that continue to support us with donations.

In particular, there has been a marked rise in archival compilations over the past 18 months. The 1960s are proving particularly popular, with compilers unearthing the 'forgotten' works of groups and labels – examples include The Love Generation (Rev-Ola Records); Mike Sheridan and the Nightriders, featuring Roy Wood who went on to form The Move and later Wizzard (Acadia Records); The Castaways, a UK answer to the Beach Boys (RPM Records); The Canterbury Music Festival (US psychedelia pastiche, 1968); Miki Dallon (RPM Records); and Jimmy James and the Vagabonds (Castle Records). RPM records has issued a 30 track compilation of swinging 60s Australian pop from the Clarion Record label; EMI produced a double CD compilation of 60s pop rarities and hits from the Swedish scene; and Rev-Ola released a compilation of New Zealand's 60s power-pop group The Gremlins. A further angle on the 1960s international pop scene came with the issue of Sandie Shaw's Italian, French, German and Spanish language recordings, all on EMI.

Other record companies have been digging around their archives looking for live performances, some in unlikely places. RCA/BMG, through Bluebird, released the last official recording from Duke Ellington's ultimate European tour, recorded in 1973 in Eastbourne; Pilot Records found recordings of Roy Orbison performing live in Batley, Stockton and Hornbridge in the late 1960s; and a recording of the Yardbirds 1964 performance in Croydon finally saw the light of day. And for completist John McLaughlin fans,

Warner Music issued a 17 CD set of the virtuoso guitarist's appearances at the Montreux Jazz Festival between 1974 and 1999.

Finally, we were happy to receive from CBM a copy of *Tony Benn's Greatest Hits*, 'a unique collaboration combining the veteran politician's greatest speeches with 21st-century ambient groove'.

■ Oral History

We acquired a series of rare recorded conversations with architect/designer R. Buckminster Fuller (1895-1983), made in 1975-6. Fuller invented the geodesic dome, a type of structure shaped like a piece of a sphere or a ball, comprised of a complex network of triangles that form a roughly spherical surface. He also founded a new system of mathematics called synergetics and coined the phrase 'Spaceship Earth' (C1115).

Eighteen interviews (73 cassettes) from the House of Commons Library comprised the first phase of the House of Commons Staff Oral History Collection. The recordings take a behind-the-scenes viewpoint of the Commons and include interviews with the Deliverer of the Vote, Clerks to the House since 1951, current and past Librarians, the Housekeeper to the Speaker, the Commons Chef and Barber, Furnishings and Works Managers, and a Hansard reporter/editor.

A collection of 109 VHS video interviews making up 'Before Stonewall: An Oral History of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community', were deposited by GLAM (Gay & Lesbian Arts and Media) based in Brighton. This Heritage Lottery-funded project set out to record the experiences of older homosexual people reflecting on life in Britain before the 1969 Stonewall riots in the US. The collection complements the existing Hall Carpenter Oral History Archive (C456).

■ Wildlife

We received some 50 separate donations of unpublished field recordings. Most of these were either recorded in Britain, or recorded overseas by British natural history experts and scientists. From Britain, we acquired important donations of wildlife sounds from expert sound recordists Phil Riddett (WA2003/57) and Dr Philip Radford (WA2004/18). Dr Simon Elliott donated closely-miked recordings of nesting Peregrine Falcons (WA2004/24), along with rare, high quality recordings of the elusive Otter.

From overseas we received recordings made in over 30 countries. Professor Robin Dunbar of Liverpool University contributed recordings of the remarkable complex language of Gelada Baboons of Ethiopia (WA2004/04), from a study which helped form his theories on the origins of human language. Major collections from Brazil (Andrew Whittaker collection WA2004/17), Australia (David Stewart collection WA2004/25), and Canada (Tom Cosburn collection WA2004/11) were added. Some recordings received were the first ever made of highly endangered or elusive bird species: for example, the first recording of the Karamoja Apalis of Tanzania (WA2003/58) and the Yunnan Nuthatch of China (WA2004/08) made by British ornithologists Dr Phil Shaw and Jon Hornbuckle respectively. We also added recordings made in captivity of the Socorro Dove (WA2004/05), extinct on its island off Mexico since 1978. All of these recordings helped to improve the coverage of what is now the most diverse collection of wildlife sounds in the world, in all 150,000 recordings representing more than 10,000 species of birds, mammals, amphibians, insects and other nature sounds.

If you are not already on the Sound Archive's mailing list and would like to be, please fill in and return this slip to
PLAYBACK, The British Library Sound Archive, 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB
ADDRESS

USER PROFILE

Nicholas Murray



Nicholas Murray is the author of biographies of Bruce Chatwin, Matthew Arnold, Andrew Marvell, Aldous Huxley, and, most recently, Franz Kafka, published by Little, Brown in June 2004 and described by 'The Independent' as 'the best kind of literary biography'. He is a biographer, poet, novelist and critic. His works of fiction include 'A Short Book about Love' and 'Remembering Carmen'. His lecture 'After Arnold: Culture and Accessibility' was published by the British Library in 1997. As a critic, he is a regular contributor of book reviews to the national newspapers. He recently appeared at the Festival of Words in Glamorgan and the Dylan Thomas Centre in Swansea, and, to launch his biography of Franz Kafka, at the Hay Festival of Literature. Earlier this year he took part in BBC4's new series of 'Battle of the Books', when Huxley's 'Brave New World' was pitted against Philip K. Dick's 'Valis'.

When did you first visit the British Library Sound Archive?

It was when I was researching my biography of Aldous Huxley, which was about four years ago. I wasn't aware of the existence of the Sound Archive when it was in South Kensington and I think that only changed when it moved to the same site as the rest of the British Library. I work in the Rare Books and Music reading room, where the Listening & Viewing Service is based, and probably picked up a leaflet about the Sound Archive there.

What recordings have you used?

My research on Huxley started with a 1958 *Brains Trust* radio programme – a legendary series now, which dates from my parents' time – with contributions from Huxley's brother Julian, a scientist, and A.J. Ayer, the philosopher. Then I went on to another 1958

BBC broadcast in the *Monitor* series. The aim was to hear Huxley himself speaking, wherever possible, though I did also listen to a PEN event from 1994, the Huxley centenary year, in which various people, including Sybille Bedford, talked about his life and work.

What is the value of using recordings in researching biographies?

If the person is deceased, I think they offer the best opportunity to get close to your subject – not just to hear their speaking voice, but to form an intuitive way of understanding them from how they express themselves in conversation or how they inflect certain words. For example, Huxley would frequently describe something as 'extraordinary' or 'interesting' with a strong emphasis. The impression was

of a man who was constantly alert. I think that conveys his intellectual enthusiasm very clearly. If there is any division of biography that comes close to fiction, I think this is probably it – the ability to form a portrait of the subject from the way they speak.

How did you find the services of the Sound Archive?

I was very happy with the help I received from the staff and the facilities in the Listening & Viewing Service. Maybe I am not very expert at using it, but the online catalogue seemed awkward and I'm not sure that I found everything I might have done. The big advantage is being able to get access to the sound recordings in the building where I do my research on printed materials. For foreign visitors, who are making a long journey, this must be a great help.

EVENTS

■ The Saul Seminars

Studies in Recorded Music 2004

Handel in Performance

Christopher Hogwood, Honorary Professor of Music at the University of Cambridge and director of the Academy of Ancient Music, discusses developments in the performing style of Handel's music.

5 October

Music Appreciation: how not to listen to classical music

Anthony Pryer (Goldsmiths' College, University of London) and David Wright (Royal College of Music) consider early hostility towards music on recordings.

2 November

English Cathedral Choirs: the voices of boys and girls

Graham F Welch (Institute of Education, University of London) and Malcolm Archer (St Paul's Cathedral) discuss the English cathedral choir sound.

30 November

All at the British Library, Conference Centre starting at 18.15pm

Admission free (by ticket only)

Tickets from the British Library Events Office

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■ Oral history training days

One-day courses in oral history techniques

12 November at the National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh

30 November at the British Library

7 December at the Norfolk Record Office, Norwich

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