Discography—a minefield?

By Rob Allingham

If the process of audio archiving can be said to involve the systematic organisation of recordings as three-dimensional entities, be they 78 rpm discs, master tapes, CDs or whatever, the related study of discography involves the systematic collation of information *about* those recordings. The details most commonly collated include: the individual or collective name of the featured artist/s, the names of all the participating musicians and their functions, the song titles, recording dates and locations, as well as all the matrix and catalogue number/s (the latter including the names/s of the imprint/s.) The underlying organisational principle is usually chronological and there must also be some kind of theme or focus, either generic or geographical or, quite commonly, in the listing of the works of a specific artist or composer.

In an ideal world of discographical compilation, it should not be at all necessary to refer to any of those aforementioned three-dimensional audio objects because the relevant information will have been carefully collected and archived by the recording companies themselves. Open a file and hey, presto! All the necessary details are there for the taking and need only be re-arranged into the desired discographical format.

In practice, it rarely works out that way. The recording business, by its very nature, tends to look forward rather than backward so preserving details about what happened yesterday is not usually an over-riding concern (unless, of course, there is money to be made from it!) Furthermore, the companies themselves tend to live out a somewhat ephemeral existence. They start up and prosper for awhile, then die out or become subsumed into some larger corporate identity, and perhaps during that limited lifespan, they might also move offices two or three times. All this militates against the chances of those irreplaceable files surviving long enough for a music historian to recognise their value and preserve them.

It is for these reasons that the business of systematically archiving recordings assumes such a crucial role in the construction of discographies. In many instances, it is those three dimensional objects that directly supply most if not all the surviving information about the recordings and provide the basis for finding additional details. (A discographer might be able to play the recording for one of the participating musicians to get, say, information about the other artists involved.)

The would-be discographer in South Africa usually faces a situation that is rather more difficult than that obtaining in countries characterised by a longstanding preservationist mindset (England springs most readily to mind). Remarkably little original archival paper material of any kind has been preserved by South African music companies. Most do not even have file

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We will be on the Web soon!

Discography - a minefield?

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copies of old catalogues despite the fact that hundreds if not thousands copies of each issue were originally printed. As for those ultimate sources of discographical data, the studio ledgers that systematically documented day-by-day recording activities, almost all have been lost or destroyed. Furthermore, an unusually large (by international standards) percentage of South Africa's master recordings have also been lost or destroyed, thus eliminating yet another primary source for discographical details. Hardly a single example of a metal master has survived from the pre-tape days (roughly before 1950) of direct-cut recordings. Even from the master tape era, entire catalogues are missing. What this means, then, is that preserving and archiving issued recordings in whatever form assumes an even more critical role in South African discographical research than would normally be the case if the usual primary sources were still available.

Spare a thought, however, for the future discographers of whatever country and the problems they may soon be facing. Once upon a time, when sound recording was a jealously guarded, cutting edge technology and setting up a 'record company' required a large capital investment, a relatively small number of companies controlled the means of mechanically/electronically re-

producing music, from the recording of it through to manufacturing and distribution. This near-oligopoly first began to break down with the widespread establishment of smaller 'indie' record labels together with independent studios willing to record any artist, not just those bound to a particular record company/studio owner. Then, with the development of the cassette tape format, the capital cost of setting up factories to manufacture recordings began to decline with the result that many independent entrepreneurs also entered that side of the business.

These trends look set to continue well into the future and will transform the music business even as we know it today. Label-owned studios are already a rarity and independent music companies are flourishing as never before despite (or because of) the ongoing consolidation of the handful of industry giants such as Warner Brothers and EMI. Now, the next format revolution, digital downloading of music from the Internet, promises to do away completely with all manufacturing costs by eliminating the existence of recordings as discreet objects. What was once a consolidated, closely controlled industry promises to soon become even more ubiquitous and decentralised.

All these changes will probably be good for music and musicians but for those of us con-

cerned with documenting the music, they could prove to be most challenging. Instead of the desired information being grouped into few centralised entities, it will be dispersed as wide as cyberspace without so much as the benefit of a material object giving three dimensional testimony to its very existence.

Of course, there are many enthusiasts of the 'new paradigm' who would claim that computer power will be more than equal to the task of managing any and all future informational diversities. Perhaps…. but your correspondent has his doubts. For many years, I have been working on an all-inclusive discography covering the first seventy or so years of South African recording up to about 1970. Will any future discographer be able to even contemplate a similar listing for the subsequent seventy?

Rob Allingham is the Manager: Archives, Gallo Records, Rosebank.

Little Nipper (1884-1895). This image became the trademark for *His Master's Voice* (HMV) records.

The American Vintage Record Labelography (AVRL) Committee is working to develop a national discographical database for sound recordings that will be released on CD-ROM, a huge undertaking that will be of tremendous benefit to member and non-member collectors, researchers, libraries and archives.

http://www.arsc-audio.org

RECORDS MANAGEMENT AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS
SUB-DIRECTORATE OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES—NEWS SNIPPETS

By Clive Kirkwood

The National Archives now has an information technology strategy in place, as well as a business plan to implement it. A considerable expansion in the information technology infrastructure of the National Archives has taken place in the past year. The National Archives' local computer, an IBM AS400, as been replaced with an upgraded model, and all terminals used for data capturing have been replaced for the first time since 1984. There has been significant growth in the allocation of personal computers with network capability to staff members. All repositories now have network links and e-mail facilities. One of the most exciting facets to this development is an envisaged project of the Records Management Division to test an electronic records management system (ERMS) in the normal course of functional activities. The intention is twofold: firstly, to test the feasibility of moving towards the paperless environment for in-house record-keeping, as has been done by the National Archives of Australia; and secondly, to develop practical expertise to be able to advise client offices that are subject to archival legislation. Reliance on the electronic version of the record is a course that has generally been resisted by archivists, but it seems essential to grapple with the potential of an ERMS, or face becoming irrelevant as advisors in the modern office environment. Practical involvement will aid in the definition of criteria that need to be complied with to meet archival requirements. The necessary hardware infrastructure is already in place, and the National Archives hopes to gain the assistance of a computer software supplier to sponsor the project.

A pilot project to investigate the feasibility of Internet enablement of the National Automated Archival Information Retrieval System (NAAIRS), in which the National Archives was assisted by IBM, was successfully completed in October 1999. Although technically complex, the project demonstrated that Internet enablement of the existing system could be achieved. By this means unrestricted on-line access could be provided to any user with Internet facilities. There are however several major technical and financial obstacles at the mainframe bureau to be surmounted before full-scale implementation can be become a reality. The National Archives is pursuing the matter vigorously. (An article on the subject was published in the December 1999 issue of *Archives News.*) It is the intention to make NAAIRS accessible via a website for the National Archives. The website is under development and it is hoped to make it available during 2000, whether or not Internet enablement of NAAIRS is in place.

A further proposed project relates to the testing of digital imaging technology for archival documents. The National Archives is represented in the National Digital Imaging Project (DISA) and is gaining experience from it, but has identified the need to test imaging using selected archival documents in an archival production environment. It is planned to launch a short-term project during March 2000 with the assistance of IBM.

Clive Kirkwood is Deputy Director at the National Archives Tel. (012) 323-5300 eMail: arg07@dacst4.pwv.gov.za

A Renaissance in Archives
CALL FOR PAPERS

SASA will hold a conference and general meeting in Johannesburg during 11-13 September 2000. The main theme of the conference is *Renaissance in Archives.* Within the broad spectrum of this theme we will examine three disciplines within the archive world in the form of small workshops: Electronic Management of Records, Audiovisual Archiving and Oral History/Memorabilia in Archives.

SASA invites prospective speakers to send a synopsis of 250 words of the proposed paper **before** 30 April 2000 to SASA. The proposal should be sent to SASA and should include the speaker's full name, address, telephone numbers, brief curriculum vitae and the title of the paper.

Papers should be limited to 20 minutes, with 10 minutes discussion time. Papers have to be based on original research and will be preselected for the compilation of the final conference programme. Accepted speakers will be notified by 30 June 2000 and will be expected to submit an edited copy of the paper to SASA by 1 August 2000. Selected papers will be published in the SASA Journal after the conference.

Please send proposed papers to the following addresses:
SASA Conference, PO Box 931, Auckland Park, 2006
        or eMail / fax to:
• razias@library.wits.ac.za / Fax: (011)339-4137
 • assmanni@sabc.co.za / Fax: (011) 714-4281

For further detail contact Razia Saleh (011) 716-2444 or Ilse Assmann (011) 714-4041

YOU SAY…..

Dear SASA Newsletter,
I have just been reading the article on the SABC's Archives.

I worked at the SABC, in the TV News Archives, from January 1992 until October 1994 and I was taken aback to see no mention of some more controversial parts of the SABC Archives' history. This omission is even more telling In the light of the piece by Angie Kapelianis where she expresses disbelief in the fact that she could find no trace of the 1976 uprisings in the SABC Sound Archives.

The truth of the matter is that the Archives, like the rest of the SABC / SAUK, served as extensions of the Great Apart heid Plan. This meant, in the case of the TV News Archive for instance, that it was used as a repository for police video footage. That line-feeds made from the SABC by foreign crews during the civil "unrest" of the 1980s, was secretly taped by the SABC technicians and these images deposited in the News Archive where they were accessible only to the police and SABC programme makers with security clearance.

During my time at the SABC (and remember this was *after* the February 1990 unbanning of the ANC / SACP / PAC etc) I had to go to a particular "journalist / producer" to ask his "permission" to hand out certain footage because the shotlist on the card had a large red "restricted access" note on it. It also meant that when Jann Turner came looking for news footage that was transmitted during the period after her father, Rick Turner, was murdered, sections of film mysteriously disappeared from the storage cans.

There are similar stories from the Sound Archives. What continues to disturb me is not that these things happened, but that these policies and occurrences have never been made public or acknowledged. And that some of the people who carried out these policies (which is some cases included destruction of tapes, in others handing over material to the police) are still working at the SABC.

It seems to me that the "Truth & Reconciliation" process did not uncover this history and that perhaps SASA should take the lead in encouraging these truths to be uncovered.
Ruth Muller
Linksfield Ridge

Announcing
the first issue of the Gay and Lesbian Archives newsletter.

If you would like to receive a copy, please contact Graeme on 011 716 2818 or eMail: galasa@pixie.co.za

Archival Finding Aids, Electronic Texts and Images Course

This course is offered by SASA in conjunction with the Institute for Applied Communication at Technikon South Africa.

This one-week course will introduce the concept of Standard Generalised Markup Language (SGML), and its application in archives, libraries, museums and other special repositories. In particular the course will provide "hands-on" training in **Encoded Archival Description (EAD)** and the **Text Encoded Initiative (TEI)**. An overview of digital imaging and the scanning process will also be covered. It is aimed at those who are keen to develop, use, publish, and control electronic texts and finding aids for access and research purposes. This course will provide participants with a foundation to start their own encoding and digital imaging projects. EAD and TEI will make it possible to "publish" finding aids and primary source material on the WWW, and to do meaningful text retrieval. Participants must have some basic knowledge about computers.

SASA is busy negotiating with Daniel Pitti (USA) who will be teaching the course, about a suitable date either in June or early July. **Mr. Pitti was the co-ordinator and developer of the EAD initiative and is the foremost expert in this field.** He has been invited to teach in various countries the world over. The course will be taught in an electronic classroom at Wits University. All participants will receive a Certificate of Completion jointly issued by SASA and TSA.

If you are interested in attending, contact Razia at razias@library.wits.ac.za or

TRANSVAAL BRANCH

SEMINAR: INFORMATION MANAGEMENT: THE KEY TO EFFICIENCY AND TRANSPARENCY

SASA Transvaal Branch will host a seminar on 7 April 2000 at Barlow park, Sandton, Gauteng. The registering fee will be R80.00 / person.

The programme will include papers on the success of Management Strategies in the Private Sector, Information Management Achievements in Libraries and Museums, Management of Electronic Records and Audiovisual Material and the Impact of Promotion of Access to Information. A video will also be shown on the return of democracy, accountability and documentary evidence in Gambia.

Speakers will include Charles Stofberg from Telkom, Marlene Burger from UNISA, Robyn Khumalo from the Mpumalanga Department of Education and Verne Harris from the National Archives.

For more information contact Isabel Kelly:
Tel: (012) 323-5300 or via eMail: arg19@dacst4.pwv.gov.za

USEFUL WWW LINKS

International
International Council on Archives
http://www.ica.org

Directory
Archives Web - National Archives around the world
http://www.archiefnet.nl/indexuk.htm

National Archives
National Archives of Namibia
http://witbooi.natarch.mec.gov.na/

United States of America
National Archives and Records Administration -NARA
http://www.nara.gov/

National Archives of Canada
http://www.archives.ca/

United Kingdom Public Records Office
http://www.pro.gov.uk/

National Archives of Australia
http://www.naa.gov.au/

National Archives of Malaysia
http://arkib.gov.my/

Audioviusal Archives
Recording Technology History
http://ac.acusd.edu/History/recording/notes.html

COURSES COURSES COURSES COURSES COURSES COURSES COURSES COURSES

Technikon SA Qualifications 2000

Technikon SA is introducing a number of new courses in Records Management and Archival Studies this year.

Courses offered are:

<u>**Post-diploma: Archival Studies**</u>

This course is offered to candidates in possession of any degree or any other national diploma (M+3). After completing this qualification students receive post graduate diploma and may progress straight to the BTech: Archival Studies (which we will start offering from 2001).

With a completed BTech students can progress to a Masters level, for example, the Masters qualification in Heritage studies at Wits University.
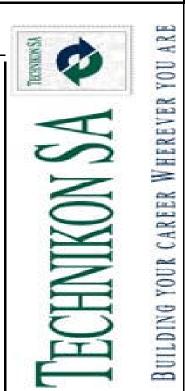
<u>**National Certificate in Archival Studies**</u>

We also offer the **National Certificate in Archival Studies** for candidates who are not in possession of a previous degree or national diploma (M+3), i.e. for candidates with a Standard 10/ Matric (or Standard 8 with 5 years experience in a records service or archive working as

para-professional records clerks or archive assistants).

<u>**National Higher Certificate in Archival Studies**</u>

We are also introducing the National Higher Certificate: Archival studies for all Registrations 2000. This course is offered to candidates who have completed the National Certificate in Archival Studies.

For more information contact either:
Tony Rodriques (011) 471 2038; e-mail: TRodriqu@tsa.ac.za or
Chris Kangulu (011) 471 2923; e-mail: CKangulu@tsa.ac.za

University of South Africa

UNISA offers Educational Programme for Archivists

JC Theron, Department of Information Science, UNISA

Since the beginning of this year (2000) Unisa is offering educational training for archivists. This is the first undergraduate programme at a university in South Africa. The programmes are offered through distance education and are accessible to students anywhere in South Africa, Southern Africa and the world. The Department of Information Science, one of the pioneers in professional education (librarians and other information professionals) presents the programme.

Lecturers qualified as archi-

vists are responsible for the programme. The programme is offered in both in Afrikaans and English. The programme is in modular form, (6 months) and all modules are offered in both semesters. Students can thus register in January or June.

Students should be in possession of matriculation exemption (or provisional) to be admitted to the course. Students who do not qualify for either of these prerequisites will be accommodated – contact the Department for more information.

The occupational opportunities for students completing this degree are far more than those offered by traditional archival educational programmes. Apart from working in Archives, the courses in Information Science (where we teach *inter alia* information technology, information management, computerised information retrieval (Internet)) equip the student to work in libraries, information centres, publishing, business and industry, information and knowledge management, etc.

For more information on course content, admissions, et cetera, feel free to contact:

Mrs M Burger
Tel: (012-4296585) (W),
eMail *burgem@unisa.ac.za*

or

Mr JC Theron
Tel: (012- 4296057) (W),
eMail *therojc@unisa.ac.za*

or

The Department of Information Science
Tel: (012-4296071)
PO Box 392
Unisa
South Africa

UNIVERSITY OF NATAL
DURBAN CAMPUS, PIETERMARITZBURG CAMPUS & MEDICAL SCHOOL

Records and Documents Management at UNP

The University of Natal-Pietermaritzburg offers the Records and Documents Management course. This is part of (along with nine other courses) the Post Graduate Diploma in Information Studies (PGDIS). At this stage it is not a *stand-alone* offering. Only graduates are eligible to register for the Diploma.

The outline of the Records and Documents Management course is as follows:

An introduction to records management; definitions and terminology; a history of records management; information storage and retrieval; principles, selection, design and evaluation of a system; life cycle approach to records management; systems design, implementation, maintenance and audit; strategic approach to records management; records management in the future; electronic records management; legal issues in records management.

The contact person is Fiona Bell (PGDIS co-ordinator)
Tel: (033) 2605097 eMail: bell@infs.unp.ac.za

AMLIB / SASA MERGER BALLOT

On 4 February 2000 the National Committees of both AMLIB and SASA met to discuss the feasibility of a merger of the two organisations. After some deliberation the meeting decided to consult the members of both organisations via a ballot. The outcome of this ballot would then determine the future of AMLIB and SASA. The SASA National Committee had requested this meeting because it felt that a merger of the two organisations was due. This would allow for a sharing of resources, and consequently a more effective service offered to the members.

A brief outline of the two organisations.

South African Society of Archivists - SASA
The object of the Society is the promotion of the archival profession in South Africa and the development of archival training. Membership of the SASA is open to all that are interested in the archival profession, the management and preservation of records and archival and manuscript sources. A National Committee is elected biennially. Each member of SASA is automatically a member of the relevant provincial branch and is informed about activities arranged by the branch. All members automatically receive a copy of the S.A. Archives Journal.

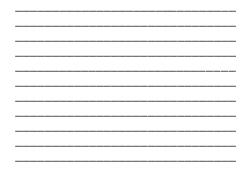### Association for Archivists and Manuscript Librarians - AMLIB

The Association strives to enable and encourage all persons with an interest of any kind in archives and manuscripts to share their knowledge. Membership of AMLIB is open to any individual or institution interested in archives and manuscripts.
A newsletter, to which anyone can contribute, in order to disseminate knowledge and create an awareness of current trends in the archival and manuscript fields, is published three times per year and sent to each member. AMLIB also seeks to advise any public or private institution or body, seeking assistance, on the organisation and conservation of their archives and manuscript collections.

BALLOT

I would like to see the following:
- ☐ To carry on as before as two separate organisations, but in close co-operation
- ☐ To merge both organisations into one new organisation
- ☐ To disband both organisations, and form a new organisation

Can you make suggestions on what you expect from an archival organisation:
_____
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_____

Please send your ballot to SASA, PO Box 931, Auckland Park, 2006
Or e-mail us at
RaziaS@Library.Wits.ac.za

SASA National Committee 2000 - 2002

Call for Nominations

The term of office of the current national committee is coming to an end. As a SASA member, this is your opportunity to elect the new national committee who will serve for the next two years (2000 - 2002). In this newsletter you will find a nomination form and information about the nomination process. Once the national committee has received nominations, ballot papers will be sent out to members. Nominations should be forwarded to the Chair of SASA, Michele Pickover, Historical Papers, Private Bag X1 PO Wits 2050. Fax: (011) 339 4137. Nominations must reach Michele by 28th April 2000.

South African Society of Archivists
Nomination Form: Election of National Committee

1. Any member may nominate up to six SASA members for election to the National Committee. The nominator and nominees must be up to date with payment of membership fees or the nominations will be disqualified.

2. A separate nomination form is to be completed in respect of each nomination. Photocopies and fax transmission copies are acceptable.

3. Nominators must sign the nomination form overleaf and give their names in block letters. If this is not done, the nominations will be invalid.

4. The nominee must also sign the nomination form, confirming his/her availability and willingness to comply with conditions indicated in paragraph 5 below. The nominee must also provide a brief career sketch and statement regarding the skills or vision he/she can bring to the National Committee (not exceeding 150 words in total), which will be circulated with the ballot paper.

5. Members who accept a nomination should note that in terms of section 6 (j) of the constitution, National Committee members are responsible for their own travelling expenses to attend National Committee meetings, wherever they may be held. National Committee members should be willing to accept responsibility for a specific portfolio and have a reasonable expectation of being able to complete the full two-year term of office. They should also have access to facilities for typing, printing, photocopying and venues for meetings.

SASA National Committee 2000—2002

NOMINATION FORM

A. TO BE COMPLETED BY NOMINATOR

I, _____(NAME IN BLOCK
LETTERS), the undersigned, do hereby nominate the following SASA member for
election to the national Committee:

NAME OF NOMINEE IN BLOCK LETTERS:_____

SIGNATURE OF NOMINATOR:_____

B. TO BE COMPLETED BY NOMINEE

I, _____ (NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS),
the undersigned, having read the notes on the reverse of this form, do
hereby accept nomination for election to the National Committee.

SIGNATURE OF NOMINEE:_____

DATE:_____

BRIEF CAREER SKETCH AND STATEMENT ON SKILLS OR VISION (NOT MORE THAT 150
WORDS IN TOTAL):

SASA in conjunction with the Institute for Applied Communication at Technikon South Africa is holding an introductory workshop on

Archival Finding Aids, Electronic Texts and Images

Date: **24 March 2000**

Venue: **SABC Computer Room, RadioPark Building, SABC, Auckland Park**

Time: **9am – 5pm**

This I day workshop will introduce the concept of Standard Generalised Markup Language (SGML), and its application in archives, libraries, museums and other special repositories through EAD and TEI. An overview of digital imaging and the scanning process will also be covered. It is aimed at those who are keen to develop, use, publish, and control electronic texts and finding aids for access and research purposes. This workshop will provide participants with a foundation to understanding the processes involved. A more intensive, hands-on course will be offered in June for participants who wish to start implementing digital and encoding projects.

What are EAD & TEI

In 1993, the Berkeley Finding Aid Project was set up to investigate the desirability, and feasibility of developing a non-proprietary encoding standard for machine-readable finding aids such as inventories, registers, indexes, and other documents created by archives, libraries, museums and manuscript repositories to support the use of their holdings. This lead to the development of Encoded Archival Description Document Type Definition (EAD DTD) using SGML. EAD is increasingly being used in the creation of archival finding aids.

The Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) is an international project to develop guidelines for the preparation and interchange of electronic texts for scholarly research, and to satisfy a broad range of uses by the language industries more generally. TEI is also a Document Type Definition (TEI DTD) using Standardised General Markup Language (SGML). TEI is useful for marking up electronic primary sources such as prose, verse, manuscripts, drama and illustrations.

Workshop Content

- Introduction to Digital Imaging
- Overview of SGML
- Introduction to EAD
- Introduction to TEI
- Discussion

Ms Razia Saleh who attended the courses on EAD and Electronic texts and Images at the University of Virginia, USA, will conduct the workshop.

Registration

The Registration fee is R100.00 per person. This includes teas, lunch and the programme. Places are limited and will be chosen on a "first come first serve" basis. Applicants need to be "computer literate".

Book early to secure a place on the course. All applications must be submitted by <u>10 March 2000</u>.

Confirmation of the application will be sent to you by 16 March.

The Registration fee will be payable on the day of the workshop.

Registration Form

Archival Finding Aids, Electronic Texts and Images Introductory workshop
Friday, 24 March 2000

Name:_____

Organisation/title:_____

Tel: _____(w) _____ (h) _____ (cell)

E-mail: _____ **Fax:** _____

Work Address:_____

_____

My fees will be paid by:
❑   Myself
❑   Employer
❑   Other (specify)_____

Please fax or e-mail your completed registration form to:
E-mail: Razias@library.wits.ac.za
Fax: Razia Saleh 011 3394137
or
E-mail: RMmutlan@tsa.ac.za
Fax: Rufus Mmutlana, Manager, Institute for Applied Communication, TSA
        (011) 471 3906