



Learning from the Eda Kuhn Loeb Music Library

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Golden Muse:
The Loeb Music Library at 50

Edited by
Sarah Adams, Virginia Danielson,
and Robert J. Dennis

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Introduction

Virginia Danielson

SEPTEMBER 17, 2006 MARKED THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY of the opening of the Loeb Music Library. While music had been taught at Harvard since the mid-nineteenth century and books and scores diligently acquired by its faculty and librarians, these resources were brought under one roof – the same roof that housed the Department of Music – only in September of 1956.

As part of our celebration of this anniversary, it gives us great joy to present this collection of essays by faculty, students, and visiting scholars concerning their work in our library. Before turning to the essays, however, it is appropriate to acknowledge and remember the people upon whose lifework our present ones are built.

As the head of the Loeb Music Library, my official title is Richard F. French Librarian. The title, incorporating the name of a great lover of music and libraries, music critic and scholar, reminds me that my role is that of a steward of this institution, attending to the business of a music library built with the care and resources of many others. As my position represents the work of other individuals, past and present, I want to recognize the excellence and accomplishments of the Library staff. While I try to keep us all on track and in communication with each other and the rest of the world, it is they who apply their considerable music knowledge and organizational expertise to buy things, catalog things, find things, take care of fragile things, teach people how to use things, tell the research community about things, answer questions, attend to needs and actually carry out our work on a daily basis. These are the members of the Loeb Music Library staff as of September 2006:

DAVID ACKERMAN, *Lead Audio Engineer*
 SARAH ADAMS, *Keeper of the Isham Memorial Library*
 CAROLANN BUFF, *Staff Assistant*
 ROBERT DENNIS, *Recordings Curator*
 MARISA DERY, *Audio Technician*
 CANDICE FELDLY, *Head Music Cataloger*
 BETH FLOOD, *Music and Media Cataloger*
 RHONA FREEMAN, *Cataloging Assistant*
 DOUGLAS FREUNDLICH, *Associate Keeper of the Isham Memorial Library*
 CATHERINE GIBBS-KLENOV, *Cataloging Assistant*

other institutions. We are still waiting and hoping to receive some material from St. Petersburg and Budapest.

The response time varies from library to library, and some have been amazingly efficient, filling orders in a matter of weeks. Others take years, as Sarah patiently sends reminders every six months or so. Relatively few libraries have delivered digital scans, though we did receive one from a library after they mailed the incorrect manuscript on microfilm, not once but twice. When Sarah pointed out the problem to a supervising librarian in September 2004, she received the following reply (one of my favorite emails): "De retour aujourd'hui, je reste STUPEFAITE à la lecture de votre message de vendredi: jouer à ce point de malchance depuis vos premiers contacts avec la Bibliothèque en janvier 2001 (!) tient de la malédiction. Je vous prie, si cela est encore possible, d'accepter nos infinies excuses." As it turned out, this particular composite manuscript preserving 48 of Bach's solo keyboard works includes an early version of one of his Suites (published in CPBW, series I, volume 8.2, edited by Peter Wollny). All's well that ends well.

Learning from the Eda Kuhn Loeb Music Library

Kay Kaufman Shellenoy

WHEN I FIRST ARRIVED AT HARVARD as a visiting professor in the fall of 1991, then Music Library head Michael Ochs gave me a guided tour of the Eda Kuhn Loeb Music Library. My first indelible memory is of the sea of scores on the library's top floor. But my subsequent explorations of the library were to take me not just top down, but literally bottom up: usually beginning in the Charles Seeger Room with its comprehensive collection of ethnomusicology monographs and world music reference sources. For this ethnomusicologist, the Seeger Room is the anchor—both physically and metaphorically—for the rest of the library on the floors above.

Not long after I joined the Music Department as a full-time faculty member in 1992, John Ward's collection of sound recordings, which had long resided in various corners of the Music Building, officially moved into the Music Library, becoming the nucleus of the Archive of World Music. In the years since, under the creative leadership of Virginia Danielson, the Archive of World Music has come to house a world-class collection of field recordings and rare commercial issues, representing music traditions well beyond the library's long-time boundaries.

Not surprisingly, among my favorite things in the Eda Kuhn Loeb Music Library are the audio-visual materials that today reside within the Archive of World Music. The relatively recent establishment of the AWM opens a window on the changing world of both our own Music Library and the manner in which the broader library landscape has expanded to incorporate a range of rapidly changing technologies. These new A-V materials provide both invaluable resources for the classroom and are the foundation of the research process. Below, I will trace how these new resources of our changing library world have served to shape both my teaching and writings about cross cultural musical materials. I will end with a tale that I hope demonstrates the contribution of the Archive in preserving materials and the ways in which finding aids can become a locus for new insights.

In Praise of Pedagogical Resources

By the early 1990s, both ethnomusicological publications and world music pedagogy were already wedded to the brave new world of audio and visual recordings. The now impressive collection of nearly 20,000 sound recordings in the AWM pays homage to the transition in recorded sound from 78 RPM to LP to cassette to CD.

Similarly, the approximately 700 films in AWM span several generations of video technology to DVD.

During my first year of full-time teaching at Harvard in 1993, I was able to offer a core course on African music thanks in large part to the audio-visual resource of our library. Over the years since, I have depended increasingly on specific holdings, such as innumerable video clips of music and dance from the entire African continent in the JVC Smithsonian Folkways Video Anthology (Yamamoto, 1996), and unforgettable films such as "The Language You Cry In: The Story of a Merde Song" (Toepke and Serrano, 1998). The growing number of recordings of African musicians performing everything from traditional musics to popular styles made it possible to expose students to a truly representative range of African repertoires.

While the Eda Kuhn Library enabled me to teach African music, it also provided a resource from which I was able to learn more about the musics I brought into the classroom. For instance, as part of my African music course, I taught the rousing 1897 hymn and longtime African National Congress protest song, *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika*, when Nelson Mandela became the first democratically elected President of South Africa in 1994. *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika* became the national anthem. In the AWM, I was delighted to discover, amidst the various polished choral recordings of this anthem by professional ensembles such as Ladysmith Black Mambazo (Spilke & Co., 1990), we possessed a published field recording of *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika* as sung in 1984 by members of the congregation of St. Paul's Church in Soweto (*Let Their Voices Be Heard*, 1987). This recording both captures the transmission of the hymn in the context of local South African religious life, and conveys aspects of indigenous South African singing style, including call and response, and vocal slides, not heard in most commercial recordings.

The collections of the Eda Kuhn Loeb Music Library have also provided the critical links between pedagogy and research, constituting a domain in which the two meet. It was the library's unrivaled collections that allowed me to invent and teach an intensively comparative world music course that ended up as my *Soundscapes* textbook. (Shelemay 2006) The library collection both fed my teaching and enhanced the depth and breadth of the *Soundscapes* text.

Tales from the Archive of World Music

The impact of living with the Eda Kuhn Loeb Music Library, filled with world class collections of print and sound materials, awakens each of us to the importance of building our collections for the future. For ethnomusicologists on our faculty, the lively presence of the Archive of World Music provides a venue for depositing field recordings and associated documentation.

All ethnomusicologists are taught early on the importance of depositing their field materials in archives. Indeed, the oral tradition is replete with tales of collections

lost through natural or other disasters by fieldworkers who neglected to make backup copies. The longer one practices ethnomusicology, one also becomes aware, to quote ethnomusicologist Anthony Seeger, that "it may be that we will be best remembered for our recordings rather than our laboured theories." (Seeger 1986: 267)

The process of depositing materials in the Archive of World Music and the presence of an on-line catalogue that makes these materials accessible to other scholars can also have quite unexpected outcomes. In 1997, I deposited my collection of Ethiopian religious and secular recordings in the AWM; they became accessible through an on-line finding aid in 1998. In early 2005, I received the first round of correspondence regarding tapes in this collection that I had literally rescued from Radio Voice of the Gospel in Addis Ababa while living in the Ethiopian capital at the height of the revolution. I had received a telephone call late one evening in 1975 from an official at the radio station, telling me that he feared that their archives would be destroyed by revolutionary forces. He asked me to come as soon as possible and to make copies of any recordings I wished to save. I went to the station the next day and for hours worked with a technician there, trying to identify recordings of particular historical interest and value. The recordings had very sparse documentation, all of which I copied out and later typed up. This information became part of the electronic record after I deposited the tapes in the AWM.

In late 2004, I received an email from David Badagnani, who was living in Ohio and archiving the recordings made by Halim El-Dabh, a composer and ethnomusicologist who long taught at Kent State University. Mr. El-Dabh had spent several years in the early 1960s in Ethiopia, where he founded the ensemble Orchestra Ethiopia and taught at then Haile Selassie I University in Addis Ababa. Mr. Badagnani recognized some of El-Dabh's compositions recorded for Voice of the Gospel from my collection's finding guide. After several rounds of correspondence, David Badagnani forwarded this request:

"I just found the following [Reel 13 and 14 of collection AWM 15072] on the website listing your own Ethiopian recording collection, among the Radio of the Gospel tape copies you acquired in 1975. I believe that these are recordings that aired c. 1964 and I don't know if Halim El-Dabh ever acquired copies of these radio tapes. They would be of great interest for his archive. May we request permission to have these two reels (as well as the contents list and technical notes) duplicated for Professor El-Dabh's archive? These are the two relevant reels (it's interesting that they call it "El Dabh Orchestra" rather than Orchestra Ethiopia, which Halim always called it. . ." (David Badagnani, email correspondence with Kay K. Shelemay, January 23, 2005)

That I gave permission for copies of these materials to be sent to the El-Dabh archive at Kent State goes without saying. I was delighted to be the conduit for Halim El-Dabh's lost RVOG tapes. But this story does not end with the return of two of Halim El-Dabh's tapes. The transfer led to yet another round of correspondence, best explained by David Badagnani in email correspondence dated March 15, 2006:

"You may recall that last year you assisted me in gaining CD-R copies of the Orchestra Ethiopia recordings in your archive of Ethiopian recordings at Harvard, for the archive of Halim El-Dabh (the founder of Orchestra Ethiopia) at Kent State University, where I teach and am completing my dissertation on his music. The recordings have proven most fascinating, even if not all of the recordings were done under El-Dabh's direction (some were done later). The El-Dabh recordings you got from Radio Voice of the Gospel are apparently unique, as El-Dabh did not even have these (although he remembers recording them; he does have some of his own recordings, of different selections by the group, in his archive).

That is where things get interesting, and why I am writing to you with this update: Recently, Halim has made the acquaintance of Mr. Charles Sutton, a musician based in New England who took over helping to run Orchestra Ethiopia around 1966 (El-Dabh left the group in 1964, and was succeeded by John Coe). Sutton remained with the group for several years, along with Tesfaye Lemma, who continued with the group into the 1970s following Charles's departure. Although they have spoken on the phone a few times over the past couple of years, Halim and Charles had never met before a few weeks ago, when Halim visited New York City; Charles drove down from Connecticut to reminisce with him about the Orchestra, and brought an amazing collection of old photos from the Orchestra's U.S. tour, which Charles organized in around 1969.

In any case, I let Charles listen to the recordings from your collection. He was most interested in the music recorded after he had left Ethiopia — performed by Orchestra Ethiopia at the time of the revolution, I guess in 1974 or 1975. Prophetically, you had apparently taped this music from your television! (I think I recall that you write about this in your book [Shelamny 1991] — specifically having recorded these things on your tape recorder while watching the revolution unfold on your [home] TV.) If you had not done that, I think this music would certainly have been lost.

"Out of curiosity, Charles took the recordings to Tesfaye Lemma, and, as it turns out, Tesfaye was the one who directed and composed those Revolution Day songs! He was utterly astonished when he heard the music, incredulous that this music had even survived. At my request, Tesfaye and Charles have

prepared detailed notes on each track for you (with the help of the track titles written in the Ethiopic syllabary which the archivist had enclosed with the recordings), so that your archive may have these notes for future scholarly study... I'm so glad this has worked out in this way, even if it has taken 30 years."

This tale continues: I am now working with Tesfaye Lemma and Charles Sutton, to insure that Tesfaye Lemma's own collection of Orchestra Ethiopia recordings are deposited according to his wishes at the Library of Congress Archive of Folk Culture. Tesfaye Lemma's detailed comments on the televised performance of Orchestra Ethiopia revolutionary songs that I recorded one night in March, 1975, when I was unable to leave our Addis Ababa apartment due to curfews, is now part of the documentation of my own collection in the Eda Kuhn Loeb Music Library. Ironically, although I had known Tesfaye Lemma since meeting him in Ethiopia in 1974 and had even written an article about Orchestra Ethiopia, I never thought to tell him about this recording. Here the Eda Kuhn Library and an Archive of World Music finding aid have provided multiple links, enabling transmission of music to the people who composed and performed it, and, in turn, enhancing documentation of its own collections for the future.

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