

THE WORK OF THE ARCHIVE IS UNENDING

I began my career as an archivist working in the archive of the late American folklorist and collector, Alan Lomax. My connection to the Alan Lomax archive was connected to my experiences as an independent sound engineer for various music groups in Memphis, Tennessee and other locales in the U.S. For over four years, I worked with colleagues to help bring order to the immensity of Lomax's collections and to complete efforts to digitize the extent of the recordings that Lomax himself had collected over the course of his 60+ active years of documentary work.


Heavily steeped in the issues of sound archiving, I was led from this experience to acquire further education in a graduate program for Museum Studies at the University of Kansas in the United States. I had begun to see the richness that can be found in archives, but I wanted to see the bigger picture more clearly. I wanted to know more about the construction of archives, about the history, and about the theories that underlie the archival process. I began to read far and wide about archives — all types of archives — and I began to learn about the inherent politics of archives: the fact that memory can be created and erased within an archive, the fact that archivists themselves play central roles in the course of human social memory. One archivist-author in particular spoke to me in his writings. This author had experienced the political complexity of archives firsthand, in a country that underwent a process of rapid and profound political change in the early 1990s. I learned from this archivist that archives can be agents for healing (individual and social) and for justice. Wrongs can be righted and hidden voices can be discovered within the archives. I also learned the value of looking at what archives do on the ground — the innerworkings, the people, the collections, the users — while also analysing what it is that archives symbolize in their locations — be it the community, the state, the country, or the world. That there is a multi-dimensional continuum from which archives can be measured.

At the IASA conference last year in Cape Town, South Africa, we all had the chance to hear from this author firsthand. His keynote spoke of ghosts in the archive, but for me I was hearing the words of a living South African archivist whose writings had been one of the foundational building blocks of my archival philosophies. Verne Harris, Director: Research and Archive, at the Nelson Mandela Foundation, opens this issue of the IASA Journal with a text adapted from his keynote at this year's annual conference. I am honored to include Harris' work in the IASA Journal. His text encourages archivists to reach out continually to those who are absent from the archive and to be aware that what is absent is always present, reminding us that there is much to be done to ensure that our archives are serving their intended publics. For Harris, and many others, justice is a central archival purpose. Harris' text concludes reminding us that the fight for justice is ongoing.

This issue of the IASA Journal addresses another central challenge for archives today: the rush to preserve sound and audiovisual recordings before they are lost to obsolescence and degradation. This is not only a threat to physical objects. If we agree that archives serve as a source for social memory and heritage, then this is a definite threat to our global memory and heritage — and this fight is also ongoing.

Michael Casey, from the University of Indiana in the United States, is not only a proponent for organized and intentional action on behalf of archives to salvage recorded heritage but he has led the fight in the U.S. to secure institutional funding for such activity. And at IU, Casey and colleagues succeeded in mounting one of the largest institutionally-funded audiovisual preservation efforts to date. Casey's call to action in this issue delineates the obstacles, articulates the solutions, and provides evidence of archives in the U.S. who are actively engaged in the process of programmatic reformatting.

New Zealand suffered from severe earthquakes in 2010. Marie O'Connell and her colleagues at the New Zealand Archive of Film, Television, and Sound were faced with the task of putting the archive back together after the tremors dislocated and shuffled the contents of the archive



into a complete disarray. O'Connell shares her experiences and offers a reminder that even as obsolescence and degradation threaten audiovisual collections, we must make sure our disaster preparedness plans are up to date and that they take into account the most likely disasters that could occur in the archive's vicinity.


This issue of the journal includes two articles from the NOA team in Austria. I think they are important articles to include because they propose arguments for two issues that are currently looming in the audiovisual archive world. In the context of broadcast archives, the first article (Kummer, Kuhnle, and Gabler) proposes a balance between production and preservation in terms of digital file management, specifically that of digital video files. With IASA-TC 06 in process, this article provides useful arguments for scenarios when an archive might select an *ffv1* codec over uncompressed or *jpeg2000*. The authors also argue for the use of *AVI* as an interim storage wrapper for broadcast archives. The second NOA contribution comes from Sebastian Gabler, who presents a method for managing digital time-based audiovisual assets using metadata at an abstracted level. In Gabler's view, for access purposes, an archive needs only to work from one set of digital files. Access to content at full duration, in segments, or any other combination or slicing of files can be provided through a combination of well-designed metadata and automated file processing.

Building on the theme of degradation to audiovisual materials, specifically magnetic media, this issue offers two scientific studies of methods to combat Soft-Binder-Syndrome (SBS) in magnetic tape. Enric Giné Giux from the Sonology Department at the Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya in Barcelona, Spain, provides a study on a batch of 500 compact cassette tapes from the collection of late pianist Alicia de Larrocha. Giné Giux's article illustrates a re-lubrication method that provided successful outcomes for digitization of the audio contained on the cassettes. Federica Bressan, Sergio Canazza, and Roberta Bertani, all from the University of Padova, Italy, provide a careful evaluation of the effects that thermal treatment (i.e., baking) has on magnetic tape stocks. Although the authors do not condemn the process, they provide evidence that there are risks to the process and that there is not a "one-size-fits-all" recipe for thermal treatment.

Reporting on migration efforts in southern Africa, Thandie Puthologo and Ruth M. Abankwah, at the University of Namibia, have written a comparative analysis of the migration process from analogue to digital formats for broadcasting at Botswana Television and at the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation. This article largely evaluates the readiness of viewers to receive digital vs. analog broadcast signals. Although slightly tangential from the archives trajectory, the paper is important because it reminds us that technological changes in the generation and delivery of audiovisual content have ramifications at all stages of the access cycle, even within the homes of everyday citizens. Analog obsolescence, in this case, is unavoidable for TV viewers.

Back in the archive, Austin Schultz, from the Oregon State Archives in the U.S., reports from first-hand experience with technological obsolescence — The Sawyers Rols dictation machine, to be precise. Schultz and his colleagues were faced with zero access to over 1,400 Rols audio recordings. Read Schultz's article to see how they overcame obsolescence to provide access to the first 20 Rols tapes, and what their plans are for the remainder.

Not all audiovisual archives are broadcast oriented, nor are they completely audiovisual oriented. Actually, most archives are of the sort that contain and provide access to a mixed array of content, including manuscripts, photographs, monographs, sound recordings, films, videos, 3-D materials, and any other type of documentary medium one can imagine. In these types of archives, historically, audiovisual content has been pushed to the side, overlooked, or hidden, as Megan McShea suggests in her contribution in this issue. McShea, of the Smithsonian Archives of American Art in the U.S., shares the results of a three-year project carried out at the Smithsonian to investigate methodologies for processing mixed-media collections with more efficiency and with assurance that audiovisual content receives equal attention and coverage in the process. Additionally, as appendices, McShea provides thorough documentation for processing audiovisual material in mixed-media collections that can be useful to archives looking to improve processing times, minimize backlog, and improve access.



Wrapping up this issue of the IASA Journal is an article from a recent winner of IASA's Research Grant Award, Gustavo Navarro. Navarro provides a report of his IASA-sponsored work to document and preserve recorded histories of the inhabitants of Southern Patagonia in Argentina in collaboration with the Municipal Archives of the province of Santa Cruz. Navarro's report includes documentation of his work to collaborate with the Municipal Archives as well as an overview of how the project partners decided to provide access to the recordings that were created and preserved during his project.

As Editor, I want to express my thanks to all the contributors to this issue. The journal received enough expressions of interest for this issue that I was forced to request that twelve articles be placed on hold until the next issue (Issue 45). This is a great problem to have and I hope that the IASA community continues to desire to publish work in the journal. As I have said in past editorials, the IASA Journal is a mouthpiece for the audiovisual archives community and all are welcome to contribute. It is here that we can continue to engage in discourse about important contemporary issues, share information about ongoing activities, and philosophize about what the future holds.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Bertram Lyons
Editor, IASA

Dear IASA friends and colleagues,

IASA-1000. This is the motto I propose for my term as president. While I recognise that such a membership target is probably unrealistic, I believe in setting the bar high when jumping into the future. To get anywhere close, we will need to understand what draws members to our sister associations, we will need to draw on our competitive edge, and we will need to effectively market the value IASA adds for a reasonable membership fee.

IASA has undergone significant changes in recent years to remain relevant and to raise the profile of the association. The most significant were changing the constitution and incorporating IASA as an entity under UK law. It is my task to take IASA forward in the direction set by past presidents Richard Green and Kevin Bradley and consolidated by Jacqueline von Arb. To venture beyond the steps of these three past presidents and to match the achievements of the past presidents before them in shaping the IASA we know, is daunting and intimidating — to say the least. At the same time it is comforting to draw from the legacies of the presidents before me and to be guided by their actions, their work, and their examples.


Only two new members were elected onto the Executive Board: myself and Judith Gray (as our new Vice President for Membership). Jacqueline von Arb moved into the supportive role of Past President, while the other board members retained their positions: Pio Pellizzari as Vice President: Training & Education; Bruce Gordon as Vice President: Conferences; Lynn Johnson as Secretary-General; and Bertram Lyons as Editor. Tommy Sjoberg remains as Treasurer and Richard Ranft as our very capable web manager. Indeed a very experienced and accomplished Executive Board to take IASA into the next three years. I would like to extend my thanks and gratitude to Alvaro Hegewisch, our previous Vice President for Membership, for the work he did and the role he played (and is still playing) in promoting IASA in the Ibero-American region, as well as to Kevin Bradley for outstanding leadership as IASA president and past president. Under Kevin's leadership IASA adopted a new constitution, became an incorporated entity, introduced sponsorships for additional IASA revenue and changed the organising model for our annual conferences.

My vision for IASA was embodied in my election declaration and is based on five strategic objectives to ensure the financial health and future sustainability of IASA:

- Maintain IASA's financial health by building professional partnerships, as well as looking at opportunities to operate more effectively in the EU.
- Promote an active membership and encourage participation in IASA's activities. In this regard it will be vital to keep IASA affordable for members.
- Finalise the administrative arrangements arising from IASA's incorporation under the laws of Wales and England, including a professional secretariat.
- Continue the work done by IASA with regard to government organisations and NGO's in ensuring that sound and audiovisual heritage remain part of international discussions.
- Maintain and promote the training initiatives undertaken by IASA and continue to seek partnerships in this regard.

As such, I intend to focus on growth opportunities for IASA and to involve you in our plans to be discussed at our next Executive Board meeting in March 2015. One of the issues we will be looking into is our membership fees structure. With a new constitution and our positioning as an incorporated entity, it may mean we need to overhaul our membership fee structure to attract new members.

Training initiatives remain a core focus for opportunity. With the excellent work Pio Pellizzari and his colleagues are doing we are looking forward to more and exciting initiatives. In this regard, the TC, as always, plays a vital role with the publication of the TC guidelines. The latest and long overdue *Handling and Storage of Audio and Video Carriers* IASA-TC 05 skilfully edited by Dietrich Schüller and Albrecht Häfner is another fine example and contribution. The IASA TC-05 was formally launched during the recent Cape Town Conference during



which both Dietrich and Albrecht were acknowledged for their work on the publication. Their longstanding commitment to IASA and the TC is commendable.

IASA's new status from now on requires the formal submission of our first financial statements under UK law. Both Tommy and Jacqueline worked hard to ensure that all required documentation was submitted to the UK Companies House in good order. The next few months will see more submissions from us (as per requirements) and as we grow into this new role and venture.

IASA's relationship with UNESCO has always been strategic and constructive. UNESCO has also gone through changes over the past few years. IASA has to rekindle the relationship and strengthen ties with UNESCO to maintain a meaningful partnership that benefits both organisations. In addition, we will maintain our relationship with the CCAAA and look for opportunities to build strategic partnerships with NGOs, sister organisations, and the private sector.

This brings me to our 2015 conference, which will be hosted by the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris. The animated conference theme *All for One — One for All: Common Concerns — Shared Solutions* is of course a reference to Alexander Dumas' book *Three Musketeers*. Dumas' book continues to capture the imaginations of readers today with the musketeers as colourful figures who find themselves in many precarious situations and fall in and out of love. When D'Artagnan, the young and 'temporary' fourth musketeer, falls in love, the older and experienced Atos advises that... "*Time, dear friend, time brings round opportunity; opportunity is the martingale of man. The more we have ventured the more we gain, when we know how to wait.*"

The IASA Conference in Paris will bring humour, friendship, opportunities and debate — all qualities of Dumas' book, and dare I say of IASA. I have no doubt that the 2015 conference will be a great success. I am looking forward to seeing you there.

And so, with opportunity quite the *martingale* for IASA, I thank you for your confidence and trust. With a supportive Executive Board and membership I look forward to growth, opportunity, and collaboration being the hallmarks of the next three years.

*Ilse Assmann
President, IASA
January 2015*