

ASSOCIATION  
FOR RECORDED  
SOUND  
COLLECTIONS



## **ARSC New York Chapter FEBRUARY 2015 Meeting**

**7 P. M. Thursday, 2/26/15  
at the CUNY Sonic Arts Center  
West 140<sup>th</sup> Street & Convent Avenue, New York  
or enter at 138th Street off Convent Avenue  
Shepard Hall (the Gothic building) – Recital Hall (Room 95, Basement level)  
An elevator is located in the center of the building**

### **"Mercury Living Presence: A Technical History" Presented by Thomas Fine**

Thomas Fine, son of the original producer and engineer, will trace the technical history of one of the world's most highly regarded classical music labels. Recognized for a catalogue of groundbreaking recordings, Mercury began to flourish in the early 1950s, utilizing a single-microphone technique to record an entire symphony orchestra. When stereo recording dawned in the mid-1950s, Mercury's technique evolved to 3 spaced omni-directional mics. The label focused on symphonic music with conductors Antal Doráti, Paul Paray, Howard Hanson and Rafael Kubelik, and on Frederick Fennell's pioneering Eastman Wind Ensemble. Among many firsts was a 1962 recording trip to Moscow, the first time an American crew recorded Russian musicians using American equipment.

Long loved by vinyl collectors, Mercury Living Presence was entirely out of print at the beginning of the CD era. Wilma Cozart Fine, was hired to remaster most of the stereo catalogue and some mono titles for CD. In recent years, Universal Music Group — Decca Classics, the current owner of Mercury Living Presence — has brought back into print most of the CD catalogue. The remainder of the 1990s CDs, plus a variety of newly remastered material, will be included in the label's third box set, due for release in spring 2015.

A consulting engineer for two of the 3 CD box sets, Mr. Fine will discuss MLP's progress from single-mic mono through the 3-spaced-omni stereo techniques. He will also describe the 35mm mag-film recording medium, and detail the 1990s CD reissue program and the recent remastering project. Listening examples will span the entire history of Mercury's classical recording program.

**Thomas Fine** is a member of the Association for Recorded Sound Collections, the Audio Engineering Society and the Adirondack 46rs. He operates an analog-to-digital transfer and mastering studio in Brewster, NY. Recent projects have included transferring hundreds of oral-history tapes for the state of New Mexico, transfer and remaster work for audio used in a Netflix documentary about Nina Simone, and remastering several titles in the new Mercury Living Presence box set. Mr. Fine is a student of audio and recording history, and has published articles in the *ARSC Journal* and *TapeOp* magazine as well as the AES Historical Committee website and [Preservationsound.com](http://Preservationsound.com). He also reviews music for the *ARSC Journal*, *TapeOp* and [Blackgrooves.org](http://Blackgrooves.org).

**Our next program will be on March 26, 2015**  
**Gary Galo**  
**will discuss “The Unknown Nadia Boulanger:  
Recordings from The Crane School of Music Archives”**



**DIRECTIONS TO THE SONIC ARTS CENTER**

**Subway:** Take the 1 train to 137<sup>th</sup> Street City College and walk north to 140<sup>th</sup> St. & Broadway, then go east to 140<sup>th</sup> St. & Convent Avenue. Take the A, B, C, or D trains to 145th St, go south on St. Nicholas to 141st St, (one long block), then west one block to Convent Avenue, and south one more block to 140th & Convent Avenue.

**Bus:** M4 and M5 on Broadway; M 100, 101 on Amsterdam Ave. (one block West of Convent Avenue)



The **Sonic Arts Center** at CCNY offers 4-year Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees in Music with a concentration in Music and Audio Technology. Their program provides an in-depth curriculum emphasizing real-world skills with a project-based approach. Students enjoy a well-rounded program, with emphasis on audio technology, music theory, orchestration, and history to help them compete in a field that today demands an ever-growing and highly diverse skill set.

All ARSC NY Chapter meetings are free and open to the public.  
**Voluntary contributions to help defray our expenses are welcome!**

To join ARSC, visit <http://www.arsc-audio.org>