

# ARSC Newsletter

Association For Recorded Sound Collections

Number 151 • Fall/Winter 2019

## ARSC AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE WINNERS

The Association for Recorded Sound Collections is pleased to announce the winners of the 2019 ARSC Awards for Excellence in Historical Recorded Sound Research.

Begun in 1991, the ARSC Awards for Excellence are awarded to authors of books, articles, or recording liner notes to recognize those publishing the very best work in recorded sound research.

The 2019 Awards for Excellence honor works published in 2018. The awards will be presented at a ceremony on May 23, 2020 during ARSC's annual conference in Montréal, Québec.

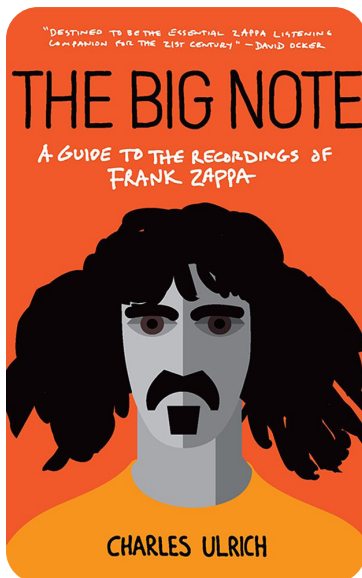
Congratulations to all winners! And thank you to the ARSC Awards Committee chair and judges.

### BEST RESEARCH IN RECORDED ROCK AND POPULAR MUSIC

#### Best History (Tie)

**Gary Giddens**

*Bing Crosby: Swinging on a Star: The War Years, 1940-1946* (Little, Brown, & Co.)



**Marisol Berrios-Miranda, Shannon Dudley, and Michelle Habell-Pallán**

*American Sabor: Latinos and Latinas in US Popular Music/Latinos y latinas en la musica popular estadounidense* (University of Washington Press)

#### Best Discography

**Charles Ulrich**

*The Big Note: A Guide to the Recordings of Frank Zappa* (New Star Books)

**Certificates of Merit:** Paul V. Allen, *The Hopefuls: Chasing a Rock 'n' Roll Dream in the Minnesota Music Scene* (McFarland); Marc Cushman, *Long Distance Voyagers: The Story of the Moody Blues 1965-1979* (unabridged version) (Jacobs Brown Press); Gary Parker, *Jethro Tull: The Glory Years 1968-1980* (McFarland); Gregory Thornbury, *Why Should the Devil Have All the Good Music? Larry Norman and the Perils of Christian Rock* (Convergent)



### BEST HISTORICAL RESEARCH IN RECORDED JAZZ

#### Best History

**Ray Smith and Mike Pointon**

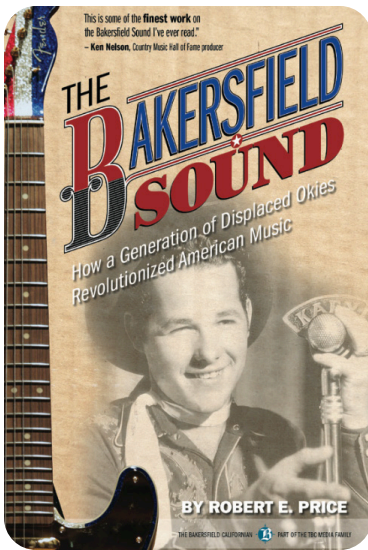
*Bill Russell and the New Orleans Jazz Revival* (Equinox)

See Awards on page 2

## Contents

Award Winners . . . . .	1
President's Message . . . . .	4
Historical Recording . . . . .	5
Grant Reports . . . . .	8
Chapter News . . . . .	11
Member News . . . . .	12
New Member Spotlight . . . . .	14
Events . . . . .	15

**Awards** *Continued from page 1*



**Best Discography**

**Peter Jones**  
*This is Hip: The Life of Mark Murphy* (Equinox)

**Certificates of Merit:**  
 Maurice Jackson and Blair A. Rolde, eds., *DC Jazz: Stories of Jazz Music in Washington D.C.* (Georgetown University Press); Stephen Loza, *The Jazz Pilgrimage of Gerald Wilson* (University Press of Mississippi)

*Black Singers and Musicians: An Annotated Discography of Artists from West Africa, the Caribbean and the Eastern and Southern United States, 1901-1943* (McFarland)

**Certificate of Merit:** Brian Ward and Patrick Huber, *A&R Pioneers Architects of American Roots Music on Record* (Vanderbilt University Press)

**BEST HISTORICAL RESEARCH IN RECORDED CLASSICAL MUSIC**

**Best History**

**Martin Elste and Carsten Schmidt, eds**  
*2000 Jahre Musik auf der Schallplatte – Two Thousand Years of Music. Alte Musik anno 1930. Eine diskologische Dokumentation zur Interpretationsgeschichte* (Gesellschaft für Historische Tonträger)

**BEST HISTORICAL RESEARCH IN RECORDED COUNTRY AND FOLK MUSIC**

**Best History**

**Robert E. Price**  
*The Bakersfield Sound: How a Generation of Displaced Okies Revolutionized American Music* (Heyday)

**Best Discography**

**Dick Spottswood**  
*The Blue Sky Boys* (University Press of Mississippi)

**Certificate of Merit:** Ivan Tribe, *Folk Music in Overdrive: A Primer on Traditional Country and Bluegrass Artists* (University of Tennessee Press)

**Certificates of Merit:** Paul Kildea, *Chopin's Piano: In Search of the Instrument that Transformed Music* (W. W. Norton); Maria Maddalena Novati, *Marino Zuccheri & Friends: Milan Rai Studio de Fonologia Musicale, 1955-1983* (Die Schachtel)

**BEST HISTORICAL RESEARCH ON RECORD LABELS OR GENERAL RECORDING TOPICS**

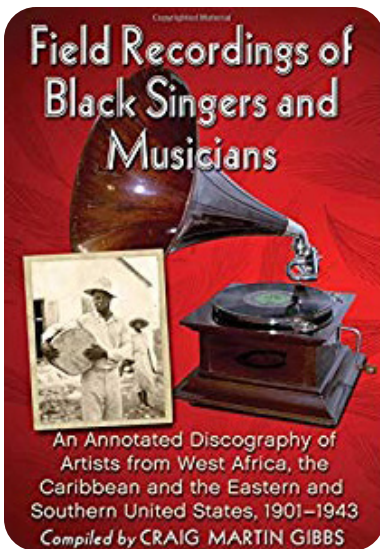
**Best History**

**Allan Sutton**  
*American Record Companies & Producers, 1888-1950* (Mainspring)

**Best Discography**

**Christian Zwarg**  
*Speeds and Keys* (Truesounds)

**Certificate of Merit:** James P. Leary, *Alpine Dreaming: The Helvetia Records Story, 1920-1924* (Archeophone)



**BEST HISTORICAL RESEARCH IN RECORDED ROOTS AND WORLD MUSIC**

**Best History**

**Kevin LeGendre**  
*Don't Stop the Carnival: Black British Music* (Peepal Tree Press Ltd)

**Best Discography**

**Craig Martin Gibbs**  
*Field Recordings of*

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## ARSC CONFERENCE SOUND RECORDINGS AND SLIDES NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE

ARSC is pleased to announce that sound recordings of presentations at ARSC's 53rd Annual Conference in Portland, Oregon are now available online to ARSC members at <http://www.arsc-audio.org/conference/audio2019/index.html>.

To browse all ARSC conference sound recordings:  
<http://www.arsc-audio.org/cds.html>.

To search AMP! for ARSC conference sound recordings:  
<http://www.arsc-audio.org/journal-index/home.php>

If you require login credentials, please contact Executive Director Nathan Georgitis ([execdir@arsc-audio.org](mailto:execdir@arsc-audio.org)).

If you presented and would like to make your slides available please contact Patrick Feaster ([pfeaster@gmail.com](mailto:pfeaster@gmail.com)). Please contribute your slide presentations.

Please note that ARSC recordings are protected by copyright. Copies are made available here with the presenters' permission solely for personal and educational non-profit, non-commercial use. No part may be sold, loaned, distributed, broadcast, or published without the written permission of the presenter.

Thank you to all who presented and all who attended! And thanks to ARSC Conference Audio Manager Patrick Feaster for preparing the recordings and slides for web publication.

## ARSC T-SHIRT HOLIDAY SALE

Due to the popularity of the ARSC T-shirt sale in May, we are offering another sale in time for the holiday season. This time, the T-shirts will be shipped directly to you in a USPS Priority envelope. Orders are due no later than November 15th and will ship by December 13th.

T-shirts will cost \$20 plus \$7.65 for shipping. Once we have reached the minimum order of T-shirts, you will receive an invoice via PayPal. \*If we do not reach the minimum order, we will cancel the sale and you will not be invoiced.\* You must submit payment via PayPal prior to shipment. \*\*Proceeds will benefit the ARSC Restricted Fund for research grants.\*\*

Submit your order at <https://forms.gle/kQTLer3CKvPRmTbw8>. If you wish to order multiple T-shirts, please resubmit the form for each one. If multiple shirts are going to a single location, we will send them together and let you know the combined shipping cost.

### ARSC NEWSLETTER

Issue 151

Fall/Winter 2019

The ARSC Newsletter is published three times a year: in March, July, and November. Submissions should be addressed to the editor via email.

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The opinions expressed in this publication are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the view of the Association for Recorded Sound Collections.



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings, record mavens!

On October 5, the new ARSC Board met at the site of our 2020 conference, the resplendent Delta Hotel in



The Delta Hotel in Montreal

downtown Montréal. I am sure that all ARSC members will revel in the luxury of the rooms and the hospitality of its staff. During the meeting, we discussed preparations for the upcoming conference and worked on the budget for the forthcoming year. We also designated the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee as a standing committee of ARSC, rather than a temporary special committee, in recognition of the committee's

hard work to date and its importance to the association's continuing efforts.



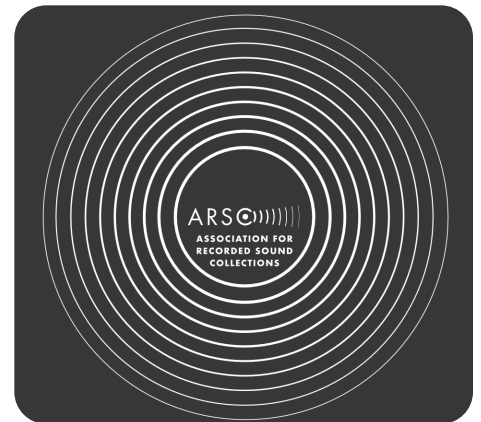
Musée des Ondes Emile Berliner

I am sure you will find Montréal to be a beautiful city. With its many restaurants and cultural points of interest, not to mention the Emile Berliner Museum, plan on bookending your attendance at the conference with several extra days so you can avail yourself with the abundance of activities and sights to see in what Mark Twain called "The City of a Hundred Steeples." Just an added advisory: make sure your passport is current and will not expire during the conference.

We were proud to finalize plans to once again offer for sale the highly successful ARSC T-shirt, which had been available only at our Portland conference earlier this year. Soon you will be able to order your T-shirt on our website, so keep your eyes peeled and have ARSC's website bookmarked for further information.

ARSC is in need of volunteers to fill several important positions. After many years of outstanding service, Brenda Nelson-Strauss will be concluding her role as conference manager with next year's conference so we are looking for someone who is detail oriented and interested in researching locations for future conferences. In addition, we are still looking for a permanent editor of the *ARSC Journal*, and someone to chair the Archives and Online Media committees. If you are interested in any of these positions, please contact any board member for further information.

Sound recordings from presentations delivered at the 2019 conference in Portland are now available on our website, but you must be a member in order to access them. This is considered to be one of the most valuable benefits of being a member, so if you have not yet renewed your membership, or if you know someone who is "on the fence," please use this as an incentive. Although we welcome and encourage all members to attend our annual conference, you don't have to miss out on all the presentations. They're just a keystroke (or two) away for ARSC members!



In my last message I reported on the new Archives at Risk program being developed by the CCAA (Coordinating Council of Audiovisual Archives Associations), of which ARSC is a member. The program will include a comprehensive list of granting agencies and foundations who might be open to proposals. To this end, if you or an organization you are affiliated with has specific targetable, fundable activities that need augmenting, we want to hear from you. This can include preservation, archiving, or outreach and training. Send any ideas or proposals to me at [originjazz@aol.com](mailto:originjazz@aol.com).

*Cary Ginell*  
ARSC President



## Historical Recording Selected by Frank Ferko: 'THAT'S THE KIND OF DAME I AM' An Interview with Ethel Merman

In February 1955, when *The Saturday Evening Post* began to run a seven-part feature article on the Broadway star, Ethel Merman, a recording of an open-end interview with Merman was produced by the Curtis Circulation Company, owner of *The Saturday Evening Post*, and was manufactured by Recorded Publications Laboratories of Camden, NJ. The purpose of the recording was to promote the magazine feature to radio audiences around the country. Titled "That's the Kind of Dame I Am," Merman's story was printed as she told it to interviewer Pete Martin. The recording consisted of a series of responses that Merman recorded to questions that had been provided to her in advance, and her recorded responses were separated on the disc by carefully timed silences.

A printed script with the interview questions was sent around to radio stations to accompany the recording with the intention that a radio host could read the questions "live" during the timed silences on the recording, and Merman's responses would follow right on cue. At one point in the interview, the script provided the option of stopping the interview disc playback and inserting the playing of Merman's commercial recording of "I Got Rhythm" to illustrate a point she had made in one of her

responses. However, the playing of "I Got Rhythm" was completely optional and was not provided as part of the promotional package.

Since Ethel Merman recorded regularly for Decca Records, the company sent out advance copies of the magazine article along with the interview record and script to radio stations. The disc was a standard 10-inch, 78 rpm red vinyl disc with a total playing time of 3 minutes, 16 seconds. The *Saturday Evening Post* issued the first installment of Merman's feature in the February 12, 1955 issue, and subsequent installments came out on a weekly basis thereafter.

A copy of the recording, the accompanying interview script, and a letter from Decca Records can be found in the Paul F. Roth American Dance Band Collection at Stanford University's Archive of Recorded Sound: <https://searchworks.stanford.edu/view/11348809>.

*Frank Ferko is currently the Music Metadata Librarian at the Jean Gray Hargrove Music Library, University of California, Berkeley. In his former life, he spent over 8 years (in two installments) working as Sound Archives Librarian, Project Archivist, and Cataloger in the Archive of Recorded Sound at Stanford University. He is an active composer with more than 75 works published by E.C. Schirmer, and performances of his works appear on more than 30 commercially released recordings (One was a Grammy-nominated disc.). He also serves as the Coordinator of the Musical Theatre Interest Group of the Music Library Association.*





## ARSClist The Online Discussion Group of ARSC

Since 1999, the Association for Recorded Sound Collections has sponsored an unmoderated mail reflector to facilitate the exchange of information on sound archives and promote communication among those interested in preserving, documenting, and making accessible the history of recorded sound. The list is sponsored by ARSC as a service to its members and the archival community at large.

### Subscribing

To subscribe to the list, send an email message to:  
listserv@listserv.loc.gov.

Leave the "Subject" blank. In the first line of the body of the message, type "subscribe ARSClist [your name]" and send the message normally.

To post to the list, send an email to:  
ARSCLIST@loc.gov

Only subscribers can post to the list. You may also subscribe to the list via the Library of Congress website at [istserv.loc.gov/listarch/arsclist.html](http://istserv.loc.gov/listarch/arsclist.html)

### ARSClist Archives

Current archives are maintained by the Library of Congress on the above website. ARSClist archives through June 2009 are kept on the Conservation OnLine (CoOL) site at [cool.conservation-us.org/byform/mailling-lists/arsclist/](http://cool.conservation-us.org/byform/mailling-lists/arsclist/). Once archived, messages will not be removed from the archives.

## Call for Applications: ARSC CONFERENCE TRAVEL GRANTS

The Association for Recorded Sound Collections is now accepting applications for ARSC Conference Travel Grants to be awarded in 2020. The grants are designed to: encourage ARSC members to attend their first ARSC conference; reach out to college students and professionals in the early stages of their careers; promote mentoring and professional development opportunities; advance scholarly research and publication, and support ARSC members who desire to participate more actively in the association.

Grant recipients are awarded: complimentary registration for the entire ARSC Annual Conference including a ticket to the Saturday night ARSC Awards Banquet; gratis registration for the Pre-Conference Workshop; and reimbursement up to US\$750 to defray the expenses of transportation and lodging (upon approval of valid receipts, to be submitted after the conference). Rental car costs for transportation within the conference city are not reimbursable.

At the time of application, the applicant must be a member of ARSC in good standing, planning to attend his or her first ARSC Conference. The applicant must also be one of the following: a college or university student aspiring to work with sound recordings; a recent graduate seeking a professional position involving sound recordings; a professional within the first five years of his or her career, who has demonstrated a dedication to sound recordings; a discographer, collector, or other researcher showing compelling prospects for the publication or dissemination of his or her scholarly work.

Applicants who demonstrate an interest in serving on an ARSC committee, publishing their work in the *ARSC Journal*, or presenting at an ARSC Conference will be given particular consideration. Preference will be given to applicants who plan to attend the entire conference, beginning with the pre-conference workshop. Each applicant must submit:

- a Letter of Application describing the applicant's background and current activities, clearly indicating why the applicant merits consideration for an ARSC Travel Grant.
- a Proposed Budget for travel costs
- Itemization of any Non-ARSC Funds that the applicant may receive toward ARSC conference attendance, such as institutional support, and
- a brief Resume or Curriculum Vitae.

Additionally, the applicant shall arrange for two Letters of Support, to be directly submitted by the writers of those letters – not the applicant.

Applications lacking any of the above items will be deemed incomplete, and may not be viewed favorably by the Travel Grants Committee. Non-Canadian grantees should be sure their passports are current and are valid for the entire duration of the conference.

Submit all items to David R. Lewis, ARSC Conference Travel Grants Committee Chair: [arsc.travel.grants@gmail.com](mailto:arsc.travel.grants@gmail.com). If you anticipate any problem with e-submission, please contact the chair at the above address. All applications and supporting materials must be received by **December 16, 2019**. Applicants will be notified about the award decisions by January 21, 2020.

## Call for Presentations: ARSC CONFERENCE

The Association for Recorded Sound Collections invites proposals for presentations, posters, and panels at its 54th annual conference, to be held May 20-23, 2020 at the Delta Hotel in Montréal, Québec, Canada.

ARSC welcomes proposals for presentations, panels, and posters on any aspect of sound recording. In recognition of our host city, Montréal, we especially encourage presentations that highlight composers, broadcasters, musicians, performers, record labels, studios, songwriters, and personalities in Québec.

In addition, the program committee invites proposals pertaining to:

- Discographies, record label and/or artist histories, the life and times of lesser known formats.
- Documenting watershed moments in history – either recorded sound history or through recorded sound.
- Innovative research, preservation and access projects, community-based archiving initiatives, digital humanities, cultural approaches to sound recordings, soundscapes, etc.
- The challenges of born-digital materials and emerging sound recording formats and genres (collecting, producing, promoting, archiving, and curating).
- Advances in audio production and preservation tools and techniques for legacy and digital formats.
- Advancements in audio preservation techniques for physical media from cylinder to DAT.

We seek presentations and panels that are informative, display a passion for their subjects, and include compelling audiovisual content. Share your special interests with our engaged community of collectors, historians, musicians, preservationists, archivists, and audio engineers.

With regret and acknowledged irony, we note our inability to provide playback equipment for dead media, including (but not limited to) disc, tape, cassette, videodisc, or videotape formats, as well as overheads, 35mm slides, or other transparencies. However, we welcome demonstrations of historic audio equipment provided and operated by presenters.

### SUBMISSION INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES

The deadline for presentation proposals is **January 4, 2020**. Receipt will be acknowledged by e-mail. Presenters will be notified of acceptance approximately one month thereafter.

To submit your proposal, see the Submission Information and Guidelines Section at:

[http://www.arsc-audio.org/conference/2020/ARSC2020\\_CFP.pdf](http://www.arsc-audio.org/conference/2020/ARSC2020_CFP.pdf)

### IMPORTANT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Presenters must register and pay for the conference. Presenters grant ARSC the right to record and distribute their conference presentations, including PowerPoints or other slide shows, unless they specify otherwise in writing.

Please make sure you have a valid passport! Many countries require travelers to have passports with at least six months of remaining validity as an entry requirement. Those who do not have a passport or who need to renew a passport should take appropriate steps as soon as possible to avoid rush fees.

For passport information:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports.html>.

For information on passport validity:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports/passport-help/faqs.html>.

Scroll down to the section “How long is a passport valid and is it true that it needs to have at least 6 months of validity remaining?”

For more information about the Call for Presentations, visit:

[http://www.arsc-audio.org/conference/2020/ARSC2020\\_CFP.pdf](http://www.arsc-audio.org/conference/2020/ARSC2020_CFP.pdf)

Questions should be directed to Terri Brinegar, ARSC Program Chair, at [arsc.program@gmail.com](mailto:arsc.program@gmail.com).

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## ARSC Newsletter Submission Deadlines

No. 152, Spring 2020: February 1, 2020

No. 153, Summer 2020: June 1, 2020

No. 154, Fall 2020: October 1, 2020

# Research Grant Report: SHELLAC AND THE RECORD INDUSTRY IN BRITAIN

The record industry was a multi-local industry from its early days: It relied on materials sourced from around the globe, as well as the vital energies and labour of thousands of individuals throughout the world.

Although crucial research in the global history of phonography has been conducted in the last twenty years (from Pekka Gronow and Ilpo Saunio's *International History of the Recording Industry* to Michael Denning's more recent *Noise Uprising: The Audiopolitics of a World Musical Revolution*), there remains a lot to be uncovered. My research engages with the discrete shellac material, a colonial substance sourced from the forest regions of India, especially Bihar (under British domination until the 1947 partition of India and Pakistan).

Shellac was crucially used in the manufacture of gramophone records (though it was first imported in the UK as early as 1607 through the British East India Company). My project seeks to resituate the first fifty years of the record industry within a turbulent, ambiguous political context of colonialism and asymmetric power relations.

As such, in addition to assessing the (instable) material composition of records, I am especially interested in recovering the lives of the subterranean, subaltern 'makers' of records employed in Indian shellac and British gramophone factories, and the larger, tacit ideology underpinning the record industry. I am also intrigued to find out, more broadly, about the diplomatic exchanges between Britain and India in the context of the shellac trade, particularly in the critical war-time years (shellac was mobilised as a strategic war material and its use restricted by governmental orders both in WW1 and WW2). I am currently writing a monograph engaging with the socio-cultural history of shellac, and am the co-editor (with Eva Moreda Rodriguez) of a book entitled *Phonographic Encounters: Mapping transnational cultures of sound, 1890-1945* (Routledge, forthcoming 2021).

In order to answer my research questions, I conducted archival research in London and greater London in the summer of 2019, engaging with the National Archives, the British Library, and the EMI (formerly Gramophone Company) archive. I plan to return to Hayes (where the original Gramophone Company factory was based) to complete more research in the coming months. Over a bit more than a week, I consulted hundreds of documents and took as many photographs; my notes steadily filled an A4

notebook.

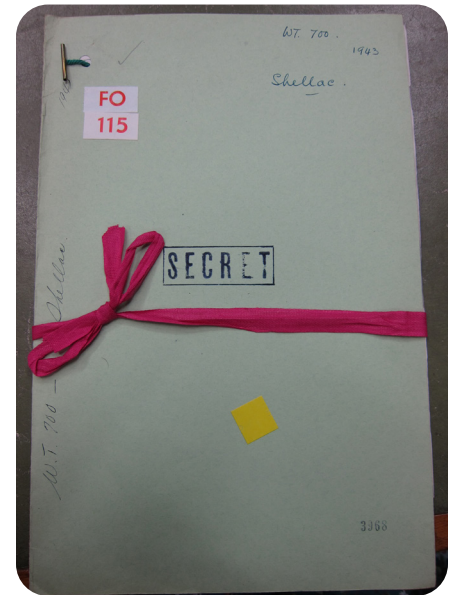
Though it would be impossible to gather here all of my findings (which will be duly and fully published in my monograph), a few key points can be outlined.

A particularly illuminating 1920 report – commissioned by the British Ministry of Labour, and based on interviews and direct observation – shed light on the arduous working conditions of the women and girls employed at the Hayes record-pressing plant in the interwar period (including details on salaries, roles, health conditions). A complementary report issued by the Indian Labour investigation committee yielded further information about working conditions in Indian shellac factories, which employed 25,000 to 30,000 persons (including women and children).

In addition to this, I was able to secure precise figures (regarding pricings, stores, circulation and infrastructure) regarding the 1917 Shellac Scheme and the 1943 Shellac Control Scheme, and how they concretely affected the manufacture of records in the UK (notably encouraging research into synthetic substitutes). What the research confirmed was how closely entangled the British record industry and the government were. Reports from the governmental unit of the London Shellac Research Bureau (for the years 1934 to 1939), as well as letters exchanged between the British Board of Trade and the Gramophone Company, revealed a set of close working relationships (the Bureau counted record experts amongst its technical committee and members).

My archival work allowed me to answer the questions I had outlined, yielding many epiphanies and further discoveries. Unsurprisingly, many complementary interrogations also emerged in the course of the research.

For instance, I came across an unsettling document listing hundreds of recordings of Nazi speeches made in



Cover of a wartime shellac report containing information about the estimate of shellac harvested in India, 1943. Location: Kew National Archives, UK

See Roy on page 9



## Call for Applications:

# ARSC PRESERVATION GRANTS PROGRAM

The ARSC Program for the Preservation of Classical Music Historical Recordings was founded by Al Schlachtmeyer and the ARSC Board of Directors to encourage and support the preservation of historically significant sound recordings of Western Art Music by individuals and organizations. (This program is separate from the ARSC Research Grants Program, which supports scholarship and publication in the fields of sound recording research and audio preservation.)

The ARSC Program for the Preservation of Classical Music Historical Recordings will consider funding:

- Projects involving preservation, in any valid and reasonable fashion, such as providing a collection with proper climate control, moving a collection to facilities with proper storage conditions, re-sleeving a collection of discs, setting up a volunteer project to organize and inventory a stored collection, rescuing recordings from danger, copying recordings from endangered or unstable media, etc.
- Projects promoting public access to recordings.
- Projects involving commercial as well as private, instantaneous recordings.
- Projects involving collections anywhere in the world. (Non-U.S. applicants are encouraged to apply.)

The program is administered by an ARSC Grants Committee including the chair, a member of the ARSC Technical Committee, and an expert on classical music. Grant amounts generally range from \$2,000 to \$10,000.

Grant projects should be completed within 24 months.

Written notification of decisions on projects will be made approximately three months after the submission deadline.

Applications may be sent as an e-mail attachment to [arscgrants@aol.com](mailto:arscgrants@aol.com).

Applications should be Word documents in Normal formatting, 12-point font, with accompanying letters and other materials scanned into PDF files.

For further details, guidelines, and application instructions, visit: <http://www.arsc-audio.org/committees/preservationgrants.html>

Grant applications must be received by **December 15, 2019**.

Questions about the Preservation Grants Program should be directed to Grants Committee Chair Suzanne Flandreau at [arscgrants@aol.com](mailto:arscgrants@aol.com).

## Roy

*Continued from page 8*

the 1929-1936 period (including a gramophone record of Hitler's voice). The records, which had been buried by the Nazis in a German salt mine towards the end of WW2, were unearthed and catalogued by the British Army in November 1945 – after which their trail is lost. It would be valuable to retrace the history and trajectory of these now silenced, repressed records.

More generally, I believe there is still a lot of research to be done in the area of wartime phonography (in the wake of Eric Charles Blake's compelling, meticulously documented book *Wars, Dictators and the Gramophone 1898-1945*).

Archival documents reveal their contents in typically slow, erratic patterns. I look forward to uncovering and piecing together more information, patiently writing and working in collaboration with others – I would be delighted to correspond with other researchers, collectors, and archivists who are interested in these issues. I am immensely grateful to the Association for Recorded Sound Collections for generously supporting and encouraging me in this research.

*Elodie Roy  
University of Newcastle, UK  
Email: [e.a.roy@riseup.net](mailto:e.a.roy@riseup.net)*

**ASSOCIATION  
FOR RECORDED  
SOUND  
COLLECTIONS**

## Research Grant Report: TOWARD A DISCOGRAPHY OF GO-GO MUSIC IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

In 1975, Parliament released the album *Chocolate City*, the title track of which celebrated the considerable African-American population of Washington D.C., the nation's capital. At the same time, black musicians in DC were developing a funk-derived genre called go-go music. Pioneered by the "godfather" Chuck Brown, go-go emphasizes live performance, call and response, audience interaction, repetition, and a beat that keeps people on the dance floor. In its heyday, go-go music was played at clubs and cabarets almost nightly in the city, and it is still a fixture in the DC music scene. Since go-go is a primarily live genre, its most popular recordings are live, rather than studio releases (though those do exist). This summer, I received support from ARSC for a project with two goals: to create a discography of go-go music that emphasizes these live recordings, and to explore the intricacies of what a discography is and the possibility of what it can be.

Much of go-go music's history is told in a highlight reel, putting the spotlight on a few superstar musicians and groups, such as Chuck Brown, Trouble Funk, and Backyard Band. I traveled to DC this summer in part to track down some of the lesser known stories in the genre, all the while digging into online collections and catalogues of go-go music. Combining this digital ethnography with interviews and participant observation allows me to interrogate what defines a discography at its core. There can be no complete discography of go-go music, not with shows happening every day for decades. Furthermore, it doesn't represent the genre well to only think about those albums, live or studio recorded, that were released by a label, because go-go exists outside of those confines. With this in mind, the descriptive data for the live go-go discography will be as follows: Band Name, Date of Show, and Venue. This is all of the available metadata for live shows that can be standardized for go-go music, and brings up interesting questions as to how much information actually constitutes a discography.

One of my first stops for this project was the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, held downtown on the National Mall at the end of June. The theme for the festival this year was "The Social Power of Music," and it featured a number of local go-go music artists and practitioners. One of the people I went there to see was Nico Hobson, an entrepreneur and go-go historian also. Hobson was at the Folklife Festival to offer an oral history of "PA Tapes,"

which are the medium through which most classic go-go recordings were made. PA tapes were made recording directly from a public address system in the '70s, '80s, and '90s, and the cassettes were sold all throughout DC, Maryland, and Virginia. To facilitate this oral history, Hobson played the audience a PA tape from Rare Essence recorded in 1983. He walked us through each element of the recording, from the words of the lead talker to the rhythmic groove that permeates all of go-go music.



The "godfather" of go-go, Chuck Brown.  
Photo by Eduardo Rodriguez, National Endowment for the Arts.

In addition to Nico Hobson, I also got the opportunity to spend time with Don Campbell, owner of "Central Communications," a cell phone store in Northwest DC that is famous for playing go-go music out of large speakers sitting in front of the store, and selling go-go CDs out of the back room. Campbell and his store went viral in April of 2019 because T-Mobile, which owns the MetroPCS subsidiary that Campbell operates, demanded that the music be shut off at the insistence of complaining neighbors. After protests, rallies, and demonstrations, T-Mobile allowed the music to be turned back on, which, to many, signaled a victory for the neighborhood. This temporary shutdown has raised many questions about the future of go-go music and culture, galvanizing preservation efforts like those seen at the Folklife Festival.

In the long term, this discography will be part of a larger online exhibit on go-go music's past and present. My work seeks to advocate for black music in a digital space through digitizing, cataloging, and preservation efforts. Go-go music is the sound of the city, and this sound is changing, evolving, and being displaced as the city transforms. Compiling a discography of this music will help in efforts to elevate and preserve this music as it struggles to maintain a foothold in a gentrifying city, and I am grateful for ARSC for the support that facilitated this project.

Alison Martin  
University of Indiana

## Call for Applications: ARSC RESEARCH GRANTS PROGRAM

The ARSC Research Grants Program supports scholarship and publication in the fields of sound recording research and audio preservation. (This program is separate from the ARSC Preservation Grants Program, which encourages and supports the preservation of historically significant sound recordings of Western Art Music.) Project categories eligible for consideration include: discography, bibliography, historical studies of the sound recording industry and its products, and any other subject likely to increase the public's understanding and appreciation of the lasting importance of recorded sound. ARSC encourages applications from individuals whose research forms part of an academic program at the master's or doctoral level.

ARSC members and non-members alike are eligible for grants in amounts up to \$1000. Grant funds can be used to underwrite clerical, editorial, and travel expenses. Funds may not be used to purchase capital equipment or recordings, to create recordings (including field recordings), to perform operations on sound recordings, to reimburse applicants for work already performed, or to support projects that form part of a paid job. Grant recipients must submit documentation of their expenses before reimbursement. All grant funds must be disbursed within eighteen months of the grant award.

Applications are reviewed by committee members in an open peer review process. Committee members are volunteers with expertise in areas of recorded sound and all members participate in the review process. Proposals are evaluated on the extent to which they focus on sound recordings as research materials or on the sound recording industry, and the extent to which applications materials meet the format requirements.

Grant recipients are required to submit brief descriptions of their projects for publication by ARSC, and are encouraged to submit articles about their projects, for possible publication in the Newsletter or Journal.

Research Grant Applications shall include:

- a summary of the project (one page maximum), with samples of the work, if possible;
- a budget covering the entire project, highlighting the expenses the ARSC Grant will cover (one page maximum);
- a curriculum vitae; and
- an indication of the prospects for publication or other public dissemination of the project results.

Applications may be sent as an e-mail attachment to Grants Committee Chair Suzanne Flandreau: [arscgrants@aol.com](mailto:arscgrants@aol.com)

Applications must be received by **February 29, 2020**.

The current Research Grant guidelines can be viewed at:  
<http://www.arsc-audio.org/committees/researchgrants.html>.

Questions about the Research Grants Program should be directed to Suzanne Flandreau at: [arscgrants@aol.com](mailto:arscgrants@aol.com).

## REGIONAL CHAPTERS: News and Upcoming Events

### NEW YORK CHAPTER [arsc-audio/chapters/ newyorkchapter.html](http://arsc-audio/chapters/newyorkchapter.html)

The chapter's next meeting is at 7 PM on November 21, 2019 at the CUNY Sonic Arts Center. Donald Manildi, Curator of the International Piano Archives at Maryland (IPAM), presents "Frédéric Chopin: Transcriptions, Transformations, and Transmogrifications."

The December meeting takes place on the 19th, with "The Artistry of Henri Temianka," presented by John Haley.

### THE STUDENT CHAPTER OF ARSC AT UCLA [arsc-audio/chapters/uclachapter. html](http://arsc-audio/chapters/uclachapter.html)

After co-sponsoring Basement Tapes Day with UCSB Library and a talk by collector Ian Nagoski with the UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive in October, the chapter held its fall business meeting on November 5, 2019 to discuss events for the winter and spring.

### WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA CHAPTER [arsc-audio/chapters/wmac.html](http://arsc-audio/chapters/wmac.html)

The chapter resumes monthly programs on December 3, 2019, at the Library of Congress with Matthew Barton's presentation "So Rare: The Last Days of Jimmy Dorsey," an updated version of the presentation that he gave to the New York chapter in January.



## The Richard Taylor Bursary, 2019

The second year of Bursary awards were approved in summer 2019 by the Board of the City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society (CLPGS) in the UK. The Board made two awards from a broad field of applicants.

The first award went to Dr. Ferenc Szabó, a musicologist based in Budapest, to fund research into the Hungarian activities of The Gramophone Company. This project will be undertaken both in Budapest and at the EMI Archive at Hayes. Given that this is an international project, and is expected to unearth fresh information for publication, he was awarded a grant of £1,000.

The second award went to Dr. Leslie McMurtry, a Lecturer in Radio Studies at the University of Salford in the UK. She sought support for a planned 9-episode podcast drama, which will mix reality and fiction involving discoveries on early phonograph recordings. It is felt this will reach new audiences and expand horizons. She has been awarded £500.

The Bursary programme is now an established and successful annual programme. Applications are again being invited for early 2020; for more details, see the accompanying announcement or [www.clpgs.org.uk](http://www.clpgs.org.uk).

## Call for Applications: THE CLPGS RICHARD TAYLOR BURSARY, 2020

The City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society (CLPGS) is the oldest society of its kind devoted to recorded sound, founded in 1919 with Thomas Edison as Patron. It supports and encourages scholarship and publication by individuals in the field of sound recordings, early talking machines, and audio preservation. The Richard Taylor Bursary programme is designed to fund specific eligible projects in this field, including discography, bibliography, historical studies of the sound recording industry and its products, company label research, the history of talking machines, developments of the technology, and any other subject likely to increase the public's understanding and appreciation of the lasting importance of recorded sound. The CLPGS Richard Taylor Bursary grants are primarily (but not exclusively) designed to encourage applications from individuals whose research forms part of an academic programme at the master's or doctoral level. They could, for instance, help fund independent research and publishing projects.

Both CLPGS members and non-members are eligible to apply for grants of at least £500. Grant funds can be used to underwrite clerical, travel, and editorial expenses. However, grants may not be used to purchase capital equipment or recordings, to create recordings (including field recordings), to perform operations on sound recordings, to reimburse applicants for work already performed, or to support projects which form part of paid employment. In addition, grant recipients may submit documentation of any reasonable extra expenses for reimbursement; any such expenses must be claimed within eighteen months of the grant award.

Grant recipients are required to submit regular status updates on their projects to CLPGS. Recipients are encouraged to submit articles about their projects for publication in the CLPGS Journal 'For the Record'.

Applications for a CLPGS Richard Taylor Bursary should include:

- A summary of your project (one page maximum), with samples of the work attached if possible.
- An outline budget covering the entire project and highlighting the costs and expenses the CLPGS Richard Taylor Bursary will cover (one page maximum); please include a summary to indicate funds that have already been committed to this project and any proposals for funds that are pending, in each case giving the source (for instance, foundation name, location), the specific amount requested, and for what purpose.
- Your curriculum vitae.
- An indication of the prospects for publication or other public presentation of the project results.

Applications should be forwarded to Dr Peter Martland, One St Matthews Court, Cambridge, CB1 2NR, United Kingdom, either in hard copy, or, preferably, by email to [spm14@cam.ac.uk](mailto:spm14@cam.ac.uk).

The closing date for applications is 31st March 2020.

In keeping with its bylaws, ARSC recognizes members who contribute funds in amounts greater than regular membership dues as Sustaining, Donor, Patron, or Benefactor Members based on levels of contribution.

## ARSC SUSTAINING MEMBERS

The following **Sustaining Members** contributed at least \$90 to ARSC in 2019:

Jeffery V. Bacich	Lawrence E. Friedman	Frederica Kushner	Ronald Rooth
Marcos Sueiro Bal	Chris Goosman	John Wallace Lambert	Lawrence Schulman
Richard Berntsen	Michael H. Gray	Steve Leggett	Ulrich Sieveking
Michael Biel	Michelle Hahn	David R. Lewis	Scott D. Smith
David A. Breninger	Eric Harbeson	Jim Long	Steve Smolian
Joel Bresler	Bill Hemmerlein	Carlos Martin Ballester	David Sommerfield
Jay Bruder	Douglas H. Henkle	Brad W. McCoy	Louise Spear
Richard Buck	A.L. Henrichsen	Alex McGehee	Richard K. Spottswood
David A. Budd	Joseph C. Hickerson	Robert McKibbin	Dale Sprock
Brandon Burke	Sheldon Hoffman	Alec McLane	Dave Stout
William Chase	Charles Howell, CA	Jeff McMillan	Suzanne Stover
Collin Clark	Caitlin Hunter	Randy Milroy	Robert A. Summers
Danielle Cordovez	Samuel D. Ingham III	Dale G. Monroe-Cook	Patrick Sumner
William A. Davidson	Matt Jaro	Peter Muldavin	Tony Tadey
Cristóbal Díaz Ayala	Emily Jonas	Bob Norton	Don Tait
David J. Diehl	Du Jun Min	Nick Patterson	Peter Uehara
Milton T. Erickson	Kenneth Kauffman	Vincent H. Pelote	Sara Velez
Richard J. Figone	Andrew I. Klein	Douglas Pomeroy	Ben Whiteley
Thomas Fine	Bill Klinger	Nolan Porterfield	Timothy R. Williams
Karen J. Fishman	William B. Knowlton	Charles Reinsch	
Suzanne Flandreau	Franz Kunst	Dennis D. Rooney	

## ARSC DONOR MEMBERS

The following **Donor Members** contributed at least \$200 to ARSC in 2019:

Matthew Barton	John Heyrman	Sherry L. Mayrent	William L. Schurk
Samuel Brylawski and	Lawrence F. Holdridge	Karl F. Miller	Nancy J. Seeger
Gail Sonnemann	Lawrence Huffman	Brenda Nelson-Strauss and	David Seubert
Robert Aubry Davis	E. Scott Johnson	Konrad Strauss	Theodore A. Sledzinski
Michael Derecka	Thomas Liebert	Sean Nye	Allan Sutton
Gerald D. Gibson	Christopher Lornell	Peter J. Rabinowitz	
Edwin G. Goldstein, MD	Patrick Loughney	Al Schlachtmeyer	

## ARSC PATRON MEMBERS

The following **Patron Members** contributed at least \$500 to ARSC in 2019:

Robert L. Bamberger	Tim Brooks	John B. Milmo	Chris Strachwitz
John R. Bolig	Charles Kirmuss	Roger Snape	Steven L. Wolfe

## ARSC BENEFACTOR MEMBERS

The following **Benefactor Members** contributed at least \$1000 to ARSC in 2019:

Frederick S. Cohen	Walter R. Keevil	Eli Savada
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ARSC wishes to thank these and all other members who made financial gifts to ARSC during the year. Your contributions help ARSC continue its programs and undertake new activities to support the preservation and study of sound recordings.

*Nathan Georgitis*  
Executive Director, ARSC

## New Member Spotlight: PAUL JOHNSON

### Were music and/or sound recordings always a part of your home growing up?

Yes. My dad was an early devotee of stereo, so he had a nice setup with Bozac speakers, a Fairchild tuner and tube amp, and some unknown brand of heavy plattered turntable. I grew up in the Bay Area, and we would listen to a program called “Excursions in Stereo.” It was such an eclectic show, music-wise. The goal was to just play good and newly released stereo recordings, so the show had an ever-changing mix of music and stereo sound effects.

I remember my dad purchasing one album just to get an innovative arrangement of “Three Blind Mice.” It may have been the Nelson Riddle arrangement or someone else’s, but I found that quite fascinating. Even as a kid, I could appreciate all that the arranger did to the tune.

I had cousins who owned a gorgeous old 1921 estate that we would visit, and they had a Wurlitzer player piano that I would pump, so I became aware of the format early on.

### What kinds of formats do you collect?

I collect piano roll formats, which are mostly standard 88 note (technically, nine holes to the inch going horizontally). These are the most common rolls you find, and they do not have coding to play dynamics like the reproducing rolls. But you are free to produce your own dynamics via how you pump the roll and control the levers on your player. I also collect 65 note rolls (6 holes to the inch), which was the major format before 88 note rolls were introduced. My player can read both 65 and 88 note rolls (It’s like having one machine to play both standard and Edison disc records.). Also, nickelodeon rolls, which were also cut on the 6 holes to the inch scale – I can play recuts of those if I cut them down.

### What captivated you with player pianos?

They could serve as window into how the piano was played in the genres I was interested in – namely ragtime and early jazz and blues. You could hear and see how the artists actually played, or how it was arranged for the piano.

I also learned that a well-rebuilt player piano will give you a great deal of ability to play with the dynamics and your performance of the work, so you could hear and enjoy something right away. You didn’t have to spend three months learning to play it from watered-down sheet music.

I found they also gave access to things you’d never hear on disc on in sheet music. Certain performances were only cut on rolls. This included different works, playing styles and roll-arranging styles.

### What led you to start collecting rolls?

I was interested in playing ragtime. I learned early from

reading *They All Played Ragtime* that sheet music was typically watered down to make it accessible to the most people possible. I figured rolls would not have that limitation, and you could learn from the rolls how things were really played.

### What was the first recording you bought?

I think I bought two James P. Johnson hand-played rolls – “Harlem Strut” and “Carolina Shout” from the local music store. I was buying rolls before I had a piano. My wife thought I was nuts, but I learned that roll recut production runs for collector rolls were typically limited to about 16-18 copies per title. If they ran out, tough luck, so I started buying rolls from recutters first, knowing that I could always find a piano later, but I likely would not find the rolls being offered.

### Do you have a prized roll in your collection?

There was so much produced back then. I’ve always enjoyed Clarence Johnson’s version of “You’re Always Messin’ ‘Round With My Man.” Johnson was from Chicago’s Southside and was one of the best pianists of the ’20s. He’s not covered in any books because he only did faintly heard backups of blues singers on disc. His solo piano work was recorded exclusively for 88 note and nickelodeon rolls.

I enjoy this performance because I feel like he throws the kitchen sink at it with bluesy runs, jazz licks, stride piano, etc. I think he was going in and trying to prove what he could do against the other pianists that QRS recorded, like James P. Johnson and Fats Waller. He was impressive.

### What motivated you to join ARSC?

I’ve been involved in Stanford’s “Reaction to the Record” conferences, and I’ve found that this and other like conferences have helped me expand the community of people I can talk to about this stuff. They help expand your thinking. I hope to achieve some of the same “wider view” by being able to speak with other jazz and blues collectors and researchers involved with ARSC. Also, I was interested in speaking at the Portland Oregon meeting about jazz, blues, ragtime rolls, and all that is there and that has been discovered recently.

### How would you describe the experience at your first ARSC Conference?

Generally, it was good. I like the fact that it is made up of



*See Spotlight on page 15*



## NEW & RETURNING MEMBERS

**Richard M. Breaux**  
La Crosse, WI

**Rodger J. Holtin**  
Henderson, TN

**Cheryl Pawelski**  
Portland, OR

**Leland Dobbs**  
Oakland, CA

**Lou Judson**  
Novato, CA

**Elizabeth Popiel**  
Ypsilanti, MI

**Sally Drew**  
Harpenden, Hertfordshire  
United Kingdom

**James Lacy**  
Shrewsbury, MA

**J.D. Ross**  
Lexington, SC

**George Epple**  
Baltimore, MD

**Don Mayer**  
Victoria, BC Canada

**John David Smith**  
Bristol, VA

**Kathleen and Christian Eric**  
Costa Mesa, CA

**National Geographic Society**  
**Karen Cerka**  
Washington, DC

**John Villanueva**  
Brighton, MA

**Colin Hancock**  
Buda, TX

**Gary Osborne**  
Port Coquitlam, BC Canada

## SPOTLIGHT

*Continued from page 14*

both collectors and academicians. I think ARSC has great educational goals, and I appreciated being able to introduce myself to the group at the session at the start of the conference.

I also felt there was a lack of appreciation for rolls and their rich legacy. It does take special equipment (player pianos) to hear these things, and a 65 note tracker bar if you want to hear the nickelodeon work.

But there's been such a remarkable discovery of jazz and blues rolls over the last twenty years, that it really serves as a great resource to understand how these genres were played on the piano at the time. When it comes to hearing how these earlier works were played on the piano, you have to go to rolls because that's where most of the piano recordings were happening.

## Upcoming Events

January 22-26, 2020  
Folk Alliance International Conference  
New Orleans, Louisiana

February 26-March 1, 2020  
Music Library Association Annual Meeting  
Norfolk, Virginia

March 25-29, 2020  
Society for American Music Conference  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

May 20-23, 2020  
The 54th Annual ARSC Conference  
at the Delta in Montréal, Québec, Canada

June 2020  
SouthEast Asia-Pacific Audiovisual Archive Association  
Conference in Da Nang, Vietnam



Association for Recorded Sound Collections  
c/o Nathan Georgitis  
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Talking Doll at Thomas Edison National Historic Park.  
Photo by Yuri Shimoda.