

## ABSTRACT

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SMITHSONIAN GLOBAL SOUND AND  
APPLIED ETHNOMUSICOLOGY  
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Directed By: Jonathan Dueck, PhD  
School of Music

The phenomenon of digital music on the Internet marks a turning point in the way human beings make, listen to, and share music. Smithsonian Global Sound is, variously: 1) a digital music download service; 2) the central hub of a network of digital music archives; and 3) the Internet branch of Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. Like all things vital, Smithsonian Global Sound is also developing rapidly. This thesis synthesizes a brief history of the Smithsonian Global Sound project, explores some of the vital issues related to the project, and offers a series of observations and recommendations for the project's development. Tracing the roots of Smithsonian Global Sound back to early archival efforts by music scholars, Moses Asch's Folkways Records, the acquisition of the Folkways catalog by the Smithsonian, and the development and launch of Smithsonian Global Sound, the project is examined as a example of applied ethnomusicology on the Internet.

“ALAN LOMAX'S IPOD?”:  
SMITHSONIAN GLOBAL SOUND AND APPLIED ETHNOMUSICOLOGY  
ON THE INTERNET

By

David Font.

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Advisory Committee:

Professor Jonathan Dueck, Chair  
Professor Atesh Sonneborn  
Professor Robert Provine  
Professor Lawrence Witzleben

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## 1. Introduction

Launched in February, 2005, as a project of the Smithsonian Institution, Smithsonian Global Sound<sup>1</sup> offers the catalogs of Folkways, Smithsonian Folkways, Collector, Cook, Monitor, Dyer-Bennet, Paredon and Fast Folk record labels in digital formats online, as well as recordings from partner archives such as the International Library of African Music (ILAM) in Grahamstown, South Africa and the Archives and Research Center for Ethnomusicology (ARCE) in New Delhi, India.

Soon after the launch, *New York Times* music columnist Jon Pareles wrote, “The Smithsonian Institution has just gone online with the ethnographic answer to iTunes: smithsonianglobalsound.org, with museum-quality annotation and royalties paid to musicians” (2005:E1). On a similar note, Public Radio International’s program “The World” asked listeners, “If ethnomusicologist Alan Lomax or Folkways Records founder Moses Asch had an iPod, what do you think they would have put on it?” The answer, of course, is to be found at Global Sound.

In fact, a music connoisseur with a computer, a fast Internet connection, and a relatively modest amount of disposable income could visit Global Sound and quickly amass several weeks or even months of recordings from around the world which currently total 39,925 items and 2,827 albums of unique and culturally diverse music. Thus, the vast reach and promise of the Internet is fulfilled for music lovers every day through various websites and services such as Global Sound, Rhapsody, iTunes, Calabash, MSN Music, eMusic, Ubu, and many others.

Aside from an impressive variety and amount of music from around the world and its prestige as a boutique online outlet for fans of traditional music, why should

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<sup>1</sup> Smithsonian Global Sound is a registered trademark. Unless otherwise noted, subsequent mentions of “Global Sound” in this thesis should be understood to refer to Smithsonian Global Sound.

Global Sound be of interest to scholars? What is provocative and important about Global Sound — beyond promotional sound bites, prestige, and marketing — in relation to music, the Internet, and humanity?

Global Sound is non-profit and driven by a mission to use “the power of the Internet for global cultural communication and exchange” (Smithsonian Global Sound 2006). This is not music for fame or profit; it is music employed explicitly in the service of humanity. And if the goal is — as one of Smithsonian Folkways’ promotional slogans proclaims — “Connecting people through music,” then what better way to *connect* people through music than the idealized, virtual World Wide Web? The phenomena of digital music and music on the Internet mark a fundamental turning point in the way human beings make, listen to, and share music, and among the countless channels for music on the Internet, Global Sound is unique.

This thesis synthesizes a brief history of the Global Sound project, explores some of the vital issues related to the project, and offers a series of observations and recommendations for the development of Global Sound. Interviews and less-formal dialog with some of the project’s designers and staff have provided a wealth of information and context. I am primarily interested in Global Sound’s role within the larger frame of world and traditional music on the Internet, as well as an example of work by ethnomusicologists outside of an academic setting. While ethnomusicologists tend to produce relatively insular texts about music, written by ethnomusicologists for other ethnomusicologists, Global Sound is a pioneering example of applied ethnomusicology on the Internet, continuing the tradition of Folkways and Smithsonian Folkways and making an enormous catalog of music and



information available to the world while establishing new ethical standards for the Internet's global market of traditional music.

## 2. The Trouble with the Internet

Digital technologies and the Internet have been the subject a great deal of recent anthropology, sociology, and ethnomusicology research that ranges from “virtual ethnographies” of communities (including music-oriented groups) on the Internet (Griscom 2003, Hine 2000, Howard 1998, Lysloff 2003) and a broad range of scholarly and ethnographic approaches to the Internet (Becker 2000, Escobar 1994, Miller and Slater 2001, Lange 2001). A great deal more recent journalism includes a substantial amount of ink devoted to the controversy over Napster (Alderman 2001, Ayers 2006, Menn 2003, Merriden 2001). The Internet has quickly ingrained itself into the social fabric of much scholarship and music. “Because of the sheer velocity of wired sound,” Paul Greene writes in his Introduction to *Wired Sound*, “global musical synergies have accelerated and become more complex. Musics now travel faster and farther than was possible before, and the feedback loops of sound communication and musical influence back and forth from music’s productive centers to local settings of reception have accelerated dramatically” (2005:2). *Global Sound* is an attempt to employ the Internet’s speed and ample reach to further its mission — “broad accessibility to the “smaller voices” of people all over the world” (Smithsonian Global Sound 2007).



Figures 1 and 2: An image from <http://www.boreme.com> and an advertisement for the iPod, Apple's signature digital AV device. Figure 1 is circulated on the Internet under the title "African iPod" — an insensitive but vivid commentary on the Digital Divide. Figure 2 was photographed on a New York City street.

The Internet's promise as one of the great equalizers in modern history — transcending geography, race, and class — may rightly be dismissed as a utopian dream. The trouble with the Internet around the world — referred to as the "digital divide" — mirrors the extreme inequalities of resources and access that continue to characterize humanity in terms of nutrition, health care, education, and social justice. For example, Internet access in Africa is estimated to be available to less than 4% of the population (All About Market Research 2007). Likewise, the ideal of a vast, globally accessible storehouse of information — a virtual Library of Alexandria for the space age — has yet to be realized. In *Strange Sounds*, Timothy Taylor reminds us of "the question of computerized access, since, as is almost never stated (or, I suspect,

recognized), most of the people on the planet do not have access to a telephone, much less a computer with an Internet connection” (2001:6).

However, groups around the world dedicate themselves to the promotion of stability and prosperity in the developing world through information and communication technology, for example, the International Executive Service Corps — or “Geek Corps” — recently developed an affordable desert PC for communities in northern Mali that is able to withstand a remote, high heat, high dust, and low electricity environment (Geek Corps 2007).

Meanwhile, Human Rights Watch characterizes Internet access in the world’s most populous nation by saying, “Political censorship is built into all layers of China’s Internet infrastructure. Known widely in the media as the ‘Great Firewall of China,’ this aspect of Chinese official censorship primarily targets the movement of information between the global Internet and the Chinese Internet” (2007).

Clearly, access to the Internet is neither ubiquitous nor apolitical. And while the self-contained, virtual realm of iPods and music on the Internet may have us all dancing as duotone silhouettes to the beats of different drummers, passing each other on sidewalks, buses, trains, and airplanes with our heads padded in custom-tailored aural cocoons, it may also be leading us slowly – subtly – to a more intimate, shared relationship to music and to each other.

### **3. On Collaborative Research**

This research has offered an opportunity to experiment with collaborative fieldwork, which can be defined as: 1) collaboration with other scholars; and 2) collaboration with research subjects (also commonly referred to as consultants, informants, or experts) (Lassiter 1998, 2001). Ideally, open exchange among scholars is complemented by an equally open exchange between scholars and research subjects. The ideal of collaborative fieldwork is organic and process-oriented, leading to rich, accurate description; more creative, diverse insights; and, finally, research that is more intimately engaged with ethical issues. In other words, collaborative research is an effort to animate scholarly research with stimulating, direct dialog with research subjects before and during writing, rather than as mere critique after publication — a way of acknowledging and formalizing the exchanges that typically occur during research design, fieldwork, writing, and editing — which should also work as a corrective measure against the aforementioned insularity among scholars. This thesis is part of the larger process born from informal conversation which, in turn, stimulates more conversation, work, and publication.

A truly collaborative approach is labor-intensive, requiring rigorous organization and exchange of information. Transparent communication involves sharing drafts of written texts and recordings, and it requires more time and energy than writing and publishing in relative isolation. In the case of my own research on Global Sound, I have attempted to engage the scholars who are the subject of my research in an open, conversational mode in the hopes of moving gradually from a conventional discourse among scholars (regarded as peers) towards a more intensive

dialog between scholars and non-scholar musicians and producers<sup>2</sup>. Atesh Sonneborn's participation on my dissertation committee is one expression of this collaborative model. In an effort to develop this thesis into a publication, it will be shared and discussed with the experts that I have consulted during my research.

My own approach to this collaborative dynamic is experimental: I am approaching the subjects of my research as both a junior scholar and the primary researcher and author<sup>3</sup>. In the end, however, the goal is to develop a way to approach the subjects of ethnomusicology research as peers, cultivating a relationship that emphasizes the humanist, egalitarian strains in ethnomusicology<sup>4</sup>. In fact, a collaborative approach to this research is more likely to yield fruitful results through incorporating actions, reactions, and input to this text — in this sense, these are both thoughts on methodology and a sincere appeal for continued dialog with the staff of Global Sound<sup>5</sup>.

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2 Timothy Rice's thoughts on fieldwork method and experience seem particularly relevant to this aspect of my own research:

Could, for example, the transformative moment in one's "being-in-the-world"—in one's self, as it were—from nonethnomusicologist to ethnomusicologist be understood as a particular example of more general transformative experiences during fieldwork that lead to new understandings? If the self rather than the method are the locus of explanation and understanding (not, by the way, the solipistic object of understanding), might this realignment contribute to the reformulation of theory and method? On the other hand, could theory and method, which take for granted a fixed and timeless ontological distinction between insider and outsider, be reordered within an ontology that understands both researching and researched selves as potentially interchangeable and as capable of change through time, during the dialogues that typify the fieldwork experience? (1997:106)

3 During my first interview with Anthony Seeger — who was exceptionally gracious — I became acutely aware of the fact that I was a junior scholar speaking to a luminary in the discipline of ethnomusicology.

4 In this case, the two principal definitions of humanism are equally significant: 1) a system of thought or action in which human interests, values, and dignity predominate; and 2) devotion to or study of the humanities (literature, philosophy, art, etc, as distinguished from natural sciences). Helen Myers's characterization of ethnomusicology as an egalitarian discipline — particularly in the United States — also resonates deeply with my approach to the Global Sound project (1992).

5 For another useful and provocative theoretical model for this type of research, Participatory Action Research (PAR), see Whyte (1991), Wadsworth (1998), and Denzin and Lincoln (2005).

In a moving address at the 2006 meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology, the late David McAllester poetically traced some of the very human, personal connections among seminal ethnomusicologists, punctuating his anecdotes with the refrain “it’s all connected” (2006:199). In this spirit, it seems entirely appropriate to connect my research to an initial meeting with Smithsonian Folkways Director Daniel Sheehy at a traditional music conference nearly a decade ago and subsequent meetings with Atesh Sonneborn, Jonathan Dueck, and Toby Dodds in consecutive seminars at the University of Maryland. Long before he became my thesis advisor or had any idea that he would be at the University of Maryland, Jonathan Dueck worked for hours to digitize Folkways album covers and liner notes for the FolkwaysAlive! Project at the University of Alberta — materials that are now available through Global Sound (Qureshi and Frishkopf 2005).

Like the invisible bonds within and between atoms, there are human connections that propel scholarship, and the research data is only part of the story. Human contact, live and in person (or, in the shorthand of the Internet, “f2f”) has shaped this research.

I have attempted to make my goals for this research as explicit as possible, adopting the role of a critically-minded, scholarly advocate of Global Sound. My own critical assessments of the project have been shared with the staff as an integral part of the research process. However, it is important to remember that Smithsonian Folkways and Global Sound are critical of their own work, continually reflecting and developing the project according to both ideals and practical limitations. I repeatedly found that the bulk of my own critical observations — several of which are mentioned in this thesis — were already being addressed internally. Ideally, my

continuing work with Global Sound will serve to help move the project forward, provide useful documentation and insight, and will stimulate dialog among scholars, producers, and artists.

A Global Sound curriculum was recently announced by Amherst College in Massachussettes<sup>6</sup>. Could it be that Global Sound signals the establishment of a new vocabulary term within ethnomusicology — an alternative to “World Music”? Or, more importantly, a new standard for the dissemination of world music on the Internet?

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<sup>6</sup> From the web site of Amherst’s Global Sound program (<http://www.amherst.edu/~gsp/Pages/mission/mission.php>), which has no formal relationship to Smithsonian Global Sound at the time of this writing: “We believe that concentrating on the changing conditions of creation, reception, transmission, and ownership that surround global sound will open up a variety of perspectives that pertain directly to a wider understanding of globalization and the experience of daily life” (2007).



#### 4. What is Smithsonian Global Sound (v2.0)?

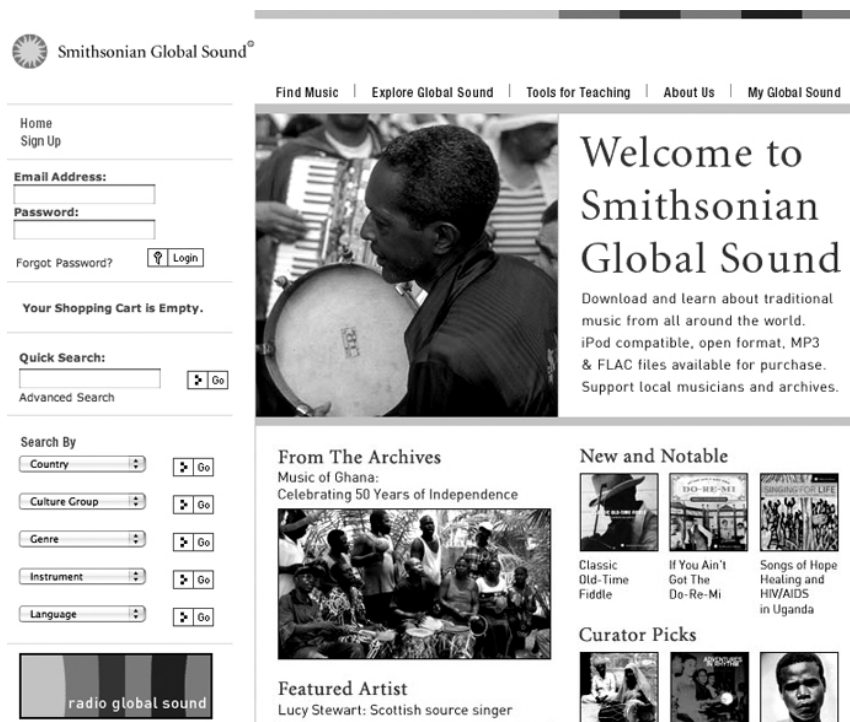


Figure 3: The Smithsonian Global Sound homepage on March 30, 2007.

This initial question is not as simple as it might appear. Global Sound is, variously: 1) a digital music download service; 2) the central hub of a network of digital music archives; and 3) the Internet branch of Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. The project, like all things vital, is also developing rapidly. While putting my “finishing touches” on this thesis, I stumbled onto a change in the Global Sound website: the project’s mission statement (under the “About Us” menu) had been substantially rewritten. This change to the Global Sound site may represent an infinitesimally small blip in the expanse of cyberspace, but there are several noteworthy aspects of the change that are relevant to my research which I discuss

below. First, the differences between the previous and current mission statements reflect the evolution of the project and approach to its marketing “brand” identity. While the differences between the two texts do not seem to mark a substantially different approach, they do represent a sharper, more clearly defined articulation of Global Sound’s role and purpose.

Secondly, this change is an example of the ephemeral nature of the Internet. If I had not copied the entire text of the previous mission statement, I would not have been able to refer to it directly<sup>7</sup>. I have reproduced the complete texts of both versions in the appendix — and encourage scholars referring to online content to download and save the content themselves rather than relying on it to remain static and available through the Internet. Despite compulsory monitoring of the Internet by security and marketing agencies, the Internet’s denizens are often unable to register changes in web sites. Future visitors to the Global Sound site may not even be aware that such changes take place, but they reflect a process of learning and refinement by the staff of the Global Sound that involves a great deal of hard work, trial and error, and dialog. Finally, I asked myself whether or not my research — which involved formal interviews and informal conversations with the staff of Smithsonian Folkways and Global Sound, as well as a conference paper and published review in a scholarly journal (Font-Navarrete 2007) — might have influenced this change<sup>8</sup>.

The Internet changes rapidly, erasing past versions of itself as it evolves and expands. Global Sound also evolves, and it is worth noting some of the changes

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<sup>7</sup> One of several projects archiving Internet materials — named, appropriately enough, Internet Archive — can be found at <http://www.archive.org>. By way of introduction, the site describes its endeavor as follows: “The Internet Archive is building a digital library of Internet sites and other cultural artifacts in digital form. Like a paper library, we provide free access to researchers, historians, scholars, and the general public” (2007).

<sup>8</sup> Apparently, my research efforts did not influence the change — according to Dodds and Sonneborn, the changes to the mission statement had been in discussion for some time before I began my research.

denoted by these two versions of the project's mission. Considering the scope of the project, both versions of the mission statement on their web site are remarkably succinct and worth quoting in their entirety. The previous mission statement read as follows:

Smithsonian Global Sound delivers the world's diverse cultural expressions via the Internet in an informative way for a reasonable price. It also helps encourage local musicians and traditions around the planet through international recognition, the payment of royalties, and support for regional archives (Smithsonian Global Sound 2006).

The current mission statement reads:

Smithsonian Global Sound is an international network of music audio archives and an educational resource that delivers the world's diverse cultural expressions in an informative way via digital media (Smithsonian Global Sound 2007).

The new mission statement is more concise, and it foregrounds Global Sound's role as a hub for a network of international archives and educational resource. Although the relationship to "local musicians and traditions" is not included in the new mission statement, it is actually described even more forcefully in the new version's statement of purpose. The previous site's autobiographical narrative, "Our Story: About Smithsonian Global Sound," offered a more detailed picture and described several dimensions of the project that I will discuss below. It also provided insights to Global Sound's institutional goals and values, as well as its marketing "brand" identity. It read, in part:

Smithsonian Global Sound (SGS) is a project of the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. By preserving and disseminating a broad range of the world's music, SGS assists local traditions by using the power of the Internet for global cultural communication and exchange. SGS joins with

institutions around the world to document, record, archive, catalog and digitize music and other verbal arts and distribute them via the World Wide Web. Royalties go to artists and institutions, and honor the intellectual-property rights of composers, musicians, and producers. In addition to supporting the creation, continuity, and preservation of diverse musical forms, SGS provides educators, students and interested listeners with an unprecedented variety of online musical resources, including recordings, expert descriptions, and images that connect recordings to their social contexts ... As part of the Smithsonian Institution and Smithsonian Folkways Records, Smithsonian Global Sound is part of the national museum of the United States of America (Smithsonian Global Sound 2006).

On the new version of this mission statement page at the Global Sound site, the story is replaced by two paragraphs titled “Purpose.” This statement of purpose is more sharply defined than the narrative format quoted above, focusing on a more politicized, activist role for Global Sound. This new version abandons the narrative format in favor of distinguishing Global Sound from commercial digital music services through their educational, populist, and multicultural institutional goals and values. This new text — reproduced in its entirety below — is a valuable window into the project and its ongoing development:

As a nonprofit endeavor, Smithsonian Global Sound is above all a mission rather than a commercial product, offering broad accessibility to the “smaller voices” of people all over the world. In pursuit of this mission, it harnesses the power of Internet commerce to deliver recorded sound from many cultures around the world to the widest audience possible. Smithsonian Global Sound’s essence and purpose are fundamentally different from that of commercial digital music delivery services. It aims to heighten communication among and about people and cultures, accomplished principally through the culturally potent, meaning-laden medium of music, accompanied by informative notes and educational features. The content it delivers is the window through which Smithsonian Global Sound users may discover and appreciate other people, other value systems, and other realms of human accomplishment. And, in an increasingly mobile and culturally scattered world, it provides a link for the culturally estranged and isolated to connect with their own heritage through a curated, distilled collection of recorded sound.

Smithsonian Global Sound is grounded in the mission of the Smithsonian’s Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage: to promote the understanding and

continuity of diverse, contemporary grassroots cultures. It is closely allied with another Center division, Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, dedicated to strengthening people's engagement with their own cultural heritage and enhancing awareness and appreciation of the cultural heritage of others through the dissemination of audio recordings and educational materials. It also collaborates with the annual Smithsonian Folklife Festival, an exercise in cultural democracy in which people are given a platform to speak for themselves. Smithsonian Global Sound strengthens these efforts as it further extends the notion of the "Long Tail" of Internet music sales, making available "people's music" from archives in India, Africa, the United States, and elsewhere, increasing the Internet's range of access to the world's cultural heritage. The revenue earned from sales of downloads and subscriptions supports the creation of new educational content and is shared with archival partners, who in turn pass on a portion of those revenues with artists and communities (Smithsonian Global Sound 2007).

This new text, which replaces the previous narrative form with a statement of purpose and employs more politically and ethically loaded language, serves as a focal point for the Global Sound project and this thesis. In fact, the new mission statement effectively highlights the central, recurring themes which emerged from my own research: the difference in "essence and purpose" between Global Sound and commercial music services, and an unabashed celebration of other-ness. If nothing else, this process of development reflected in the mission statement's reformulation also illustrates the project's vitality.

Just as the Smithsonian's own account of the project was vividly portrayed through a narrative form, I build on Olmsted's *Folkways Records: Moses Asch and His Encyclopedia of Sound*, tracing the roots of Global Sound back to early archival efforts by music scholars, Moses Asch's Folkways Records, the acquisition of the Folkways catalog by the Smithsonian, and the development and launch of Global Sound. Along the way, I will also illustrate the central importance of the issues articulated in the statement of purpose. I have constructed a brief history of Global Sound from the project's promotional materials, journalists' accounts, and — most

importantly — interviews with many of the people most closely involved in the project’s design, creation, and ongoing development. These individuals include Anthony Seeger, Jon Kertzer, Shubha Chaudhuri, Daniel Sheehy, Atesh Sonneborn, Amy Schriefer, and Toby Dodds<sup>9</sup>.

The very brief history of Global Sound — it was launched just over two years ago — means that any discussion of what the project is must be weighed against what it could become. I am writing during the adolescence of the project. For a broader perspective, it is necessary to delve into the histories of Folkways and Smithsonian Folkways Records, as well as mapping the route Global Sound’s staff are mapping for the project’s immediate and long-term future. The genesis of Global Sound is an extension of a much longer historical process which has — fortunately — been documented by previous authors (see Chaudhuri 1992, Seeger 1996, Seeger and Chaudhuri 2004). Similarly, Goldsmith and Olmsted have both published excellent books on the history of Folkways Records (1998 and 2003). Following these accounts of Folkways, I will trace some of the precedent for Global Sound by beginning the story of Global Sound more than one hundred years ago.

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<sup>9</sup> The most succinct of the narratives of Global Sound’s creation came from Atesh Sonneborn:

I’m not sure when the first idea of the Celestial Jukebox arose. Somewhere in the history of recording, people realized they could have access to more and more and more of the world’s music. I do know that early on when I arrived here in 1998, Tony Seeger — then the director and curator here — told me that when he arrived almost twelve years earlier, he thought, “Well, we could get all of this audio together and deliver it on the phone! It’ll take a few months.” Actually, it took nineteen years (p.c. 2007).

Sonneborn also mentioned the “Celestial Jukebox” as concept that inspired Global Sound’s design. The metaphor of the jukebox is, interestingly, a technological metaphor that is especially appropriate to the Global Sound project — one track at a time played at the request of a general public. Alan Lomax’s “Global Jukebox,” associated with his cantometrics project, is also indirectly implicated in this account.

## 5. Back to the Future: The Visionary Spirit of Moses Asch

Numerous authors have pointed out that the impulse to preserve musical traditions has driven a great deal of ethnomusicology (Nettl 2005, Myers 1992, Chaudhuri 1992, Seeger 1996). The invention of the phonograph and other subsequent technologies — including magnetic tape and digital recording — have now inspired several generations to employ audio technologies to record and preserve music. It is deeply symbolic that the founders of the discipline were closely involved in recording and archiving audio recordings. For example, Carl Stumpf, Eric von Hornbostel, and Curt Sachs worked at the Berlin archives in the early part of the 20th century — archives that were threatened and often suffered irreparable damage during the First and Second World Wars. The early days of North American ethnomusicology, in particular, are closely related to preservation efforts. As Myers notes,

American studies during the late 19th and early 20th centuries were practical, descriptive, and based on fieldwork, particularly among the indigenous peoples at their doorstep, the American Indians. Early writings on Native American musical life were rich in data and lean in the speculative theories cultivated by contemporary German thinkers. Fearful that native cultures were vanishing, American scholars used the phonograph to preserve [North American] Indian music. (1992:5)

Although he was not involved directly in the creation of Global Sound, my conversations with Global Sound workers suggest that the spirit of Folkways Records founder Moses Asch guides Global Sound. Olmsted sketches a background for the establishment of Folkways and describes Asch's early years. Born in 1905, at the turn of the 20th century and the dawn of audio recording, By the time he was twenty years

old, Asch had lived in Poland, France, the United States, and Germany — he had an early, cosmopolitan exposure to a variety of places, cultures, and ideas. He was also exposed to his parents’ activism in “humanitarian,” “prolabor,” and “nationalist causes” and lived through both World Wars (2003:10-11).

As a Jewish man born in Poland, Asch’s experiences of the destructive chaos of war must have had a powerful effect on him, shaping his views on the relationships between peoples and their cultures, and instilling an abiding sense of the importance of cultural and historical preservation. The culturally diverse, cosmopolitan environment of New York City — Asch’s home from 1926 until his passing in 1986 — also had a powerful influence on Asch’s Folkways catalog. Sonneborn explains:

Historically, Folkways Records arose in New York in a particularly interesting time after World War II where you had all those people recently back from an exposure abroad — millions of people, some of whom had gained an interest in other cultures. Studies like anthropology exploded. A postcolonial anthropology started to arise, and anthropology ultimately gave rise to the idea of collaboration rather than objectification (pc, 2007).

In this way, Asch’s formative years contain themes that became essential elements in the Folkways catalog: multiculturalism, preservation, labor and populist political ideals. As I discuss below, these themes were carried into the work of Smithsonian Folkways and Global Sound.

Olmsted points out that developments in audio technology were essential to the original creation and success of Folkways (2003). In the late 1940s, the transition from 78 to 33 1/3 long-playing record format allowed for longer recordings to be produced more affordably, and “Folkways’ philosophy of including extensive notes and putting together an album of related material ... perfectly fit the new format” (2003:63). Likewise, the introduction of new, less costly recording technology —



magnetic tape — became an important element in Folkways' unique contributions and success:

Another new technology that came after World War II was a new means of recording on flexible plastic tape, as opposed to the cumbersome acetate discs used to record 78s. Tape allowed for longer recording times, which complemented the longer playing time of the LP record. And, although initially tape machines were heavy and expensive, they soon became at least somewhat portable and more available to the average person. Amateurs could begin making their own recordings at a reasonably low cost; by the 1960s, these would become important sources for Folkways (2003:64).

Like previous transitions from one technology to the next that Moses Asch skillfully navigated, the Internet and digital audio formats have combined to create a favorable environment for Global Sound. Liner notes, for example, are a traditional form of multi-media content and an important element in distinguishing Folkways from other record labels. Now, through the Internet, a vast amount and variety of multi-media content can be associated with recordings, allowing Global Sound to take Asch's philosophy a step further.

In fact, the development of digital technology and an online digital economy are allowing for the guiding principles of Asch's Folkways Records to truly flourish at Global Sound. Asch's extremely prolific and open approach to Folkways Records was radically altered by Smithsonian Folkways' more rigorous — and perhaps more rigid — curatorial standards. Under Asch, Folkways released 2,168 titles, averaging nearly five recordings per month; by comparison, Smithsonian Folkways has averaged less than two new releases per month since its inception in 1985. Global Sound, however, offers the possibility of returning to a more prolific and open approach to music publishing. Digital music formats for the Internet are much less costly to produce and release than physical CD formats and make longer recordings

possible, appealing to the pragmatic constraints of Smithsonian Folkways' and Global Sound's specialized, niche market while making recordings of unprecedented lengths possible. Like the transition from 78 rpm to 33 1/3 rpm vinyl records, the shift in the music market from physical CD formats to online digital audio formats could suit Global Sound perfectly and make it the heir to Moses Asch's legacy — more prolific, more accessible, and more profitable than the elder Smithsonian Folkways.

Interestingly, Chris Anderson's concept of the “Long Tail” can be applied to both Moses Asch's approach to Folkways and Global Sound (Anderson 1998, 2006). In contrast to an entertainment economy driven by hits, Anderson maintains that an emerging digital entertainment economy will tend toward and benefit more from a larger number of options that sell in smaller quantities. For example, single sales of 1,000 different songs become more profitable than one or two songs that each sell 100 copies each. This is directly analogous to Asch's approach to Folkways Records: publish relatively small quantities of many albums, each of which sold in small numbers to a dedicated, niche market but amounted to a substantial amount of total sales. For the moment, however, digital downloads are not nearly profitable enough to take over as a primary source of income for Smithsonian Folkways, and digital- or online-only releases are a novel concept that has yet to be instituted.

It is interesting to note that Smithsonian Folkways recently unveiled a new approach to their custom-made CDs ... or maybe not so new ... Since the beginning of Smithsonian Folkways, custom-made CDs of Folkways recordings not popular enough to reproduce in mass quantities have been packaged in generic, corporate-style sleeves featuring a portrait of the late Moses Asch with photocopied liner notes folded awkwardly into the sleeve. Smithsonian Folkways recently unveiled custom

CD packaging that emulates the thick, matte black stock of Folkways LP sleeves. Like the original Folkways packaging for vinyl LPs, stickers with the original Folkways artwork are applied to each CD sleeve. Digital, PDF-format files of original liner notes are burned onto the CDs. This seems like a powerful symbol of a return to the sensibilities and methods of Moses Asch, which are remarkably well-suited to the realities of the contemporary music market. Aesthetically, the custom CDs now look like miniaturized versions of Folkways LPs.

## 6. From Folkways to Smithsonian Folkways

In conversation with Anthony Seeger, I was initially surprised by his apparent lack of interest in discussing Global Sound as “the ethnographic answer to iTunes” (Pareles 2005). Despite an enthusiasm for the project’s ability to generate income for artists through sales, his interest was focused on Global Sound’s role and value as an online portal to digital sound archives. Seeger expressed a pragmatic synthesis of Global Sound’s dual role as a commercial service and a virtual archive, able to offer educational rewards for users, financial rewards for artists, and humanistic rewards for archivists and scholars.

[We had] all of these Folkways records that only a teeny percentage of the population would ever want to listen to, and yet [were] only able to distribute to a teeny percentage of that teeny population. The opportunity that the Internet had of actually making it available to much more of that teeny percentage in a way that benefitted both the cultural project and also the artists’ aspirations. The archives [had the] abilities to keep preserving traditions through income seemed to be a key part of the project (Seeger p.c. 2007).

Seeger went from being the Director of Archives of Traditional Music (ATM) at Indiana University to become the first Director of Smithsonian Folkways and one of the architects of Global Sound, which is in the process of becoming an online hub for music by partnering with archives around the world to digitize materials and make them available through Global Sound. In *Archives for the Future*, Seeger and ARCE director Shubha Chaudhuri neatly define archives as

a place where recordings are stored for the purpose of both preservation and use. Archives differ from libraries in that they collect unpublished material as well as published recordings. They also place a stronger emphasis on

preservation for the future than most libraries, which make the recordings more easily available to the public (2004:30).

The fundamental purpose of archives is preservation: to transcend politics and economics; to transcend, in fact, the waxing and waning cultural salience of styles, genres, and artists that Martin Daughtry poetically refers to as attenuation (2005). It is worth noting that archives and, more generally, the practices of collecting and archiving so closely associated with ethnography, are complex in their multiplicity of contexts and purposes<sup>10</sup>. As an activist, however, Seeger regards the application of archival materials in the service of quantifiable, practical results as the most effective aspects of his work with the Archives at Indiana; in a remarkable example, Seeger's own field recordings and notes were used by the Suyá in Matto Grosso, Brazil as legal evidence in a land rights dispute (2007:105-6).

In his writing, Seeger has called attention to the importance of music-related law (1992), and his tenure as the first Director of Smithsonian Folkways was marked by a rigorous overhauling of contracts and royalty agreements with artists and copyright holders. The time-consuming process of reforming established an important turning point in Asch's legacy that deserves detailed description along the lines of Olmsted's study. The powerful emphasis on this approach to revenue in the final sentence of Global Sound's new mission statement is an expression of the reforms' pivotal role in the development and future of the project, which I discuss in more detail below.

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<sup>10</sup> For a recent and insightful discussion of archiving in ethnomusicology that begins with a creative riff on a previous article by Seeger (1996), see Muller 2002.

## 7. Interlude: A Quick Tour of the Collection

Before I delve further into talking about the important work of Smithsonian Global Sound, it is *apropos* to briefly survey the breadth of the recordings in the collection. Through Global Sound, all of the following sounds are available with only a few clicks of a mouse: Bell Telephone Laboratories' "Science of Sound" album provides examples and examples of aural phenomena such as Frequency and the Doppler Effect; sitar virtuoso Shamin Ahmed's epic treatment of the North Indian *raag* Bageshwari; jew's harp playing from Papua New Guinea, Ireland, Italy, the Philippines, the United States, Laos, and Kazakhstan; folk music legends Peggy and Pete Seeger; a Mercury mission astronaut's transmission to Earth from outer space; magnetic tape compositions by experimental music cult hero Ilhan Mimarolglu; a chorus of frogs in South Florida; and on and on.

The value of Global Sound's level of accessibility for music lovers and scholars — particularly in terms of comparative and historical research — should not be understated. For example, a number of different recordings of Bata drumming are available. Bata drumming is a tradition very close to my heart, and it is particularly vital. We might even say it is fashionable — at the 2007 meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology alone, three papers dealt specifically with the Bata tradition, and several others touched on it. At the times these recordings were made, however, Bata drumming was not nearly so fashionable in Nigeria, Benin, Cuba, the United States, or ethnomusicology meetings. Bata are the sacred, double-headed Yoruba drum orchestras carried from West Africa to the Americas in the 19th century slave trade. Global Sound's offerings of Bata drum music include recordings made in Oyo, Nigeria in 1953, Havana, Cuba in 1957, Matanzas, Cuba in 1983, and Pobe, Benin in

1987. Taken as a whole, they document fifty years in the evolution of a transatlantic musical tradition. Perhaps more importantly, they also represent the oldest commercially available recordings of this tradition in both West Africa and the Americas. These recordings provide only one example out of many illustrating the value and accessibility of this collection to performers, scholars, and listeners. They are also a vivid reminder of the inherent value of archival preservation.

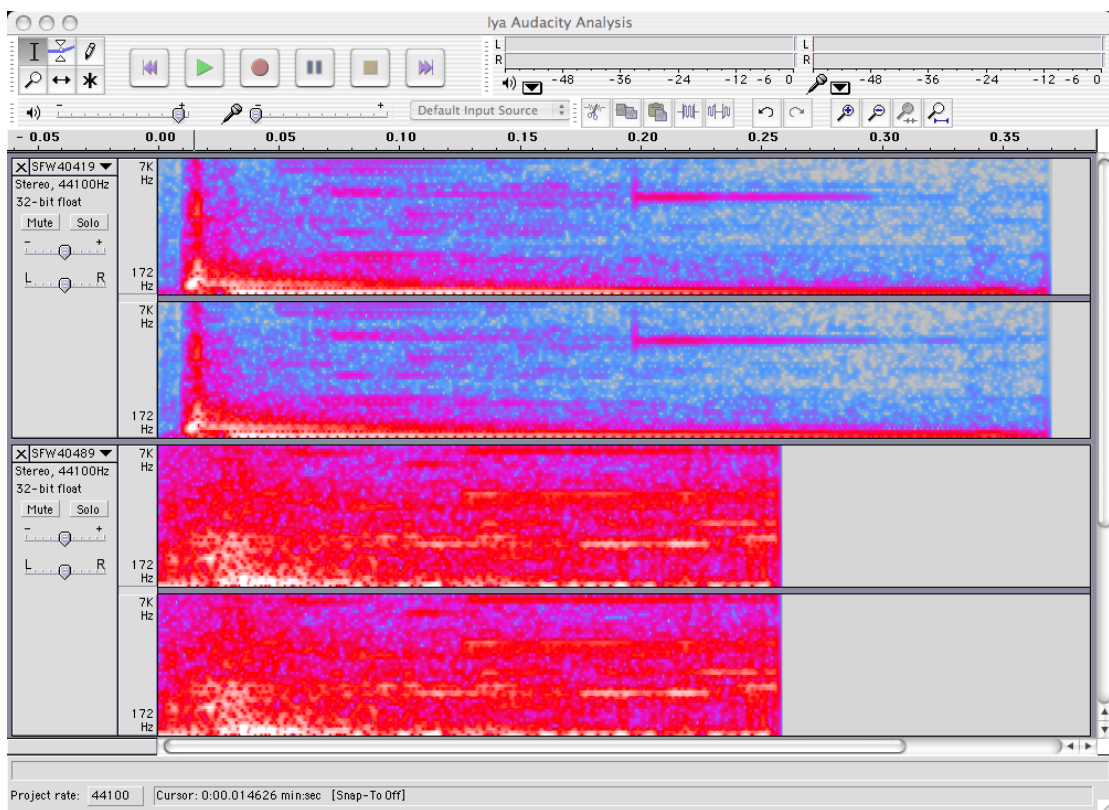


Figure 5: Spectrographic analysis of two Bata drum tones. The top Iya tone is excerpted from a 1957 recording (SFW40489\_115) and the bottom Iya tone is excerpted from a 1983 recording (SFW40419\_101).

The spectrographic images and spectrum analyses of two Bata drum tones above illustrate a single, very simple approach to the use of Global Sound recordings for comparative and historical musical analysis. One of the most dramatic recent

changes in the Cuban Bata drum tradition involves the tuning of the drums. According to all of my teachers (including Lazaro Alfonso, Ezequiel Torres, and Angel Bolaños), Bata drum tuning has dramatically risen in pitch over the last fifty years; along with increased tempi, high pitch tuning for Bata is associated with modernity, while lower pitch tuning and slower tempi are associated with an older style. There are different reasons offered for this gradual change, including increased access to higher quality construction materials and changing tastes, but drums that are tuned low are generally characterized as sounding “tiempo España” (literally, “from Spanish [colonial] times,” or old).

The spectrographic images above represent open tones played on the lowest of the three drums — the lead drum in the battery, called Iya. Although the complex, broad timbre of these drums is often difficult to associate with specific, discrete pitches, these spectrographic images present clear evidence of the substantial difference in both pitch and timbre between an Iya tone from a 1957 recording and another Iya tone from a 1983 recording. This digital form of rendering sound is especially appropriate to the digital formats disseminated by Smithsonian Folkways (CD) and Global Sound (FLAC and MP3). Spectrographic analysis is also an especially vivid way to represent the subtle sonic parameter of timbre that is essential to the distinctive sound of Bata drums (Fales 2002).

I was able to download the recordings from Global Sound, open them in the free, open-source program Audacity, isolate the section of the audio that I wanted to analyze, and capture the image. An analysis of this sort would have been extremely difficult and prohibitively expensive a short time ago. Compared to using a custom-built melograph to analyze recordings from archives at Bloomington, Indiana or



Havana, Cuba, my spectrographic images are intended to illustrate the accessibility and potential for comparative analysis that Global Sound provides, more than a single, specific musical phenomenon — no matter how fascinating those particular drum tones may be to some of us. Due to the high quality FLAC-format audio files and accessibility via the Internet to an enormous and well-organized collection, this comparative spectrographic analysis was made with relative ease.

## 8. The “Encyclopedia of Sound” Goes Online

Moses Asch worked to build Folkways Records into an “encyclopedia of sound,” but it is easy to imagine Global Sound becoming the world’s greatest Internet resource for world music. The idea for a Smithsonian Folkways music download service was an obvious one, and it had been discussed for some time before formal plans for Global Sound were developed. “But, even more,” according to Sonneborn,

there was a vision of linking together all the world’s archives of traditional music, many of which are in terrible condition, decaying and really desperately in need of preservation. Rockefeller funded the project — gave seed money sufficient to get the idea up and running, to staff it with a few people. Jon Kertzer became the first director, working mostly with Tony [Seeger] and with his fellow computer development wizard man Toby Dodds and Susan Golden ... began to work. Tony and Jon travelled around and talked with a lot of people and identified two archives that would be good candidates to where we would provide training and the resources so that they could digitize a selection from their collections. We thought a thousand tracks from each. Those two archives were the Archive Center for Ethnomusicology in Gurgaon, a suburb of New Delhi in India, and the other was the International Library for African Music which is Hugh Tracey’s collection at Willard Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa. And both of those were sufficiently technologically savvy in a place — an urban setting — that the idea wasn’t too much for them. They also had some rights to the material, and we worked out an agreement to receive content from them and put it online in Global Sound (p.c. 2007).

Although the bulk of the material available through Global Sound consists of the Folkways and Smithsonian Folkways catalog, the original plan for Global Sound centered around the project’s role as a hub for archives from around the world. It was only after the closing of the Seattle office that a concrete decision was made to incorporate the Folkways catalog into Global Sound. According to Sonneborn,

We realized that the whole process was going to be much slower than we thought, after some years had passed and nothing was online yet. We were demo-ing the kind of frame — the idea of how it would work — and we

thought it would give it more heft if we added the Folkways Collection ... Although originally we were thinking of distributing the Folkways collection, Smithsonian Global Sound was not originally going to have that material. And we're just now getting into shape so that in 2007 I expect we'll add some more archives (p.c. 2007).

The emphasis placed on the value of partnerships with archives within the Global Sound project makes more conspicuous the limited number of partnerships Global Sound has been able to establish in its first two years of operation. While many archives around the world might be able to commit the resources necessary to digitizing substantial portions of their audio collections and organize the metadata associated with them, a much larger obstacle is presented by the permissions necessary for recordings to be legally disseminated and/or sold over the Internet.

In fact, Global Sound's partnerships with ILAM and ARCE have already made a number of unique recordings, images, and texts available online. Interestingly, these partnerships with archives mean — in both practical and conceptual terms — that Global Sound gives partner archives the authority over curatorial decisions that is usually reserved by Smithsonian Folkways. For example, recordings, text, images, and video from the ARCE archive in New Delhi are selected, edited, and organized by ARCE, not Smithsonian Folkways.

This means that perhaps the most radical — and logical — future development at Global Sound involves a change in the process of curating Smithsonian Folkways releases. By disseminating materials from partner archives in digital formats, Global Sound becomes a vehicle for both the materials themselves and the “loosening up” of Smithsonian Folkways' curatorial process<sup>11</sup>. A logical next step for Global Sound would involve submissions by researchers and “amateur”

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<sup>11</sup> For a more detailed understanding of the process of archival partnerships and submission of materials to Global Sound, refer to draft documents reproduced in Appendix 8 on pages 62-78.

recordists directly to Global Sound. Field recordings by scholars, accompanied by texts, images, and videos, could be incorporated into Global Sound's collection at a relatively low cost, and legal issues could be addressed through standardized documents that might lead to unexpected revenue to the artists. Efforts are underway to facilitate the accession of materials into Global Sound. Streamlined forms for "ingestion" and "importation" of new materials into Global Sound — drafts of which are reproduced in the Appendix — are clearly designed with both institutions and individual researchers in mind. This represents another possible return to the ways of the late Moses Asch, who published albums of field recordings by anthropologists and other recordists using portable tape machines, particularly under the Ethnic Folkways series.

Another of the project's challenges — a perennial topic of discussion and debate within ethnomusicology — has been how to approach musical genre (see, for example, Myers 1992, Nettl 2005). For nearly two years, Global Sound's search parameters did not include genre; that is, visitors could search according to artists names, "culture groups" (a curious euphemism for ethnicities), and instrument names or groups (along the lines of the Sachs-Hornbostel organology, i.e. "membranophones"). The recent inclusion of "genre" as a search parameter in Global Sound is an interesting, gradual development: a drop-down menu currently allows visitors to scroll through a list of ninety-four genres that includes Afro-Cuban, Ambient, Old Time, Raga, twelve types of song (from ballad to work), and several categories that include spoken word recordings.

Meanwhile, in what seems like a parallel musical universe, the DJs at blentwell.com offer access to their free MP3 creations through a sophisticated

categorization scheme that includes hundreds of genres. Global Sound and Blentwell seem to share a disregard for the gross categorizations of musical genres typical of most music retailers (Pop, Rock, World, etc) in favor of remarkable variety and specificity. Within their distinct musical vocabularies, both Global Sound and Blentwell employ this specificity regarding musical genre as a powerful symbol of both respect for artists' conceptions of genres and an implicitly non-commercial orientation. (Blentwell, it is worth noting, offers only free digital music.) On behalf of the ARCE, Chaudhuri argued for indigenous taxonomy/categories for musical genres which have yet to be incorporated into the indexing for the database (Chuahduri p.c. 2007). The initial assignment of genre(s) to musical performance — and subsequent incorporation of genre as a parameter into the database and search engine — involves substantial labor and expertise. While the database and search engine at Global Sound is clearly more detailed and more useful to scholars and specialists than the search engines of other Internet services, they are clearly works in progress.

## 9. Global Sound as Applied Ethnomusicology

Global Sound and similar projects practice what we could call applied ethnomusicology. A single definition of applied ethnomusicology is — as a missive from the SEM’s own Applied Ethnomusicology Section excerpted in the Appendix below admits — “elusive” (SEM 2006). The thrust of applied ethnomusicology, however, resonates especially well with the mission statements of both Smithsonian Folkways and Global Sound: applying musical knowledge in a “constructive manner”; “empowering” individuals and communities; and “advocacy and social justice” (SEM 2006).

Ethical concerns, as well as both explicit and subtle ideological positions, are clearly articulated by both Smithsonian Folkways and Global Sound. Royalties paid to artists are prominently advertised as an intrinsically positive novelty. This is in sharp contrast to the near-infamous disregard for such legal and ethical rigor when Moses Asch ran Folkways Records which Seeger elegantly described as royalties paid “without any regularity” (p.c. 2006). And while Global Sound and Smithsonian Folkways are non-profit, they are expected to make a profit in order to sustain and, ideally, expand their operations. Their mission is educational and humanistic in nature, and their ethical standards are presented as exemplary. A promotional brochure for Global Sound invites visitors to “support musicians around the world” and boldly asserts that “these groundbreaking practices allow musicians and artists a chance to maintain their cultures and to profit from their work.”

In an emotionally charged contribution to a “Call and Response” feature in the journal *Ethnomusicology* titled “Applied Sociomusicology and Performance Studies,”

Charles Keil addresses a set of issues of vital and fundamental importance to the study of music.

Save the world for posterity? Is that really the responsibility of music-makers, dancers, performers and performance theorists, ethnomusicologists and the like? I think that is the safest, sanest, and finally a very humbling assumption to make. While we are losing species diversity and cultural diversity, as we lose life on earth and our diverse human capacities to be a continuing part of life on earth, we have to encourage each other to dance, drum, sing, and dramatize sustainable futures of pleasurable paths toward sustainable futures, with ever growing energy ... In short, trying to figure out a new relationship for an expanded ethnomusicology in the academy requires thinking about a whole range of major and pressing issues, starting with capital's seemingly infinite capacity to destroy life and the reasons why we are faced with this mostly untapped capacity of broad-spectrum performing to affirm it (1998:304).

Essentially, Keil asks, What value does our work as music scholars hold for humanity<sup>12</sup>? This question lies at the heart of the ethical, activist ideals of applied ethnomusicology. In an insightful analysis of the problems facing archives around the world, archivist Dietrich Schuller of the Vienna Phonogrammarchiv articulates some of the structural issues that contribute to a divergence between the goals of preservation and the goals of scholarship:

Another considerable problem in optimizing the safeguarding of audiovisual research material is the fact that many unique sources are not held by professional archives. It can be estimated that 80% of all ethnomusicological and linguistic recordings — be they audio or video — are held by research institutes, whose primary aim is to further the knowledge within their subjects, the sources being but tools to support these aims. The *raison d'être* of the ethnomusicologist whose institute holds a collection of importance is not to safeguard these holdings: his or her aim is to advance knowledge by publications. Academic careers are measured by the quality and quantity of such publications and not by the number of important audiovisual documents which the researcher has safeguarded, not even if such documents have been the outcome of the respective researcher's fieldwork (2004:64).

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<sup>12</sup> Keil offers his own music project with children — found at [musekids.org](http://musekids.org) — as an example of his own efforts to address these issues.

In a brief and modestly titled article in *Ethnomusicology*, “A Few Notions about Philosophy and Strategy in Applied Ethnomusicology,” Daniel Sheehy offers a clear distillation of some of the principles of applied ethnomusicology and a set of historical references for the development of this approach in the United States (1992). Sheehy describes applied ethnomusicology as “promoted as a career option,” “praised as an avenue to benefit humanity in ways that the academy has not,” “talked about in terms of an ethical responsibility to ‘pay back’ those whose music and lives we study and make our livings from,” and “defined by the kinds of activities that often result from it, such as recordings, festivals, exhibits, and so forth” (1992:323). Significantly, each of these four characteristic elements of applied ethnomusicology are to be found in the Global Sound project.

It is worth returning, at this point, to McAllester’s refrain: “It’s all connected.” Sheehy’s seminal contribution to the literature on applied ethnomusicology was written years before he became Director of Smithsonian Folkways — that is, during Seeger’s tenure as Director. Perhaps more importantly, the central figures that Sheehy cites in his article are influential in both ethnomusicology and the folk revival in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s — both cultural streams of fundamental importance to Smithsonian Folkways. Among the names mentioned, we find Charles Seeger (grandfather of Anthony) and John Lomax (father of Alan), suggesting that one of the most basic human links — blood — flows through this vital stream in North American music, along with personal links of personal, musical, and scholarly affinity.



## 10. Access, Royalties, and Ethics: A Postcolonial Model

Contemporary controversies in world music often boil down to financial compensation and intellectual property. While problematic issues of representation and the colonial legacy dominated anthropology during the late 20th century, the enthusiastic portrayal of non-Western musicians as an exotic, essentialized “other” is seldom seen as objectionable or unethical. The “culturally potent, meaning-laden medium of music” (Smithsonian Global Sound 2007) is generally understood to celebrate ethnic and cultural difference while maintaining its mystique as a “universal language.” Numerous authors have commented on a host of instances that share these common features: musicians from far-away places have been recorded (or just “sampled”) by Westerners without permission, without being given credit (making them anonymous, like a traditional song), and/or without being paid fairly (if at all) for their musical work. Examples of these well-documented controversies include Taiwanese Ami musicians Ying-nan and Kuo Shin-chu being sampled by the band Enigma (Taylor 2001), South African group Ladysmith Black Mambazo's role in Paul Simon's blockbuster “Rhythm of the Saints” album (Hamm 1989, Meintjes 1990), and the Solomon Islands musicians recorded for UNESCO by Hugo Zemp, emulated by Bill Summers and Herbie Hancock, and sampled on a hit album by Deep Forest — who erroneously identified them as Central African pygmies (Feld 1994,1996).

However, when non-Western musicians are compensated for their work through a fair portion of revenue from sales of recordings, the recording venture is regarded as a form of activism. The model instituted at the inception of Smithsonian Folkways resolves many of these thorny issues in a disarmingly direct way — contracts are negotiated and honored, credit is given, and royalties are paid. The

revenue earned becomes a way to contribute to the musicians and their communities. While ethnomusicologists who study, record, and explain musicians to their academic colleagues seldom (if ever) share in the revenue from subsequent publications and faculty salaries with the subjects of their research, Smithsonian Folkways and Global Sound share in the revenue (and credit) from the musical products. Moreover, their rigorous approach to royalties and intellectual property is combined with an embrace of cultural and musical difference which amounts to a sane, ethical way of representing the exotic “other.”

In the old, colonialist period ... we’ve got collectors going out. The Smithsonian was founded on this principle. It comes out of the British model. You go to a far away place, you find things that are novel, exotic, strange, unique. You bring them back. We can bring them back without taking them. We can bring them back and give back to those who are willing to share. We can give back to the cultures. We can give back to the artists, or their heirs if they’re no longer with us. This is not the old model. This is a new model of collecting ... Because much of what is in the collection is stuff that the audience that might encounter it by searching online would identify ... as Strange. And when you identify Strange you can respond to it with curiosity or fear. To enhance the curiosity, we have the original liner notes, which are a key element. We have stronger indexing than you find on any commercial website. And more and more we have video and photographic content to provide far more than any liner notes — even great liner notes — could ever do ... People have a gateway where they can really encounter the cultural “other” on their own terms, and on its own terms (Sonneborn p.c. 2007).

Clearly, representing artists “on their own terms” is not this simple: the very idea of collecting represents a complex, problematic interaction; for example, the composition of liner notes is seldom performed by musicians themselves. Rhetorically, however, this approach to “other”-ness is clearly emphasized in Global Sound’s new mission statement, which sets out to help people “discover and appreciate other people, other value systems, and other realms of human accomplishment,” and “enhancing awareness and appreciation of the cultural heritage

of others” (2007). In the midst of the “crisis of representation” that reassessed the role of the social sciences in increasingly problematic, politicized, and power-laden terms, the reformation of Folkways’ approach to royalties and licensing allowed this “new model” to flourish by directly addressing the most easily quantified — and most contentious — vessel of power and resources: money. It is important to remember that many of the earliest and most sophisticated discussions of globalization, transnationalism, and cosmopolitanism come from scholars primarily interested in economic phenomena. If we focus on the economics of Smithsonian Folkways and Global Sound, we find keys to its prestige and singular way of mediating world music on the Internet. Of course, Smithsonian Folkways’ and Global Sound’s approach to royalties and intellectual property does not address all of the problematic issues of representation, agency, exoticism, and the colonial legacy. It is, however, certainly a compelling way to address the crucial — and often problematic — issues of intellectual property and financial compensation.

## **11. If You Take the King's Coin ...**

They say that “if you take the king’s coin, you play the king’s tune.” However, caustic songs of protest have been introduced into Global Sound through a recent partnership with Paredon Records. These releases — promoted aggressively at Global Sound — include Barbara Dane’s “I Hate the Capitalist System,” Amaury Perez Vidal’s anti-colonial, pro-independence “Siempre con Puerto Rico,” and speeches by Fidel Castro and Black Panther Huey P. Newton. Let us remember that Global Sound is a musical arm of the Smithsonian Institution – the national museum of the United States of America – clearly articulating autonomy and dissent. As I was reminded by both Seeger and Sonneborn, Smithsonian Folkways and Global Sound are not funded directly from federal funds, although the Smithsonian Institution does receive federal funding. That is, while both projects are self-sustaining, they are also work in association with and under the auspices of the Smithsonian Institution. Nonetheless, both Smithsonian Folkways and Global Sound clearly enjoy much of the prestige associated with the Smithsonian Institution. Paradoxically, a great deal of Smithsonian Folkways and Global Sound’s loyal audience also appreciates the counterculture, non-mainstream currents in the catalog.

The “subtexts” running through the catalogs of Folkways, Smithsonian Folkways and Global Sound are manifest political and cultural expressions and easily interpreted as indicative of institutional values and ideologies. In fact, this orientation recalls values clearly expressed in Asch’s Folkways catalog: the Folkways and Smithsonian Folkways catalogs advocate for more than just cultural diversity; they also express populism — literally embedded in the label’s name — and are unashamedly leftist — especially by the standards of the current political climate in

the United States. Interestingly, Seeger and Sonneborn both characterized politically charged releases as “topical,” linking them directly to the Folkways tradition of Moses Asch.

One of the things that you can identify as an important stream in Folkways is the idea of topical music— issues of the day spoken to in music, commented upon and criticized, including direct social criticism and political criticism in opposition to the power structures of whatever day. We recognize that. I mean, it’s a fact (p.c. 2007).

A recent series of releases by Smithsonian Folkways presents music from Central Asia — including Afghanistan, Iraq, and Iran — coinciding precisely with the United States military incursions into these regions is a contemporary example of these topical releases. The cover for “When the Soul Is Settled” by Rahim Alhaj features both English and Arabic texts equal typographical weight — one spine of the CD is in Arabic, the other in English. The following excerpt from an interview with Sonneborn, who produced and wrote the liner notes for the Rahim Alhaj recording, illustrates several dimensions of this topical element in the Smithsonian Folkways and Global Sound catalogs.

AS: It made sense to me — personally — when, after 9/11, it became obvious we were going to invade Afghanistan to go after the people who apparently had given us 9/11 ... We’re going to send a military presence into this culture. Americans are going to become curious about it. They’re not going to get enough from the mainstream media. During time of war, we get a very two-dimensional picture of other culture’s people, and music is always about people. You have the music maker and you have the auditor, the listener ... I thought it was important to do something to relieve that two-dimensionality that we would get from the media to better understand Afghani people. The same occurred again 2002, when it became evident to us that we were going to go into Iraq ... Let’s know these people. How are we going to know these people? What is their music tradition? ... Ultimately the album came out at a time when the debate was really coming to a head about, “What are we doing in this place? Who are these people and what are we doing this for?” So, I think we made a small contribution to the cultural dialog.

DF: It seems like that contribution is extremely subtle and restrained compared to Barbara Dane's records. There's an elegance that maybe wasn't there before, but it's also maybe so abstract that it'll go over people's head completely. I'm sure that's come up in your mind and in conversation with the other folks who work here. Did those conversations —

AS: I've never heard that thought before this moment. It never came up in conversation. That idea of going over people's heads — I mean, I know how many copies our albums sell. Compared to the major labels, we're a speck of dust. I think it's point zero zero — I don't remember how many zero's, and then a three — percent of the market. I think it's either three thousandths of a percent or three ten-thousandths of a percent of the market, so we're not going to ever strike a lot of people. But, historically, Folkways affected people's lives — not many people's lives, but some people's lives — in a positive way. Maybe because we have this comprehension ... about its past, it gives us a sense that Barbara Dane couldn't have had at the time. She wasn't thinking about a time thirty years or a hundred years from that moment. She was saying, "These are people involved in struggle against various forms of oppression, and I want their voices heard" ... We're part of the national museum. We're not advocating the overthrow of a government. We're saying, "Here are interesting cultural expressions. Here's another one." And it becomes topical only because it's an issue of the day. But a hundred years from now — I hope — my successors will say, "Boy, I'm glad they did that. It's still worth listening to because it's a good documentation of a musical tradition at a particular moment."

DF: I guess what's striking to me is that those releases are topical in a very indirect way — in a non-literal way, where if you're listening to this one hundred years from now, unless you do the historical math, it'll be beautiful recordings that people will undoubtedly be grateful for, but the context in which you're recording and releasing this stuff is going to be implicit, not at the forefront. Maybe that's something that you're doing deliberately? I'm wondering how deliberate that is — it seems like this is [presented as] evergreen music ...

AS: To me what it comes down to is that beauty transcends time. And so if we do a good piece of work — whatever our reasons were in the moment felt different after time — but the beauty will remain.

DF: But then the goal is the beauty of the recording, not so much the topical aspect of the recording ...

AS: If we wanted to make a topical, political point, we would have packaged it in such a way that it would do that. But you're right — I mean, I don't think hammering people over the head with it is the best way of getting a message across ... Because we're in a political context — although Folkways doesn't receive funds from the federal government, the Smithsonian does. So, we

learned as an institution in the time of the Enola Gay when they wanted to put it on exhibition, that it was a mistake for the Smithsonian to ask the pointed questions<sup>13</sup>. That's not its role. Its role is representation, not confrontation ... I can't think of anything more topical at a time when we're at war in this place than to show an aspect of it to whomever is interested (p.c. 2007).

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13 The controversy over the Smithsonian's exhibition of the (in)famous WWII Enola Gay bomber has been described in the press and several books. Richard Kurin, Director of the Smithsonian Center for Folklife, provides an account of the controversy in his book, *Reflections of a Culture Broker: A View from the Smithsonian*. Both Seeger and Sonneborn mentioned the Enola Gay controversy in their responses to my questions about Smithsonian Folkways' politicized, topical releases.

Like Sonneborn's comments above, Global Sound's new mission statement is clearly more direct in its expression of activist goals than the previous mission statement. Meanwhile, a recent "New This Month" recording at the Smithsonian Folkways and Global Sound websites is "Classic Labor Songs." There is no nationalist agenda at work here, promoting the cultural value of culture coming from the United States along the lines of cultural patrimony; instead, there is a platform for autonomy and dissent. I believe that this part of Moses Asch's legacy has been proudly maintained: there are messages in this music, even if they subjected to various layers of subtle encoding and mediation. Rather than simply inherited "left-wing" political tendencies which could be traced to the "pro-labor" activism of Asch's parents, however, we find the cultivation of broader ideals: cultural pluralism and the autonomy of under-represented, "small" voices.

Another more subtle — but equally significant — example of the expression of values at Global Sound are the use of the FLAC format and the lack of Digital Rights Management (DRM) technology for the MP3 format audio files downloaded from Global Sound. For the consumer, this means that files downloaded from Global Sound can be copied and shared at will without restrictions or online monitoring. The use of the the FLAC format, in particular, connects Global Sound to the open source movement, which advocates for autonomous, legal, and free sharing of technology; aside from its technical merits as an option for the archiving of digital audio (a relatively small file size relative to the resolution of the audio), the FLAC format is free, open-source coding technology.

A recent press release from Apple's CEO Steve Jobs addressed the topic of DRM technology directly. (Due to the aforementioned ephemeral nature of Internet



postings, I have reproduced excerpts from Jobs's message in the Appendix.) Jobs maintains that the "big four" record companies — Universal, Sony BMG, Warner and EMI — insisted on Apple's "DRM system, which envelopes each song purchased from the iTunes store in special and secret software so that the audio cannot be played on unauthorized devices" (2007). Interestingly, another announcement came from Apple only two months later, stating that the EMI Music's catalog would be available through iTunes without DRM encoding — for an additional .30¢ per song (Apple 2007). In the aftermath of the Napster controversy, a remarkable public discourse has arisen around issues of intellectual property, music technology, economics, ethics, the structure of the music industry in the 21st century, and the roles of musicians and publishers in the marketplace. In this regard, it appears that Global Sound has taken the high road by developing an approach that caters to artists (through generous royalty terms and rigorous licensing contracts) and consumers (through file formats that avoid the limitations of DRM technologies).

## **12. Downloads, Subscriptions, and ... Marketing? What Marketing?**

To my surprise, I quickly learned that direct sales of digital files to customers, while rising steadily, are a minimal source of income for Global Sound. Everyone I interviewed agreed that sales of digital files represent a very small portion of Global Sound's income (and, by extension, an even smaller portion of Smithsonian Folkways' income). The most profitable function of Global Sound is its institutional subscription service. Global Sound receives varying amounts from numerous institutions for annual subscriptions, which are offered on a sliding scale to accommodate large and small institutions. In exchange, members of subscriber institutions (typically universities and libraries) gain unlimited access to the enormous resources of the Global Sound archives in streaming formats. (Downloads of digital audio files, which must be purchased at their standard price.) There is reason to suspect that sales of digital audio files will become the source of a more substantial portion of Smithsonian Folkways' — eventually, perhaps, exceeding physical CD sales — but this remains speculative.

The Global Sound for Libraries subscription service was designed and continues to be managed by Alexander Street Press, an independent company contracted by Smithsonian Folkways. The intersection of the distinct institutional goals of Smithsonian Folkways/Global Sound and Alexander Street Press forms fertile ground for further investigation, particularly in terms of the ways different institutional goals and values are expressed and negotiated. In general, there is a movement towards developing music subscription models in the Internet's considerable marketplace music, spearheaded by services like eMusic, Rhapsody, and the reformed, legitimate reincarnation of Napster.

How are artists compensated by the library subscriptions? The substantial amount of income from the subscriptions may be enough to sustain Global Sound, regardless of its modest success as a digital music retailer, but the blanket access to the archives without anyone ever actually owning a copy of a recording creates a technologically challenging situation, part of the moving target of rapidly evolving technologies employed by Global Sound. According to Dodds, “Track usage statistics are gathered and are calculated alongside income received. Royalties are paid on revenue generated and are calculated using percentages established by prior agreements” (p.c. 2007). The models employed by various subscription services, including Global Sound and Rhapsody, are a complex and important area for further investigation. For the moment, it is important to note that subscription services do not simply compensate artists through a penny-per-play model.

In talking with Toby Dodds and Amy Schriefer — who together comprise the entire full-time staff of Global Sound — I was amazed to discover the paucity of marketing (and marketing research) conducted for the project. Demographic information on their customers was apparently not being gathered, and I have not been able to gather how much market research was conducted in the design and publicizing of Global Sound before, during, and since its launch. As every independent music producer in the world knows, releasing music successfully depends on marketing releases — if potential customers don’t know that a record has been released, they can’t buy it. Most music labels — including small, independent labels — spend as much money marketing releases as they do recording and reproducing them. Without effective marketing, Global Sound will be limited in its ability to develop as a service. To its credit, Alexander Street Press has successfully

marketed the Global Sound subscription service to universities; according to Sonneborn, “[Alexander Street Press] already had a marketing and sales force in place to sell such things. That’s why I think the institutional subscriptions have done well” (p.c. 2007). However, if the Global Sound web site also needs marketing to stimulate its sales and provide resources for its maintenance and development, what strategies might be most effective?

According to Dodds, “Current marketing efforts are geared primarily towards the academic community. We’re hoping to expand our online marketing efforts by developing more and more popular features and by networking within grassroots communities around the world” (p.c. 2007). In addition to this, there might be any number of approaches to marketing that might be custom tailored to Global Sound — grassroots marketing has proven itself among independent music labels, especially among younger music lovers, through Internet fora such as MySpace and Facebook. A number of firms specialize in marketing independent, world music, and music on the Internet. It is possible that a small amount of resources dedicated to marketing might go a long way toward generating more income for Global Sound. Considering the substantial contacts with students and scholars and large portion of Global Sound’s income that are generated by the subscription service, it seems especially important for the project to make itself known to teachers, librarians, and students in universities — including universities that are already subscribers. In the course of my research, it has been amazing to discover how few of my classmates in the musicology/ethnomusicology division knew about Smithsonian Global Sound; for example, a quick survey before a colloquium paper I delivered on Global Sound in September showed that only 5 out of 18 of the people in the room had heard of the

project. This means that, despite the fact our university pays for a subscription, a remarkably small number of students and faculty make use of it. Teachers, in particular, might be courted more aggressively through promotional materials and other types of marketing to ensure that the service is put to good use and that demand for the renewal of subscriptions is maintained.

The path that lead me to academic research on Global Sound began with a proposal to Global Sound for an artistic project that complements my current, scholarly work. A series of remixes of music from the Global Sound catalog is an idea long overdue that would allow Smithsonian Folkways to reach a new audience of music lovers: a mass of young, international mass of listeners with a taste for hybrid forms of world music and innovative electronic music. Remix series from seminal jazz labels Blue Note and Verve have found commercial and critical success. This type of series would also shine a spotlight on some amazing recordings in the Global Sound catalog that are, unfortunately, often overlooked. From the late 1950's to the 1980's, Folkways released numerous contemporary, experimental music recordings which are now seldom mentioned, even in today's electronic-rich soundscape. For example, Ilhan Mimaroglu's "To Kill a Sunrise and La Ruche" and Gianni Safred's "Futuribile: The Life to Come" are among a string of innovative, electronic music and artistically idiosyncratic Folkways releases. A project of this sort would enliven this essential thread in the fabric of Smithsonian Folkways Records and help to draw a large group of listeners' attention directly to Global Sound. Hip-hop artists' sampling has lead a great many fans to seek and learn more about source material — from the funkateers in Parliament to jazz organ giant Jimmy Smith to Indian Bhangra — that are integral aural elements of their favorite songs. With a Global Sound remix project,

rigorous documentation and informative liner notes mean that curious listeners would be two mouse clicks away from access to the original recordings and a wealth of information about them.

### 13. Closing

Now, let's take this opportunity to step back and keep some pragmatic issues in perspective: despite enormous potential, grandeur and cache, the reality of Global Sound is, in many ways, still modest. For all of the unique, hard-to-find music and materials available through Global Sound, a box full of DVDs could contain the entire catalog. Global Sound is an ambitious project supported by some of the most powerful and influential cultural organizations in the world, but it is limited by a very real struggle for resources. A small staff are dedicated to a noble goal, and their hard work is rewarded with modest pay. To put it quite simply, the most important thing I have learned during my research on Global Sound is that the project is important as a pioneering effort to disseminate world music through the Internet and deserves more attention and support from scholars and academic faculty. Like Olmsted's account of Folkways Records, my own exploration of the Global Sound project suggests a relevance that extends well beyond scholarly or musical concerns.

Folkways is more than just a company that produced recordings for the marketplace. It has created a catalog that is academically important to researchers as well as musically important to listeners around the world. Few companies can claim to produce material that has had the kind of global impact on music — that has opened the ears of music listeners and creators around the world — as Folkways recordings (Olmsted 2003:3).

Global Sound, like Folkways, is more than just a music emporium on the Internet, and it is both timely and gratifying to note the recent changes to the mission statement, which emphasize what I consider the project's most distinctive and valuable aspects. The cultural pluralism and advocacy of "small voices" in the world of music are particularly timely as the Internet broadens and increases musical,

cultural, economic, and political connections around the world. As a project rooted in a tradition of North American applied ethnomusicology, Global Sound is also a vital contribution to a broader endeavor that, as Olmsted and Sheehy prove, can be traced directly to the early 20th century's great ethnomusicologists and folklorists. Sheehy notes that "the intellectual histories of ethnomusicology, particularly in the United States, virtually exclude thought about the guiding philosophies and many endeavors in applied work" (1992:324) and goes on to describe some of the reasons for this omission:

Part of the responsibility rests on the shoulders of we (ethnomusicologists) who have been a part of the explosion of activity in applied work ... but who have neglected to share our outlook, insights, and experiences with the field at large (1992:325).

Hopefully, this thesis represents a small step towards remedying this gap. Sheehy goes on to quote an address by Alan Lomax in which Lomax affirms that "cultural feedback, through the use of field recordings published as discs and broadcast, and films projected and televised, has become an easy matter" (1992:333). Although the relative ease of such dissemination and feedback may be a question of perspective, the Global Sound project and my research are reflections of these goals, as well as acts of advocacy for their development.

And what *would* Alan Lomax's iPod sound like? Seeger suggested that, due to Lomax's fascination with African-American music, Hip Hop would be well represented (p.c. 2007). Thanks to the Alan Lomax Archives website ([lomaxarchive.com](http://lomaxarchive.com), launched two months after Global Sound), we can hear MP3 excerpts of lectures by Lomax on the Global Jukebox in which he discusses his work recording prison songs, including the heavy equipment that he carried and took entire



days to set up. Then, we can hear one of these prison song recordings by Lomax — a 1959 performance of “Ain’t Been Able to Go Back Home No More” by Heuston Earnes in Camp B of the Mississippi State Penitentiary, better known as Parchman Farm. Lomax's omnivorous and prolific spirit — along with his concept of the Global Jukebox — certainly play a crucial role in the story of Smithsonian Global Sound.

For my own part, I have been happily searching the collection for months and still find myself continually, joyfully lost in searches through Global Sound — a very dangerous luxury for a graduate student with several jobs and a thesis to write. I expect that the most valuable conclusions and directions for future research will develop out of exchanges with the people who helped me conduct this research — and numerous others who I have yet to contact or interview formally — once I am able to share this thesis with them. I also look forward to depositing copies of interview recordings and transcripts at the Smithsonian Folkways archive.

There are, of course, numerous other provocative topics having to do with Global Sound that are beyond the scope of this thesis, and the issues I have raised could all be elaborated upon further and taken in different directions. For example, Smithsonian Folkways and Global Sound are fascinating case studies in some of the myriad ways that music scholarship, journalism, publishing, and education converge and diverge. The individual archives that have already partnered with Global Sound — ARCE and ILAM — both offer enormous opportunities for intensive research. Although Olmsted and documented Folkways Records, a similar study of Smithsonian Folkways has yet to be undertaken, and I hope that this thesis points to some of the unique histories and issues such research might involve.

There are developments that seem logical next steps for Global Sound. A more open and active involvement by Global Sound users seems inevitable, like the virtual interaction among users that is mediated by iTunes in their iMix function— playlists that could be shared among users and offer users ways to become involved with the service and other users more directly. More generally, increased collaboration with and between customers could prove to be one of the most interesting and stimulating advancements for the program. Translation of portions of Global Sound's text — a development discussed enthusiastically by Dodds (p.c. 2007) — would increase accessibility enormously, but the amount of resources required for substantial translations of the material remain prohibitive at this point. As I made clear in my discussion of Global Sound's marketing, the promotion of the project is essential to its success — creative marketing efforts could break through many of the obstacles created by a lack of resources. The constant tension between humanism (propelled by philanthropy and sacrifice) and profitability (propelled by marketing and commerce), tempered by rigorous ethical and legal standards, drives the Global Sound project and may serve is likely to serve as a model and precedent for future scholars, publishers, and performers of music.

## Appendices

Appendix 1. The Mission and History of Smithsonian Folkways (April 20, 2007)  
from [http://www.folkways.si.edu/about\\_folkways/history\\_mission.html](http://www.folkways.si.edu/about_folkways/history_mission.html):

Smithsonian Folkways Mission:

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings is the nonprofit record label of the Smithsonian Institution, the national museum of the United States. We are dedicated to supporting cultural diversity and increased understanding among peoples through the documentation, preservation, and dissemination of sound. We believe that musical and cultural diversity contributes to the vitality and quality of life throughout the world. Through the dissemination of audio recordings and educational materials we seek to strengthen people's engagement with their own cultural heritage and to enhance their awareness and appreciation of the cultural heritage of others. Our mission is the legacy of Moses Asch, who founded Folkways Records in 1948 to document "people's music," spoken word, instruction, and sounds from around the world. The Smithsonian acquired Folkways from the Asch estate in 1987, and Smithsonian Folkways Recordings has continued the Folkways commitment to cultural diversity, education, increased understanding, and lively engagement with the world of sound.

Our History:

Folkways Records & Service Co. was founded in 1948 in New York City by Moses Asch (1905-1986) and Marian Distler (1919-1964). Under Asch's enthusiastic and dedicated direction, Folkways sought to record and document the entire world of sound. Between 1948 and Asch's death, Folkways' tiny staff released 2,168 albums. Topics included traditional, ethnic, and contemporary music from around the world; poetry, spoken word, and instructional recordings in numerous languages; and documentary recordings of individuals, communities, current events, and natural sounds.

As one of the first record companies to offer albums of "world music," and as an early exponent of the singers and songwriters who formed the core of the American folk music revival (including such giants as Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, and Lead Belly), Asch's Folkways grew to become one of the most influential record companies in the world.

Following Asch's death in 1987, the Smithsonian Institution Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage in Washington, D.C., acquired Folkways Recordings and the label's business papers and files in order to ensure that the sounds and genius of its artists would continue to be available to future generations.

As a condition of the acquisition, the Smithsonian agreed that virtually all of the firm's 2,168 titles would remain "in print" forever--a condition that Smithsonian Folkways continues to honor through its custom order service. Whether it sells 8,000

copies each year or only one copy every five years, every Folkways title remains available for purchase.

In the years since 1987, Smithsonian Folkways has continued to expand on Asch's legacy, adding several other record labels to the collections and releasing over 300 new recordings that document and celebrate the sounds of the world around us.

\* \* \*

Appendix 2. Previous Smithsonian Global Sound "Mission Statement" and "Our Story" text, downloaded in September, 2006 from <http://www.smithsonianglobalsound.org/missionstatement.aspx>:

"Mission Statement: Statement of purpose":

Smithsonian Global Sound delivers the world's diverse cultural expressions via the Internet in an informative way for a reasonable price. It also helps encourage local musicians and traditions around the planet through international recognition, the payment of royalties, and support for regional archives.

"Our Story: About Smithsonian Global Sound":

Smithsonian Global Sound (SGS) is a project of the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. By preserving and disseminating a broad range of the world's music, SGS assists local traditions by using the power of the Internet for global cultural communication and exchange. SGS joins with institutions around the world to document, record, archive, catalog and digitize music and other verbal arts and distribute them via the World Wide Web. Royalties go to artists and institutions, and honor the intellectual-property rights of composers, musicians, and producers.

In addition to supporting the creation, continuity, and preservation of diverse musical forms, SGS provides educators, students and interested listeners with an unprecedented variety of online musical resources, including recordings, expert descriptions, and images that connect recordings to their social contexts.

SGS has received initial support from the Creativity and Culture Program and the Program Investment Fund of the Rockefeller Foundation as well as the Paul Allen Foundation for Music.

The Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage began the project of recording, preserving, and distributing the world's music in 1987, when it acquired Folkways Records and its archive of 2,168 album titles. Since then, the Center has kept the original catalog in print and has published some 300 titles, newly recorded and re-released from the archive - available at [www.folkways.si.edu](http://www.folkways.si.edu).

Launched in February 2005, SGS initially offers almost the entire Folkways and Smithsonian Folkways Recordings collections and the holdings of two regional

archives: the International Library of African Music (ILAM), in Grahamstown, South Africa, and the Archives and Research Center for Ethnomusicology (ARCE), in New Delhi, India. Expansion of educational offerings and user groups and partnerships with other archives around the world are anticipated with the growth and success of SGS. Please continue to visit the site for updates and new features.

As part of the Smithsonian Institution and Smithsonian Folkways Records, Smithsonian Global Sound is part of the national museum of the United States of America.

\* \* \*

Appendix 3. Current Smithsonian Global Sound “Mission Statement” and “Purpose” text (“Purpose” replaced “Our Story” in this new version) downloaded in March, 2007 from <http://www.smithsonianglobalsound.org/missionstatement.aspx>:

#### Mission

Smithsonian Global Sound is an international network of music audio archives and an educational resource that delivers the world’s diverse cultural expressions in an informative way via digital media.

#### Purpose

As a nonprofit endeavor, Smithsonian Global Sound is above all a mission rather than a commercial product, offering broad accessibility to the “smaller voices” of people all over the world. In pursuit of this mission, it harnesses the power of internet commerce to deliver recorded sound from many cultures around the world to the widest audience possible. Smithsonian Global Sound’s essence and purpose are fundamentally different from that of commercial digital music delivery services. It aims to heighten communication among and about people and cultures, accomplished principally through the culturally potent, meaning-laden medium of music, accompanied by informative notes and educational features. The content it delivers is the window through which Smithsonian Global Sound users may discover and appreciate other people, other value systems, and other realms of human accomplishment. And, in an increasingly mobile and culturally scattered world, it provides a link for the culturally estranged and isolated to connect with their own heritage through a curated, distilled collection of recorded sound.

Smithsonian Global Sound is grounded in the mission of the Smithsonian’s Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage: to promote the understanding and continuity of diverse, contemporary grassroots cultures. It is closely allied with another Center division, Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, dedicated to strengthening people’s engagement with their own cultural heritage and enhancing awareness and appreciation of the cultural heritage of others through the dissemination of audio recordings and educational materials. It also collaborates with the annual Smithsonian Folklife Festival, an exercise in cultural democracy in which people are given a platform to speak for themselves. Smithsonian Global Sound strengthens these efforts as it further extends the notion of the “Long Tail” of internet music sales, making available “people’s music” from archives in India, Africa, the United States, and

elsewhere, increasing the internet's range of access to the world's cultural heritage. The revenue earned from sales of downloads and subscriptions supports the creation of new educational content and is shared with archival partners, who in turn pass on a portion of those revenues with artists and communities.

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Appendix 4. Excerpts from the Applied Ethnomusicology section of the Society for Ethnomusicology web page  
([http://webdb.iu.edu/sem/scripts/groups/sections/applied/applied\\_ethnomusicology\\_section.cfm](http://webdb.iu.edu/sem/scripts/groups/sections/applied/applied_ethnomusicology_section.cfm)):

*"We are a group of ethnomusicologists with a strong desire to make the world a better place through our work."*

*"If music is culture and culture is a product of society, we must realize how the study of music and those involved with it can benefit the world."*

*"We strive to empower individuals and communities."*

*"For me, what distinguishes applied work is the advocacy & social justice aspect of it."*

*"We see music and musicians and ourselves as profoundly involved in social transformations. "*

*"We listen... advocate... empower...educate and connect people."*

\* \* \*

Appendix 5. Background information on the ARCE from  
<http://www.smithsonianglobalsound.org/musicpartners.aspx>:

Archives and Research Centre for Ethnomusicology (ARCE)

ARCE is one of the most extensive audiovisual repositories of the oral traditions and performing arts of India. Housed in a state-of-the-art facility in New Delhi, it functions as a branch of the American Institute of Indian Studies of the University of Chicago, and is a member of a consortium of 52 major U.S. universities.

Established in 1982, ARCE serves as a repository for research tapes from South Asian and Western scholars. It collects commercial recordings and copies of recordings from collectors' private holdings. Drawn from 154 collections, these recordings range from classical music to folk and popular genres.

Materials deposited in ARCE are cataloged and made accessible to interested scholars and institutions. Global Sound offers the first opportunity for many of these recordings to be distributed around the world.

Among ARCE's publications are the ARCE Newsletter; a volume entitled Texts, Tones and Tunes: A Multicultural Perspective; and The Music of Bharat Natyam, by Jon Higgins. ARCE also carries out research projects, such as the Ethnographic Atlas of Musical Traditions in Western Rajasthan, undertaken with the Rupayan Sansthan (Rajasthan Institute of Folklore), in Jodhpur.

Dr. Shubha Chaudhuri, the director of ARCE, is chief coordinator of the Archives Resource Community (ARC), a network of 13 audiovisual archives in India.

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Appendix 6. Excerpts from Steve Job's February 6, 2007 essay on DRM technology and music, "Thoughts on Music," from <http://www.apple.com/hotnews/thoughtsonmusic/>:

With the stunning global success of Apple's iPod music player and iTunes online music store, some have called for Apple to "open" the digital rights management (DRM) system that Apple uses to protect its music against theft, so that music purchased from iTunes can be played on digital devices purchased from other companies, and protected music purchased from other online music stores can play on iPods. Let's examine the current situation and how we got here, then look at three possible alternatives for the future.

To begin, it is useful to remember that all iPods play music that is free of any DRM and encoded in "open" licensable formats such as MP3 and AAC. iPod users can and do acquire their music from many sources, including CDs they own. Music on CDs can be easily imported into the freely-downloadable iTunes jukebox software which runs on both Macs and Windows PCs, and is automatically encoded into the open AAC or MP3 formats without any DRM. This music can be played on iPods or any other music players that play these open formats.

The rub comes from the music Apple sells on its online iTunes Store. Since Apple does not own or control any music itself, it must license the rights to distribute music from others, primarily the "big four" music companies: Universal, Sony BMG, Warner and EMI. These four companies control the distribution of over 70% of the world's music. When Apple approached these companies to license their music to distribute legally over the Internet, they were extremely cautious and required Apple to protect their music from being illegally copied. The solution was to create a DRM system, which envelopes each song purchased from the iTunes store in special and secret software so that it cannot be played on unauthorized devices.

Apple was able to negotiate landmark usage rights at the time, which include allowing users to play their DRM protected music on up to 5 computers and on an unlimited number of iPods. Obtaining such rights from the music companies was unprecedented at the time, and even today is unmatched by most other digital music services. However, a key provision of our agreements with the music companies is that if our DRM system is compromised and their music becomes playable on

unauthorized devices, we have only a small number of weeks to fix the problem or they can withdraw their entire music catalog from our iTunes store.

To prevent illegal copies, DRM systems must allow only authorized devices to play the protected music. If a copy of a DRM protected song is posted on the Internet, it should not be able to play on a downloader's computer or portable music device. To achieve this, a DRM system employs secrets. There is no theory of protecting content other than keeping secrets. In other words, even if one uses the most sophisticated cryptographic locks to protect the actual music, one must still "hide" the keys which unlock the music on the user's computer or portable music player. No one has ever implemented a DRM system that does not depend on such secrets for its operation.

The problem, of course, is that there are many smart people in the world, some with a lot of time on their hands, who love to discover such secrets and publish a way for everyone to get free (and stolen) music. They are often successful in doing just that, so any company trying to protect content using a DRM must frequently update it with new and harder to discover secrets. It is a cat-and-mouse game. Apple's DRM system is called FairPlay. While we have had a few breaches in FairPlay, we have been able to successfully repair them through updating the iTunes store software, the iTunes jukebox software and software in the iPods themselves. So far we have met our commitments to the music companies to protect their music, and we have given users the most liberal usage rights available in the industry for legally downloaded music.

With this background, let's now explore three different alternatives for the future.

The first alternative is to continue on the current course, with each manufacturer competing freely with their own "top to bottom" proprietary systems for selling, playing and protecting music. It is a very competitive market, with major global companies making large investments to develop new music players and online music stores. Apple, Microsoft and Sony all compete with proprietary systems. Music purchased from Microsoft's Zune store will only play on Zune players; music purchased from Sony's Connect store will only play on Sony's players; and music purchased from Apple's iTunes store will only play on iPods. This is the current state of affairs in the industry, and customers are being well served with a continuing stream of innovative products and a wide variety of choices.

Some have argued that once a consumer purchases a body of music from one of the proprietary music stores, they are forever locked into only using music players from that one company. Or, if they buy a specific player, they are locked into buying music only from that company's music store. Is this true? Let's look at the data for iPods and the iTunes store – they are the industry's most popular products and we have accurate data for them. Through the end of 2006, customers purchased a total of 90 million iPods and 2 billion songs from the iTunes store. On average, that's 22 songs purchased from the iTunes store for each iPod ever sold.

Today's most popular iPod holds 1000 songs, and research tells us that the average iPod is nearly full. This means that only 22 out of 1000 songs, or under 3% of the music on the average iPod, is purchased from the iTunes store and protected with a



DRM. The remaining 97% of the music is unprotected and playable on any player that can play the open formats. Its hard to believe that just 3% of the music on the average iPod is enough to lock users into buying only iPods in the future. And since 97% of the music on the average iPod was not purchased from the iTunes store, iPod users are clearly not locked into the iTunes store to acquire their music.

The second alternative is for Apple to license its FairPlay DRM technology to current and future competitors with the goal of achieving interoperability between different company's players and music stores. On the surface, this seems like a good idea since it might offer customers increased choice now and in the future. And Apple might benefit by charging a small licensing fee for its FairPlay DRM. However, when we look a bit deeper, problems begin to emerge. The most serious problem is that licensing a DRM involves disclosing some of its secrets to many people in many companies, and history tells us that inevitably these secrets will leak. The Internet has made such leaks far more damaging, since a single leak can be spread worldwide in less than a minute. Such leaks can rapidly result in software programs available as free downloads on the Internet which will disable the DRM protection so that formerly protected songs can be played on unauthorized players.

An equally serious problem is how to quickly repair the damage caused by such a leak. A successful repair will likely involve enhancing the music store software, the music jukebox software, and the software in the players with new secrets, then transferring this updated software into the tens (or hundreds) of millions of Macs, Windows PCs and players already in use. This must all be done quickly and in a very coordinated way. Such an undertaking is very difficult when just one company controls all of the pieces. It is near impossible if multiple companies control separate pieces of the puzzle, and all of them must quickly act in concert to repair the damage from a leak.

Apple has concluded that if it licenses FairPlay to others, it can no longer guarantee to protect the music it licenses from the big four music companies. Perhaps this same conclusion contributed to Microsoft's recent decision to switch their emphasis from an "open" model of licensing their DRM to others to a "closed" model of offering a proprietary music store, proprietary jukebox software and proprietary players.

The third alternative is to abolish DRMs entirely. Imagine a world where every online store sells DRM-free music encoded in open licensable formats. In such a world, any player can play music purchased from any store, and any store can sell music which is playable on all players. This is clearly the best alternative for consumers, and Apple would embrace it in a heartbeat. If the big four music companies would license Apple their music without the requirement that it be protected with a DRM, we would switch to selling only DRM-free music on our iTunes store. Every iPod ever made will play this DRM-free music.

Why would the big four music companies agree to let Apple and others distribute their music without using DRM systems to protect it? The simplest answer is because DRMs haven't worked, and may never work, to halt music piracy. Though the big four music companies require that all their music sold online be protected with

DRMs, these same music companies continue to sell billions of CDs a year which contain completely unprotected music. That's right! No DRM system was ever developed for the CD, so all the music distributed on CDs can be easily uploaded to the Internet, then (illegally) downloaded and played on any computer or player.

In 2006, under 2 billion DRM-protected songs were sold worldwide by online stores, while over 20 billion songs were sold completely DRM-free and unprotected on CDs by the music companies themselves. The music companies sell the vast majority of their music DRM-free, and show no signs of changing this behavior, since the overwhelming majority of their revenues depend on selling CDs which must play in CD players that support no DRM system.

So if the music companies are selling over 90 percent of their music DRM-free, what benefits do they get from selling the remaining small percentage of their music encumbered with a DRM system? There appear to be none. If anything, the technical expertise and overhead required to create, operate and update a DRM system has limited the number of participants selling DRM protected music. If such requirements were removed, the music industry might experience an influx of new companies willing to invest in innovative new stores and players. This can only be seen as a positive by the music companies.

Much of the concern over DRM systems has arisen in European countries. Perhaps those unhappy with the current situation should redirect their energies towards persuading the music companies to sell their music DRM-free. For Europeans, two and a half of the big four music companies are located right in their backyard. The largest, Universal, is 100% owned by Vivendi, a French company. EMI is a British company, and Sony BMG is 50% owned by Bertelsmann, a German company. Convincing them to license their music to Apple and others DRM-free will create a truly interoperable music marketplace. Apple will embrace this wholeheartedly.

\* \* \*

Appendix 7. Excerpts from Apple, Inc.'s announcement of DRM-free audio files through iTunes from <http://www.apple.com/pr/library/2007/04/02itunes.html>:

### **Apple Unveils Higher Quality DRM-Free Music on the iTunes Store**

#### **DRM-Free Songs from EMI Available on iTunes for \$1.29 in May**

CUPERTINO, California—April 2, 2007—Apple® today announced that EMI Music's entire digital catalog of music will be available for purchase DRM-free (without digital rights management) from the iTunes® Store worldwide in May. DRM-free tracks from EMI will be offered at higher quality 256 kbps AAC encoding, resulting in audio quality indistinguishable from the original recording, for just \$1.29 per song. In addition, iTunes customers will be able to easily upgrade their entire library of all previously purchased EMI content to the higher quality DRM-free versions for just 30 cents a song. iTunes will continue to offer its entire catalog, currently over five million songs, in the same versions as today—128 kbps AAC encoding with DRM—at the same price of 99 cents per song, alongside DRM-free higher quality versions when available.

“We are going to give iTunes customers a choice—the current versions of our songs for the same 99 cent price, or new DRM-free versions of the same songs with even higher audio quality and the security of interoperability for just 30 cents more,” said Steve Jobs, Apple’s CEO. “We think our customers are going to love this, and we expect to offer more than half of the songs on iTunes in DRM-free versions by the end of this year.”

... With DRM-free music from the EMI catalog, iTunes customers will have the ability to download tracks from their favorite EMI artists without any usage restrictions that limit the types of devices or number of computers that purchased songs can be played on. DRM-free songs purchased from the iTunes Store will be encoded in AAC at 256 kbps, twice the current bit rate of 128 kbps, and will play on all iPods, Mac® or Windows computers, Apple TVs and soon iPhones, as well as many other digital music players.

iTunes will also offer customers a simple, one-click option to easily upgrade their entire library of all previously purchased EMI content to the higher quality DRM-free format for 30 cents a song. All EMI music videos will also be available in DRM-free format with no change in price.

\* \* \*

8. The following (pages 62-78) reproduce three drafts of Smithsonian Global Sound documents: 1) a letter to prospective partner archives; 2) an application to join Smithsonian Global Sound's network of archives; and 3) the technical guidelines for the submission of content to Smithsonian Global Sound. These drafts were last edited in April, 2007 and provide valuable documentation of the project's development. My thanks to Toby Dodds and Atesh Sonneborn for providing these documents and permission to reproduce the full text in this thesis.



Smithsonian Global Sound®

Date

Important Archivist  
Major National/International Archives  
Address  
Address

Dear Head Archivist:

Thank you for your interest in Smithsonian Global Sound®. We are excited about working with you to make your important collection of music available to the world.

Smithsonian Global Sound, a nonprofit educational web-based initiative launched in 2005 by the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, uses recent advances in digital download technology to make otherwise unavailable treasures of traditional music and other audio recordings as appropriate from participating archives worldwide available for purchase by scholars, students, and the public. Through a collaborating organization, Alexander Street Press, it offers subscriptions of the entire Smithsonian Global Sound content to university campus communities and public libraries in North America and around the world. Smithsonian Global Sound seeks to promote traditional arts and artists as it generates and distributes revenue from the website to participating archives to support the collection, production, and preservation of traditional cultures in their nations and communities. It highlights partner archives and artists in special features placed on its website.

This packet contains information about Smithsonian Global Sound, its mission, and the benefits of becoming a participating archive.

\*PART I: APPLICATION TO JOIN SMITHSONIAN GLOBAL SOUND NETWORK addresses how to apply for participation in Smithsonian Global Sound.

\*PART II: TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR DELIVERY outlines the technical specifications to deliver your content to Smithsonian Global Sound. Examples of filled-in data fields are included for your convenience.

#### Smithsonian Global Sound: About the Project

The goals of Smithsonian Global Sound are multi-faceted. First, it is an international resource center where scholars, students, and members of the public can locate, sample, learn about, and purchase selected tracks<sup>14</sup> that are not readily available

---

<sup>14</sup> Track is used here to refer individual audio items, such as a song, an instrumental piece, a single story, etc.

through commercial recordings. Of equal importance, by sharing income from the purchase of digital downloads and subscriptions, the project seeks to provide long-term income to participating archives and generate support for traditional artists by creating new and ongoing revenue opportunities. Furthermore, by publicizing the traditional arts holdings of large and small archives throughout the world, Smithsonian Global Sound has established a new network which increases communications and fosters collaborations among scholars, collectors, and performing artists.

If you have not already done so, we recommend you begin by visiting the Smithsonian Global Sound website [at [www.smithsonianglobalsound.org](http://www.smithsonianglobalsound.org)] to see how it works. Presently the site features over 40,000 selections/tracks, primarily from the holdings of Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, the Archive and Research Centre for Ethnomusicology (ARCE) in New Delhi, India and the International Library of African Music (ILAM) at Willard Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa.

Tracks are easy to access and download and each is enriched by descriptive and didactic materials. Visitors may browse the site by instrument, geographic location, language, and culture group(s). Additional enrichment materials, such as streaming radio, video, and artist profiles are also featured. Unlike material currently offered on such well known sites as Apple's iTunes, the vast majority of Smithsonian Global Sound's digital downloads are rare, noncommercial recordings of traditional music and spoken word drawn from field tapes and regional recordings.

#### Terms of Archival Participation

Participating in Smithsonian Global Sound worldwide network is based on the following mutual assumptions and criteria, that:

- \* There is a mutual interest in promoting traditional music and spoken word, the artists that perform them, and the preservation of their contributions to world culture.
- \* Your archive is interested in promoting worldwide access to and wider knowledge about all or part(s) of your collection(s).
- \* Every time a track is downloaded and purchased by an "end-user," the archive that owns it will receive a fair percentage of the net income.
- \* Payments will be made semi-annually, and will be based on accountings to your archive by the Smithsonian Institution.
- \* Participating archives will make efforts to share an equitable portion of Smithsonian Global Sound revenues with the artist(s) featured in each downloaded track, or that artist's heirs, or, if none, artists' communities. (The Smithsonian will provide detailed accounting about individual tracks to facilitate this.)
- \* An archive owns or has cleared all necessary rights as required by law, including "mechanical" or "DPD" (that is, music composition) rights when they exist, and

permissions for every audio track submitted for uploading. This provision also applies to photographs, images, text, and descriptive cataloging material submitted with the audio.

\* Tracks and supporting materials submitted for uploading meet the technological, descriptive cataloging, and metadata<sup>15</sup> formats and standards as specified in Part II of this packet.

\* Smithsonian Global Sound staff will be available for reasonable assistance and guidance during the preparation and submission of materials.

**More details will follow in the form of an Archive Licensing Agreement.**

#### Joining Smithsonian Global Sound

Joining Smithsonian Global Sound entails a three-step procedure:

- 1) Submitting the Application (Part I) to Smithsonian Global Sound and its approval by the project's Review Committee and Curator/Director;
- 2) Signing the required Archive Licensing Agreement with Smithsonian Global Sound;
- 3) Delivering electronic data and metadata that meet technical specifications to Smithsonian Global Sound for upload to the Web. (Specifications are attached in Part II of this packet.)

We believe that Smithsonian Global Sounds offers an innovative and unprecedented opportunity for education, institutional visibility and promotion, support for traditional artists, and revenue. Developed over the past seven years at the Smithsonian Institution with generous support from the Rockefeller Foundation, the Paul Allen Family Foundation, and other sponsors, Smithsonian Global Sound attracts nearly two million visits per year by people in search of traditional music and spoken word. Direct digital delivery of audio holdings and ethnographic documentation from among the world's most important repositories brings a major new resource to scholars, educators, artists, and interested individuals everywhere at minimal cost.

We invite you to review this material with your colleagues and your institution and then contact our Acquisitions Manager, Dr. Atesh Sonneborn (tel: +1.202.633.6451, email: sonneborna@si.edu), or me for further discussion. In the meantime, thank you for your interest in Smithsonian Global Sound.

Sincerely,

---

<sup>15</sup> "Metadata" is used here to refer to text and graphic details about the audio tracks.

Daniel Sheehy, Ph.D.  
Director & Curator  
Smithsonian Global Sound  
Phone: +1.202.633-6455  
Email: [sheehyd@si.edu](mailto:sheehyd@si.edu)

Post/Mail:  
Smithsonian Global Sound  
Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage  
P.O. Box 37012,  
MRC 520,  
Washington, DC 20013-7012  
USA

Express/Courier Delivery:  
Smithsonian Global Sound

600 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Suite 2001  
Washington, DC 20024-2520  
USA



Smithsonian Global Sound<sup>®</sup>

**PART I: APPLICATION TO JOIN SMITHSONIAN GLOBAL SOUND NETWORK**

Name of Archive:

Name of Director (or other Contact Person, if different):

Contact Person's Address/Phone/Email:

Archive Information: Please provide a short description of your archive and its mission:

Please provide a short description of type, content, and quantity of tracks you would like to submit to Smithsonian Global Sound (For example: 460 tracks: 100 tracks from field recordings of Hopi harvest songs ca. 1955; 300 tracks of Scottish ballads recorded near Edinburgh in 1965; 60 tracks from assorted field tapes by local researchers 1940s-80s).



Would your Archive be able to meet Smithsonian Global Sound technical requirements (see PART II) for upload to website? Do you foresee any serious obstacles to delivering the required content to Smithsonian Global Sound?

One of Smithsonian Global Sound's fundamental aims is that an equitable portion of the revenues generated by Smithsonian Global Sound downloads will be shared with the traditional artists and/or the artists' communities. Will your archive have this capability?

In addition to yourself, who at your archive/institution will be involved with making the decision to participate in Smithsonian Global Sound?

Please send completed application to Dr. Atesh Sonneborn, Acquisitions Manager, at [sonneborna@si.edu](mailto:sonneborna@si.edu) or

Post/Mail:  
Smithsonian Global Sound  
Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage

P.O. Box 37012, MRC 520

Washington, DC 20013-7012  
USA

Express/Courier Delivery:  
Smithsonian Global Sound  
600 Maryland Avenue SW  
Suite 2001  
Washington, DC 20024-2520  
USA



## TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR CONTENT DELIVERY (VERSION 1.5)

The Smithsonian Global Sound (SGS) team welcomes you and your archive to Smithsonian Global Sound. In the following instructions, we try to make clear how you can provide the sounds from your archive and the textual information and images (“metadata”) associated with them into the SGS database and ultimately the Internet via [www.smithsonianglobalsound.org](http://www.smithsonianglobalsound.org).

Participating archives (such as yours) deliver audio and metadata. SGS will add them to the SGS database and upload them to the website. SGS will contact you for a preview and final approval before making the content “live” on the Internet.

### **AUDIO**

A participating archive makes the best possible digital copies of its sound recordings, identifies each one by a unique catalog number, groups the recordings in Albums, copies them to CD-Rs, and sends the CD-Rs to Smithsonian Global Sound via an express carrier such as Federal Express, UPS, or DHL, or by registered, insured postal mail.

If you use an express carrier, then address the packages as follows:

Smithsonian Global Sound  
Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage  
600 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Suite 2001  
Washington, D.C. 20024-2520  
USA  
(for shipments, our telephone number is 202-633-6447)

If you use postal mail, please use the following address:

Smithsonian Global Sound

Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage

P.O. Box 37012, MRC 520

Washington, DC 20013-7012

USA

## **METADATA**

**("Metadata" includes textual information and images. Note that certain fields are required.)**

A participating archive enters metadata in an Excel spreadsheet supplied by Smithsonian Global Sound which is then sent along with the audio files on CD-R. There are three pages of data fields in the spreadsheet: Albums, Tracks, and Images. Examples are included with these materials.

The archive enters all metadata into the Excel spreadsheet. This set of metadata should include descriptions of the recordings at the album and track levels, as well as digital files of photographs, notes, and song texts intended to appear on Smithsonian Global Sound as associated with a particular album.

Please note: some data should be entered specifically in **either** the album field **or** the track field, but not both. This "either/or" distinction is crucial for the proper functioning not only of the database, but also of the search function on the SGS site. Further information may be found below.

## **ALBUMS ("Album" specifies a related group of tracks)**

### **Catalog Number [Required]**

Catalog Numbers identify albums in the collection. They are assigned to albums by the partner archive after consultation with SGS staff. Numbers consist of an assigned, unique, three- or four-letter prefix that identifies the archive followed by five digits.

*Example: ARCE00016.*

### **Original Catalog Number**

Original Album Catalog Numbers are the numbers an archive may have already assigned to albums to identify them in the archive's own collection.

### **UPC (Universal Product Code, also known as a "barcode" )**

The UPC Code is a unique 12-digit product identifier that appears on most commercially sold products. If a barcode exists for a previously published recording please indicate that here. If more than one format is available then please default to the UPC code for the CD product. If no UPC exists, please leave blank.

*Example: 093074051726.*

**Number of Discs [Required]**

Refers to the number of CDs in the album. Typically that number is 1 or 2.

**Number of Tracks[Required]**

Refers to the total number of tracks in the album.

**Album Title [Required]**

The Album Title names a related group of tracks.

*Examples: Ceremonial, Dance, and Story Songs from the Yao people of Malawi*

*OR*

*When the Soul is Settled: Music of Iraq*

**Translated Album Title (English)**

Album Titles are translated into English for use on SGS.

**Album Artist [Required]**

Album Artist name(s) are displayed in SGS next to the album title. Individual and/or group names may be used. In the case of compilations, where individual tracks have different artists, the phrase "Various Artists" should be used to describe "Album Artist."

**Album Abstract**

Album Abstract is a one- to two-paragraph non-technical text description of the Album. Please restrict your abstract to 200 words or less.

**Record Company / Collection**

If an archive includes individually named collections (for example, those of a particular collector) or the commercial releases of a particular record company, and if the archive wishes that information to be noted on the SGS website, then that information is noted here.

*Examples: Arnold Bake Collection*

*OR*

*Paredon Records*

### **Sound Recording (SR) Copyright**

This information identifies the sound recording date and copyright owner and will appear in the copyright field of online media players. If no copyright exists, this field should be left blank.

*Example: (p) 2006 Smithsonian Folkways Recordings.*

### **Place of Recording**

Place of recording refers to the precise location where the recording was made. This is ideally a place name followed by an address.

*Examples:*

*Carnegie Hall, 154 West 57th Street, New York, NY, USA.*

*OR*

*Porch of home at Fresh Creek Settlement, Andros Island, Bahamas.*

### **Date of Recording**

Date of Recording refers to the date when the recording was actually made, not to the year of any commercial release. Please note that descriptions (or metadata) entered on the Album page (or level) will apply to all tracks in an Album. If an Album is a compilation of tracks recorded on different dates, then this field should be left blank, and specific date information should be entered at the track level.

*Example:*

*1972*

*January, 1972*

*January 19, 1972*

*January – February, 1972*

*January 19-21, 1972*

*1972-1973*

### **Date of Release**

Date of Release refers to the date when the recording was *first* released commercially. If it has never been released commercially, leave blank.

*Examples:*

*1972*

*January, 1972*

*January 19, 1972*

### **Country of Origin**

Country of Origin refers to the country that will be associated with the Album as a whole. Please note that descriptions (or metadata)

entered on the Album page (or level) will apply to all tracks in an Album. If an Album is a compilation of tracks from different countries, then this field should be left blank, and specific country information should be entered at the track level. Multiple countries should be separated by a semi-colon.

*Example: Bangladesh; Burundi*

### **Culture Group**

Culture Group refers to the community within which the recorded music is (or was) performed. When assigning culture group names, the Library of Congress authority lists may be of assistance, available online at:

<http://authorities.loc.gov/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?DB=local&PAGE=First>

Or, contact Kathy Kerst at [cker@loc.gov](mailto:cker@loc.gov).

Please also note that descriptions (or metadata) entered on the Album page (or level) will apply to all tracks in an Album. If an Album is a compilation of tracks from different culture groups, then this field should be left blank, and specific culture group information should be entered at the track level. Multiple culture groups should be separated by a semi-colon.

*Example: Cajun; Celtic*

### **Genre**

Genre refers to a category or keyword used to help identify and find the music. When assigning genre names, please refer to the published Smithsonian Global Sound genre list found at [www.smithsonianglobalsound.org/genres.aspx](http://www.smithsonianglobalsound.org/genres.aspx) and choose one from there whenever possible.

If a genre to be entered in this field is not in the SGS list, the archive should supply us with the correct name, and SGS staff will add it to the genre list upon its importation into the SGS database. **Please indicate that you are adding a genre by highlighting its text in red.** Please also note that descriptions (or metadata) entered on the Album page (or level) will apply to all tracks in an Album. Multiple genres are acceptable and should be separated by a semi-colon.

*Example: Folk; Bluegrass*

### **Instrument / Performer**

This field is one of the most complex to enter. The goal here is to list all known instruments as well as all known performers. When assigning instrument names, the Library of Congress authority lists may be helpful, available online at:

<http://authorities.loc.gov/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?DB=local&PAGE=First>

The format for cataloging instruments and assigning performer credit is as follows:

instrument name / (performer name)

*Example: flute / (John Smith)*

Please enter the performer name exactly as you would like it to be displayed and enclosed in parentheses. If an instrument name is known but no performer information is available, you may enter only the instrument name. If a performer name is available but no instrument information is available, you may enter only the performer name. Be certain that the performer name is placed inside parentheses so there will be no confusion with instrument name data. Another note: if a single performer plays multiple instruments on a given Album or Track, please enter a separate record for each instrument, and separate them with semi-colons.

*Example: vihuela; guitarrón / Juan Pérez*

The same logic applies if multiple performers play the same instrument.

*Example: vihuela / Juan Pérez; Juana Castro*

Finally, please remember that descriptions (or metadata) entered on the Album page (or level) will apply to all tracks in that Album. If an Album is a compilation of tracks with different instruments or performers, then this field should be left blank at the Album level, and specific instruments/performers, should be entered at the Track level. Multiple entries should be separated by a semi-colon.

Consequently, the three possible variants at the Album level are displayed below.

*Example, if the performer and instrument are the same for each Track on an Album:*

*harp / (Carlos Quintero Pérez)*

OR

*Example of Album notation if the performers vary within an Album and the instrument is the same throughout the Album:*

*harp*

OR

*Example of Album notation if the instruments vary within an Album and the performer is the same throughout the Album:*

*(Carlos Quintero Pérez)*

### **Language**

Language refers to the language in which any vocals are presented. When assigning language names, the Library of Congress authority lists may be helpful, available online at:

<http://authorities.loc.gov/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?DB=local&PAGE=First>

Please also note that descriptions (or metadata) entered on the Album page (or level) will apply to all tracks in an Album. If an Album is a compilation of tracks with different languages, then this field should be left blank, and specific languages should be entered at the track level. Multiple languages should be separated by a semi-colon.

### **Additional Credits**

Recorded By

Collected by

Compiled by

Composed by

Music by

Words by

Notes Authored by

Cover Art/Photo by

Video by



Additional credits may optionally be added. Please remember that credits entered at the album level will be attributed to all tracks associated with the album.

## **TRACKS (See accompanying examples)**

### **Album Catalog Number [Required]**

Each track must be associated with its album, so the Album Catalog Number field must be filled for every track. This is easily done by the copy-and-paste commands or with the fill-down command sequence in Microsoft Excel.

### **International Standard Recording Code (ISRC)**

#### **If**

an ISRC identification has already been assigned to the digital audio file, please provide it here, otherwise leave this item blank. For more information on ISRC Codes, please go to [http://www.ifpi.org/isrc/isrc\\_handbook.html](http://www.ifpi.org/isrc/isrc_handbook.html).

### **Disc Number [Required]**

Tells us on which disc of the album the tracks appear. Unless the album is a multi-disc recording, the number will always be 1.

### **Track Sequence Number [Required]**

The Sequence Number refers to the order of the track within the sequence of tracks in the Album: for example, 1, 2, 3, and 4

### **Track Title [Required]**

Track Title in the original language names the performance recorded on a track.

### **Translated Track Title (English)**

Track Titles are translated into English for use on SGS.

### **Track Display Artist**

Track Display Artist is the performer's name or names to be displayed beside a track title. Individual and/or group names may be used, or a series of performer names separated by semi-colons.

### **Track Abstract**

Track Abstract is a one- to two-paragraph description of the Track. Please restrict your abstract to 200 words or less.

### **Place of Recording**

If a Place of Recording has been entered at the Album level, then this field should be left blank. Place of recording refers to the precise location where the recording was made. This is ideally a place name followed by an address.

*Example:*

*Carnegie Hall, 154 West 57th Street, New York, NY, USA.*

*OR*

*Porch of home at Fresh Creek Settlement, Andros Island, Bahamas.*

### **Track Date of Recording**

If a Date of Recording has been entered at the Album level, then this field should be left blank. Track Date of Recording refers to the date when the recording was actually made, not to the year of its commercial release.

*Examples:*

*1972*

*January, 1972*

*January 19, 1972*

*January – February, 1972*

*January 19-21, 1972*

*1972-1973*

### **Track Descriptors and Additional Credits:**

Country of Origin

Culture Group

Genre

Instrument / Performer

Language

Recorded by

Collected by

Compiled by

Composed by

Music by

Words by

Notes Authored by

See definitions provided at Album level. **Note: If identical metadata has been entered at the Album level, then this field may be left blank.**

### **For Sale [Required]**

The values in this field indicate whether the track may be sold. "Y" confirms that the track or tracks may be used in commerce; "N"

indicates it should not be sold. The latter situation might arise when an Album is submitted to SGS as a whole, but a certain track on it may not be sold. We would like to receive Albums in their original form with indications, when necessary, of their various levels of rights usage. Tracks that are not available for sale will be displayed but will not be made available for purchase.

### **Publisher**

Owner of the copyright or rights in the underlying musical composition for each Track. If a song is in the public domain, type "PD" and mark the Public Domain field with an "x".

### **PRO (Performing Rights Organization)**

Publisher's Representative (in the US, ASCAP, BMI, or SESAC) for digital transmission of each Track.

### **Copyright Information: Track**

Copyright notice for the underlying composition (Example: © 2001 EMI Music Publishing)

### **Public Domain**

See Publisher note above. If the song is in public domain, mark this field with an "x".

### **Track Duration (Required)**

The Track Duration is the length of the track indicated in minutes and seconds.

*Examples:*

4:02

0:55

## **IMAGES**

### **Album Catalog Number**

Images are associated in the database with Albums, not with individual Tracks. Each image record therefore begins with its associated Album Catalog Number. This is easily done for multiple images with the copy-and-paste command sequence or with the fill-down command sequence in Excel.

### **Image File Name**

Image File Names must be derived from Album Catalog Numbers in order to associate them accurately in the database with their Albums. If there is more than one image associated with an Album, then the image files should be named using a letter sequence akin to that used to name audio files. Thus, for example, the 4 images associated with the Album number SFW40157 should be named: "SFW40157\_a.tif"; "SFW40157\_b.tif"; "SFW40157\_c.tif"; and "SFW40157\_d.tif". These four images would display alongside the Album.

### **Caption**

Each image should have a caption in English. Limit the caption to a phrase or a few short sentences for display purposes.

*Example: "Mexican mariachi guitarrón player Francisco "El Capiro" Castro."*

### **Credit**

Please credit and date the photograph wherever possible.

*Example: "Photograph by Daniel Sheehy, 1984."*

### **Copyright/Courtesy of**

The words in this field display after the caption and indicate ownership of the photo. *Example: "Courtesy of the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, Smithsonian Institution."*

### **Video**

For submission of video to accompany audio recordings, please consult Smithsonian Global Sound staff.

## References

All interview citations are designated as personal communication (p.c.) and refer to audio files and transcripts kept in my personal collection of notes, recordings and transcribed interviews taken between August, 2006 and April, 2007. These recordings and transcripts will be submitted to the Smithsonian Folkways archives in Washington, DC at the conclusion of the thesis process. These include interviews with Anthony Seeger, Jon Kertzer, Shubha Chaudhuri, Daniel Sheehy, Atesh Sonneborn, Amy Schriefer, and Toby Dodds.

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