The Use of Audiovisual Resources for Scholarly Research: A Jazz Archive as a Multidiscipline Resource

MARIE P. GRIFFIN

Since the dawn of time the human species has recorded its history both visually and aurally. It is probable that the earliest form of communication was the dance—the language of the body. Ritualistic dances marked the milestones in human life (birth, puberty, marriage, and death) and the elements of nature (sun, rain, earth, the starry heavens, the seasons) that made family, and later communal, life possible. Early man recorded these primitive origins of civilization by carving in stone; these visual petroglyphs have been studied by scholars for centuries. The sounds that accompanied the rituals and the movements are preserved for us through the medium of the oral tradition and by relatively recent recordings of societies in which such rituals remain essential to the fabric of the community. The word, the symbol, existed eons before written language on the continuum of time.

Technological developments in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries have made it possible for the scholar to have access to these primary sources. Photographs and slides of man's artistic creativity from 3000 B.C. to yesterday enable the scholar to study prehistoric Greek vases or the most avant-garde sculptures. Recordings bring us the voices of the past as well as the present, and in the Arctic or the jungle one can listen to the "top" tunes on the Billboard charts. The consummate marriage of these media—television—brings the four corners of the world into our living rooms.

Marie P. Griffin is Librarian, Institute of Jazz Studies, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, Newark, New Jersey.
world into our homes at the flick of a switch. The twentieth century is documented daily in the media.

Scholars have appreciated the value of these primary sources for study and research but only rarely in academia. In colleges and universities, research is generally equated with the study of manuscripts and printed sources. Traditionally, scholars spend many hours analyzing various editions of Shakespeare's plays, seemingly forgetting that, for Shakespeare, an actor, the play itself (the performance) was the thing. Private individuals and commercial manufacturers—in some instances public libraries—recognized the importance of audiovisual resources early in the twentieth century. In academic circles the idea that audiovisual materials represent an essential and primary resource for scholarly research has not yet been fully realized.

Because the development of jazz in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries coincided with the improvement and commercialization of audiovisual recording techniques, the examination of a jazz archive as a primary resource for a wide variety of research is particularly appropriate. For jazz, a music characterized by improvisation and the individual interpretations of jazz musicians, the sound recording is indisputably the primary source. Therefore, this paper gives particular emphasis to the research potential of jazz sound recordings as an example of the use of audiovisual materials for scholarly research.

Nowhere are the technological developments, which have revolutionized every facet of our lives, more evident than in the development of the phonograph and the continual improvement of sound recording techniques. The first edition of From Tin Foil to Stereo: Evolution of the Phonograph, published in 1950, was expanded in 1976 to describe experimental videorecording, a method of recording both sight and sound on a twelve-inch synthetic foil disc.1 If this book was updated and reissued today, less than ten years later, it would have to be renamed "From Tin Foil to Digital and The Compact Disc."

Shortly after Thomas A. Edison produced his first tin foil cylinder in 1877, he predicted that the recording of music and preservation of speech and other utterances were among the potential applications for this new invention.2 Edison's forecasts have today become commonplace. The continual development of audio technology now affects every aspect of our lives. Recorded sound is omnipresent in the work place and in our homes and pervades all recreational activities. It is not surprising, therefore, that sound recording techniques have also revolutionized scholarly research.
Audiovisual Resources for Scholarly Research

Field Recordings

Since the early years of the twentieth century, the importance of sound recordings as historical documents has been recognized. During the 1890s and the early 1900s instantaneous ethnological recordings were made in many countries and among many peoples ranging from the Maoris in Australia to the Arctic Eskimos using battery or treadle-operated acoustical phonographs.

What might be called ethnological incunabula were recorded by composers Bartók and Kodály in Hungary and Eastern Europe and Percy Grainger in England and Scandinavia. Using the Edison wax cylinder phonograph, both Bartók and Grainger independently collected folk songs in 1905, and, apparently unaware of each other’s work, published their first findings in 1906. The early Folkways records consisted primarily of field recordings collected by Moses Asch, Harold Courlander, and others in the United States, in Africa, and in many European countries. The archive of folk song at the Library of Congress originated with the field recordings of work songs, prison songs, sea chanteys, and folk tales collected by John Lomax and later by his son Alan Lomax. Although some of the problems of field recording still persist (for example, an ethnologist permitted to record a religious ceremony cannot stop the ceremony if equipment fails or participants move beyond the range of the microphone), the sound recording as oral history is now widely accepted. Today the commercial availability of battery-operated cassette recorders has made it possible for remote villagers in Brazil, ethnic neighborhoods in American communities or local historical societies to record their own oral histories.

Since 1948 when Allan Nevins established the first oral history research program at Columbia University, the number and extent of such projects has increased greatly. Recognizing the potential importance of these recordings as historical documents, government and institutional support for such projects expanded considerably during the 1960s and 1970s. A Foreign Specialist grant provided by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State combined with support from the Blues Research and Recording Project and a British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) midget tape recorder, enabled the well-known blues scholar Paul Oliver to travel in the United States in the summer of 1960 recording blues singers and musicians. These field recordings were featured in the series “Conversation with the Blues” on BBC and later, under the same title, published in both England and America. In his introduction Oliver describes why the music must be heard to be comprehended musically:
for the blues...the recording remains as the only means for common reference, for the subtleties of timing in voice and instrument, of touch and "feel" of the peculiar beauty of crushed notes or slid and twisted guitar strings, of the whine of the bottleneck on an unconventionally tuned instrument.6

Another example of note is the Jazz Oral History Project, initiated in 1972 by the Jazz Panel of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and administered for a number of years by the Division of Performing Arts of the Smithsonian Institution. This project was transferred to the Institute of Jazz Studies (IJS) of Rutgers University in 1979 with continuing support from the Music Program of NEA. It now includes more than 100 in-depth interviews with jazz artists. Performers interviewed include not only jazz stars—such as Count Basie, Benny Carter, Roy Eldridge, and Charles Mingus—but also many fine musicians who performed primarily as sidemen. Interviews with Sonny Greer and Russell Procope, both members of the Duke Ellington orchestra, reveal many details about the great Duke Ellington himself as well as the experiences shared by the members of the orchestra. An interview with Snub Mosley, who toured with the Alphonse Trent and Claude Hopkins orchestras, illustrates some of the problems the jazz artist faced: "Remember, many times we couldn't sleep in any hotel because the band was black. We wound up sleeping on the bus.... That atmosphere is important to convey to people writing about the history of jazz."17

Field recordings and oral histories provide a sense of direct contact with history that is as important to the sociologist, historian, and political scientist as it is to the ethnologist or musicologist. Field recordings are usually documented by the musician or ethnologist doing the research and deposited in a specialized archive, such as the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress; the Archives of Traditional Music at Indiana University, the Jazz Archive at Tulane University, and the John Edwards Memorial Foundation, now located at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Commercial Recordings

Scholarly research using commercial recordings began in the 1930s, primarily as discographical research by talented amateurs. Because for jazz—a music based on improvisation and the unique contributions of individual musicians—the recorded performance is the primary source, much of the early research using commercial recordings was concentrated on jazz music.
Record producers applied different standards to the recording of classical and art music featuring famous performers and to the recording of the popular music of the 1920s much of which was jazz. Recording sessions usually required more than one “take” to ensure that the recorded performance which was finally distributed was the best artistically and technically. As each take was completed, the recording engineer inscribed a matrix and take number in the same wax master on which the sound was recorded, usually in the space between the spindle hole and the played surface. Thus the matrix number uniquely identifies each recorded take. Normally, test pressings were made from each take and the company determined which take would be issued, although Caruso reportedly had the privilege of eliminating any take which he did not find satisfactory. For jazz recordings, companies sometimes issued the same take on several different labels—e.g., for the first-class record shops, for the five-and-ten cent store trade, and “race” records for the Negro market. The name of the performing group was frequently different on each label; a name was selected that would appeal to the market. If a particular recording proved popular and the stamper or other metal parts were in poor condition, another matrix and take number might appear on a subsequent reissue. The purchaser, selecting a record to play on the family Victrola, never knew the difference. Each performer was paid a flat fee for the recording session; there were no royalties in these early years.

Jazz recordings, often featured as dance tunes such as “fox-trot” or “Charleston,” were the popular music of the 1920s. Many jazz greats including Louis Armstrong, Sidney Bechet, and Coleman Hawkins, recorded during this early period, but unlike opera stars Enrico Caruso and Madame Schumann-Heink, their names did not appear on the record labels. Jazz buffs in the 1930s collected these early records, and in college dorms and private homes, analyzed these recorded jazz performances. For example, as they listened to the “colored vocal” on the Gennett recording of “Nobody knows the way I feel dis’ mornin’,” they discovered that Armstrong and Bechet recorded together under the name of the “Red Onion Jazz Babies,” accompanying Alberta Hunter, who was listed on this early Gennett session under her sister’s name Josephine Beatty. Intensive listening revealed that “Louis’ Harlem Stompers” on the Columbia blue label 2615 (matrix number 404569) was not Louis Armstrong at all, but the “Casa Loma Orchestra.” They noticed that “Ladd’s Black Aces” on a Gennett recording and the “Bostonian Syncopaters” on the Grey Gull label were really the same band—the “Original Memphis Five”—a group whose membership
frequently varied and which sometimes included six rather than five instrumentalists.10

Rudi Blesh describes these intensive listening sessions as "the birth of discography." Indeed, it was in 1936 that the first significant discographies were published. Schleman's *Rhythm on Record*, subtitled *A Who's Who and Register of Recorded Dance Music, 1906-1936*, was published in London by the periodical *Melody Maker*11 and Delaunay published his *Hot Discography* in Paris. Delaunay's classic work is acknowledged as the earliest scholarly approach to jazz music, and successive revisions of this discography in 1938, 1943, and 1948 had a tremendous influence on the development of jazz discography.12

Since the late 1950s and early 1960s scholarly research based on commercial recordings has diversified. In a study designed to show that commercial sound recordings can be successfully used as sources of research data, Cathleen Flanagan noted that such studies tended to emphasize specific aspects of performance in the fields of speech, music, and theater, and to a lesser extent they examined recorded poetry and song lyrics as social commentary.14 Commercial recordings are documented in discographies, in manufacturers' catalogs and listings of new releases such as the *Schwann Record and Tape Guide* and *Bielefelder Katalogs*.15

**Noncommercial Recordings**

Less accessible to the scholar are transcriptions of radio broadcasts, records produced under the V-Disc Program of World War II, unissued recordings such as test pressings, and private recordings including airchecks recorded at home from radio broadcasts. As radio networks expanded, programs for transmission nationwide were recorded by the studios. Early transcriptions of radio broadcasts were usually recorded on 78 rpm, sixteen-inch, glass-base acetate disks and distributed to satellite stations. In some cases commercial recordings were made from these transcriptions. Some eventually came into the hands of private collectors or archives of recorded sound, and others remain in the vaults of the broadcasting companies.

Amateur audio engineers could produce home or concert recordings using the same labor-intensive techniques employed by commercial companies. As early as the 1900-1901 opera season, Lionel Mapleson recorded live Metropolitan Opera performances on Edison wax cylinders, first from a prompting box in the proscenium and later from a catwalk above stage.16 These cylinders have been reproduced at the Rodgers and Hammerstein Archives of Recorded Sound, New York
Audiovisual Resources for Scholarly Research

Public Library, and will be issued as special premiums by the Metropolitan Opera Guild.

With the advent of the tape recorder, remote broadcasts of performances at clubs or concert halls could be taped off the air even by the amateur. Many of these airchecks have vanished. Some have been issued with permission of the performers and composer. Unscrupulous producers could press records from the tapes in a basement workshop, issue recordings with inaccurate or incomplete (sometimes fictitious) information on the label and the album cover and sell them in competition with commercial recordings.

The V-Disc program was conducted by the Special Services of the U.S. Armed Forces during World War II to provide military personnel overseas with the music they wished to hear. The V-Discs were produced from a variety of sources. In the early stages of the program V-Discs were sometimes made from previously issued popular commercial recordings. As the V-Disc program expanded, many issues were extracted from transcriptions of radio broadcasts, such as the "Moonlight Serenade" programs from CBS Playhouse No. 2, New York City; the NBC "For the Record" series; and Martin Block's "Make Believe Ballroom" program on WNEW. On occasion, movie sound tracks were used. Special V-Disc recording sessions were frequently arranged for the convenience of the artists, often late at night or in the early morning hours. The performers were not paid for these recording sessions. The masters and other metal parts were supposed to have been destroyed at the end of the war; however, many were obtained by private collectors. A set of stampers was deposited at the Library of Congress. Illegal reproductions of the V-Discs, like bootleg copies of airchecks and nightclub performances, have made many of these performances commercially available.

V-Discs are particularly valuable for the scholar. Because the performers were not paid, artists under contract to different record companies could record together under their own names rather than under an alias as they did when they recorded for a company other than the company with which they were under contract. In addition, there was a recording ban from 1941 to approximately 1944 when record producers finally agreed to the demands of James Petrillo of the American Federation of Musicians for better reimbursement and pension funds for the musicians. Therefore, for many performers V-Discs, airchecks, or transcriptions are the only recordings available during this period. Richard Sears's history of discography of V-Discs is a comprehensive reference work covering this era of recorded sound.17
Archival Collections

Like the commercial recordings, many of these more ephemeral recordings, including V-Disc masters, were collected by private individuals. As time progresses many of these extensive and diverse private collections are deposited in institutional archives. This is fortunate for the scholar not only because outstanding collections tend to attract other similar collections but also because institutional collections are usually more accessible than collections in private homes.

An example is the Institute of Jazz Studies at Rutgers University, the foremost collection of jazz and jazz-related materials under university auspices anywhere. The institute was founded in 1952 by Marshall Stearns, a professor of medieval English literature at Hunter College and author of two basic jazz studies, *The Story of Jazz*, and with his wife Jean Stearns, *Jazz Dance*. Stearns and a group of musicians, scholars, critics, collectors, and jazz devotees set up the collection of some 25,000 jazz recordings, books on jazz, clippings, photographs, African instruments, and memorabilia in Stearns's Greenwich Village apartment. In 1966 the board of the institute selected Rutgers University as its permanent academic home, and the collection was transferred to Rutgers in that year (shortly before Stearns's death) with the stipulation that the institute remain autonomous, continue to acquire new materials, and be accessible for research and study.

The IJS collection has continued to grow through donations of jazz releases from record companies, jazz books sent for review from their publishers, and periodical subscriptions; through trading of duplicate items with other archives, and through donations of significant materials from jazz aficionados and such well-known jazz authorities as Nat Hentoff and Leonard Feather as well as the estates of the late George Hoefer, Walter C. Allen, and Charles Edward Smith. The IJS collection now includes more than 75,000 sound recordings (78 rpm, 45 rpm, and 33-1/3 rpm discs, 16-inch transcriptions of radio broadcasts, test pressings, private recordings on disc and tape, and cylinder recordings) and approximately 100 oral history interviews. This recorded sound collection, the very heart of the archive, is augmented by a library of more than 4000 books including essential reference works such as discographies, biodiscographies, dissertations, jazz histories, Afro-American studies, musicological analyses, biographies, and sociological studies; large holdings of jazz periodicals from throughout the world, many of them extremely rare; sheet music, music scores, arrangements, song collections, and transcriptions of jazz solos; a collection of photographs; clipping files dating from the early 1900s; and realia including works of
Audiovisual Resources for Scholarly Research

art, antique phonographs, and musical instruments. Scholars in many disciplines use the resources of the institute for their research.

Musicological Research

Musicological analyses of jazz music date from 1919. After hearing jazz clarinetist Sidney Bechet, jazz soloist with Will Marion Cook’s New York Syncopated Orchestra on its European tour, the eminent Swiss conductor Ernest Ansermet published an essay predicting that the musical innovations inherent in jazz music would form the highway along which the whole world of music would move.19 By 1936, when the French critic Hugues Panassie published Hot Jazz: The Guide to Swing Music,20 musicologists had ample opportunity to listen to jazz music on record and in live performances in Europe and America.

The major musicological treatises on jazz music, including André Hodeir’s Jazz: Its Evolution and Essence and Schuller’s Early Jazz: Its Roots and Musical Development, have based their analyses primarily on recorded jazz performances.21 Schuller describes the extent to which he relied on jazz sound recordings in his preface:

In fact, this volume has been written on the assumption that virtually every record made, from the advent of jazz recordings through the early 1930s, has been listened to, analyzed, and, if necessary, discussed. A true assessment of an artist (or a particular musical development) cannot be made without reference to the totality of his work and its relation to his contemporaries. An analysis of Beethoven’s Eroica or Armstrong’s West End Blues without reference to musical history or the development of musical style could yield a certain amount of factual information, but a full evaluation would obviously be impossible without considering the authors’ total oeuvre and that of their immediate predecessors, contemporaries, and successors.22

Both Hodeir’s and Schuller’s seminal works contain extensive discographies, delineating the oeuvre of the jazz musicians covered in these musicological analyses. It is fortunate that the invention and continual improvement of sound recording techniques paralleled the development of jazz music thus assuring that this uniquely Afro-American music has been and will continue to be preserved for enjoyment and research.

Visual Resources

The use of visual resources for research is as old as time and predates the use of print. A pictorial representation of a person, a scene, or an event can be seen, and usually understood, by the average viewer and can
be examined and interpreted by the scholar. One cannot imagine a scholar writing a treatise on Picasso without reference to specific paintings such as "The Three Musicians" and "Guernica," and a discussion of his collages, sculptures, and ceramics. Similarly, we have become so accustomed to the photograph as document that we accept photographic evidence in legal proceedings and record the memorable events of our personal lives in photo albums.

Since the first daguerreotypes were exhibited in Paris in the winter of 1838-1839, scholars and the public have been aware that the photograph reveals more than the photographer sees when taking the picture. Jacob Riis's photographs of the immigrants who lived and worked under wretched conditions in the tenements of lower Manhattan's East Side during the 1880s proved more powerful than his text in his advocacy of legislative reform. Photographic journalism blossomed after World War I in Europe with the publication of pictorial journals such as the Müncher Illustrierte Zeitung and in the United States with the initial publication of Life and Look in 1936.23

Accordingly, it is not without precedent that the institute's "jazz-related" collection of photographs is frequently used by scholars both in conjunction with, and in addition to, the sound recordings. Photographs of individual performers or groups of performers are not valuable merely as illustrations. In many instances photographs provide information which cannot be obtained from print sources. For example, photographs of Sidney Bechet onstage as clarinetist in the jazz ensemble and in the chorus line of the 1925 review Ballets Nègre in Paris document Bechet's versatility and also provide a graphic portrayal of the performance which featured the American dancer Josephine Baker as well as other American musicians. When the scholar sees an additional photo of Bechet playing his clarinet on the streets of Paris accompanied by a clown and a dancer the flavor of this Parisian experience—the acceptance in Europe of the Black jazz artist as a man and as a musician—is succinctly depicted.24

The scholar investigating the music, the art, the history, or the sociology of the 1920s would also be intrigued by the Paul Colin posters which advertised the Ballets Nègre and other revues featuring jazz musicians and dancers in the theaters of the Montmartre district of Paris. Colin's posters not only feature musicians, dancers, and instruments as subjects but also reflect the improvisational freedom and the rhythmic propulsion or "swing" or the jazz idiom.25

The photograph as document is valuable to the scholar; equally valuable is the photograph as a work of art. When these elements are combined the composite is often a portfolio of incomparable beauty. No
text is required to supplement the photographic essay on Charlie Parker by Francis Paudras and Chan Parker. Parker’s immense capacity to savor life to the fullest—music, women, food, and wine—as well as the self-destructive impulses inherent in his tragic addiction are mirrored there. But the artistry of the photography also evokes Parker’s inimitable sound and musical originality.

The scholar seeking to understand Parker’s music or the interrelationship of jazz and art might also look closely at the Pharaoh-like statue of Charlie Parker, created by Julie MacDonald, who described the musical and artistic influences that affected Parker’s playing: “He listened to Shostakovich, Stravinsky and Bartók, looked at art from Egyptian sculpture to Picasso, with the same intensity; and he remembered!”

The artist Henri Matisse is noted for his experimentation with new media. He invented the technique called découpage—drawing with scissors—in which he cut forms out of brilliantly colored sheets and then arranged and combined these until he achieved a harmonious juxtaposition of pure colors. His first portfolio using this technique, which Matisse described as cutting into color as the sculptor carves into stone, was titled Jazz and included notes written in his own hand. Of these works he writes:

The images, in vivid and violent tones, have resulted from crystallizations of memories of the circus, popular tales, or of travel. I have added these pages of text to appease the simultaneous reactions of my chromatic and rhythmic improvisations, which constitute a background of sound which carries them, surrounds them and thus protects them in their particularities.

The jazz motif is apparent also in his later works, such as Creole Dancer, which represent the full development of the découpage technique and achieve the effect of spontaneous use of color and form.

Audiovisual Resources

Scholarly research in dance requires a variety of resources. The tribal and ritualistic origins of dance predate recorded time. However, until the twentieth century when technological developments enabled us to capture moving images on film and sound on recordings, the story of dance could only be traced by studying live performances, memoirs of observers of actual performances, the representations of dancers in arts, and the dance rhythms in music.

The African origins of dance are not only the basis of jazz dance but have been continually reintroduced into American vernacular dance in
the intermingling of Afro-American dance with European, especially Spanish and French, dance. Of the three basic musical orientations—Euro-African, Indo-Arabic, and Sino-Mongolian—harmony is indigenous only in Western music. In Spain, European music and dance forms were modified by Arabic influences, which extended from the Middle East along the shores of the Mediterranean, and the African traditions which dominated Spanish culture during the years 711-1492 of the Moorish conquest.

Louisiana was discovered by the Spaniards and colonized by the French, but during the eighteenth century was both a Spanish and French colony. In addition, during the latter half of the eighteenth century, there was a vast influx of slaves from the French and Spanish islands of the Caribbean. In New Orleans, the port city of Louisiana, these cultural traditions merged and are reflected in compositions, such as Louis Moreau Gottschalk’s “La Bamboula, Dance Nègre, op. 2,” which is based on the African rhythms exhibited by dancers at the Place Congo in the 1840s, and the Creole-flavored “New Orleans Blues,” by Jelly Roll Morton who, by his own account, invented jazz by introducing swinging syncopation and improvisation to ragtime, as early as 1902.

The merging of African and Spanish-African elements continues in the twentieth century. “Caravan” composed by Puerto Rican Juan Tizol, trombonist in the Ellington orchestra, was introduced in 1937 and became a standard in the Ellington repertoire. Afro-Cuban and West Indian music and dance were popularized by Machito, Tito Rivero, and other Latin Americans who formed their own bands. The dance repertoire which began with the cakewalk, the strut, and the Charleston expanded to include the rumba, the mambo, the merengue, and, from Brazil in the 1960s, the bossa nova and the samba.

The essential elements in African dance can be studied in films of African dancing in South Africa, Ghana, and Nigeria and in their counterparts in the Afro-American vernacular, such as the cakewalk, shuffle, the strut, the chicken, and the Watusi. A list of films and kinescopes, dating from 1894 to 1966, is included in Jazz Dance. Listed in this compilation are feature-length films, short subjects, newsreels, cartoons, documentaries, and films made for television. David Meeker’s Jazz in the Movies covers the period 1917-1977. Many of the more than 2000 films annotated in this listing—which features jazz artists as performers or studio musicians—contain dance sequences. Photographs of dancers are also an important visual resource. The dance archives of the New York Public Library at Lincoln Center have an outstanding collection of dance photographs. For jazz dancers the IJS photograph files,
Audiovisual Resources for Scholarly Research

which include photographs of dancers such as Leon James, Honi Coles, and the Lindy Hoppers, are very valuable. Sound recordings of tap dancing add a unique dimension to the study of both jazz dance and dance music. Bunny Briggs's tap solo, "David Danced Before the Lord With All His Might," performed to the accompaniment of Duke Ellington's "Come Sunday" theme from Black, Brown and Beige can be heard on Duke Ellington's Concert of Sacred Music (Victor LPM 3582) recorded at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York City, and on an album My People (Contact LP CM1) recorded from a show written by Ellington and produced in Chicago.36

Social Science Research

The story of jazz, as revealed in the music, the arts, and literature is a fertile field for scholarly research in the social sciences. Jazz is the story of African slaves forced to dance on the long voyage to America. The African roots of jazz—polyrhythmic and asymmetrical percussion, open tonality, the pentatonic scale, the call-and-response pattern—are echoed in the field hollers and spirituals which were the Negroes' response to the trials of slavery in an alien land. Jazz sings the blues while the blue notes continue to resound from the cotton fields, the fish fries, and the levees to the tent shows, honky-tonks, and the urban ghetto. Jazz blossomed in New Orleans with funeral parades of brass beds, dancing the French quadrille, Spanish and Creole traditions, and ragtime pianos in Storyville. Jazz played the riverboats on the Mississippi, taking jazz upstream to Memphis, St. Louis, Kansas City, and Chicago. Jazz combos in dance halls, speakeasies, and night clubs; and the hot swing bands—Count Basie, Benny Goodman, Duke Ellington—carried the jitterbug and the Lindy from New York City to London, Paris, the Nile, and Tokyo. Burdened with slavery's legacy of prejudice and discrimination, jazz musicians poured forth their improvisations in hotels where they frequently could not eat or sleep, sometimes in towns where they could not walk the streets. Jazz was applauded in concerts at Carnegie Hall in New York City and at festivals in Newport, Rhode Island, Montreux, Switzerland; jazz greats were invited to the White House; and in England jazz stars played for royalty.

This story can only be fully documented by consulting audiovisual materials. To understand how these events affected the thoughts and actions of individual men and women—the very essence of history—we must consult a medium which reveals the innermost feelings of those—black, white, and mulatto—who lived with these experiences. Literature and poetry crystallize these moments so that we can comprehend
the depth and breadth of these feelings. We can read Langston Hughes’s jazz-inspired depiction of “The Weary Blues”:

Down on Lenox Avenue the other night
By the pale dull pallor of an old gas light
  He did a lazy sway...
  He did a lazy sway...
To the tune o’ those Weary Blues.
With his ebony hands on each ivory key
He made that poor piano moan with melody.
  O Blues!
Swaying to and fro on his rickety stool
He played that sad raggy tune like a musical fool.
  Sweet Blues!
Coming from a black man’s soul
  O Blues!

Poetry, however, is essentially an aural medium. When a poem is read the timbre of the open vowel sounds and the inflections of pitch and tone engender an emotional as well as an intellectual response. As we listen, we—like the poet—get an inkling of what that black piano player felt as he poured forth his soul in the blues.

When the poem is set to music this response is intensified. Before a note is sung the instrumental introduction sets the scene, establishes the mood, and involves the listener. When a jazz singer like Billie Holiday, who used her voice like an instrument and paraphrased the melody in the classical jazz tradition of the inimitable Louis Armstrong, begins her vocal solo, the musical expression intensifies the meaning. The effect is similar to the magnification of sound from mono to stereo to quadraphonic.

As an example, we can listen to Billie’s recording of “Strange Fruit,” a poem by Lewis Allan, set to music by Billie Holiday and Sonny White and dedicated to Billie’s father who, when stricken with pneumonia, was refused admittance to any Dallas hospital and died in the Jim Crow ward of a veteran’s hospital. This was first recorded 20 April 1939 at Café Society Downtown, a nightclub in Greenwich Village, New York City, by Commodore Records (Commodore XFL-14428). Standing in the spotlight, gardenia in her hair, Billie commences her solo:

    Southern trees bear a strange fruit,
    Blood on the leaves and blood at the root,
    Black bodies swinging in the southern breeze;
    Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees.
By the time she reaches the searing climax, "Here is a strange, and bit-ter-crop," the clinking of glasses and whispered conversations are stilled. Mere words cannot describe this performance—an impassioned plea for racial justice in America. As recorded, it is a piercing cry expressing the anguish of all men everywhere who suffer man's inhu-manity to man.

Epilogue

It is difficult, indeed, to follow Billie Holiday's consummate per-formance. Nonetheless, it may be valuable to come full-circle, as it were, and return to the basic premise of this paper—i.e., that audiovisual resources represent a primary source for a broad variety of scholarly research. An entire issue might be devoted to the multiplicity of re-sources available in the film archives and the audiovisual centers in this country and abroad. This investigation, however, has focused on just some of the many facets of scholarly research which are pursued in a specialized, primarily audio, archive and can be aptly termed a case study. If, as a result, in college or university libraries academic librarians are alerted to the importance of adding a discography, a filmography, or a list of audiovisual resources to the bibliographies, routinely and conscientiously prepared, the scholarly community will surely benefit by gaining access to the undisputed fact of the recorded event.

References

6. Ibid., p. 10.
8. Bechet, Sidney. Treat It Gentle: An Autobiography. New York: Hill and Wang, 1960, p. 146. On Gennett 3044, Matrix No. 9246, the label lists the performers as "Jose-ephine Beatty acc. by Red Onion Jazz Babies." Performers include: Alberta Hunter, vocal; Louis Armstrong, cornet; Charlie Irvis, trombone; Sidney Bechet, clarinet; Lil Armstrong,
MARIE GRIFFIN

piano: Buddy Christian, banjo, IJS Jazz Register, IJS DOOOOO1.O1. (The IJS Jazz Register and Indexes are quarterly microfiche cumulations published by the Institute of Jazz Studies, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.)


10. Rust, Brian. Jazz Records, 1897-1942, 4th ed. rev. and enl. New Rochelle, N.Y.: Arlington House, 1978, pp. 1184-93. (The Original Memphis Five usually included Phil Napoleon, trumpet; Miff Mole or Charlie Panelli, trombone; Jimmy Lytell, clarinet; Frank Signorelli, piano; Jack Roth, drums. On occasion, Loring McMurray or another saxophone player was added.)


22. Schuller, Early Jazz, p. ix.


24. Bechet, Treat It Gentle (illustrations between pp. 87-88 and pp. 188-99).

25. "Swing" as used here designates the rhythmic swinging quality characteristic of jazz music not merely the style of jazz popular in the 1930s, the era of the big bands.


29. Matisse, Jazz, p. 41.


32. Ibid., pp. 102-03.

Audiovisual Resources for Scholarly Research

This Page Intentionally Left Blank