Facilitating Discovery of Historic Sound Recordings: Classroom and Research Strategies

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Belfer Audio Archive

Diane and Arthur B. Belfer Audio Laboratory and Archive
TRF 530 Radio, Musics, and Audio Cultures

Objective: to teach communications and audio arts students about music’s dissemination through radio and audio cultures today

Communication students:
- strong musical interests, but no formal musical training
- little or no experience with audio recording or audio editing
Soundscape No. 1

- Illustrate some aspect of music or sound in the world today using the sounds from recordings of nearly a century ago
- Focus on 2+ pre-1940 recordings
- Prepare a script, including researched information and original thoughts
- Learn to use a recording studio to record voice-over narrative
- Create a 2-3 minute audio essay. Submissions include a “time-chart” and a resource list with full citations.
The Belfer Cylinders Digital Connection provides online access to digital audio files of cylinders in the Belfer Audio Archive. Belfer's cylinder collection includes over 22,000 cylinders, 12,000 of which are unique titles.

With initial funding from the Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation, Syracuse University Libraries have been able to digitize over 1,400 cylinders. Work is ongoing, so please check back regularly for newly added titles.

The digital recordings, provided in both MP3 and WAVE formats, are available for research, teaching, and personal use. The content includes voices from across the country, with records from states from Maine to California and as far south as Texas. The collection is also known for its unusual content, ranging from liturgical songs to recordings of vaudeville acts and musical performances by famous speech educators.
Guide for researching sound recordings

Librarian for Writing

Patrick Williams

Using this Guide

The guide is organized into the following set of pages, able to be navigated using the tabs above.

- **Writing for Sound Beat** features information from Sound Beat producer Jim O'Connor, including example Sound Beat episodes and date tools for choosing themed episodes.

- **Artist Biographies & Discographies** features links to both print and online reference sources for performer biographies.

- **Historical Research** features links to selected library databases as well as some background on the history of recorded sound.

- **Lyrics and Liner Notes** provides links to many useful free historic sheet music collections online as well as instructions for locating recordings and liner notes in SU Libraries' circulating collections.

Music Librarian

Rachel Fox von Swearingen

Audio Selections

Explore the Belfer Digital Cylinders Collection
Soundscape No. 2

Illustrate some aspect of music dissemination via radio as it occurred and achieved influence during war

- Focus on 3+ sound tracks, one of which is derived from radio
- Research the topic and the music, consulting as many authoritative, signed resources as unsigned resources
- Conduct an oral history interview with a veteran
- Prepare a script, including researched information and original thoughts
- Create a 5 minute audio essay. Submissions include a “time-chart” and a resource list with full citations.
About This Guide

This guide provides both library and free internet resources for researching music and sound recordings for Soundscape No. 2. Library research is a wide, wonderful, and overwhelming experience, so have fun! If you find a cool resource that you want to share with others, leave it in the comments below, and I will add it to the guide.

Research well, and if you have questions, ask me!

-Rachel rsfoxvon@syr.edu

Comments (0)

Music During Wars: Selected Books

The Vietnam War: Its History, Literature and Music - Kenton J. Clymer (Editor)
Call Number: DS557.3.V53 1998
ISBN: 0780874042771
Publication Date: 1999-01-01

The Songs That Fought the War: Popular Music and the Home Front, 1939-1945 - John Bush Jones
Call Number: ML3477 .J68 2006
ISBN: 9781564664438
Publication Date: 2006-06-30

Sound Targets: American Soldiers and Music in the Iraq War - Jonathan Pieslak
Call Number: ML3477 .P54 2009
ISBN: 078025363238
Publication Date: 2009-04-01
Activity-Based Library Guide Tabs

- Selecting Music
- Understanding Music Genres
- Researching Musicians
- Researching People, Events, and Wars
- Researching Radio Shows & Playlists
Instructional Goals

- Demonstrate tools for browsing and discovering unfamiliar music
- Familiarize students with how to research a piece of music
- Introduce sources for researching popular culture, history, and radio
Source Selection

- Quality of content
- Online availability
- Breadth of coverage
- Accessible to non-musicians
Websites, Charts, Discographies

Billboard
HOT 100

The Green Book of Songs by Subject
The Thematic Guide to Popular Music
By Jeff Green

Foreword by Robert K. Oermann

AllMusic
Websites, Charts, Discographies
Music Reference

2. Encyclopedia of Popular Music
3. The Grove Dictionary of American Music
4. Oxford Music Online
History Sources

Advanced Search

Search:

vietnam war

AND

music and the war

AND

as a phrase within Subject (keyword)

any of these within Keyword Anywhere
Radio Sources


Mitchell E. Shapiro

Radio Times

JOURNAL OF THE BBC

The Third Programme

An Introduction by the Director-General of the BBC

Ser, William Hayley, K.C.O.G.

Programmes begin on page 2 ...
Article Indexes

- Music: IImp, RILM
- American History & Life Full Text
- Communication Source
- ProQuest Newspaper Archive
- Popular Journalism:
  - Entertainment Industry Magazine Archive
  - Rock’s Backpages
What the students produced ...

- Five students interviewed veterans of the Vietnam War
  - music: Jimi Hendrix and Bob Dylan
    - The Guess Who and Creedence Clearwater Revival
    - Bobby Bare and The Beatles
    - Marvin Gaye and Dion
    - Country Joe & the Fish and The Hollies

- One student focused on World War II
  - music: Doris Day, Vera Lynn, Dinah Shore, and Bing Crosby

- One student focused on a period between wars
  - music: Run DMC, and Common and John Legend
Soundscape No. 2

Illustrate some aspect of music dissemination via radio as it occurred and achieved influence during war.

- Focus on 3+ sound tracks, one of which is derived from radio.
- Research the topic and the music, consulting as many authoritative, signed resources as unsigned resources.
- Conduct an oral history interview with a veteran.
- Create a 5 minute audio essay.

Soundscape No. 2 (excerpt)
by Jordan Robinson
Assessing Source Use

- Student feedback session
- Review of both soundscapes, including sources cited
Websites, Charts, Discographies

- All tools were used ... plus others
- Combined multiple approaches
- YouTube recommended videos
- Unexpected use of music journalism
Music Reference

- Soundscape 1? Yes
- Soundscape 2? Not as much
- Used music titles within Credo Reference
Article Indexes

- Not used:
  - Scholarly journal indexes in all disciplines
  - Newspaper indexes

- Used somewhat:
  - Entertainment Industry Magazine Archive
Other Sources

- Used heavily:
  - Credo Reference
  - Pre-filled library catalog searches

- Not used:
  - Radio logs and lists
Sources for Next Time

- More online browsing by theme
- Curated list of websites for spoken word recordings
- Online dictionary of music terms
Questions?

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