Twenty-Five Years of Popular Music in Nova Scotia: The Archives of Solar Audio and Recording Limited

Fountain School of Performing Arts, Dalhousie University
Performing Arts Research Forum
Creighton Barrett
October 1, 2015
Research questions in the University Archives

1) How much “local music” should the University Archives preserve?

2) How should archivists describe multi-track sound recordings?

3) How should the Libraries service the archives of Solar Audio and Recording Limited?
Solar Audio and Recording Limited

- Studio founded by Russell Brannon
- Acted as “label” for many bands
- Master tapes and stereo mixes left in attic on Cunard Street...
Solar Audio and Recording Limited

- Recorded many well-known artists
- Recorded many unknown artists
- “Paid the bills” by recording radio advertisements
Archival work to date

- Chronological **organization** of tapes
- **Research** on digitization and archival description of sound recordings…
- Archival **description** of over 860 tapes
- Creation of new “**authority records**” for many recording artists
- Successful “**test**” **digitization** of multi-track tapes and stereo mixes
Chronological organization of Solar Audio Recording tapes in Dalhousie University Archives storage.
Research on digitization and description of sound recordings

• Audiovisual archives reading courses
• Ongoing work with Helen Creighton sound recordings
• Kevin Hartford, Audiovisual Archives Assistant
• Dave MacLachlan, Young Canada Works Audiovisual Archives Intern
• Recent audiovisual digitization projects with The MediaPreserve (audiovisual digitization vendor)
### Collection 2012-023 - Solar Audio Recording Studio

**Title and statement of responsibility area**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title proper</th>
<th>Solar Audio Recording Studio Collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General material designation</td>
<td>Sound recording</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of description</td>
<td>Collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repository</td>
<td>Dalhousie University Archives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference code</td>
<td>2012-023</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Dates of creation area**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date(s)</th>
<th>[ca. 1975]-[ca. 2003] (Creation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creator</td>
<td>Solar Audio &amp; Recording Limited.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Physical description area**

| Physical description | 60 m of sound recordings |

**Archival description area**


Administrative history:
Solar Audio & Recording Limited was a recording studio run by Russell Brannon. The studio operated on Hunter Street South. One of its most notable recordings is titled "Ocean Song."
### Item Level

**Description of Dutch Mason recording**

**Item 2012-023, Reel 383, Track 1 - Trying to find my baby**

- **Title proper**: Trying to find my baby
- **General material designation**: Sound recording
- **Title notes**: Source of title proper: Title not given on box. Title was determined by matching the master record to commercially available recordings that contain track titles.
- **Level of description**: Item
- **Repository**: Dalhousie University Archives
- **Reference code**: 2012-023, Reel 383, Track 1

**Archival description area**

- **Name of creator**: Mason, Dutch

**Access points**

- **Name access points**: Mason, Dutch (Creator)
### Item list

**Solar Audio Recording Studio Collection**

**Reel 576**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Reference code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Access restrictions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2012-023, Reel 576, Track 1</td>
<td>How much longer</td>
<td>February 11, 1986</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2012-023, Reel 576, Track 2</td>
<td>Brand name appeal</td>
<td>February 11, 1986</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2012-023, Reel 576, Track 3</td>
<td>Two sides</td>
<td>February 11, 1986</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2012-023, Reel 576, Track 4</td>
<td>En francais</td>
<td>February 11, 1986</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2012-023, Reel 576, Track 5</td>
<td>Prisoner of conscience</td>
<td>February 11, 1986</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2012-023, Reel 576, Track 6</td>
<td>Death of a salesman</td>
<td>February 11, 1986</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2012-023, Reel 576, Track 7</td>
<td>Speaking stones</td>
<td>February 11, 1986</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Showing 1 to 7 of 7 results

---

“Item-Level” Descriptions of Killer Klamz recordings
Molly Oliver

Identity area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of entity</th>
<th>Corporate body</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authorized form of name</td>
<td>Molly Oliver</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Description area

| Dates of existence | 1976-[1987?]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Molly Oliver was a Nova Sc origins began after Bruce V (bass/vocals) had left Every with former Pepper Tree m Quinn (keyboards/vocals). According to the first album Molly Reed, a madame wh where she married an English set sail with him. Following command of his ship and r as the pirate, "Molly Oliver" and "Oliver" were actually
Vendor “deliverables” for digitized ¼ inch audio tape

- XML Metadata (MODS and METS standards)
- XML Metadata for WAV digital preservation file
- MD5 checksum file for each digital sound recording
- Mp3 streaming file
- WAV access file
- WAV digital preservation file (BWF)
- JPEG photographs of box front and reel front
- MRK file
### Digital files from "Killer Klamz" ¼ inch tape 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Killer_Klamz_Tape2_WRC4-4454_preservation.wav.meta</td>
<td>XML Document</td>
<td>19 KB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killer_Klamz_Tape2_WRC4-4454</td>
<td>XML Document</td>
<td>8 KB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killer_Klamz_Tape2_WRC4-4454_preservation</td>
<td>Wave Sound</td>
<td>734,596 KB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killer_Klamz_Tape2_WRC4-4454_access</td>
<td>Wave Sound</td>
<td>224,972 KB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killer_Klamz_Tape2_WRC4-4454_preservation</td>
<td>MRK File</td>
<td>1 KB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killer_Klamz_Tape2_WRC4-4454_streaming</td>
<td>MP3 Format Sound</td>
<td>30,610 KB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killer_Klamz_Tape2_WRC4-4454_streaming.mp3</td>
<td>MD5 File</td>
<td>1 KB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killer_Klamz_Tape2_WRC4-4454_preservation.wav</td>
<td>MD5 File</td>
<td>1 KB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killer_Klamz_Tape2_WRC4-4454_access.wav</td>
<td>MD5 File</td>
<td>1 KB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killer_Klamz_Tape2_WRC4-4454_ReelFront</td>
<td>JPEG image</td>
<td>7,519 KB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killer_Klamz_Tape2_WRC4-4454_BoxFront</td>
<td>JPEG image</td>
<td>7,568 KB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MODS/METS metadata

<amd:AUDIOMD ANALOGDIGITALFLAG="FileDigital"
ID="mdp.Killer_Klamz_Tape2_WRC4-4454
_preservation.wav">
  <amd:file_data>
    <amd:audio_data_encoding>PCM
  </amd:audio_data_encoding>
  <amd:bits_per_sample>24
</amd:bits_per_sample>
  <!--aka bit depth-->
  <amd:checksum>
    <amd:checksum_type>MD5
  </amd:checksum>
  <amd:checksum_value>01c8afee350e0c3e0f61e15755c6112d</amd:checksum_value>
</amd:checksum>
  <amd:compression>
    <amd:codec_creator_app>Steinberg Wavelab</amd:codec_creator_app>
    <amd:codec_name>PCM
  </amd:compression>
Research question #1 – How much “local music” should the University Archives preserve?

• Mandate and acquisitions policy
• Archival appraisal theory and practice
• Matrix of criteria
• Monetary appraisal considerations

Out of the Fog compilation:
Artist Recognition and Critical Reception

Musicality and Acoustic Quality

Representation and Diversity

Institutional Capacity for Multimedia Archives
Research focus #2 – How should archivists **describe** multi-track sound recordings?

- Canadian Rules for Archival Description
- ISAAR (CPF) – International Standard for Archival Authority Records, Corporate Bodies, Persons, and Families
- **Hierarchical “levels of description” proceed from the general to the specific**

---

```
TAPE TWO 15 ips Feb.11/’86

1.) DON’T BOTHER
2.) REBEL WITHOUT A BRAIN
3.) BROKEN HEART BLUES
4.) GHOST TOWN
5.) CAN’T GET ALL THE LOVIN’ ...
6.) THE LATEST RAGE
7.) CLOSING DOWN
```
Hierarchy of Recording Sessions

- Recording Session
  - Song 1
    - Tape 1
      - Audio Track 1
      - Audio Track 2
  - Song 2
    - Tape 1
      - Audio Track 1
      - Audio Track 2
      - Audio Track 3

Hierarchical “Levels of Description”

- Collection
  - Series
  - File
    - Item
      - N/A
  - File
    - Item
  - File
    - Item
Research focus #3 – How should the Dalhousie Libraries service this collection?

• **Accessibility** - streaming audio via Learning Management System? YouTube? iTunes?

• **Usability** - Develop unique teaching tools?

• **Preservation** - Work with recording artists to complete digital preservation?

• **Opportunity** – Marketing and communications

Sticky shed on tape head. Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Shedonhead.JPG
Dutch Mason – Trying to Find my Baby

- **YouTube:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k84HtWhxF0g
- **Libraries’ LibVine Blog:** https://blogs.dal.ca/libraries/2013/12/university-archives-digitizes-dutch-mason-master-recording/

Reel 383, Solar Audio and Recording Limited Collection
Image sources

- **Slide 1**: Photograph of reel front, Killer Klamz, tape 2, WRC4-4454. Photograph by The MediaPreserve, February 17, 2012.


- **Slide 17**: Photograph of reel front, Killer Klamz, tape 2, WRC4-4454. Photograph by The MediaPreserve, February 17, 2012.


- **Slide 20**: Photograph of box front, Dutch Mason Band. Photograph by The MediaPreserve, February 17, 2012

- All other images taken by Creighton Barrett.