

MEMORY OF THE WORLD REGISTER
Collection of Jewish Musical Folklore (1912-1947)

REF 2004-49

PART A - ESSENTIAL INFORMATION
SUMMARY

Collection of Jewish Musical Folklore (1912-1947) Wax phonocylinders, note and text decoding manuscripts, typewriting). Fonds 322, 190.

The Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine is the world's foremost repository of Jewish folk music recorded on Edison wax cylinders. Comprising over 1 017 cylinders with two to seven minutes of music each, the collection contains historical recordings, as well as note and text decoding, made from 1912 to 1947 in Jewish areas of Ukraine and Belarus.

The collection contains the only authentic phonogram of the Sholom-Alejhem voice, examples of voices of eminent Jewish actors Solomon Mikhoels, Benjamin Zuskin, Lela Romm recorded on phonograph. There are also records of voices of famous writers such as Jehieskil Dobrushin, Notke Lurie and instrumental pieces performed by the famous violinist and composer Leo Pulver, director of the Jewish instrumental ensemble.

This collection of Jewish Musical Folklore on wax cylinders from 1912-1947 has no direct equal in the world and has had great influence on the course of Jewish and Ukrainian history.

It reflects the impact of key individuals of Jewish ethnographic science on the development and preservation of Jewish folk musical treasure, represents particular intellectual development in human sciences, culture and arts.

The collection has outstanding aesthetic, stylistic, linguistic value. Edison wax cylinders are typical exemplar of a disappearing recording carrier of the late 19th -early 20th cc.

2 *DETAILS OF THE NOMINATOR*

2.1 Name (person or organisation)

Judaic Department, Institute of Manuscript
National V.I Vernadsky Library of Ukraine

2.2 Relationship to the documentary heritage nominated

Custodian of the documentary heritage. Preservation and research

2.3 Contact person (s)

Irina Serheyeva, Chief,
Judaic Department, Institute of Manuscript
National V.I Vernadsky Library of Ukraine

2.4 Contact details (include address, phone, fax, email)

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National V.I Vernadsky Library of Ukraine
Prospect 40-richja Zhovtnja, 3
Kyiv, 03039 Ukraine
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3 IDENTITY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE

3.1 Name and identification details of the items being nominated

Collection of Jewish Musical Folklore. 1912-1947. Wax phonocylinders, note and text decodings (manuscripts, typewriting). Fonds 322, 190.

3.2 Description

The Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine is the world's foremost repository of Jewish folk music recorded on Edison wax cylinders. Comprising over 1 017 cylinders with two to seven minutes of music each, the collection contains historical recordings, as well as note and text decoding, made from 1912 to 1947 in Jewish areas of Ukraine and Belarus. These recordings represent the painstaking work of two generations of East European Jewish folklorists and chronicle the achievements of folk musicians during pre- and post- revolutionary periods of Ukrainian history.

The concept of ethnographic expeditions, with the objective of collecting these valuable materials, originated with the well-known Jewish folklorist and writer S. An -sky, who lived from 1863-1920. Initiated by the Jewish Historical and Ethnographic Society in St.Petersburg and funded by patron of the arts Horace Guenzburg, the project saw its genesis in folkloric expeditions from 1911 to 1914. Besides S. An-sky, many outstanding representatives of Jewish culture participated in these expeditions, including Julii Engel, composer and music expert (1867-1927), Zinovii Kisselhof, folklorist (1878-1939) and Solomon Judovin, artist (1892-1954), to name but a few. In 1912 and 1913, prior to World War I, the expedition managed to explore and ethnographically examine the Volynian and Podolian regions, then bring together and classify the enormous and invaluable collection of data.

The participants in these expeditions were able to implement recordings, on Edison wax cylinders, of various genres of traditional Jewish music: wordless chants, instrumental performances, songs and synagogue liturgies, examples of *klezmer* music and little-studied folklore genres such as Jewish folk musical performances (*purimshpils*) . Today these recordings make up a virtually inexhaustible source of the art and traditions of the early twentieth-century Ashkenazi Jews. The majority of these wax cylinder recordings have been preserved perfectly up to the present day, adding greatly to the value of the collection.

After the revolution, especially in the 1920s and 1930s, opportunities opened for Jewish folklorists to continue the work of their predecessors. The period saw the organization of the cabinet for Musical Folklore of the Ethnographic Section of the Institute for Jewish culture in Kyiv, with photographic archives contributed by numerous ethnographic expeditions that had come to be regular, comprehensive and wide-ranging due to the efforts of the prominent folklorist Moisei Beregovsky.

In 1930, the collection was expanded with several valuable contributions. The phonographic Archive of the Museum for Jewish History and Ethnography was transferred to Kyiv, at the same time Julii Engels' daughter presented the Institute with her father's personal collection of wax cylinders. In 1936, the Institute was transferred into the cabinet for Jewish Culture of Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, and in 1940, Antonina Kisselhof, daughter of the late Zinovii Kisselhof, generously donated her father's private collection of musical records to the cabinet.

After the World War II, the archives returned to Kyiv, after having been evacuated to Ufa city, and were now housed in Judaic Department of IM NVLU.

The collection contains the only authentic phonogram of the Sholom-Alejhem voice, which was presented in 1996 in the Knesset by President of Ukraine to the people of Israel. Kyiv records of 1929 stored unique examples of the voices of eminent Jewish actors Solomon Mikhoels, Benjamin Zuskin, Lela Romm recorded on phonograph. There are also records of the voices of famous writers Jehieskil Dobrushin, Notke Lurie and instrumental pieces performed by the famous violinist and composer Leo Pulver, director of Jewish instrumental ensemble.

The fonds is used extensively by researchers: folklore researchers, musical critics, museum curators planning exhibitions, filmmakers producing documentaries, and historians writing books and articles about the history of Jewish music folklore in East Europe. For better access to the collection, in November 1995 a vast and comprehensive re-recording process was initiated. It was made possible by the advent of a new type of audio technology developed by the Institute for Information Recording. This new technology represents a non-destructive optoelectronic method of reproducing the original wax cylinders without physical damage to delicate and valuable antiques. Using state-of-the-art technology, this recording preserves all of the nuances of the original performances, and provides the contemporary listener with a rare and fine glimpse of the past.

This collection of Jewish Musical Folklore on wax cylinders of 1912-1947 has no direct equal in the world and has had great influence on the course of Jewish and Ukrainian history. It reflects the impact of key individuals of Jewish ethnographic science on the development and preservation of Jewish folk musical treasure, represents particular intellectual development in human sciences, culture and the arts. The collection has outstanding aesthetic, stylistic, linguistic value. It is a typical exemplar of a disappearing recording carrier of the late 19th -early 20th cc.

Literature: *Шолохова Л.В.* Фоноархів єврейської музичної спадщини. – К.: НБУВ, 2001. – 843 с.; Шолохова Л. Про фоноархів єврейського фольклору в Інституті рукопису Національної бібліотеки України імені В.І. Вернадського // Наукові записки / НАН України. І-нт політ. і етнонац. досліджень. – К., 1998, Вип. 4. – С. 175-183. *Береговский М.* Еврейский музыкальный фольклор. – М.: ОГИЗ – Музгиз, 1934. – 268 с.; *Adler I.* The Study of Jewish Music: A Bibliographical Guide. – Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, 1995. – 87 p.

4 JUSTIFICATION FOR INCLUSION/ ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

4.1 Authenticity

Yes. The collection contains authentic documents. Their identity and provenance have been reliably established by the world-known researchers of Jewish musical folklore M.Beregovsky, S.Kisselgof, S.An-sky, J.Engel. At present the collaborators of the Judaic Division published the catalogue of this collection. The identity can be confirmed by Dr. H. Mursina, P.I.Chaikovsky National Musical Academy of Ukraine, Dr. I. Mazievsky, Art History Institute of Russia, St. Petersburg, Prof. L. Dubrovina, Director of Institute of Manuscript VNLU, Kyiv.

4.2 World significance, uniqueness and irreplaceability

Yes. The collection has an enormous historical and cultural value. Its materials reflect the painstaking work of several generations of talented researchers-enthusiasts, who studied the Jewish musical folklore of Ukraine, a region of a very considerable Jewish Diaspora with traditionally strong centres of religious and spiritual life.

It reflects the social and cultural conditions, and the strivings and efforts of people at a specific period in history of mankind. It is an important source of information. Firstly, it is the audio evidence of the spiritual treasures of Jewish people, folk art and living voices of a wide spectrum of Jewish communities in Ukraine most of which no longer exist. Secondly, it reflects the tremendous work of M.Beregovsky, S.Kisselgof, S.An-sky, J.Engel, true devotees of Jewish history and folklore, who collected and kept for us this documental heritage. Besides its historic and folkloric value the collection is important for the history of Jewish musical art, being a rich source for comparative

research.

The collection is unique and irreplaceable. Its disappearance or deterioration would constitute a harmful impoverishment of the heritage of humanity. It has created great impact within a particular cultural area of the world - Jewish and Ukrainian. Some examples of the collection have no direct equal in the world.

4.3 Criteria of :

time 1912-1947 This is a period of unique ethnographic expeditions through now disappeared area of the Pale of Settlement of Jews in Ukraine and Byelorussia.

place Ukraine, Belarus, disappeared area of the Pale of Settlement of Jews in Ukraine.

people Jewish folklore musicians, ethnographers, outstanding people of Ukraine and Bjelorusua.
The expeditions took place –

subject over 1 017 cylinders with two to seven minutes of music each, the collection contains historical recordings, as well as note and text decoding, made from 1912 to 1947 in Jewish areas of Ukraine and Bjelarusssua. The folklore records represent particular historical and intellectual developments in social and human sciences, music, folklore, history.

theme Jewish musical folklore

form and style The collection has outstanding musical, linguistics, stylistic value. Collection of Jewish folk music recorded on Edison wax cylinders is a key exemplar of the type of presentation on disappearing recording carrier.

4.4 Issues of rarity, integrity, threat and management

Rarity: The content of records and its physical nature -Edison wax cylinders- make them rare surviving examples of record system in the world history

Integrity: The collection is complete.

Threat : The collection is secure but the vigilance must be applied to maintain its security because of the brittle carrier.

Management plan : No

1. LEGAL INFORMATION

Owner of the documentary heritage (name and contact details)

Judaic Department, Institute of Manuscript

National V.I Vernadsky Library of Ukraine

Prospect 40-richja Zhovtnja, 3

Kyiv, 03039 Ukraine

Tel. 038-044- 234- 8256

Fax: 038- 044- 265-5602

5.2 Custodian of the documentary heritage (name and contact details, if different to owner)

No

c. Legal status:

(a) Category of ownership

State property. Appropriate custodial, conservation and protective mechanisms are in place

(b) Accessibility

Appropriate access is guaranteed

- (c) Copyright status State property. Copyright is accessible.
- (d) Responsible administration Irina Serheyeva, Chief, Judaic Department, Institute of Manuscript, National V.I Vernadsky Library of Ukraine
Prospect 40-richja Zhovtnja, 3. Kyiv, 03039 Ukraine
Tel: 038- 044- 234-8256
Fax: 038- 044- 265-5602
- (e) Other factors No

6 MANAGEMENT PLAN

6.1 There is no management plan but the collection is housed in an early 20th century building specially built for the library. It has central heating, air-conditioning, 24-hours security and a fire alarm system. The cylinders are kept in specially made round boxes. They are under permanent care of curators.

7 CONSULTATION

7.1

PART B - SUBSIDIARY INFORMATION

8 ASSESSMENT OF RISK

8.1 The fonds is used extensively by researchers: folklore researchers, musical critics, museum curators planning exhibitions, filmmakers producing documentaries, and historians writing books and articles about the history of Jewish music folklore in East Europe. For better access to the collection, in November 1995 a vast and comprehensive re- recording process was initiated. It was made possible by the advent of a new type of audio technology developed by the Institute for Information Recording. This new technology represents a non-destructive optoelectronic method of reproducing the original wax cylinders without physical damage to delicate and valuable antiques. Using state-of-the-art technology, this recording preserves all of the nuances of the original performances, and provides the contemporary listener with a rare and fine glimpse of the past.

9 ASSESSMENT OF PRESERVATION

9.1 The collection is in good condition. It is housed in an early 20th century building specially built for the library. It has central heating, air-conditioning, 24-hours security and a fire alarm system. The cylinders are kept in specially made round boxes. They are under permanent care of curators.

PART C - LODGEMENT

This nomination is lodged by:

(Please print name)

Irina Serheyeva, Chief, Judaic Department, Institute of Manuscript, National V.I Vernadsky Library of Ukraine

(Signature).....

(Date)...01/06/ 2004.....