

# The Invisible Conduit from the World to the Ears of Human Beings

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Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, Washington, DC

As Director, I have tried to create an atmosphere where all recordings are treated equally regardless of the sales statistics. My obligation is to see that Folkways remains a depository of the sounds and music of the world and that these remain available to all. The real owners of Folkways Records are the people that perform and create what we have recorded and not the people that issue and sell the product. The obligation of the company is to maintain the office, the warehouse, the billing and collection of funds, to pay the rent and telephone, etc. Folkways succeeds when it becomes the invisible conduit from the world to the ears of human beings. (Asch 1986)

In 1948, Moses Asch founded Folkways Records & Service Corporation in New York. Over the next four decades he released more than two thousand albums, many of them representing traditional music from all over the United States and many others from the rest of the world. Also included in the label's catalogue are children's music, drama, speeches, poetry and other spoken word materials, natural and man-made sounds, film soundtracks, language, music and science instruction and a substantial array of other things that may be perceived and possibly enjoyed. Asch kept every title in print, year in and year out, whether one copy was sold or thousands. It is important to realize that there were very few that sold thousands, in order to understand how Folkways not-for-profit successor stewards the collection and generates revenue today.

The Folkways catalog is close to an encyclopedic array of what may be heard by human ears, from *Sounds of the Deep Ocean* (FX 6121) and *Sounds of the Junk Yard* (FX 6143) to *Speech after the Removal of the Larynx* (FX 6134) and *Voices of the Satellites* (FX 6200).<sup>2</sup> Included were blues greats like

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2 At the time of this publication, Smithsonian websites display Folkways Records catalog numbers in the format FW0XXXX, where each X is a numeral. See <<<http://www.folkways.si.edu>>>.

Huddie Ledbetter, (better known as Lead Belly) and Lightnin' Hopkins, jazz innovators such as Mary Lou Williams, avant-garde composer John Cage, such now legendary songsters as Pete Seeger, Woody Guthrie, the New Lost City Ramblers, Dock Boggs, Ola Belle Reed and multicultural education pioneer Ella Jenkins. Asch also published some of Bob Dylan's first commercial recordings under the pseudonym Blind Boy Grunt.<sup>3</sup> He released today's country rock star Lucinda Williams' first two albums. Among significant oddities were the *Harry Smith Anthology of American Folk Music*, an array of recordings reissued mostly from 1920s and 30s regional record labels, so-called "hillbilly" and "race" recordings.<sup>4</sup> The *Anthology* was a publication that inspired a small but illustrious audience; it is cited by musicians such as Bob Dylan, U2, Bruce Springsteen, Emmylou Harris and others as a profound influence on their musical development. Albums were released from all the Americas, Europe, Africa, Asia and Australia – of music originating in rural areas, villages and big cities, featuring folk music and many other regional and national genres. The catalogue includes Danish music by emigrants, Vietnamese folk song, South African dervishes and Zulu wedding music alike. There is very much more; I have mentioned all these only to indicate to a reader new to the label, that for two generations following the end of World War II, Folkways Records was an historically significant pioneer in nurturing and developing what is now called World Music.

During the mid-1980s, his health declining, Asch sought another record label to take over his catalogue. He had one overriding condition – that every title remain available. The major labels and some independents expressed keen interest. That is to say, they were keenly interested to reissue those few titles that could sell tens of thousands of copies, and discard the rest. But Asch was insistent, absolutely adamant about keeping everything in print. Asch is reported saying, "Do you delete the letter Q from the alphabet just because you don't use it as much as the others?" (Scherman 1987)

Enter the Smithsonian Institution. The U.S. national museum is a complex of sixteen national museums and several science research centers, headquartered in Washington, DC since 1846 after the bequest of \$500,000 in gold from the will of British scientist James Smithson in 1833 to "establish at Washington an institution for the increase and diffusion of knowledge". A man named Ralph Rinzler was

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3 *Broadside Ballads, Vol. 1*. Long-playing record. BR 301/Folkways 5301c, 1963.

4 On December 2, 2005, the 1997 compact disc reissue of Harry Smith's *Anthology of American Folk Music* SFW-CD 40090 (originally issued 1952) was certified as a "Gold" record by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA). The certification means that the recording has sold 500,000 copies.

invited to work for the Smithsonian in 1967, to produce its first Folklife Festival,<sup>5</sup> a summer celebration of tradition and culture on the National Mall in the U.S. capital.<sup>6</sup> He became the in-house advocate for the idea that the U.S. national museum should acquire Folkways Records. Rinzler had known Asch as far back as the 1950s. He had introduced to Asch musicians who Folkways recorded in the 1960s, including Bill Monroe, Clarence Ashley, "Doc" Watson, and others. And he championed the idea that the Smithsonian was the ideal candidate to take on acquisition of the label. The Smithsonian specified that any activity to make use of the collection, including making the recordings available to the public, would have to pay its own way. The institution eventually agreed to acquire all of Folkways' recordings, notes, artwork, contracts and attendant rights, other business files and to house them for preservation purposes. Asch was persistent in his demands and difficult to negotiate with. He did not fully trust the Smithsonian's intentions, according to his son, Michael Asch.<sup>7</sup> But Moses Asch died on October 19, 1986 and the negotiations were brought to a close with his estate's lawyer, aided by Michael and Margaret Asch. In February 1987 the deal was finalized. A part-time archivist was hired shortly thereafter, and Anthony Seeger came aboard later that year as curator and director of what has become known as Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. Thus was born a not-for-profit record label run by ethnomusicologists.

## Means for the Mission

Smithsonian Folkways is a small player indeed in the global music industry, commanding all of slightly less than 9/100,000 of one percent (0.00009%) of the worldwide recording sales market of US\$33.6 billion.<sup>8</sup> Approximately forty per cent (40%) of the more than three hundred titles manufactured and released to date on the label are comprised of remastered reissues of the archived titles. The catalogue is sold mostly in English-speaking countries but also cultivates a slowly-growing network of distributors in more than thirty countries worldwide.

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5 Rinzler (1934–1994) learned to play banjo while a student at Swarthmore College, and later joined the Greenbriar Boys. He helped program the legendary Newport Folk Festival in its opening season (1959) and into its heyday, and managed bluegrass pioneer Bill Monroe for a couple of years after that.

6 The Festival of American Folklife, now called the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, is a free, annual event that occupies two weeks preceding and including the capital's celebration of Independence Day on July 4, and regularly attracts more than a million visitors.

7 Dr. Asch is chair of the Smithsonian Folkways Advisory Board at the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage at the Smithsonian Institution. He is a professor of anthropology, who now teaches at the University of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. His spouse, Margaret Asch, curated an exhibition of Folkways Records cover art at the University of Alberta, Canada's Fine Arts Building Gallery, which opened on November 30, 2005, in association with folkwaysAlive!

8 International Federation of the Phonographic Industry. "The Recording Industry: World Sales 2005", *IFPI News*. London, UK, March 22, 2005: <<<http://www.ifpi.org/site-content/press/20050322.html>>>.

## Sales Report

### *Top 10 Best-Selling Releases (2005):*

SF 40483	LUIZ BONFA: SOLO IN RIO 1959
SF 40163	CLASSIC BLUEGRASS VOL 2
SF 40137	CLASSIC SOUTHERN GOSPEL FROM SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS RECORDINGS
SF 40000	GUTHRIE, WOODY & LEAD BELLY FOLKWAYS: THE ORIGINAL VISION
SF 40149	BACK ROADS TO COLD MOUNTAIN
SF 40100	WOODY GUTHRIE, THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND – THE ASCH RECORDINGS, VOL 1
SF 40044	LEAD BELLY WHERE DID YOU SLEEP LAST NIGHT? – THE LEADBELLY LEGACY, VOL 1
SF 40090	ANTHOLOGY OF AMERICAN FOLK MUSIC
SF 40815	WILLIAMS, MARY LOU: MARY LOU'S MASS
SF 45059	cELLA-bration: A TRIBUTE TO ELLA JENKINS (CHILDREN'S)
SF 40147	COTTEN, ELIZABETH: SHAKE SUGAREE
SF 40515	SI SOY LLANERO - JOPOPO MUSIC FROM THE ORINOCO PLAINS OF COLOMBIA

**Table 1. Smithsonian Folkways sales rankings, August 20, 2005.**

Between fifteen and twenty-five new recordings per year are released, virtually all accompanied by well-documented and substantial booklets; twenty-eight to thirty-six pages are typical, sometimes eighty pages or even more. The accompanying texts, graphics, lyrics and imagery help contextualize and enrich the listening experience.

Contrary to unshakeable popular belief, Smithsonian Folkways receives financial support neither from the Smithsonian trust nor from the U.S. government. Instead, the publication of recordings is funded by recording sales and an occasional grant. Sales of custom-made, on-demand digital (CD-R) or tape (audio cassette) copies of titles from the archival collection are made to individuals and institutions worldwide. The record label releases both new material and reissues from its collections for sales to retail outlets via traditional distribution channels. About one-third of its revenue is derived from making on-demand digital copies of the mostly analog recordings in the archive, the balance is from sales of commercially-manufactured recordings. Of the manufactured products, new releases account for not more than thirty percent (30%) of sales.

The label forges partnerships with outside entities to strengthen knowledge, for example the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies, New York's Center for Traditional Music and Dance or the now-defunct International Institute for Traditional Music in Berlin. With the help of a substantial grant from the Ford Foundation, a twenty-disc series on Indonesian music was published. With the Catholic University of Peru's Center for Andean Ethnomusicology, the Smithsonian label released eight compact discs of Peruvian village music traditions. A current partnership with the Aga Khan Trust for Culture plans publication of ten albums featuring Central Asian music traditions, each accompanied by a DVD of performances and context.

During Asch's Folkways Records' years, rights were often purchased outright from the artist or from whomever owned the recording. In such a contractual arrangement, often called a "buyout", no royalties are due. In many other instances, the arrangement would pay a royalty of a few cents for each copy sold, a "penny rate". Occasionally the artist was paid a percentage of sale price for U.S. sales. In all cases where royalties were owed, only half the applicable rate was paid for foreign sales. In Anthony Seeger's early years at the Smithsonian, he initiated a unilateral reform whereby percentage rates for all royalties was established based on retail price, and moreover substantially higher than any penny rate. Of course no one declined.

I would like to discuss one particular relationship in which we are part of and which uses an experimental model for dealing with royalties. Smithsonian Folkways had discussions in the late 1990s with Dr. Steven Feld, a scholar and field researcher who has spent more than thirty years working with Bosavi peoples in the Southern Highland Province of the island nation of Papua New Guinea. Feld's work was already renowned. His book *Sound and Sentiment* (1990) is a landmark in both anthropology and ethnomusicology, an exploration of an entire community's experience of sound and music. Royalties from Feld's first commercially-released recording were sent to a council of Bosavi community members who decided how the money should be spent.<sup>9</sup> The vehicle to accomplish that purpose, to deliver a fair share of the revenue to the artists, is a combination of non-profit legal structures in the U.S, similar structures in the country of origin and a community council at the locus whence the recordings came. Feld's recordings are exemplary in many ways of ethical best practices. The model he and two other scholars of Bosavi life have engaged to deal with artist and producer royalties has proven both inspiring and practicable for Smithsonian Folkways. The concept of intellectual property, of copyright in sound recordings and underlying ownership rights in musical composition, is far from universal. In the case of the various artists whom we hear in Feld's New Guinea recordings, people do not necessarily believe that music is created by individuals, but rather that compositions come through living persons from ancestor spirits, who may speak in the voices of birds, or waterfalls. For that reason, the Bosavi do not believe songs are or can be owned by individuals and therefore will not engage in the intellectual property commodification process of music copyright. In this case the community-of-origin has thus chosen not to copyright the original songs represented in the three-CD set.

There are other researchers, field recordists and ethnomusicologists, who employ similar or other exemplary models to ensure compensation for music-makers whose work is commodified in the Western marketplace. In the past several years Smithsonian Folkways proactively helped create such models (with a community as beneficiary) for several other recordings, including music

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9 *Voices of the Rainforest*. Compact disc. Ryko RCD 10173, 1991.

from eastern Africa and music from across a long swath of Asia.<sup>10</sup> If a non-profit record label can do this for artists who are not in the Western economic sphere, commercial record labels can do it for those who are. Feld himself founded a label in 2003, Voxlox, to “present exile, refugee, diasporic, and indigenous voices muted or censored by mainstream media”.<sup>11</sup>

All the three record labels Feld has released recordings through pay royalties to the Bosavi People’s Fund, which is administered for legal purposes by the non-profit Tides Foundation in the U.S. and the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies in Port Moresby.<sup>12</sup> As I understand it, the fund channels royalties to projects decided upon by a Bosavi council of advisors. Projects have included solar panels, a school and musical instruments for local communities in the province. What is exemplary to me is the manifest realization by the recordist that revenue from the recordings made available to the world should benefit the community. A small amount of royalties can accomplish a good deal of benefit in a community not in the belly of the post-industrial West. Feld understood important implications of the complex relationship between field recordist and the people whose work he studied. His career was built upon his work with that community and he remains connected and committed to it.

Professor Feld wished to release material that would show much of the community’s musical experience from the mid-1970s through the late 1990s, a time when critical and stressful interactions with the modern world occurred, and a period during which much change occurred. Smithsonian Folkways wished to take the project on but recognized that funding support was needed. Following discussions and negotiations between the label and Feld, outside funding to realize the project was located, largely and directly resultant from his abiding commitment.

There are other recordists who use their royalties from recordings for the benefit of the artistic communities, directly or indirectly, for example by establishing scholarships for youth from the community of origin. But this is far from a universal practice. Better academic preparation for ethical behavior and best practices in fieldwork would help improve this situation.

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10 Respectively, *Abayudaya: Music from the Jewish People of Uganda*. Compact disc. Smithsonian Folkways SFW40504, 2003 and *The Silk Road: A Musical Caravan*. Two compact discs. Smithsonian Folkways SFW40438, 2002.

11 See for details: <<<http://www.voxlox.net>>>.

12 See websites for Bosavi People’s Fund: <<<http://www.bosavipeoplesfund.org>>>, Tides Foundation: <<<http://www.tides.org>>>. The Institute for Papua New Guinea Studies (e-mail: ipngs@global.net.pg) connects to the local communities.

## Smithsonian Global Sound

When Anthony Seeger arrived in Washington in 1987 to take up his role as founding curator and director of Folkways at the Smithsonian, he expected that it would be possible to quickly establish a way to deliver music over telephone lines. “It would take perhaps a few months, at most”, he thought.<sup>13</sup> It took a bit longer than that, actually a good deal longer, about eighteen years. Finally, in late June of 2005, Smithsonian Global Sound was publicly launched. It is an online digital download site where one may access samples or download full versions of recordings from the International Library of African Music (ILAM; physically housed at Willard Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa), the Archive Research Centre for Ethnomusicology in Gurgaon (a suburb of New Delhi, India), and Smithsonian’s own collection of Folkways Records plus the subsequently-acquired Collector, Cook, Dyer-Bennet, Fast Folk, Monitor and Paredon Records labels, insofar as their rights are available. All in all, close to 40,000 tracks are available for sale by download. The collection is enhanced by free availability of downloadable liner notes in portable document format (pdf) for most titles and is accompanied by cover images. Each item is indexed by community of origin, regional and national identifiers, culture group, language, instrument and other parameters, in robust addition to the now-standard commercial online music websites’ basic metadata, which includes only album and track title, artist name, and a limited group of market-defined categories, similar to what one might typically find in a record shop.

Without a press release or any sort of announcement, the word of early testing with volunteers spread. The *New York Times*’ Jon Pareles wrote, “... the Smithsonian Institution has just gone online with the ethnographic answer to iTunes”.<sup>14</sup> To accomplish that task, between 1999 and October 2003, Smithsonian spent well over US\$1 million, via a mixture of loans and grants, in development of the vision to develop the website and its complex functionality. We supported efforts by the South African and Indian archives to help digitize their materials, as pilot projects to test the unproven hypothesis that there is substantial worldwide interest in traditional, community-based music. We required that the remote archives establish a functioning means to directly and financially benefit the musicians represented in the recordings, or their heirs, or their communities— whenever royalties are paid.

We established a development office in Seattle, Washington, staffed by three persons to do the work. We had hoped to launch before anyone else could accomplish such a task, after the pioneering Liquid Audio but well before iTunes. As it happened, after several years of diligent work to accomplish the smooth

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<sup>13</sup> Anthony Seeger, conversation with the author, ca. 1999.

<sup>14</sup> Jon Pareles 2005. “This Is the Sound of Globalization”, *Critic’s Notebook*. *New York Times*, sec. E, April 15, 2005, national edition.

delivery of mixed media, including audio, imagery and well-indexed texts, funds to continue development ran out. We closed our Seattle office in December 2003, released two of the three fulltime staffers and transferred the database designer to Smithsonian offices in the U.S. capital. Smithsonian Folkways and Center for Folklore and Cultural Heritage staff took on all the other tasks needed to continue progress. Work continued for another year and a half before public launch of Smithsonian Global Sound. We have wagered that the foreseeable future will increasingly be digital.

Smithsonian had tried several ventures previously in efforts to extend its diffusion of knowledge mission to the online domain before 2000, with Liquid Audio for downloads and a company called MusicMaker, which had an in-store kiosk concept. Liquid Audio was an excellent example of an idea born before its time, but there was insufficient market to support it. MusicMaker ran out of capital before it launched. With Smithsonian Global Sound we hoped to be the first website to not only offer downloadable audio, but also a rich mix of imagery, introductory texts and extensive liner notes, all well-indexed and eminently searchable according to the individual user's interests and curiosity. We wanted to help set a very high standard for delivery of online audio in the digital domain. But Apple iTunes and other commercial distributors arrived online sooner, each offering only minimal, and to my mind insufficient, supporting information (metadata). And still we labored, longer than we thought we would need to accomplish our launch of Smithsonian Global Sound.

In 2004, with a financial boost from Microsoft Corporation, our staff was finally able to complete digitization of Smithsonian-owned audio archive's content, in return for allowing MSN Music an exclusive major digital distributor right to the entire collection for a short period.<sup>15</sup> Microsoft Corporation was and remains proactive in acquiring independent label content to shape its music site's answer to iTunes and the iPod and other emerging online distributors.<sup>16</sup> Smithsonian's right to operate Smithsonian Global Sound were not limited in any way by the agreement. The onset of digital distribution multiplies royalty accounting demands. Where once there was a product type for sale called an album, with ten to twenty cuts on it, now each selection is itself a product, and there are ten to twenty times more sales to keep track and account for.

Smithsonian Global Sound is growing slowly. Educational features using streaming video and audio have been launched to promote the site, including cultural heritage materials, specific artists and genres. Presently, our plans include

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<sup>15</sup> See << <http://www.music.msn.com/smithsonian> >> and subsequent links.

<sup>16</sup> At the time of this writing, Smithsonian Global Sound is offered for sale to libraries worldwide via streaming media subscriptions under the aegis of Alexander Street Press, and Smithsonian Folkways Recordings has added eMusic and iTunes to its list of digital distributors of its content.

strengthening the website with the addition of several more otherwise unavailable archival audio collections from other parts of the world. Time will tell if the project can become self-supporting or not.

## Selection Process

The major label music business in the West almost completely fails to represent traditional music adequately. World music, even popular genres, are largely distributed by independent labels. It is rare to find, either in diaspora or in original setting any vital, community-of-origin-based music. I mean this as simply an observation rather than a critique. Major label priorities do not include the transmission of intangible cultural heritage, for corporate strategies are economically determined. At the Smithsonian we process 800–1000 incoming proposals per year, some of which are invited. From that set selections are made, based on several parameters.

Under the strategic guidance of the curator/director, senior staff may advocate for and lead the way for a project. We ask many questions, such as:

- Is this music culturally significant?
- Is it based in a community whose members include the music as one of its distinctive identifiers?
- Is the music beautiful, that is, aesthetically pleasing, in its own context?
- Is this music available elsewhere in the Western marketplace?
- If available, is it already well- or reasonably well-represented?
- Would this music's addition to our catalogue strengthen our offerings?
- Did the musicians get paid to make this recording?
- Did the musicians agree to the possibility of commercialization, however modest?
- Is there provision for the musicians represented to be paid royalties?
- Have arrangements been made for the possibility of further licensing?
- Is there documentation of such agreements?

Concurrently comes an economic assessment, which may include both internal and external queries, such as:

- What indications are there that this project will have commercial appeal?
- What is our marketing director's estimate of sales potential?
- Can our U.S. distributor (or sometime a territorial distributor outside the U.S.) comment on likely interest and demand for the particular genre under consideration?

If the project answers almost all of these questions affirmatively, we often will send the audio out for independent review, engaging the network of music scholars worldwide, those who have considerable expertise in music of virtually every sort. At the end of these processes, which can take several months, sometimes a year or more, we have eliminated all but less than one per cent (1%) of the possibilities.

I am often asked, how do we say, “No.” to almost all of those whose work we will not release, the hundreds of musicians, recordists, scholars, agents, managers and others who come to us each year with the audible result of their heart, craft, soul, discipline, desire, community, spirit, talent and love? Following is from a recent rejection letter:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you for considering Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. We were glad to listen your recording but will not be able to add to it our catalogue. We are part of the U.S. national museum, established for “the increase and diffusion of knowledge”. Our non-profit record label mostly publishes material from the Smithsonian’s archival audio collection, and community-based traditional music from all over the world. We seldom take on singers, songwriters or composers of their own material, as the much larger commercial music business provides many opportunities to do that.

There is so much great music everywhere and we can publish only about twenty recordings per year! We are able to release less than one percent of what we are privileged to review, so do not take this as a judgment of the worthiness of your work. Keep making your music, a recording will come in due course. On behalf of Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, I wish you all the best.

More than a year in advance of any publication, we have a handful of new ideas in hand. We augment our selections of traditional music from all over the world with economically dependable reissues from our archival catalogue of American roots/traditional/folk music, and in this century we have added a focus on both new and archival Latino roots music, in recognition of the demographic makeup of the U.S. population. There is a good deal to choose from, as we steward nearly 3000 albums. And at last we make final decisions about the handful of recordings we hope to publish next year and the year after.

And then our work continues. We issue a contract to the provider of the sound recordings, if the masters are not part of our collection. We take care that a fee is paid, sometimes upon completion of the contract, sometimes on release. Such a fee is deductible from royalties and is basically a calculation of what we believe will be an approximation of the copies sold in the first year or two.

Next we identify and contract with an appropriate noteswriter, someone well-steeped, knowledgeable about the cultural context and musical content of the

particular material, moreover someone who can write for our audience. We believe Smithsonian Folkways buyers are intelligent, but assume they know little or nothing about the particular music. We seek an audience of people who react to something new and possibly quite strange with stronger curiosity than fear. We offer a modest fee, an honorarium, to that person to write the notes. Often the recording provider is eminently qualified to write such an essay, generally describing the music and specifically the individual tracks. If we have nothing in hand from whomever provides the recorded material, we begin to seek appropriate imagery for the cover. I view the front cover of a CD as an invitation to its audio content. If the invitation is accepted, the viewer will turn the package over to learn more about what's inside, and perhaps soon after will become a listener.

Many people, in most every part of the world dream of wealth and fame, of becoming a star. If not famous, wealthy will do, they rationalize, and believe they can get there from here. But when starting the journey armed with a passion for music and a skill with music-making, is it possible for a musician or an unknown recordist to land a major label contract, or even a small independent label contract? Should she or he want to? Frankly, I say "No, it is not possible." and again "No, she or he should not want to". In my encounters with musicians beginning a career, I counsel: "Do not cede control of your art, your craft. Keep making the music, build a following of people who find meaning in it. A record contract can come later, after you have further honed your craft and established a community. These days you can make your own recording and sell it yourself, at live performances and online". In the U.S., a good website distributor, for example CD Baby ([www.cdbaby.net](http://www.cdbaby.net)) can effectively expand the reach of the individual music-maker to the retail marketplace.

That there has been such a significant shift of patronage in many parts of the world is notable. In the West, support for music has mostly moved from royal courts to ministries of culture and arts councils, to corporations, philanthropic foundations, record labels and still the occasional individual. The shift of patronage has moved even further from its traditional bases. The recording business is historically young, it has been around for just a bit more than a hundred years, but it has profoundly democratized access to music. It is possible today in much of the world, urban centers in South Africa certainly included, to acquire the means to record, mix, master, and manufacture recordings with very little money. Perhaps for the first time in history, the patron of a particular musician or sort of music, destined for more than the home or the very localized community, can be the music maker.

## Conclusion

I have tried to show how the little record company at the U.S. national museum goes about fulfilling its mission, to share how it makes its decisions, to illustrate its means and methods. While dolphins, whales, birds, other primates and other life forms may share similar behavior, music-making is a fundamentally human activity. It expresses the deepest feelings and meanings, the value of our very breath, in ways that words can only approximate. Music emerges from the human heart, from craft, or call it soul, from patience and self-discipline, desire, community, spirit, talent and love.

If any readers are music tradition-bearers seeking to make their way by means of sharing music with others, make music without pause! Learn the basics about intellectual property rights, royalties, copyright, licensing, understand the burgeoning digital distribution marketplace. Know that the problems are worldwide. You are not on your own, many are meeting similar issues creatively, information from other places has bearing on your place. Your responsibility as a culture-bearer will be addressed only in small part by the UNESCO Convention on Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage. I believe all concerned should become familiar with the activities of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).<sup>17</sup> Arm yourself with knowledge, find allies locally, nationally, regionally and worldwide.

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<sup>17</sup> WIPO's English language website is <<<http://www.wipo.int/portal/index.html.en>>>.

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