Performing the archive:
The ILAM *For Future Generations* exhibit, *Music Heritage Project SA* and *Red Location Music History Project*¹

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Abstract
This paper reports on recent projects of the International Library of African Music (ILAM) involving research, community outreach and dissemination/repatriation of archived recordings. The *ILAM-Red Location Music History Project* addresses the lack of research on Eastern Cape jazz of the Red Location in the Nelson Mandela Bay metropolitan area (Port Elizabeth). The project combines collection of oral history data with community outreach and education in its effort to do meaningful intervention in the community that passes on to younger generations the uniquely South African style of jazz that is their heritage. ILAM's *For Future Generations* museum exhibit displays Hugh Tracey's legacy for African music. The *ILAM Music Heritage Project SA* seeks to fulfil Tracey's vision for keeping the music he recorded alive in its communities of origin by developing music education textbooks that utilize Tracey's field recordings. Outcomes of the ILAM-Red Location oral history project that uniquely combine documentation with community outreach, education and empowerment initiatives are presented along with examples of ILAM’s dissemination/repatriation efforts which are returning ILAM’s field recordings through music education textbooks created for the mandated creative arts curriculum in South Africa and reaching countless school groups and the general public through its traveling exhibition, *For Future Generations*. This paper advocates for archives to become sites for heritage activism.
Keywords: oral history; Eastern Cape jazz; repatriation; community outreach and education; digital divide.

Introduction
The International Library of African Music, famous for the pioneering work of its founder, Hugh Tracey (1903-77), whose research methods left a legacy of carefully documented field recordings, has catalogued, digitized and created on-line access (www.ilam.ru.ac.za) to the Hugh Tracey Collection of many thousands of recordings of African music from throughout east, central and southern Africa. A self-taught scholar motivated by his awareness of the need to preserve what he feared to be vanishing repertoires of indigenous African music, Hugh Tracey’s audio-visual collections spanning from 1928 to the early 1970s provide a rich source of recordings of African music and related material for use by researchers and educators. Tracey’s achievements – documentation, preservation, research, dissemination via audio-visual and print publications and outreach and education – remain to this day the mission of the International Library of African Music (ILAM), which he founded as an archive and research centre in 1954.

Figure 1. Hugh Tracey with his Sound of Africa (218 LPs) and Music of Africa (25 LPs) series produced from his field recordings (ILAM image).
This paper discusses issues that emerge in “performing” a research archive such as the International Library of African Music and advocates for archives to make heritage activism part of their mission. I urge that ethnomusicologists, musicologists, music researchers in general and archivists be creative in devising research projects that include community outreach and education aimed at continued performance of the music by future generations. Importantly, it is also necessary to recognize that there is a “digital divide”, and to try to bridge it by devising ways to make our collections of musical heritage accessible to the many who do not have access to the Internet.

A question that frequently arises in digitization projects is: who benefits? Answers often suggest universal benefit because the heritage materials will be preserved for posterity and easily accessible to all via the Internet. But, given the reality of low bandwidth and sparse Internet accessibility for many in the southern hemisphere, particularly in the rural areas where many of our archived field recordings were obtained, ways of getting the music back to the communities of its originators beyond the Internet need to be created. ILAM’s attempts in that direction, the ILAM Music Heritage Project SA and the For Future Generations exhibit, to be reported on in more detail in what follows, give Hugh Tracey’s archived recordings back to the youth and their communities through the schools and museums.

**Issues in “performing” a research archive**

The perpetual issue faced by the International Library of African Music and most archives is that of sustainability – that is, how to source and maintain adequate funding to survive and thrive. There is an on-going need for funding for basic operations such as accession and preservation of collections through cataloguing and digitizing, dissemination via online access, dissemination through production of audio-visual and print publications, research projects and research publications. There is also a need for funds for outreach and education activities more generally – not to mention repatriation projects – since institutional support from national governments and/or universities that house archives is never enough. Writing project proposals to secure outside funding is necessary. Cataloguing and digitising the Hugh Tracey audio, film and photo collections was accomplished through fund raising from government, corporate and international sources including the National Research Foundation (NRF), the National Heritage Council, the Rand Merchant Bank Expressions Programme and the Mellon Foundation. Now that ILAM has, after five years of committed effort (2007-2011), reached the point of having catalogued, digitised and made the Hugh Tracey collections accessible via the Internet, the question remains: After digitising, what next? What are the ethical implications of providing Internet access for those privileged enough to have that access, while countless other descendants of the musicians Hugh Tracey recorded very likely do not have Internet access, and also very likely have little or no idea the recordings even exist?
Among the most urgent issues facing research archives is how to survive and thrive without compromising professional ethics in regard to archival practice. Professional ethics pertain to all areas of an archive’s operations, from the basic functions of accessioning collections to the securing of funds – whether institutional, grants, or from sales – for on-going operations and for repatriation projects crucial to the functions of archives in the twenty-first century. Archives in the twenty-first century are more than ever in a position to not only digitally preserve and make their collections accessible, but also to break the digital divide and return copies of their audio-visual holdings to their communities of origin. Our current mandate at ILAM is to attempt to disseminate and “give back” Hugh Tracey’s audio recordings through outreach and education projects that create materials designed to educate and inform about ILAM’s legacy for African music, while exposing the general public, and youth in particular, to their heritage as contained in the indigenous music Tracey recorded, documented and preserved.

**Guidelines for Reproduction, Sale and Repatriation of Digital Heritage**

In an effort to establish standards for reproduction, sale and repatriation of digital heritage, ILAM partnered with the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor African Studies Center to host a Digital Heritage Workshop at ILAM in December 2008. Discussions at the workshop explored (1) sources of digitisation success and failure; (2) technology and mechanics of distribution; (3) funding, sales and sustainability; (4) access (open access versus fee-based models); and (5) intellectual property rights. Participants also spent considerable time grappling with the question of how to repatriate cultural heritage to communities of origin. The workshop agenda included presentations on content management models, a repatriation project carried out by the Alan Lomax Archive, copyright issues and technology options. Outcomes of the workshop included two sets of guidelines – one, *Guidelines for reproduction and sale of digital heritage*, the other *Guidelines for repatriation of digital heritage*.

**ILAM’s travelling museum exhibit For Future Generations**

In 2010 ILAM developed a full-scale travelling museum exhibit, which included publishing an exhibit catalogue with a collection of informative articles, stunning images from Hugh Tracey’s field excursions, and a full-length CD with field recordings of each of the twenty instruments featured in the exhibit. Titled *For Future Generations – Hugh Tracey and the International Library of African Music*, the exhibit is the outreach and education component of the Rand Merchant Bank Expressions Programme grant to ILAM that covered the cost of staff and equipment to complete the cataloguing and digitising of Hugh Tracey’s original pancake reels recorded in the 1940s-1950s.
Also published and provided to museums hosting the exhibit was a colourful *African music activities* educational packet (see Figure 2b) consisting of five lessons and a CD to accompany the exhibit, *for* use as a teaching resource by teachers and the school groups who visit the exhibit. Each of the five lessons has a unifying focus grounded in African music. For example the “Drums and trees” lesson focuses on rhythm, tonal contrast and environment. In this lesson, children consider the value of trees to the environment and their use in making instruments, and create and perform rhythms based on speech rhythms.
The exhibit displays twenty musical instruments from the Tracey collection, an installation of connected wooden display boxes that showcases some of the instruments as well as Hugh Tracey’s audio and print publications in the form of 78 rpm and LP records, books, ILAM’s journal *African Music*, and various images from Hugh Tracey’s field excursions. Numerous information panels include a time line of ILAM’s history and a map of Tracey’s field research locations. There is also an information panel and listening station devoted to Tracey’s broadcasting career that gives exhibit goers a chance to hear him tell, in one of his radio shows, the story of how he recorded the Congolese guitarist Jean Bosco Mwenda and released his hit song “Masanga” (ILAM 1952) which, in Tracey’s words, “went round the world” (Tracey 1970). Six audio stations offer a wide variety of field recordings to accompany the various information panels, such as a large wall display of exceptional images of people performing “songs for every occasion”. Four video stations feature films of South African mine dancing, Chopi xylophone music, Andrew Tracey’s films on Shona storytelling and his “System of the mbira”, and an overview of ILAM’s history and current activities. An exhibit highlight is Hugh Tracey’s 1939 film from a recording excursion in Zululand projected on big screen.
**ILAM Music Heritage Project SA**

A desire to begin the repatriation of ILAM’s field recordings and recognition of the need for teaching materials for African music, together with the hope to begin to fulfill Hugh Tracey’s vision to repatriate his field recordings through his *African music codification and textbook project* (1969), which unfortunately never came to fruition, have motivated the current *ILAM Music Heritage Project SA*. This project was conceived as a method of repatriating the music recorded by Hugh Tracey to communities throughout South Africa. It is hoped that eventually the concept can be extended throughout sub-Saharan Africa to all the various geographical regions where he recorded.

Funded by the South African National Arts Council, the project is authoring and publishing two music education textbooks. The first, titled *Music for the creative arts* and written to comply with the mandates of the South African Department of Education’s Creative Arts Curriculum, is aimed at grades 7-9 and students between twelve and fourteen years of age. The second, entitled *Understanding african music*, designed for high school music majors aged fifteen-eighteen, will appeal more broadly to the general public because of the nature of its content. The texts are illustrated with images from ILAM’s photo collections and the lessons feature selections from Hugh and Andrew Tracey’s field recordings. Audio files and video clips to accompany the lessons are provided on a multimedia disc that accompanies each book. Both textbooks are authored by school music teachers with exposure to and training in African music, ethnomusicology and music education.

**ILAM-Red Location Music History Project**

The *ILAM-Red Location Music History Project* is a research and community outreach project on jazz performance in the Red Location/New Brighton, greater Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Area. The project, funded by the National Heritage Council, features research (oral history interviews, archival and library research into jazz recordings of the 1950s-1970s era) and community outreach. It is being conducted in cooperation with the Red Location Museum and veteran musicians from the area. The project’s research goal is to conduct oral history interviews with surviving musicians and anti-apartheid activists who were involved in performance of jazz in aid of the “struggle” as well as purely for entertainment and creative expression during this era, before any more of this music heritage, unique to the region, is lost due to the passing of people possessing the knowledge.

Secondary goals are to collect memorabilia from the era for use in preparing an exhibit. A jazz listening area and archive at the Red Location Museum will be open to the public. All data from the project will be archived at ILAM and at the Museum. Production of a documentary film from video shot during interviews and performance workshops to be shown as part of the museum exhibit is also planned. The project’s outreach goal was to educate young musicians from the community in jazz performance from the era through sponsorship of Saturday morning “workshop-rehearsals” led by veteran musicians from the community. The outreach culminated
with the Jazz Heritage Concert staged for the community on 27 March 2010 featuring the youth playing with the veteran musicians. The concert showcased three generations of local jazz artists playing music historically connected to the Red Location and Eastern Cape jazz. It was filmed by ILAM technicians and produced into a documentary DVD that is now available to the performers at cost from ILAM as a way for them to generate income through sales to their fans.

Figure 3: Veteran bass player, “Big T” Ntsele, teaching a student at a workshop/rehearsal.

CONCLUSION
The most crucial question for us to answer as we seek to repatriate field recordings is: What works? Certainly active engagement by archives in research projects that include outreach and education, as well as repatriation to communities through the schools, seems to be a viable way to begin this process. Teacher workshops will be essential to make sure that the books are utilised to their full potential and that engagement with the materials is actually accomplished and sustained. There is no doubt that archives are ideally situated to serve as sites for heritage activism. As Hugh Tracey understood, working through schools offers a way to reach out to future generations.

The potential for archives possessing valuable collections of cultural heritage in the form of field recordings to form a bridge from their historical recordings to present realities – and thereby provide creative inspiration for researchers, educators, and composers of contemporary African music – is great. There is no doubt that
Hugh Tracey’s vision remains a vision we must strive to achieve today, as the ethics of professional responsibility for those maintaining collections of field recordings must include outreach and education activities that find ways to make the music accessible globally. But also and most importantly, we must also find ways to return the music to its communities of origin so that contact with and assimilation of their African heritage is assured for the future generations whose forefathers and mothers created the music found on our field recordings.

ENDNOTES

1. Portions of this paper were presented at the 5th Symposium on Ethnomusicology at the University of Dar es Salaam, 22 July 2011 and the 2nd International Symposium on Ethnomusicology in Uganda, 21 October 2011.
2. The Guidelines are available for download from the ILAM website or by contacting ilamsales@ru.ac.za.

REFERENCES


