

The New York Times



## Great Jazz, Long Unheard, Is Rediscovered

After 70 Years in Crates, the 'Savory Collection' Is Being Burnished for Its Place in Posterity

By LARRY ROHTER

For decades jazz cognoscenti have talked reverently of "the Savory Collection." Recorded from radio broadcasts in the late 1930s by an audio engineer named William Savory, it was known to include extended live performances by some of the most honored names in jazz — but only a handful of people had ever heard even the smallest fraction of that music, adding to its mystique.

After 70 years that wait has now ended. This year the National Jazz Museum in Harlem acquired the entire set of nearly 1,000 discs, made at the height of the swing era, and has begun digitizing recordings of inspired performances by

Louis Armstrong, Benny Goodman, Billie Holiday, Count Basie, Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young, Bunny Berigan, Harry James and others that had been thought to be lost forever. Some of these remarkable long-form performances simply could not fit on the standard discs of the time, forcing Mr. Savory to find alternatives. The Savory Collection also contains examples of underappreciated musicians playing at peak creative levels not heard anywhere else, putting them in a new light for music fans and scholars.

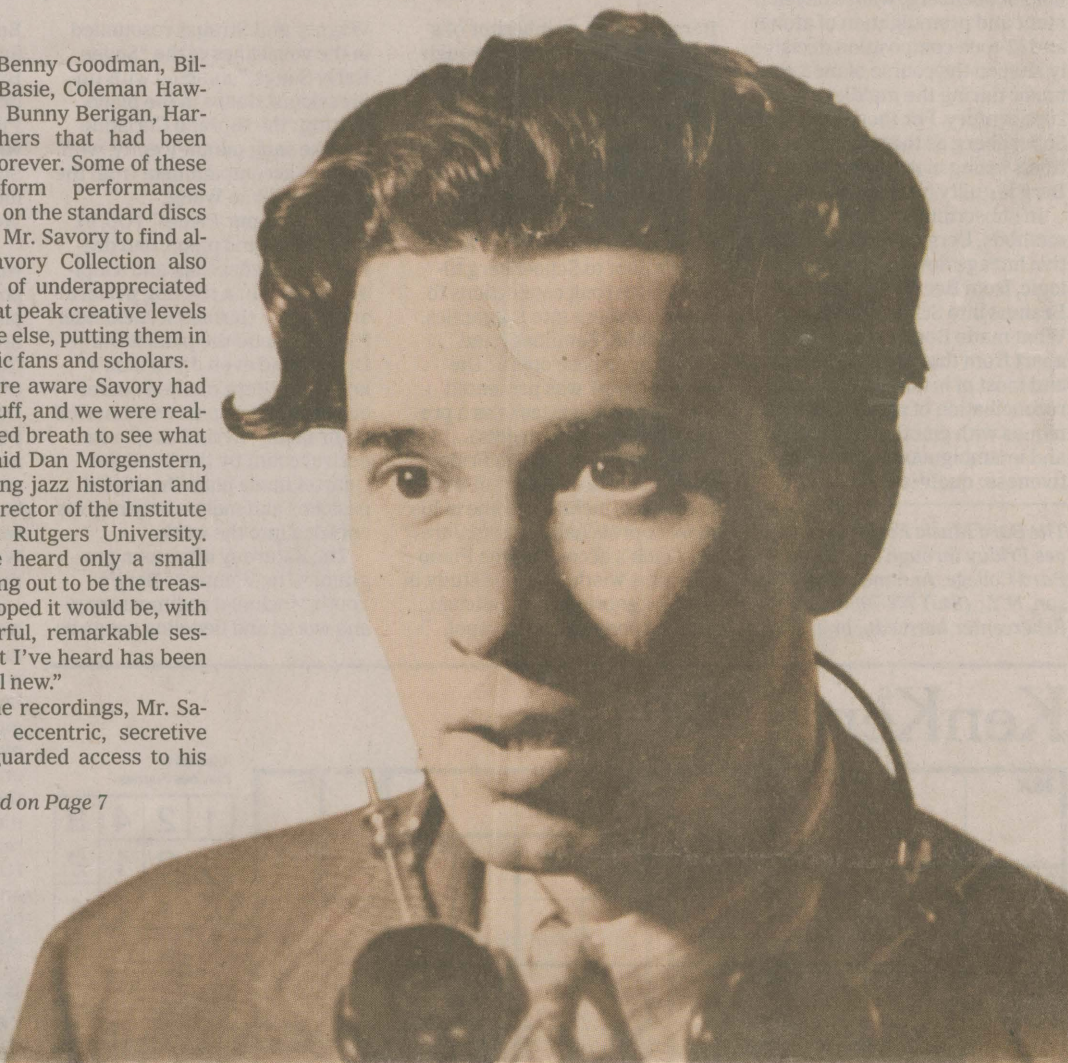
"Some of us were aware Savory had recorded all this stuff, and we were really waiting with bated breath to see what would be there," said Dan Morgenstern, the Grammy-winning jazz historian and critic who is also director of the Institute of Jazz Studies at Rutgers University. "Even though I've heard only a small sampling, it's turning out to be the treasure trove we had hoped it would be, with some truly wonderful, remarkable sessions. None of what I've heard has been heard before. It's all new."

After making the recordings, Mr. Savory, who had an eccentric, secretive streak, zealously guarded access to his

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Doug Pomeroy, above, a recording engineer, is transferring the Savory Collection from disc to digital form. Originally recorded by William Savory, right, an audio engineer, in the late 1930s, the collection features live performances by jazz musicians like, top from left, Coleman Hawkins, Cab Calloway, Fats Waller and Lester Young.



# A Tribute to Alban Berg and His Viennese Influences

ANNANDALE-ON-HUDSON, N.Y. — “My job tonight is to allay any residual fears you might have,” the conductor Leon Botstein said from the stage of the

## MUSIC REVIEW

STEVE SMITH

Sosnoff Theater at the Fisher Center for the Performing Arts at Bard College here on Friday night.

Was there a hint of concern in his statement? Perhaps. For the 21st season of the Bard Music Festival, which started on Friday, Mr. Botstein and his collaborators are focusing on the life and times of the 20th-century Viennese composer Alban Berg.

You might think special pleading would no longer be needed. Berg, who was born in 1885 and died, painfully prematurely, in 1935, left a relatively small oeuvre of mature pieces, including the two greatest operas of the 20th century, “Wozzeck” and “Lulu.”

But one aspect of Berg’s career continues to draw attention above others: He was a prominent disciple of the composer Arnold Schoenberg, whose development and promulgation of atonal and 12-tone composition decisively shaped the course of modern music during the middle of the 20th century. For those who view Schoenberg as the start of everything wrong in modern music, Berg is guilty by association.

In subscribing to Schoenberg’s methods, Berg extended a putative lineage devoted to musical logic, from Beethoven and Brahms into Schoenberg’s work. What made Berg’s music stand apart from that of Schoenberg and most of his disciples was a reconciliation of modernist techniques with emotional efficacy and unambiguous communicativeness: qualities that made

The Bard Music Festival continues Friday through Sunday at Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y.; (845) 758-7900, [fishercenter.bard.edu/bmf/2010](http://fishercenter.bard.edu/bmf/2010).



PHIL MANSFIELD FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

**Bard Music Festival** The violinist Akiko Suwanai and the American Symphony Orchestra at Bard College.

Berg as much an inheritor of a Romantic line running through Schubert, Wagner and Mahler.

Accordingly, and somewhat unusually for a Bard presentation, you sensed an agenda at work during the first weekend, titled “Berg and Vienna.” In six long concerts and related lectures, weight was shifted from Berg’s debt to Schoenberg toward his strong connections to other Viennese late Romantics, like Mahler, Zemlinsky and Schreker (whose opera “Die Ferne Klang” was presented here in previous weeks as a precursor to the Berg events).

The initial concert on Friday was a concise overview of Berg’s career arc, including some of his most approachable works. Jeremy Denk’s account of the Piano Sonata, a wistful, elusive study in post-Wagnerian chromaticism, seemed conjured on the spot.

Wagner and Strauss resounded in the vocal lines of the “Seven Early Songs,” mingled with Impressionist daubs in the piano writing; the soprano Christine Goerke sang magnificently, with elegant accompaniment from the pianist Pei-Yao Wang.

Berg’s “Four Pieces” (Op. 5), for clarinet and piano, had dramatic concision and a lapidary gleam in a riveting performance by the clarinetist Alexander Fiterstein and the pianist Danny Driver. And even if you didn’t know that Berg planted numerous references to an extramarital affair in his “Lyric Suite,” a superb account by the Daedalus Quartet made plain the urgent passions and melancholy regrets encoded into the work.

The Saturday afternoon program, “The Vienna of Berg’s Youth,” included rudimentary piano works and fledgling songs by

Berg that pointed to the strong influence of Schubert and Brahms. The clotted late-Romantic sound of a similarly youthful Piano Quintet by Anton Webern, who along with Berg became a Schoenberg adherent, offered no hint of the gemlike miniatures of Webern’s later years.

More distinguished were two works by Zemlinsky, based on poetry by Richard Dehmel. The pianist Alessio Bax showed a dreamy ease in “Fantasien über Gedichte von Richard Dehmel” (“Fantasies on Poems by Richard Dehmel”); the tenor Nicholas Phan, with Ms. Wang, was poised and insightful in five elusive songs Zemlinsky composed nearly a decade later. Agreeable works by Joseph Marx and Karl Weigl indicated a more conservative agenda.

Saturday night’s concert by the American Symphony Orchestra, meant to show the powerful influence of Mahler, opened with a businesslike account of the Adagio from his unfinished Symphony No. 10: music searing in its emotional impact and rich with the promise of future developments Mahler would not live to realize. Berg’s “Three Pieces” (Op. 6), despite a shaky performance, suggested how Berg’s orchestral writing might have

## Arts, B

Compiled by

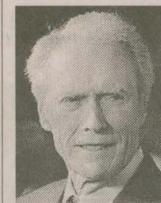
### Old Battle Rejoined Over M

A longstanding tug of war has begun again between the city of Florence and the Italian state over Michelangelo’s “David,” after a report by state-appointed lawyers was made public. The document argues that although the statue was commissioned by the Florentine Republic in 1501, Italy became the rightful titleholder after its unification in the 19th century. At stake are both pride of ownership and millions of dollars in annual ticket sales. Florence’s mayor, **Matteo Renzi**, sought to rebut the claim, saying, according to news reports, that a decree issued shortly after unification granted the city ownership of the building where “David” was displayed. The national government’s lawyers mention of the statue itself. With its “David” was a symbol of the freed Republic and an important source of revenue on Monday, Mayor Renzi declared long to Florence — there are no le firm it.” Italy’s culture minister, **Sa** statement on Monday describing t and inopportune.”

### Eastwood’s ‘Hereafter’ To Close Film Festival

Clint Eastwood’s “Hereafter,” a movie about the intertwining experiences of people who have dealt with death, near-death and the afterlife, will be the closing-

night selection of the New York Film Festival, on a program that will also feature new works by **Jean-Luc Godard, Mike Leigh and Kelly**



**Reichardt**, among other directors, the Film Society of Lincoln Center said on Monday. “Hereafter,” directed by Mr. Eastwood, and written by **Peter Morgan** (“The Queen,” “Frost/Nixon”), chronicles the gradual connections of an American psychic (played by **Matt Damon**), a French journalist (**Cécile de France**) who has a brush with death in the 2004 tsunami and a

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Answers to Previous Puzzles

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# Great Moments in Jazz, Rediscovered After 70 Years

*'Some of us were aware Savory had recorded all this stuff, and we were really waiting with bated breath to see what would be there.'*

DAN MORGENSTERN, director, Institute of Jazz Studies at Rutgers University

From First Arts Page

collection, allowing only a few select tracks by his friend Benny Goodman to be released commercially. When he died in 2004, Eugene Desavouret, a son who lives in Illinois, salvaged the discs, which were moldering in crates; this year he sold the collection to the museum, whose executive director, Loren Schoenberg, transported the boxes to New York City in a rental truck.

Part of what makes the Savory collection so alluring and historically important is its unusual format. At the time Savory was recording radio broadcasts for his own pleasure, which was before the introduction of tape, most studio performances were issued on 10-inch 78-r.p.m. shellac discs, which, with their limited capacity, could capture only about three minutes of music.

But Mr. Savory had access to 12- or even 16-inch discs, made of aluminum or acetate, and sometimes recorded at speeds of 33 1/3 r.p.m. That combination of bigger discs, slower speeds and more durable material allowed Mr. Savory to record longer performances in their entirety, including jam sessions at which musicians could stretch out and play extended solos that tested their creative mettle.

"Most of what exists from this era was done at home by young musicians or fans, and so you get really bad-sounding recordings," Mr. Schoenberg said. "The difference with Bill Savory is that he was both a musician and a technical genius. You hear some of this stuff and you say, 'This can't be 70 years old.'"

As a result, many of the broadcasts from nightclubs and ballrooms that Mr. Savory recorded contain more relaxed and free-flowing versions of hit songs originally recorded in the studio. One notable example is a stunning six-minute Coleman Hawkins performance of "Body and Soul" from the spring of 1940; in it this saxophonist plays a five-chorus solo even more adventurous than the renowned two-chorus foray on his original version of the song, recorded in the fall of 1939. By the last chorus, he has drifted into uncharted territory, playing in a modal style that would become popular only when Miles Davis recorded "Kind of Blue" in 1959.

## Glimpsing the Jazz Hierarchy

Asked if the Savory recordings were likely to prompt a critical reassessment of some jazz musicians or a reordering of the informal hierarchy by which fans rank instrumentalists, Mr. Morgenstern responded by citing the case of Herschel Evans, a saxophonist who played in the Count Basie Orchestra but who



GJON MILI/TIME LIFE — GETTY IMAGES

Billie Holiday, shown here at a jam session at the Metropolitan Opera House in 1943, is featured in the Savory Collection singing a live version of her famous anti-lynching anthem, "Strange Fruit."

ONLINE:  
LOST AND FOUND

Audio excerpts  
from "The Savory

citement he felt then about the quality of the music on the discs. "I asked him once, 'How much more have you got?,' and he said, 'I don't know,'" Mr. Avakian said. "He was really vague about it."

When he moved to suburban Washington, Mr. Savory took a job with a defense contractor, working, Mr. Desavouret said, on electronic communications and surveillance devices designed to pick up audio and data signals. His son also said his father told him that he was "a spook, connected with the C.I.A.," an assertion he is inclined to believe because "when I'd come for Thanksgiving, we'd go out with six retired C.I.A. guys," and because, on retirement, his father was given a memento calling him "the master of mysterious projects."

After Mr. Savory's death, his lawyer and heirs were not sure what to do with the meticulously annotated collection. Some of the boxes with discs had been sealed in 1940 and never opened again, and others had been damaged by exposure to water or were covered with "50 years of mold and gunk," as Mr. Schoenberg put it.

Mr. Desavouret, a musician and retired computer scientist who lives northwest of Chicago, said, "When he died, I felt overwhelmed," because "there was a danger it was all going to be thrown away." In fact, he added, "Dad's lawyer hired a couple of people to clean things up, and they dug through everything and threw away some stuff that they thought was not useful. So I had to issue instructions to preserve all the recordings and writings until we found out what the hell it is."

Eventually, Mr. Desavouret had the recordings shipped to his home in Malta, Ill., where Mr. Schoenberg, who had been trying to track him down, finally heard them this spring and immediately realized that "we have struck gold."

## From Disc to Digital

"This has been on my mind for 30 years," Mr. Schoenberg said. "I cultivated and pestered Bill Savory, who never let me hear a damn thing and wouldn't even tell me what was in the collection besides Benny Goodman," for whom Mr. Schoenberg, 52, used to work.

But because of deterioration, converting the 975 surviving discs to digital form and making them playable is a challenge. Mr. Schoenberg estimates that "25 percent are in excellent shape," he said, "half are compromised but salvageable, and 25 percent are in really bad condition," of which perhaps 5 percent are "in such a state that they will tolerate only one play" before starting to flake.

The transfer of the Savory collection from disc to digital form is being done

died early in 1939, just before his 30th birthday. Evans played alongside Lester Young, who was one of the giants of the saxophone and constantly overshadowed Evans on the Basie group's studio recordings.

"There can never be too much Lester Young, and there is some wonderful new Lester Young on these discs," Mr. Morgenstern said. "But there are also some things where you can really hear Herschel, who is woefully under-represented on record and who, until now, we hardly ever got to hear stretched out. What I've heard really gives us a much better picture of what he was all about."

The collection has already shed new light on what is considered the first outdoor jazz festival, the 1938 Carnival of Swing on Randalls Island. More than 20 groups played at the event, including the Duke Ellington and Count Basie orchestras, and though newsreel footage exists, no audio of the festival was believed to have survived — until part of performances by Count Basie and Stuff Smith turned up on Mr. Savory's discs.

Other material consists of some of the most acclaimed names in jazz playing in unusual settings or impromptu ensembles. Goodman, for example, performs a duet version of the Gershwins' "Oh, Lady Be Good!" with Teddy Wilson on harpsichord (instead of his usual piano), while Billie Holiday is heard, accompanied only by a piano, singing a rubato version of her anti-lynching anthem, "Strange Fruit," barely a month after her original recording was released.

"The record is more like a dance tempo, whereas this version is how she would have done it in clubs," Mr. Schoenberg, a saxophonist and pianist who is also the author of "The NPR Curious Listener's Guide to Jazz," said of the live Holiday recording. "You have the most inane scripted introduction ever, but then Billie comes in, and she drives a stake right through your heart."

Because Mr. Savory liked classical

collection," a video about the process of rescuing and restoring a lost era of jazz, and more:

[nytimes.com/music](http://nytimes.com/music)

One of the discs recorded by William Savory, now owned by the National Jazz Museum.



CHESTER HIGGINS JR./THE NEW YORK TIMES

music, the discs also include a few performances by the Norwegian soprano Kirsten Flagstad, taken from one of her very early tours of the United States, and several by Arturo Toscanini's NBC Symphony Orchestra. There are even speeches, by Franklin D. Roosevelt and Pope Pius XII, and a broadcast of James Joyce reading from his work.

The collection also provides a glimpse into the history of broadcasting, thanks to the presence of Martin Block, a WNEW announcer who hosted a show called "Make Believe Ballroom," on many discs. Walter Winchell coined the term "disc jockey" to describe Block, whose citation when he was inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame gives him credit for being "the first radio disc jockey to become a star in his own right."

Mr. Savory himself played piano and saxophone, and his choice of what to record reflects a musician's refined tastes. "We're lucky that he was such a jazz fanatic, because he really knew who was good and who wasn't," Mr. Schoenberg said.

According to his son Eugene, Mr. Savory was born William Desavouret in June 1916 aboard the ocean liner Mauretania, where his parents were passengers immigrating to the United States from France. (Mr. Desavouret, Mr. Sa-

vory's son, said he did not know why his father changed his name.) He grew up in New Jersey and Southern California and showed an early fascination with technology, which led, while he was still a teenager, to his entry into the recording business.

### A Mysterious Man

As best as can be reconstructed, Mr. Savory went into a Manhattan recording studio to make a demo for a group he played in, found that the equipment was not working and offered to repair it. That led to his being hired to maintain the gear and eventually to a contract with a studio that specialized in transcribing live performances off the air for radio networks and advertisers.

"He was doing these air checks, he told me, to get the balance in the recording, and recorded the shows on his own," said Susan Schmidt Horning, a historian of technology and culture who teaches at St. John's University in Queens and who interviewed Mr. Savory several times. "I think he was just interested in recording and loved music. He did it because he could do it. He knew the value of these recordings, artistically and commercially, and wasn't going to let them go. "The recordings that the museum acquired end around

1940, when Mr. Savory moved to Chicago to work for Columbia Records and CBS. During World War II he was initially assigned to the Naval Research Laboratory, where, Mr. Desavouret said, he helped develop radar for all-weather fighter aircraft, but later also served as a test and combat pilot.

At war's end, Mr. Savory went back to work for Columbia, where he was part of the team that invented the 33½-r.p.m. long-playing record. In the 1950s he moved to Angel Records, EMI's classical label; engineered or produced numerous albums there under the name W. A. Desavouret; married Helen Ward, a former singer in the Goodman band; and eventually moved to Falls Church, Va.

"As an engineer, Bill was remarkable, the guy who developed the technique for cutting the masters" of 78-r.p.m. recordings that were being transferred to the new format, said the jazz record producer George Avakian, 91, who worked with Mr. Savory at Columbia in the 1940s. "He was an all-round character, a humorous, delightful guy who never got as much credit as he deserved, and he did so much."

Mr. Avakian said he remembered hearing a few songs from the collection in the late 1950s, when he visited the Savory home, and still recalled the ex-

from disc to digital form is being done by Doug Pomeroy, a recording engineer in Brooklyn who specializes in audio restorations and has worked on more than 100 CD reissues, among them projects involving music by Louis Armstrong and Woody Guthrie. The process involves numerous steps, beginning with cleaning the discs by hand and proceeding through pitch correction, noise removal, playback equalization, mixing and mastering.

"As fate would have it, a couple of the most interesting Count Basie things are so badly corroded that it took me two afternoons and 47 splices just to put one of them back together again," Mr. Pomeroy said while working on yet another Basie tune, a shuffle featuring Lester Young on clarinet rather than saxophone, his main instrument. "In almost every case I've been able to get a complete performance, but it can be very fatiguing to hear the same skip over and over again and have to close the gap digitally."

Initially, Mr. Pomeroy was reluctant to take on the project, saying he had too much of a backlog to accept new work. But as Mr. Schoenberg recalled their initial conversation, standing in Mr. Pomeroy's studio one morning last month, "when I said 'It's Bill Savory,' he said, 'I'll see you tomorrow morning.'"

Mr. Schoenberg said the museum planned to make as much as possible of the Savory collection publicly available at its Harlem home and eventually online. But the copyright status of the recorded material is complicated, which could inhibit plans to share the music. While the museum has title to Mr. Savory's discs as physical objects, the same cannot be said of the music on the discs.

"The short answer is that ownership is unclear," said June M. Besek, executive director of the Kernochan Center for Law, Media and the Arts at the Columbia University School of Law. "There was never any arrangement for distribution of copies" in contracts between performers and radio stations in the 1930s, she explained, "because it was never envisioned that there would be such a distribution, so somewhere between the radio station and the band is where the ownership would lay."

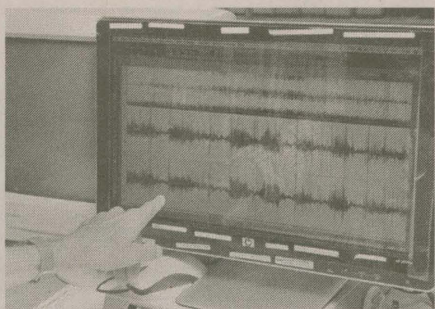
At 70 years' remove, however, the bands, and even some of the radio networks that broadcast the performances, no longer exist, and tracking down all the heirs of the individual musicians who played in the orchestras is nearly impossible.

In the meantime Mr. Pomeroy is plunging ahead. He has digitized just over 100 of the discs so far, and knows that additional challenges — and delights — await him.

"Every one of these discs is an unexpected discovery," he said. "It's an education for me. I can hardly wait to transfer some of this stuff because I am so eager to hear it, to find out what's there and solve all the mysteries that are there."



AUDIO ENG. SOC., VOL. 52, NO. 12, 2004 DECEMBER



Left, William Savory with a 1950s vintage tape machine; right, Doug Pomeroy, at left, an audio restoration specialist, and Loren Schoenberg, executive director of the National Jazz Museum in Harlem. Above, the digital information extracted from one of the old Savory discs.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHESTER HIGGINS JR./THE NEW YORK TIMES

# A Long Road From 'Come By Here' to 'Kumbaya'

Nearing 40 and nearly broke, ousted from his last job as an English professor, a folklore buff named Robert Winslow Gordon set out in the spring of 1926 from his temporary home on the Georgia seacoast, lugging a hand-cranked cylinder recorder and searching for songs in the nearby black hamlets.

**SAMUEL G. FREEDMAN**

**ON RELIGION**

One particular day, Mr. Gordon captured the sound of someone identified only as H. Wylie, singing a lilting, swaying spiritual in the key of A. The lyrics told of people in despair and in trouble, calling on heaven for help, and beseeching God in the refrain, "Come by here."

With that wax cylinder, the oldest known recording of a spiritual titled for its recurring plea, Mr. Gordon set into motion a strange and revealing process of cultural appropriation, popularization and desecration. "Come By Here," a song deeply rooted in black Christianity's vision of a God who intercedes to deliver both solace and justice, by the 1960s became the pallid pop-folk sing-along "Kumbaya." And "Kumbaya," in turn, has lately been transformed into snarky shorthand for ridiculing a certain kind of idealism, a quest for common ground.

Conservative Republicans use the term to mock the Obama administration as naïve. Liberals on the left wing of the Democratic Party use it to chastise President Obama for trying to be bipartisan. The president and some of his top aides use it as an example of what they say their policies are not.

Yet the word nobody wants to own, the all-purpose put-down of the political moment, has a meaningful, indeed proud, heritage that hardly anyone seems to know or to honor. Only within black church circles can one, to this day, still hear "Come By Here" with the profundity that Mr. Gordon did almost a century ago.

"I find it troubling, but not surprising," said Glenn Hinson, a professor of folklore at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill who has studied the song. "Yet again, a product of African-American spirituality has been turned into a term of joking and derision. It's a distortion, and it's a sad reversal."

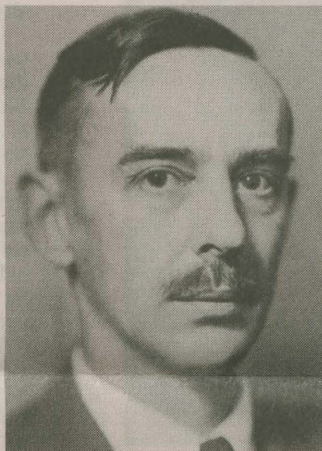
The current political landscape — Red State, Blue State, Tea Party, MoveOn.org, Congressional gridlock — only adds to the insult's appeal.

"'Kumbaya' lets you ridicule the whole idea of compromise,"



PHOTOGRAPHS BY AMERICAN FOLKLORE CENTER ARCHIVE, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Robert Winslow Gordon, below in 1928 and at the Library of Congress with his wax cylinders, captured the sound of someone named H. Wylie singing a lilting spiritual in the key of A.



said John G. Geer, a political scientist at Vanderbilt University in Nashville who is an expert in negative campaigning. "And that ridicule is the latest manifestation of the polarization that the country is dealing with."

Far from compromise, "Come By Here" in its original hands appealed for divine intervention on behalf of the oppressed. The people who were "crying, my Lord" were blacks suffering under the Jim Crow regime of lynch mobs and sharecropping. While the song may have originated in the Georgia Sea Islands, by the late 1930s, folklorists had made recordings as far afield as Lubbock, Tex., and the Florida women's penitentiary.

With the emergence of the civil rights movement in the 1950s, "Come By Here" went from being an implicit expression of black liberation theology to an explicit one. The Folkways album "Freedom Songs" contains an emblem-

atic version — deep, rolling, implacable — sung by the congregation at Zion Methodist Church in Marion, Ala., soon after the Selma march in March 1965.

The mixed blessing of the movement was to introduce "Come By Here" to sympathetic whites who straddled the line between folk music and progressive politics. The Weavers, Peter Seeger, the Folksmiths, Joan Baez and Peter, Paul and Mary all recorded versions of the song.

By the late 1950s, though, it was being called "Kumbaya." Mr. Seeger, in liner notes to a 1959 album, claimed that America missionaries had brought "Come By Here" to Angola and it had returned retitled with an African word.

Experts like Stephen P. Winick of the Library of Congress say that it is likely that the song traveled to Africa with missionaries, as many other spirituals did, but that no scholar has ever found an indigenous word "kumbaya" with a relevant meaning. More likely, experts suggest, is that in the Gullah patois of blacks on the Georgia coast, "Come By Here" sounded like "Kumbaya" to white ears.

So a nonsense word with vaguely African connotations replaced a specific, prayerful appeal. And, thanks to songbooks, records and the hootenanny boom, the black Christian petition for balm and righteousness became supplanted by a campfire paean to brotherhood.

"The song in white hands was never grounded in faith," Professor Hinson said. "Its words were simplistic; its tune was breezy. And it was simplistically dis-

missed."

Not surprisingly, much of the dismissiveness emanated from the political right.

UrbanDictionary.com defines a "kumbaya liberal" as "knee-jerk thinkers, politicians and other individuals of the far left who tend to (a) believe force is never an answer, (b) talk about problems, rather than do something about them" and so on. The Web site RightWingStuff.com sells T-shirts, coffee mugs and other merchandise that show a drill sergeant choking an antiwar demonstrator and shouting, "Kiss My Kumbaya, Hippie!"

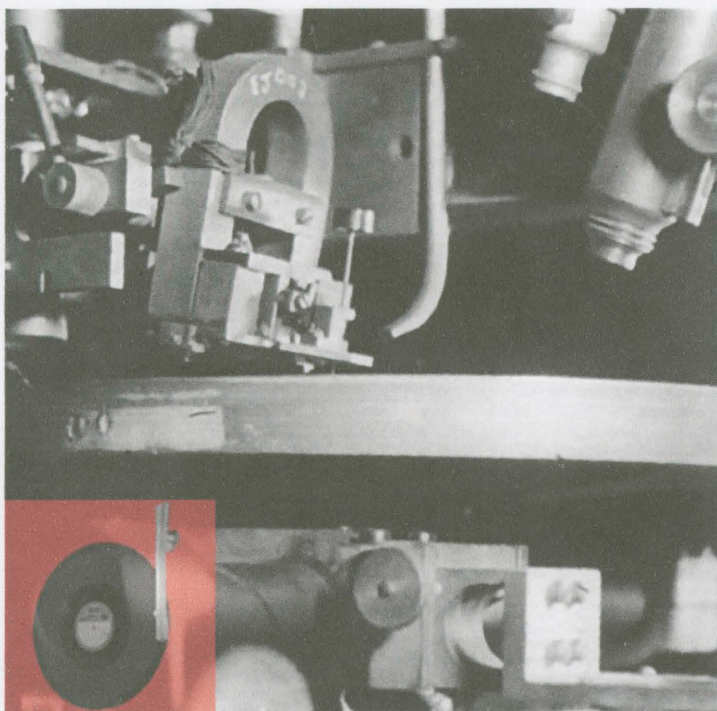
Yet while running for president, Barack Obama once said, "The politics of hope is not about holding hands and singing, 'Kumbaya.'" His education secretary, Arne Duncan, said last month, "I'm a big believer in less of singing 'Kumbaya' together and going on retreats than in rolling up our sleeves and doing work together." The activist filmmaker Michael Moore said of President Obama's appeal for bipartisanship after the Democrats' "shellacking" in the midterm elections, "You don't respond with 'Kumbaya.'"

In the civil rights era, "Come By Here" was a call to action. In the cynical present, essentially the same song has become a disengagement of action.

"If you say someone's engaged in 'kumbaya,' you're saying that person isn't serious," said Thomas S. De Luca, a political scientist at Fordham University in New York who studies political rhetoric. "It's designed to disempower someone who's trying to do something."

# History of Phonograph Record Technology- "Electrically" Recorded Discs

Technical change was afoot. During World War I, radio technology was greatly accelerated in part by military sponsorship. By the end of the war, the vacuum tube was commercially available for use in low-cost radios as well as radio transmitters and all sorts of other devices. It was not long before various inventors returned to the idea of using an electrical signal from a microphone to drive an electromagnetic disc recording device. With the addition of the vacuum tube, the microphone's weak signal could be stepped up to drive the cutter. While there were numerous proposals to do this, the technical problems were considerable.



Edison (who was one of the first to experiment with electrical recording technology, lagged behind his competitors but eventually introduced this electrical recording system for studio use.

The Western Electric Company (whose research activities were soon to be taken over by the Bell Telephone Laboratories) developed an electronically amplified, electromagnetic disc cutter of high quality in the early 1920s, as well as a conventional-looking but improved acoustic phonograph on which to play the resulting records. The new device was marketed to phonograph and record manufacturers (and also became the basis of talking films and "transcription" recorders used in radio stations).

In October, 1924, Columbia Phonograph Company experimented with this new "electrical" recording equipment developed by Western Electric. The new records sounded different than those recorded by the acoustic process, and consumers responded well to them. The trade-name "Orthophonic" was attached to both the recording process and the record player.

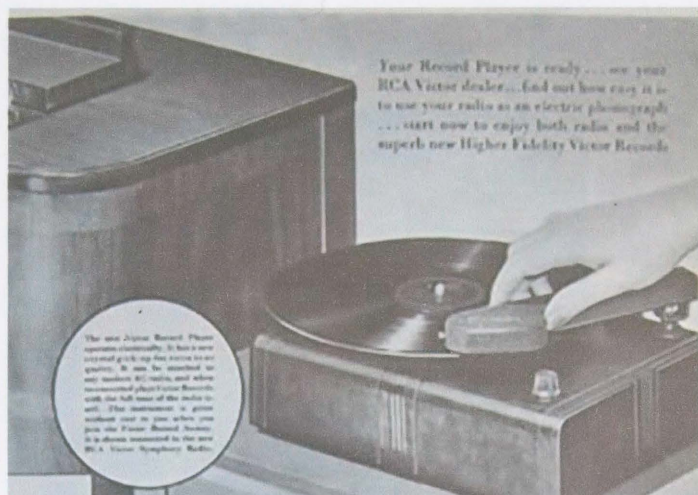
Victor released its last phonograph discs made by the original acoustic process in 1925.

Edison meanwhile had announced a long-playing, 12 inch disc capable of holding 20 minutes of music per side. While this format did not become a commercial success, the next year the company marketed its first electrically-recorded "diamond" discs. Struggling, Edison in 1927 offered a phonograph capable of reproducing either Edison vertical cut discs or his competitors' more popular lateral cut discs. Finally, in 1929 Edison ceased production of records and pulled out of the home phonograph business.

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# History of Phonograph Record Technology- The 78 RPM disc

During the 1930s and 1940s, there were all sorts of experiments with the phonograph. Western Electric's "electrical" recording technology briefly became the basis of talking pictures in the late 1920s before finding a place in radio stations, where it was called the transcription recorder. Columbia in 1931 introduced the first "long playing" record. Resembling the later LP, these 12-inch diameter discs had finely spaced grooves and turned at just 33 1/3 rpm. There were even experiments with stereo. But through all this, the standard 10- and 12-inch, shellac-based discs remained the top sellers.



It was not until after World War II that new technologies displaced the old. A new disc introduced by RCA in the late 1940s began selling well. This 45-rpm disc doomed the older records, which were now known, like the '45' by their speed of rotation-- 78 rpm. Many people hung on to their record collections, and most record players had a '78' setting until the 1980s. However, sales of 78-rpm discs fell off during the 1950s, and the last records were issued by about 1960.

The date of the very last 78-rpm record is not known, although some claim that the last one issued in the U.S. was Chuck Berry's "Too Pooped to Pop" (Chess 1747), released in February 1960. There were almost certainly later releases on small labels, and there are documented cases of 78 discs released as late as 1961 in Finland. According to one source, 78s were deleted from the EMI catalogs in 1962.

It's worth mentioning that Moby Grape's 1968 LP, *Wow*, featured a song that was recorded at 78 rpm.

(End)

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The Friend Who Walked the West  
From Hell to Texas  
Showdown at Boot Hill.