
Historical Sound Recordings | Yale University Library

About Us

The closing years of the nineteenth century saw the advent of a new era for performing arts. Performance practices in music, drama, public speaking, and literature, previously lost with the passage of time, could now be preserved for future generations. Yale University, among the first academic institutions to recognize the value of sound recordings in scholarly research, established the Yale Collection of Historical Sound Recordings (HSR) as a department of the Yale University Library in 1961: - its purpose to collect, preserve, and make available for study important historical recordings in the fields of Western classical music, jazz, American musical theatre, drama, literature, and history. Approximately 280,000 recordings currently reside at HSR, the majority of which are 78s and LPs. The remaining portion of the collection consists mostly of reel-to-reel tapes, CDs, audio cassettes, and cylinders. Also, in support of this collection, HSR maintains a large library of printed materials that provide biographical and historical information, background information about the recording industry, and discographical information useful in locating and dating recordings in the collection.

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