
On the Occasion of ASRA's Silver Jubilee

Mary Miliano

Mary Miliano (formerly McMullen) is a foundation member of Australasian Sound Recordings Association (ASRA). From 1982 to 1992 she served on the Committee/ Board as Secretary, Treasurer and Vice-Chair of ASRA and of its predecessor LASA (Australia). From 1987 to 1993 she co-edited the 'Phonographic Bulletin' (later 'LASA Journal') with Grace Kock, and from 1992 to 1999 she convened the LASA Cataloguing and Documentation Committee's Editorial Group for the 'LASA Cataloguing Rules'. Mary was the 2004 recipient of ASRA's Award for excellence for Outstanding Contributions to National and International Audio Cataloguing. Following a decade's work at the National Library of Australia. Mary worked at the National Film and Sound Archive for 22 years, commencing there as the Senior Sound and Radio Cataloguer and retiring as the Indigenous Collections Branch Archivist in 2007. More recently Mary has undertaken some audio visual archives consulting work.

In this article I offer my personal recollections and reflections on Australasian Sound Recordings Association (ASRA) and International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives (IASA) Australia's early days, highlights and leaders, and some thoughts for ASRA's future. The Australasian Sound Archive

ASRA's Anniversary

This coming New Year's Eve marks the 25th Anniversary of ASRA. Therefore 2012 offers ASRA members a special season to reflect and project, and of course, to celebrate ASRA.

While ASRA formally came into being on 31st December 1987, my introduction to the ASRA community was some years earlier, when it was known as the Australian Branch of the International Association of Sound Archives, or, IASA (Australia).

Introduction

In mid 1980 I temporarily joined the National Library of Australia's then Music and Sound Recording Section where I worked until late 1981 with Prue Neidorf, Peter Burgis, Ian Gilmour, Jean Wein (Waghorn), Sue Cullen and Maureen Hodgson. In my early days there, I heard for the first time of some mysterious organisations known as "Yassa", "Yassa Australia", "Yumill" and "Yummylans"... of course my colleagues were talking about IASA¹, IASA (Australia)², IAML³ and IAMLANZ⁴

IASA (Australia) was very recently formed, and momentum, enthusiasm and support for it were rising. By the time of its second Conference in May 1981, I was an enthralled delegate.

Early IASA (Australia)

I recall Dr Alice Moyle telling me that after attending her first IASA conference in Europe in the 1970s, she returned delighted to the (then) Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies (AIAS) in Canberra and told her (then) assistant Grace Koch about IASA saying '... and it is all for us!!' (meaning 'us sound archivists!!')

At the time, professional recognition for sound archivists was non-existent, and training for them was limited. Sound archivists worked as a very small group or as a lone figure in an organisation.

Meanwhile, all kinds of archives and collections of recorded sound abounded. These included government, broadcasting,

1 IASA - International Association of Sound Archives (and from mid 1990s known as the International Association of Sound Archives)

2 IASA (Australia - the Australian National Branch of the International Association of Sound Archives (1979-1987)

3 IAML - International Association of Music Libraries (now known as the International Association of Music Libraries, Archives and Documentation Centres)

4 IAMLANZ - the then Australian and New Zealand Branch of the International Association of Music Libraries

research, academic, national and state archives, libraries and museums. Also many individuals in the wider community were researchers, discographers and/or record collectors and had specialised subject knowledge and expertise in various areas of international and Australian recorded sound and radio. In addition, there were members of the radio and music (record) industries. IASA (Australia) attracted members from all of these groups.

Alice Moyle noted that ‘At the August meeting in 1979, later known as the “inaugural meeting” of IASA (Australia), two of the principal speakers were from London: Miriam Miller (BBC Library) representing IAML and David Lance (Imperial War Museum) representing IASA. In the minutes of this meeting... reference is made to an “informal business meeting chaired by Peter Burgis during which the audience discussed procedures to establish a national branch of IASA.”⁵



Figure 1

The founding committee of 1980-1982 were Chairman, Peter Burgis (Chief Sound Archivist at the National Library of Australia), Secretary, Bob Maynard (Adelaide ABC FM Fine Music producer and presenter), Treasurer, Michael Dover (from the State Library of South Australia, Adelaide), Vice Chairs, Dr Alice Moyle (Ethnomusicologist and Fellow at AIAS) and Chris Long (Researcher and exponent of early communication formats), Publicity Co-ordinator, Tony Miller and Committee

⁵ Moyle, A 1986, 'Notes for a Future Historian' *Australasian Sound Archive*, no 1, August p.

Members: Grace Koch (Sound archivist at AIAS) David Mercer (Lecturer in the Faculty of Music, University of Tasmania), Peter Scott (of Australian Archives), Frank Van Straten (Director of the Performing Arts Museum in Melbourne), Ron Wills (Artist and Repertoire Manager of RCA and formerly of EMI) and Val Naphthine (Radio Archivist at the ABC in Sydney)

My Early Involvement

After my attendance at the 1981 IASA (Australia) conference,

Alice Moyle invited me to write a short article for the IASA (Australia) Newsletter, about some of the presentations at that conference (McMullen, 1981). The same issue included Peter Burgis' Second National Conference Chairman's Address; a summary of conference guest speaker, Mervyn McLean's presentation on The Preservation of Indigenous Musical Heritage in New Zealand; Robert French's Sound Archival Developments in the Australian Archives; Ian Gilmour's post-Conference Review of Technical Sessions and of course Ian's regular column Through the Journals.

By the third conference in 1982, I was processing delegates' registrations with Grace Koch, where I successfully stood for the position of secretary

Several existing committee members remained through the 1982 election. However there was a small 'changing of the guard' with Michael Dover, Tony Miller, and Peter Scott stepping down and Barry Badham (Collector and discographer), Leon Becker (Film Australia) and Robert French (Australian Archives, NSW Office) being elected as Committee Members.

Grace Koch (now as Treasurer) and Alice Moyle (Editor) offered to help me in my Secretarial role and they proved to be very good mentors to me.

Peter Burgis – Founding Chair

The Association blossomed and grew under the founding Chairmanship of Peter Burgis. Chief Sound Archivist at the National Library of Australia, Peter was also a soon-to-be Vice-Chair of the IASA Executive Board, the future founding Chair of the IASA Discography Committee, and the future founding Sound and Radio Branch Head at the National Film and Sound Archive. A ‘walking encyclopedia’ on sound and radio and a renowned discographer and sound recording collector, Peter was strongly committed to increasing resources for sound archiving. A charismatic and congenial person, Peter networked widely with others involved with all aspects of recorded sound and welcomed all interested to join the organisation.

How IASA (Australia) grew

Australian members joined IASA (international) and their membership dues were directed to the international body. In return they received IASA’s journal, the *Phonographic Bulletin* and had voting rights within IASA. In addition they received automatic membership of IASA (Australia), including the IASA (Australia) Newsletter and voting rights at General Meetings. Also, in the early years, Australian members received free registration at the Australian national conferences.⁶

By 1980, Australian membership formed a very large National Branch of IASA with over 70 members: 58 individuals and 16 institutions.⁷ By 1985, this increased to over 100 members: 90 individuals and 21 institutions.⁸

Dr Alice Moyle and the Newsletter of the Australian Branch of IASA

Peter Burgis edited the first two issues of the IASA (Australia)

⁶ IASA (Australia) 1980, *Newsletter*, no. 2, March, p. 1.

⁷ IASA (Australia) 1980, ‘List of Individual Members’ [and] ‘Institutions and Organisations’, *Newsletter*, no. 3, December, pp. 19-20

⁸ IASA

Newsletter comprising 2 to 3 roneoed pages. They were IASA (Australia) Newsletters, no. 1 (November 1979) and no. 2 (March 1980).

Dr Alice Moyle followed as the Editor of the IASA (Australia) Newsletter no. 3 (December 1980) through to no. 24 (April 1986). Under her stewardship the Newsletter appeared almost always quarterly. Initially it carried 'news' items for the membership and short articles. In time it also published substantial articles. It included preliminary programs and registration forms for conferences; Ian Gilmour's excellent overview of current literature about audio technology *Through the Journals*; that Editor's delight, occasional Letters to the Editor; reports from interstate, for instance from Sydney by Val Napthine (1980) of the ABC Radio Archives; and from Adelaide by Michael Dover (1981) of the State Library of South Australia; pertinent newspaper articles; book reviews; articles on new and developing technology at the time, for instance about 'INFOSAT' by John Gillam (1981) of the Computer Services Section at the NLA, and on future audio formats and technology for example by Victoria Rubensohn (1984) Executive Director of ARIA; a focus on early sound recordings such as Chris Long's (1985) article and list of the Thomas Rome Collection; a quest for Australia's Oldest Cylinder Recordings: Proposal for a Last Search (1983); reports of local conferences' Discography meetings and Technical sessions, of international conferences and at times of Committee meetings, for instance the November 1983 Hobart meeting of the Australian Branch Committee (in a 1984 issue of the Newsletter); an address to the 1984 IASA (Australia) conference about IASA's international context, activities and main developments by David Lance, then the President of IASA and Curator of Audio Visual Records at the Australian War Memorial; articles on the importance of recorded sound in education and media studies by Dr Jeff Brownrigg (1984 and 1985); and the IASA (Australia) Constitution and Amendments (1985).

Proposed Bicentennial Projects

IASA (Australia)'s 'proposed contributions to the Bicentennial year'⁹ for the 1988 celebrations are summarised in the inspiring *A Chance to Give Ourselves AIRS* by Bob Maynard, Fine Music producer and presenter with the Australian Broadcasting Commission, (1982). Here 'AIRS', is the acronym for a proposed Australian Institute of Recorded Sound. In addition 'preparation of a [significant] set of records for issue in 1988' was proposed.

'AIRS' and NFSA

In 1984, the Federal Government's establishment of the National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA) overtook the AIRS proposal. The IASA (Australia) Newsletter reproduced correspondence between its Secretary and the Government regarding the AIRS proposal (1984), related Hansard transcripts, and newspaper coverage of the launch of the NFSA. In turn the NFSA's Advisory Committee report, *Time In Our Hands* (1985) included extracts from IASA (Australia)'s Proposed Australian Institute of Recorded Sound (AIRS) Guidelines.

Dr Jeff Brownrigg and the early Australasian Sound Archive

In 1986, Alice Moyle stepped down as Editor of the IASA (Australia) Newsletter and Dr Jeff Brownrigg became the new Editor. Suggestions for a new title had been canvassed¹⁰ and *Australasian Sound Archive* was chosen. For the issue of transition, both titles appeared on the cover: IASA (Australia) Newsletter no. 25 and *Australasian Sound Archive* no. 1.

Jeff Brownrigg continued as Editor from August 1986 until April 1992, producing 14 issues of *The Australasian Sound Archive*. Under Jeff's direction and with the assistance of an Editorial Advisory Committee and, initially, support from the Performing Arts Museum in Melbourne, book reviews, international and

⁹ Moyle, A 1982, 'Editorial' IASA (Australia) *Newsletter*, no. 9, June, p. 3

¹⁰ Moyle, A 1985, 'No tes for a Future Historian', *Australasian Sound Archive*, no. 1 August, p.4

local conference reports, committee and office bearer's reports continued along with news, many fine articles, and in due course the ASRA Constitution (1988). Peter Pinne (also a Vice President in the early 1990s) contributed regularly with updates about Australian Show Music; David McCallum published on 78rpm disc technology; several articles about vocal recording artists appeared; one special issue comprised An Introductory Survey of Australian 78rpm Record Labels by discographer, Ross Laird; some substantial technical articles were contributed by authors such as Jack Ross, Ian Gilmour, Wanda Lazar and Neville Thiele; and John Spence reported on the 1990 JTS and IASA Conference in Ottawa.

In 1993 Jeff Brownrigg prepared ASRA's first Occasional Paper. Also, as a guest Editor in 2002, he produced a whole issue of the Australasian Sound Archive on the subject of Australian soprano Amy Castles. In 2006, Jeff's long awaited book on Amy Castles was launched.

A researcher, author, musician and educator, Jeff is a former senior staff member of the National Film and Sound Archive and currently Associate Professor in the Faculty of Arts and Design at the University of Canberra. He has served as Vice President and President of ASRA, convened some excellent ASRA conferences, including The Shamrock and the Wattle (held in 1998), has given many presentations at ASRA Conferences and contributed several fine articles to the IASA (Australia) Newsletter and Australasian Sound Archive.

Becoming ASRA

By the mid 1980s, the IASA (Australia) Committee identified that we were retaining insufficient funds from members' dues for our local work, and especially for the publication of the Australasian Sound Archive. The bulk of our membership dues went overseas to IASA and we held approximately \$2.00 per member, per

year, in our local bank account. IASA (Australia) Chairmen Leon Becker and Ron Wills attended the IASA Conferences in Europe in 1985 and 1987 respectively, and attempted negotiations with IASA to keep more of our funds in Australia. It was to no avail. The dilemma came to a head towards the end of 1987.¹¹ As the result of a postal vote by IASA (Australia)'s membership, our Australian Branch of IASA ceased and the new Australasian Sound Recordings Association (ASRA) was established – effective 31 December 1987.¹²

All IASA (Australia) members were invited to take up membership in the new ASRA, and informed on how to retain their IASA membership.¹³ Thus, our Australasian community glided seamlessly across to ASRA membership, and many also continued as members of IASA.

In time, ASRA became an affiliated organisation of IASA and also of the Association of Recorded Sound Collections (ARSC) in America.

Australia's Heritage in Sound/Soundabout Australia

The proposed release of the set of records to commemorate Australia's Bicentenary, mentioned earlier, took on a life of its own with the formation of a new organisation, Sound Heritage Australia. Alice Moyle headed up the new organisation, initially as the 'Convenor: joint sub-committees on the production of Bicentenary discs of Australian material',¹⁴ ably supported by Dr David Rentz as the Secretary. It was a major undertaking, with significant contributions by many experts from widely diverse fields of Australia's recorded sound heritage. Proudly for ASRA,

11 IASA (Australia) 1987, 'The Demise of IASA (Australia) 10 November 1987' *Australasian Sound Archive*, no. 4, December, p. 2

12 IASA (Australia) 1987, 'ASRA is On the Way! 8 December 1987', *Australasian Sound Archive*, no. 4, December p. 2

13 IASA (Australia) 1987, 'Membership' *Australasian Sound Archive*, no. 4, December, p. 3

14 Moyle, A 1984, *Letter to Colin Pitson, Acting Director, National Film and Sound Archive* (9 August 1984), accessed 5 March 2012 http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/collections/exhibitions/alice/letters/pdfs/ms3501_1_119_51_a.pdf

some of the contributors were ASRA members. The first CDs appeared in 1991. To celebrate their arrival, the ASRA Conference theme for that year was Australia's Heritage in Sound.¹⁵

By 1996, the series title for these discs became Soundabout Australia. Some discs are still available from the University of Melbourne's Lyrebird Press (2011). These are: Australian Pop and Rock 1958-1987 (selected by Glenn A. Baker with a booklet by Aaron D.S. Corn); Classical Music of Colonial Australia (compiled and with a booklet by Ann Carr-Boyd); Country Music in Australia (compiled and with booklet by Eric Watson); History of Jazz in Australia (compiled and with booklet by Ron Wills); Nature Sounds of Australia (edited by Dr David Rentz; with booklet); The Great Bands of Australia (compiled and with booklet by Jack Greaves); Transplanted Musical Traditions in Australia (compiled and with booklet by Peter Parkhill)¹⁶

Once Upon A Wireless

In 1990 Leon Becker announced a proposal for a special oral history project with radio pioneers and practitioners. Leon was the project's Steering Committee Chairman and the project was Once Upon A Wireless. Pending sponsorship, the project was to be 'progressed by instigator Bruce Asmus as Executive Producer and media technician Ken Brentnall as Assistant Producer.'¹⁷ This was another major undertaking and required significant sponsorship, observation by ASRA and by the Federation of Australian Radio Broadcasters, co-ordination of an interview schedule planned to extend across multiple Australian states and negotiation for a repository for the completed oral history recordings. Five years later Brendan Horgan published An

¹⁵ Rentz, DCF 1991, Letter to Dr Alice Moyle, c/- AIATSIS (6 Feb. 1991), 1 p. accessed 5 March 2012, http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/collections/exhibitions/alice/letters/pdfs/ms3501_1_144_4_a.pdf

¹⁶ University of Melbourne. Lyrebird Press. Centre for Studies in Australian Music 2011, Publications. Sound Recordings, accessed 27 November 2011, <http://www.lyrebirdpress.com/csam/>

¹⁷ Becker, Leon 1990, 'Once Upon A Wireless', Australasian Sound Archive, no. 10, March, p. 31.

Update From Once Upon A Wireless Ltd stating that 174 people had been interviewed and indicating the wide geographic scope of the project. He invited readers to identify potential interviewees and advised that ‘contributions to the Once Upon A Wireless fund are tax deductible and greatly appreciated...’¹⁸ Two years on Bruce Leonard highlighted that over 350 radio pioneers and actors had been interviewed with the recordings lodged at the NFSA. He noted that a ‘side benefit’ was a morale booster for those interviewees, especially as some had sensed a ‘great loss of personal worth’ after the introduction of television.¹⁹

Like the Soundabout Australia series of recordings, Once Upon A Wireless did not develop as an ‘ASRA project’ as such. However, both of these significant ventures drew on ASRA’s members, support and good will, and benefited from the good relationships formed within ASRA as well as with other participating organisations and individuals.

Public promotion of ASRA

The already mentioned Australasian Sound Archive, the annual conferences and the ASRA website are all prime agents to present and promote ASRA to the membership and the public. Their value cannot be underestimated.

ASRA’s Conferences

ASRA’s Conferences are always brilliant events, and a highlight of the year. The programs have a good balance of subject matter, and presentations are of a high quality, engaging and informative.

The early conferences were held over a weekend at the request of members, many of whom were private researchers, collectors and discographers, and a special Technical day / Discographers’ meeting was held on the Monday. More recently, conferences have

¹⁸ Horgan, Brendan 1995, ‘An Update from “Once Upon A Wireless Ltd” Project’, Australasian Sound Archive, no. 18/19, Autumn/Spring, p. 22.

¹⁹ Leonard, Bruce 1997, ‘Final report on the “Once Upon A Wireless” Project’, Australasian Sound Archive, no. 22, Autumn, p. 9

been held during the working week, and are primarily attended by representatives from heritage collecting institutions, with some representation from media organisations and the industry.

The discography sessions of the early conferences have declined, but the technical sessions have increased in popularity over recent years. The Technical Day at last year's (2011) conference was well attended by most of the conference delegates as well as by preservation and technical experts. It contrasted strongly with the conferences of 25-30 years ago where only those with technical interest/expertise in audio engineering would attend the Technical session. Also as new applications of digital technology reach into many aspects of archive, library and gallery work, last year's Technical Day had a wide interest and appeal with presentations on preserving web-based content (Paul Koerbin, National Library of Australia); challenges of preserving proprietary platforms (Ian Gilmour, National Film and Sound Archive) and managing digital collections (Lenny Preston, Australian War Memorial); as well as the sessions on emerging standards for video preservation; and the design, implementation and management of mass and multiple ingest systems.

ASRA's Logo and Website

In IASA (Australia)'s early days, the IASA logo together with the text 'International Association of Sound Archives AUSTRALIAN BRANCH' was adopted. Shortly after ASRA's establishment, though, Leon Becker offered ASRA a logo designed by his son. Clearly Leon had in mind the importance of ASRA's establishing and promoting its identity as a new association.

The new logo design featured the letters 'ASRA' joined up to look like a sound wave. There is a general recollection amongst ASRA Board members from that time that the original logo design was by Leon's graphic artist son, Matthew. Here, though, is a mystery. Sadly, Matthew met an untimely accidental death in November 1984, which is prior to ASRA's establishment in 1987. I spoke

about this recently with Matthew's mother Freda Becker. Freda acknowledged the 'mystery' and thought the only possible explanation could be that Matthew had done the design at some earlier time, with Leon later making it available to ASRA.²⁰

More recently, the logo has undergone further work. This mostly relates to its presentation on ASRA's website.

Daniel Saw advised that in 1998 'the most detailed remaining copy of the logo was only available in a printed format.' At the time, and in consultation with the ASRA Board, he 'digitally "cleaned up" a scan [of the logo] to enhance its presentation for display on the first ASRA website.'²¹

From 2002 to 2004 former Secretary and ASRA Web Manager, Frances Thiele, organised maintenance of ASRA's website on the Vicnet host.²²

Since 2004 Daniel has maintained the website, and in 2006 with ASRA Board involvement he 'started a significant restructuring of the site content and navigation. Separation of content from design led to discussions with the Board about the logo and site design, resulting in the creation of a geometric interpretation of the logo.'²³

The redesigned website was launched in 2007 and, 'approved by the Board, the new version of the ASRA logo appeared when the site went live...[and] when conference banners were commissioned in 2008, Daniel contributed to the banner layout and a vector version of the new logo was created by the graphic artist for the print file.'²⁴

With regard to the present website, Daniel advised that 'there are currently just over 100 publicly accessible pages of content...

20 Miliano, M 2012, Notes from phone conversation with Freda Becker on 1 March

21 Saw, D 2012, Emails to Mary Miliano, 11 and 13 March.

22 Australasian Sound Archive 2002-2004, nos 28-32, Office Bearers pages.

23 Op. cit.

24 Op. cit.

Adopting a custom template, design and style that incorporate elements of the new logo, the new layout is also better adapted to higher screen resolutions, now the site is no longer bound to previously limited resolution of printable page size. Also the site is searchable using a free version of the 'ATOMZ engine'.²⁵

Daniel also highlighted that as a result of Matthew Davies' work for ASRA to acquire its own domain, the website moved to the new domain www.asra.asn.au in June 2009.²⁶

Alice Moyle Lecture

The Alice Moyle Lecture, with special focus on Indigenous collections, was inaugurated by ASRA in 2002. It is a free public event and always a highlight of ASRA Conferences.

Dr Martin Thomas presented the first of these entitled 'This is for you, Mrs Mathews': The Cross-Cultural Recordings of Janet Mathews (1914-1991).

Since then, according to ASRA's Conference Programs, the Alice Moyle Lecture has been presented by Brett Galt-Smith (2003), Dr Kev Carmody (2004), Rangioria Hedley (2005), Dr Joe NeparrꞤ a Gumbula with Dr Aaron Corn (2006), Grant Hansen (2007), Dr Jackie Huggins (2008), Liz McNiven (2009), Deborah Cheetham (2010) and Dr Aaron Corn (2011)

ASRA Awards for Excellence

The ASRA Board inaugurated the 'ASRA Awards for Excellence' in 1992 at the first IASA/ASRA Conference held in Australia (in Canberra).

That year, the recipients were Dr Alice Moyle for 'outstanding contributions to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recordings', and Bert Button for 'outstanding contributions to the radio

²⁵ Op. cit.

²⁶ Miliano, M 2011, *Notes from phone conversation with Daniel Saw* on 29 November

industry in Australia'.²⁷

Almost every year since, at least one ASRA Award for Excellence has been presented during the ASRA Conference Dinner. The list of recipients offers a glimpse of the wide diversity of interest, expertise, profession and commitment of ASRA members and non-members alike who have received this award.²⁸

Leaders and Community

The importance of good leadership and strong sense of community for a healthy and vibrant association cannot be overstated. Following are brief tributes to many of those who have led and guided IASA (Australia) and ASRA over the years.

Leon Becker, Ron Wills and Mike Sutcliffe – Past Presidents and Vice Presidents

The earliest membership list, published in the IASA (Australia) Newsletter No. 3, December 1980, includes Leon Becker (broadcaster, tertiary lecturer in Communications, Production Executive for Film Australia), Ron Wills (Artist and Repertoire Manager for EMI and RCA) and Mike Sutcliffe (record collector, discographer and researcher).

While on the IASA (Australia) Committee, I had the opportunity to work with Leon and Ron who were Committee members, and each of whom also served a term as Chair. I remember them as kindly, thoughtful, constructive and positive older gentlemen who were experts in their fields, gave great support to IASA (Australia) and were gracious to all.

At a 1983 Committee meeting I was nominated and selected to be the IASA (Australia) representative at the IAML/IASA Conference in Como, Italy in 1984. Back then I was in the role of Secretary to IASA (Australia), and had never been overseas. While

²⁷ Australasian Sound Recordings Association 2010, ASRA Awards for Excellence (web page), viewed 8/3/2012, < http://www.asra.asn.au/asra_awards_for_excellence.htm

²⁸ *ibid*

chatting to Leon about my being selected afterwards, he, in his fatherly way said something to the effect of ‘Oh, it will develop you, love’, Certainly it was an enriching experience and opened up a whole new opportunity to extend my professional experience, meet new colleagues and make new friends. And, in due course, it led to my involvement with the preparation of the IASA Cataloguing Rules.

In his earlier career, Leon Becker was a radio broadcaster. One of his special gifts was his beautiful broadcaster’s voice, which we sometimes referred to as ‘The Voice’. Naturally Leon was charged with presenting many of the citations for the ASRA Awards.

Leon would sometimes share about new technology and at other times relate a personal story that related in some way to the music or broadcasting industry. At one conference he presented on holography in *Holography Discography*, while at another, in *My Uncle Fred* (1993) he highlighted the acting and film production career of his uncle, known as Claude Flemming, who was a contemporary of the singers Peter Dawson and Al Jolson.

When I joined the NFSA late in 1985, reference sources for Australian sound and radio were scant. One morning as we gathered for a Committee meeting, Ron Wills very kindly placed into my hands two lever arch files containing a copy of the RCA Artist Catalogue which he had recently compiled.

Ron Wills’ presentations and articles often brought the early history of the recording industry alive for the audience or reader, for example in his *The First Jazz Record* and *The Nipper Story* (both 1993), *The First Sydney Symphony Orchestra* (1994), and *Victor: Early History* (1996).

Mike Sutcliffe came onto the ASRA Board, including two terms as a Vice President, a few years after I had stepped down. A gentleman of few words, Mike was a builder by trade and a record

collector, researcher and discographer in his spare time. Mike's great subject knowledge, commitment to research, and sheer joy and enthusiasm for Australian jazz and popular music recordings led him to publish a wonderful quarterly magazine *The Australian Record and Music Review*. In his review of the first issue (April 1989), Peter Burgis wrote 'It is very heartening to welcome *Australian Record and Music Review*, edited and produced by Michael Sutcliffe... The first issue maintains a high standard of scholarship and accuracy. I found the information fresh and stimulating. Articles are concise, factual and entertaining... ARAMR is well produced, easy to read and copiously illustrated... I applaud Mike Sutcliffe on his enterprise in launching *Australian Record and Music Review* and strongly recommend a subscription at the modest cost of \$20.00 for four issues.'²⁹ While I worked at the NFSA, Mike would call in to visit several of us there on his trips to Canberra. Often he would stop by to visit me and hand me an article that he had found through his research which he thought would be of use to my work. I have no doubt that Mike did the same for several others.

When Leon, Ron and Mike (all Sydney dwellers) travelled to Canberra for the IASA (Australia) or ASRA Conferences or Committee meetings, their wives always accompanied them. So we had the opportunity to befriend Freda Becker, Psyche Wills and Dale Sutcliffe as well. In the very early days, those delightful ladies would sit together (in the back row) and knit while the conference or committee meeting held in Canberra proceeded. And for many years, when our conferences were held in Sydney, one or more of those ladies would also help as part of the conference organising team.

Dr David Rentz - Past President

Formerly of CSIRO, Dr David Rentz has served on the ASRA Board in various roles including President, Vice President and

²⁹ Burgis, P 1989. 'Australian Record and Music Review', *The Australasian Sound Archive*, no. 8 (September), pp.6-7.

Secretary. An internationally esteemed and celebrated entomologist, author, and broadcaster of popular music from the 1920s and 1930s, David is particularly gifted in his ability to engage non-specialist audiences on the subject of insects, their lives and recordings of them. While David's contribution to Soundabout Australia, mentioned earlier, is still in demand, I recall attending an especially appealing conference presentation in which David demonstrated CSIRO's interactive CD-ROM *Insects: A World of Diversity* (1994) and to which he was a major contributor. David also presented about his radio program *Hit Parade of Yesterday* at ASRA's 2007 conference, and at least one other of his conference presentations about recording nature sounds (1995) is published in the Australasian Sound Archive, as is the delightful story of his introduction to ASRA (2003).

Grace Koch – Past Vice President

Former Sound Archivist and current Native Title Research and Access Officer at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), Grace Koch is a founding Committee member of IASA (Australia) and of ASRA, a former Vice President of both organisations. Grace was also a founding Board member of the National Film and Sound Archive following its establishment as a statutory authority in 2008.

From IASA (Australia)'s very earliest years, Grace provided a regular international interface for Australian members through her reports of pertinent IASA activities and developments published in the IASA (Australia) Newsletter. These reports included news of the contributions and participation of other Australians in IASA, progress of the work of IASA's National Branches and Affiliated Organisations Committee which Grace chaired, updates on the work of IASA's Training Committee of which she was the Secretary, and in 1981 an announcement of the release of the IASA Directory of Member Archives, 2nd Ed. which she had compiled and edited.

From 1987 to 1993 Grace edited IASA's Phonographic Bulletin and the IASA Journal; and in 1992 she convened the first IASA/ASRA Conference to be held in Australia (Canberra), which was a great success.

Perhaps most telling are Grace's beautiful keynote address to the 1994 ASRA Conference where she highlighted the influence and work of many Australians internationally in the field of sound archiving;³⁰ and at the 2006 ASRA Conference, a year after Dr Alice Moyle's death, her demonstration of AIATSIS's superb On-line Exhibition of Alice Moyle.³¹

At the 2008 IASA/ASRA Conference in Sydney, Grace was honoured by both organisations as she received the 'ASRA Award for Excellence for services to sound archiving and Indigenous collections'³², and the 'IASA Special Recognition Award for Outstanding Service to IASA for Significant contributions to

the development and dissemination of professional standards'³³. Grace is indefatigable in her work to further sound and audiovisual archives and their benefits to all people. It is to her credit that Grace is the only person to date to have received awards from both IASA and ASRA, and there is no doubt that the members of both organisations were delighted to see Grace receive this double honour.

Prue Neidorf – Past Vice President

I have Prue Neidorf to thank for selecting me to work in the National Library of Australia's Music and Sound Recording Section back in 1980, and therefore providing me the opportunity to connect with IASA (Australia) and ASRA. At that time, Prue Neido-

30 Koch, G 1994, 'The Influence of Australians Internationally in the Field of Sound Archiving: Keynote Address to the 1994 ASRA National Conference in Canberra', *Australasian Sound Archive*, no. 17, Spring, pp. 44-52

31 Koch, G 2007, 'The Alice Moyle Website', *Australasian Sound Archive*, no. 33, (unsighted journal issue)

32 Op. cit.

33 International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives [2012], IASA Award of Recognition, accessed 3/3/2012, <http://www.iasa-web.org/iasa-award-recognition>

rf was the Music and Sound Recording Librarian at the National Library, and she was serving on the IASA and IAML Training Committees. A strong advocate for the importance of cataloguing music and sound collections and a foundation member of IASA (Australia) and ASRA, Prue is a former Secretary and Vice President of ASRA. In 1994, Prue presented about her research on 'pre-1950 Australian popular music [focusing on] sheet music with recorded sound connections'³⁴ to the ASRA Conference.

Dr Neville Thiele – Vice President

Dr Neville Thiele is a world renowned audio and broadcasting engineering authority, and a long standing ASRA member since IASA (Australia)'s very early days. Neville has served on the ASRA Board for many years including as Vice President with special responsibility for Technical matters. Also a celebrated lecturer, researcher and author, and currently Honorary Associate in the Faculty of Architecture, Design and Planning at the University of Sydney, Neville has generously shared his knowledge and mentored within ASRA. At ASRA Conferences, Neville has participated on Technical Panels and given presentations on technical and audio engineering topics, some of which are published in the Australasian Sound Archive.³⁵ On a more personal note, Neville described 'the attitudes, conventions and equipment that shaped broadcasting in Brisbane in particular and Australia in general when he and his brother Len became involved in radio during the 1930's, and how it came to shape their lives'³⁶ in his keynote address at ASRA's 2007 Conference.³⁷

34 White, R 1994, 'An Overview of the 1994 ASRA National Conference in Canberra', Australasian Sound Archive, no.17, Spring, p. 40.

35 Thiele, AN 1989, 'Group Delay; The Frequency Response That Is Often Ignored in Sound Reproduction', Australasian Sound Archive, no. 8, September, pp. 8-16. and Thiele, AN, 2006, 'The Dynamics of Reproduced Sound', Australasian Sound Archive, no. 32, Autumn, pp? (un-sighted)

36 Thiele, N 2007, 'The Making of a Broadcasting Engineer' (Abstract for presentation), [ASRA] Conference 2007 Abstracts and Bios, viewed 4 March 2012 http://www.asra.asn.au/events/conference_2007_abstracts_bios.htm#thieleabstract

37 Thiele, Neville 2008, 'The Making of a Broadcasting Engineer', Australasian Sound Archive, no. 34, Summer, pp. 33-64.

James McCarthy – Vice President and Past President

Formerly the Music Officer at Film Australia and the Manager of the National Film and Sound Archive's Sydney Office, James McCarthy is a long standing member since the days of IASA (Australia). James has served on the ASRA Board in a variety of positions including President and Vice President, and has convened some excellent ASRA conferences, including ASRA's Inaugural Conference at Sydney University in 1988. Further, James is a past President and past Vice-President of IASA. At various ASRA Conferences, James has shared informative and engaging recollections of his work with various Australian composers and of the recording of film scores at Film Australia. Fortunately many of these have been published in the Australasian Sound Archive. In other articles and reports penned by James, his keen interest in and dedication to supporting ASRA's growth and development, and promotion of high quality recorded sound, excellence in musical performance, and conferences with balanced programs, and rich and diverse subject coverage shine through.

Kevin Bradley – Past President

Kevin Bradley's earliest contribution to the IASA (Australia) Newsletter was in 1983 when he reported on a Technical Seminar at the National Library by the UK Audio Consultant, John R.T. Davies. Since then Kevin has served for several years on the ASRA Board as President - sometimes concurrently as Editor, and as a Board Member. Also a Past President of IASA, Kevin is currently Curator of Oral History and Folklore and Director of Sound and Audiovisual Preservation at the National Library of Australia.

Kevin's high level roles in a variety of national and international organisations concerned with audiovisual heritage materials; and his positive and 'can-do' approach, capacity to deliver required work in a timely way, and ability to communicate clearly to a general or specialised audience make him a great asset to ASRA.

Kevin contributes significantly to ASRA, with his broad professional expertise and wide ranging subject interests. He has promoted organisational planning and direction for ASRA, and has presented on developments in and standards for sound preservation, digitisation and metadata, as well as folk music and oral history.

At the 2011 ASRA conference Kevin presented on Maltese folk music and also highlighted in his Overview on the Conference's Technical Day that IASA's TC03 : Safeguarding the Audio Heritage is now being rewritten to include audio visual and that IASA's TC06 : Guidelines in the Production and Preservation of Digital Video Objects is now in preparation.

Matthew Davies –President

Matthew Davies is currently the President of ASRA and the Senior Curator of Sound, Broadcast and New Media at the National Film and Sound Archive. A former ABC Radio Producer and Broadcaster, and former Operations Manager of Preservation and Technical Services with the NFSA's Sound Preservation Unit, Matthew's presentations at ASRA conferences include discussion on the latest advances and uses of digital technology for sound and media archives.

Matthew is responsible for ASRA's acquiring the www.asra.asn.au domain, and for pursuing the PayPal option to assist conference registration and ASRA membership dues payments.³⁸

Matthew has a clear vision to the future. He looks out for good new directions and opportunities for sound and media archives and collections, technological applications, and ASRA, including how ASRA may become more attractive, more relevant, and better able to interact with new and future members.³⁹

³⁸ Davies, Matthew 2011, ASRA President's Newsletter , Winter, 1p.

³⁹ Davies, Matthew 2010, *ASRA President's Newsletter*, Winter, ASRA, Australia, accessed 9 March 2012 <http://www.asra.asn.au/newsletter.htm>

Bruce Skilton - Treasurer

A foundation member of the National Film and Sound Archive's former Sound and Radio Branch, Bruce Skilton is ASRA's current Treasurer and a long standing Board member. In addition, Bruce has given some excellent conference presentations with truly magnificent recorded music examples. Some of Bruce's work is in the journal and includes articles on British film music (1985) and on Australian pianist, Eileen Joyce (1990, 1990, 1999)

Shelly Grant - Secretary

Shelly Grant, Senior Librarian of the Oral History and Folklore Branch at the National Library of Australia is ASRA's current Secretary and is a long standing Board member.

Shelly is a quiet achiever with a focus on the future for ASRA. She has chaired some ASRA conference sessions, and presented on recording practice (2000), evaluation of hard disc and flash card recorders for use in the field (2005), and more recently about the on-line delivery service of audio at the National Library. In addition, Shelly participated in a panel discussion concerning practical advice and workflows for digital preservation of recordings at ASRA's 2005 conference.

Editors from 1992 to date

While Alice Moyle and Jeff Brownrigg pioneered the journal, others have followed in their wake producing excellent issues of the Australasian Sound Archive with high quality content. They are John Spence, Ron White, Di Naphthali, Kevin Bradley (sometimes with James McCarthy and Neville Thiele), Greta Jatania with current Vice President Graeme Kinraid (whose Australasian Sound Archive (2010) no. 35, Winter issue included a DVD of audio visual examples to complement the articles) and the current Editor, Melinda Barrie. Each of the ASRA Journal Editors is to be highly commended on their dedicated work with the Austral-

asian Sound Archive.

Other Board members to date

In addition to those already mentioned, many other Board members have contributed to the work of ASRA. They include in alphabetical order: Bruce Asmus (with his radio background and involvement with the *Once Upon A Wireless* project), Barry Badham (with his specialisation in musical comedy), Brian Butler (who convened ASRA's 1989 conference in Canberra), Ian Cameron (Treasurer during the very trying time prior to ASRA's establishment), Mark Cranfield (with his specialisation in oral history), Maryanne Doyle (who convened ASRA's 2007 and 2010 conferences in Melbourne), Simon Drake (with his contribution to ASRA's Sydney Chapter and fruitful promotion for what became a joint NFSA/AIATSIS project to compile and publish a discography of commercially released Indigenous recordings), Robert French and Robyn Gamble (representatives of National Archives within ASRA), Alan Heinecke (with his specialisation in sound effects and mood music), David Lance (who contributed to the establishment of IASA (Australia) and was the first local committee member to also be the IASA President), Bruce Leonard (long standing board member, public officer and with his involvement with the *Once Upon a Wireless* project), Chris Long (with his specialisation in early media formats), Terry McGee (ASRA Steering Committee Treasurer), David Mercer (of the Faculty of Music, University of Tasmania in the 1970s and 1980s), Dr Jane O'Brien (of the NFSA in the 1980s, and with her specialisation in the work of Percy Grainger and vision for a high quality encyclopedia of Australian music, sound and radio), Bronwyn Officer (preservation specialist from the National Library of New Zealand), Prof. Guy Petherbridge (preservation and conservation specialist at the National Archives in the 1990s), Peter Pinne (with his specialisation in discography and Australian show music), Beth Robertson (of the State Library of South Australia and with her specialisations in oral history and preservation), Peter Scott

(of the Australian Archives and with his strong commitment to automating information retrieval systems), Frances Thiele (past Secretary and ASRA's first Web Manager) and Frank Van Straten (of the Performing Arts Museum in Melbourne).

The ASRA Community

ASRA would not have developed as it has without the support and encouragement of IASA for an Australian Branch to be formed. It could not have grown without good leadership and direction from its Board, and its community of individual and institutional members.

The common denominator for ASRA is 'sound', and the membership brings a diverse range of knowledge, expertise, skill and experience on content, culture, music genres, nature and environmental sounds, sound effects, mood music, discography, cataloguing, technical work, engineering, analogue recordings, preservation, history, sociology, musicology, health, Indigenous people and culture, legal (copyright), managing collections, publications, research, qualifications, sound/av productions and their public release, private collectors, collecting institutions, administration (of association), philosophy of sound and media archiving, profession of sound and media archiving, new technology, merging technology, institutional merges, institutional splits, computer technology, digitisation, oral history, quality of sound recording, quality of recorded performance, students, teachers, researchers, social media, projects, podcasts, web culture and applications, standards, soundscapes, politics, national and regional identity, sound art, experimental music, broadcast and music industries...

As always, the sum is greater than the parts!

The Future

The challenge with raising and maintaining a good profile for Sound is that while Sound is an integral part of our lives, it is

‘invisible’ (unless we view it, for example, as a sound wave on a screen) and can be taken for granted. When we watch a movie, or communicate by Skype or at a teleconference, Sound is an integral part of the technology whether we think about it or not. It is of critical importance that Sound has a strong profile.

ASRA is the peak body for sound archives and collections in Australasia. Through its membership and activities ASRA brings together and presents a high level of expertise, a wide professional experience and a wealth of knowledge on all aspects of Recorded Sound.

Looking to the future, could there be opportunities for ASRA to build on its current success and:

- extend partnerships with similar/related organisations to pursue common goals, joint activities and projects ;
- identify what the next generation of sound and media archivists would seek from ASRA and from being ASRA members;
- develop strategies to mentor and develop future Board members to lead ASRA into the future;
- develop strategies to assist the Editor with sufficient copy for publication of regular issues of the Australasian Sound Archive;
- document guidelines and procedures for all those things that ASRA is already doing well, so that this expertise and knowledge is retained in the organisation for the future;
- reach out to engage with regional Australia’s and remote Indigenous Australia’s sound and media collections, knowledge centres and media organisations;
- reach out to engage with the wider parts of Australasia - through Australia, New Zealand, and Papua New Guinea and on to neighbouring islands of the South West Pacific; and

- develop a fund raising program to assist sound and media archivists from remote Australia and/or South West Pacific nations to attend conferences and/or training seminars.

Conclusion

As we celebrate ASRA's twenty-fifth year may our vision for the future be strengthened and inspired by all that the ASRA community individually and collectively has achieved. May ASRA maintain a clear focus on its purposes, plan effectively for the future and continue as a vibrant and relevant association for all current and future members.

Congratulations to ASRA and to all our members on our 25th Anniversary!

Silver Jubilations!

Happy Celebrations,

to ASRA and all members

on your twenty-fifth year!

May you see another twenty-five,

fifty and centenary -

growing as community,

continuing to hear!

Acknowledgements

With thanks to Grace Koch and Bruce Skilton for the loan of personal copies of the Australasian Sound Archive, to Daniel Saw for the conversation on the logo and text about the web site; and to David Rentz, Freda Becker and Tim Becker, Matt Davies, James McCarthy, Shelly Grant, Kevin Bradley, Grace Koch, Jeff Brownrigg, Bruce Skilton and Prue Neidorf, for the conversations and correspondence.

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Abbreviations used in the bibliography are the same as those used in ASRA's website:

ABN - IASA Australian Branch Newsletter, also known as IASA (Australia) Newsletter

ASA - Australasian Sound Archive

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- 3) Reply No. 1 from C.G. Evans, Principal Private Secretary 3/4/1984;
- 4) Reply No. 2 from S. Sergi, Senior Private Secretary 18/6/1984;
- 5) Australia. Minister for Home Affairs 1984, National Film and Sound Archive: News Release, Canberra, 5 April)

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Figures:

1. IASA Committee c.1983, Macintosh Room at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), clockwise starting at the front are Ron Willis (RCA), Grace Kock (AIATSIS), Robert French Australian Archives (AA), Mike Sutcliffe private researcher and discographer, Dr Alice Moyle (AIATSIS), David Merce, University of Tasmania and Mary Miliano nee (McMullen), National Library. Image supplied by Mary Miliano.