



Press Release

Monday, July 29, 2013.

THE NATIONAL RECORDING PRESERVATION FOUNDATION BECOMES OPERATIONAL THANKS TO GENEROUS DONATION FROM JACK WHITE

The contribution

The National Recording Preservation Foundation (NRPF) announces a major contribution of \$200,000 from musician and NRPF Board member Jack White (1).

“The donation is very much a game changer,” says Executive Director Gerald Seligman. “It is our first and therefore provides the welcome opportunity to go from talk about the needs and priorities of audio preservation to concerted action. With this contribution we can now put up our basic structure, begin enacting the preservation plan – and give out our first grants. We’re committed to doing that right away, and certainly within the coming months.”

“Mr. White’s contribution to the Recording Foundation comes at an opportune time,” says Sam Brylawski, the Chairman of the National Recording Preservation Board, an affiliated project created by Congress in the same National Recording Preservation Act of 2000 that authorized the NRPF (2). “With its national plan, the Library of Congress has laid the groundwork for the long-term preservation of our audio history but the challenges to achieving this at a significant scale are daunting. I hope that Mr. White’s extraordinarily generous donation inspires many others, especially those in the recording business—record companies, artists, songwriters, and others—to follow his lead to help ensure that we are able to preserve and make accessible recent and historical recordings at risk of loss.”

Each Board member demonstrates valuable ways to contribute, from lending time, talents, advice and expertise to sharing contacts and helping reach the people best placed to further the Foundation's objectives. At this key moment, Jack White has provided the means to get the Foundation up and running.

What is the National Recording Preservation Foundation?

The NRPF aims to help stem the flow of serious losses to America's unparalleled radio, music and recorded sound heritage. “Sound archives have reached a critical point in their history marked by the simultaneous rapid deterioration of unique original materials, the development of expensive and powerful new digital technologies, and the consequent decline of analog formats and media,” explained

Board member George Massenburg, the renowned producer, engineer and educator. “It has long been clear to most sound archivists that our old analog-based preservation methods are no longer viable and that new strategies must be developed in the digital domain.”

What will the Foundation work to preserve? "American music is one of our true national treasures," says Board member Bob Santelli, the Executive Director of the Grammy Museum in Los Angeles. “Preserving our greatest recordings is both necessary to our identity and important for future generations as a source of inspiration and cultural knowledge.”

But the scope is broader still. "The mission goes beyond music to include radio, broadcast, speeches, poets, spoken word, oral histories, field recordings – the very soundtrack of the nation," says Board member and radio producer Davia Nelson. “The Foundation seeks to discover and preserve lost audio treasures as well as the most iconic of recordings that deserve another listen and share them with the public, to educate, entertain and delight," she adds, something she knows much about due to her ground-breaking work as one half of NPR's Kitchen Sisters.

By law and inclination, the Foundation intends to go beyond the archives, collections and libraries and into the lives of the population by making these treasures accessible to all. Education, research, preservation, pleasure, that is the mission at hand. It is a process made easier than ever before due to online tools and ubiquity.

The NRPF... The Finer Details

The National Recording Preservation Foundation is the independent, nonprofit charitable corporation established by the U.S. Congress for the purpose of supporting archives, libraries, cultural institutions and others committed to preserving America's radio, music and recorded sound heritage. Where appropriate, it will also assist privately-held collections and commercial archives that may have been damaged through the ravages of time or random acts of nature when those holding them cannot do so with their own resources. And, finally, it will help to further database and digitize our vast and often hidden treasures – delivering them to the nation at large.

“Congress understood the need to preserve and protect our Nation’s sound recordings when they created the National Recording Preservation Foundation,” says John Simson, the Foundation's Chairman and former Director of Sound Exchange. “It is a crucial task at hand, working to identify collections of recordings that are at risk, that are in need of archival resources, that are in need of a home. ”

Independence and Collaboration...

The NRPF is a private/public partnership, that works closely with the Library of Congress and its experts, and is dedicated to putting into practice the priorities and procedures of the National Recording Preservation Act of 2000 and the National Recording Preservation Plan(3). But it maintains an independence that lends it great flexibility in fund raising and the setting of priorities and practices. These are largely determined according to the broadest concerns of the preservation community at large and the guidelines of the Foundation's advisors and Board of Directors. It is therefore uniquely positioned to raise the necessary funds, marshal the expertise of skilled professionals, and reach out to the recorded sound community, collectors and archives to build support for preserving our nation’s audio treasures.

The National Recording Preservation Foundation... Up and Running...

“The establishment of the National Recording Preservation Foundation as a separate charitable and nonprofit entity constitutes one of the most important actions by the Library of Congress in fulfilling the mandates of the National Recording Preservation Act of 2000,” says Patrick Loughney, the Director of the Packard Campus for Audio Visual Conservation at Library of Congress and an advisor for, and advocate of, the NRPF. “In securing its first major donation, the Foundation takes a major step toward accomplishing one of the recommendations of the National Recording Preservation Plan, which calls for developing sustained private and public sector funding to support the preservation of recorded sound collections held by libraries, archives and other cultural institutions across America which lack the resources and expertise to preserve their important collections and make them publicly accessible.”

“After several years in planning, we are thrilled that we can finally join the mission of helping to preserve the riches of America’s recorded heritage,” says Executive Director Gerald Seligman. “We hope to reinforce the good work already being done and to help fund far more of it through the contributions we seek and will, in turn, distribute. The goal here is preservation and access, bringing the wealth of our recorded heritage to the public. America’s cultural treasures are to be savored by all. Stay tuned for key events, and by all means, help us if you can.”

National Recording Preservation Foundation

Gerald Seligman, Executive Director

Board of Directors



John Simson (Chairman), Lawyer, Past Executive Director Sound Exchange

T-Bone Burnett, Musician, Producer

Bruce Lundvall, President/CEO Emeritus, Blue Note Label Group

George Massenburg, Engineer, Record Producer, Educator

Ricky Minor, Musician, Band leader for The Tonight Show with Jay Leno

Davia Nelson, Radio Producer, NPR's Kitchen Sisters

Jonathan Poneman, Co-Founder, Sub Pop Records

Bob Santelli, Executive Director, Grammy Museum

Jack White, Musician, Producer, Label Owner

The Foundation is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization devoted to undertaking and supporting programs that preserve America's unique audio treasures.

Visit www.recordingpreservation.org

Tax Deductible donations are welcome via PayPal under www.recordingpreservation.org

For more information... or to request interviews with NRPF Board members, contact the Executive Director, Gerald Seligman, at info@recordingpreservation.org / 347-504-5311.

For more information on the Library of Congress National Recording Preservation Plan or the National Recording Preservation Board (whose objective is to formulate the selection criteria for the National Recording Registry and to review and recommend subsequent nominations), contact Sheryl Cannady, scannady@loc.gov.

Notes

(1) Jack White first came to prominence as a member of the White Stripes, a group that was active from 1997 to 2011. He has been awarded nine Grammys in seven different categories, most for his work under his own name and that of the White Stripes but several with other groups with which he has been associated.

Mr. White runs his own label, Third Man Records, which highlights a special interest in vinyl issues and releases. To date the 200-plus releases have covered Jerry Lee Lewis, the Smoke Fairies, Wanda Jackson, Black Milk and Stephen Colbert, Blind Willie McTell, Charlie Patton, The Mississippi Sheiks and many others, demonstrating an eclecticism inspired by broad musical interests. Third Man Records also released Mr. White's 2012 chart-topping debut solo album Blunderbuss.

(2) The NRPF was one of three components established by an act of Congress in the National Recording Preservation Act of 2000. The Act aims to form a comprehensive national program to ensure the survival, conservation, and increased public availability of America's sound recording heritage. The other two components are the National Recording Registry and the National Recording Preservation Board, whose objective is to advise on the selection criteria for the Recording Registry and to review and recommend nominations for the Registry.

(3) For a copy of the National Recording Preservation Plan, see:
<http://www.loc.gov/rr/record/nrpb/PLAN%20pdf.pdf>