

AM:NH

31st March 1981

Vice President Kenneth R.R. Gros Louis,
Bryan Hall 100,
Indiana University,
BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA 47405
USA

Dear Sir,

I have been very concerned to learn that, after the retirement of Director Frank Gillis at the end of June, 1981, there will be a vacancy for an indefinite period in the top position of one of the world's leading ethnomusicological archives. While I realise that this does not necessarily signify the closing down of the Archives of Traditional Music, it appears that there is a threat of curtailment to the day-to-day activities of this important institution.

As a depositor - and one-time user - of Indiana's Archives of Traditional Music, and also as a member of the International Association of Sound Archives, I write to urge that the pending decision to freeze funds for the directorship be revoked.

The contribution that Indiana University has made to the development of a concept of 'world music' has been unique. And this has been due both to the work of the late Professor Alan P. Merriam and, in a large measure, to the Director of the Archives of Traditional Music.

The decision to hold in abeyance the appointment of a new Director has come, in my opinion, at a most inopportune time. People in many parts of the world are beginning to realise the importance and value of institutions such as the Archives at Indiana. Many smaller sound archives have looked to the ATM for guidance and as a standard-setting institution on which to model their own beginnings in this field. The Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies in Canberra, for instance, owes much to the Archives of Traditional Music for help and advice received in the early stages of its own sound archival activities. There is a growing need everywhere for people trained in all aspects of sound archiving, especially in methods of storing and preserving sound recordings and of 'auditory' cataloguing. Archives such as the ATM provide not only a necessary training ground of this kind, but the means for developing in full the growing concept of sound archivism.

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The increasing interest in Oral History is an indication of this growth and also of the general use for 'audio documentation' of all kinds, including recordings of orally-transmitted music.

In an establishment such as Indiana's Archives of Traditional Music, one looks for new directives, new methods and techniques in the archiving of recorded music. It is a shock to find that at this time the University has already laid plans for the Archives' contraction and diminution instead.

As one of the ATM's many well-wishers, I urge that every effort be made to remove this grave inhibition to its future development and that - after June, 1981 - there be a full flow and wider development of its present activities.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Alice Moyle,
Former Research Fellow in Ethnomusicology,
Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies,
Vice-President, International Association
of Sound Archives (Australian Branch).