

ANNOUNCEMENT

TRADITIONAL MUSIC ARCHIVES
INSTITUTE OF AFRICAN AND ASIAN STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF KHARTOUM

The Traditional Music Archives were established at the Institute of African and Asian Studies, University of Khartoum (Sudan), in the 1994–95 academic year as a research and documentation centre to serve the needs of scholars, research students, musicians and the general public.

Scope and content. Traditional music in the Sudan and all material related to ethnomusicology are included. The archives contain: (1) video and sound recordings, (2) field notes, (3) folklore material other than music, (4) publications and (5) an index (in Arabic and English) to the entire collection.

Objectives. The archives are intended to (1) serve as an archival and documentation centre for Sudanese traditional music, research in applied folklore and other fields and for future generations, (2) provide access to musical material to relevant institutions and individuals, (3) facilitate research in material related to ethnomusicology, (4) organise live music shows and music production, (5) collect from areas that have not been covered by previous collections, (6) obtain such material as books, conference proceedings, audio-visual recordings and other collections, and copies of material collected by researchers, (7) provide a forum for local and international meetings, conferences, workshops and seminars, (8) prepare and publish monographs, research and news bulletins and to participate in local and international conferences, (9) produce radio and television programmes on traditional music, (10) co-operate with similar institutions world-wide.

Organisation. The archives are governed and run by two organising bodies: (1) an Advisory Board consisting of five members (three Sudanese and two from outside the Sudan). The board meets annually to discuss general policy, evaluate work done and give advice on future activities, (2) staff consisting of a director, an assistant director, a technician, a librarian and an assistant librarian. The staff run the daily work and carry on the various activities specified in the objectives and report to the Advisory Board on the work done.

Background. Early in the 1980s the Institute of African and Asian Studies became concerned about the vulnerability of traditional music, perceiving it to be threatened by such factors as the war in the south, by political change and generally by the spread and popularity of urban music styles. With a grant from the Ford Foundation the Institute initiated the collection, documentation and preservation of traditional music. The results of the project include: (1) purchasing recording and fieldwork equipment, (2) collecting samples of traditional music on field trips, (3) convening workshops and seminars, (4) providing short-term training, (5) participating in conferences, (6) organising live musical performances, (7) issuing two publications, (8) compiling an archive index.

With the closure of the Ford Foundation in January 1992 the whole situation was reassessed. The result was to activate the archives by transforming them from a storehouse to a research and documentation centre. To this end a workshop on how to establish an archive was convened on 10–12 January 1993. The workshop involved a number of international consultants whose discussion centred on exploring and defining issues of archiving traditional music. The whole matter was discussed further during the workshop on evaluating trends of research on traditional music held in Washington, D.C., on 23–5 July 1993, which was hosted by the Smithsonian Institution. A proposal to establish an archive for traditional music in the Sudan was prepared, submitted to the Ford Foundation and kindly approved.

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