

2005

# The World Map of Music: The Edison Phonograph and the Musical Cartography of the Earth by Ulrich Wegner

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## Recommended Citation

Bates, Eliot, "The World Map of Music: The Edison Phonograph and the Musical Cartography of the Earth by Ulrich Wegner" (2005).  
*CUNY Academic Works*.  
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## Film, Video, and Multimedia Review

**The World Map of Music: The Edison Phonograph and the Musical Cartography of the Earth**, produced by Ulrich Wegner. CD-ROM, 2007. Distributed by the Ethnologisches Museum SMB (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin), Arnimallee 27, D-14195, Berlin. <http://www.smb.museum/smb/>

The Berlin Phonogram-Archive was founded in 1900 by Carl Stumpf and Otto Abraham with a collection of twenty wax cylinders of a Siamese theatre ensemble. Erich Moritz von Hornbostel became the head of the archive in 1905, and ever since, the archive—and its archivists—have held an important place in the histories of folklore, ethnomusicology, and recorded sound. Recognized in 1999 by UNESCO's "Memory of the World" project, the archive now holds over 150,000 music recordings and recently released a comprehensive catalogue (Ziegler 2006) and the CD-ROM *The World Map of Music: The Edison Phonograph and the Musical Cartography of the Earth*.

At the nucleus of *The World Map of Music* are early wax cylinder recordings representing fifty-two distinct cultural areas spanning the globe, from Greenland to Tierra del Fuego, from the Solomon Islands to Siberia. While listening to a digitized wax cylinder, the user can peruse text about the culture, view archival images, and read a biography of the song collector. For example, the 1906 cylinder "Song of the Snake Dance" is accompanied by general information about the Hopi Indians and the snake dance ceremony, five photos taken by Edward Sheriff Curtis and others, and a biography of the ethnographer, Otto Abraham (1872–1926). For other regions (including Uganda and the Arua Indian territory on the border of Brazil and Bolivia), more recent video footage is also included, which, in tandem with the cylinder recordings, provides a vibrant multimedia document of rural folk arts.

In addition to the "world map of music," the CD-ROM provides four additional multimedia-rich modules: Edison's process of inventing the phonograph, a technical look at the phonograph and wax cylinder restoration, the history of the Berlin Archive, and an essay about the "phonograph on the road." Although other sources provide a more exhaustive account of early sound recording (Thompson 1995; Sterne 2003), this CD-ROM con-

tains an excellent and appealing introduction to the subject, one that is pedagogically useful for high school through graduate-level education. I could imagine these modules becoming a standard component of beginning ethnomusicology curricula.

One of the most immediately useful features of the *World Map of Music* is the ability to access materials through a convenient web-style interface (which requires the latest version of Adobe Flash Player), and also to have direct folder access to image files and audio-visual examples. Individual JPEG images, MP3 audio files, and FLV videos on the CD-ROM can therefore be used in a standalone manner in a classroom or presentation setting. The wax cylinder recordings were de-clicked, de-noised, and de-crackled prior to conversion to 128kbps mono MP3, and sound very good considering that most are over one hundred years old. Video and still images, likewise, were digitized with care and are of high quality.

There is only one aspect with which I found notable fault: the combination of material that comes to represent particular cultural areas. It is not clear if the intention of the CD-ROM producers was to depict cultures as they were perceived by the cylinder recordists themselves, since copious newer research is included, and only occasionally are quotes from the original ethnographers clearly indicated. Some examples are quite surprising for their romantic, sweeping generalizations (the description of “Eskimo drum song”), others for their focus on an ancient archaeological history that has little to do with the audio example (e.g., a South Iraqi song).

I will detail one particular culture area to demonstrate the sorts of problems current and future generations of scholars may encounter. In the section on Turkey, the Berlin Archive wax cylinder example is described as an “uzun hava sung by Ibrahim from Karaitli.” How this title was determined is unknown. Felix von Luschan recorded this cylinder in 1902 at the end of a several-year archaeological excavation of the Hittite city Sam'al (between Adana and Gaziantep in Southeast Anatolia), perhaps in the nearby village of Karayigit. It is unlikely he would have heard the term *uzun hava*—a twentieth century categorical invention employed by folklorists to emphasize commonalities between numerous nonmetrical song forms. Additionally, several of the photographs in this section are taken from Kurt and Ursula Reinhard's later expeditions to Adana, where they researched the *bozlak* singing tradition (now considered a type of *uzun hava*) (Reinhard 1957). Due to the geographical proximity of Sam'al to Adana, the choice of these photos makes sense. However, a second musical example, inexplicably, is a Reinhard recording from Bodrum (a beach resort on the Aegean, over 400 miles away), which bears little musical or cultural relation to von Luschan's cylinder, and appears on the screen next to a picture of Kurt Reinhard—in Adana, recording *bozlak*. One of the many excellent Reinhard *bozlak* recordings might have been included instead. One additional photo

simply entitled "Turkish peasants," taken in 1909 by Lucy Garnett (1909:75), seems similarly out of place in relation to the other materials.

These details aside, the *World Map of Music* is an important and timely CD-ROM that will have numerous pedagogical applications and represents a major achievement towards making the contents of one of the world's most important sound archives publicly accessible.

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