Archiving in Real Time and the Exciting World Culture Consultancy

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Recommended Citation
King, John (2017) "Archiving in Real Time and the Exciting World Culture Consultancy," MAC Newsletter: Vol. 44 : No. 3 , Article 11. Available at: https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/macnewsletter/vol44/iss3/11
While I am not exactly an “up-and-comer” in the traditional sense, my story and experiences will hopefully prove both interesting and useful to those who are. For the past 15 years I have been a loyal servant to the wonderful world of culture archives. My “up-and-coming” years started in my early twenties when I began creating an annual project called “Louisville Is for Lovers,” which collects and releases songs from Louisville, Kentucky, bands at Valentine’s Day. At the time, I wasn’t fully aware that what I was doing was actually archiving culture from a specific geographical and cultural location. After 10 years of this project, I applied and was given a full scholarship to Berea College in southeastern Kentucky.

As part of the scholarship, all students must work for the school. While most students work within facilities management during their first year, luckily someone saw that I had a decade of audio engineering and production on my resume, and I was assigned to the Berea College Special Collections and Archives as an audio archivist. One of my duties was to encode high-quality digitally archived sound recordings prepared by John Hodges Bondurant, staff sound archivist, onto Berea’s streaming music archive, as well as to write biographies of the musicians and create learning guides for educators and visitors to the site.

From 2011 to 2015, I worked as a sound archivist at the Berea College Special Collections and Archives before moving into the role of serials librarian during my last year at Berea.

After graduating and moving back to Louisville, I revived the Louisville Is for Lovers project in addition to setting up a small business as a culture consultant and freelance archivist.

Most of my work thus far has been with organizations hoping to create company personalities that appeal to specific audiences, but I also get to work with organizations on archiving culture. I currently write a weekly history column for LEO Weekly, the Louisville alternative paper, titled “This Week in Louisville History.” Additionally, I write and edit a world cultural history website called This Day in Pop Culture (www.thisdayinpopculture.com).
Today, I am fortunate to be working with the Louisville Free Public Library on a project called “Louisville Mix.” The library is creating a public archives and streaming service of local music. The initial program was launched on October 3, 2016, and can be found at library.biblioboard.com/module/e9809bac-6070-4a30-a954-9e47d46ee96c. Currently available on the site are approximately 50 albums from local musicians, including all 11 Louisville Is for Lovers Valentine’s compilations. The full comprehensive archives will be online and available to the public on January 20, 2017. The archives will include the entire Louisville Is for Lovers available-to-date catalog.

The archive itself is streamed through Biblioboard in MP3 format. The project will be updated continuously as more music is donated to the project. Musicians are not paid for their contributions, rather, listeners support the artists by following the links in each collection in the anthology to purchase music and find out about upcoming live shows and other events.

The Louisville Free Public Library is also working on an “After Hours” music showcase that is to take place at Louisville’s Main Branch, located at 301 York Street, on January 20, 2017. This event will feature two main stages and showcase six bands from the project. Currently, the plan is to continue the Library After Hours Music Series throughout 2017.

Are you a local Louisville musician? Interested in participating? E-mail localmusic@lfpl.org and visit louisvilleisforlovers.culturearchivist.com/p/submit.html. Would you like more information on culture archiving and consultancy by John King? Find it at www.culturearchivist.com or contact louisvilleisforlovers@gmail.com.