

Die Restaurierung des Phonoarchivs von Osyp Rozdolsky

Restoration of Osyp Rozdolsky phonoarchive

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Zusammenfassung:

Es werden Ergebnisse der Digitalisierung einer der größten Sammlungen von Audioaufzeichnungen der ukrainischen Folklore vorgestellt. Die Originalaufnahmen auf Phonozyclindern stammen von O. Rozdolsky aus der Zeit von 1900 bis 1940.

Abstract:

The results of digitizing of one of the largest collections of audiorecords of Ukrainian folk-lore are presented. Original records on phonograph cylinders are done by O. Rozdolsky between 1900 and 1940.

General characteristic of O.Rozdolsky phonoarchive

O.Rozdolsky (29.09.1872-27.02.1945) the known Ukrainian specialist in folk-lore and ethnographer collected and wrote down about 8-9 thousand folk melodies. O.Rozdolsky one of the first in Ukraine began the systematic sound documenting of musical folk-lore of Ukraine at support of Ethnographic Commission of Shevchenko Scientific Society. In 1891 Rozdolsky began together with the prominent Ukrainian cultural workers F. Kolessa and S. Liudkevich the work on collecting folk-lore. About possibilities of phonograph – new audiorecording device it was known in Western Ukraine before the expeditions of O.Rozdolsky. However, exactly he began the systematic and large-scale sound documenting of musical folk-lore in Ukraine.

O.Rozdolsky began to write down folk songs and prose in 1891, and the first records on phonograph were done in ten of villages of Galitsia in a period from 1900 to 1902. During musically-ethnographic work O.Rozdolsky recorded more than thousand phonograph cylinders, from which 750 were preserved up to now. In all O.Rozdolsky wrote down no less than 7 thousand folk pieces of music.

A biography of records spreads over not only practically all ethnographic areas of Galitsia but also a number of districts of Eastern Ukraine, in which a researcher was in expeditions on the special invitation of the Russian Academy of Sciences in 1914-1915. On the whole preserved archive contains records from 109 villages of Ukraine. According to a modern territorial-administrative division 20 settlements are among the Ivano-Frankovsk region, 25 – to Ternopil region, 40 – to Lviv region, 2 – to Chernivtsi region, one each – to Poltava, Kyiv and Zhytomyr regions. In addition, records were done in nine settlements of Poland.

There are most of all records of vocal music in collection. There are both ritual folk-lore (the calendar, domestic and labour one), and ballads, lyric songs. It is especially necessary to highlight cylinders with the records of Ukrainian lyre players. The results of O.Rozdolsky ethnographic

expeditions consist of manuscripts and phonograph part. The handwritten part of archive (field diaries, texts of songs rewritten clean, transcriptions of melodies is already worked up and some of written melodies are published. At the beginning before recording performers O.Rozdolsky recorded on phonographic cylinders sounding of a tuning fork for the facilitation of work of researchers. At the end of records he sometimes presented folk performers.

On the average he recorded on one phonograph cylinder 5-6 compositions. In collection there are cylinders with one recorded song and even with twelve ones. A researcher recorded only the first strophes of songs, except for instrumental compositions and ballads. To save place on the phonograph cylinders recording was carried out without spaces between the fragments of compositions. O.Rozdolsky recorded short tunes on small free phonographic cylinders. Such dense placing of pieces of music creates considerable complications at deciphering records, especially from heavily damaged cylinders.

Phonocollection which is preserved in the Lviv Musical Academy covers all periods of research activity of O.Rozdolsky: since the first records of 1900 to the records done in 1940.

Digitizing of audiorecords of O.Rozdolsky phonoarchive

In the process of carrying-out of works on digitizing and clearing from noise of audiorecords it was necessary to overcome considerable technical difficulties, bound up with bad quality of most of phonograph cylinders of this collection.

On the whole O.Rozdolsky phonoarchive is very nonuniform as to opportunities of processing for the further audition. Because of bad conditions of storage (including in the basement rooms) a part of phonographic cylinders were affected by microorganisms, some of them have mechanical damages of surface and some are broken (55 are fully broken and 90 are split). Mould of the surface of phonographic cylinders creates complications for sound reproduction and causes sharp worsening of phonograms quality at any method of sound reproduction. Records on the separate phonograph cylinders is not possible to decipher because of low quality recording of phonograms during ethnographic expeditions, of what marks give evidence on boxes with the phonograph cylinders, which were done by the scientist.

The repeated attempts to transfer a phonograph part of Rozdolsky collection on modern data carriers were undertaken. However the read-out of phonograph cylinders with the use of original phonograph and recording of the reproduced audiosignals on a magnetic tape did not allow to get the quality of audiofragments, necessary for the further analysis of pieces of music. Information is recorded on the tape recorders and carriers which already long ago themselves fell out of circulation. The repeated attempts of mechanical read-out of phonograph cylinders resulted in the considerable contraction of frequency band of the reproduced signals. Audioinformation on some cylinders was practically destroyed.

The quality of the audioinformation reproduced by us from approximately 700 cylinders sharply differs on separate cylinders. The records reproduced by us can be divided arbitrarily into three large groups, containing approximately the same number of cylinders. In one group there is a high noise level and sounding quality is low, which does not allow to carry out deciphering of texts even after application of computer methods of sound clearing. We succeeded only partly in recovering and restoring a melody. The second group of the reproduced cylinders is also characterized by a high noise level, but a melody is easily guessed and it is possible to make out separate words. After the conducted cleaning by the software methods the phonograms can be of interest for specialists in the field of ethnomusic. The third group of audiodata, reproduced from phonographic cylinders, after application of a set of methods on clearing audiosignals is of sufficiently high quality (comparable with the quality of audiosignals from the analog audiocassettes). These records can be of interest for the wide circle of specialists and amateurs of ethnomusic. We were preparing the records of this group to primary edition on compact disks, supplemented by information from the handwritten part of O.Rozdolsky archive.

Plans of further researches and developments

Presently the specialists of the Institute for Information Recording and Lysenko Lviv State Musical Academy are conducting comprehensive restoration of O.Rozdolsky phonoarchive. Simultaneously work is executed on transferring of the audiocollection on modern digital carriers. We hope that application of integrated hardware and software methods of clearing of audiofragments will allow to create conditions to specialists for working with most of records from collection. Currently the catalogue of phonographic collection is made more exact. In a catalogue in the highest possible volume is presented information about numeration of phonograph cylinders, their safety, amount of recorded compositions, initial words of songs, place and time of realization of recording, information about performers, information about music records.

These researches are a part of project on creation of archive for phonographic cylinders, which are the priceless monument of musical culture.