**2009 National Recording Registry**

1. **Fon der Choope (From the Wedding) - Abe Elenkrig’s Yidishe Orchestra (April 4, 1913)**

Barber and trumpeter Abraham Elenkrig recorded this lively number for Columbia Records in the spring of 1913 and the 10 songs from the session were among the first klezmer recordings made in America. Columbia had been increasingly marketing to Eastern European immigrant communities where klezmer music had been popular since 1890s. While chiefly colored by Romanian musical influences, the cornet and trombone on “Fon der Choope” lend it a brassy sound typical of John Philip Sousa, Arthur Pryor and other popular military bands of the time. It was a sound characteristic of early klezmer recordings in the United States.

2. **“Canal Street Blues,” King Oliver’s Creole Jazz Band (April 5, 1923)**

Made for Gennett Records in Richmond, Ind., this recording is the second title recorded by King Oliver’s ensemble, which included Oliver, first trumpet; Louis Armstrong, second trumpet; Johnny Dodds, clarinet; Honore Dutrey, trombone; and Baby Dodds, drums, among others.  In his “Early Jazz,” author Gunther Schuller wrote that the glory of the Creole Jazz Band sums up “all that went into the New Orleans way of making music: its joy, its warmth of expression, its Old World pre-war charm, its polyphonic complexity, its easy relaxed swing ... its lovely textures, and its discipline and logic.”

3. **“Tristan und Isolde,” Metropolitan Opera, featuring Kirsten Flagstad and Lauritz Melchior, NBC Broadcast (March 9, 1935)**

This recording captures Wagnerian singing at its dramatic best by two of the greatest voices of the 20th century and the prime interpreters of the lead roles. The beauty and purity of Kirsten Flagstad’s singing, captured at the beginning of her worldwide fame, combined with Melchior’s heroic scale and nobility creates an unsurpassed performance in this profoundly influential opera. This is an early example of Metropolitan Opera Saturday matinee broadcasts, which have brought “live” performances of complete operas into homes throughout the world for more than 75 years.

4. **“When You Wish Upon a Star,” Cliff Edwards (recorded 1938; released 1940)**

Cliff Edwards (“Ukulele Ike”) was an enormously popular singer in the 1920s and early 1930s. He was a star in vaudeville, musical comedy and early sound films, but his career was on the decline at the time he was chosen to voice Jiminy Cricket in Walt Disney's second animated feature, “Pinocchio.” He is now most remembered for the song “When You Wish Upon a Star.” The beauty of the composition, written by Ned Washington and Leigh Harline, and Edwards’ natural tenor and clear falsetto make the song a classic. The recording was one of the very first derived directly from a film soundtrack to be issued commercially.

5. **“America’s Town Meeting of the Air*:* Should Our Ships Convoy Materials to England?”** **(May 8, 1941**)

“America’s Town Meeting of the Air” was a lively public affairs program, broadcast live from Town Hall near Times Square in New York over the NBC radio network from the 1930s to the 1950s. This program aired seven months before America’s entry into World War II, when most of the country opposed the nation joining the war effort. The featured speakers were American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, chairman of the Union for Democratic Action and creator of the Serenity Prayer; and John Flynn, New York chairman and a founder of the America First Committee. Niebuhr supported U.S. aid to Britain while Flynn opposed it. This is a lively debate moderated by “Town Meeting” founder George V. Denny.

6. **The Library of Congress Marine Corps Combat Field Recording Collection, Second Battle of Guam (July 20 - August 11, 1944)**

This collection of recordings owes its existence to the collaboration of Harold Spivacke, former chief of the Library of Congress Music Division, and Brigadier General Robert L. Denig to provide war correspondents with recording machines to interview soldiers, record their songs, and document actual battles in the Pacific theater during World War II. While the larger collection includes battle coverage of Iwo Jima, Saipan and Guadalcanal, the recordings made in Guam feature the most immediate coverage of the battle. Among the dozens of recordings made on Guam, listeners can hear firsthand coverage of an officer’s briefing before the invasion; reportage and battle sounds on the morning of the invasion; rare recordings of tank communications during the fighting; an awards ceremony after the fighting has ended; native opinions of the Japanese occupation; and the personal reactions of the enlisted troops before, during, and after the battle.

7. **“Evangeline Special” and “Love** **Bridge Waltz,” Iry LeJeune (1948)**

The post-World War II revival of traditional Cajun music began with accordionist Iry LeJeune’s first single, his influential recordings of “Evangeline Special” and “Love Bridge Waltz.” Le Jeune’s emotional and deeply personal style was immensely popular with Louisiana Cajuns returning home from the war, eager to hear their own music again.

 His recordings marked a distinct move away from the style influenced by Western Swing that had dominated commercial Cajun recordings for over a decade and a return to the older sound of Cajun music. This sound featured the accordion, prominently and unrestrained, and a blues-influenced singing in French. LeJeune is regarded as one of the best Cajun accordionists and singers of all time.

8. **“The Little Engine That Could,” narrated by Paul Wing (1949)**

This classic story of optimism and determination is beloved by several generations of Americans. The charming story is climaxed by the mantra, “I think I can – I think I can – I think I can … ” chanted in a chugging rhythm as the little blue engine successfully climbs over the mountain to bring a train full of toys to the children waiting on the other side. Paul Wing’s cheerful reading and the rich sound effects make this version of the story the most fondly remembered of many recorded interpretations.

9. **Leon Metcalf Collection of recordings of the First People of Western Washington State (1950-1954)**

Leon Metcalf – a logger, musician and music instructor with a lifelong interest in languages – documented songs, stories and other narratives from Native speakers in the Puget Sound region and neighboring areas. He used one of the early commercially available tape recorders. The Metcalf recordings not only document the voices of many of the last Native speakers, they also include unique content because Metcalf allowed the narrators free rein during recording sessions. They often recorded personal messages to one another, providing a rare aural documentation of conversational practice, along with lengthy narratives of local mythology. The revival of interest in Lushootseed language and literature and the work of Upper Skagit elder Vi Hilbert owes much to this collection, which has been the source of material for language-instruction projects and numerous publications since the 1970s.  The collection is located at the Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture at the University of Washington in Seattle.

10. **“Tutti Frutti,” Little Richard (1955)**

In 1955, 22-year-old “Little Richard” Penniman was a seasoned rhythm-and-blues performer, but an unsuccessful recording artist in search of a breakthrough as he entered Cosimo Matassa’s New Orleans studio to record his first sides for Specialty Records. There seemed to be little rapport between Little Richard and the musicians hired for the date until Richard started extemporizing verses of “Tutti-Frutti,” a risqué feature of his club sets. Even in the less-suggestive version that was eventually released, Little Richard’s unique vocalizing over the irresistible beat announced a new era in music, punctuated by his immortal exclamation “A-wop**-**bop-a-loo**-**bop-a-lop**-**bam**-**boom!”

11. “**Smokestack Lightning,” Howlin’ Wolf (1956)**

The derivation of Chester Arthur Burnett’s stage name, “Howlin’ Wolf,” is evident in “Smokestack Lightning.” The blues lyric has no narrative; instead Wolf howls as he grasps for words to express his romantic torment. Guitarist and collaborator Hubert Sumlin plays the song’s signature bending, sliding riff. “Smokestack Lightning” influenced the swampy sound of Dale Hawkins’ “Susie Q” and, later, music of Creedence Clearwater Revival. Critic Cub Koda observed, Howlin’ Wolf could “ ... rock the house down to the foundation while ... scaring its patrons out of [their] wits.”  No song better exhibits this than “Smokestack Lightning.”

12. “**Gypsy,” original cast recording (1959)**

Gypsy is considered by many to be the apotheosis of the original Broadway cast recording. It boasts a spectacular score, thrilling orchestrations and star power in the form of Ethel Merman. Jule Styne’s music includes pitch-perfect pastiches of vaudeville and burlesque songs, tender ballads, and what is generally agreed to be the most exciting Broadway overture in the history of the form. The lyrics by Stephen Sondheim are funny, clever and perfectly suited to the dramatic characters singing them and the variety-theater setting of the show. Much of the score was tailored to Merman, and rarely have a score and a voice complimented each other so well and been so masterfully preserved on record.

13. **The Complete Village Vanguard Recordings, Bill Evans Trio (June 25, 1961)**

All five sets performed by the Bill Evans Trio on June 25, 1961, at the Village Vanguard club in New York City were recorded, resulting in what are recognized as some of the greatest live recordings in the history of jazz. The trio, consisting of Bill Evans (piano), Paul Motian (drums) and Scott LaFaro (bass), has been credited with redefining jazz piano trios by including the bass and drums as equal partners rather than a rhythm section accompanying a piano soloist. The performances were the last by this lineup of the trio because LaFaro was tragically killed in a car crash ten days later. Producer Orrin Keepnews has recalled, “I remember listening to the tapes and saying, ‘There's nothing bad here!’” Complete recordings of all five sets were released in 2005.

14. “**Daisy Bell (Bicycle Built for Two),” Max Mathews (1961)**

This recording, made at Bell Laboratories on an IBM 704 mainframe computer, is the earliest known recording of a computer-synthesized voice singing a song. The recording was created by John L. Kelly, Jr., and featured musical accompaniment written by Max Mathews. Arthur C. Clarke, who witnessed a demonstration of the piece while visiting friend and Bell Laboratories employee John Pierce, was so impressed that he incorporated it in the novel and film script for “2001: A Space Odyssey.” When Clarke’s fictional HAL 9000 computer is being involuntarily disconnected near the end of the story, it sings “Daisy Bell” as it devolves.

15. **“I Started Out As a Child,” Bill Cosby (1964)**

Recorded live at Mr. Kelly’s in Chicago, Bill Cosby’s second album is made of up short vignettes on a wide range of topics, drawing mainly from his childhood in Philadelphia. Cosby’s delivery is intimate in style, but utilizes the microphone and public address system of the venue to create humorous and evocative effects, and to conjure up the world perceived through the eyes and ears of a young boy.

16. **“Azucar Pa Ti,” Eddie Palmieri (1965)**

This breakthrough album was the result of a conscious effort by pianist and bandleader Eddie Palmieri to recreate on record the new Latin sounds that he and his eight-piece “La Perfecta” band were playing nightly in New York nightclubs and ballrooms in the early 1960s, and it set trends for years to come. Though steeped in the earlier Afro-Cuban styles that he loved, Palmieri led a band that represented several Latin music traditions and was particularly distinguished by the contributions of the hard-charging, Bronx-born trombonist Barry Rogers.

17. **“Today!,” “Mississippi” John Hurt (1966)**

In 1963, 35 years after his last recording session, “Mississippi” John Hurt was rediscovered near Avalon, Miss., by Tom Hoskins, who had correctly guessed Hurt’s location from geographical clues in his 1920s recordings.  Hurt was coaxed out of retirement and a series of folk revival concerts led to a recording contract and “Today!,” his first studio recording since 1928.  “Today!”demonstrates that Hurt’s musical gifts, like his voice, had deepened over the years.  Hurt was the antithesis of a blues shouter. His gentle, soft-spoken delivery won him a legion of fans in his twilight years.

18. **“Silver Apples of the Moon,” Morton Subotnick (1967)**

Morton Subotnick composed “Silver Apples of the Moon” entirely on the Buchla Electronic Music Box, a modular analogue synthesizer designed by electrical engineer Don Buchla in 1963. Subotnick collaborated with Ramon Sender and others associated with the San Francisco Tape Music Center. One of the unique features of Buchla’s instrument was its use of the electronic sequencer, a device capable of creating repeating, rhythmic sequences of musical notes or timbres. Subotnick uses the sequencer extensively and effectively in the creation of many repeated figures in the recording, creating a canonical statement for this pioneering technology.

19**. “Soul Folk in Action,” The Staple Singers (1968)**

The Staple Singers—then consisting of father Roebuck and children Cleotha, Pervis and Mavis—established themselves as a top gospel act in the 1950s, but began reaching out to a broader audience in the 1960s by playing folk festivals and recording protest songs. This 1968 release, their first on the legendary Stax label and the last to feature the group’s original lineup, did not achieve the crossover success of their work in the 1970s for that label, but it is the pivotal album of their career. “Soul Folk in Action” is spiritually informed, socially aware and, as its title suggests, equally soulful and stirring. The album contains such timeless tracks as “Long Walk to DC,”  “Slow Train,” “Top of the Mountain,” and covers of Otis Redding’s “(Sittin’ on) the Dock of the Bay” and The Band’s “The Weight.”

20. **“The Band,” The Band (1969)**

The Band’s debut album, “Music from Big Pink*,*” was a shot across the bow of popular music. “We were rebelling against the rebellion,” declared guitarist Robbie Robertson. Ignoring the prevailing “hard rock,” their second, self-titled LP (colloquially known as “the Brown Album”) continued their emphasis on Americana, but featured even better songwriting and ensemble playing than that in “Music from Big Pink.” The Band mixed rock ‘n’ roll with country, bluegrass, rhythm-and-blues, and even gospel. Robertson cited the influence of The Staple Singers on their vocals. Even the sound was deliberately against the grain, from touches such as the mouth bow harp-like Clavinet of “Up on Cripple Creek” to the overall woody sound of the album. “The Band” presented an image of America largely absent in the popular music of its time.

21. **“Coal Miner’s Daughter,” Loretta Lynn (1970)**

Loretta Lynn’s signature song lovingly recalls her hardscrabble upbringing in Butcher Hollow, a poor coal-mining community in Kentucky. With an upbeat melody and arrangement, the song warmly recounts a financially impoverished childhood filled with love. Lynn writes songs that are realistic and plainspoken, portraying strong and independent women.

22. **“Red Headed Stranger,” Willie Nelson (1975)**

At the time composer and performer Willie Nelson recorded “Red Headed Stranger,” he had just moved to Columbia Records with a contract that gave him complete artistic control. The new freedom allowed him to compose an album of uncommon elegance and power, one built primarily of his own compositions, but including older country songs like Fred Rose’s “Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain.” Set in the Old West, it told the tale of a tormented preacher on the run from killing his wife and her lover. In the studio, Nelson relied on extremely spare arrangements which emphasized guitar, harmonica and piano. At times the only accompaniment was Nelson’s nylon-string guitar. The resulting album was met with considerable skepticism from Columbia’s executives, but Nelson’s instincts proved prescient and “Red Headed Stranger” resonated with an audience weary of the elaborate production techniques associated with Nashville studios, setting a new course for country and popular music.

23. “**Horses,” Patti Smith (1975)**

Before recording this poetic proto-punk classic, Patti Smith and her band had honed the tunes in a triumphant run of shows at New York’s iconic venue, CBGB. In the studio, producer John Cale helped the band to further refine the selections in a process that Smith remembers as not always pleasant, but greatly beneficial to the final product. Smith’s background as a rock critic and poet is equally in evidence on this record, which includes re-imaginings of such oldies as “Gloria” and “Land of 1000 Dances,” with the addition of Smith’s provocative and unflinching lyrics.

24. **“Radio Free Europe,” R.E.M. (1981)**

The original Hib-Tone single of this song set the pattern for later indie rock releases by breaking through on college radio in the face of mainstream radio’s general indifference. Although a more elaborately produced version of the song appeared on the band’s first album “Murmur,” the original – recorded by Let’s Active frontman Mitch Easter –maintains a raw immediacy that undoubtedly contributed to its overwhelmingly favorable critical reception. Singer Michael Stipe’s elliptical lyrics and guitarist Peter Buck’s arpeggiated open chords would not only become signatures of the band’s future output, but they added greatly to the song’s enigmatic appeal.

25. **“Dear Mama,” Tupac Shakur (1995)**

In this moving and eloquent homage to both his own mother and all mothers struggling to maintain a family in the face of addiction, poverty and societal indifference, Tupac Shakur unflinchingly forgives his mother who, despite a cocaine habit, “never kept a secret, always stayed real.” The song displays further evidence of hip hop as a musically sophisticated and varied genre that can artfully encompass a wide variety of themes and musical influences.