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This issue marks the end of my fifth year as Editor of the IASA Journal and comes at a time of rapid political, cultural, and economic shifts that are impacting archives and archival workers. An American living in the Czech Republic, I have watched with great dismay as a coordinated, multifaceted assault on institutions of memory, knowledge, and public access has been launched by the new administration in the U.S.: firings of the Archivist of the United States, the Librarian of Congress, and the Director of the Copyright Office; the defunding of the Institute of Museum and Library Services; cancellation of grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and National Endowment for the Arts; book bans; and the purging of public data from the internet. The rescission of funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting threatens not only journalism and programming from PBS and NPR, but those who work in public media's audiovisual archives. My own employer, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, was defunded in March 2025 along with several other international broadcasters including Voice of America. RFE/RL's future is still uncertain: after a lengthy lawsuit, its funding is secured only through the end of September. Still quite a new department, RFE/RL's Digital News Archive was already facing numerous challenges, and much of its legacy data from the past 25 years has not yet been processed, backed up, or formally archived. Many IASA members and archivists from around the world have reached out to help, which I am incredibly grateful for. These actions and many other policies of the new administration will surely have a knock-on effect globally. It's a troubling time for American archivists (and a terrifying time to be queer, disabled, an immigrant, or someone holding unpopular political opinions, among other things), and I hope that IASA remains in a strong position and its membership continues to seek ways to support colleagues and institutions facing threats. While I am powerless as an individual to stop these attacks, there is power in collective action and care.

Unfortunately, I will not be able to attend the joint conference with SEAPAAVA this year. I will miss seeing friends and colleagues, and I wish everyone a safe and productive conference. I speak to many presenters, encouraging them to submit to the journal. This year I will review presentations after the event, due to the 12 hour time difference. I welcome any interested conference presenters reading this editorial to contact me or Managing Editor Dr. Marija Dumnić Vilotijević with abstracts, ideas or questions. At this time, we are still accepting submissions on a rolling basis, with no current deadline for next year's issue.

The Editorial Board continues to grow and take shape. Members of this body have been a great support to myself and Marija, offering their expertise, time, and editorial experience. Shortly after last year's conference in Valencia, Dr. Jesse Johnson joined our E.B. as a North America representative. We are delighted to have him on board, but were also sad to lose Dr. Lindsay Mattock, a long-time member who was instrumental in planning the journal's transformation to an Open Access, online-only format and in establishing the editorial board. Recently, some members of the board have been dedicated to the creation of an official style guide for the journal, which will be published online soon. Another group has been investigating potential aggregators and indexers for the journal to be included in, increasing our reach and bringing more attention to the authors it features. Marija and I are always looking for new members to join this advisory body—please contact us if you are interested in serving.

Issue 55 of the IASA Journal brings together six articles that reflect a range of approaches to digitizing, recovering, and reinterpreting audiovisual collections across diverse archival, geographic, and historical contexts. Authors from Germany, South Africa, Norway, the United States, Azerbaijan, and France are featured, with projects extending to Southeast Asia and the Caucasus. Together, these pieces illuminate audiovisual archival practice while reaffirming the field's critical role in safeguarding diverse expressions of human experience.

Ruprecht Langer presents the results of a mass digitization project at the German National Library involving over 50,000 commercial audio recordings. He describes the development and operation of a large-scale digitization workflow designed to meet the demands of legal deposit, long-term preservation, and access, highlighting practical challenges around staffing, infrastructure, and quality control.

Andrea Walker and Susan Mvungi offer a compelling account of post-disaster archival recovery at the University of Cape Town Libraries. The devastating 2021 Jagger Library fire destroyed irreplaceable archival collections, but the disaster became an opportunity to digitize thousands of audiovisual items, as well as to improve disaster preparedness and to conduct a large-scale inventory of collections.

David M. Walker and Crystal Sanchez document a unique capacity-building collaboration with the Tbilisi State Conservatoire to digitize endangered recordings of traditional Georgian music. Their project resulted not only in the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, it also strengthened regional infrastructure in Georgia and empowered Conservatoire staff with technology, best practices, and training. Ketevan Davitashvili, a key project participant, recently recounted some of her own experiences with this project in an online interview: <https://easterndaze.net/recordings-belong-to-the-people-an-interview-with-sound-archivist-ketevan-davitashvili>. I've spent time getting to know Ketevan in Istanbul and Valencia—she is both a talented emerging professional and an IASA member (both, possibly, as a result of this project!).

Karl Peder Mork presents a unique and intimate collection of audio letters recorded by Norwegian-American Owen Veum, offering insights into second-generation immigrant identity and transatlantic cultural memory. Veum's letters were recorded and sent to relatives in Norway between 1964 and 1983 and form the basis for Mork's analysis of transnational family memory and everyday communication. Mork connects the collection to broader questions about archival value, vernacular media, and the preservation of informal, affective sound recordings that often fall outside traditional institutional frameworks.

Joséphine Simonnot and Dana Rappoport introduce the Pratinada platform, which supports the identification and study of Southeast Asian musical materials dispersed across European archives. Developed in collaboration with musicians, researchers, and heritage stakeholders from the region, the project aims to promote equitable access, support shared knowledge production, and contribute to the broader decolonization of archival practices.

Finally, Dr. Sanubar Baghirova examines early 20th-century recordings of Azerbaijani traditional music within the context of Caucasian discography and regional cultural politics. Her analysis traces how these recordings were shaped by the commercial agendas

of recording companies and the geopolitical tensions of the time, offering insight into how musical heritage was framed, marketed, and preserved across shifting historical contexts.

At first glance, the contributions span vastly different geographies, formats, and institutional settings. But a shared set of concerns emerges around how audiovisual archives are managed, interpreted, and mobilized in response to institutional, technological, and historical challenges. Whether addressing large-scale digitization in a national library, restoring access in the wake of disaster, or tracing the cultural circulation of recordings across regions and diasporas, each contribution foregrounds the operational and interpretive decisions that shape audiovisual archival work. Collectively, they highlight that audiovisual archives are not static repositories but active sites of negotiation between access and restriction, memory and infrastructure, local context and transnational relevance.

Happy reading,
Jennifer Vaughn
IASA Editor