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FAU receives large Judaic record collection



Volunteers at Florida Atlantic University's Judaica Sound Archives are unpacking 760 boxes of mostly 78 rpm records from the music collection of the late Jack Saul of Cleveland. From L-R, Ben Roth, Maxine Schackman and Director of Judaica Sound Archives Nathan Tinanoff are showing part of the 12,000 Jewish recordings. Most of the Jewish recordings are from the early 1900s. (Marta Mikulan Martin, FPG / December 3, 2009)

By David A. Schwartz
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They called him "the record man." And when Jack Saul died last May at the age of 86, the lifelong Cleveland resident had amassed a collection of 250,000 to 300,000 recordings.

Florida Atlantic University Libraries recently received around 30,000 recordings, including almost all of Saul's Jewish music collection — about 10,000 records — that went to the Judaica Sound Archives.

The large number of vintage 78s in the collection will propel the FAU Libraries' collection into the top 10 in the world, Nathan Tinanoff, JSA founder and director, said.

Among the Jewish recordings are some the Archives didn't have, he said. Others are of better quality than those already in the collection.

Only about two percent of the Saul collection's recordings are cantorial music, Tinanoff said. But there are a good number of opera recordings, including a large collection of soprano Alma Gluck's music.

Gluck was "one of the premiere victrola performers," Maxine Schackman, Judaica Sound Archives assistant director, said.

There are 12 different Mickey Katz albums and a total of 39, Schackman said. "You can't talk Jewish music and not mention Mickey Katz."

The performer from Cleveland got his zany character from working with Spike Jones, Schackman said, and became incredibly popular on the Borscht Belt.

Marlene Englander, Saul's daughter, said she is pleased that the Judaica Sound Archives is preserving her father's recordings and sharing them in the same manner that he did. "People will have access to these recordings that normally would have been thrown away," said Englander, 57, of Cleveland.

Her father's collection was his passion, she said. "He just was music morning, noon and night."

Saul's home, business and a warehouse were filled with recordings, Englander said. She thinks the collection of recordings numbered between 250,000 and 300,000.

Her father knew where everything was, Englander said. "He had everything shelved and categorized by label."

"I think he was born with a love of music," said Hinda Saul, 87, Saul's widow. Her husband was called "the record man," she said. "I was called a tolerant and understanding wife."

She said she overlooked the records spread throughout the house because they made him happy. She liked the music too, she said.

Jack and Hinda Saul traveled with their son and his wife to **Boca Raton** in February, 2009 to look at the Judaica Sound Archives collection. Saul died three months later at the age of 86.

"He was satisfied," Hinda Saul said. "He said it was a good place."

An excited Tinanoff is waiting for spring, when 40,000 to 50,000 more records from Saul's collection will arrive from Cleveland and he will find more Jewish recordings.

The Judaica Sound Archives hopes to one day digitize all of its music. It puts complete recordings or portions on the website www.fau.edu/jsa.

For more information about the Judaica Sound Archives visit the website or call 561-297-0080.

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