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Don't lose valuable recordings!

So far millions of songs have been recorded, with many of them never released in any form and stored (or lost) in all kinds of places.

Most recordings ended up in an official archive, but occasionally so called “lost recordings” are found back. In many cases these recordings were lost, because the reels were stored in the wrong box or elementary information wasn't included with the recorded tape.

If you record music – anybody's music – please make sure to include information with these recordings! At least write down some of the technical info – “16-track, 15 ips, no NR, 510 nWb/m, AES EQ” or “48 kHz/16bit AIFF stereo”. Also information about the calibration tones is useful or that there are no tones as reference.

We recommend that the following information is included with every recording:

1. Artist – plus all musicians or session players.
2. Complete date.
3. Location – studio, city/state/country, address, URL and phone number.
4. Engineer and producer names – use their real names, as nicknames are often forgotten after so many years.
5. Unique numbering for every tape/reel/folder/session – can be date-based.
6. If tracks were submixed or backed up from elsewhere, write down the source.
7. Does this item sync to something? Note the details of this.
8. Was this session for a specific project? Write down “third solo album” or such.
9. Song Titles – even if it's some made-up-on-the-spot temporary name, anything helps!
10. Song Times – many times songs were listed out of order on the back of a reel. Times from the head of a tape can help sort this out.
11. Album Takes – indicate if a multi track master was used to mix from, or if a mix was mastered from.
12. Source origins – for live recordings or stereo mixes: Soundboard? Audience mics? Mixed from what multi track? Live in the studio?

To stop and take a moment to organize and label one's work could be the difference between a reel accidentally getting lost or saved for the future. And that's the scariest thing one can imagine – unique material lost that will never be recovered.

So label your work!