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Ethnomusicology Collection at the University of Montana's Anthropological Collections Facility (UMACF)

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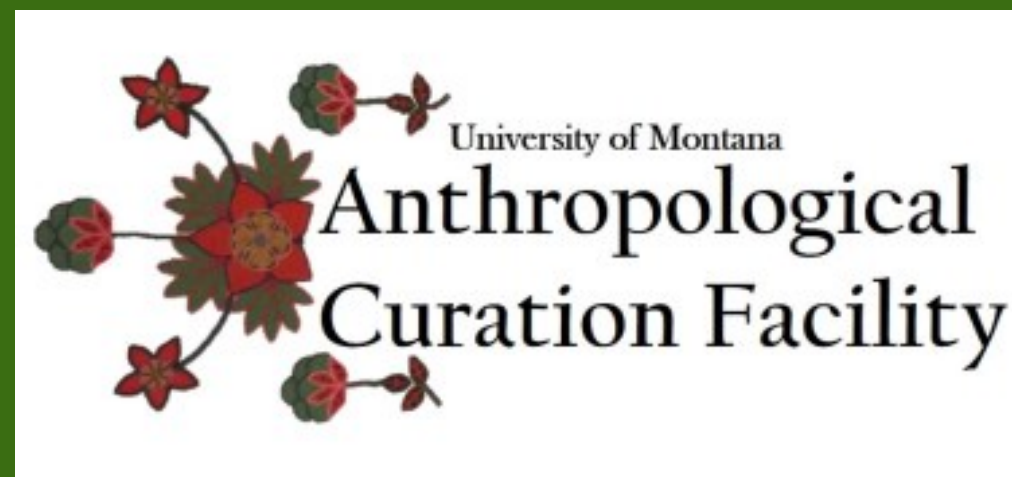
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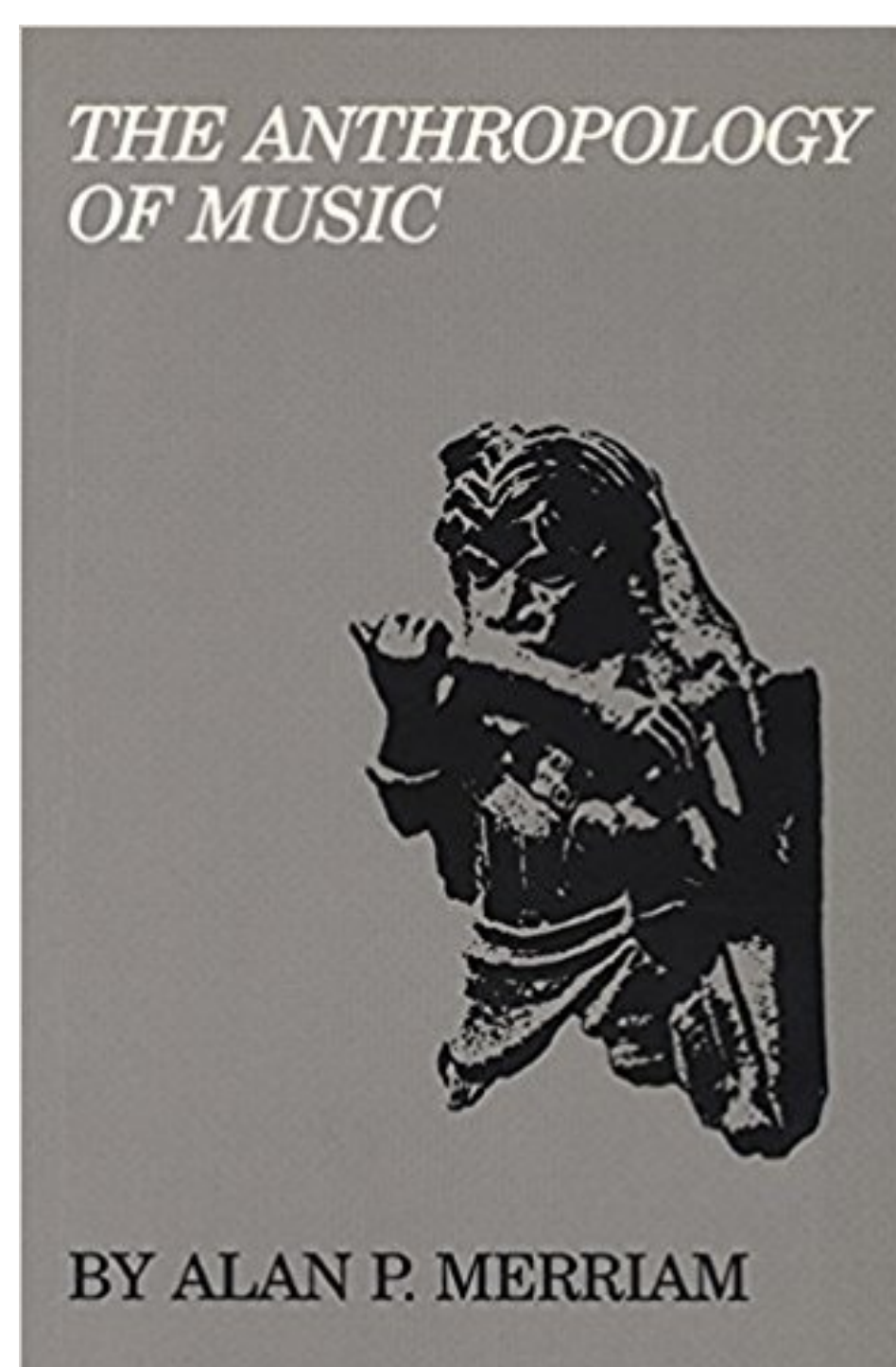
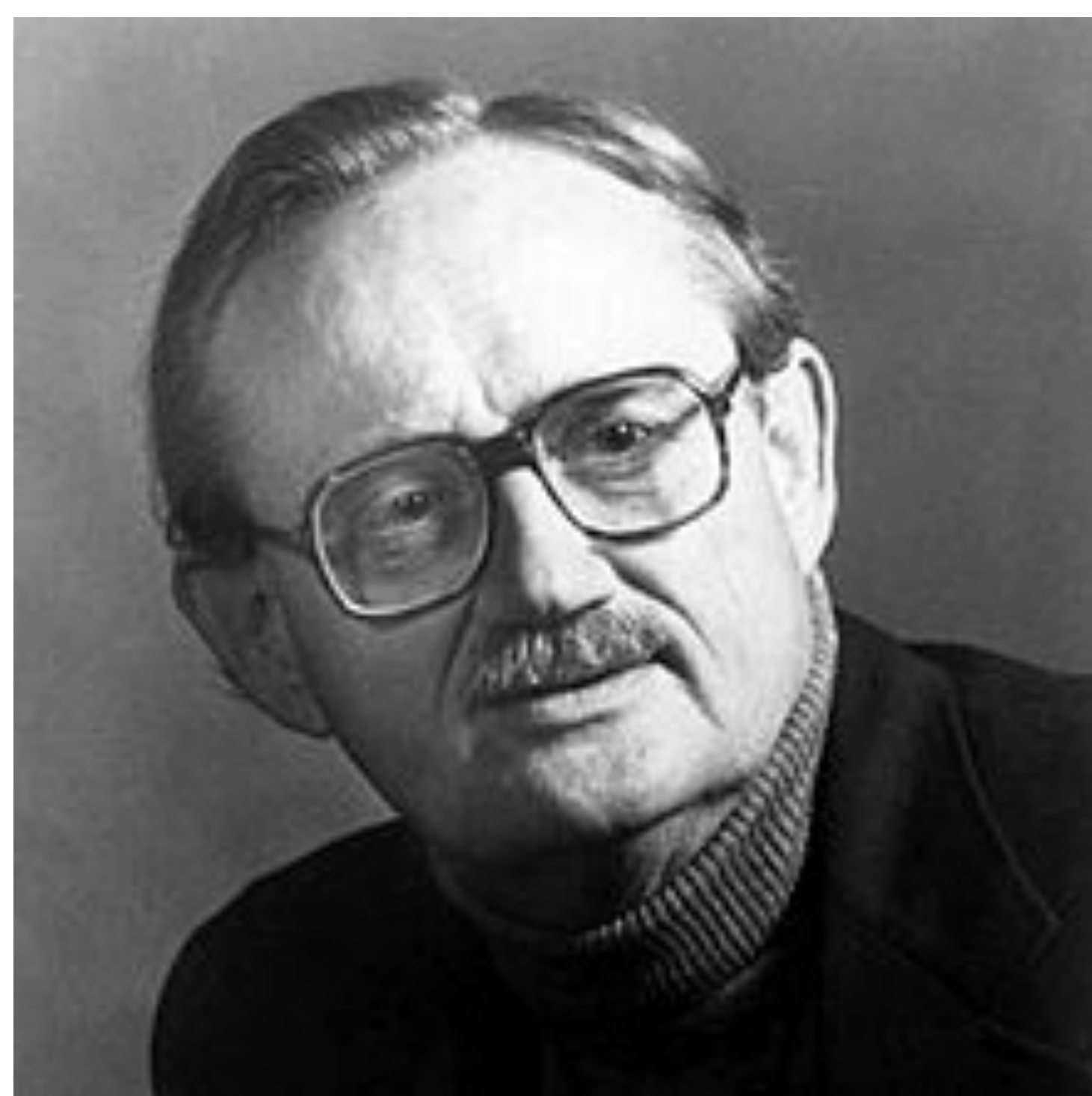
Ethnomusicology Collection at the University of Montana's Anthropological Collections Facility (UMACF)

By Rachel Steffen with support from UMACF and the Davidson Honors College



INTRODUCITON

My Senior Honors Research Project was to inventory the collection of 2,300 78 RPM records, as well as conduct historical background research. This will also be used for the purpose of writing grants which would be used to purchase materials that would aid in the preservation, digitization, and cataloging of the collection.



UMACF'S COLLECTION

Since 1959 UMACF has housed an extensive ethnomusicology collection, donated by cultural anthropologist Alan P. Merriam (1923-1980) of Indiana University, a native of Missoula.

Professor Merriam was a cultural anthropologist and ethnomusicologist, known for his studies of the music of Africa and of Native Americans. He developed a way of studying music through an anthropological perspective and methods. He created the concept of "music as culture". Merriam died in the LOT Polish Airlines Flight 007 accident at the age fifty-six, on March 14, 1980. Merriam donated his collection of the 78 RPM records and 11 reel-to-reel tapes to Carling Malouf (1916-2007), Professor of Anthropology at the University of Montana, who then used the collection for instructional purposes. He created an ethnomusicology course specifically for the use of these records. The collection remained in storage, unused, after his retirement.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS



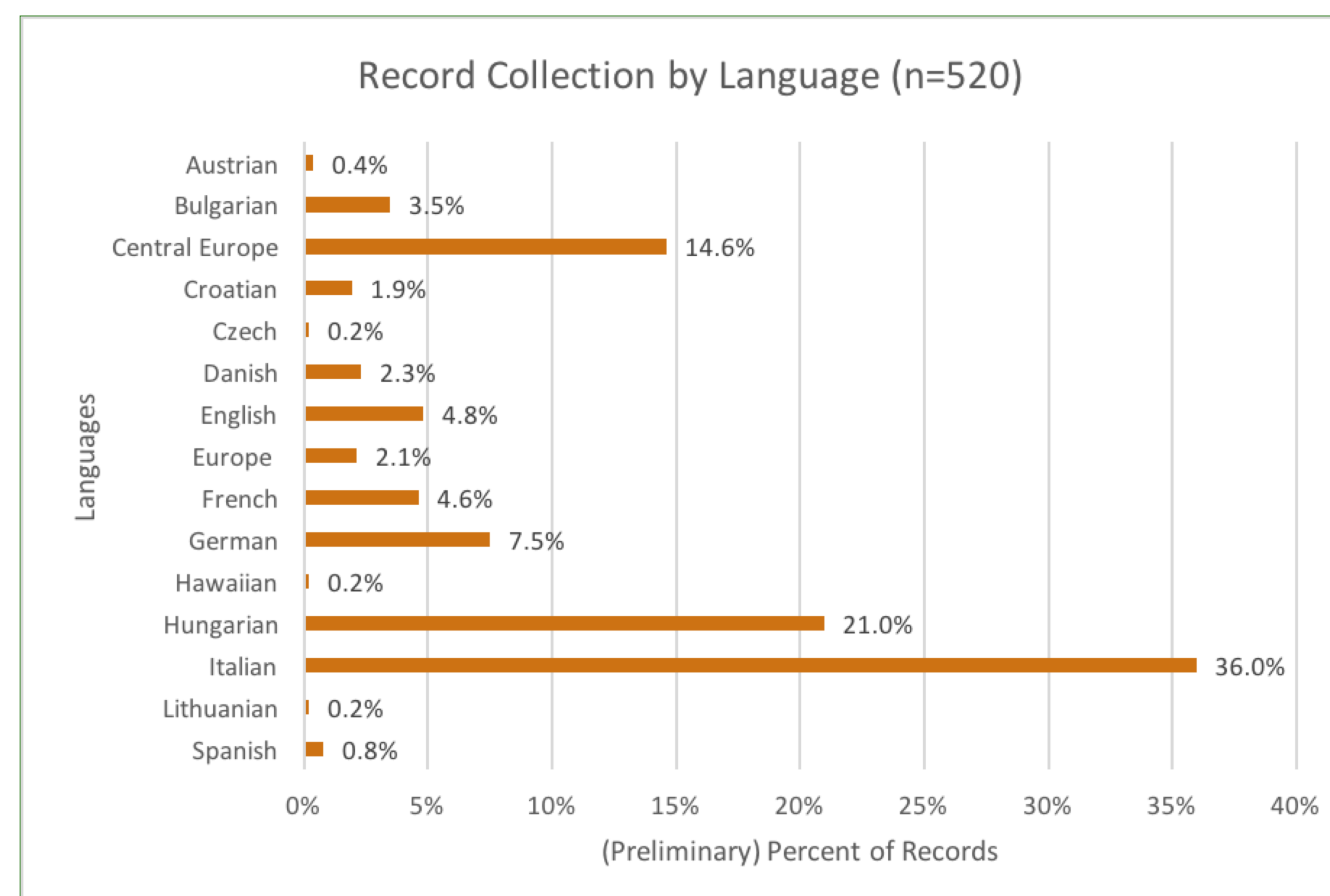
This research was undertaken to ascertain a very basic question. What do we actually have? The collection had never been inventoried. It is critical to know the contents of the collection and determine its ethnographic value to be able to apply for grants and to make it accessible for instructional use.

METHODOLOGY

Background research was undertaken to determine the meaning of the various markings on the labels and surfaces of 78 rpm records. A chart database was created to record the information. Each individual record was examined and the following data was recorded: language, culture, topic or format, performer's name, title, record company, label color, size, engraved matrix number, serial number of label, printed matrix number, other relevant information, and side B data.

This database is sortable by category.

RESULTS



FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Specific work needed would include storing the disks within paper sleeves in vertical containers, regular dusting, and cleaning of the records. Necessary supplies are cleaning solutions such as Tergitol, record sleeves, storage boxes, audiotape boxes, electric compressed air cleaner, and a digitizing turntable. Labor would include cleaning 2,300 78 rpm records as well as digitizing them.

It is necessary to house the records and audio tapes to archival standards, as well as cataloging the collection in PastPerfect 5.0 (museum cataloging database). Additional work needs to be done with eleven reel-to-reel tapes, that have a museum and Northwest History Collection stamp, with a printed date of "Aug. 1950". Tapes deteriorate over time and need to be sent to a specialized facility to be digitalized. These tapes could be Merriam's 1950 Flathead Indian Music project, irreplaceable ethnomusicological data. Even if the curation facility had a reel-to-reel player to find out what was on the tapes it would be too risky to the media to try. What is needed are grants from programs like the Preservation of Classical Music Historical Recordings.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my mentor and advisor for this project, collections curator Dr. Riley Augé, for guidance and support the last two semesters; Daniel Harris, graduate student within my department, for help with data analysis; anthropology PhD candidate William Schroeder for his advice and assistance; and finally the Davidson Honors College for their support.