



**Twenty-Five Years of  
Popular Music in Nova  
Scotia: The Archives of  
Solar Audio and Recording  
Limited**

**Fountain School of Performing Arts, Dalhousie University**

**Performing Arts Research Forum**

**Creighton Barrett**

**October 1, 2015**

# Research questions in the University Archives

- 1) How much “local music” should the University Archives **preserve**?
- 2) How should archivists **describe** multi-track sound recordings?
- 3) How should the Libraries **service** the archives of Solar Audio and Recording Limited?

**Archival Theory**

**Archival Practice**



# Solar Audio and Recording Limited

- Studio founded by Russell Brannon
- Acted as “label” for many bands
- Master tapes and stereo mixes left in attic on Cunard Street...

# Solar Audio and Recording Limited

- Recorded many well-known artists
- Recorded many unknown artists
- “Paid the bills” by recording radio advertisements



# Archival work to date

- Chronological **organization** of tapes
- **Research** on digitization and archival description of sound recordings...
- Archival **description** of over 860 tapes
- Creation of new “**authority records**” for many recording artists
- Successful “test” **digitization** of multi-track tapes and stereo mixes



Chronological  
organization  
of Solar Audio  
Recording  
tapes in  
Dalhousie  
University  
Archives  
storage

# Research on digitization and description of sound recordings

- Audiovisual archives reading courses
- Ongoing work with Helen Creighton sound recordings
- Kevin Hartford, Audiovisual Archives Assistant
- Dave MacLachlan, Young Canada Works Audiovisual Archives Intern
- Recent audiovisual digitization projects with **The MediaPreserve** (audiovisual digitization vendor)

## ▼ Collection 2012-023 - Solar Audio Recor...

▶ File 2012-023, Reel 1 - Sound recording...

▶ File 2012-023, Reel 4 - Sound recording...

▶ File 2012-023, Reel 5 - Sound recording...

▶ File 2012-023, Reel 6 - Sound recording...

▶ File 2012-023, Reel 8 - Sound recording...

▶ File 2012-023, Reel 9 - Reel 9

## Collection 2012-023 - Solar Audio Recording Studio

## Title and statement of responsibility area

Title proper	Solar Audio Recording Studio Collection
General material designation	Sound recording Textual record
Level of description	Collection
Repository	<a href="#">Dalhousie University Archives</a>
Reference code	2012-023

## Dates of creation area

Date(s)	[ca. 1975]-[ca. 2003] (Creation)
Creator	Solar Audio & Recording Limited.

## Physical description area

Physical description	60 m of sound recordings
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## Archival description area

Name of creator	<a href="#">Solar Audio &amp; Recording Limited. (1975-2003)</a> Administrative history : Solar Audio & Recording Limited was a recording studio Russell Brannon. The studio operated on Hunter Street Central Business District, the community-based
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# “Collection Level” description



## Item 2012-023, Reel 383, Track 1 - Trying to find my baby

Solar Audio Recording Studio Collection » Reel 383 » Trying to find my baby

Title and statement of responsibility area	
Title proper	Trying to find my baby
General material designation	Sound recording
Title notes	Source of title proper: Title not given on box. Title was determined by matching the master record to commercially available recordings that contain track titles.
Level of description	Item
Repository	<a href="#">Dalhousie University Archives</a>
Reference code	2012-023, Reel 383, Track 1
Archival description area	
Name of creator	<a href="#">Mason, Dutch</a>
Access points	
Name access points	<a href="#">Mason, Dutch</a> (Creator)

# “Item-Level” Description of Dutch Mason recording

[Print preview](#)

## Item list

Solar Audio Recording Studio Collection

Reel 576

#	Reference code	Title	Dates	Access restrictions
1	2012-023, Reel 576, Track 1	How much longer	February 11, 1986	None
2	2012-023, Reel 576, Track 2	Brand name appeal	February 11, 1986	None
3	2012-023, Reel 576, Track 3	Two sides	February 11, 1986	None
4	2012-023, Reel 576, Track 4	En francais	February 11, 1986	None
5	2012-023, Reel 576, Track 5	Prisoner of conscience	February 11, 1986	None
6	2012-023, Reel 576, Track 6	Death of a salesman	February 11, 1986	None
7	2012-023, Reel 576, Track 7	Speaking stones	February 11, 1986	None

Showing 1 to 7 of 7 results

# “Item-Level” Descriptions of Killer Klamz recordings

# “Authority Record” for Molly Oliver

Creator of

(no title supplied)

Apology

Apology (we both could be wrong)

Go back home

Go back home

Greet your neighbour : [sound recording ...

Living a dream

Living a dream

Open up

Open up

Open up : [sound recording by Molly Oliv...

Somebody new in my eyes

Somebody new in my eyes : [sound recor...

Somebody new to my eyes

## Molly Oliver

Authority record » Molly Oliver

### Identity area

Type of entity	Corporate body
Authorized form of name	Molly Oliver












### Description area

Dates of existence	1976-[1987?]
History	<p>Molly Oliver was a Nova Sc origins began after Bruce V (bass/vocals) had left Every with former Pepper Tree r Quinn (keyboards/vocals).</p> <p>According to the first albur Molly Reed, a madame wh here she married an Englis set sail with him. Following command of his ship and r as the pirate, "Molly Oliver. and "Oliver" were actually 1</p>

# Vendor “deliverables” for digitized ¼ inch audio tape

- XML Metadata (MODS and METS standards)
- XML Metadata for WAV digital preservation file
- MD5 checksum file for each digital sound recording
- Mp3 streaming file
- WAV access file
- WAV digital preservation file (BWF)
- JPEG photographs of box front and reel front
- MRK file

# Digital files from “Killer Klamz” ¼ inch tape 2

Name	Type	Size
 Killer_Klamz_Tape2_WRC4-4454_preservation.wav.meta	XML Document	19 KB
 Killer_Klamz_Tape2_WRC4-4454	XML Document	8 KB
 Killer_Klamz_Tape2_WRC4-4454_preservation	Wave Sound	734,596 KB
 Killer_Klamz_Tape2_WRC4-4454_access	Wave Sound	224,972 KB
 Killer_Klamz_Tape2_WRC4-4454_preservation	MRK File	1 KB
 Killer_Klamz_Tape2_WRC4-4454_streaming	MP3 Format Sound	30,610 KB
 Killer_Klamz_Tape2_WRC4-4454_streaming.mp3	MD5 File	1 KB
 Killer_Klamz_Tape2_WRC4-4454_preservation.wav	MD5 File	1 KB
 Killer_Klamz_Tape2_WRC4-4454_access.wav	MD5 File	1 KB
 Killer_Klamz_Tape2_WRC4-4454_ReelFront	JPEG image	7,519 KB
 Killer_Klamz_Tape2_WRC4-4454_BoxFront	JPEG image	7,568 KB

# MODS/METS metadata

```

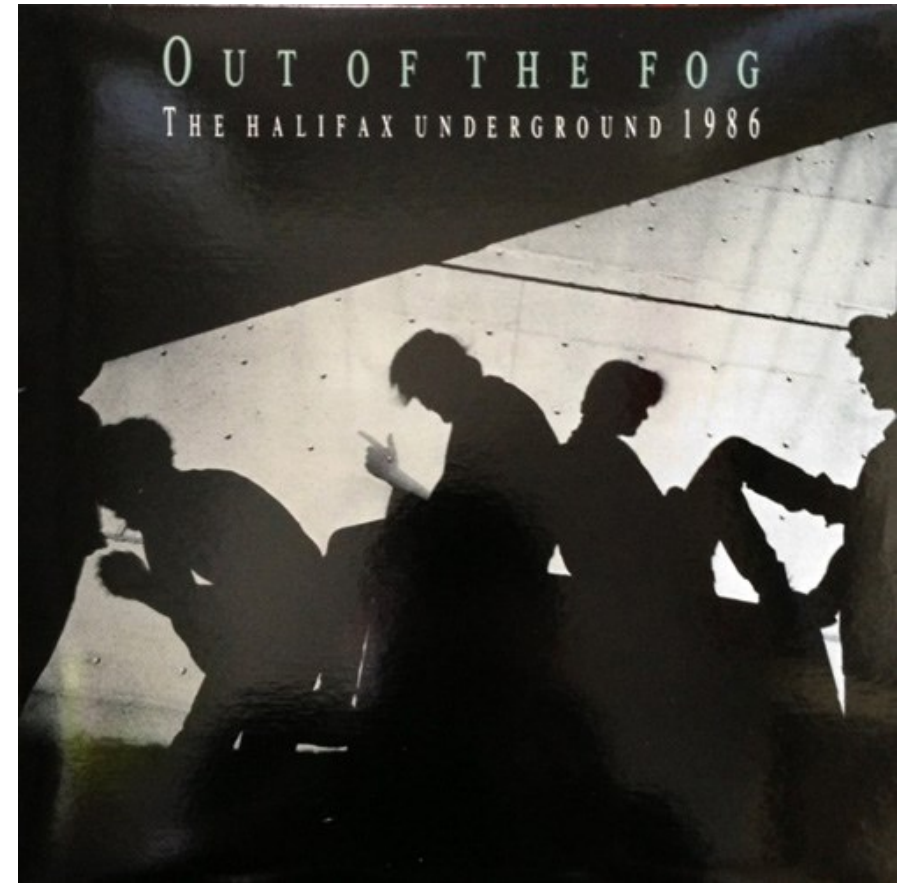
      <amd:AUDIOMD ANALOGDIGITALFLAG="FileDigital"
        ID="mdp.Killer_Klamz_Tape2_WRC4-4454
_preservation.wav">
      <amd:file_data>
        <amd:audio_data_encoding>PCM
      </amd:audio_data_encoding>
        <amd:bits_per_sample>24
      </amd:bits_per_sample>
        <!--aka bit depth-->
        <amd:checksum>
          <amd:checksum_type>MD5
        </amd:checksum_type>
          <amd:checksum_value>
01c8afee350e0c3e0f61e15755c6112d</amd:checksum_value>
        </amd:checksum>
        <amd:compression>
          <amd:codec_creator_app>Steinberg
Wavelab</amd:codec_creator_app>
          <amd:codec_name>PCM

```

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# Research question #1 – How much “local music” should the University Archives preserve ?

- Mandate and acquisitions policy
- Archival appraisal theory and practice
- Matrix of criteria
- Monetary appraisal considerations



Out of the Fog compilation:

<http://www.discogs.com/Various-Out-Of-The-Fog-The-Halifax-Underground-1986/release/4600634>

Artist Recognition  
and Critical  
Reception

Musicality and  
Acoustic Quality

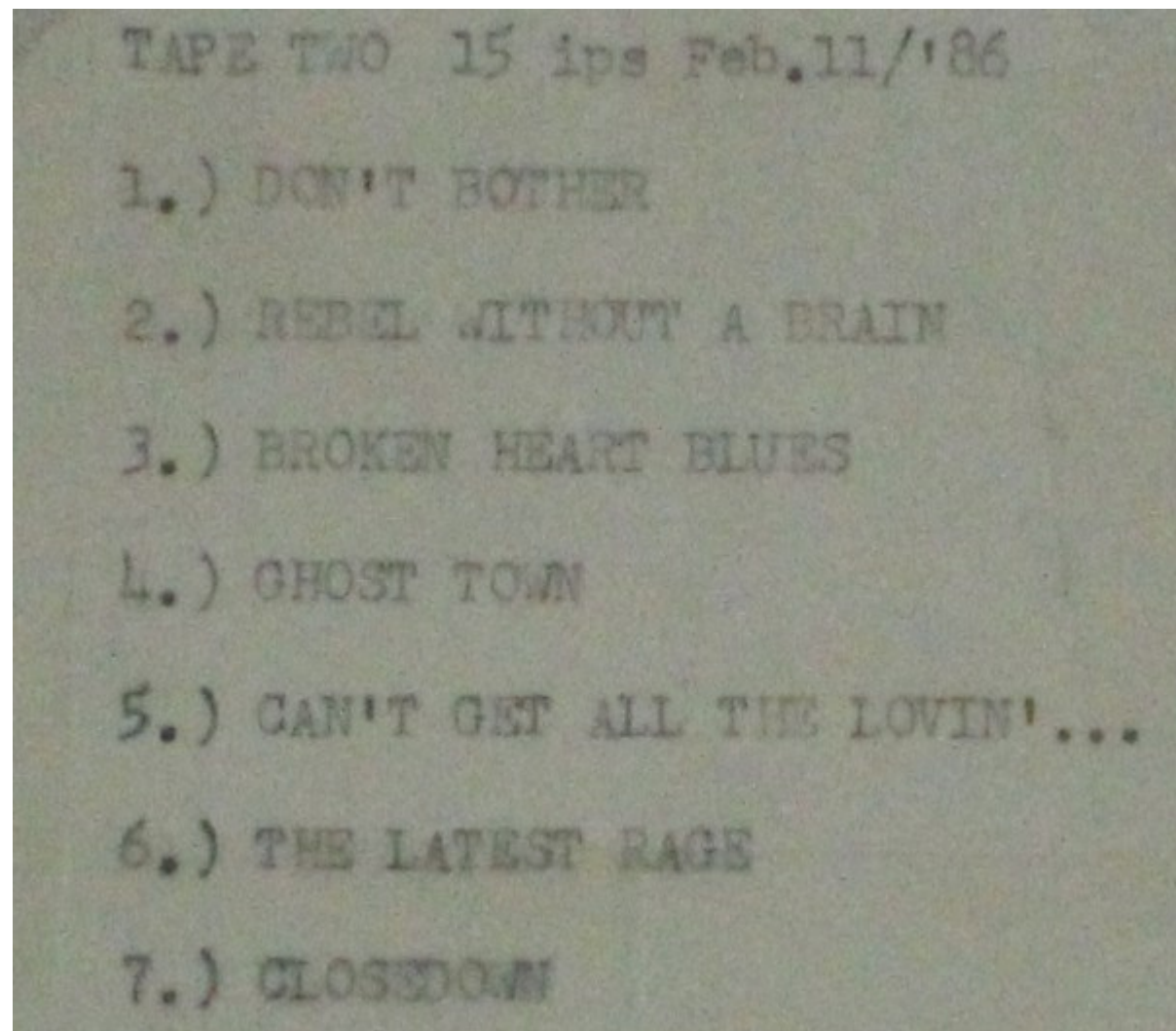
Representation  
and Diversity

Institutional  
Capacity for  
Multimedia  
Archives



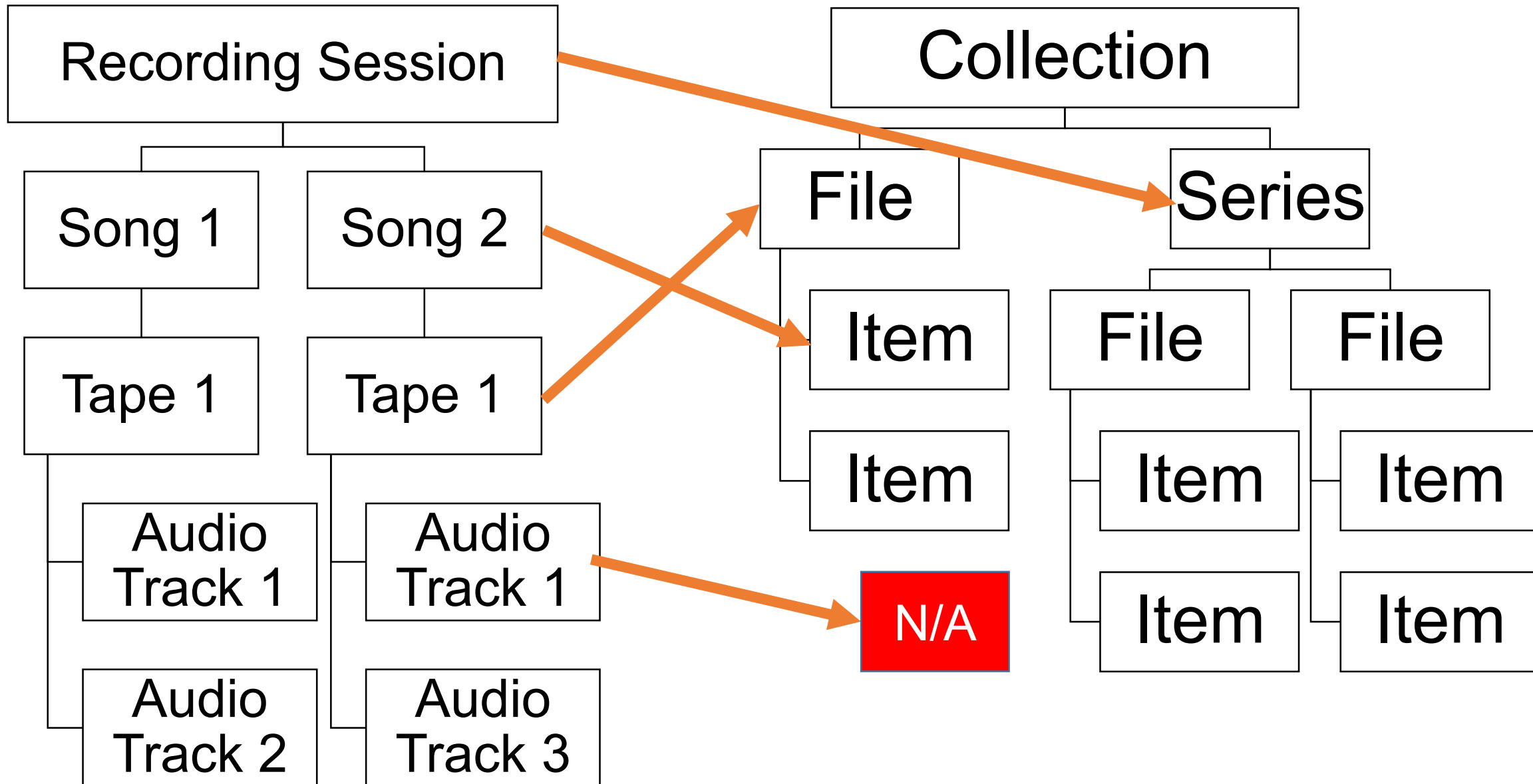
# Research focus #2 – How should archivists describe multi-track sound recordings?

- Canadian Rules for Archival Description
- ISAAR (CPF) – International Standard for Archival Authority Records, Corporate Bodies, Persons, and Families
- ***Hierarchical “levels of description” proceed from the general to the specific***

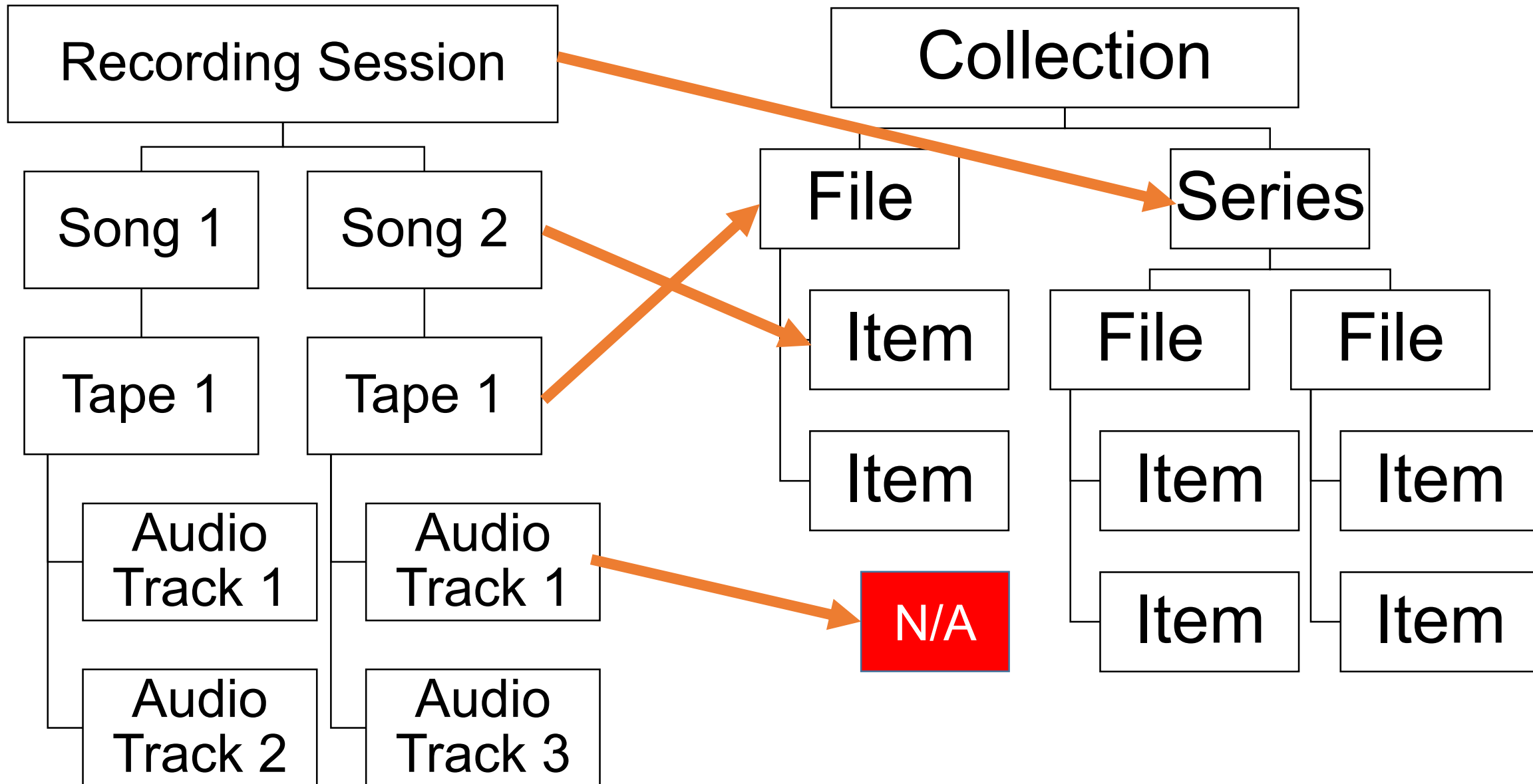


# Hierarchy of Recording Sessions

# Hierarchical "Levels of Description"



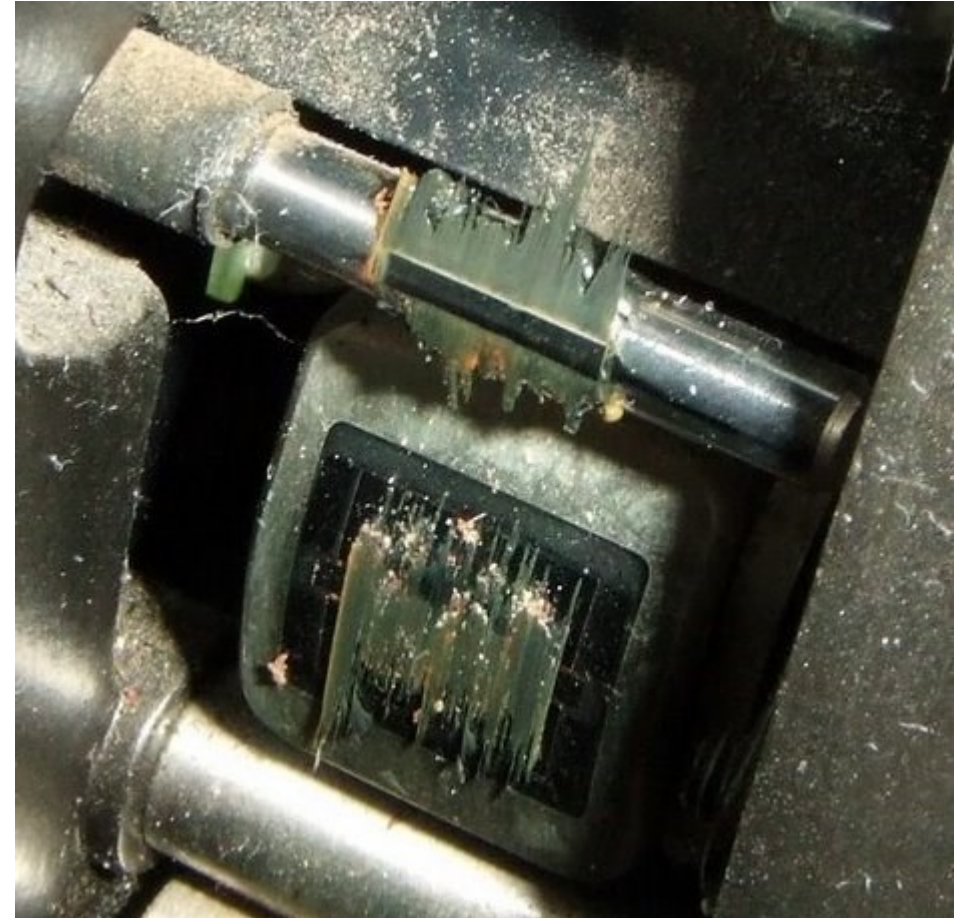
# Hierarchical "Levels of Description"



N/A

# Research focus #3 – How should the Dalhousie Libraries service this collection?

- Accessibility - streaming audio via Learning Management System? YouTube? iTunes?
- Usability - Develop unique teaching tools?
- Preservation - Work with recording artists to complete digital preservation?
- Opportunity – Marketing and communications



Sticky shed on tape head. Source:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Shedonhead.JPG>

# Dutch Mason – Trying to Find my Baby

- YouTube:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k84HtWhxF0g>
- Libraries' LibVine Blog:  
<https://blogs.dal.ca/libraries/2013/12/university-archives-digitizes-dutch-mason-master-recording/>

RECORDING LTD.  
Dartmouth, N.S.  
3-5557

PROGRAMME ~~PIANO ALLEY~~ ROLL #  
CLIENT ~~CBC~~  
PRODUCER ~~40's HOTEL / HARPSICHORD~~  
MASTER # \_\_\_\_\_ DATE ~~Jan 6/81~~

TITLE	TIME
<del>PIANO MEDLEY</del>	<del>4:30</del>
<del>KNIGHTS IN WHITE SATIN</del>	<del>3:25</del>
<del>BLACKBIRD</del>	<del>2:30</del>
<del>DUST IN THE WIND</del>	

**D. MASON**

7mm  DOLEY  IN  OUT   
15mm  30mm

ORIGINAL  COPY

LEVEL  STANDARD  ELEVATED

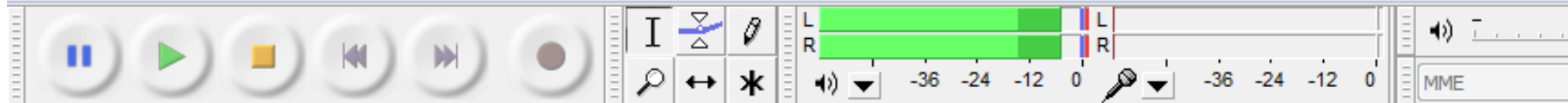
FORMAT  MONO  STEREO  4 TRACK  8 TRACK  16 TRACK  24 TRACK

REFERENCE TONES  750 Hz  15 kHz  10 kHz  100 Hz  30 Hz  NAB ED  PILOTONE

WIND  TAIL OUT  HEAD OUT

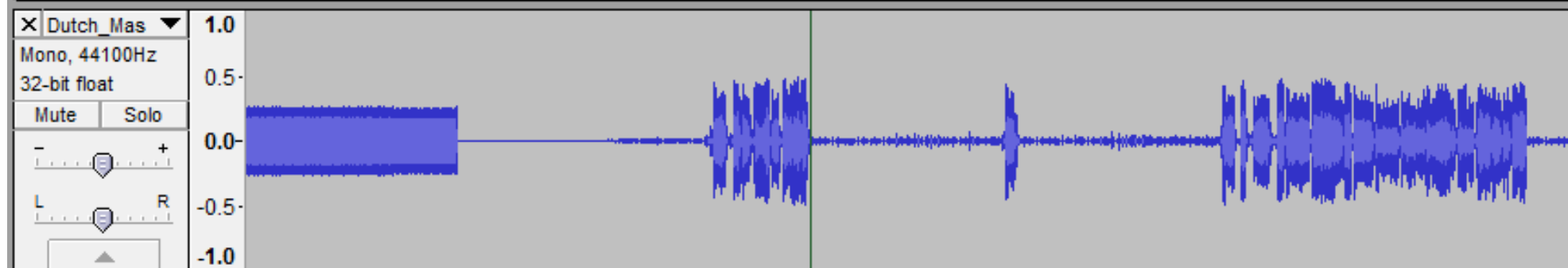
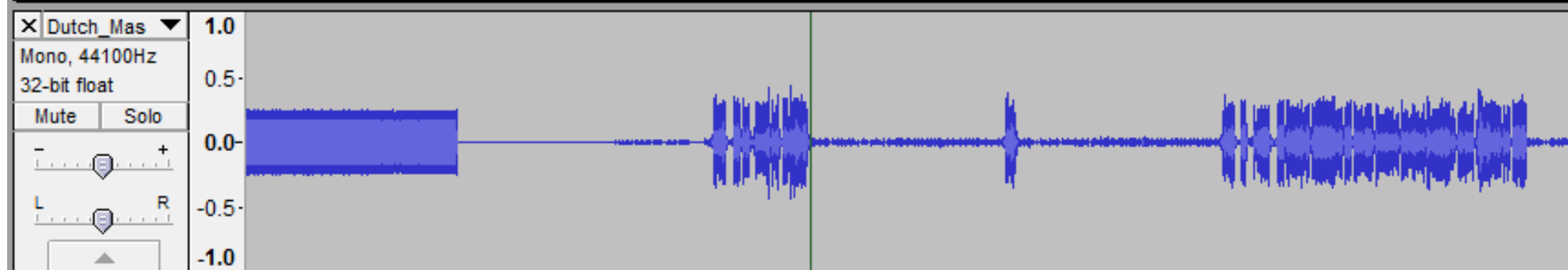
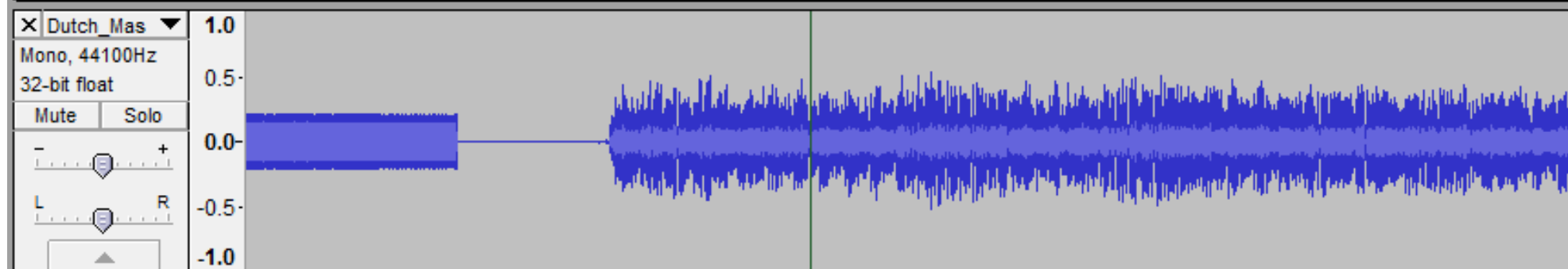
ENGINEER \_\_\_\_\_  
ASSISTANT \_\_\_\_\_  
COPY ENGINEER \_\_\_\_\_  
MACHINE # \_\_\_\_\_ ROLL \_\_\_\_\_ STUDIO Solar

Reel 383, Solar Audio and Recording Limited Collection



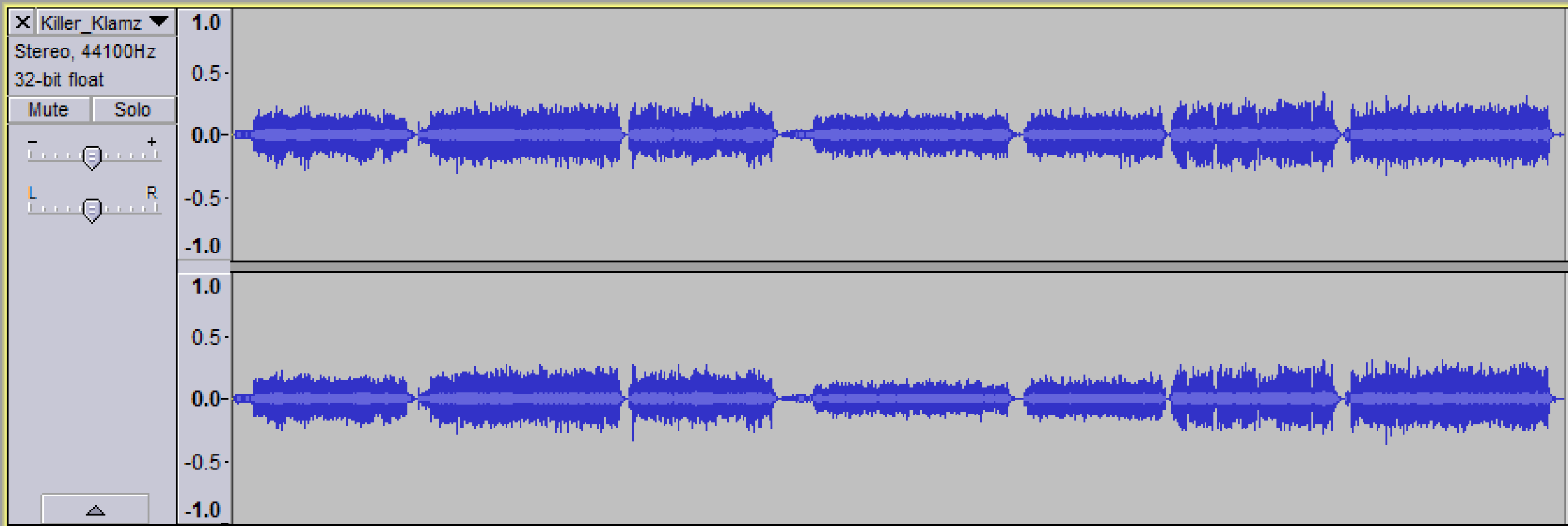
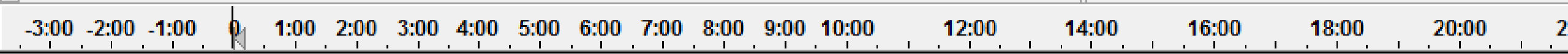
Transport controls: Play, Stop, Previous, Next, Record. Mixer controls: Solo, Mute, Pan (L/R), Volume (0 to -36 dB). A green bar indicates the current audio level.

1:45 2:00 2:15 2:30 2:45 3:00 3:15 3:30 3:45 4:00 4:15 4:30 4:45 5:00 5:15 5:30 5:45



Transport controls: Play, Stop, Previous, Next, Record. Editing tools: Insert, Split, Erase, Undo, Redo, Copy, Paste, Delete. Monitoring: Click to Start Monitoring. Meters: L, R, -57, -54, -51, -48, -45, -42, -3, 21, -18, -15, -12, -9, -6, -3, 0.

Input: MME, Microphone (Realtek High Defi), 2 (Stereo) Record. Output: Speakers (Realtek High Definit).



# Image sources

- **Slide 1:** Photograph of reel front, Killer Klamz, tape 2, WRC4-4454. Photograph by The MediaPreserve, February 17, 2012.
- **Slide 15:** Cover of *Out of the Fog* compilation:  
<http://www.discogs.com/Various-Out-Of-The-Fog-The-Halifax-Underground-1986/release/4600634>
- **Slide 17:** Photograph of reel front, Killer Klamz, tape 2, WRC4-4454. Photograph by The MediaPreserve, February 17, 2012.
- **Slide 19:** Shed on head. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Shedonhead.JPG>
- **Slide 20:** Photograph of box front, Dutch Mason Band. Photograph by The MediaPreserve, February 17, 2012
- All other images taken by Creighton Barrett.