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Metadata for Moving Image Collections
Assignment Three

The collection I chose for this assignment is my own musical output. This mostly takes the form of a few releases by two bands of mine: Send Away Stranger and Wavelets. It goes without saying that this is of personal interest, and of interest to the other band members. It would also hopefully be of interest to friends and family, who in my experience have tended to gravitate towards physical copies of albums (on vinyl or cassette tape), perhaps as keepsakes. Both bands had a small measure of success, managing to release a few recordings on different independent record labels. The preservation of the essence of the works themselves would (also hopefully) be important to any fans we had or have.

With the band Send Away Stranger, we had three releases: an EP in 2011 released on CD and cassette tape, a split 7" record in 2013, and an EP in 2014 released on cassette tape. There are digital versions of all three releases as well. With Wavelets there were three physical releases: a split 7" record in 2009, a 12" record in 2012, and a discography cassette tape released in 2011 that contained the songs on both the aforementioned records a few other prior digital releases. The songs from the LP released in 2012, for example, would have been available on the 12" record, on the discography tape, and digitally. The 12" record had only one pressing of 500 copies, in three colors. 75 copies were available on clear vinyl, 150 on transparent red vinyl, and 275 on black vinyl. At the time of this writing, there are fifteen copies still for sale, all of the black vinyl.

With bands of our ilk (and this is still a trend today, all these years later) there was an appeal to have rare and limited versions of releases (such as the 75 clear vinyl copies of the Wavelets full-length). Although the clear vinyl version is not the essence of the album

Athletics by the band Wavelets, it still would likely be regarded as the “essential version” in terms of value, the ideal physical representative of the album. This complicates preservation and cataloging, because it might be difficult to track down a copy for the imaginary archive seeking to collect our output. Nonetheless, it seems important to track this sort of info, to indicate the full collection of work; however, I am equally inclined to keep things simple, as many of the variants and versions were created more for the sake of having options than for any loftier aesthetic or artistic purposes. The cassette tapes of Wavelets and Send Away Stranger of course arrived well after the decline of the format, not because it is resurging in popularity but because it is a niche collector’s item. In all three cases (two Send Away Stranger tapes and one Wavelets tape) fifty copies were made, roughly appropriate to the size of the niche market. Because of this sort of thinking, it may be unnecessary to get too detailed in cataloging these works. Although it would be ideal to notate the different versions, it is not imperative that they occupy required fields.

The details of recording (dates of recording and mixing, equipment used) are probably not essential here, likely not always included in a catalog of this sort of ephemera, and mostly forgotten regardless. Of course I am biased here, but I am not convinced that that level of cataloging is necessary here. The metadata wish-list will focus more on item level descriptions of the physical objects, with the assumption that they would be collected as physical artifacts. The goal is to make this as simple as possible, to not overload the information with details about the essence (the music itself), and instead make the XML records simply reflect a physical document. The metadata wish-list reflects this, while documenting the information that seems most crucial towards understanding what the works are.

Metadata Wish-List

1) Band Name – This would be the band name (e.g., Send Away Stranger), while band members would go under a “contributor” sort of field.

2) Album/Release Name – This would be the name of the work/album (e.g., Gables).

3) Band Members – Band members would be listed here, as would other personnel related to the production and release of the album (everyone responsible for producing, mixing, mastering the music, designing the art, etc.).

4) Other Personnel – Everyone responsible for producing, mixing, mastering, art design, etc.

5) Format – In these examples it will be mostly be physical (e.g., cassette tape), but could also be digital.

6) Version/variant – This would be a way to list something like the clear variant of the vinyl format.

7) Release Date (format) – This would be the primary release date, indicating when the album was originally released, regardless of which format.

8) Release Date (version) – This would be a way to register when this specific variant was released. Perhaps a pressing of a record released years after the first.

9) Record Label – This would either be the name of the record label that released the album, or the name of the band in the case of self-released albums.

10) Genre – This would classify the type of music, in this case rock, punk, emo, or some similar subgenre (because “genre” and “subgenre” in this context is colloquial, I think for this instance a “subject” element works fine).

11) Description – Information stored here would be some sort of contextual description of the work (perhaps in relation to the artist’s catalog).

13) Physical Description – A description of the physical artifact.

14) Track Listing – This would be the song titles and lengths, probably just in a single field.

15) Rights – This is unnecessary for this specific example, because all rights belong to the band members, but it is still important to note.

Because the majority of this information is pretty basic, I think that Dublin Core is an appropriate standard. If some future imaginary archive with a taste for the technical decides they need more precise information then the Dublin Core record would still be useful as a starting point. However, because someone will likely only find these bands and recordings by searching for them specifically, it is best to keep it simple. The music scene in Florida at the time was somewhat sparse, and this does not require much in the way of metadata mapping. . In the XML I will add a language field, although it is not part of the wish-list. This is due to several fields having to be combined by Dublin Core. I will also use the Open Archives Initiative (OAI) schema, because it is easily integrates with Dublin Core.

<u>Wish-list</u>	<u>Dublin Core</u>
Band Name	Creator
Album/Release Name	Title
Band Member	Contributor

Other Personnel	Contributor
Format	Format
Version/Variant	(Qualifier: Alternative)
Release Date (format)	Date
Release Date (version)	Date
Record Label	Publisher
Genre	Subject
Description	Description
Physical Description	Description
Track Listing	Description
Rights	Rights

NOTE:

The simplistic approach had a few major setbacks, namely that it was difficult to not make the records *too* simple. It was also difficult to distinguish band members of different music groups in the split 7" record, and it felt at times like I was either overloading a single element (e.g., Will Linscott, guitar and vocals). Properly crediting those involved in the production and release of a work is obviously important; in the future I would rethink this approach and adopt a standard better suited for that sort of detail.