



[Preface](#) | [Summary](#) | [Project History](#) | [Cantometrics](#) | [Choreometrics](#) | [Parlametrics](#) | [Urban Strain](#) | [Other Studies](#) | [Teaching Tools](#) | [Global Jukebox](#) | [Library of Congress Publications](#) | [Acknowledgements](#)

### THE PERFORMANCE STYLE AND CULTURE RESEARCH COLLECTION AT THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

In 2007 the Performance Style and Culture Research Collection was placed at the American Folklife Center of the Library of Congress, where it is part of the Alan Lomax Collection along with the main corpus of Alan Lomax's writing and field collections. It was compiled and annotated by Nancy Johnson under the auspices of ACE (see the Finding Aid).

This multifaceted group of materials constitutes an in-depth record of the Performance Style and Culture Research project (1961–1995), or, as it was originally called, the Cross-Cultural Survey of Expressive Style. Comprising more than 100 linear feet of paper files housed in 200 document boxes, hundreds of computer files, and thousands of recorded examples on tape and film, it is the largest assemblage among Alan Lomax's collected works. Its intellectual content is complex, and the context of research on human behavior, nonverbal communication, and cultural evolution in which it took shape is not easily reconstructed. The pioneering spirit of this project and of the era that gave rise to it comes through in the taped [discussions and interviews](#) between members of the research team and their colleagues, which can be heard on this website.

The collection documents the development of coding systems for vocal music and orchestras, dance, and speech, as well as the statistical methods and other analytic tools designed for the project. Thousands of coding sheets and other analyses of performances are linked to source data in Lomax's published and unpublished collections of sound recordings and film which provided the raw data for the project and its constituent studies. Extensive indices illustrate the connections between the codings, other paper records, and the media collections that were sampled. Hundreds of old punch cards and mainframe computer runs from the first two decades of the project, and the PC files of its last ten years, contain data, metadata, and statistical runs.

Notes, correspondence, and publications shed light on the intellectual foundations of the project, and the unfolding of its constituent studies. A large correspondence attests to the efforts made to amass a high-quality sample of audio and visual materials representing world music, dance and speaking styles. Voluminous notes record the development of coding systems, geographic and ethnographic frameworks, sampling and statistical methods, and data analysis. Also of interest are grant applications, project publications and unpublished writings, and newspaper articles and correspondence pertaining to scholarly and public responses to the project over the years.

The project's paper records are linked to media collections and computer files:

- Sound recordings collection: Cantometrics drew upon Lomax's own field recordings and some 2,000 audiotapes and discs of music from other sources. These are cataloged and cross-referenced to Cantometric coding sheets. 115 hours of cassette and tape-recorded speech samples were used in Parlametrics research.
- The LP collection: The hundreds of commercial LPs in Lomax's record collection were also mined for the Cantometrics sample. Cantometrics coding sheets refer to items coded on these discs, which are arranged in a geographic classification.
- Film and video collections: Some 1,500 films showing dance and work movement from the main world regions provided the Choreometrics sample. Choreometrics coding sheets cross-reference to these films, and many contain annotations on the films and their sources.
- Computer files: In addition to 200 binders of mainframe computer runs and 150 boxes of punch cards created during the early years of the project, 8,000 computer files were generated between 1988 and 1995, some of which may be compromised. These consist of WAV and digital video files, plus C source code, data files, and documentation of source code, were stored in custom binary formats to support multi-valued fields and high performance processing.

Go to Performance Style & Culture Finding Aid (coming soon).

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