

**ARSC AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE
In Historical Recorded Sound Research**

CHARTER

I. Introduction

Whereas, one of the fundamental purposes of the Association for Recorded Sound Collections is to "encourage development of the highest standards of scholarship with respect to research involving sound recordings," and another is to "foster improvement of techniques for the reproduction, storage, and preservation of sound recordings" (Bylaws, Article II);

The Board of Directors of ARSC establishes a program of awards to be called the ARSC Awards for Excellence in Historical Recorded Sound Research. These awards are intended to serve the following purposes:

1. Support the goals stated in Article II of the Bylaws by citing and publicizing specific examples of the best work currently being done.
2. Encourage those doing such work, and others, with the promise of formal recognition by their peers.
3. Reach out to fields with which ARSC has been only peripherally involved (e.g., rock music), and encourage them to pursue high standards of historical research.
4. Promote wider readership of the finest research, which might otherwise be "lost" in limited circulation publications.
5. Raise the visibility and influence of ARSC so that it can better achieve its Article II goals.

II. Awards Committee

1. The Awards shall be administered by a **Blue Ribbon Awards Committee** consisting of seven voting members:
 - a. The President of ARSC or his/her designee
 - b. The Editor of the *ARSC Journal* or his/her designee
 - c. One elected member with recognized expertise in the field of recorded classical music.
 - d. One elected member with recognized expertise in the field of recorded popular music.

- e. One elected member with recognized expertise in the field of recorded jazz.
- f. Two elected "At Large" members with recognized expertise in any field of recorded sound.

2. The ARSC Nominating Committee shall propose at least two nominees for each of the elected seats. Additional nominations may be made by written petition to the Board, signed by at least 20 members of ARSC. Nominees who signify their acceptance shall be voted on by the membership of ARSC during the regular biennial elections. The nominees receiving the largest number of votes in each category shall be elected to serve on the committee for a two year term. Committee members need not be members of ARSC, and may serve consecutive terms. Vacancies on the Committee between biennial elections shall be filled by majority vote of the ARSC Board.

3. The President of ARSC shall appoint a Chairman of the Awards Committee, who may be one of the seven voting committee members. The Chairman shall be responsible for coordinating the work of the committee, to include obtaining and circulating copies of nominated works, tallying committee votes, submitting results to the Board, and arranging for a suitable physical award.

III. Awards Categories

1. Genre Awards

- a. Awards will be presented for the best research in the following categories.

Recorded Classical Music

Recorded Blues, Rhythm and Blues, Hip-Hop or Soul Music

Recorded Jazz Music

Recorded Country, Folk or Ethnic Music

Recorded Rock or Popular Music

Record Labels or Manufacturers

General research on recorded sound

- b. The Blue Ribbon Awards Committee may, by majority vote, modify the list of categories in light of the submissions in a given year, and may decide not to present any award in a category in a given year should no submission fully meet the high standards outlined in the section "Judging Criteria."

- c. Awards shall be for research on artists, compositions or other subjects predominantly identified with the field indicated. The committee will be the final authority regarding categorization of individual nominees.

d. Separate awards may be presented for best discography and best general research in any category. In addition, the committee may award Certificates of Merit to any runners-up that are felt to be of exceptionally high quality.

2. Lifetime Achievement Award

a. This award will be presented to an individual in recognition of his or her life's work of conspicuous excellence in any field of published recorded sound research.

3. Award for Distinguished Service to Historical Recordings

a. This award honors a person who has made outstanding contributions to the field of historical recorded sound, outside of published works or discographic research.

IV. Judging Criteria For Genre Awards

1. The recognized work contributed significantly to the advancement of knowledge and/or appreciation of the role of recorded sound in the establishment and preservation of our cultural heritage.

2. The work was substantially original and not previously published. A new edition of a previously published work may be considered if the work has not previously received an award, and if it contains significant new content.

3. The work embodied the highest standards of research: accuracy, thoroughness, ingenuity and originality in research and analysis, and a logical and accessible physical presentation.

V. Judging Criteria For Lifetime Achievement Award

1. This individual, through a body of published work, set standards worthy of emulation by others; contributed significant original approaches to his or her field; and exhibited persistence and dedication over an extended period in the pursuit of knowledge about recorded sound.

2. The state of knowledge in this individual's field would be noticeably poorer without his or her contribution.

3. Specific works by the individual should be cited in support of this award. These works must meet, individually or as a whole, the criteria for a contemporary award as defined in the preceding section.

VI. Judging Criteria for Award for Distinguished Service to Historical Recordings.

1. This individual, through his or her activities on behalf of historical recorded sound, set standards worthy of emulation by others; contributed significant original approaches to his or her field; and exhibited persistence and dedication over an extended period on behalf of knowledge of or preservation of recorded sound.

2. The status of historical recorded sound today would be noticeably poorer without his or her contribution.

3. Specific work by the individual should be cited in support of this award. This may include (but is not limited to) archives management, reissue programs or projects, engineering skills, and editorial and publishing activity.

VII. Eligibility

1. To qualify for a genre award, a work must have been published during the previous calendar year.

2. All nominated and cited works must deal predominantly with historical subjects. Works dealing primarily with contemporary subjects (except preservation and restoration) are specifically excluded. "Historical" is here defined as pertaining primarily to periods more than ten years prior to the year of the award.

3. Nominated and cited works must have been published in a printed or electronic form and available to the research community. This includes books, articles, monographs, liner notes, web sites, films or any other generally available form. It excludes non-published work (typescript, letters, non-published speeches, etc.). Publication may have been in any language and in any country.

4. Examples of works eligible: discography, biography, oral history, content of recordings, histories of musical genres, label/company histories, original technology and equipment (phonographs, etc.), and modern preservation and reproduction techniques. Not eligible: review and criticism of modern reissues, works dealing predominantly with current recording or collecting subjects, and musicological or sociological works that do not deal significantly with recordings.

VIII. Award Procedure

1. Individual works and Lifetime Achievement and Distinguished Service candidates may be proposed for consideration by any interested party, by written communication to the Chairman. Early each year the Chairman shall submit to The Blue Ribbon Committee a list of all proposed candidates in each category.

2. Based on this list, and any other candidates it deems appropriate, the Committee shall develop a list of finalists in each award category. The Committee will at this time decide whether separate judging should be conducted for discography and for general research in any category, and whether any award should be withheld due to lack of suitable candidates. Choice of finalists, as well as questions of eligibility and category, will be decided by committee vote. However any candidate proposed by more than 20 persons under Section VIII Para. 1 will automatically become a finalist in its category.

3. Each committee member will then separately consider each finalist work. Voting procedures will be determined by the Committee.

4. It is intended that each committee member vote on all finalists in all categories, utilizing the general criteria specified above. Thus the awards are not intended to be based on judgments by specialists in narrowly defined fields, but rather on those of committee members who have a broad overview of recorded sound research. (Committee members may discuss nominated works with each other and with specialists if they wish; however the final vote is theirs.)

5. A committee member may disqualify himself/herself from voting on a particular work, if necessary, due to conflict of interest or complete lack of knowledge of the subject covered. In no event may a member vote on his or her own work. Any committee member whose own work becomes a finalist in a given year will be ineligible to vote in that category, while remaining eligible to vote in all other categories.

6. Once the voting process is completed, the Committee may if it wishes award Certificates of Merit to particularly worthy runners-up. This shall be decided by majority vote.

7. If possible, Awards will be announced at an annual ARSC Conference, presented during the annual Awards banquet, and publicized in the *ARSC Journal* and *Newsletter* and web site, and by ARSC press release. A suitable physical and/or monetary award shall be determined by the ARSC Board.