I. Description of the project and its significance

The Gilmore Music Library proposes a two-phase project focusing on the preservation and digitization of films and accompanying soundtracks in the Benny Goodman Collection. Phase I is the subject of this proposal and will focus on preservation and the creation of analog duplicates of these films. The funding source targeted is Arcadia, an agency who funds projects whose mission is to protect and preserve endangered culture and nature. The Goodman films fit perfectly in the cultural category. This preservation project is a first step that will allow us to improve knowledge of and access to library materials currently uncataloged and, therefore, nearly invisible to users both inside and outside of Yale University. Our work will lead to easy access to materials needed by scholars and students. The poor physical state of these films prevents their access by patrons and the absence of action will result in their extinction. The assessment of the collection conducted by the Yale University Library (YUL) Preservation Department revealed indeed that Goodman films have started to acidify and are essentially on a slow path to disintegration. Storing them in good conditions, as they are at our library storage facility (LSF) slows down that process but will not stop it. The number of usable years that we can expect from those films is rather limited. We would like in the first phase of the grant to contract out a select group of films to be duplicated for long-term preservation.
II. Narrative

A. Significance and Historical presentation

Benny Goodman hardly needs any introduction. In America and much of the world people of all stripes have heard Goodman’s music and its unique qualities. He is truly one of the most cherished icons of American music. Such was his importance in jazz that he earned the title of “King of Swing” during his lifetime. He won great acclaim both for his dazzling clarinet solos and for the brilliance of his band. In an era of segregation, Goodman was a pioneer in hiring without regard to race; his ensemble included outstanding black musicians (such as Teddy Wilson) as well as leading white performers (such as Gene Krupa). At his peak, Goodman may have been the most popular musician in the world. Although the swing era eventually passed, Goodman retained a large and loyal following, even as bop, rock, and other musical styles came into vogue. He and his band performed widely, not only in the United States, but also in Latin America, Europe, the Soviet Union, and East Asia. Over the course of his long career, Goodman made innumerable recordings and appeared frequently on radio, television, and film. His life and music have been the subject of many biographies, discographies, and other studies. Benny Goodman died in New York on June 13, 1986.

Our collection of films focus particularly on one decade: the mid-1950s to early 1960s, the heart of the Cold War. Jazz as an instrument of international diplomacy transformed relations in the Cold War era and changed America’s image worldwide. Goodman was part of the American effort to extend cultural diplomacy around the world. Our collection, for example, includes footage from Goodman’s trip to Russia in 1962 (these films have already been preserved and digitized however). As Lisa Davenport explains in her book, Jazz Diplomacy: Promoting America in the Cold War Era (University Press of Mississippi, c2009):

Jazz music and jazz musicians seemed an ideal card to play in diminishing the credibility and appeal of Soviet communism in the Eastern bloc and beyond. Government-funded musical junkets by such jazz masters as Louis Armstrong, Dave Brubeck, Duke Ellington, Dizzy Gillespie, and Benny Goodman dramatically influenced perceptions of the U.S. and its capitalist brand of democracy while easing political tensions in the midst of critical Cold War crises.

The collection is divided into eight general areas (For full descriptions see Appendix A):

1. Irving Jacoby “Prod 55”: Master quality materials for a 1955 Columbia Recording Studios session
2. Benny Goodman in Bangkok: Master quality materials for Goodman’s trip to Thailand in 1956
5. The Benny Goodman Show: Master quality materials of Goodman’s band at Disneyland, 1961
6. Television Kinescopes: Various TV shows on which Goodman appeared
7. Home movies that spans the years 1940s to 1950s
8. Various other materials: including Hollywood feature films excerpts

In March 2013 David G. Jessup, author of Benny Goodman: a supplemental discography (Scarecrow Press, 2010), evaluated our films and established that these materials are invaluable. Their contents are rare and interesting, and their quality is to be equaled nowhere else in the world. Yale University Library is the only institution that can undertake such a project and Arcadia funds seem perfectly suited for the purpose.

B. Physical Description

The Benny Goodman Papers were established in the Music Library of Yale University by Benny Goodman himself in 1986. The Benny Goodman papers currently include scores and/or parts to musical arrangements written for Benny Goodman’s bands, orchestras, and combos. The Papers also include: published music in Goodman’s collection; sound recordings on reels; films on reels; correspondence; photographs; scrapbooks; concert programs and publicity materials; scripts, interviews, and miscellaneous other items.
The collection currently holds a hundred and thirty three films in need of preservation treatment. They include a variety of formats from 16mm black & white negative or positive reels to similar footage on 35mm, and even 2” quad tapes (Appendix B for more details). Generally, accompanying soundtracks are on separate reels that need to be synchronized to films. Most of the collection is composed of master quality materials that came directly from the recording studio through Goodman. As such, these materials are completely unique.

C. Metadata & Cataloging
Most of the Goodman Papers have been described in an EAD finding aid but the Goodman film reels have not. In other words, there is currently no metadata describing these films in Orbis or the Yale Finding Aid Database; they are nearly invisible to the world. Fortunately, one of the outcomes of Mr. Jessup’s visit is that we now know precisely the content of those films. Mr. Jessup has also provided evaluation sheets for 75% of the films and precisely matched their contents with entries in a discography published by Russ Connor (*Benny Goodman: Listen to his Legacy*, Scarecrow Press, 1988.) Much of the basic archival work, therefore, has been performed. Phase I of this project, however, will not include archival description because most of the footage in this collection is silent and has to be matched with corresponding sound reels. Upon completion of Phase I we will receive preservation copies of the reels and we will be able to do this matching/synching process without using original reels and further damaging those.

D. Preservation Status
The Music Library has worked with the Yale University Library Preservation Department for the last year on this project. All films have been examined by a technician in that department to document the physical state of the collection. Furthermore, following his visit in March 2013, Mr. Jessup provided content analysis as well as preservation and digitization priorities for each film viewed. With those evaluations we now have a detailed picture of the most at-risk and valuable films and are ready to proceed with the reformatting of those items. The entire film collection was re-housed to appropriate archival storage boxes in 2008 but the preservation and audio-visual assessment of the collection was conducted by the Preservation Department during Spring semester 2013. All films were reviewed to identify any signs of damage or deterioration which could render the films unsuitable for projection and that could affect later preservation and/or digitization efforts. The survey of the collection was done using the categories of damage and deterioration specified in the *Columbia AV Survey Tool*. Of the 144 films surveyed, 15 or 10.42% showed some indications of previous mold exposure; 22 or 15.28% showed signs of cupping; 41 or 28.47% showed signs of shrinkage; 38 or 26.39% showed spoking issues; and 15 or 10.42% have flawed packs or improper winding; and 28 or 19.44% have obvious splicing problems. AD strip readings ranged from 0 to 3. This measure of chemical off-gassing commonly known as “vinegar syndrome” is considered the best gauge of the need for proper storage conditions and/or reformatting. 34 of the films or 23.61% have AD strip readings above 1 which indicates a need for freezing and 15 or 10.42% have readings of 2 or 3 indicating active degradation and a need for reformatting. These AD strip readings were done in 2008 and the films continue to deteriorate.

E. Methodology & Standards
We have a firm handle on the preservation status of these films and a thorough knowledge of their content. Much of the work, therefore, is behind us. Our partners in the Preservation Department have been involved at every step of the way and they are committed to this project. The Preservation Department sees this project as a good pilot in establishing a preservation workflow for similar audiovisual materials. There is at the Library a lack of standards, equipment, and staff to deal with these media. This project is a good opportunity to determine our needs in the area of preserving audiovisual material. Until we identify and fill those needs we have to revert to outsourcing these projects which can be a costly proposition. We are also hoping to collaborate with AVPS to inform the development of future standards for film preservation, reformatting, and digitization at Yale Libraries. At this point we are almost ready to send Requests for Proposals (RFP) to reformatting companies or film laboratories. Upon receipt of RFPs we will determine the best vendor possible. Finally, we will prepare a detailed list of outcomes/products expected from the vendor and send the films out (Please consult the “Work Plan” section for additional details on methodology).
The traditional preservation approach when dealing with film reels is to create duplicate copies (in analog format) of the originals. Typically these duplicates are polyester-based films. We are expecting such a process for this project. Back in 2008, our Benny Goodman in Russia film reels were sent to Colorlab, a film lab specializing in 16mm and 35mm services, for processing and duplication services. Colorlab first performed ultrasonic cleaning and then produced 35mm duplicate negative reels, 35mm negative optical soundtrack reels, and 35mm black & white composite answerprint reels combining image and sound. We envision a similar process for this grant project although, as explained above, composite answerprints will not be produced in Phase I because of synching work that need to be done first.

F. Access Methods

The duplicate films created during Phase I will be preservation copies not primarily meant for access. As previously explained, working from those preservation prints we will be able to synchronize the accompanying audio with the moving images in Phase II of the project. Thereupon, we will be able to create composite “digital prints”. These synchronized items will eventually serve as our service copies. In other words, Phase II of this project will be more concerned with access to those films. Nevertheless, during Phase I we will investigate solutions for digital storage and online access methods or platforms. Firstly, we will need to determine the best possible method of digital storage in collaboration with our Preservation Department. We will work on a digital preservation plan to that effect. Unfortunately, the YUL digital infrastructure is currently fragmented although, significant efforts and resources are currently being extended to resolve that situation. At the time of this writing there was no clear avenue or system to effectively ingest and provide access to digitized audiovisual materials (See “Final Product and Dissemination” for further thoughts).

G. Copyright / Fair Use

The Benny Goodman Papers are the physical property of the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University but copyrights belong to the composers and authors, or their legal heirs and assigns. In terms of scholarly usage there are no restrictions on the collection but further research in this area will be explored during Phase I with the goal of finding permissions (if needed) well ahead of the completion of Phase II. The Music Library received materials directly from the Goodman Estate. The family, who is well aware of what we have and supports this project, would have kept materials they did not want public. Most of our films, however, are composed of footage shot by professional studios (e.g., Columbia). Further copyright issues might arise for this situation. At the same time, most films are composed of raw footage, i.e., not commercially released products but the “source materials” used to compose final products. As such, a whole layer of copyright issues is eliminated (i.e., access for the general public would have no effect on the market). Still, we will make every effort during Phase I to identify and resolve possible permissions issues.

H. Environmental scan

We performed a thorough scan for this project looking for similar archives or collections in the USA or abroad. Rutgers University, through its Institute of Jazz Studies, owns a collection similar to ours but their holdings focus on reel-to-reel Goodman sound recordings, not films. They were fortunate enough to receive a Mellon grant to digitize these holdings. The Glenn Miller Archive at Colorado University owns significant holdings of big band music but focuses mostly on Miller. Institutions such as Library of Congress also hold some Goodman materials but do not overlap with ours. Finally, commercial studios such as Columbia or NBC may hold copies of films similar to ours but they are very unlikely to include the raw footage that we own. Some of the footage can be found online on websites such as youtube.com but these are mostly bootlegged videos owned by private collectors that will most not survive the test of time. Quite simply stated by Mr. David G. Jessup in his letter of support: “No other entity, whether scholarly, government, or commercial, has this body of material at this level of quality…” As Mr. Jessup explained to us, Yale is the last remaining large-scale repository of Goodman films in the world that has not been explored, processed, described, and made available.