

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 8, 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: LUCY WINCHESTER  
REX SCOUTEN

FROM: STEPHEN BULL *SB*

SUBJECT: Recording of Entertainment

The only tangible item that a White House entertainer takes with him is a recording of his performance. Another copy of this recording is also necessary for the Archives and other possible uses, such as documentaries. In view of the importance of these taped recordings, we would like to provide the highest quality possible, utilizing the full electronic resources of WHCA.

The problem we have in providing a full fidelity stereophonic recording of an entertainer's performance is more an aesthetic than an electronic one. In order to make a good recording we had to erect a number of standup microphones all across the stage, and the general appearance is of a sound studio, not a platform in the East Room of the White House. As a result, we had to ask WHCA to remove most of the microphones which resulted in a very poor tape of the entertainment. This was the case with Sammy Davis, Jr.'s performance on Saturday, March 3.

At my request a few months ago, WHCA began diligently working on alternatives to the standup microphone approach that they had been using. They have now developed some very sensitive microphones that can be placed unobtrusively on the floor of the stage. I understand that fewer microphones are necessary, and that these new microphones are small enough that they can be concealed behind plants, etc., and we can still get a good recording. Of course, we have not yet had the opportunity to give this new system a full test in a formal setting in the East Room, but we would very much like to do <sup>do</sup> at the March 17 Evening at the White House.

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What we want to do is, when planning the decorative arrangement on the stage, such as flowers, plants or the like, we take into consideration where the microphones have to be placed. We're not talking about putting a potted palm in the middle of the stage just to cover a microphone in front of the bass guitar player; what we want to do is arrange the stage or make certain modifications so that the limited number of microphones that they now have to use can be placed so they can't be seen.

Personally, I'm delighted that WHCA has been able to come up with a partial answer to our problem. We will have to go half-way to assist them in accommodating their sound requirements. I see no real problem in this in that I think we have found the answer to maintaining a dignified appearance of the stage while still achieving the objective of getting a good quality reproduction of the entertainment.

cc: Colonel Adams  
Commander Coates