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The first presidential campaign recordings released on CD

*The campaign of 1908 redefined political communication for all time.
The 20th century's march to the sound bite begins here.*

Champaign, IL: September 9, 2008 — Both candidates claim the mantle of change. The Democrat is a gifted and motivating speaker; the Republican is admittedly plodding. Issues include a teetering economy, tariffs and taxes, Wall Street versus Main Street, discontent over an elective war, the imposition of democracy via military occupation, and the readiness of each candidate to hold the highest office in the land.

The parallels to 2008 are striking, but the year is 1908.

Today Grammy-award winning Archeophone Records releases *Debate '08: Taft and Bryan Campaign on the Edison Phonograph*—the first-ever compilation of the wax cylinder recordings made by the Democratic nominee, William Jennings Bryan, and the Republican nominee, William Howard Taft, during the presidential campaign of 1908.

“The Taft-Bryan race was a turning point in American politics,” says producer Richard Martin. “For the first time the voices of the candidates could be heard in cities and towns that neither could have reached on their limited train stops across the country. For the first time their voices could be heard in voters’ homes! Some saw this as a great advance for democracy. Others resented the intrusion.”

“These are the earliest surviving examples of modern campaign oratory” adds producer David Giovannoni. “The candidates went on record just as populist campaign strategies were redirecting political discourse from the back rooms of the Electoral College into the public arena. Moreover, the two-minute playing time of Edison’s records forced them to abandon the purple prose of 19th century and get to the point. The 20th century’s march to the sound bite begins here.”

Debate '08 lets each candidate speak on foreign policy, business regulation, interstate commerce, labor relations, banking and progressive reforms, and his personal philosophies. “The candidates’ statements are just the starting point” says producer Meagan Hennessey. “We introduce each with historical background illustrated with editorial cartoons; David writes about how the presidential campaign came of age in 1908 and Patrick Feaster premieres fascinating new research into the parallels of political and mechanical talking machines. We even eavesdrop on Edison’s house organ to show how an entertainment industry struggled to sell these historic documents. At 80 color pages it’s our largest booklet ever, and it really brings the history to life.”

Debate '08 Producers Giovannoni, Hennessey, and Martin have been nominated for the “Best Historical Album” Grammy in each of the last two years. They won the Grammy in 2007 (with author Tim Brooks) for *Lost Sounds: Blacks and the Birth of the Recording Industry, 1891-1922*. *Debate '08* writers Feaster and Giovannoni were also nominated last year for the “Best Album Notes” Grammy for *Actionable Offenses: Indecent Phonograph Recordings from the 1890s*.

Learn more about *Debate '08* at www.archeophone.com (ARCH 1008, retail price \$18.99).

About Archeophone Records

Based in Champaign, Illinois, Archeophone Records was founded in 1998 with the goal of preserving recordings from the acoustic era—the years between 1890 and 1925 when artists made records without electricity, their performances captured by a recording horn. *Debate '08* is Archeophone’s 42nd CD release; other notable releases include the Grammy-winning *Lost Sounds*, the Grammy-nominated *Actionable Offenses*, the critically acclaimed *The Great War: An American Musical Fantasy* and three volumes comprising *The Complete Bert Williams*.