

Archives and Music Documentation Centres Branch

The Archives and Music Documentation Centres Branch held two sessions during the Riga Congress. About 80 people attended the first session “Manuscripts, letters and recordings: music archives throughout Europe” on June 19th.

Before opening the session, elections were called. Hanna Bias (Library of the Karol Szymanowski Music Academy, Katowice) was elected as a Secretary, Marie-Gabrielle Soret (Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris) as a Vice-Chair, and Marie Cornaz was re-elected as Chair.

Lolita Furmane (Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music, Riga) opened the session with a paper entitled “Die Musikmanuskripte in den Repositorien Lettlands: Ein Bericht über Fonds, deren Zustand und Erforschungssituation”. She gave an overview of the most important repositories of music collections, and specifically of primary sources in Latvia (which she has regularly used for years in her research experience). She then gave a more detailed account of three particularly rich collections, which came to light quite recently via cataloguing projects. The first one is the music collection of the Liepaja Kantorat, from an evangelical-Lutherian cathedral. The collection was catalogued in summer 2011 thanks to a Latvian-German cooperation project, and the records were added to the RISM catalogue. It consists of about 350 documents, of which 330 are manuscripts: most of them are autographs in the tradition of the Dresdner Kreuzschule (followers of JS Bach), showing the diffusion and the influence of this musical trend in the Baltic region. The collection comprises 23 of the 25 known autograph manuscripts of Telemann. The second is the collection of the former city theatre of Riga, recently entrusted to the national library of Latvia. It comprises a huge collection of 2200 items in 258 boxes, which are not as yet catalogued, and are in need of urgent care (contrary to the documents of the Liepaja Kantorat, which are in very good condition). The third collection is kept in the rare-books department of the academic library of the University of Latvia. It consists mostly of letters of Baltic-German musicians and German musicians with a strong link to Riga (among the collection are two precious letters of Beethoven), but also of actors, architects and painters, most of them between 1826 and 1850. As a whole, this collection of letters shows the vitality of relations and the influence of German musicians in the musical life of Latvia. The collection remained hidden all through the Soviet era, but is now available for research.

Patrizia Rebullà (Archivio Storico Ricordi, Milan) followed, with her talk “Confidentially yours: the confidential letters of Giulio Ricordi”. She first gave an overview of the Ricordi Historical Archive, one of the largest private collections in the field of music in the world. It comprises about 7,800 scores (mostly autographs), which are now all digitized, 13,500 iconographic documents, mostly preparatory documents for opera costume and scenery, 10,000 librettos, many annotated by the composers, 6,000 photographs, numerous documents on stage direction and administrative archives of the Ricordi publishing house. The current project presented by Patrizia Rebullà deals with the abundant letters kept by the archives: 31,000 letters received, and copies of 60,000 sent letters, kept in copybooks. These copybooks have been indexed in a 500 page notebook, which is a vital compass to find one’s way through the collection. These letters are in the process of being digitized, and the copybooks of Giulio Ricordi (covering the years 1888-1909) and Tito II Ricordi (1912-1918) will be transcribed. These letters give a fascinating view on the daily life of the publishing house during the period, on the role of Ricordi as publishers and on their relationships with composers. They address for instance the problem of copyright and the publication of pirate editions, harmful for both composer and publisher; they show the dialogue of the editing process and additions of the editor (metronome markings, stage directions, etc.); and give information on the relationships with public institutions and on political interventions. They also give a precious account of the management of the Ricordi company, going through its first workers’ strikes movement, and expecting a complete hierarchical obedience from the employees, expressed in terms coherent with the strong personalities of Giulio and Tito II Ricordi. The transcription of the letters is part of the READ (Recognition and Enrichment of Archival Documents) project, in cooperation with the University of Sheffield and the University of Innsbruck.

The aim is to develop an automatic transcription software adapted to handwriting. On some letters the results are already similar to a human transcription, because this corpus of letters is well adapted to machine learning: there are very few different writers (as the employees remained a very long time in the company), and their writing is very homogeneous. Another interesting perspective of the project is the data mining it will enable (for instance on name and works), once all the letter will have been digitized, transcribed and tagged.

The last paper of this session, "Digitizing sound archives at Royal Library of Belgium: challenges and difficulties encountered within a huge digitization project" was presented by **Frederic Lemmers (Royal Library of Belgium, Brussels)**. The recordings are "special of the special", as music collections are already considered as special compared to the rest of the collection of the Royal Library. One characteristic of recorded music is the diversity of media, through all the acoustic and then analogue eras, with a relative interoperability of devices (acoustic phonograph records might be played for instance on analogue players). The digital revolution involved not only a technical evolution of sound extraction, but a whole new context with different players, and then download platforms and dematerialization. As there is no legal deposit of recordings in Belgium, the collection of the Royal Library stems mostly from private collections acquired by the Library (about 80,000 documents on the 100,000 recordings that it comprises, the 20,000 remaining documents being individual documents). As such, they are part of private archives, and reflect the taste of the person who collected them. The aim of the digitization is not exactly the preservation of the documents, which are in rather good material state, but the fact that they can't be listened to by individual users if their preservation is to be guaranteed. Two different audiences were first targeted in this project: scientific researchers in the field of humanities (interested in the oldest and rarest resources, recorded before 1950), and leisure listeners in search of discovery (mainly interested in the post 1950 repertoire). Several other criteria were added to help the selection, among which the copyright issues took a major place, leading the library to give priority to public domain recordings. The "digit-03" program started in 2016, and will go on until 2020 to digitize 4,000 hours of music on 60,000 sides (meaning 30,000 of the 100,000 discs). In the library, it requires 4 FTE to oversee the whole process, and work with the subcontractor that actually produces the digitization. The whole process implies:

- The dematerialization of the recording (reading of the original, creation of the metadata, producing distinct master and broadcast files)
- The storage and long term preservation of the digital document (audio file and metadata)
- The valorisation of the digital collection (online publication, development of a commercial offer, production of anthologies, globally fostering the reusing of the collection)

Several choices were made by the Library during the process. The first concerned the method for choosing what was to be the ultimate reading of the physical media, especially for acoustic recordings. The choice made was to prefer an analogue reading for all those recording over an optical one. The second concerned the sound restoration, and the decision to totally or partially suppress noise artefacts (coming either from the recording conditions of the time, the material state of the disc, or the digitization process itself). The decision made was to respect, as much as possible, the material history of the recorded work and of the medium used.

About 30 people attended the second session, which welcomed four papers presenting different sides of a common project called "Musical Polonica in Moscow libraries and archives". This project, which started with discussions during the IAML Congress in Moscow in 2010, owes much to the friendly relationships between the librarians of the four partner institutions, who decided to highlight the rich cross-cultural history of links between Poland and Russia in the field of music. Although there has been flourishing intense relations following the integration of Poland in Russia in the 19th century, this history is very scarcely studied, and the Russian sources are particularly unknown to Polish scholars, hence the project of a common catalogue for Russian sources about Musical Polonica. **Renata Suchowiejko (Institute of Musicology, Jagiellonian University, Kraków)** opened the session with a paper on "the Music Library of Prince Michał Kleofas Ogiński in the collections of the Russian State Archive of Ancient Documents (RGADA)". The RGADA is a typical institution that is rarely visited by musicologists, but the exceptional personality of Ogiński, who was altogether a scholar, a violinist, a politician and a composer, is representative of the rich cultural relations between Poland and Russia. Most of his political action has now fallen into oblivion, but he remains famous for some of his compositions – several polonaises and *Les adieux à la Patrie*, of which about 65 different editions have been numbered (a third of them during his lifetime). He didn't expect such a success, which went beyond his geographical zone, with foreign edition he had no knowledge of. His name also became a symbol of Polish music, and several pieces from other composers were published under his name. In the RGADA can be found the manuscripts of his works, but also the first editions of these works and several

other works dedicated to him (especially from Maria Szymanowska and Pierre Baillot). Born in Poland from a Lithuanian father, deceased in Italy after a French, English and Italian career, he is a quintessentially European figure. Several countries count him in their major composer (although he used to see himself more like an eminent amateur than a professional musician). He embodies the fact that today's musicology and musical history has to go beyond the current national border and national history, especially as far as central and eastern Europe is concerned.

Alla Semenyuk (Russian State Library, Moscow) gave the second talk entitled "Polish Music in the collections of the Russian State Library in Moscow". She gave an overview of the collections, comprising different kind of documents (prints, as well as recordings). She numbered more than 1000 printed scores for Polish composers of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. Those composers were frequently edited and re-edited by Russian publishers. This often followed the career of the musicians: Maria Szymanowska for instance was invited from Poland to give lessons in St Petersburg, and was thus published in Russia. The Russian State Library has the project to produce a catalogue of the works of Polish composers published in Russia during this period.

Irina Torilova and Irina Meshcheryakova (Taneyev Music Library of the Moscow State Conservatory P. I. Tchaikovsky, Moscow) unfortunately couldn't attend the congress, and sent their paper "Polish sources of the 19th and early 20th centuries in the library of the Moscow Conservatory" as a video. The collections regarding Polish music in the Taneyev Music Library are sizeable, numbering more than 1,000,000 documents, most of them published between the 18th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, among which 330,000 records, and more than 33,000 programmes and ephemera covering a 100 year timespan, that are precious to document the tours of Polish interpreters in Russia. Identifying the first editions of the Polish composers has been difficult, but the collection comprises a large number of rare editions (for instance bilingual French-Russian editions). The library also keeps interesting orchestral arrangement of Polish works first published for piano only.

The session was concluded by a paper from **Natalya Tartakovskaya (Glinka National Museum Consortium of Musical Culture, Moscow)**, who couldn't either attend the congress. "Manuscripts, letters and archives of Polish artists in the collection of the Glinka National Museum Consortium of Musical Culture" was therefore read by Suchowiejko. The collections of the Glinka Museum are particularly rich in letters: several private collections contain letters that reflect the cross cultural exchanges between the Russian and Polish musical worlds, but also letters from binational couples. The museum also keeps several graphic works, notably paintings representing musicians and composers.

During the Congress in Riga, the **Access to Music Archives Project Group (2014-2017)** had its final meeting. This group has concentrated its efforts in the technical matters of the Database for the Directory of RISM-C, discussing and adopting the fields related to the Directory of institutions previously existing in RISM. It has also been written a reference manual for the implementation. This Project Group studies the possibility to write a proposal to form a new Study Group.

Clotilde Angleys, secretary