

Association internationale des bibliothèques, archives et centres de documentation musicaux (AIBM)
International Association of Music Libraries, Archives and Documentation Centres (IAML)
Internationale Vereinigung der Musikbibliotheken, Musikarchive und Musikdokumentationszentren (IVMB)

Research Libraries branch Report 2006

The Research Libraries Branch presented two sessions at the 2006 conference in Göteborg. Both were dedicated to music digitisation projects and the exploration of their resulting online music collections.

The first session entitled 'Digital sources in music' was opened with a paper by Ann-Barbara Kersting-Meuleman on the portrait collection F.N. Manskopf in the University of Library Frankurt am Main: The Portrait collection F. N. Manskopf is part of the museum of music and theatre history established by Friedrich Nicolas Manskopf (1869-1928) from 1887 to 1928. Since 1946 it has been part of the University Library of Frankfurt. It comprises pictures of individuals, groups of people, stage scene stills, views of buildings as well as allegorical pictures from the fields of music, theatre, dance, literature and others. Focal points are the musical life of Frankfurt and Richard Strauss and his works up to 1927, but numerous persons and places of the European and North American music life are represented as well. Graphic prints in the collection date from 1640 to 1920, photographs from 1860 to 1944. Up to 1995 the collection was only roughly indexed despite a long-time desire to describe it with more detail. The Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft funded the project to make the collection more easily accessible through security microfilming, digitizing and cataloguing the original photographs and graphic prints of the collection, a total of 17,000 images. For reasons of easier data management it was decided to include the entries for images in the PICA catalogue which was originally designed for cataloguing books. Search facilities of the catalogue include: browsing lists for names of people portrayed, related people and places; name lists that can cope with changing names and different spellings; searches for genres; combination searches. The bilingual display in German and English makes the resource easily accessible to a world-wide audience.

Since July 1995 all 17,000 digital images have been accessible either via a separate server or via the OPAC of the library. The digital images can be used for free for private and academic purpose, higher resolution TIFF images at 600dpi are available against payment of a fee.

Server: http://manskopf.ub.uni-frankfurt.de Catalogue: http://lbsopac.rz.uni-frankfurt.de/

The next speaker was Johan Eeckeloo from the Royal Conservatoire, Brussels, who gave an informative and at the same time entertaining presentation entitled 'A sleeping beauty: the collection of libretti in the Royal Conservatoire of Brussels':

This libretti collection was acquired for the library by Alfred Wotquenne, librarian of the Brussels Conservatoire 1894-1918, who was one of the first musicologists recognising the importance of libretti for musicological research. In addition to developing a large libretti collection in the library he also published a catalogue of 17th century Italian libretti. After Wotquenne's departure from the conservatoire in 1918 interest in such ephemeral collections diminished to such an extent that no further libretti were acquired and the existing libretti collection fell into neglect, or, referring to the title of the presentation, Sleeping Beauty fell into a long deep sleep. While scholars were aware of the collection, research was discouraged. Access to the libretti collection, about 6,000 items in total, was very restricted in the past due to limited search facilities (title and the composer's name when known), which also prevented scholars to discover the true value of this collection. More than half of the libretti contain Italian text, and a third French text. The 18th and 19th centuries are particularly well represented and with several unique copies it is the most important one in Belgium. An electronic database with very detailed title descriptions was needed to make this lesser known collection accessible, and a local digitization project provided the opportunity to combine cataloguing with the digitization of the libretti themselves. Given the funding constraints and the inclusion of original full content it was decided to limit the cataloguing process as much as possible. Digitisation is carried out to 600dpi, 24-bit TIFF standards without further manipulation of files. The project began with a pilot project digitising the Donizetti collection. However, to continue work on the remaining libretti and awake the 'Sleeping Beauty' a rich prince is required.

Access to the database is through the Hamled project website at www.hamled.org/ which also offers online finding aids for music literature, scores and iconography.



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Olga Mojzisova from the Smetana Muzeum, Prague, reported on a restoration and digitisation project at the museum:

The digitisation of works of the founder of Czech national music, Bedřich Smetana, is part of a project whose main aim is the protection of these rare and often fragile manuscripts. The first stage of the project, the gradual restoration of the manuscripts, will be followed by the production of high quality digital copies, which will help reduce the use of the originals. Apart from the autographs of Smetana's compositions, the project will also cover his non-musical manuscripts, such as correspondence and other important documents. The music sources owned by the Smetana Museum, which have been digitised so far, include all autograph scores of the operas Dvě vdovy (The Two Widows), Libuše and Hubička (The Kiss). The concept of the description and layout of the data for the individual sources aims at quick and easy orientation and searching, and creating a model, which, partially modified, would be usable also for the digitisation of non-operatic compositions. The Museum is presently working on a project digitising Smetana's correspondence, which is the first phase of its critical edition.

The first session of the Research Libraries Branch concluded with a report from Alla Semenyuk (Russian State Library, Moscow) on digital collections of old Russian music in the Russian State Library:

Today one of the main challenges facing the Russian State Library is the preservation of its collections in all formats. Special attention should be given to old Russian music dating from the end of 18th century to the beginning of the 19th century. Among them are significant publications by guitarists Sikhra and Vysotsky, music from the Romanovs family collection, Prince Odoyevsky's collection and other scores, some of which haven't even been republished in the 20th century. For four years the Russian State Library has been working together with the firm 'Adamant' on the project "Digital Music Library Collection of the Russian State Library". Furthermore a special department, 'Digital Library', has been established. It is responsible for creating an electronic collection based on traditional printed collections of the Russian State Library. Through creating digital copies of old music, originals will be preserved while at the same time widening access to everyone interested in these old publications. Readers can consult digital music and make copies on paper, microfilm or electronic carriers.

The second session presented by the Research Libraries Branch entitled 'Digital Musical Sources' was opened with a presentation by Christoph Wollf, Harvard University, Cambridge/MA) on collaborative Mozart digitisation programmes currently undertaken between the Packard Humanities Institute and the Salzburg Mozarteum: The first one is a long-term project that aims at making the complete works of Mozart available in digital format and in a critical edition that that can be updated as needed. Updates will be offered as PDF files from late 2007. The second one is a facsimile edition of the seven mature Mozart operas based on extremely high-resolution digital scans that offer unprecedented possibilities for examining the original manuscript sources. Moreover, the opera facsimiles bring back together the autograph scores dispersed today and reunite the physically separated parts located in different libraries around the world. Christoph Wolff expressed his gratitude to colleagues in libraries helping this collaborative effort. Facsimile editions will be available through the Packard Humanities Institute as well as Bärenreiter.

Friedrike Grigat (Beethoven-Haus, Bonn) presented a paper on the digital 'Beethoven-Haus': The Beethoven-Haus Society, founded more than 100 years ago, maintains a museum at the birthplace of Ludwig van Beethoven which houses the "Beethoven-Archiv" research centre as well as a chamber music hall. At the end of 2004 the "Digitale Beethoven-Haus" opened, allowing visitors to discover Beethoven through new media. The extensive website focuses particularly on presenting the collections of the Beethoven-Haus in a digital library. Museum visitors are offered advanced technologies and can, for example, view and listen to Beethoven's handwritten music or visit a reconstruction of the composer's last dwelling in Vienna. A search of a particular work will offer a wide range of sources in different formats. Using virtual reality, Beethoven's opera "Fidelio" was for the first time being transformed into an interactive experience with 3D image and sound effects.

Richard Chesser from the British Library, London gave a short presentation of the digitised version of Mozart's own thematic catalogue, available on the British Library website as part of their 'Turning the pages' online collection: Mozart compiled a catalogue of his own works from 1784 until his death in 1791 ('Verzeichnüss aller meiner Werke'). The British Library has now published Mozart's 'Verzeichnüss' in digital, interactive, format, allowing the widest possible access to this most fascinating of musical sources.



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The catalogue lists the works he composed during this period chronologically, with brief, dated, verbal descriptions of the pieces written on the left-hand leaves of the openings, and the corresponding musical incipits written on the right-hand leaves. The catalogue is a unique musicological document as it provides authentic first hand details like completion and performance dates. The British Library were able to add further value to this primary source by offering text transcriptions even of illegible sections of the text. Staff and students at the Royal College of Music recorded music for online audio clips.

This second session of closed with a paper by Seija Lappalainen on Russian musical collections in Finland: Early Russian church music manuscripts were originally collected in the Orthodox monasteries on Lake Ladoga. Today the manuscripts, some of which dating back to the 16th century are preserved in the Orthodox Church Museum in Kuopio in Finland. The richness of cultural life of St. Petersburg has made an impression in Finland from the beginning of the 18th century through lively exchange of musicians in both directions. In 1809 Finland obtained the status of an autonomous Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire, which led to further cultural connections. Finnish musicians studied in St. Petersburg or Moscow, and Russian musicians were employed in Finnish orchestras and bands. An improved infrastructure made travel between the two countries easier. Russian civil servants, merchants, officers and military troops, who lived permanently in Finland organised music evenings, concerts and charity occasions. There were several Russian military bands. Orthodox parishes in Finland had also employed professional musicians, who mostly were studied at the theological institutes or academies in Russia. When Finland became independent in 1917 the situation for many Russians in Finland changed. Those with Finnish citizenship were allowed to stay, while others had to leave the country within a few days. The remaining Russians founded the Russian Colony and continued to preserve Russian culture in Finland. As a result of the Russian revolution many Russian emigrants moved to Finland and other countries. After the Second World War cultural ties between Soviet and Finnish artists were established and strengthened. The rich cultural history of the two countries is reflected in the richness of Russian musical sources preserved in Finnish repositories to this day.

Compiled by Almut Boehme