

Research Libraries Report 2018

The first session of the Research Libraries Section (July 26), themed 'Current Research Projects', consisted of two papers, one on research on medieval music in Württemberg, the other on the baton used by Richard Wagner at the first performance of the *Siegfried Idyll* in 1870.

Stefan Morent (Musikwissenschaftliches Institut, Tübingen) talked about fragments from medieval notated chant manuscripts preserved in the Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart. In April 2017 at Tübingen a project was started, dealing with medieval music fragments from Württemberg monasteries which had been used as binding material in the Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart. Around 2,000 fragments were registered and catalogued; they are available in the database 'Fragmentarium', supported by recent technology.

The second paper was presented by two speakers: Anita Breckbill (University of Nebraska-Lincoln) and Hanna Jo Smith (Doane University, Crete, Nebraska). They told the strange story of Wagner's baton used for the first performance of the *Siegfried Idyll* on December 25, 1870. Wagner conducted the legendary first performance of the *Siegfried Idyll* on the staircase of his home in Tribschen, Switzerland, for his new wife, Cosima's, birthday celebration. Afterward the baton he used was etched with the name of the piece, "Tribschener Idyll," and the date, "Den 25. December, 1870," and became a memento for Richard Wagner's wife, Cosima. Seventy-five years later, at the end of World War II, Bayreuth was bombed and the Wagner house, Wahnfried, was partially destroyed. An American serviceman, while clearing the town on April 14, 1945, picked up the baton as a bit of war booty and took it home with him. Now (2018) this baton will return to its home in Bayreuth.

The second session of the Research Libraries Branch (July 27) was entitled 'The role of the library in documenting suppressed music and exiled musicians'.

The first speaker was Michael Haas (Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst, Vienna). He reported on 'The work of the exil.art Center in Vienna'. It is an archive for the estates of former music refugees, or musicians who became victims of state murder, and was opened in May 2017 at Vienna's University of Music and Performing Arts. In many cases, important estates of European musicians in distant archives remain even today, decades later, in a state of disarray. Insufficient scholarship and lack of language skills have often thwarted the best intentions in cataloguing works, correspondence and documentation. Exil.art recognised this situation and in May of 2017 opened the first exile-music centre with the intention of providing a dedicated European home for musicians forced to flee their homelands. Its location within a Music University makes it more than just an archival repository for the past. Access by a student body of some 3,000 young musicians offers an opportunity of presenting lost music to the next generation of musicians and scholars, thus creating a platform for the future.

As the second speaker Piotr Maculewicz (University of Warsaw Library) presented a paper on the 'cursed composer' Roman Palester and the Library of Warsaw University as a promotor of his memory. Its Music Department holds the extensive legacy of Roman Palester (born 1907 in Sniatyn, present-day Ukraine and died 1989 in Paris). He was an artist of the generation close to Witold Lutosławski and was considered in his youth as "the successor of Karol Szymanowski". Unfortunately, his decision to emigrate to Western Europe during the communist regime as well as his association with Radio Free Europe resulted in a complete ban on the performance and publication of his works in Poland, going as far as the prohibition of his mention in literature or academic lectures. This 'curse' proved to be surprisingly durable, and even after the fall of communism, Roman Palester did not return to the consciousness of Polish music lovers or the concert halls. As a testament to him, The University of Warsaw Library, as a holder of his legacy, wishes to bring back this great composer to the musical world.

Aušra Strazdaitė-Ziberkienė (Kaunas City Museum) closed the session with her presentation on the story of music holdings in Lithuania during the 20th century. A hundred years ago, when Lithuania declared independence, many state institutions were established, also a Central book repository and a university. The central repository collected various books, documents and music sheets from former czarist institutions. Almost four thousand books from the library of Adalbert Bezzenberger, and about 34,000 books, documents, and music sheets were moved into the library of Vytautas Magnus University – until 1930 the University of Lithuania. After the Soviet occupation the university was closed, many books were moved to the Institute of Medicine, the Public library of Kaunas, the University of Vilnius and the National library of Lithuania. Many of these were destroyed as “ideological bad” literature. About three hundred musical publications and manuscripts from the former Vytautas Magnus University library, now the Kaunas Polytechnic Institute, were moved to the memorial museum of the famous Lithuania singer Kipras Petrauskas in Kaunas – now part of Kaunas city museum.

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