Report of the Study Group on Performance Ephemera, Prague 2022

The meeting was chaired by Katharine Hogg and attended by Stefan Engl, Jennifer Ward, Margaret Jones, Colin Coleman, Dominic Bridge, Peter Linnitt, Satoko Nasu, Matthias Pernerstorfer, Ann Kersting-Meulemann

Katharine Hogg (UK) gave a short presentation on an exhibition curated by the library staff of the Gerald Coke Handel Collection, focusing on 18th-century performances and called *Two Last Nights: showbusiness in Georgian Britain*. The exhibition focused on the ephemera in the Collection and what can be learned from ephemera about both planning performances and the experience of going to the theatre or a concert in the 18th century.

Ann Kersting-Meulemann (Germany) reported that playbills have been digitized from microfilms including about 100,000 playbills from160 years of Frankfurt theatre, 1780-1940. New catalogue rules no longer allow these to be catalogued as 'periodicals'. Frankfurt has already digitized theatre almanacs from Vienna which can now be searched using OCR.

The Frankfurt project aims to imitate a project in Mannheim (Civic Museum) which has a large collection of theatre playbills, using a 'citizen science' (crowd sourcing) project to catalogue individual playbills. Images are stored on a publications server.

A project aspiration would be to combine sources from German-speaking Europe into one portal (archives, documentations centres, libraries of performing arts, dance, film). It was suggested that the Deutsche Digitale Bibliothek might be a portal for such resources, as archives, libraries, museums have different skeleton catalogue structures.

Peter Linnitt (UK) reported that the Royal College of Music has digitised the programmes and papers of Society of Women Musicians.

Matthias Pernerstorfer (Austria) expressed a desire for an overall portal for sources of information, with caveats referring to other sources of information (advertisements/reviews/diaries/etc.) to indicate the changes/differences of information

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There were no further reports at the meeting, but subsequently a report was received from Sabine Koch from SLUB, who was unable to attend the conference, about the Musiconn project:

We now provide our performance data through an api (which was released last year: https://performance.musiconn.de/api), while improving the design and search engine of our front end (on https://performance.musiconn.de/).
Users can now go to https://performance.musiconn.de/search and conduct separate as well as combined searches for event titles, dates, concert series, performance venues, performers, ensembles, works, sources, and data providers. We have also recently started working on visualizing our data, starting off with a calendar function presenting events and performances associated with individual locations, works, performers, bodies and sources. Our data are becoming more and more international (most recently by importing data about symphonic concerts in Tokyo

(https://performance.musiconn.de/projects/concert-life-and-concert-venues-in-tokyo). In fact, we are intent on making musiconn.performance more international overall: for now by reporting on our innovations and news not only in German but also in English newsletters (cf. https://www.musiconn.de/services/newsletter/newsletter-archiv and https://www.musiconn.de/newsletter-no1-english), and until the end of next year by translating our home pages into English, and by integrating international authority files (such as from VIAF, and Wikidata). We hope to give an update in these areas and our further progress next year at the MAL/TLA meeting 2023 in St. Louis.
For now, I can only send you a further link to performance data in English from the project "Opera buffa as a European phenomenon" on http://operabuffa.uni-bayreuth.de/#/home.

Nienke de Boer also reported after the meeting that there was a new archivist at the opera house in Uppsala who might be invited to take part in the meeting next year.

Katharine Hogg
August 2022