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)

Information Technology Committee
Naples 2008 Sessions

The IT Committee, by some curious quirk of fate, presented three sessions at the 2008 Napoli conference in addition to holding a working meeting.

First session

The first session began with a paper from Virginia Danielson (Loeb Music Library, Harvard University): Sound directions: a program in digital audio preservation for libraries. This research and development project,was jointly conducted by Harvard University and Indiana University with funding by the US National Endowment for the Humanities to examine best practice for a large part of the audio digitization chain. Between February 2005 and May 2007 the project drew on European and Australian models and precedents and developments at the Library of Congress, augmenting previous work to produce interoperable audio preservation packages and sustainable, streamlined workflows for the entire digitization process. The project's three principal aims were:

- to develop best practices and to test emerging standards for archival audio preservation and storage in the digital domain and to report on findings;
- to establish robust and sustainable programmes at both universities for digital audio preservation with the intention of producing interoperable preservation packages that include all the metadata necessary for long-term storage as well as resource discovery;
- to preserve critically endangered, unique and valuable field recordings.

The second paper of this first session was presented by Jerry McBride of Stanford University, California. His paper had been submitted for the Audio-Visual Commission and included many examples taken from recordings made at the Monterey Jazz Festival since it began in 1958 and described processes used for digital preservation of the festival recordings, initially only audio, but later including video material. Some of this conserved material has been issued on commercial carriers. The third paper for the session was to have been on the EASAIER project but this unfortunately had to be withdrawn shortly before the conference began when the speaker was unable to attend.

Second session

The second session began with a presentation by Michael Fingerhut from IRCAM in Paris on the Portal of contemporary music in France. This portal, made publicly available in 2007, results from a collaboration between six institutions holding and/or producing resources that relate to contemporary music in France. During 2008 a further eight organizations are expected to join the project. The portal uses the internet as a means to bring the fruits of contemporary music production to a wider public, to encourage its dissemination and to facilitate access to performances and other events such as talks and courses through sound recordings and related documentation.
As of early 2008, the portal included 120,000 references to resources, 20,000 of them in digital form. The presentation covered the initial setting up of the portal, the metadata model (MODS) that was used to describe documentary resources and events, and rights management aspects of access to content. In conclusion there was a look forward in the direction of further developments.

The second presentation of the second session entitled Topic maps: knowledge organization for the 21st century (with special reference to Italian opera was given by Steve Pepper of Ontopedia, Oslo. Music librarians in common with all information professionals face the challenge of how to organize digital assets in such a way as to enable sharing of knowledge about them as well as making it easier for users to find what they are looking for. The new international standard called 'Topic Maps' promises to turn our understanding of information management inside out. In a lively presentation one of the world's leading experts on Topic Maps explained how they work and what benefits they bring. He showed how Topic Maps can bring subject-based classification into the 21st Century, making it possible to share knowledge, find information, and (not least) perform queries 'that would make Google boggle' - such as 'Which Italian operas were premiered in Naples, and when; who were the composers and librettists; and where can I find more information about all of this?'

The third presentation in this session was given by Antony Pitts from the Royal Academy of Music, London, under the title: The RAMline - rewriting musical history. The RAMline is a unique multi-dimensional index of music and musicians linked to local digitized archives and other online resources such as manuscripts and published editions, live performances and recordings, musical criticism and comment. This index can be used to display a timeline of musical history and the life-cycle of any piece of music from antiquity to the present, as well as charting musical profiles of individuals and organizations. RAMline is multi-dimensional in that the index can be explored from the perspectives of people, works, places, events, and dates and it is unique in that the connections between musicians and musical works are categorized in a rigorous yet flexible ontology which makes sense of the processes and products involved.

This session laid the ground work for an additional working meeting of the IT committee the following day with other invited participants. Those present included: Steve Pepper (Ontopedia, Oslo), Antony Pitts (Royal Academy of Music, London), Mike Gibb (Operabase, London), Gabriele Gamba (IAML webmaster), Kathy Adamson (Royal Academy of Music, London), Avo Kartul (Tartu University, Estonia), André Balog (RILM, New York), Michael Fingerhut (IRCAM, Paris), Patrizia Rebulla (Castalia Music, Brussels), Julia Mitford, (ExploreMusic, Gateshead, UK), Emma Sekuless (National Library of Australia, Canberra), Colin Homiski (Senate House Library, University of London). During the meeting it was agreed that the existing Working Group on a Music Ontology that was established by Council at the Göteborg conference in 2006 had now completed its work. (Its remit had been to examine the feasibility of constructing a music ontology and whether IAML was best-placed to work on one.) A request was made to Council to re-establish the Working Group for a three year term with new terms of reference: To develop a comprehensive upper ontology for the domain of music, to enable musical content and information about music to be more easily located, shared and reused.

IAML was seen by the group to be an ideal host for this activity because of the expertise of its membership and because it can offer an authoritative imprimatur for the resulting ontology. Collaboration will also be sought with other interested parties, including IFLA and IASA. Participation in the Working Group will be open to invited experts as well as to members of IAML, and its output will be freely available to all.

The Chair of IT Committee participated in the Ad Hoc Committee on Electronic Voting which had its first face to face meeting in Naples and made considerable progress, reported elsewhere in the Secretary General's report of Council proceedings.

Third session

In the third paper session of the IT Committee the first presentation was given by Michael Fingerhut (IRCAM, Paris) under the title: Online preservation and access to the records of past musical events. Since 1995 the IRCAM Multimedia Library has been collecting the traces of concerts and conferences produced by IRCAM during its annual musical season, including recordings, concert notes, cycle and season brochures, etc. Since 2006 an in-house system has been used to organize the collection of documents directly from their producers - written documentation before an event and sound recordings after it has taken place, In order to describe and organize documents of varying kinds the metadata needs to describe the structure of the annual program as well as that of individual events down to the level of performers. This metadata facilitates both preservation and provision of online access for local and remote users. In addition, the Multimedia Library has overseen retrospective digitization of the recordings and documentation of past events, and has been migrating a previous generation of digitized assets to the new system. The presentation described workflows and the underlying model.

The second presentation in this session was given by Professor Goffredo Haus of LIM - Laboratorio di Informatica Musicale - at the Università degli Studi di Milano under the title: ICT advances for preserving and accessing great music archives: basic features and case studies. Prof. Haus's paper addressed the problems associated with preservation, organization and retrieval of information in large-scale music archives. His paper showed how heterogeneous data can be associated using advanced ICT methods and tools to enrich the user's experience when browsing music content. Material encoded using the new standard IEEE PAR1599 for XML-based synchronization of audio and graphical representations of music scores was displayed. Users are able to view digitized score and/or libretto pages in synchronization with audio or video recordings. Any one content type can be specified as the

leading medium to which the other related contents are then synchronized. Working demonstrations have been installed at the Teatro alla Scala in Milan and at exhibitions organized by the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage (Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali) in Europe.