

The Netherlands

Headlines:

- The Royal Library "Joint Collection Plan: Policy Framework for Public Library Policy"
- Positive developments:
 - a new selection and delivery service for sheet music
 - The Ministry and the city of Hilversum will finance a process of selection and digitization for the Dutch public broadcasting companies
 - The Netherlands Music Institute moved to the Municipal Archive of The Hague
- Two Network Meetings

The general situation of music libraries and librarianship in The Netherlands remains vulnerable, as has already been the case for a number of years; however, some important positive developments can be reported.

On 9 December 2016, the "Joint Collection Plan: Policy Framework for Public Library Policy" (Gezamenlijk collectieplan: Beleidskader collectiebeleid voor het netwerk van openbare bibliotheekvoorzieningen,) drawn up by the Royal Library in consultation with public libraries and library organisations, was definitively established. Dutch law prescribes that such a plan is drawn up every four years. It is not an operational plan but a policy framework. Naturally, there is a lot of attention for actual developments: the changing position of public libraries, digital materials and so on; however, the plan also clearly states that a coherent policy for sheet music on a national level should be developed. This is in accordance with input given by the NVMB Board. The Board is happy to note this and has indicated its willingness to participate in the development of this policy.

On 1 January 2017, Musidesk Rijnbrink Information Specialists (Arnhem) started a new selection and delivery service for sheet music, thereby filling the gap caused by the termination of the NBD Biblion service. The selection is done by Musidesk Rijnbrink on the basis of collection profiles provided by the subscribing libraries. The number of subscribing libraries is encouraging.

The plan for the future of the musical collections of the Dutch public broadcasting companies submitted in 2016 was accepted by the Ministry of Education & Culture and supported by the city of Hilversum. The Ministry and the city of Hilversum will finance a process of selection and digitization. In 2020, the selected and digitized materials should be publicly available.

The Netherlands Music Institute (Nederlands Muziek Instituut, NMI) also arrived in smoother waters, after troubled times. The NMI moved from the Royal Library to the Municipal Archive of The Hague and was quickly able to resume its services. In view of the fact that an important part of the NMI collection consists of archives of Dutch musicians and musical organisations, the new housing together with the Municipal Archive of The Hague is not a bad solution. The city's public library, which has a sheet music collection of high quality, is also housed in the same complex.

The NVMB organizes two Network Meetings for the membership and other interested parties each year.

On 19 May 2016, a Network Meeting was hosted by the Public Library of Almelo, a city in the east of the country whose first public library opened one hundred years ago. The day started with a lively General

Assembly, during which, among others, the state of affairs with respect to the Joint Collection Plan and the Musidesk Rijnbrink initiative were discussed. The afternoon programme was dedicated to the theme "Collections versus Space" (Collecties versus verblijfsruimtes). The function of libraries and library buildings has changed. Nowadays, there are many reasons to go to the library apart from borrowing a book, a CD or a score: it is also a place to stay, to study, to meet people, to have a coffee, to follow a course or to assist at a performance. Borrowing library items is often possible from alternative locations, and digital information is available everywhere.

After an inspiring column by Anne Marie Roetgerink (Rijnbrink Musikdesk) about the possibilities for displaying library materials while hosting a concert or a performance, two presentations by colleagues from the east of the country followed. Jasper Slaghuis informed us about the activities of the Muziekbank Overijssel in the city of Enschede, of which he is the manager. This public music library, the second largest of The Netherlands, is financed by the joint public libraries in the province of Overijssel and is largely run by volunteers. Borrowing is free of charge for public library members. The Muziekbank not only lends music materials but has also developed a wide range of courses and lectures, in close cooperation with other cultural institutions in the area. This policy has born fruit: borrowing figures are increasing. However, borrowing free of charge has come under pressure of late.

Gert-Jan Sweep, the director of the Public Library of Almelo, gave an overview of the many ways in which the library cooperates with other public institutions in the city of Almelo. The library building also houses the regional newspaper, the local radio and TV channel, the tourist information office and the public welfare service. Gert-Jan Sweep strives for as much cooperation between these institutions as possible. Library staff members already work in front-of-house functions for some of these institutions. The library itself gives special attention to the functionally illiterate, young people, and reduction of the "digital divide". The closure of branch libraries (2014) is remedied by offering services in canteens and nursing homes and a home delivery service.

There was also a guest from abroad: Rachel Zillig from Alexander Street Press. Rachel presented the Open Music Library, a "shop-in-shop" for digital music resources from a wide range of libraries and collections, among others the digital archives of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra.

This Network day was concluded with a tour of Almelo Public Library and drinks, during which our President Jantien Dubbeldam reminded us of the NVMB's 20 years of happy existence.

On 17 November 2016 a Network Day "Special Collections 2" was hosted by our colleagues Simeon Bodden and Gea van Veen of the Carillon School (Beiaardschool) in Amersfoort. This Network Day was a sequel to the Network Day "Special Collections" of November 2015, during which we had already heard about the Carillon School and it became apparent that a visit to Amersfoort would be most worthwhile. Carillon playing in The Netherlands and Flanders has been documented since the 15th century and the Carillon School in Amersfoort is one of the few specialized institutions for the training of carillonneurs. However, carillons and campanology (the study of bells and carillons) were not the only themes at this Network Day.

The first presentation was given by Martine de Bruin, project manager for Ethnology and ICT developer at the P.C. Meertens Institute of the Royal Dutch Academy of Sciences, which specializes in research into the history of Dutch popular culture and language. Martine informed us about the recent research projects of the P.C. Meertens Institute (among others, the discovery of a new possible author of the Wilhelmus, the Dutch national anthem which dates from the 16th century) and the Institute's collections, which are not so well known but contain, among others, ca. 200 songbooks from before 1800, thousands of popular song sheets, and thousands of recordings of folk singers made between 1957 and 1993 by Ate Doornbosch, the Dutch Alan Lomax. About 170,000 Dutch songs are registered in the Dutch Song Database (Nederlandse Liederbank).

After Martine's presentation, Simon Groot, the Special Collections Curator for Music History of Amsterdam University Library, delivered a lecture on the composer Johannes Tollius (ca. 1555 – ca. 1620) who was born in Amersfoort. Simon will be defending his doctoral thesis about this composer in the near future. His lecture offered an overview of Tollius' international career and works, and also some remarkable information about rehearsing practices in the 16th century. Simon has recorded several works by Tollius with his own Hemony Ensemble and played a number of these recordings. We heard some amazing harmonies and final chords.

Of course this Network Day could not be without a campanological element. This was provided by Mathieu Polak, carillonneur, teacher at the Beiaardschool, and composer. He initiated us into the art of composing for

carillon. What makes a composition really suitable for carillon? Transparency is the key factor: music for one voice, music in certain keys or idioms, for instance those in pentatonic and octotonic modes. Mathieu demonstrated this by playing his own composition Dandelion field on the portable carillon of the Beiaardschool.

This Network Day was concluded with a Joannes Tollius Walk through the historic city of Amersfoort, conducted, of course, by Simon Groot.

The IAML/IMS Conference (Rome, July 2016) was attended by a respectable number of NVMB members. Several Dutch delegates blogged about the conference on the IAML and NVMB websites.

NVMB had 37 institutional members and 12 personal members as of 1 January 2017. The President is Jantien Dubbeldam, the Secretary is Nienke de Boer, the Treasurer is Martie Severt. The Board members at Large are Cora Mulder, Ria Warmerdam and Joost van Gemert. There were three most informative issues of the Newsletter, edited by Ria Warmerdam. The Program Committee and the Committee on Sheet Music continued their work, in close cooperation with the Board.

Joost van Gemert

Board Member, IAML / The Netherlands (NVMB)