



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)

Netherlands, report 2011

The year 2011 can be characterized as a disaster for culture politics in the Netherlands, due to historically unprecedented cuts in the governmental budget.

It is obvious that governments need to cut back their budgets drastically, as a result of the 2008 worldwide financial crisis, where they saved the financial world by using public money. So far, so good. No one in The Netherlands disputes the need for these economies to be made, but with the coming to stage of a right wing populist party, Wilder's *Partij voor de Vrijheid* (Party of Freedom) and the role in the wings that was allowed to this party by the conservative and Christian-Democrat parties that have formed a government since 2010, a climate of culture bashing has become apparent, causing a multitude of anger, sorrow, and turmoil among those active in the field of music, theatre, cinematography, and public broadcasting.

“No one should feel safe”, the Minister of Culture maliciously smirked when announcing his plans for the new culture budget, and this proved to be no idle threat when he presented his budget in the month of June. 200 million euros to be cut out of the culture budget, grossing up to 900 million per annum. This will prove to be disastrous and a fatal insult for the many that have devoted their professional career to the realm of the arts.

In absolute numbers the amount of 200 million euros is modest when compared to the total of 18 billion euros to be economized, but this money is essential for the field of culture to maintain the infrastructure (education, orchestras, companies) that has been developed over the decades and is obligatory to keep the production of performances and concerts going.

Raising the VAT tariff from 6 to 19 percent for cultural presentations was another measure introduced, and was much disputed by producers and economic experts. Claims by the government that the *free market process* would lead towards a more sound and widely appreciated culture supply proved to be a failure, as was underlined by private financiers, private funds, and individual Maecenases already active in the field of culture. During the year, the government admitted that this VAT maneuver produced a negative effect, but the damage had been done, resulting in a dramatic drop in the number of tickets sold for the new theatre and orchestra season of 2011-2012.

Several prominent music archives, documentation centres, and orchestras of our colleagues are under a direct threat of closing down, such as the *Nederlands Muziek Instituut*, *Muziek Centrum Nederland*, *Muziek Centrum van de Omroep* and *Theater Instituut Nederland* to name a few. This will affect the organisation of NVMB as well, and eventually IAML in the near future, as we will lose members. This can be surely predicted.

Protests have been organized, which have been moving and encouraging, but, in the end, without a positive outcome. A *March of Civilization* was held, ending near the Parliament in The Hague, bringing together thousands of artists and students in their overnight protest. London



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Philharmonia violist Gijs Kramers mobilized orchestras from all over the world to play Rogier van Otterloo's theme of the movie *Soldaat van Oranje* and mounted this on YouTube.

All proved to be in vain. Nothing is left for the future to cope with the current disaster. All we can do is to unite the good forces, while maintaining a vital cultural infrastructure, and await better times.

Apart from all the political turmoil, NVMB went on with its work as usual, aimed at the members and their specific needs for discussion, education, and professional growth.

On 14 January the NVMB board and a selection of members who are active in the subsequent commissions discussed the set out and objectives for the policy plan 2011-2014, moderated by the inspiring Jos Debeij, executive director of the Deventer public library and a board member of VOB, the Dutch central body of public libraries. It was agreed that for the upcoming term through 2014 to focus on stressing the distinctive features as an organization of music libraries and archives in the total range of organisations with a broader scope. This implies the motivation of and presentation of music-related issues in the diverse frameworks where our colleagues do their daily work. We are also seeking to embed NVMB in larger national organisations. The newly-installed national library institute SIOB and GO, as a venue for the presentation of tailor made courses for library professionals, could offer a future perspective with respect to this.

In Utrecht NVMB had a festive meeting on 12 May, commemorating its third lustrum (i.e., we're 15!).

Ria Warmerdam was presented and unanimously elected as a board member. The policy plan, as made up during springtime, was adopted too. In the afternoon, a keynote speech was delivered by University of Amsterdam professor Frank Huysmans, focusing on the history and the changes in the realm of public libraries. Initially set up as centres of civilization, public libraries still fulfill this task with commitment, though nowadays the needs of the public has shifted towards a more social presence instead of the individually-driven need for intellectual development. Jos Oegema of Deventer Public Library spoke on a successful marketing strategy developed in the Overijssel province, and Ian Borthwick gave an account of his experiences with a new approach of collection management in Haarlem City Library.

Muziek Centrum Nederland launched its much anticipated music encyclopedia on the internet (www.muziekencyclopedie.nl ([link is external](#))), a free, accessible site bringing together diverse genres such as pop music, jazz, classical, and contemporary music. More news from the digital front is the NVMB involvement in the integration of scores and its metadata in the NMC (National Music Catalogue) following the approach as already applied in the international project *23 Things*. The same is true for the updating and restyling of the NVMB-website, which comes along with a Twitter facility. Members are encouraged to use Twitter for professional contacts and day-to-day exchange of information and experiences in the field of music



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We held another meeting on 17 November, hosted by OBA, the Amsterdam Public Library. The focus of this workshop was the newly-arisen situations following the budget cutting earlier in the year and how to deal with this. Gemma Bottegal's introduction drew attention to the phenomenon of *crowdfunding* as a means to generate income from the side of a general public, in combination with smaller allowances by the government or local and regional funding. Moreover light was shed by several moderators on the diverse genres of music and its presentation to an audience of music lovers. Here special attention was given to world music and pop.

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