

ARCHIVES SECTION REPORT 2017-2018

At the 2017 IAML Congress in Riga, the Archives and Music Documentation Centres Section held two sessions. About 80 persons attended the first session “Manuscripts, letters and recordings: music archives throughout Europe” on June 19th. Before opening the session, elections were called. Hanna Bias (Library of the Karol Szymanowski Music Academy, Katowice) was elected as Secretary, Marie-Gabrielle Soret (Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris) as Vice-president, and Marie Cornaz was re-elected as President.

Lolita Furmane (Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music, Riga) opened the session with a paper entitled “Die Musikmanuskripte in den Repositorien Lettlands: Ein Bericht über Fonds, deren Zustand und Erforschungssituation”. She gave an overview of the most important repositories of music collections, and specifically of primary sources in Latvia (which she has regularly used for years in her research experience). She then gave a more detailed account of three particularly rich collections, which came to light recently through cataloguing projects. The first one is the music collection of the Liepaja Kantorat, from an evangelical-lutherian bishop church. The collection was described in the summer 2011 thanks to a Latvian-German cooperation project, and the records were added to the RISM catalogue. It comprises about 350 documents, of which 330 are manuscripts, most of them are autographs in the line of the Dresdner Kreuzschule (followers of JS Bach), showing the diffusion and the influence of this musical trend in the Baltic region. The collection comprises 23 of the 25 known autograph manuscripts of Telemann. The second one is the collection of the former city theatre of Riga, recently entrusted to the national library of Latvia. It comprises a huge collection of 2200 items in 258 boxes, which are not as yet described, and are in need of urgent conservation (in contrast with the documents of the Liepaja Kantorat, which are in a very good material state). The third collection is kept in the Rare Materials department of the academic library of the University of Latvia. It consists mostly of letters of Baltic-German musicians and German musicians with a strong link to Riga – the collection includes two precious letters of Beethoven – but also of actors, architects or painters, most of them between 1826 and 1850. As a whole, this collection of letters shows the vitality of relations and the influence of German musicians in the musical life of Latvia. The collection remained hidden through the Soviet era and is now available for research.

Patrizia Rebullà (Archivio Storico Ricordi, Milan) followed, with her talk “Confidentially yours: the confidential letters of Giulio Ricordi”. She first gave an overview of the Ricordi Historical Archive, one of the largest private collection in the field of music in the world. They comprise about 7,800 scores (mostly autographs), which are now all digitized, 13,500 iconographic documents, mostly preparatory documents for opera costume and scenery, 10,000 librettos, frequently annotated by the composers, 6,000 photographs, numerous documents on stage direction and administrative archives of the Ricordi publishing house. The current project presented by Patrizia Rebullà deals with the abundant letters kept by the archives: 31,000 received letters, and copies of 600,000 sent letters kept in copybooks. Those copybooks have been indexed in a 500 pages notebook, which is a vital compass to find one’s way through the collection. Those letters are in the process of being digitized, and the copybooks of Giulio Ricordi (covering the 1888-1909 years) and Tito II Ricordi (1912-1918) will be transcribed. Those letters give a fascinating view on the daily life of the publishing house during the period, on the role of the Ricordi publishers and on their relation with the composers. They address for instance the problem of copyright and the publication of pirate editions, harmful for both composer and publisher, show the dialogue about the editing process and additions of the editor (metronome markings, stage directions...), or inform on the relations with public institutions and on political interventions. They also give a precious account of the management of the Ricordi company, going through its first strikes, and expecting a complete hierarchical obedience from the employees, expressed in terms coherent with the strong personalities of Giulio and Tito II Ricordi. The transcription of the letters is part of the READ (Recognition and Enrichment of Archival Documents) project, in cooperation with the University of Sheffield and the University of Innsbruck. The aim is to develop automatic transcription software adapted to handwriting. On some letters the results are already of similar quality to human

transcription; this corpus of letters is well adapted to machine learning: with only few different writers (as the employees remained a very long time with the company), and their writing is very homogeneous. Another interesting perspective of the project is the data mining it will enable (for instance on name and works), once all the letters have been digitized, transcribed and tagged.

The last paper of this session, "Digitizing sound archives at Royal Library of Belgium: challenges and difficulties encountered within a huge digitization project" was presented by Frederic Lemmers (Royal Library of Belgium, Brussels). The recordings are "special in the special", as music collections are already considered as special compared to the rest of the collection of the Royal Library. One characteristic of recorded music is the diversity of media, through all the acoustic and then analogue eras, with a relative interoperability of devices (acoustic phonograph records might be played for instance on analogue players). The digital revolution involved not only a technical evolution of sound extraction, but a whole new context with different players, and then download platforms and dematerialization. As there is no legal deposit of recordings in Belgium, the collection of the Royal library comes mostly from private collections acquired by the Library (about 100,000 items). As such, they are part of private archives, and reflect the taste of the person who collected them. The aim of the digitization is not entirely the preservation of the recording carriers, which are in a good physical state, but the fact that they can't be listened to by individual users so as not to cause further degradation. Two different audiences were first targeted in this project: scientific researchers in the field of humanities (interested in the oldest and rarest resources, recorded before 1950), and leisure listeners in search of discovery (interested in the post 1950 repertoire). Several other criteria were added to help the selection, among which the copyright considerations took a major place, leading the library to give priority to public domain recordings. The "digit-03" program started in 2016, and will go on until 2020 to digitize 4,000 hours of music on 60,000 sides (that is, 30,000 of the 100,000 discs). In the library, it requires 4 full time persons to oversee the whole process, and work with the subcontractor that actually does the digitization. The whole process implies:

- The dematerialization of the recording (reading of the original, creation of the metadata, producing distinct master and broadcast files)
- The storage and long term preservation of the digital document (audio file and metadata)
- The valorisation of the digital collection (online publication, development of a commercial offer, production of anthologies, globally fostering the reusing of the collection)

Several choices were made by the library during the process. The first concerned the choice of method for reading the physical media, especially for acoustic recordings. The choice was to prefer an analogue reading for all those recording over an optical one. The second concerned the sound restoration, and the decision to totally or partially suppress parasitic noise (coming either from the recording conditions of the time, the material state of the document, or the digitization process itself). The decision was, as much as possible, to respect the material history of the recorded work and of the medium used.

About 30 persons attended the second session, which welcomed four papers presenting the different sides of a common project called "Musical Polonica in Moscow libraries and archives". This project, which started with discussions during the IAML Conference in Moscow in 2010, owes much to the friendly relationships between the librarians of the four partner institutions, who decided to highlight the rich cross-cultural history of links between Poland and Russia in the field of music. Although there were flourishing intense relations following the integration of Poland in Russia in the 19th century, this history is scarcely studied, and the Russian sources are largely unknown to Polish scholars, hence the project of a common catalogue for Russian sources about Musical Polonica. Renata Suchowiejko (Institute of Musicology, Jagiellonian University, Kraków) opened the session with a paper on "the Music Library of Prince Michał Kleofas Ogiński in the collections of the Russian State Archive of Ancient Documents (RGADA)". The RGADA is a typical institution that is rarely visited by musicologists, but the exceptional personality of Ogiński, who was a scholar, a violinist, a politician, and a composer, is representative of the rich cultural relations between Poland and Russia. Most of his political action has now fallen into oblivion, but he remains famous for some of his compositions – several polonaises and *Les adieux à la Patrie*, of which about 65 different editions have been numbered (a third of them during his lifetime). He didn't expect such a success, which went beyond his geographical zone, with foreign edition that he had no knowledge of. His name also became a symbol of Polish music, and several pieces by other composers were published under his name. In the RGADA there are manuscripts of his works, but also the first editions of these works and several other works dedicated to him (especially from Maria Szymanowska and Pierre Baillot). Born in Poland from a Lithuanian father, he died in Italy after a French, English and Italian career, he is a quintessentially European figure. Several countries count him among their major composers (though he used to see himself more as an eminent

amateur than a professional musician). He embodies the fact that today's musicology and musical history has to go beyond the current national border and national history, especially as far as central and eastern Europe is concerned.

Alla Semenyuk (Russian State Library, Moscow) gave the second talk entitled "Polish Music in the collections of the Russian State Library in Moscow". She gave an overview of the collections, comprising different kind of documents (prints, as well as recordings). The collection holds more than 1,000 printed scores by Polish composers of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. Those composers were frequently edited and re-edited by Russian publishers. This often followed the career of the musicians: Maria Szymanowska for instance was invited from Poland to give lessons in St Petersburg, and was thus published in Russia. The Russian State Library has a project to produce a catalogue of the works of Polish composers published in Russia during this period.

Irina Torilova and Irina Meshcheryakova (Taneyev Music Library of the Moscow State Conservatory P. I. Tchaikovsky, Moscow) unfortunately couldn't attend the congress, and sent their paper "Polish sources of the 19th and early 20th centuries in the library of the Moscow Conservatory" as a video. The collections regarding Polish music in the Taneyev Music Library are extremely large: they number more than 1,000,000 documents, most of them published between the 18th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, among which 330,000 records, and more than 330,00 programmes and ephemera covering a 100 year timespan, that are precious for documenting the tours of Polish interpreters in Russia. Identifying the first editions of the Polish composers has been difficult, but the collection comprises a large number of rare editions (for instance bilingual French-Russian editions). The library also keeps interesting orchestral arrangement of Polish works first published for piano only.

The session concluded with a paper from Natalya Tartakovskaya (Glinka National Museum Consortium of Musical Culture, Moscow), who also wasn't able to attend the congress. Her paper "Manuscripts, letters and archives of Polish artists in the collection of the Glinka National Museum Consortium of Musical Culture" was read by Suchowiejko. The collections of the Glinka Museum are particularly rich in letters: several private collections contain letters that reflect the cross cultural exchanges between the Russian and Polish musical worlds, but also letters from binational couples. The museum also keeps several graphic works, notably paintings representing musicians and composers.

During the Congress in Riga, the Access to Music Archives Project Group (2014-2017) had its final meeting. This group has concentrated its efforts on the technical matters of the Database for the Directory of RISM-C, discussing and adopting the fields related to the Directory of institutions previously existing in RISM. After Riga, this Project Group studied the possibility of forming a new Study Group.

After the Riga Congress, the Archives Section collected materials presented during the sessions in order to propose documentation on the Archives pages of the IAML website. At the end of 2017, the Archives Section contacted researchers and librarians in Leipzig in order to build sessions for the next Congress in this city.