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The full report of IAML(UK) once again contains details of non-stop activity by Branch officers and members. There are, of course, some familiarly depressing stories of cuts and economies in British libraries, but there are many positive achievements. Almost 30 percent of IAML(UK) members are named in our printed report as being involved in committees and project groups: this is an extremely good record, particularly as time is probably our most precious resource, and few music librarians these days are able to conduct IAML business during work time.

The proposal to create a joint database of the holdings of nine UK conservatories succeeded in attracting the necessary funding from the Higher Education Funding Council. This project, named Music Libraries Online, has started with the recruitment of key staff and work is well under way. Public and national libraries are expected to join in the third phase, so this is a major breakthrough towards one of IAML(UK) 's cherished dreams: a national music database. This was one of the recommendations in the Library and Information Plan for Music.

Another recommendation in the Plan highlighted the need to resurrect education for music librarians. The distance learning course in music librarianship, described by Ian Ledsham at the Geneva Conference and generously funded by the Britten-Pears Trust, is now a reality. A number of students have enrolled in the course, which will eventually be available as a stand-alone module for practising librarians in the UK and beyond. The Music Libraries Trust launched the course at the new British Library in a joint celebration, a new beginning both for music library education and the music services at the British Library. Colleagues at the British Library have been working extremely hard on the move from the British Museum building and the message seems to be that all the work and expense has been well worthwhile. IAML visitors will be more than welcome at the new library.

During the autumn we carried out the first-ever survey of performance sets borrowed from British public libraries. This was published to support a major seminar on the subject entitled Partners in Performance which turned the spotlight onto this often forgotten subsidy for the arts. The findings showed an astonishing variety of music being performed by local music groups throughout the UK. We estimated that one million people benefit from this service, and the research gained us some useful press coverage, including a letter published in the *Times*.

We have continued to remind government ministers and officials of our existence. We met with the senior civil servant responsible for libraries and briefed him on several areas of concern



including the effects of underfunding of libraries. This year we have written to Tony Blair to protest against the withdrawing of music from the compulsory primary school curriculum; there has been a certain amount of backtracking, owing largely to the protests of eminent musicians, and we have since been invited to submit our views during the consultation period. The branch has responded to government initiatives including consultation documents on the networking of public libraries, lottery funding, and research strategies for library development.

Our outreach efforts are continuing, mainly thanks to the indefatigable Roger Taylor. A large number of boxes of long-playing records were sent to Bulgaria earlier this year, personally packed by our immediate Past-President and his young son, with carriage funded by the Open Society Foundation. In May, Roger represented IAML at the Open Society conference in Budapest entitled *The Role of Library Associations* and gave a paper on continuing education. At our Annual Study Weekend in April we were delighted to welcome colleagues from Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Latvia, and Macedonia who made the long journey to Surrey to be with us.

In conclusion, I would like to pay tribute to the outstanding Presidency of Roger Taylor over the last three years. He has been tireless in his support of colleagues and in his promotion of music libraries in the professional and political arenas, and the contacts formed by his outreach work have enriched our knowledge of music libraries around the world.

Ruth Hellen

President