

# CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS AND NEW INITIATIVES OF MLA 2011

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The Music Library Association's 80th Annual Meeting in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, marked the first time a conference theme was employed for the annual event. "Born Digital: A New Frontier for Music Libraries" was the chosen theme and therefore the focus of many of the sessions. These included plenary, individual, panel-run, and poster sessions; as well as the "Hot Topics in Music Librarianship" discussion. The conference featured a range of topics, such as digital recordings and copyright, provision of online access to audio course reserves, approaches to collection development, new music resources, and preservation of recordings.

For those new to the organization, there were opportunities to learn more about the structure of MLA through committee business meetings and the "Get Involved with MLA" sessions. The latter represented another new initiative at this year's conference and offered participants an informal occasion to meet with committee chairs and round table coordinators, learn about the activities of these bodies, and explore opportunities for becoming involved. First-time attendees had the chance to attend the "first-timers" banquet and participate in the mentoring program, which successfully matched over seventy newcomers with more experienced MLA members.

The following are highlights and observations from selected conference sessions.

## **BORN AND REINCARNATED DIGITAL: ONE COURSE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM-BASED SOLUTION TO PROVIDING COPYRIGHT COMPLIANT STREAMING AUDIO RESERVES**

This session, presented by Lisa Lazar and Carla Myers from the University of Akron, featured an introduction to the Streaming Media Reserves system implemented at the University of Akron Library. The system provides online streaming access to audio files on reserve for music courses at the University and the files are made accessible using the course management system, *SpringBoard!*.

The Streaming Media Reserves system provides password protected, streaming access for only those students enrolled in the courses for which the files are made available. The digital copies of the audio files are made only for works that are being taught as an integral part of the course, and the Library makes a good faith effort to purchase a commercially available copy of all requested items. The Library will only make copies available if they are not already offered through another online service such as Naxos Music Library or Classical Music Library. If the file is available through one of these vendors, a link is provided in the course management system. At the completion of the course, the files are removed from the system, but they can be stored for future use, by way of a searchable digitized file archive.

The concept-to-pilot time frame for this project was two years. It received the support of both the Library Administration and the Information Technology Services Department, and overall the feedback from students and faculty has been positive. In the future, the Library hopes to implement a streaming film component to the Streaming Media Reserve System, and to supplement the audio files with additional files or links.

### **ASK THE MLA/MPA/MOLA JOINT COMMITTEE**

The panel for this session included representatives from MLA (Music Library Association), MPA (Music Publishers' Association), and MOLA (Major Orchestra Librarians' Association). Panelists offered their perspectives regarding some of the complications involved in the publishing of music. The following issues were among those discussed: the differences in the needs of music libraries and performance libraries; the fact that because library sales are a very small percentage of the market, certain accommodations to make scores shelf-ready would not allow publishers to recoup costs; and the problem of ongoing composer revisions, leading to differences among various editions. Some of these issues have been addressed by "on demand" services, such as the digital options available through Boosey & Hawkes, and "Schirmer on Demand," which offers printable score perusal copies. The session also included information about the role of the music engraver in the score publishing process.

### **EDUCATING MUSIC LIBRARIANS IN THE DIGITAL AGE**

As part of this session, Beth Fleming (Oklahoma City University) presented "Music Information Literacy Training with a Digital Twist," which focused on incorporating digital and interactive opportunities in the classroom. Examples included creating and demonstrating online helping aids such as the "Guide to Musical Examples" in *Grove Online*, linking to resources such as manuscripts in digital repositories, and increasing the use of video in instruction. Reference was also made to an interactive online music information literacy tutorial from the Cleveland Institute of Music, which functions as a training module for undergraduate students (<http://www.cim.edu/library/milt/libMilt.php>). At her own institution, Fleming has developed similar modules which have been embedded within the course management system and graded as part of a first-year survey course.

Fleming also mentioned Jing—as did Sam Cook in a later session, “Music Librarians in La-La land: Where Do Technologies Go When They Finally Emerge?” Jing is a free screen capture and screencasting tool that has the potential to record internet navigations. A number of applications were suggested, such as incorporating the recordings into classroom presentations, or using the recordings to provide instructions or answers to reference questions in a more visually oriented format.

## **TOWARD ELECTRONIC MUSIC EDITIONS: THE MUSIC ENCODING INITIATIVE**

Erin Mayhood (University of Virginia) presented this session on the Music Encoding Initiative (MEI) schema (<http://music-encoding.org/home>), a set of rules for recording the characteristics of music notation documents using XML so that the information contained in them may be searched, retrieved, displayed, and exchanged in a predictable and platform-independent manner. The schema accommodates the encoding of common Western music, and though it is designed primarily for scholarly purposes, it does not exclude other uses. The markup allows for tagging of the internal structure. It shows potential for addressing the functions of traditional facsimile, critical, and performance editions of musical scores. The MEI schema is useful because it has the potential to provide access to, and archives of, digital scores that are both transient and renewable. This is an open-source and community-driven initiative that is based on the Text Encoding Initiative (<http://www.tei-c.org/index.xml>).

## **PLENARY II: LICENSING AND DIGITAL MEDIA: OUR MUSICAL HERITAGE AT A CROSSROADS**

Plenary II featured the following panel of speakers: Corynne McSherry (Electronic Frontier Foundation), John T. Robertson (Robertson Law Group), and Kevin L. Smith (Duke University). They spoke about the barriers resulting from recordings being made available as downloadable files only, and with restrictive licenses—a model that conflicts with the traditional library uses associated with lending and preservation. This related to another session during which the history of the Lala service was given as an example of the unpredictability of maintaining access to licensed digital content.

Corynne McSherry presented several examples of lawsuits dealing with the issue of licensing. These examples highlighted the complexities and legal implications of attaching licenses to digital objects such as software or music files. In particular, she cited the example of a software company restricting sale of its products on the second-hand market. In this case, the software company claimed that users do not purchase a copy of the software, but rather are licensees of the software and therefore cannot share or sell their copy. McSherry argued that the presence of a secondary market is better both for the economy and the environment as well.

Kevin Smith suggested several approaches for dealing with the issues under discussion. One approach put forward was that of relationship development: working with vendors to set up a digital preservation system for audio files (currently there is no

digital audio equivalent to LOCKSS); communicating with researchers, performers, and composers regarding the preservation issues related to releasing performances in a download-only format; and pressuring record companies to consider special library licenses.

### **COLLECTING RECENTLY COMPOSED MUSIC IN THE DIGITAL AGE**

Matt Ertz (Indiana University) presented a compilation of online sources useful for identifying and finding information about emerging composers (available through <http://mla2011.musiclibraryassoc.org/files>). As well, he discussed various criteria for determining which composers are becoming “significant” and should therefore be considered for the purposes of collection development.

Greg MacAyeal (Northwestern University) spoke about the challenges—stemming from new and varied distribution models—of acquiring recently composed music. For example, some composers are now providing their works through a print-on-demand system; as such, these scores will not automatically arrive through vendors and must be sought out or obtained through special arrangements. At times it is necessary to track down even well-established contemporary composers—John Luther Adams, for example—who continue to self-publish.

James Wintle (Library of Congress) made the point that many new artists deal solely with the internet and have no interest in working with distributors and publishers in the traditional manner. He believes that in order to address this issue, librarians should be a part of the conversation with composition students and faculty.

### **OVERDRIVE AND FREEGAL MUSIC PRODUCTS IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

This session, sponsored by the Public Libraries Committee, featured a panel of speakers who discussed Overdrive and Freegal products and their application to music audio collections. The session addressed the quality of the services from both the library and consumer perspectives.

#### *Overdrive*

The Overdrive product provides digital access to ebooks, audio books, and music files. Users are able to download an item to their computer and transfer it to mobile devices, and then after a certain period of time the item will expire. The library uses traditional collection development methods to select items for their online collection. The LibTunes service, to be introduced in 2011, will expand OverDrive’s music purchasing options to over 500 music labels and nine million tracks. LibTunes offers libraries the option to purchase music files on a track-by-track basis, in a similar fashion to the iTunes store. There is currently a trial available for LibTunes, but no pricing options were available at the time of the conference.

## *Freegal*

Freegal provides the user with a limited number of weekly downloads of audio files from the Sony catalogue, including popular, classical and jazz materials. The panel reported that this product, already in use in a number of North American libraries, has been received favourably by many users and has also resulted in positive press coverage for certain libraries. On the other hand, some of the session attendees expressed reservations about libraries putting their collection budgets into access-only products, as opposed to a model where the library retains an archival copy.

## **VARIATIONS ... NOT JUST INDIANA'S DIGITAL MUSIC LIBRARY ANYMORE**

John Anderies (Haverford College) and Jon Haupt (Southern Methodist University) discussed their institutions' local implementations of the Variations software. Tools unique to the Variations system, such as the "Bookmark" tool and the "Timeliner" audio annotation and analysis tool, were mentioned. Information was also provided about new features, such as a web player, and those in development, such as iPod/iPad versions and "Variations in Video." Both institutions have used the system for high circulation recordings or for digitizing audio to be used for reserves. Haupt has created a guide related to using the system: <http://guides.smu.edu/variations>.

## **POSTER SESSION HIGHLIGHTS**

### *Discovery: Undergraduates and Primary Source in Musicology*

Harvard University librarian Kerry Carwile Masteller described the work she and colleagues have carried out to embed digital primary source materials in a course research guide (<http://guides.hcl.harvard.edu/music97b>). The project was developed in response to faculty calls for assistance in introducing primary sources to students.

### *Preserving Virginia's Recorded Concerts*

Winston Barham of the University of Virginia Music Library presented this institution's efforts to preserve and archive their collection of concert recordings. Up until this time, it has been preserved on various media including open-reel tapes, DATs, videotapes and audio cassettes. The project aimed to convert these media into archival (WAV in archive), reference (WAV on local hard drive), preservation (CD, stored offsite) and circulation (CD onsite) copies of the concert recordings, and to provide corresponding bibliographic records in the University of Virginia Library Catalogue.

### *'Digital Love': The Description of 'Pop Muzik' in Online Resources*

This poster was presented by Deb Kulczak and Lora Lennerta Jetton from the University of Arkansas Libraries. The poster described the process of determining genre tags for a large gift collection of popular music made up of 3,434 CDs and 1,861 vinyl recordings. The project was focused on collecting and comparing genre tags for the

received collection as determined by allmusic.com, *The Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, and Wikipedia. Results indicated that allmusic.com contained the most bands with genres, and the least number of bands with no entries. Wikipedia contained some inconsistencies in uniformity within the genres that were applied. *The Encyclopedia of Popular Music* was missing entries for many of the artists in the collection, or did not always assign a genre. Based on their findings, the Library was able to determine the genres used in all three sources and apply them to the pop music collection.

## **HOT TOPICS IN MUSIC LIBRARIANSHIP**

This lively session, moderated by Tom Caw (University of Wisconsin – Madison), offered an opportunity for conference attendees to raise and address timely issues and questions facing music libraries and the music industry. The following were among the topics that were touched on during the discussion:

- Download-only audio files: There was a call for an institution such as the Library of Congress to take on the task of initiating a digital repository for audio that is being distributed in download-only format. Other comments echoed concerns on issues of copyright, preservation, and access as discussed earlier in the Plenary II session.
- Web-scale discovery tools: The discussion focused on the problems all such tools still pose with regard to searching for music in various formats.
- Bibliographic utilities: There was mention that some libraries are switching from OCLC to SkyRiver for their cataloguing needs.
- Integrated Library Systems: One topic broached in this area was the use of open source library systems and their feasibility in academic settings. As well, it was mentioned that changes are in store for Aleph and Voyager users with the introduction of the new Ex Libris Alma service.
- Streaming audio: Some participants indicated that usage statistics of certain streaming audio services have revealed low use and have led them to cancel their subscriptions. It was suggested—here and at other times during the conference—that users now predominantly want downloads and are less interested in streaming as a mode of access.

Files from many of the conference presentations are available at <http://mla2011.musiclibraryassoc.org/files>.