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Ugo e Olga Levi
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Towards a Network of European Archives of Twentieth-Century Music
Musicians' Correspondence and Interaction between Archives

Venice 27-28 June 2014

Conference organized by: Istituto per la Musica – Fondazione Giorgio Cini and Fondazione Ugo e Olga Levi.
In collaboration with: Fondazione Archivio Luigi Nono, Università di Cagliari, University of Calgary
Coordination: Paolo Dal Molin (Università di Cagliari)

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME AND INTRODUCTION

Friday 27 June

Fondazione Ugo e Olga Levi, Biblioteca «Gianni Milner»

Collecting, Preserving, Describing, and Rendering Accessible Composers' Correspondence. State of the Art

09.00-13.00 Chair: Friedemann Sallis (University of Calgary)

15.00-18.00 Chair: Massimo Gentili Tedeschi (URFM - Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan; Fondazione Ugo e Olga Levi, Venice)

09.00

Welcome address

09.30

1. Werner Grünzweig (Akademie der Künste – Musikarchiv, Berlin)

2. Felix Meyer (Paul Sacher Stiftung, Basel)

10.20 Discussion

10.40 coffee break

11.00

3. Sylvia Freydank (Internationales Musikinstitut Darmstadt)

4. Nada Bezić (Croatian Music Institute, Zagreb)

5. Pierluigi Ledda, Gabriele Dotto (Archivio Ricordi)

12.15 Discussion

13.00-15.00 Lunch [reserved for speakers and invited guests]

15.00

1. Nicolas Bell (British Library, London)

2. Richard Chesser (British Library, London)

3. Élisabeth Giuliani (Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris)

16.15 Discussion

16.40 coffee break

17.00

4. Piotr Maculewicz (University of Warsaw Library)

5. László Vikárius (Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest Bartók Archives, Budapest)

6. Alessandra Carlotta Pellegrini (Fondazione Isabella Scelsi, Rome)

18.15 Discussion



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Saturday 28 June
Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Sala Barbantini

Publishing Composers' Letters. Case Studies on Relations between Research and Archival Practice

09.30-13.00 Chair: Paolo Dal Molin (Università di Cagliari)

09.30

Denis Herlin (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Institut de recherche sur le patrimoine musical en France);
Andreas Meyer (Staatliche Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst Stuttgart);

10.50 Discussion

11.10 coffee break

11.30

Angela Ida De Benedictis (Paul Sacher Stiftung);

Katharina Bleier (Wissenschaftszentrum Arnold Schönberg, Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst, Wien) and
Therese Muxeneder (Arnold Schönberg Center, Wien)

12.40 Discussion

13.00-15.00 Lunch [reserved for speakers and invited guests]

Towards a Network of European Archives of Twentieth-Century Music: Discussion

15.00-18.00 Chair: Gianmario Borio (Fondazione Giorgio Cini), Luisa Zanoncelli (Fondazione Ugo e Olga Levi)

18.00 Visit of the exhibition *The Composer's Mailbox*



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Introduction

Starting in the 1980s, the study of compositional techniques, historical backgrounds and promotion of 20th-century music received considerable impulse from increased public access to the documentation. Several factors lay behind the new or improved accessibility of sources: the inauguration of archives and research centres devoted to the conservation and interpretation of composers' manuscripts and working documents (Paul Sacher Stiftung, Basel; music archives of Akademie der Künste, Berlin; Istituto per la Musica della Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Fondazione Archivio Luigi Nono, Venice; Arnold Schoenberg Center, Vienna); the definition of new archival standards appropriate for personal materials which may be included in larger and more heterogeneous deposits (e.g. the British Library and Bibliothèque nationale de France); the transfer of information from paper to digital formats.

The merits and limits of the various forms of treatment employed for personal archives depend on the physical conditions of the collections when they are consigned to the place of preservation, and also on the financial resources available for their safeguarding and perusal. In general, however, the specialization of staff and the computerization of the descriptive processes have helped to establish common benchmarks. This is demonstrated by research in the sphere of musicology focusing on the sources pertaining to musical production over the last 150 years: this research is increasingly detailed, thanks to first-hand information to be found in the vast typology of 20th-century archival sources. Further evidence of this can be seen in initiatives designed to enhance the study and interpretation of the documents themselves (facsimile editions, critical editions of works, writings, sketchbooks and other working documents, re-editions of audio and audiovisual recordings, documentary exhibitions etc.), which are increasingly elaborate and innovative in their approach. Some editions of the letters or two-way correspondence of composers that have been published since the 1990s are very eloquent. Their publication has introduced private documentation into the scientific domain, providing evidence of technical indications and aesthetic intentions which are crucial in understanding artistic processes (e.g. the Boulez-Cage correspondence). As this awareness grew, the historical and critical commentary on the letters and associated documentation has grown in scope, going beyond the limits of technical explanation and erudition. This shows precisely how the various European archives of 20th-century music reflect the dense networks of relationships created by composers and musical institutions in the most important centres (Berlin, Darmstadt, London, Paris, Warsaw, Vienna etc.) and throughout Europe.

Towards a Network of European Archives of Twentieth-Century Music arises out of a realization and a series of questions. In the treatment of the musical documentary heritage of the 20th century the authoritative and cutting edge techniques of leading institutions are seen to share certain principles and goals, thanks to the diffusion of archival and scientific models. However, this has come about, and continues to occur, often with little or no synergy between the institutions responsible for conservation. Do the operators and specialised users feel a need for greater interchange between the archives? At what level? Do the desire and the conditions for this to come about exist? If yes, in what forms and with what objectives?

To respond to these questions, the Istituto per la Musica della Fondazione Giorgio Cini and the Fondazione Ugo e Olga Levi are promoting an encounter between representatives of archival studies and musicology that will focus on the treatment of correspondence – a specific topic designed to lead to a more general reflection. In the first two sessions, individuals in charge of some of the major European archives of 20th-century music will present the state of the art in



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conservation, description and dissemination of letters and associated sources. In the third session, editors of some of the most recent and innovative editions of correspondence will exchange their expertise and methodology, analysing the situation of the various conservation authorities from their own perspectives. The fourth and final session will consider the network we can imagine coming into existence to meet the demands of research, which is bound to become increasingly less compartmentalised, and to disseminate, in the expanded Europe of today, best practices for the safeguarding and exploitation of the musical documentation produced from the end of the 19th century onwards.

Collecting, Preserving, Describing, and Rendering Accessible Composers' Correspondence. State of the Art

The modalities for the preservation for letters in the institutions designated for this task depend on various factors. When a composer's archive is acquired, the correspondence may already be ordered in a series by the letter writer in person, by the heirs or by someone engaged for the purpose. Alternatively the collection may be divided up according to subject matter, in files containing for example all of the material relating to one composition or the composer's engagement in one activity. The collection may require different conservation interventions, depending on the condition of the physical objects. A single «letter» may be made up of heterogeneous material and contain 'attachments' requiring a specific treatment.

From the inventory of a collection to the detailed record of the single document in multiple field databases, the description of the correspondence can be carried out at various levels of detail, in relation to the institutional context (a set of variables which includes available funds, descriptive media, etc.) and the conditions and prospects for public access envisaged by the archive.

The surviving documents of a composer's epistolary activity are normally scattered among numerous archives and sometimes remain inaccessible. In addition, other types of authorial testimony can supplement letters, such as the notes jotted down in view of an oral answer to a letter. The indexing of data makes it possible to relate different types of documents belonging to separate series and collections to the same correspondence.

Allowing access to the documents (from their description to their publication) is the prerequisite for consultation, investigation and critical evaluation. This is a direct or indirect expression of institutional policy that has a decisive impact on preservation and classification of documents, and strongly influences research and the dissemination of knowledge.

Sessions 1 and 2 will feature a series of brief overviews of these topics provided by representatives of major European archives and libraries. The speakers will illustrate the operations carried out on correspondence in their institutions, giving examples from both past and ongoing projects, explaining the reasons for operative choices which may have been adopted as standard procedure or may instead have undergone important revisions.

Publishing Composers' Letters. Case Studies on Relations between Research and Archival Practice

Publications of correspondence differ in the first place according to their goals. You only have to leaf through the *Correspondance* of Claude Debussy (Gallimard 2005), the edition of the letters between Arnold Schoenberg and Alban Berg (Schott, 2007) and the correspondence of Massimo Mila or Helmut Lachenmann and Luigi Nono (il Saggiatore 2010;



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Olschki 2012) to realise that different outcomes result from specific research objectives and archival constraints. In the former the edition aimed to publish all the letters written and received by Debussy (respectively 2588 and 308). Many letters are conserved in over 60 different places scattered throughout 15 countries. Others have yet to be localised, and their existence and, in some cases, their content have had to be deduced from secondary sources (including auction catalogues or transcriptions by others).

The situation of the sources regarding the 810 letters that Schoenberg and Berg have exchanged is multifarious because of their location, types and accessibility. Moreover, their publication is part of a larger project, *Briefwechsel der Wiener Schule*, which entails a specific editorial policy. Consequently the selection, transcription and commentary on the individual documents is based on careful consideration of the heterogeneity of the sources, and of the function and style of the epistolary communication between the two composers.

The letters between Mila and Nono and 124 letters between Lachenmann and Nono are conserved in the Archivio Luigi Nono, Venice and the Paul Sacher Stiftung, Basle. However, as the curators themselves have said, private archives and libraries, publishing houses and musical institutions have been consulted for further acquisitions or various forms of documentary confirmation. As in Debussy's *Correspondance*, these two publications feature not only a critical apparatus of annotations and appendixes identifying pertinent source material, but also the edition of other documents and letters related to the correspondence and preserved in other locations.

After the cases of a composer's letters, of correspondences between two composers and of the exchange between composers and musical critics, the forth and last paper will examine the case of a composer-publisher correspondence through the example of the Schönberg's epistolary exchange with Universal Edition.

In this third session, curators of some of the most recent and landmarking editions and of important current projects will speak about their research, how they obtained access to the data and consulted the documents they came across. Their work on these correspondences led to a convergence of criteria and methodologies between institutions, fostered by the scientific and editorial requirements, and point to the need for shared policies and means that involve collaboration between archives and libraries responsible for the 20th-century music.

Towards a Network of European Archives of Twentieth-Century Music: Discussion

The introductory address will start by reviewing the previous sessions so as to highlight the current state of interaction between archives and the potential for future development. After this, conference participants will discuss the possibilities of a structured network with its advantages and disadvantages.

In Europe, the organizations, approaches and experience in this sector are so numerous and significant that it would be unwise to make any predictions concerning a hypothetical network. Indeed, the very idea of a network of archives devoted to the music of the 20th century is based on premises that may not garner a consensus. Such a consensus presupposes forms of dialogue between documentary collections formed by very different subjects (individuals, institutions, associations, etc.), and would require some level of agreement on the definitions of selection criteria. How will it be possible to ensure the adhesion of individuals and institutions, whose sphere of action extends, by statute or as a result of their



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history, beyond the 20th century and beyond the domain of music (conservatoires, publishing houses and record companies, performing arts companies)? On the other hand, one could imagine a network which is typologically homogeneous, limited for example to personal archives (composers, performers, musicologists etc.), which would necessarily exclude other important musical actors and agents. But would it not then be better to remove the specified time span, which in any is difficult to justify (The personal archive of a composer active in the first half of the 20th century has more in common with that of a counterpart from the previous century than with a more recent collection). Moreover, even once the scope of the network were to be defined, it would be necessary to work hard on inter-institutional communication (which does not just happen) among partners throughout Europe that are so organisationally and culturally diverse (public libraries, private foundations, associations, etc.).

In terms of the possible forms the network might take, previous experiments and those currently in progress, whether in analogous or quite different sectors, can provide examples of best practices. The possible levels of collaboration range from the aggregation of data or metadata to the definition of a collective programme of publications, to initiatives fostering communication among operators and/or the general public (periodical seminars, information portals, newsletters). Needs and expectations will vary considerably according to specific realities and contexts. To round off the conference, we hope that the last session will contribute to the identification of priorities and common perspectives.

Paolo Dal Molin

English translation: Mark Weir revised by Friedemann Sallis