

Running Head: Evaluation of Digitizing Cello Collection

Evaluation of the Digitization of UNC Greensboro's Cello Music Collection

Assignment 3: Action Research Project

Wilson Mericle



THE UNIVERSITY *of* NORTH CAROLINA
GREENSBORO

Table of Contents

I. Introduction

Background

Statement of Problems and Research Questions

Users

Staff

Copyright

Research Questions

II. Methodology

III. Findings

Evaluation

Overall Process

Accessibility and Discovery

Time vs. Cost

Webpage

Promotion

Conclusions

I. Introduction

Background

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the digitization process, discovery of, and accessibility of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro's unique cello music collection. UNCG has the largest archive of cello music in the world. Therefore, it is a matchless resource for performers, scholars, and students. Stacey Krim, Special Collections Technician, and David Gwynn, Digital Projects Coordinator, are in the process of working toward performing a needs assessment on this digital project, and both felt that this particular study would be the first stepping stone in that process.

The violoncello collection originated with the purchase of the Luigi Silva Collection in 1963 by Friends of the Library. The collection has grown to include the manuscripts, papers, and personal performance copies of Lev Aronson, Elizabeth Cowling, Marion Davies, Maurice Eisenberg, Lubomir Georgiev, Bernard Greenhouse, Fritz Magg, Rudolf Matz, János Scholz, and László Varga (Krim). In association with David Gwynn, Krim (2014) proposed the "Cello Manuscript Digital Project" in the fall of 2014 (pg.1). The purpose of the project is to digitize physical manuscripts that have so far been unavailable to researchers and patrons except by an in-person visit to the university archives. The project began with the intent to digitize 100 to 200 of the manuscripts, including the Luigi Silva collection and Lev Aronson's manuscripts composed during his time in German and Russian forced labor camps. As of this year, 2015-2016, the project has expanded to include the digitization of published scores within the public domain (Krim, 2015).

Statement of Problems and Research Questions

Users

The violoncello collection is mostly used by researchers and scholars, many of whom are international. The knowledge that UNCG owns the largest cello music collection in the world draws them to visit the campus; however, since the majority of the collection is still in physical form, distance is an issue. Krim has received many calls and emails from researchers wishing to view the collection, but not wishing to make the trip due to personal inconvenience or the monetary value of travel. Thus, accessibility is a problem. Another complaint is that the manuscripts are undiscoverable either in Google or the library catalog. The latter issue has also been brought to Krim's attention by students wishing to use the collection.

In creating this project, Krim and Gwynn have already begun to fix these issues. By digitizing the collection, accessibility has been improved for researchers far from the UNCG campus. The digital collection can be found very easily on the library's webpage, and is in a visually appealing and easy-to-navigate format. As the project eventually comes to a close, accessibility will no longer be considered an issue. William "Mac" Nelson, Cello Music Cataloger" and Gwynn both work on discovery. Gwynn has updated the processing of metadata to include the extra fields that music materials fit in that normal materials do not. Nelson's position as a cataloger focuses primarily on the cello collection. Because the material is so

specialized, he more often than not ends up creating the classification for each item. He inserts composer/composition specific search terms, English translations of the many languages in which the manuscripts are composed, and updates the individual item records all to aid in discoverability.

Staff

One of the main staff concerns is whether the collection is reaching other demographics outside of musicologists and performers. Due to the uniqueness of the collection, both Gwynn and Krim want to see the collection used by all patrons. Krim has turned to social media to aid in this issue. She has a Facebook page devoted strictly to the violoncello collection. Posts are added constantly, displaying fun facts, striking visuals, and fascinating historical write-ups. The page has gained 20 followers since its inception this year, and is connected to the UNCG Special Collections & Archives page to garner further interest. Though the following is small, it is a decent starting point.

Copyright

Copyright is the exclusive legal right to one's original works, i.e. print, music, visual or sound recording, etc. Music copyright laws are complicated and vary by country. In regard to UNCG's cello collection, the staff must abide by both United States and European music copyright laws. According to Thomas Witt Godden (2010) in his article, *US and European Music Copyright and Collections*:

In the United States, owners of copyright have six basic rights:

- Reproducing the works
- Creating derivative works
- Distributing copies to the public
- Performing the work in public places
- Displaying the work publically
- Performing the work in non-exempt digital mediums

Europe has these same six basic rights, with a few additions from the signing of the Rome Convention in 1961. As stated by Godden (2010), "These rights address performing artists and record producers who make creative reinterpretations of other artist's work." US and European music copyright laws also have differing coverage periods concerning when a work is considered in the public domain. BMI (2001) explains US years of protection:

Even if the composer is no longer above ground, his or her work can be protected by copyright law for 95 years or longer. Works created after January 1, 1978 can be protected for the life of the composer plus 70 years, before those works move into the public domain.

The European copyright law recently changed for classical music. Prior to 2013, works were protected for 50 years after the work's initial publication. As of November 1, 2013, a work is

now protected for 70 years following the owner's death (Byrt). This of course does not cover the changing of copyright holders.

When selecting the manuscripts for digitization, Krim has to be ever conscious of whether the item is still under copyright or not. There are some for which she can request permission to display in the digital collection; however, this is a lengthy process and usually requires a contract stating that those viewing the item in the collection will not be able to copy or print the image for non-academic use. Dealing with copyright laws is a constant issue, but unlike the other problems regarding the collection, to this one the staff must maintain strict adherence—maintaining only physical accessibility.

Research Questions

Five research questions were created to evaluate the digital project:

- Can the digitization process be optimized?
- Are there any further ways to improve accessibility and discovery?
- Does the time outweigh the cost in terms of audience? In other words, does the amount of time spent digitizing the cello collection more productive than paying to bring in those who wish to research the collection in person?
- Is the online view of the collection optimal and user friendly?
- Is the project promotion adequate, and does it reach the intended audience?

II. Methodology

To decide on an action research project, I contacted Stacey Krim, David Gwynn, Mac Nelson, and Sarah Dorsey, Head-Music Library. I knew that I wanted to perform a study related to music, with the possibility of focusing on digital and/or archival material. Both Dorsey and Nelson were happy to meet with me, but had no current projects or assessment needs. Gwynn and Krim have both worked with LIS students on projects in previous semesters, and were more than receptive in my request to evaluate the cello music digitization project.

My first meeting with Stacey Krim consisted of talking briefly about the project idea and then a tour of the music archives, focusing heavily on the cello collection itself. I next had an hour-long meeting with Gwynn and Krim to outline the project, their concerns, and develop the research questions. The following week I met with Gwynn to learn how to digitize the manuscripts pulled by Krim. The process is simple:

- Make sure the Epson scanner is on and its software is open
- Open Photoshop, the “Cello Music Workflow New (2015-2016)” spreadsheet in Google Sheets, and the proper storage folders on the UNCG server.
- Lay the first manuscript page on the scanner bed, with the top an inch away from the edge of the bed and the page itself centered. Then cover with black card stock for a uniform, professional background—this shows the edges of the document to demonstrate that the manuscript is indeed an original.
- Perform a preview scan to set the margins—done to leave enough room to edit the image.
- Perform an actual scan

- Straighten and crop the image in Photoshop
- Record the dimensions of the image for use with the remaining pages—keeps entire manuscript uniform in size
- Save the image to its proper archival folder using the item number found on the “Cello Music Workflow New (2015-2016)” sheet.
- Repeat process until the manuscript is scanned in its entirety.
- Update the Google Sheet: number of pages, notes of flaws or missing pages, initials and date scanned.

Over a period of two weeks, I scanned four manuscripts: three by Maurice Eisenberg and one by Elizabeth Cowling. In our next meetings, Gwynn quality checked my images and then uploaded them to the metadata program. He attached the proper classifications and terms before finally uploading the files to the “Cello Music Collections” page on the library’s digital collections site.

III. Findings

Evaluation

Overall Process

The digitization process is already rather streamlined. It is smooth, easy, and creates clean, crisp images. A faster scanner could be used, such as an upright or a Bookeye, but the quality of each image would suffer.

Accessibility and Discovery

Accessibility of the collection is improving with the digitization process alone. Further improvements could be made if there were no copyright restrictions on certain items in the collection. As stated earlier, this is not possible; therefore, I feel that the individuals working on this project are doing all they can.

Gwynn and Nelson have improved discovery of the collection tenfold with their work in the catalog and with the metadata. As far as discovery, there is not much more that can be done to improve it apart from adding specificity into an item’s record and adding detail to the metadata.

Time vs. Cost

The time spent on digitization is completely worth it. By digitizing the violoncello collection, UNCG’s Archives are improving accessibility to the materials. The process is more time intensive than paying to bring in scholars who need to view the collection; however, using money and resources on digitizing means more patrons can use the materials.

Webpage

The online view of the collection is crisp, clean, and easy to navigate. The separate collections are easy to find by composer, the view of each manuscript is easy to use, and the quality of each image makes for easy analysis and study.

Promotion

Between the pamphlet in the Archives department and Stacey Krim's Facebook page, promotion of the project seems to reach most interested parties. Both are informative, and the Facebook page is updated constantly. Other social media sites could be used, but Facebook is the most popular. Additionally, without another staff member to assist in maintaining the social media accounts, adding a new account would hinder more than help.

Conclusions

I went into this study hoping to aid an archivist and digital project manager fix the bugs in one of their ongoing projects. Surprisingly, their personnel and procedures have done most of the work for them. Mac Nelson and David Gwynn make discovery of the collection easy through their hard work with the catalog and metadata; Stacey Krim makes sure that anything not under copyright protection is digitized, and promotes the collection constantly; the students who digitize the manuscripts have the process down to a science. Musicologists, performers, and students all have access to the physical copies of the cello collection, and now, with this digitization project, have unimpeded access to most the collection online—or will soon. The study may have failed in finding a problem to fix, but it succeeded in giving peace of mind to all involved that their project is a phenomenal feat of information distribution. UNCG has the largest cello music collection in the world, and is on its way to sharing this collection universally.

References

- Broadcast Music Inc. (July 4, 2001). *Playing Classical Music Raises Copyright Questions for Business Owners*. Retrieved from http://www.bmi.com/news/entry/20010705_playing_classical_music_raises_copyright_questions_for_business
- Byrt, S. (December 3, 2013). *A Look at Europe's New Copyright Law*. Retrieved from <http://www.law360.com/articles/492241/a-look-at-europe-s-new-music-copyright-law>
- Gwynn, D. (2015). *Cello Music Workflow New (2015-2016)*. Retrieved from https://docs.google.com/a/uncg.edu/spreadsheets/d/1HRSys_PNJrjwhLpGiTW8NVgMmKxvLcLDrxTFNeRJ1Ug/edit?usp=sharing
- Gwynn, D. *Cello Music Collections*. Retrieved from <http://libcdm1.uncg.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/Greenhouse>
- Godden, T. W. (December 2010). US and European Music Copyright and Collections. *Music Business Journal*. Retrieved from <http://www.thembj.org/2010/12/us-and-european-music-copyright-and-collections/>
- Krim, S. *Cello Music Collections* [Pamphlet]. Greensboro, NC: Martha Blakeney Hodges Special Collections & University Archives, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Greensboro, NC.
- Krim, S. (2014). *Digital Project Proposals, 2014-2015* (unpublished staff project proposal). The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Greensboro, NC.
- Krim, S. (2015). *Digital Project Proposals, 2015-2016* (unpublished staff project proposal). The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Greensboro, NC.