

Ohne Musik wäre das Leben ein Irrtum: Report from the
AIBM-Tagung in Berlin 10-13 September 2013

Thanks to a generous grant from Bibliothek & Information International I had the pleasure of participating in the annual conference with AIBM - the German national branch of International Association of Music Libraries Archives and Documentation Centres (IAML), 10-13 September this year. The conference took place in Universität der Künste in Berlin. I was very impressed by the programme and the meeting was excellently organized. There were no fewer than 190 delegates – about 50 of whom were “Berliner”. AIBM is the biggest and one of the most active national branches within IAML, with around 230 members. As Secretary General of IAML it was therefore very interesting for me to attend the conference and to get to know more German members than the ones I have met at the international conferences. AIBM is also one of the oldest national branches of IAML. It was founded 1953 – the same year as the Swedish and UK & Ireland branches. Consequently these three branches celebrated their 60th anniversaries this year.

IAML is a respected member of the international library and music communities. It currently has around 1.800 members in more than 50 countries and “membership is open to any person or institution interested in the work of the Association”. The membership comprises music librarians, music archivists and documentation specialists, musicologists, music publishers and dealers etc. There is a mixture of personal and institutional members. In countries where there are ten or more members, a national branch can be formed and at present there are twenty five of these around the world. A lot of important work is done on a national level and as Secretary General I am always proud to read the annual reports from each country. The reports include activities such as meetings and workshops; collaboration with other organizations; copyright issues and different kinds of projects – often in the area of digitization.

Before the actual conference started there was an opportunity to take part in one of two half-day courses at a small extra fee (EUR 25):

1. Datierung von Musikdrucken des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts
2. Erstellung von e-Tutorials

Since this was not directly relevant for my work I decided instead to make some study visits to a few of the many prestigious libraries and music institutions in Berlin:

- * Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preußischer Kulturbesitz (SBBPK)
- * Zentral- und Landesbibliothek Berlin (ZLB)
- * Staatliches Institut für Musikforschung Preußischer Kulturbesitz (SIM including BMS online) with the Musikinstrumenten Museum (MIM)

I had also planned to visit the ISMN Agency (ISMN = International Standard Music Number), but unfortunately the office was closed during that week.

I think this report will be too long (and too hard to digest!) if I write about all these institutions. Let me choose the first library I visited, namely Zentral- und Landesbibliothek

Berlin where the head of the music library, Susanne Hein, was my guide. This is the second largest public music library in Germany and the second largest music library in Berlin. The holdings are enormous: Amongst others 43.000 CDs, 40.000 books on music, about 4.500 Music-DVDs and 95.000 scores (not counting individual parts). The library subscribes to 80 journals on music. There are about 400 000 loans of musical material per year, excluding DVDs.

The Amerika-Gedenkbibliothek (AGB), (which is now one of two sites of the Zentral- und Landesbibliothek, founded in 1995) is situated in the former western part of Berlin. It was a gift from the USA in 1954 and was the most modern library in Europe during the 1950's.

Eleven people work with music in ZLB - librarians and library assistants. CDs and scores are purchased and catalogued by the music department while books about music and DVDs are taken care of by other departments. The library receives legal deposit through the federal state of Berlin and is obliged to keep every copy. As a result plenty of time needs to be spent on cataloguing this material.

The library has a room with two pianos for individual practice. This is immensely popular and the room is booked weeks in advance. There is also a so-called black box where visitors can watch DVDs as well as a special exhibition room ("Themenraum").

The music department of the library also hosts concerts in the library, which are very popular among the borrowers.

The library subscribes to several music databases, such as Oxford Music Online, Naxos and IIMP. Unfortunately it is not allowed to offer remote access.

ZLB is a member of the Verbund der Öffentlichen Bibliotheken Berlins (VÖBB). Thanks to this cooperation between the public libraries in Berlin the borrowers have access to 2.7 million titles! The libraries within VÖBB have a common catalogue with a special interface for music. Ms Hein demonstrated the different search possibilities for music and my conclusion was that this was one of the best catalogues for music I have seen – uniform titles with links and cross references, medium of performance, media types etc.

I was very happy to see the devotion of the colleagues at the ZLB, not least the chief Ms Hein. They have every reason to be proud of their music department. And I am proud of them and our profession!

The actual conference started on Wednesday morning. We were welcomed by the AIBM President, Jürgen Diet. He started by reading out a "telegram" (email) from the IAML President, Barbara Dobbs Mackenzie, with cordial congratulation wishes on the 60th anniversary.

The plenary session in the morning was devoted to "Musik in Berlin" from different aspects: The history of the Hochschule für Musik and its libraries and archive; the music history of Berlin during the 18th and 19th centuries; the situation of pop music from a political point of

view and the “double structure” of Berlin. Due to historical reasons (the division of the city into East and West after the Second World War) Berlin has three professional orchestras and three opera houses. This has several implications on, for example, planning repertoires.

On Wednesday afternoon I gave a presentation at the meeting of ArbeitsGruppe Musikhochschulen. The title of my talk was “Ohne Musik wäre das Leben ein Irrtum: Reflections on the role as a librarian at a music conservatoire and a presentation of the network Nordic Music Academy Libraries.” The audience was very friendly and attentive. I was happy to receive many questions afterwards.

The theme of the plenary session on Thursday was “Musik digital” with presentations about muziekweb.nl, Wikipedia and copyright of digital material.

The third plenary session, on Friday, had “Musikbibliothekarische Erschließungsstandards” as the focus. It dealt with uniform titles and RDA — now known as preferred titles.

A conference with AIBM is like a small IAML conference with parallel sessions. There are several subdivisions within AIBM:

- Kommission für Aus- und Fortbildung
- Arbeitsgruppe Öffentliche Musikbibliotheken
- Arbeitsgruppe Musikhochschulbibliotheken
- Kommission für AV-Medien
- Arbeitsgruppe Musikabteilungen an wissenschaftlichen Bibliotheken
- Arbeitsgruppe Rundfunk- und Orchesterbibliotheken
- Projektgruppe Musikverlags-Wiki

Several study visits were organized:

- Architekturführung Staatsbibliothek Unter den Linden
- Musikinstrumentenmuseum (which I visited privately before the conference)
- Musikbibliothek der Zentral- und Landesbibliothek Berlin (private visit – please, see above)
- Universität der Künste. Bibliothek (participated)

and

- Deutsche Oper (participated)
- Musikhistorischer Spaziergang – Andante in Mitte
- Backstage-Führung Stage-Theater am Potsdamer Platz

Like IAML’s international conferences there was also an attractive social programme. On Wednesday evening we enjoyed a concert with Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester (DSO) Berlin in the famous concert hall, the Philharmonie. It was part of the “Musikfest Berlin” with music by Janáček, Martinů (a beautiful Rhapsodie-Konzert für Viola und Orchester performed by Maxim Rysanov) and Bartók. On Thursday we were taken on a boat trip on the river Spree. As a result of a delicious buffet, not a little beer and distribution of prizes to the lucky winners

of a quiz (related to the AIBM history and the year 1953) the spirits were quite high as we slowly passed by Berlin by night.

The complete programme can be found on the AIBM website: <http://www.aibm.info/>.

The conference ended with the General Assembly where I had an opportunity to thank my German colleagues for their hospitality. Besides from all the professional input I received during the conference week, it was very valuable for me to participate in my role as Secretary General for IAML. I am proud that our Association has such a prominent branch among its members.

Coda

My participation in the AIBM Conference 2013 was very useful in many respects and also lead to a couple of follow-ups. I am very grateful for the generous financial support from BI International, which enabled my participation.

One of the presentations during the conference was made by Jürgen Diet, President of AIBM. As a result of the conference I have now invited him to Gothenburg next year to deliver a one-day course for Swedish IAML members. It will be an adaptation of a summer school arranged at the Media University in Stuttgart for international English-speaking participants: "Music in Digital Libraries and Archives".

Another positive result of the conference is that the Chair of the ArbeitsGruppe Musikhochschulen, Katharina Hofmann, is planning to spend a week in my library next autumn within the Erasmus programme.

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