

Introduction

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Ever since the 1980s, twentieth-century music studies have received considerable impulse from a higher degree of public access to documentation. This enhanced availability of sources is essentially due to the appearance of archives and research centres dedicated to the conservation and interpretation of documents produced and collected by composers, performers and music promoters (the Paul Sacher Stiftung in Basel, the music archives of the Akademie der Künste in Berlin, the Istituto per la Musica of the Fondazione Giorgio Cini and the Fondazione Archivio Luigi Nono in Venice, the Arnold Schönberg Center in Vienna, etc.), as well as the definition of archival standards for the preservation, description and digitisation of items and personal materials which are at times included in larger and more heterogeneous deposits (e.g. the British Library and the Bibliothèque Nationale de France).

As is well known, archival processes depend on many different factors, ranging from the physical condition of the collections to the archival policies and the available resources. In general, however, professionalisation and digitalisation (i.e. the adoption and increased use of computer technologies) have helped to establish common benchmarks. This is well demonstrated by musicological

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studies focused on sources pertaining to the musical production of the last 150 years: publications have become increasingly detailed thanks to first-hand information found in the wide spectrum of accessible sources in twentieth-century archival collections. Further evidence can be seen in editorial initiatives designed to disseminate archival documents, promoting knowledge of them through traditional media or new multimedia products which are increasingly elaborate and innovative in both their form and content (facsimile editions, critical editions of works, writings, sketchbooks and other working documents, re-editions of audio and audiovisual recordings, documentary exhibitions, websites, etc.).

Over the last three decades, a growing interest in correspondences by twentieth-century musicians has emerged. This tendency is the result of the above-mentioned accessibility of sources and the ensuing increase in publications of letters (especially as of the nineties), as well as a greater awareness that in letters one often encounters elements that do not emerge from other sources. In fact, letters often clarify or even provide fundamental evidence as to the genesis of works, writings, performances, recordings and other projects or events. In certain cases they are the locus in which compositions, event programmes, thoughts or even entire theories receive their first outline, prior to being fully developed and implemented (see for instance the Boulez–Cage correspondence). They can furthermore reveal promotional and self-promotional strategies enacted by individuals and organisations, bring out the emotional aura that surrounds a première, and so on.

Moreover, as this awareness has grown, historical and critical commentaries on the letters and *addenda* presenting related sources have developed in size and scope, going beyond the limits of technical explanation, erudition or mere illustration. Hence recent editions of letters, even more than other source-based publications, offer a precise idea of how European archives of twentieth-century music reflect the dense networks of relationships created by composers and musical institutions in major cultural centres (Berlin, Darmstadt, London, Paris, Warsaw, Vienna etc.) and throughout Europe.

These were only a few of the reasons that encouraged the Istituto per la Musica of the Fondazione Giorgio Cini and the Fondazione Ugo e Olga Levi to sponsor and organise a meeting between archivists and musicologists focused on the treatment and dissemination of twentieth-century musicians' correspondence (Venice, 27 and 28 June 2014). The present issue of *Archival Notes*, the first of this new on-line journal promoted by the Istituto per la Musica, takes its title from this two-day event. Almost all the texts were presented and discussed on

that occasion; and although most have since undergone significant revision, they maintain the style of conference papers.

In the first section of the volume, the editors of a number of current, recent or landmark projects deal with the topics addressed during the second day of the conference ('Publishing Composers' Letters. Case Studies on Relations between Research and Archival Practice'). In revisiting his Claude Debussy's *Correspondance (1872–1918)* (Gallimard, 2005), Denis Herlin classifies the letters published therein according to their location and recipients, and concludes with an overview of the latest findings.¹ The article examines the limits of what has proven to be, and remains, a complex documentary survey, given that most of the letters received by the composer have gone missing. Katharina Bleier and Therese Muxeneder present their work-in-progress on the exchange of letters between Arnold Schoenberg and Universal Edition,² an extremely interesting project for two main reasons: firstly because letters between composers and publishers play an essential role in documenting musicians' creative processes, despite the fact that these publications often receive far less attention, and secondly because the format chosen in this case is a hypertextual digital publication on the pages of an institution's website. Andreas Meyer, the co-editor of the Arnold Schoenberg–Alban Berg correspondence (Schott, 2007), offers a point by point discussion of the archival, musicological and editorial premises and the singular accomplishment of the series *Briefwechsel der Wiener Schule* [Correspondence of the Second Viennese School].³ He then weighs up the pros and cons of the various types of editorial products that are on offer today (from books to continuously updated Internet portals), making 'a cautious and preliminary plea for the printed book' 'as a medium for critical editions'.⁴

As musicologist and director of the Budapest Bartók Archives, László Vikárius considers the last seventy years of work on Béla Bartók's correspondence, from the early partial editions to current projects.⁵ The second half of his contribution concerns the task of locating, indexing, and describing the letters written and received by the composer, and the digital re-publication of letters previously published in books (*Hagyományok Háza*, 2007). In fact, these are two of the preliminary stages in the development of a database dedicated to the 'whole known correspondence' of Bartók. Finally, Angela Ida De Benedictis offers an overview of her experience in publishing letters, with special reference to Luigi Nono's exchanges with Massimo Mila (*il Saggiatore*, 2010) and Helmuth Lachenmann (Leo S. Olschki, 2012).⁶ She first describes the particular, not readily schematised and never pre-defined relationship between interdependent variables including accessibility, state of research, editor's objectives and

publisher's targets, and then goes on to illustrate the effects of this relationship on the final product.

The second section of the issue, entitled 'Glimpses from the Archives', brings together nine reports on the topics discussed during the first day of the conference: 'Collecting, Preserving, Describing, and Rendering Accessible Composers' Correspondence. State of the Art'. The majority of the authors illustrate how letters are treated in eight European institutions: Akademie der Künste, Berlin (Werner Grünzweig); Archivio Storico Ricordi, Milan (Pierluigi Ledda and Gabriele Dotto); Archives of Polish Composers, University of Warsaw Library (Piotr Maculewicz); Fondazione Archivio Luigi Nono, Venice (Paolo Dal Molin); Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice (Angela Carone and Francisco Rocca); Fondazione Isabella Scelsi, Rome (Alessandra Carlotta Pellegrini); National and University Library, Zagreb (Nada Bezić); Internationales Musikinstitut Darmstadt (Sylvia Freydanck). Their examples come from both past and ongoing projects, offering a description of working conditions, contexts and potentialities. The papers indirectly highlight a number of significant differences (and even some contradictions) that *Archival Notes* has in no way attempted to attenuate. These differences concern the very way in which the institutions' internal functioning has been conceived and presented, and essentially depend on the role of the corporate bodies and professionals involved. On the one hand, we see libraries or archives that for the most part manage their own holdings; this is the typical situation for medium and large organisations, be they public or private, with a great number of collections. On the other hand, we find foundations and centres, especially those dedicated to a single musician, which do not simply deal with his or her *Nachlass*, but also try to collect (copies of) scattered documents produced by this musician and promote his legacy. Thus, regardless of descriptive standards, a significant part of archival processes depends on the nuances that exist between these two extremes in the field of the preservation and dissemination of an artistic and intellectual heritage. These differences have a considerable impact on the policies and procedures used in accessing archives (indeed, access to sources can be provided, as the aforementioned Andreas Meyer tells us, by 'an institution which ironically hosts nearly none of the original sources, but defines for itself a thematic responsibility'). In hindsight, safeguarding each institution's prerogative *versus* adopting a radically user-oriented approach seem to be the two antipodes of the world of twentieth-century collections, which continues to be bountiful and a hive of activity, despite the financial crisis. It is, however, a domain whose regions are somewhat reluctant to fully assimilate the widespread awareness that common standards and tools are in fact useful, and that their full adoption

represents an investment for the future, even though, paradoxically, this does not appear to come across as an urgent issue. So it is not by chance that the main body of the issue ends with a non-European perspective on data sharing, originally presented as a key-note to the final discussion of the conference (“Towards a European Network of Archives of Twentieth-Century Music”).⁷ The musicologist Friedemann Sallis and the archivist Regina Landwher illustrate how structured collaboration is indeed both possible and fruitful, even though it cannot be achieved in the blink of an eye.

As will be the case with later numbers of this journal, *Archival Notes* 1 is rounded off by a section entitled ‘Documents and Reports’. Released by the Istituto per la Musica, it records a few traces of its own activity. Of the two texts published here, the second provides details, among other things, of publications dating to 2014–2015 and events promoted in the same period (books, chapters and articles, exhibitions, CDs, concerts, conferences), entirely or partially dedicated to the musical archives of the Fondazione Giorgio Cini. The first contribution instead provides a precious counterpart to the preceding articles: it takes the reader back to the occasion that first prompted them, publishing in a new and revised form the texts of the exhibition *The Composer’s Mailbox*.

Notes

- 1 Denis Herlin, 'Debussy's Letters: Recipients, Current Locations, Current Concerns', *Archival Notes. Sources and Research from the Institute of Music*, 1, 2016 (Musicians' Correspondence and Interaction between Archives), pp. 1–17.
- 2 Katharina Bleier and Therese Muxeneder, 'The Correspondence between Arnold Schoenberg and Universal Edition', *Archival Notes*, 1, 2016, pp. 19–30.
- 3 Andreas Meyer, 'The Berg–Schoenberg Correspondence. Background, Archival Conditions, and Editorial Practice', *Archival Notes*, 1, 2016, pp. 31–44.
- 4 Meyer, 'The Berg–Schoenberg Correspondence', p. 42.
- 5 László Vikárius, 'Béla Bartók's Correspondence', *Archival Notes*, 1, 2016, pp. 45–56.
- 6 Angela Ida De Benedictis, 'Some Experiences in Editing 'the Body of Thoughts' of Lachenmann, Maderna, Mila and Nono', *Archival Notes*, 1, 2016, pp. 57–70.
- 7 Friedemann Sallis and Regina Landwehr, 'Musicians' Correspondence and Interaction Between Archives: Remarks from a Canadian Perspective', *Archival Notes*, 1, 2016, pp. 145–155.