Mirjana Veselinović-Hofman

MULTIMEDIA ARCHIVES AS A STEP TOWARDS WORLD MUSIC

Abstract: World music is considered in this study as a collective category that refers to the entirety of artistic music achievements in the world. Therefore, it is not treated as a trend that aims to promote one particular kind of music or style or composer or piece of music or some specific "mingling"…, in such a way that they become fashionable, even elitist. And yet, neither is it considered here as "world" because it is anticipated that it will neutralize ethnic and stylistic peculiarities and advocate common, "universal" music features and practice. On the contrary, it is considered as "world" because it is expected that it will demonstrate an increased capacity to encompass and offer diversity that will provide complex layers of richness and "entirety". So, world music is conceived of and treated as the *awareness of* the possibility of accessing any music stratum and fact belonging to the global music heritage, meaning, the music heritage worldwide, stored in "network institutions" such as libraries and archives. In other words, the embodiment of world music presumes the existence of a store of world music data as well as a direct accessibility.

This is precisely why the phenomenon of world music is elaborated in this study in the metaphorical sense through a comparison with the above mentioned network institutions. In this elaboration, the notions of *world music library* and *world music archive* are introduced and examined. The finding of this investigation is that these notions cross over considerably: practical aspects of the world music archive and of world music are closer than those of the world music library and world music. The main reason is that, ultimately, world music requires first of all accessibility of sound, which cannot yet be entirely provided by a world library. But a world music archive can - due to its audiovisual nature - make possible listening to every music example stored in it. In this way, technologically, such archives essentially correspond to what world music "expects" from its embodiment.

This paper was inspired by a recent conference of the International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives.[1] More precisely, it was provoked by a strong conviction voiced during the conference that (music) archives are very important institutions today capable of and hence expected to perform an active role in the various facets of life of contemporary society worldwide.

Nowadays archives established and organized by means of state-of-the-art technology can be considered as a specific "global" phenomenon, which is, due to current multilateral archival projects, attainable even in developing countries. The recent practice of establishing compatible multimedia centres – which has also been realized in several African countries[2] – provides an efficient communication network among (music) archival institutions equipped in the same way, which makes possible the existence of a general, reliable and easily accessible source of information on music heritage worldwide.

This very fact encouraged us to ponder the question of parallels between music archives and another phenomenon which bears the accidentals of the "global": world music. In our view elaboration of these

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[1] The conference was held at the Music Department of the University of Pretoria, South Africa, from the 21st to the 25th of September, 2003.

[2] It is the case for example in Mali, Ghana, Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, where network centres of the same type have been established within the Cultural African Network (CAN) project.

parallels is important, because it may help to mitigate a current spreading fear of losing particular national identities concomitant with growing globalization. And this is precisely why it would seem more urgent to speak about the nature of the global rather than of the local, regarding assumed parallels between music archives and world music.

Let us start with the fact that both phenomena rely on abundant layers of the particular. So, world music, generally speaking, is a collective category that refers to the entirety of artistic music achievements in the world. As such, it still exists more as a concept than a reality, for its definite and specific materialization is not easy to accomplish: this materialization would firstly presume the existence of a store of world music data as well as straightforward accessibility.

But, as we know, libraries are the usual places where notated and recorded music is preserved together with all genres of published writings about music and everything directly or indirectly referring to it: biographical, historical, theoretical, analytical, aesthetic, philosophical and other issues. Therefore, libraries, and in particular music libraries, make music and its literature available to users. Of course, some libraries are bigger and have richer collections than others, which means that besides an obligatory historical music holding (for example, a choice of Palestrina's motets, the main works of J. S. Bach, Beethoven's symphonies or Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring,* and the like), in practice libraries do not offer exactly the same card catalogue to users. And this is not only because the basic collection has material that necessarily varies from library to library - mostly due to limited space - but also because libraries tend to store music and writings of authors belonging to the geographic region of the libraries' professional jurisdiction, as well.[3] By accumulating and storing material of national interest, music libraries provide the source and the foundation for a future world music library.

What needs to be done to achieve it is to provide all existing music libraries with compatible equipment and software appropriate for searching through every single library collection from any library in the world, so that they can easily communicate among themselves.

In this way, the holdings of every properly equipped and organized music library becomes a living part of a general music legacy considered here as world music. And through this, every music library becomes a constructive segment of a world library. In other words, the global character of a world library springs from the local characteristics of its constituents, but can come into being exclusively on the basis of an appropriate communication network spread and activated among music libraries worldwide. Such a system has already been instituted in bigger library centres, so that their holdings can be reached from any personal computer. And yet, in order to operate the system fully, it would be necessary to introduce every

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[3] We do not neglect the fact that there are different types of libraries, among which are also those of specifically international or national character. However, as national libraries also preserve "international" material, and internationally aimed libraries also contain a "national" collection, we talk here about them in general. Thereby, we also have in mind that music libraries mostly accumulate both kinds of material with the same interest and attention.

single music library into this network. Only then could we speak of the real existence of a world library and of world music as its content.

However, even then, certain questions would inevitably arise, firstly, the question of how real this existence actually is and how global is its coverage.

To answer it we would start with the claim that neither the reality of existence nor globality can be considered as absolute categories. For if we speak about the real existence of a world library and, consequently, of world music, we must bear in mind that its reality is in fact virtual, and its globality is finally a matter of selection.

The virtual reality of a world music library relies on the technical procedure of connecting users to certain technical systems by means of which users can extend their physical abilities and limits in the sense that they can "travel" extremely fast, almost instantly materializing their electronic presence within a desired library. They can quickly "enter" a library no matter how far away it is. This means that users are able to search through catalogues of distant libraries while having the illusion of being physically there. However, the users' electronic navigation in itself is no less real than if their search was through traditionally organized library catalogues: that is, because of the network connections, a user can receive the information in written form. The "only" difference is that the information sought is not in the form of usual library cards but appears on the computer screen. However, even as such, the downloaded information can be printed anytime, on paper as well as on cards, which then simulates the reality of a conventional library catalogue. Thereby, certain tangibility would inevitably be reached, but at the same time, precisely because of this, the mentioned illusion would be reinforced.

That is why a traditional search through library catalogues can also be conceived of as a kind of "virtual reality". We would claim that, to a certain degree, the virtual reality of electronically organized library catalogues corresponds to the reality of the traditional library setting. The reality of network "bodies" and the reality of tangible "bodies" are sometimes very close to each other.

The *contents* offered by both realities are, however, fragmentary.

On the one hand, the collection of any conventionally established library necessarily represents only a specific selection. It is determined by the availability of the desired materials whose purchases are regularly planned ahead within the library's annual projects, and additionally suggested by users. A library collection also depends on the gifts that it may receive in the form of various publications, which is mostly unpredictable. Finally, acquisitions are restricted because of the dimensions of the library premises, almost decisively depending on the size of the library's storage space.

So, as library collections are in fact selective, so too are their common collections. This means that a world music library can hardly merit its "world" qualification in the absolute sense: for, no matter how huge the world music legacy stored in a world music library, it is only a relative category.

On the other hand, we cannot deny that the qualification "world" in both formulations, "world library" and "world music", or, let us say, the qualification "global" in "global library" and "global music" *are* grounded to a certain degree. This ensues from an attainable wealth of current knowledge about music from the whole world, knowledge which is actually based on information that is globally accessible by means of the network. Hence, we would say that the adjectives "global" and "world" in the given formulations always indicate the current range of the general. More precisely, that which *in practice* acts as general does not remain unchanged, "locked", but is open to any new material, information or data: with every library which becomes a participant in an electronic communications system, this *general* becomes "more general", and the global "more global".

An important conclusion which can be drawn from this fact is that the notions of global and world, that otherwise do bear "absolute" conceptual status and meaning, exist in real life as relative categories, because only at the conceptual level can these notions "perform" the entirety of their content. Therefore, we would say that a *global/world* music library and *global/world* music operate as specific "work in progress".

Regarding this issue, music libraries share the same problems with other related institutions, in particular with music archives. But while libraries collect primarily edited material - printed and recorded – music archives collect original documents (files, letters, lists, photos, writings, sketches, analysis, tapes...) regarding everything which refers predominantly to regionally emphasized music life. [4] Within this framework of the regional, special attention is given to the preservation of the ethnomusic heritage: *of folklore melodies,* directly recorded while being performed vocally, instrumentally or vocal-instrumentally by native local music makers; *of folk dances* and *peasant costumes,* that are recorded either in the form of drawings, schemes, descriptions, photos, film or video tapes; *of indigenous instruments,* that are kept as parts of special collections, of which documentation exists as well in photos, in the performers' own verbal descriptions of the procedure of making and the way of playing them, which is preserved on sound- or film tape, etc., etc. More recently data are also being stored on the computer, which is the initial step towards a technologically new status of music archives.

So, in a way that is analogous to the function of a music library, every particular music archive provides material for a general collection too. Here it is about a world *archival* music collection which, as in the case of a *world music* collection, can become reality only in the virtual sense, that is, on the basis of a network system. Through this, global archival wealth - which is global in the same sense as is the artistic music heritage stored in a world library – becomes also a specific part of world music heritage: it enters this heritage, enriching it with its own content, which includes a vast field of indigenous music traditions and practices.

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[4] We do not forget that music libraries in fact contain manuscript departments, but still, the foremost task of libraries is not to deal with original, unprinted documents.

By means of specific technological settings, music archives become accessible to a much wider public than through traditional, technologically obsolete systems. When functioning exclusively through traditional systems, archives are not the most inviting places. They are usually visited by a rather narrow circle of users, predominantly by people carrying out particular (scientific) research, or people who are just interested in searching for information mostly regarding their private matters. Anyway, they cannot borrow documents from a conventionally ordered archive, because the nature of the documents does not allow that. However, thanks to new technology, even this circumstance has been overcome to a certain degree.

A system that provides such accessibility is based on the multimedia logic and organization of music archives and involves the coordination of different digital databases where material is prepared, that is, collected, classified, conserved and preserved in all its aspects separately: sound, verbal, visual, and kinetic. The databases can be coordinated in various ways, depending on the particular subject, and is in itself a matter of creation.

For example, if a user requires information on the instrumental practice within a specific ethnic region, an interface connection can lead the user from the geographical and historical data of the region, which are presented visually as well as kinetically; to information about instruments played in the region – which can include photos, sound examples, verbal/oral explanations, directly filmed materials; to biographical particulars about indigenous instrument makers, also music makers, and live interviews with them; to the presentation of the findings of those melographers and ethnomusicologists who have dealt with the instrumental music of the region and examined it (e. g. their supply of live music material collected directly from authentic sources, articulated both in the form of sound and notation, can be completely accessible to a user as well as the ethnomusicologists' analysis of the material, their various writings on it, etc., etc.).

A database project as the foundation for multimedia archival settings is of crucial importance for at least two reasons. Firstly, it brings archival stores "to life" not only through the coordination of corresponding music archive databases worldwide, but also through the provision of an efficient communication interface among all institutions equipped with the same system. In such a way, the local, ethnic, let us say even national character of stored material remains reliably preserved and essentially undamaged by the easy accessibility provided by the very same communication system that stores the material. We would even say that the system protects its own store from itself. This is so because the easy accessibility can also result in the undesirable, mechanical use of the stored collections, including mixing of music facts taken from most various and distant traditions.

However, even when the combining is done for creative reasons and motives, in a thoughtful artistic way, the local music features of the applied materials are in serious crisis. Due to such use – in current artistic methodology known as postmodern – the chosen contents inevitably enter a kind of ethnic (and not only

ethnic) compromise. We cannot deny that the ethnicity of the material is in danger of gradually disappearing in these circumstances, for the idea of this methodology is not to emphasize but to mingle ethnic specificities in order to build a new "local/global" quality. But, at the same time, since these music data applied in a new music context already exist as digitally recorded and are also ethnically systematized in a multimedia form, hence are "alive", they can hardly lose their national identity. Actually, the multimedia form of storing folklore contents and the interface archival network through which this material becomes available, are nowadays the most secure way of preserving and "advocating" the peculiarities of one's indigenous music.

Secondly, multimedia archiving with its "skill sharing" becomes not only an important issue of the living memory of a society and of its past, but also of its present and indirectly its future. This kind of archiving warns of the fact that memory is not "just memory" considered as a petrified source, but as a construct too. This means that memory relies first of all on *how* things are memorized, and how these memorized things are considered. If this is done in a way which presents and treats the stored material as "alive", in context, as part of the endeavours of civilization, with the consciousness that "today is always the past", multimedia archiving can contribute decisively to the many facets of everyday life of a society, becoming an important indicator of its development.

So, music archives can function as a crucial means of dissemination of the knowledge they store.[5] They provide schools, universities, radio and TV programmes, publishing houses, concert agencies, and other relevant institutions with contents which can be applied to particular purposes: educational, scientific, cultural, even political. For example, due to interface technology, school children can be informed in a direct and compelling manner about, let us say, the richness of the folklore music of their own country first of all; students, especially those who study ethnomusicology, as well as scientists from the same branch have the opportunity to experience and elaborate the folklore virtual reality of an unlimited ethnic range, even to introduce their own achievements (direct recordings "from the soil", various findings, writings…) into a direct world archival communication; radio and TV stations can considerably enrich and expand their documentaries; publishing houses can easily reach authentic music contents for the production of CDs, books or magazines; concert agencies, museums, etc., can broaden their activities with various ethnically defined events and contents. Moreover, multimedia archival communication may even serve as a source of court evidence.[6]

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[5] This is the point where complex questions of authorship, intellectual property and rights arise. Let us mention that a particular session at the IASA conference dealt with these issues, which are not elaborated here.
[6] It is interesting that one whole session of the IASA conference was dedicated to "The Role of Audiovisual Archives in the Process of Reconciliation". A striking issue of this session was the activity of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, whose investigations have taken into consideration various audiovisual recordings and collections. (Cf. Martha Henck, "The Audiovisual Collections of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda: Reconciliation and Reconstruction", man.) The Australian Oral History Project, "Bringing Them Home", also crucially relies on audiovisual recordings, first of all interviews with people who were directly affected by the former government policy which forced separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their parents and families, to grow up in

Indirectly regarding this, let us just mention that if the Archive of the Faculty of Music in Belgrade, for example, were to be given the necessary financial support to digitalize its holdings, it would be able to play an important role in providing the relevant institutions throughout the world with audiovisual evidence of the richness of indigenous Serbian music and ancient cultural monuments in, let us say, the Kosovo region. Then, the Faculty's exceptionally rich music archive would at all times be able to show evidence of the fact that all indigenous artistic practice which has been suppressed in this region, and all those cultural monuments barbarically destroyed for purely political reasons, once really existed. And presumably, the Archive could testify authoritatively in particular to the history of the existence of Serbian music culture in Kosovo. Without the interface connections, however, the archival holdings remain inaccessible and socially inefficient for the present and hence for the future too.

With this we do not claim that the archives which until now have not been fortunate enough to receive funding to adopt the new technology, do not fulfil their basic role of preserving and transferring their treasure for generations to come. They do this even through obsolete technical procedures because their very essential function is, fortunately, not decisively dependent on technological conditions. The problem is that this very basic, nowadays already "petrified" function, is no longer sufficient. If an archive really intends for its holding to become a vital part of archival virtual reality, it has to be appropriately equipped for quick and easy communication with institutions of the same kind, as well as with those for which its collections may be of interest and importance. Stores of archival knowledge have to become as accessible and efficient as possible.

In other words, the direct network distribution of archival documents necessarily leads to an exchange of knowledge among people, hence towards a more profound understanding among them, and an expansion of their experiences and partnerships.

Indeed, in this sense, multimedia music archives are an undeniable "world" phenomenon. To emphasize *this*, we use the formulation "world music archive". As we have already mentioned, the adjective "world" is used in the sense of the *currently global,* as it is in the formulation "world music library". To put it another way: when referring to an institution, the qualification "world" implies the globality, which originates from its communication network organization and system of functioning. As for the "world" character of the content of this communication, "world" refers both to information on artistic music heritage stored in a world music library and to original documents regarding predominantly indigenous music stored in a multimedia way in a world music archive.

However, we would say that these notions can cross over considerably: the practical aspects of a multimedia archive and of world music are closer than those of a world library and of world music. The main

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conditions of modern civilization! (Cf. Kevin Bradley, "Bringing Them Home", man.) Multimedia archival documentation can also be of importance for the new International Criminal Court in The Hague.

reason is that, ultimately, world music requires first of all accessibility of sound. But the sound cannot be entirely provided by a world library yet. Currently, libraries can enable reading of some articles on the screen, as well as of some magazines, parts of books, theoretically even entire books; they can also enable listening to some sound examples through the computer, but not listening to the whole music on which it stores information and printed material (scores, literature and recordings). Users cannot borrow a score, sound recording, or a book from an on-line library as they can from a traditional library. They can only purchase the material they need more easily through the possibilities offered by the network.

But a world music archive can - due to its audiovisual nature - make possible listening to every music example stored in it. In this way, technologically, such archives essentially correspond to what world music "expects" from its "materialization". But at the same time, the notion of *world music* is broader from the logical point of view than the notion of *folklore music*, at least because the notion of *music* implies folklore music too. Therefore, we would say that the concept of world music as the holdings of a world music library actually goes beyond its own initial institutional belonging, and, moving towards a multimedia archive, extends its state of belonging to both institutions. In other words, world music has become a blanket term for the music wealth of both institutions.[7] And yet, it should be considered as "world" not because it is anticipated that it will neutralize ethnic and stylistic peculiarities and "advocate" common, "universal" music features and practice, but because it is expected that it will demonstrate an increased capacity to encompass and offer diversity which will provide complex layers of richness and "entirety". Finally, world music should be conceived of and treated as the *awareness of* the possibility of accessing any musical stratum and fact belonging to music heritage worldwide, stored in both network institutions: library and archive.

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[7] On this occasion we will not elaborate on the possibility that the formulation *world music* also refers to just one trend which aims to promote one particular kind of music or style or composer or piece of music or some specific "mingling"…, in such a way that they become fashionable, even elitist. Since this is open to manipulation and abuse, especially through the network system – which never goes alone but in coordination with the usual means of mass communication - it can easily happen that this particular trend undermines the status of "world music", and that it "behaves" like "world music": but now "world" in the sense of "compulsory" prevailing. This syndrome of, let us say, "Coca-Cola" is dangerous for the authentic idea of world music, which is to endorse and maintain diversity and freedom of choice. To make something "inevitable" and "unavoidable" is, surely, not difficult to achieve through the internet, but, at the same time, this technology provides "protection" from this abuse: it is always possible to monitor the propagated "universality", because network databases, as an immense store, always offer "another choice".