

Call for Papers
Special issue on
Ethnic music audio documents: from the preservation to the fruition

The ethnic-musical heritage is in danger of disappearing, of being forgotten in some public archive or, in most cases, a private collection, because of the poor quality of the material on which the audio documents were recorded and the rapid evolution of the recording formats — that make obsolete and scarcely readable many old recordings. Obviously, this has not been the destiny of music repertoires of wider interest, such as lyrical or classical music, rock/pop or jazz. In these cases, the recording companies have re-recorded most of the audio documents, particularly those of high economical interest for the market. Unfortunately, the same has not happened to folk and traditional repertoires.

Nowadays the A/D conversion represents the only solution able to efficiently contrast the eclipse of audio memories and to guarantee content transmission. During the re-recording onto the new media, the communication forms change, thus outlining a plurality of preservative, restorative and editorial approaches, which variously raise the usual problems related to the authenticity and interpretation of the documents.

Ethno-music archives and cultural institutions show a keen awareness both for the opportunities, which the new media offer to improve and spread their documentary heritage, and for uncontrolled duplication and manipulation risks arising from transfer onto digital carriers and to on-line access. There have been several EU research projects on audio digitalization in different contexts and from different points of view (IST, Culture2000, *Mediaplus*, *Interreg*, *eContentplus*, etc.), although very few of them are focused on ethnic music. Moreover, as it is well known, the multidisciplinary researches in a multicultural society preservation—of which the preservation of audio documents is an outstanding example—fit perfectly in the Sound and Music Computing roadmap (challenge 3) as defined by scientific community (see <http://www.soundandmusiccomputing.org/>). There are many reasons to believe that the audio documents of ethnic music are the most complex in terms of preservation-restoration-access. By studying examples from this field, a broad range

of challenging problems can be discovered and analysed. Ethnic music refers to the music recordings of non-Western cultures since the beginning of the 20th Century and the problem of multiple carriers (e.g., in analogue domain: wax cylinders, sonofil, disc, tape, cassettes; in digital domain: magnetic tape and optical disc), formats, ethnic groups, regions, researchers, etc. involved with the documenting, researching and preservation of this music. The analysis of Western music has been developed almost exclusively on the basis of written scores, which represent musical performance models, rather than on the performance itself. In ethnomusicology, music is part of a cultural context and social life: the audio document contains information about the whole context in which the document was produced. Since ethnic music recordings were often made with non-professional (low-quality, poorly aligned and maintained—often by technically unskilled researchers—without generally accepted standards and recording practices) recording systems, the audio carriers—almost obsolete—show risk of deterioration. In this sense, this field of study is particularly important to preserve the document and to restore the audio signal in a musicological correct way.

Aim

The aim of this special issue is to reflect the state of the art in the field of ethnic music documents preservation, restoration, retrieval and access, in order to face various problems that can be summarised in the following question: “Where does the authenticity of a musical audio document lie when there are neither scores nor a univocal and well-established executive praxis?”

Relevant topics

We invite contributions dealing with:

- *Ethnic music audio documents preservation.* Audio documents related to ethnic music are usually recorded on a large variety of carriers, which range from industrially pressed discs to semi-professional recording formats, used in the live recording. Moreover, these documents are often the unique testimonial of disappeared oral cultures. Their preservation requires digitization procedures, detailed for every type of carrier, able to preserve not only the recorded audio but also all the metadata and contextual information which can be useful for the musicological research.
- *Ethnic music audio documents restoration.* Over the past ten years, the research on the audio restoration field was focused on the study of the sound content of a historical recording (a digitized signal without contextual information), producing different noise reduction algorithms (based on noise models, signal models or source models). If aggravated, this approach can become deceptive even from the point of view of the algorithms development, since it reduces the range of knowledge necessary to model the signal alterations. On the contrary, it is necessary to guide the restoration work with all the ancillary information, retrievable from the history of the audio document and from the history of the musical technology connected with it.
- *Access of Ethnic music audio documents.* To assure an adequate indexing and an effective access, it is essential to supply the audio document with digitized metadata and contextual information, organised in advanced hypermedia structure.

The provisional calendar for the issue is:

- Deadline for submission: November 30th, 2008
- First Round of Reviews/Decisions: February 28th, 2009
- Resubmission of Revised Papers (if needed): May 31st, 2009
- Final Decisions to the authors: July 31st, 2009
- Issue Publication (scheduled): winter 2009

Submission guidelines

Please submit articles via the online submission page (<http://ees.elsevier.com/sigpro>) selecting "ICA/BSS" as Article Type.

Prepare articles following the instructions in the Guide for Authors, available from <http://authors.elsevier.com/journal/sigpro>.

Guest Editors

Prof. Antonio Camurri. Associate Professor at DIST-University of Genova (Faculty of Engineering). Research areas include sound and music computing, multimodal intelligent interfaces for expressive interaction, kansei information processing and computational models of emotions, interactive multimodal-multimedia systems for the arts (theatre, music, dance) and culture (museums). He is founder and scientific director of InfoMus Lab (www.infomus.org), he was President of AIMI (Italian Association for Musical Informatics), he is member of the Executive Committee (ExCom) of the IEEE CS Technical Committee on Computer Generated Music, Associate Editor of the international "Journal of New Music Research". He is responsible of EU IST Projects and since 2005 he is Director of the Casa Paganini International Centre of Excellence on science and multimedia technologies for music and performing arts (www.casapaganini.org). antonio.camurri@unige.it.

Prof. Ichiro Fujinaga. Associate Professor in Music Technology Area at the Schulich School of Music at McGill University, Montreal (QC), Canada, ich@music.mcgill.ca. He has Bachelor's degrees in Music/Percussion and Mathematics from University of Alberta, and a Master's degree in Music Theory, and a Ph.D. in Music Technology from McGill University. In 2003–4, he was the Acting Director of the Center for Interdisciplinary Research in Music Media and Technology (CIRMMT) at McGill. In 2002–3, he was the Chair of the Music Technology Area at the School of Music. Before that he was a

faculty member of the Computer Music
Department at the Peabody Conservatory of
Music of the Johns Hopkins University.

Dr. Sergio Canazza, Udine University, Italy, sergio.canazza@uniud.it. He received the Laurea degree in electronic engineering from the University of Padova, Italy. From 1996 to 2003, he was a researcher at the CSC, University of Padova, in the field of Sound and Music Computing. In 2003, he joined the University of Udine (Italy) as an assistant professor, where he teaches classes on music and new media, informatics, musical acoustic and audio signal processing. He is a Member of the board of the Italian Association of Music Informatics (AIMI: <http://www.aimi-musica.org/index.html>). His research concerns a) audio signal processing, b) human-computer non-verbal interaction, and c) audio documents preservation /restoration. He is author or co-author of more than 100 papers published in International Journals and Refereed International Conferences. He was a) general chairman and member of Technical Committees at several conferences and b) Project Manager in European projects.