ПОСЕБНЕ ЗБИРКЕ

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SING IT BACK

Abstract

The life of opera, one of the most important music forms, begins and continues in the theatrical setting. The emotional and audiovisual experience is available only to the ones who attend the performance, i.e. the audience. Since this experience continues its life in the shape of the listeners' recollections, it is not available to others: they cannot hear it, experience it or paraphrase it. One cannot paraphrase music. One can only experience music.

The National Library of Serbia has made essential motions towards the audio heritage preservation, both on the national and international level by launching the audio tape digitisation project *The Guests of the National Theatre in Belgrade – Historical Opera Performance Recordings from 1969 to 1989.*

Thanks to the Professor of Acoustics and a genuine opera lover Mr Husnija Kurtović, who carried his tape recorder and microphone to many opera performances he listened to from the late 1960s, the voices and performances of well-known Serbian and international opera singers have remained recorded and remembered. Although the recordings have been captured on audio carriers, they were not available to the general public but only to the owner of the cassettes and a narrow circle of the people he was in touch with.

By presenting all the aspects of this project (regarding the material selection, analog to digital transfer, sound restoration, bibliographic and metadata description, access and collection presentation), we aim to create a way for libraries to acquire and manage the unique audio materials, but also to illustrate the magical transformation of the analog collections inaccessible to a wide audience into a visible collection of digital sound recordings, accessible not only via the National Library of Serbia but also via the Library of Congress, the British Sound Archive, the National Theatre in Belgrade and the Institute of Musicology of SASA.

Keywords: opera, sound recordings, projects, audio tapes, sound restoration

TIME-TRAVEL

Imagine yourself at the opera hall. It is dark and the energy is almost palpable. You can feel the anticipation of something unique about to happen in just a few moments. Then, seemingly out of nowhere, a subtle sound reaches your ear. It feels like an overwhelming, warm, familiar, pleasant emotion. The music encloses you and makes you feel alive and better connected to the whole reality. So, you close your eyes and relish this astounding feeling, surrendering to its warm embrace. You just breathe and feel it. The feeling takes you out of this world. You feel like you could fly. And you do fly. Therefore, you are freed.

Afterwards, you open your eyes and notice a man in his forties sitting a few seats away from you. He holds something in his hands, what is it? It looks like a piece of equipment. Then you notice a microphone too. Then you get it. He is recording the performance.

It is 1969, men have already reached the Moon, a strange festival called the Woodstock has recently happened, the Vietnam War protests have already happened as well, the French President Charles de Gaulle has resigned and Monty Python's Flying Circus has aired for the first time, just like the Sesame Street.

At the moment, you still do not know that he is a professor of electro-acoustics at the University of Belgrade and that tomorrow evening he is hosting a small dinner party with his wife and closest friends. After the dinner, they will all listen to the recording he has made tonight at the National Theatre in Belgrade.

Suddenly, your grandson enters your room and it is 2017 again. "Grandma, Grandma, you have to come, you have to come", he pulls you off the chair and you are standing in front of the huge smart TV. "Look what I've found! Just listen", he touches the screen and that well known subtle sound experienced a long time ago (in 1969) emerges. You realize that music is a powerful, timeless force. Place and time are connected and the two realities merge so you can't tell which one you are experiencing at the moment.

THE MAN WITH THE RECORDER AND HIS REASONS

His name is Husnija Kurtović and he will, for many decades, continue to record opera performances at the National Theatre in Belgrade, as well as at many Yugoslav and European halls and theatres. As an acoustics professor at the Faculty of Electrical Engineering of the University of Belgrade, he was interested in sound. However, he had yet another passion – as a very young boy, he fell in love with opera. Combining his two obsessions, acoustics and opera, science and art, he created a significant legacy of more than 300 invaluable and unique audio tapes he recorded throughout a time span of almost half a century. Dear reader, aren't you curious to find out why he carried his recorder and microphone to the National

Theatre each night, and why he spent a small fortune buying audio tapes when they were not affordable at all?

Before answering that seemingly insignificant question, we find it necessary to explain a few things about opera. In just a few words, Maria Callas explained, "An opera begins long before the curtain goes up and ends long after it has come down." Then she went further into her depiction and added, "It starts in my imagination, it becomes my life, and it stays a part of my life long after I've left the opera house."[1] Opera, as perhaps the most complex music form, does not live in a musical score at all, "you've seen one, you've seen them all" cannot be applied here. Opera lives in the theatre and each performance is a unique experience. Opera is about people. Opera is about people having and sharing new emotional experiences.

Have you had a chance to watch the **opera scene** from the movie **The Shawshank Redemption**?[2] In that scene[3], the director (Frank Darabont) placed his leading character Andy Dufresne (Tim Robbins) in the midst of a new experience in the Shawshank prison. Andy found a gramophone record and played it, enjoying the music privately at first, but he soon decided to share the divine Mozart's **Marriage of Figaro** duet with all the inmates via the speaker system. After only a few seconds, the music grasped every single person in the prison yard, leaving them mesmerized and almost hypnotized, gazing at the speakers as if the two ladies singing were to come out of them. During the scene, one of the caracters said, "I have no idea to this day what those two Italian ladies were singing about, truth is, I don't want to know. Some things are best left unsaid. I like to think that it was something so beautiful it can't be expressed in words and makes your heart ache because of it. I tell you, those voices soared higher and farther than anybody in a grey place dares to dream. It was as if some beautiful bird had flapped into our drab little cage and made these walls dissolve away, and for the briefest of moments, every last man at Shawshank felt free." This brilliant description illustrates the power and influence of opera and the notion that opera is all about people having and sharing new emotional experiences.

Thus, it becomes apparently easy to answer the **why question**: he adored opera, enjoyed visiting the opera theatre. He was passionate about the new performances and new musical and emotional experiences. Like all of us, he wanted to freeze time and capture the moment. Of course, holding the memory just to himself was

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1   Arianna Huffington**,** Maria Callas: The Woman Behind the Legend (U.S: Cooper Square Publishers Inc., 2002), 142, https://books.google.rs/books?id=E6lVZT04E5gC&p-g=PA142&dq=It+starts+in+my+imagination,+it+becomes+my+life,+and+it+stays+part+o f+my&hl=sr&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi3zuuGqvfXAhXMh7QKHQerDqYQ6AEIJzAA#v=o-nepage&q=It%20starts%20in%20my%20imagination%2C%20it%20becomes%20my%20 life%2C%20and%20it%20stays%20part%20of%20my&f=false (accessed November 20, 2017).

2   IMDB, "The Shawshank Redemption", http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0111161/ (accessed November 21, 2017).

3   Look for **The Shawshank Redemption Opera Scene** on YouTube.

not an option. He yearned to satisfy one of the most important human race traits – to share the experience with his friends and family.

Sharing is the ultimate stage of caring.

THE NEW LIBRARY PARADIGM AND THE REASONS FOR ITS EXISTENCE

John Palfrey, the author of the book that should find its place on every librarian's shelf, said, "The types of librarians who are thriving most consistently in the digital era are those who have found a way to operate as a node in a network of libraries and librarians. They are agents of change, actively creating the future instead of constantly reacting to it."[4] The **New Library** should be an active player in the community affairs. As the 21st century librarians, we are supposed to know and profoundly believe that libraries are influential.

For a long period of time, libraries used to gather information published on different media in many shapes and forms. Nowadays, besides the issued information, we should think of the plethora of unissued pieces of information. These private resources and collections should be our open way to create a unique library material that could be beneficial to the community.

The new paradigm is that libraries could and should create their own content. Why would it be prudent to grab this opportunity and create new content? If we equate libraries with knowledge and ideas (which is, obviously, a fact) and replace only the letter L in the word "collectors" with the letter N, we can begin to describe libraries as powerful "connectors". In addition, if we acknowledge that there is much information that was not available and shared, then we have a wide open space to create new resources that would, otherwise, remain inaccessible. Right there, in that sweet spot, lies our potential for reshaping and influencing the existing knowledge and learning patterns, which is the concept of human growth and expansion. Libraries are not about history; they are all about the future.

In order to foretell the role of the **New Library**, it is wise to step back and observe a wider picture of the world today. Let's face it, it is a **4.0 world** that influences libraries as much as any other area of human civilization. Can you imagine a robot serving a patron or dusting old books? Or maybe even digitizing more efficiently than a team of experts? Actually, this is not science fiction – this is our reality. Would it be that the fear of being replaced by artificial intelligence is the reason for the resistance of libraries to the **4.0 World**? On the contrary, resisting the imminent transformation of the world as we know it can result in libraries becoming redundant.

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4   John Palfrey, BiblioTech: Why Libraries Matter More Than Ever in the Age of Google (U.S.: Basic Books, 2015).

The keywords of the 4.0 Industry[5] and, consequently, the **4.0 World** are:

1. Connection (sensor and networks),
2. Cloud (computing and data on demand),
3. Cyber (model & memory),
4. Content/context (meaning and correlation),
5. Community (sharing & collaboration),
6. Customization (personalization and value).

Too many Cs, one might think. How do these six Cs affect the library? Though they are primarily applied to industry, we can subsequently expect those Cs to become relevant to libraries in a short while and to force librarians to rethink and reinvent their role in this exciting era. What if libraries are not so far from the 6 Cs paradigm? What if we turn things the other way around and suppose that these Cs have been the paradigm of the library itself for a very long time? Is it possible that libraries have been living the six Cs from the very beginning of their existence? Every librarian can agree that connectivity, content and community are the universal epitomes of a library. The terms cloud and cyber can be synonymous to the digital representation of library shelves and related to digital repositories. Customization and personalization have been a part of libraries since the beginning of time. After all, maybe we are not so far on the sidelines? Still, what do we have to do in order to establish our place in the new world? There are a few things that we should do, but there is so much more of what we should become. Libraries and librarians should think digital, think 4.0, to shift their mindset from the analogue and physical to the digital, and be idea/innovation oriented. Therefore, there is one **C** left to commit to a bit more thoroughly, and it is the **C** that stands for the Context. The **father** of the 4.0 Industry, Klaus Schwab, contemplated the effects of the **New World**: "Technology is not an exogenous force over which we have no control. We are not constrained by a binary choice between "accept and live with it" and "reject and live without it". Instead, we can take the dramatic technological change as an invitation to reflect on who we are and how we see the world. The more we think about how to harness the technological revolution, the more will we be able to examine ourselves and the underlying social models that these technologies embody and enable, and we will have an opportunity to shape the revolution in such manner as to improve the state of the world."[6] Following this train of thought, he adds that: "as all these trends happen, the winners will be those who are able to fully participate in innovation-driven ecosystems by providing new ideas, business models, products and services, rather than those who can offer only low-skilled labour or ordinary capital assets."[7]

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5   Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, "Industry 4.0", 2017. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Industry 4.0 (accessed November 20).

6   Klaus Schwab, The Fourth Industrial Revolution (U.S.: World Economic Forum, 2016).

7   Klaus Schwab, The Fourth Industrial Revolution (U.S.: World Economic Forum, 2016).

THE FUSION OF THE "TWO WHYS"

We are witnessing one more transformation in the library sphere regarding the perspective from which library collections are analysed. The evidence of this subtle and long-range transformation can be found in Lorcan Dempsey's blog post named **The Facilitated Collection**: "There is some discussion about a shift from collections to services. Another way of thinking about what I have called the facilitated collection here is to move towards thinking about collections as a service. Libraries will continue to build collections, although the level of activity will differ across libraries. At the same time, it seems likely that facilitated collections of various types will grow in importance."[8]

What happens when you explore the unique opera recordings collection and a library the main function of which is to connect time, space and people by enabling access to the content and, furthermore, by creating new content? We get a concept of sharing stretched into the digital universe. We do not create a new library collection. What we do is exactly the same thing Mr Kurtović was doing for decades – we share the experience with our friends, family and others – this is what constitutes a community. Fortunately, we have technology on our side, whereas he only had one cassette recorder and one microphone.

The sequel of libraries as **content architects** will be realized in the production of new physical or digital resources/collections, and that is fine. Concurrently, this new content is the starting point from which the creation of a new information hierarchy emerges. How does the construction of a multilevel hierarchy happen? The content is neutral in itself – it is not good or bad, it simply exists. If there are no recipients at the other end of the seesaw, there can be no reception and no probability for the construction of a new information structure. What we see as a potential for libraries is a generation of new implications which happen on the wings of a new context in which the content is placed and, consequently, examined and used. In other words, unlike the 20th century perspective of libraries as physical places where one can look for and discover information, the **New Library** is an access point where connectivity, new insights, new ideas and knowledge patterns come to existence. To illustrate this statement, we highlight the words coming from the Irish writer and journalist, Fintan O'Toole: "The library should not provide an argument for a particular case, but demonstrate that there is always another case to be made. The notion that a library is a place that has no agenda other than allowing people to invent their own agendas is what makes it an indispensable resource for a democratic society. It is where we can learn not just to be readers, but to be the authors of our own destiny".[9] The National Library of Serbia followed the ide-

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8   Lorcan Dempsey's Weblog, "The Facilitated Collection"**,** January 31, 2016, http://orweblog. oclc.org/towards-the-facilitated-collection/ (accessed November 21, 2017).

9   Lorcan Dempsey's Weblog, "Defining the library… Reflexively"**,** March 21, 2013, http://orweblog.oclc.org/defining-the-library-reflexively/ (accessed November 21, 2017).

al of the **New Library** by proposing the Project **Guests of the National Theatre in Belgrade - Historical Opera Performance Recordings from 1969 to 1989**.

THE NATIONAL THEATRE IN BELGRADE PROJECT GUESTS IN A NUTSHELL

The National Library of Serbia has been systematically working on sound recording digitization for more than 10 years. During that period, more than 800 commercial 78 rpm gramophone records have been digitized and restored. The gramophone records[10] issued at the beginning of the 20th century are among the historically significant cultural heritage objects that are vanishing due to carrier obsolesce and deterioration. A much younger format used for capturing and reproducing sound vibrations, the audio tape[11] is, nowadays, just as endangered and threatened as the gramophone record. Its vulnerability comes as a result of the swift transformation of the sound industry that implies excessive changes of the sound carrier format.

The Activities Preceding the Project

The National Library of Serbia got the very first indication of the existence of this collection a few years before the opportunity to preserve the sound recordings arose. Prior to launching the project, we were introduced to several randomly chosen recordings from Professor Kurtovic's collection. Considering the recordings had been made using only one recorder and a microphone, it was concluded that they sounded really good. Even though the recordings had been created a long ago, in the late 60s, 70s and 80s, they sounded quite good. They captured the depth of the space very well, as well as the voices and orchestra timbre. In addition, the physical condition of the tapes was rather satisfying and each cassette had its own container.

Since we were well aware of how significant these recordings were, we searched for a sustainable path for their digitization. Unlike the previous audio recording digitization project, this one was not funded by the National Library of Serbia. Owing to the **Preservation of Classical Music Historical Recordings Grant Program** (founded "to encourage and support the preservation of historically significant sound recordings of the Western Art Music by individuals and organizations"[12]) of the **Association for Recorded Sound Collections (**ARSC), the pathway opened up. We acknowledge and appreciate the ARSC and its effort to support research and the preservation of sound recording collections worldwide.

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10 Irving S. Gilmore Music Library, "Short history of gramophone records", Yale University Library, https://web.library.yale.edu/cataloging/music/historyof78rpms (accessed November 21, 2017).

11 Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, "Compact Cassette", https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Compact_Cassette (accessed November 21, 2017).

12 Association for Recorded Sound Collections, "Preservation Grants Program", http://www.arsc-audio.org/committees/preservationgrants.html (accessed November 20, 2017).

The National Library of Serbia signed the Letter of Agreement on 9th March 2015 and (among other terms and conditions of the ARSC Preservation Grants Committee) agreed to "place up to four copies of the preserved files with interested repositories after consultation with the chair of the ARSC Grant Committee". Lorcan Dempsey explained the importance and benefits of sharing digitized collections: "As libraries digitize their collections, it has become clear that very few individual institutions are strong gravitational hubs in themselves. The material digitized from local collections obtains a greater value when aggregated within larger collections, which can both dictate the supply and demand"[13]. Therefore, the final result of the project – the digital audio files and all additional materials – will be shared with the Audio-Visual Conservation at the Library of Congress, the British Library Sound Archive, the National Theatre in Belgrade and the Institute of Musicology of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts.

What makes the collection **The National Theatre in Belgrade Guests – Historical Opera Performance Recordings from 1969 to 1989** so unique?

COLLABORATION

The project was based on a solid foundation of mutual benefits of the private collection owner and the National Library of Serbia. We proposed digitization and the relocation of 122 audio cassettes to Mr Kurtović, from his collection into the National Library of Serbia, which he wholeheartedly accepted. For the very first time, the cooperation between the National Library of Serbia and a private collector took place.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL IMPACT

Our project proposal was primarily focused on the opera recordings of the highly-appreciated National Theatre in Belgrade guest performances – Giuseppe Di Stefano, Piero Cappuccilli, Placido Domingo, Natalia Troitskaya, and many other opera singers of the 20th century. The coalescence of numerous international and Serbian performers in Belgrade and Mr Kurtović's efforts in recording their performances was a legacy worth preserving that the National Library of Serbia was well aware of. The benefits of digitizing this material to the Serbian and international public are apparent considering their exclusivity and the significance of these performers for the Western art music tradition. Sharing the historical cultural heritage resources with other institutions and archives is highly important for the National Library of Serbia and the community in general.

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13 Lorcan Dempsey's Weblog, "The Facilitated Collection", January 31, 2016, http://orweblog. oclc.org/towards-the-facilitated-collection/ (accessed November 21, 2017).

PURSUING INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

Is there any real difference between private collections, hidden from the public and digital collections if they cannot be shared due to interoperability issues that arise if a library does not follow some standards? No, there is no difference at all. Therefore, we had to adhere to the international standards, but the National Library of Serbia has been doing that since the beginning of the sound recording digitization. The ARSC Methodology and Standards Guidelines state that the audio recordings should be preserved following the ARSC preferred methods and standards for preservation projects: "Projects should comply with the preservation guidelines published by the Technical Committee of the International Association of Audiovisual Archives (IASA) in documents TC-03: The safeguarding of the audio heritage: Ethics, principles, and preservation strategy (Version 2, September, 2001) and TC-04: Guidelines on the production and preservation of digital audio objects (Second Edition, 2009) 14."

Primarily, our goal was to digitize 112 audio tapes. The analogue-to-digital transferring process at first implied tape examination in order to check the potential tape defects, sign-off moulds and similar destructive processes that could have affected them. After the tapes were examined, we checked the cassette mechanisms, pressure pads and smooth tape winding and, in many cases, we had to change the pressure pads or place the whole tape into a new tape enclosure that being the only solution to preserving some of the recordings. In addition, if the very tape was broken, we reconnected the pieces.

In order to ensure playback smoothness, all cassettes were rewound slowly (using a dedicated deck – Technics M45 or similar), then quickly (Technics AZ7), which was followed by choosing the right playback device between five tape machines aligned to the specifications.

We recorded both sides of a tape via a playback device connected directly to an a/D converter (RME HDSP 9632) and created master copies of each tape and initial backup copies on two different storage spaces. The master recordings of a tape side (approx. 60 minutes) took up almost 2 GB and they were recorded in the WAV format (sampling rate 96 kHz, 24-bit depth, stereo, 4608 kbps bit rate). Along with the sound files, we have scanned tape and cassette inlay cards and Mr Kurtović's recording log. At the end of the digitization process, before storing the tapes, they were all rewound.

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14 Association for Recorded Sound Collections, "Preservation Grants Program", http://www. arsc-audio.org/committees/preservationgrants.html (accessed November 20, 2017).

BORN DIGITAL OR DIGITIZED?

This project may seem like just another ordinary digitization project, which it would be if we had simply digitized both sides of each tape, but we went a few steps further.

The audio tapes from ex-Yugoslavia and the late 60s and 70s were not cheap at all. At the time, tapes were mostly manufactured in several varieties: as 45, 60 or 90-minute tapes. The duration of one whole opera exceeded the tape length immensely, so we supposed that Mr Kurtovic would have had to calculate and manage the time of each recording so it would fit the tape length. Before the beginning of the project, we idealistically thought that operas would be recorded continuously on one or two tapes. However, more than half of the tapes that we digitized carried parts of two, three, four or more operas. Still, one particular tape was the most difficult case, for it had parts of 3 different performances of a single opera – **The Queen of Spades** by Tchaikowsky; two performances were recorded in 1982 and one in 1983. Just imagine how hard it was to identify 3 different recordings of the same opera – but different performances – recorded on a single tape with no audio blanks in between.

Another challenge was that parts of a single opera were spread on two or more tapes. For example, parts of a particular opera recording were found on three different tapes randomly. Wanting to provide a good listening experience, we had to extract all parts and merge them into one continuous sound file. Thanks to Mr Kurtović's good memory, exquisite opera knowledge, as well as his patience and readiness to help with the disjunction/extraction of parts of a single opera, we have managed to reconstruct whole acts or even whole operas. After that, we were ready for the last phase of the project dedicated to postproduction, which implied various sound designs, sound editing and audio mixing processes.

Two archival copies have been stored on two optical media storage spaces and distributed among two physical locations, alongside technical metadata. As mentioned previously, the most demanding and time-consuming task was to identify the right recording sequences (the starting and ending points of specific opera parts), to splice and gather musical pieces into logical sequences and to create the right sequences for later public distribution and listening. The restored files have been archived on two optical media distributed among two physical locations, and metadata have been created. Digital copies of the restored opera recording parts have been stored both in the WAV format (for archiving) and the MP3 format (for presentation purposes). The sampling rate is 44 kHz, 16-bit depth, stereo, 128 kbps bit rate. Scanned visual documents have been converted from HQ TIFF (for archiving, 600 dpi) to JPEG (for presentation purpose, 300 dpi).

For all sound files, rich bibliographic records have been created. We kept in minds that all the information given to listeners could be useful. Along with opera titles and composers' names, we identified all the secondary contributors: librettists,

writers who wrote works used as inspirations for opera librettos, all performers and conductors. All titles and names have been presented in the original and variant form. We have added data about time, location and sound carrier type of the original (analogue) recordings. Metadata record creation is in progress at this time.

Therefore, it would be accurate to say that this project unfolded in two steps: digitization of A and B sides of 122 tapes, but the **digital jigsaw puzzle** phase followed and we focused on collecting the pieces of individual operas and merging them into a continuous sound file, along with the sound restoration process. Along the way, we felt as if we were some sort of (musical) archaeologists collecting pieces of sound memory and reconstructing it again, in the digital realm.

The ambiguous nature of born-digital objects and the current confusion concerning this hot issue in the library world seems to be resolved in case of this project, because "digitization always results in the creation of a new digital object."[15] The creation of digital sound files from pieces is, undoubtedly, the birth of born-digital objects and, as a result, we have created 144 of them.

DIVERSE MEDIA

Along with the recordings, Mr Kurtović gave us all the available additional material: programs he was given in theatres, his notes on performances, sometimes followed by newspaper articles or evaluations, and his notebook-catalogue that served as a register for all information of importance for the identification of recordings and their cataloguing and description. These valuable information resources containing a touch of his personal impressions about singers, conductors, and even libretto translations will be accessible online, along with audio file streaming.

Still, there is one thing missing from this picture – his valuable, unique memories which are an inseparable part of this project. Will the 21st-century libraries find a way to digitize and immortalize human memories? Will collecting human memories, thoughts and feelings be a new concept for libraries or something they have already been doing successfully for aeons? Far from the digital or virtual immortality hypothetical concept (of storing or transferring a person's personality in durable media, i.e., a computer, and allowing it to communicate with people in the future)[16], libraries preserve intangible knowledge undocumented in any other way (we primarily refer to the thoughts, ideas, hopes, dreams, fears and knowledge) in the form of the oral history and that is one more way in which they can create new information resources.

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15 Trewor Owens, "All Digital Objects are Born Digital Objects", May 15, 2012, https://blogs.loc.gov/thesignal/2012/05/all-digital-objects-are-born-digital-objects/ (accessed November 23, 2017).

16 Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, "Digital immortality", https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_immortality (accessed November 22, 2017).

THE SMART LIBRARY – THE NEW I-ONE METAPHOR (THE INTERNET OF NEW EXPERIENCES)?

What does the word **smart** stand for in the 21st Century? Smartphones, smart TVs, parking places or even whole smart cities, smart this and smart that, but what is it all about, and in which way could this concept be applied to libraries? If we would like to describe the **Internet of Things**[17] concept with only one word, our choice would certainly be the term **connection**. Connected devices or services make our life easier and more secure. Still, in order to connect devices and create networks which can facilitate every single part of human life experience, subject/object communication ports have to be established and open.

Let us use this story about the library that recognized the value of the unique recordings from this private collection previously accessible only to the owner and a small number of his connections to analyse the possibility of the 21st-century libraries becoming the Internet of Things counterpart. Have you already noticed the subtle intertwining of the two significant words – collection and connection? It seems that they are weaving the tapestry of the **New Library** as well. If we apply the **Internet of Things** concept (exemplified in communication – connectivity relationship between entities) to the library, we could certainly notice that in fact libraries already connect knowledge/information with its patrons. The only new experience is the way this connectivity ensues and is processed. Knowing all that, we could conclude that the 21st-century libraries provide a **new experience** and are already the **Internet of New Experiences**, designed long ago to connect people, time and space by linking human minds, ideas, knowledge, perspectives, memories and imagination. During the previous centuries, libraries were organized around physical items and collections, but today, they are oriented toward user experiences.[18] Once available online, these unique and unknown opera recordings will become new and interesting research resources on many different levels. The expected outcome of our project is the benefit that musicologists, music performers, composers, conductors and other music-related researchers will receive, enabling them to shape new insights, new perspectives, and new experiences.[19]

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17 Jacob Morgan, "A Simple Explanation of 'The Internet of Things", May 13, 2014, Forbes, https://www.forbes.com/sites/jacobmorgan/2014/05/13/simple-explanation-internet-things-that-anyone-can-understand/#498600a91d09 (accessed November 22, 2017).

18 Lorcan Dempsey, "Working collaboratively: scaling infrastructure, services, learning and innovation", slide 15, https://www.slideshare.net/lisld/working-collaboratively-scaling-infrastructure-services-learning-and-innovation (accessed November 23, 2017).

19 An Irish writer Seán O'Faoláin talks about the most important impact that library has on people, stating that: "people should think not so much of the books that have gone into the National Library but rather of the books that have come out of it. A library, after all, feeds the people that go in there". Quoted in Kissane, Noel. 1994. Treasures from the National Library of Ireland. [Drogheda]: The Boyne Valley Honey Co, 1994.
Lorcan Dempsey's Weblog, "Defining the library… Reflexively", March 21, 2013, http://orweblog.oclc.org/defining-the-library-reflexively/ (accessed November 21, 2017).

Furthermore, the Serbian and international public will be given a chance to relive the past times by browsing through this collection, to enjoy opera performances and voices of the world's most famous opera singers of the last three decades of the 20th century. This collection contains the unknown and unexplored audible memories of the humankind. By putting them in a spotlight, we have created the musical history resources for the next generations (and will continue to do so). We intend to search for and find other private sound collection and share them with the community because libraries are about people and new emotional experiences, just like opera.

His name is Husnija Kurtović and he connected people, time and places, by capturing the voices of Placido Domingo, Mario del Monaco, Radmila Bakocević, Giuseppe Di Stefano, Zivan Saramandić, Breda Kalef and many other well-known international and Serbian singers, letting them echo into eternity, so – sing it back, again, and again, and again…

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Summary

Sing it back

Опера, као један од најзначајнијих сценских музичких облика, свој живот започиње и живи у позоришној дворани. Искуство емоционалног, звучног и визуелног доживљаја доступно је онима који су извођењу присуствовали – публици. Упркос томе што у облику сећања оно наставља свој живот у слушаоцу/посматрачу, оно није доступно и другима: не може се чути, доживети, а ни препричати. Музика се не препричава. Музика се доживљава.

Народна библиотека Србије је пројектом дигитализације звучних касета са уникатним снимцима оперских представа у Народном позоришту у Београду, под називом Гостовања у Народном позоришу у Београду – Историјски снимци оперских извођења од 1969. до 1989, учинила важан корак ка заштити звучног наслеђа, значајног на националном, али и међународном нивоу. Захваљујући г. Хуснији Куртовићу, професору акустике и истинском заљубљенику у оперу, који је на оперске представе одлазио са касетофоном и микрофоном и снимао их од краја шездесетих година прошлог века, гласови и извођења веома значајних страних и домаћих оперских извођача остали су забележени. Ипак, иако забележени, нису били доступни никоме осим власнику касета и његовом ужем кругу пријатеља и познаника.

Представљањем свих фаза овог пројекта (одабир материјала, трансфер из аналогног у дигитални формат, рестаурација звука, израда библиографских записа и метаподатака, онлајн приступ колекцији) желимо да покажемо начине на које библиотека долази до нових, уникатних звучних садржаја и од невидљивог и аналогног, као искусни мађионичар, прави видљиву и доступну колекцију изворних дигиталних снимака, који ће своје место наћи у Конгресној библиотеци у Вашингтону, Британском звучном архиву, али и Народном позоришту у Београду и Музиколошком институту САНУ, и најпре у осведоченом чувару звучног културног наслеђа – Народној библиотеци Србије.

Кључне речи: опере, звучни снимци, међународни пројекти, звучне касете, рестаурација звука