LUND UNIVERSITY

Open access to university music – the challenge of YouTube and Ning

Berry, Peter

[Link to publication](#)

Open access to university music – the challenge of YouTube and Ning

Paper presented by Peter Berry at the conference "Mötesplats inför framtiden", University College of Borås, Sweden, October 15-16 2008.

Thrown open by the wind

I think you recognize the feeling when you sit on a sofa reading something pleasant in deep comfortable thoughts. It is a summer evening . Windows are open and the front door is ajar when there is a crash as the crosswinds blow the front door wide open and a gush of wind fills the room. Suddenly you are wide awake and your eyes are owl-like wide open. This is what comes to my mind when I try to describe the impact of new technology – such as open access and web 2.0 – in my life as a music and arts librarian. Sudden, so far unknown possibilities open and give me a feeling of anticipation and awe. I will try to convey some of the observations I have made since in this short paper and I will do it in a somewhat shorthand form, trying to transmit my feeling of being a wide open pair of eyes in a strange somewhat disorganized world. In a few years I will surely write a much more sensible paper.

The author discusses the definition of music open access

I would like to start my paper with the Wikipedia definition of open access and then move on to show how the arts, and particularly music, imply a development of this concept.

"Open access (**OA**) is free, immediate, permanent, full-text, online access, for any user, web-wide, to digital scientific and scholarly material,[1] primarily research articles published in peer-reviewed journals. OA means that any individual user, anywhere, who has access to the Internet, may link, read, download, store, print-off, use, and data-mine the digital content of that article. An OA article usually has limited copyright and licensing restrictions." (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_access. 080907)

Open access, as defined here, leaves the impression of maintaining a tradition and making it fit new conditions in a way that does not take advantage of the essence of this new development, the ground-breaking new emphasis on openness. There is a sense of defining and cutting off unwelcome attributes. I believe the arts can help practitioners of open access in the "traditional" sense to widen their views.

I can think of two main avenues, inspired by the world of the arts, that will make open access really open. First, the definition of the pet concepts "research" and "scientific" must be broadened. The assumption that these things are well defined entities may not gain acceptance in the world of the arts. Using a traditional definition of these concepts alienate much of what is today thought of as research in the artistic field. To illustrate this I would like to mention the concept of performative

research. The Australian scholar Brad Haseman discusses this concept at length in a recent article (Haseman 2006). He states that "...performative research stands as an alternative to the qualitative and quantitative paradigms by insisting on different approaches to designing, conducting and reporting research." Performative research is characterized by the "dive in" attitude to research, to "commence practicing to see what emerges" and the insistence on reporting research "through the symbolic language and form of their practice". This means that a work of art, such as a composition, an exhibit or a stage production, can be considered as "research" in itself, and that it is not necessary to attach a text as an explanation or reflection. The message to the advocates of the traditional open access definition is to question and problematize the narrowness of the traditional definition. The argument about performative research brings to open access a world of other media than text. This might constitute a world of valuable contributions far beyond the walls of university bureaucracies. Openness is a keyword in open access. Let us take it seriously, and playfully.

Open access in the traditional sense implies a world of producers or receivers. I believe a point is often missed here, which is made so obvious by the development of interactivity in new technology, what we like to call web 2.0. In the future I would like to see more emphasis on open access communication, i.e. the process of giving and taking that goes on at every instant on the Internet regardless of media character. Systems that call themselves open access must leave equal space to responses as well as questions and must recognize the process of building knowledge, not staying in the tracks of a machinelike view of production.

The mechanic view of knowledge building identifies particular and well defined roles played by the contributors. This is not any longer the "real" world. Web 2.0 technology has opened the door to creativity from all parties. Knowledge is no longer the exclusive habitat of university scholars or scientific librarians. A wealth of creativity is supplied by all sorts of people all over the world and Wikipedia is one example of this. At the same time, the question of quality and reliability of sources appears to become more acute than earlier. But maybe we should remind ourselves that it always has been an important issue.

Part of adding quality to knowledge supplied by the net is the ordering and the defining of standards. Librarians are doing a terrific job here. The much looked down on work of catalogers is essential and must continue. At the same time, the taxonomic contributions of laymen in terms of organizing the net, sometimes called folksonomies, is a well known and appreciated fact.

Open access traditionally defined could be thought of as an old brewery horse. It is reliable. It is predictable. An open definition of open access, taking into account the wealth of valuable contributions and the multitude of contributors, instead of defining confines, would make the brewer's horse gallop with force and energy. Yes, and sometimes frolic with the fillies on the meadow. It is important to promote quality of open access but perhaps even more important to un-harness creativity. The open access movement will find plenty of creativity in the world of performance and art.

The author describes his grounds

I had two visitors in my office today. Both were students of folk music at an advanced level. Esbjörn plays the clarinet and the accordion ("durspel"), and Olof, the violin. Both are senior students at the Malmö Academy of music. Esbjörn is on his way to Vietnam as a part of an exchange with the university of Hanoi. He hopes to be able to spend a substantial period of his training there, developing his skills in Vietnamese music. He already plays Vietnamese instruments. Olof is spending his last semester at the Academy and integrates his studies with the development of his folk music band, "Alla fagra". They are already established on YouTube and other net facilities and they are planning to build their own website. Esbjörn is toying with the idea of continuing his studies at the Academy pursuing a doctorate in world music. I have had frequent contacts with Olof and Esbjörn as a librarian, guiding them in the use of the Lund university net resources, digital libraries and other Internet sources that I might be aware of, particularly as these guys have been preparing their final research papers. It has been particularly interesting to me as I myself am a folk musician and write about music, besides being a librarian. The office next to mine is inhabited by Per-Åke, an established composer of electronica, an archivist and a teacher at the school. He plays the guitar, the ukulele and many other instruments. He used to have his own band some years ago but decided to make his music alone, using modern technology. He found it much easier that way to get done what was right according to his own intentions. Per-Åke and I meet every other week in my neighborhood church, improvising for hours on folk music themes. He built his first instrument when he was 4 years old, using scrap cardboard.

My neighbor across the corridor is the head of the performing art academies. He is a scholar of ethnomusicology and has written extensively about the music traditions of Laos and Japan. He is also reputed to be a fine guitarist. He travels widely and is currently the president of ISME (International society for music education). Further down the corridor you will find Staffan, composer in the classical tradition, member of STIM (Swedish performing rights society – also provider of Internet related services), head of the music department, teacher of composition and a man always open to interesting conversations about music, such as water as a source of inspiration in music. Not far away are the offices of Eva and Pär, teachers of world music and musicians and scholars. Eva has an important function in coordinating the school research department, and the final papers of the students. She has written particularly on African music and is currently involved in projects concerning the use of internet in music education, such as Jam2jam (http://www.jam2jam.com/) – "a collaborative and generative music improvisation software". She also develops a second research semester for students at the Academy, using the Internet portfolio method, who document their stay at the Academy by using open technology on the Internet. Pär, well known as a performer and interpreter of Balkan music, has more than any teacher used the Internet in his teaching of off-campus students, using software developed by the Lund university, not always being very happy with that.

All these activities, all these people, at different stages of their lives, with different demands made on them, different ways and needs to express themselves, foment under the roof of the Academy of Music, and constitute together what I like to call "university music". This species has characteristics akin to a mouse: it is hard to catch, it does not want to be caught, it runs away in all directions. Its main characteristic, besides being musical, is to open, transgress borders, be alive, constantly

developing. It challenges the borders between private and official (music outside and inside work), it challenges borders between the amateur and the professional, it challenges borders between media (sound, images OR text), it challenges the boundaries between research and performance and I believe that it does not like bureaucracies.

Creative art makes demands on new technology

Steve Dillon and his colleague Andrew Brown (Dillon and Brown 2006) argue that the following issues are essential in dealing with questions about technology and how we relate to it in the field of creative arts. Dillon, a professor at the Queensland University of technology, has written several books and articles about learning and music and the use of the Internet and is a pioneer of innovative web 2.0 applications in the field of music.

These are the issues:

1. Representation - a matter of the author or artist being satisfied with the representation of his work on the Internet. Is it a fair description, possible to recognize as the work of this author? Does it create the intended impact?

2. Ethics and rights – i.e. who sees and owns the work. Copyright is the subject of a heated debate. It is a complicated matter where one has to rely on experts. "Creative commons" might offer some solutions (http://www.creativecommons.se/). In this paper I am avoiding the quagmire of file sharing. Coward. Yes.

3. Implementation – what technology is used, who has the skills and access to this technology, what are the local policies? It is when we want publish our first document with multimedia links that we might encounter our first frustrating experiences of open access publishing. "Why does this not work?" "Who knows?" "Where is he?"

4. Access and control – this is a very important issue - does the university have systems and policies that allow you, i.e. the researcher or artist, to connect with your community, or is it possible that the university makes it more difficult? I think there is a problem here and it has to do with the contradiction between free flow of information and music and the use of digital archives to evaluate the work of contributors, to distribute funds to them and in the end, in some way controlling their activities.

Dillon has summed up the ways in which you, the arts person, might approach open access on the Internet, defining the "open access terrorist":

1. Only work with passionate ideologically driven people (they do not need payment)

2. Use the resources around you, never your own

3. Build networks and deconstruct bureaucracies

4. Choose your targets well for maximum impact and effect

5. Hit really FUCKING hard when you do!

Learning all that is necessary about the use open access technology might appear as an overwhelming task. Yes, it is hard work to find out how your demands correspond with the offerings of the systems. A viable attitude might be one suggested by Dillon, i.e. to attempt a "cyber ontology". This means getting familiar with the workings of the new technology at the same time as you are creating the input, not allowing the understanding of technology take second place, once your input is created. Your understanding of the workings of the new, open, technology and your awareness of the demands in your field, for example music, on this technology, implies a rather catlike approach the problem. Finicky, yes, but also nimble, self-reliant and ready for action.

Choosing arenas of music open access

The choice of an arena should be made with cunning since arenas vary as to how they respond to the demands of the communicators (cf. above). They fulfill different professional needs of the communicators, often several at a time, sometimes only a more specific need. The arenas of more specific needs, such as research, tend to be less active and more introvert, much as the world of research itself. The arenas of music sharing and development, teaching and promotion are clearly in the forefront of the open access development. This is where the opportunities of web 2.0 are most obvious.

The choice of arena is defined by the role you are assuming in relation to your institutional surroundings. Are you acting as a representative of your institution or are you acting more as an individual, belonging to this institution? In the first case you may prefer selecting an arena of a more strict, establishment kind, such as university digital archives. In the latter role you will most likely prefer a more open, maybe not so well organized but on the other hand more active arena.

With this in mind, it becomes obvious that it is difficult to present a list of arenas that will cater to all these positions. I have chosen a reasonably neutral way of ordering them, according to the "owners" of the communication: individuals, networks of individuals, institutions (including government and non-profit organizations or interest groups) and private companies.

In the world of the individual "owner" the foremost arenas constitute an array of popular and well known agents. They are all basically different forms of personal websites with a high degree of

interactivity, often described as blogs. Some of the names are Ning, MySpace, FaceBook and YouTube.

Network arenas are frequent in the area of teaching where the level of creativity seems high Examples of outstanding projects are Jam2jam (cf above), Savetodisc (http://savetodisc.net/) which acts as a network portfolio collaborative space connecting researchers and projects and Songs of resilience (http://songsofresilience.wikispaces.com/). The latter project uses a "wikispace" and aims at collecting biographies connected with experiences of music. It is an open platform. These creative solutions are the work of the Australian maverick Steve Dillon and his collaborators, mostly in the setting of educational institutions but maintaining a decisive degree of independence.

Official agents are all the university archives and similar institutions connected by a similar structure that makes common searches possible by using search engines such as OAIster (http://www.oaister.org/). There is so far little music in this type of archives. It is a world often distant from web 2.0 but it has its advantages in the sense of being orderly. It is not a cornucopia. It lacks in serendipity. A problem, at least concerning archives of this kind in Sweden, is the way these archives are used by authorities to evaluate and control communication. A considerable problem for the arts is that these archives origin in fields with different conditions and interests as compared to humanities and the arts. The popular notion of bibliometry in these camps witnesses the rigid and result oriented mechanic ideals in that world. There is, in spite of all this, good reasons to search in these storages where naturally riches can be discovered. It is very important to try to make them less hostile to the arts.

In the family of official digital archives in the field of music you will find valuable efforts such as DiscMarc (http://discmarc.org) and ENOMA (http://www.enoma.no/background.page). Among Swedish digital archives I would like to mention the folk music archives of Svenskt visarkiv (Centre for Swedish folk music and jazz research - http://www.visarkiv.se/) and the digital collections of Uppsala university library (http://www.ub.uu.se/arv/special/musik.cfm). Another impressive digital initiative within the field of music is the publication of Neue Mozart-Ausgabe online (http://www.mozarteum.at/03_Wissenschaft/03_Wissenschaft_NMAOnline.asp).

There are private company initiatives that allow some selection and influence of the individual, particularly the teacher or the librarian. Examples are the services of Naxos Music Library (http://mhm.naxosmusiclibrary.com/) and the Alexander Street Press databases (http://www.alexanderstreet.com/products/music.htm) where the local administrator may shape the database in some respect to suit local needs, foremost by compiling playlists.

These are just a few examples of services that relate to music communication and new technology on the Internet.

It is interesting to show how teachers and students at music academies choose between these opportunities. I will rely on a few interviews I conducted recently at my own institution, showing what is representative of a changing attitude rather than providing the whole picture.

Eva (teacher and coordinator of student research and researcher in her own right) is an advocator of the portfolio method as part of a research program aimed at students in which they document one

semester's worth of research in an artistic portfolio, i.e. a personal Internet platform with multimedia links to the individual student's work, owned by the student. This solution demands use of open Internet resources as well as access to server space locally at the Academy. There are two major problems with this solution according to Eva. First, it demands a fair amount of contribution from technicians. Secondly, it is a method that many teachers might sense as a new and foreign element in their teaching. Eva has also been very involved in the digital publishing of student papers. She has had trying experiences of publishing attached audio files on the Internet. She concludes that local support to load audio files has been lacking and that the school needs to allocate substantial resources to Internet technology applications, to make the school an active player. In the meantime, it is necessary to rely on open resources on the Internet, such as YouTube. In general, Eva states, that performing arts teachers have a freer, less authoritarian relationship to institutional solutions of digital communications, such as university archives and teaching platforms. She emphasizes that this may be an important contribution of the arts teachers to the setting up of the institutional systems. Eva herself is aware of all sorts of systems that she has access to and uses them unconventionally yet with discrimination, such as dotMac and Iweb. She uses university systems when they fit her needs, such as building a website with the OOIS program.

Pär (teacher, musician band leader with a world music profile) is currently reworking his courses so that students are urged to use open sources on the Internet to find examples of music and musicians, rather than particular recordings demanded by the teacher. Pär is a practiced user of open access as well as a user of the local teaching platform offered by the university. The latter has caused him considerably frustrations, but he claims that after a heavy work load, he is now more or less contented with its functions. He cautions other teachers to be aware of a lot of initial work to make this platform function. Pär tells me that many students or former students use the Internet to promote their work. The Academy has it own MySpace spot (http://www.myspace.com/mhmfolk) with all the amenities offered by this service such as interactivity and links to music and video. Pär has been involved in providing a space for world music on the Academy's new website. He also manages his own website. He contributes to discussion lists on the Internet and uses Internet platforms to promote his own music such as WOMEX (http://www.womex.com) and Sonicbids (http://www.soicbids.com/Default.aspx).

Emil (advanced student of music, folk music profile, musician, promoter of a folk music band) is, like many of his friends at school, a competent user of resources on the Internet. He uses the Internet to promote his music, getting in touch with potential audiences, advertising, contacting producers, contacting other members of the band and contacting the music industry and similar agents. He mentions MySpace as an important forum to publish music and to contact other musicians, producers and audiences. He and his friends use YouTube, connecting videos from YouTube to their MySpace spot. He has used Facebook music (http://www.facebook.com/Music) but decided against it after a while because of copyright rules. He also uses Internet radio, such as last.fm (http://www.lastfm.se/) to publish music and to download music that is of interest. He also uses an administrators' site called Basecamp, which is made to supply a format for the administration of any company, such as a band. Emil and friends use the net to groom relations with record companies with the goal to appear in distributors' lists as those provided by iTunes, CDON and Ginza. His band does not have its own website yet, but Emil is working on it. The point is to profile themselves as a serious band, to keep functions together that they offer on different other sites. The homepage will

consist of information about the band, biographies, discography, web-shop, possibility to listen and download music, information about new appearances/concerts, reviews of concerts, pictures, guestbook. Finally, e-mail is used extensively in all doings of the band, for instance making notes and distributing them in the context of practicing and working on new tunes.

Per-Åke (composer, musician, archivist – field of electronica) is an early user of the net to find distributors of his music, which has been successful. Electronic mail has been very important in this context. Since the beginning of this century, Per-Åke has used the net to find virtual instruments, downloading them and using them to create his own compositions and music files. Lately Per-Åke has established himself on MySpace and enjoys the advantages of creating his own musical network on the Internet. He also states that this is the place where you find new exciting music these days, not in the record stores. Per-Åke uses considerable time to read and keep abreast of the technological development of the Internet in terms of music. He emphasizes that it takes a lot of time to learn new programs and that the wealth of possibilities creates stress.

The general impression is that there is a growing awareness of open access on the Internet and that each individual makes smart choices to get the most out of the opportunities to satisfy his needs. I believe that t is necessary to maintain a cunning attitude, to act like a fox, sensing intuitively in which direction to go, what to choose. There is no obvious ready-made choice, in a world such as this, which is so dependent on now and instant possibilities. But there is much to hunt for.

When libraries respond to open access music

When librarians approach open access music they sometimes make the same mistake as I made. You are likely to start your analysis with the particular services that you or your institution provide. This perspective is skewed. Why starting by assuming that what you contribute to the field in some way is decisive? Libraries' involvement in how people enrich themselves with knowledge of different sorts is, and has been, important but limited. And that is OK. What is not OK is to forget the large picture, learning the ways people keep informed, how they communicate, in your branch, and now I do not mean among the librarians. The island of library and university produced services in the field of open access music is small indeed.

Librarians should first of all keep themselves informed about the developments of music communication in general. The librarian should attempt to get an understanding of where he and the services he traditionally provides stand in relation to the field at large, in which he dwells. I recommend that a music librarian gets personal knowledge of music 2.0., and, why not, contributes to it. Personal involvement, possibly professional, adds a particular edge to your insights in a field, any field. With this perspective in mind he can influence those decisions that are made among his colleagues, the profession, his own institution (the academy, the university). With this knowledge in his bag he receives a stature that will make him an interesting partner in the discussions of open access music, with decision makers, colleagues, technicians, teachers, musicians, students and researchers.

University projects so far in the field of open access music tend to be of three kinds: as a resource in teaching, as a distributor of recordings and as a source of texts about music. Not surprisingly the last issue receives most attention on the floor. It is easier to handle since it is possible to attach to the tradition of how you handle print media. This is where libraries tend to become involved, whereas the distribution of university sound seems to become primarily the territory of teachers, administrators and technicians.

Open access music print consists today mostly of student papers and research papers, often published in so called university archives, often in different university archives depending on who writes them, students or researchers. This type of publishing is now challenged by university music providers when some of the print documents start to include audio files. It becomes necessary to remake the university archives so this kind of material of multimedia origin can be searched and retrieved. The same type of challenge comes from other fields of academic performing arts schools i.e. theater, film, and fine arts. Most academies of music today provide access to these files in university archives, belonging to the umbrella organizations, the universities. The level of library involvement in shaping these and developing these seems generally low. It seems that packages are presented to the academies and the academy libraries and their response is not asked for. The initiative does not rest in the library systems. This must be a drawback.

The distribution of audio files as an open access scheme, concerts and such, is not the rule, but things are changing. We might see more of this in a few years. So far, only the Royal Academy of Music broadcasts selected concerts on the Internet, using Internet radio or as it is also called, podcasting. There is, also in my own institution, frequent discussion of web radio possibilities, and the problems of storing and accessing locally of audio files produced at the school. A third area where music OA is expanding in the institutional setting is as resources in teaching. We are talking about the world of Jam2Jam, web portfolios and music biographies (cf. above).

Librarians need to dare to get themselves involved in technology and the new possibilities of creating and sharing, at the same time as the traditional professional skills of the librarians must be maintained in the areas of selection, cataloging and reference services. (The music library organizations have taken notice of this.) The library is a perfect place to stimulate and direct this kind of movement. It is a friendly, hospitable and knowledgeable place and has many virtues. Imagine a field with agile and friendly domestic animals. Maybe a little unrest and aggressiveness would in place. The border collie. The ram.

Open access to music is a model

Open access in the established sense continues the traditions of old fashioned print media management, particularly in the academic environment. It might be called open access but it reminds you of bureaucratic practices in a narrow elitist world. The message of open access in music is to open boundaries, welcoming the complexities, and the necessities, of 2.0 technology. It is a message of creativity. Not only managing media but inspiring the making of them. The needs of Academy digital archives and other established ways of managing media will keep their roles, and they will survive. But, they can be implemented and changed in favor of solutions that offer opportunities for

more creativity. This is the challenge of the arts approach to open access. Will administrators unfamiliar with the artists' perspective be able to respond?

At the same time as open access to music opens and provides a new universe of creative opportunities, it is depending on the roots of creativity. If nothing is created, open access cannot make it better. The roots of creativity may not have changed but the ways to express them have changed. There is a risk that the surface, the mere production, gets confused with the real thing. Catching the spirit of creativity must be made again and again.

There is a certain charm attached to creativity expressed before the onset of information technology. Maybe the choices that were made then had a certain impact on creation, that we might not achieve today in a world that is too large and too confusing. Accepting the ways of today, but with a sentimental, slightly sad, glance in your eyes – that might be the right attitude. Not only for open access musical people but for creators of all kinds of media. The unicorn.

Bibliography

Alexander Street Press databases: http://www.alexanderstreet.com/products/music.htm

Creative commons: http://www.creativecommons.se/

Dillon, S. and A. Brown (2006). The Art of ePortfolios: Insights from the creative arts experience. Handbook of Research on ePortfolios: Concepts, Technology and Case Studies. A. Jafari and C. Kaufman. Indianapolis, Idea- Group Inc.**:** 418-431.

ENOMA: http://www.enoma.no/background.page

Facebook music : http://www.facebook.com/Music

Haseman, Brad. "A manifesto for performative research". Media international, no 118, February 2006, pp. 98-106.

Jam2jam: http://www.jam2jam.com/.

MySpace (Malmö Academy of Music) : http://www.myspace.com/mhmfolk

Naxos Music Library: http://mhm.naxosmusiclibrary.com/

Neue Mozart-Ausgabe online: http://www.mozarteum.at/03_Wissenschaft/03_Wissenschaft_NMAOnline.asp

OAIster: http://www.oaister.org

Savetodisc: http://savetodisc.net/

Songs of resilience: http://songsofresilience.wikispaces.com/

Uppsala university library (digital collections): http://www.ub.uu.se/arv/special/musik.cfm)

Wikipedia (article on open access): http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_access. 080907

WOMEX: http://www.womex.com