

THE MUSICAL ACOUSTICS RESEARCH LIBRARY (MARL): FULLY DIGITAL & ONLINE

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ABSTRACT

The Musical Acoustics Research Library (MARL) is a collection of research materials assembled by distinguished groups or individuals in the field of musical acoustics research. MARL was established at the Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics, Stanford University in the mid-1990s. A catalogue of the MARL contents was made available online and individual items were digitized and linked to the site upon request when resources allowed. In 2009, an agreement was reached between the various MARL representatives and the Stanford University Library for the transfer and digitization of the entire collection. The new MARL website is now officially online and its contents are freely available to the musical acoustics community in digital form.

1. BACKGROUND

The Musical Acoustics Research Library (MARL) is a collection of research materials from the Catgut Acoustical Society (CAS), Arthur Benade, John Coltman, and John Backus. The collection was established during the 1990s at the Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics (CCRMA), Stanford University [1].

MARL's origins date back to 1992, when CAS agreed to transfer to CCRMA an extensive set of files that had been compiled by Carleen Hutchins and other CAS members concerning the research of such people as Louis Condamine, Robert Fryxell, and John Shelleng, to name a few. CCRMA agreed to actively promote and find ways of making available the file contents. Gary Scavone, a PhD student at CCRMA at the time, volunteered to help coordinate these efforts, with faculty support by Max V. Mathews and the director of CCRMA, Chris Chafe. Scavone initiated discussions to augment the CAS files with the personal archives of Arthur Benade and John Backus, world leaders in the study of wind instrument acoustics. Available research files and some experimental equipment of John Backus were acquired in 1995 and an agreement was reached with Virginia Benade in 1997 to establish the Arthur

H. Benade Archive. In 1998, John Coltman agreed to contribute his personal research files to the collection. The Musical Acoustics Research Library was established to provide a single point of reference for these various archives.

CCRMA supported the creation of a World Wide Web site to help publicize and make available the MARL contents to members of the musical acoustics research community. While descriptions of the file contents were made available online, however, there was insufficient funding available to allow a mass digitization of all the files. Rather, individual files were scanned and made into PDF or DjVu documents as they were requested from the public.

2. DIGITIZATION PROJECT

In 2003, Gary Scavone took a faculty position at McGill University, Montreal, Canada. Arrangements were made to allow the scanning-on-demand modus operandi to continue, with Scavone being able to maintain the MARL website remotely. However, it became difficult to address inquiries regarding the file contents and there tended to be long delays in getting requested documents scanned. Thus, discussions were initiated in 2005 with the Stanford University Libraries (SUL), and in particular Jerry McBride, head of the Stanford Music Library, about transferring the MARL files to the SUL and undertaking a complete digitization of the files. From 2006, McBride spearheaded a number of initiatives to help achieve these goals. First, he succeeded in getting the Stanford Library administration to formally agree to the project. He then undertook discussions with and gained consent from the various MARL sub-collection representatives for the transfer of the files to the SUL. As well, he was able to gain financial support for the digitization project from a variety of sources, including the Stanford Initiative for the Arts, CCRMA, the Violin Society of America (VSA)¹, and the Stanford University Libraries.

The funding from the VSA was made possible by a fundraising effort begun in the 1990s by the CAS to support the MARL initiative. The CAS Forum Board agreed to transfer to Stanford these funds in support of the digitization effort.

Work on the MARL digitization project officially began in late 2009. The most time-consuming component of this

¹ The Catgut Acoustical Society had officially merged with the VSA as the CAS Forum in 2004.

Collection Title: Guide to the records of the Musical Acoustics Research Library (MARL) M1711

Collection Number: M1711

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Description
The MARL collection is dedicated to the study of all aspects of musical acoustics. The collection, established in 1996, came about through the joint effort of the representatives of the Catgut Acoustical Society (CAS), founded by Carleen M. Hutchins and devoted to the study of violin making; Stanford's Center for Computer Research in Music Acoustics (CCRMA), and Virginia Benade, the widow of the wind instrument acoustician Arthur Benade. MARL consists of the research materials from acousticians around the world who were dedicated to studying different aspects of violin making, which make up the Catgut Acoustical Society papers, and the archives of three prominent wind instrument acousticians of our time, John Backus, John W. Coltman, and especially Arthur H. Benade, which deal not only with wind instruments, but also room acoustics, and the interplay between acoustical physics and the mechanisms of auditory processing. The collection consists of papers, photographs, media, digital materials, wood samples, clarinet mouth pieces, and lab equipment

Extent
59.39 Linear feet (138 manuscript boxes, 3 card boxes)

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Figure 1. Online MARL finding aid.

Collection Title: Guide to the Catgut Acoustical Society Newsletter and Journal MUS.1000

Collection Number: MUS.1000

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Description
The Catgut Acoustical Society grew out of the research collaboration of Carleen Hutchins, Frederick Saunders, John Schelleng, and Robert Fryxell, all amateur string players who were also interested in the acoustics of the violin and string instruments in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Their intense correspondence concerning the acoustics of the violin and other musical instruments led to the founding of the Society in Carleen Hutchins's garden on 16 May 1963 sitting around a ping-pong table where they referred to themselves as the "Catgut Acoustical Society." The name started out as a joke, but it was never changed. (Catgut, made from animal intestines, is the material traditionally used to make violin strings, as opposed to metal strings which are commonly used today.) In May 1964, the Society published its first Newsletter, an informal, typewritten periodical printed by a stencil duplicator. It soon matured into a scholarly research publication and was edited by Fryxell until his death in 1986. The Newsletter was published twice a year in May and November from 1964-1984 for a total of 41 issues. The title changed to the Journal of the Catgut Acoustical Society with no. 42 (November 1984), and the issue numbering continued through no. 48 (November 1987). With the May 1988 issue, an editorial board was established and a policy of peer review was instituted. The numbering changed to vol. 1, no. 1 (Series 2) and continued through vol. 1, no. 4 (November 1989). The final title change to the CAS Journal began with vol. 1, no. 5 (May 1990), ending with the final issue of vol. 5, no. 1 (May 2004), its eightieth issue. In 2004 the Society merged with the Violin Society of America as the CAS Forum. The purpose of the Violin Society of America is to promote "the art and science of making, repairing and preserving stringed musical instruments and their bows." The VSA publishes the Journal of the Violin Society of America and the VSA Papers.

Extent
50 journals

Figure 2. Online CAS Newsletter and Journal finding aid.

project was not the scanning itself but rather the task of attempting to contact authors of the various files to obtain copyright consent. The MARL finding aid² (see Figure 1) was posted in October 2011 (without digitized content). Digitized versions of most of the MARL files were added to the site in early April 2013. A finding aid with digitized versions of the complete set of the Catgut Acoustical Society Newsletters and Journals was made available in late April 2013³ (see Figure 2).

Some of the MARL files are not online because of copyright or author permission issues. Parties interested in a listing that lacks a digital link may contact Jerry McBride (jilmcbrid@stanford.edu) to obtain further information.

3. FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

The Musical Acoustics Research Library was established with the expectation that it would continue to grow over time via the addition of more sub-collections and Stanford is quite interested in adding to these archival collections of acoustical research materials. Digitization of modern archival collections is complex, and the musical acoustics research community might consider future discussions on

² <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt6h4nf6qc/>

³ <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c8gt5plr/>

ways to assist libraries with securing copyright permissions for the documents and obtaining funding for cataloging and digitization to help ensure that research archives of our colleagues are preserved and made available to the public.

Carleen Hutchins passed away on 7 August 2009. Thirty-three boxes of research files from Carleen's estate were sent to Joe McNalley of the Hutchins Consort, which were subsequently gifted to Stanford in 2010. A finding aid⁴ for these materials has been posted, though funds do not currently exist to digitize the files.

Acknowledgments

Over the past twenty years, many people have contributed to MARL in various ways, all with the hope that its contents would one day be fully digitized and freely available. We gratefully acknowledge the substantial efforts of Virginia Benade, Joan Miller, Carleen Hutchins, John Coltman, Jay VandeKopple, Patricia Lamkie, Max Mathews, Chris Chafe, Julius Smith, Jonathan Berger, Mauk Hudig, and Fan Tao. We note with regret the passing of Carleen Hutchins (2009), John Coltman (2010), Joan Miller (2011) and Max Mathews (2011) ... their support and guidance was crucial to the success of this project.

Finally, we wish to acknowledge the organizations that helped fund the digitization project, including the Stanford Initiative for the Arts, CCRMA, the VSA-CAS, and the Stanford University Libraries.

4. REFERENCES

- [1] G. P. Scavone, "The musical acoustics research library," *The Catgut Acoustical Society Journal*, vol. 3, no. 6, 1998, (Series II).

⁴ <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt067nf29d/>