

Project Year

Spring 2009

Project Title

Performance Practice of 20th Century Electroacoustic Music: A test case as prototype (The newly accessible archive of Dr. Jean Eichelberger Ivey)

Project Team

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Audience

Students in Peabody's undergraduate/graduate course *The History and Literature of Electronic and Computer Music*

Pedagogical Issue

Currently a student in Peabody's undergraduate/graduate course *The History and Literature of Electronic and Computer Music* might visit the library, check out a score and magnetic tape recording to study and perform only to find the tape mislabeled, crumbling, stretched, and rewind inside-out. It may not be clear which is the start or end of the tape, or if the irregular fluctuations in pitch and amplitude are the composer's intentions or due to damage to the tape. Some tapes require obsolete machines to play, and others may have their layers stuck together by seeping adhesive due to the passage of time and improper storage. The average student should not even handle materials in such fragile condition. Recently the life works of composer Dr. Jean Eichelberger Ivey have been given to the Peabody Archives. Her archive contains examples of all the problems listed above, and more.

Solution

We propose that our Technology Fellow, under the supervision of the Computer Music faculty, the Peabody Archivist, and special consultation from the Library of Congress as needed, use the Ivey collection as a test case in identifying problems related with the media, recovering the media, placing the media online in digital form and work with the faculty in integrating the digitized raw material into the curriculum of *The History and Literature of Electronic and Computer Music*.

Pedagogy is greatly enhanced by making previously unavailable materials available to students in a form that allows analysis and editing. We will modify the course to add a significant component of 20th century electroacoustic performance restoration.

Technologies Used

Logic, Soundtrack Pro 2, Max/MSP/Jitter, HTML

Project Abstract

Undergraduate and graduate Peabody students enrolled in the "History of Electroacoustic Music" have encountered a difficult problem with access to source material in the relatively young field of 20th century electroacoustic composition and performance.

Already much of the analog audio recording tape that is a staple of the field is aging and deteriorating; it requires obsolete playback equipment, and has been poorly distributed by uninformed publishers, and improperly maintained by former users of the material. Often, the very handling of the material causes it to become unusable.

The Computer Music Department has recently acquired the life works of Dr. Jean Eichelberger Ivey, composer and founder of the Electronic Music Department at Peabody. The collection, much of which was previously unavailable, includes numerous books, musical scores, sound recordings, videos, and photographs, providing valuable educational resources to students. Much of the material is in the various states of disrepair typical to the field.

We propose to carefully preserve and digitize the original materials, and present them on the web in their raw state to allow historical analysis. We also will provide/create tools to enable students to edit the raw material into usable form for distribution and in musical performance. The digitized archive will reside on the Computer Music Department server, be linked to Peabody's history courses and be freely available to the world.

By making a test case of Dr. Ivey's archive we hope to produce a protocol for preserving 20th century electroacoustic materials, and provide a prototypical website of material so it can be studied and edited for publication and performance.