

Report of Network meeting European World Music Index

October 24, 2015 10-11 a.m.
Danubius Gellert Hotel, Budapest (Womex)

Agenda: Account of recent developments and a further exploration to set up a pilot of the European World Music Index (EWMI) with other European partner-countries (such as Hungary, Germany and the Netherlands). The discussion will continue to focus on possibilities to built up a system of data collection in a wider context as well as the financing.

The ultimate goal of the EMWI is to create a firm tool to make a significant difference in drawing up policy and to empower World Music on a European scale. By gathering data over a longer period developments and trends become manifest.

Summary of what has been done before:

Rob Boonzajer Flaes (researcher): Our aim for today's meeting is to find out what would be the best way to internationalize data gathering. Knowing who we are is of course relevant, but having data and publishing them is even more important because it makes us visible in the political and social landscape. The booklet with results from our 2012 can now be used by every Dutch organizer whenever confronted with scepticism from politicians and administrators about world music. For this purpose, we gathered all the information we collected in five batches: creators (who is making the music?), consumers (who is listening to it?), venues (where is it played?), facilitators (who is making it possible for artists to perform), and educators (who is involved in handing over skills and knowledge to the next generation?).

We then needed to decide what should be considered world music. And since it is virtually impossible to come up with a final definition, we took a different approach by generating a long list of all styles and genres associated with world music in all relevant fields (academia, festivals, magazines, etc.). As a result the definition we used is inclusive rather than exclusive. So a string quartet can be part of both world music, jazz and chamber music.

Since the data we collected in this way have proven to be very useful for us in the Netherlands, we are now trying to find out if and how this

(or any other) system of data gathering and data exchange could be set up at a European level. Other sectors, like jazz and classical music, already have their data together and it gives them leverage over people like us, because they have been around a long time and we are just getting started.

We have so far presented this project at Womex and BabelMed, and feel we have arrived at a crossroads. We could try to collaborate with similarly inclined organizations that are about data gathering, such as IAMIC. But another option – and one we prefer – is to contact other national organizations that in one way or another represent the actual world music scene. We have been talking to a number of organizations so far, such as IAMIC, the European Jazz Network (who are setting up a database themselves), Minstrel and Lemon, who applied for a European grant but unfortunately didn't get it. The EU loves data, but applying for a grant is a lot of work and requires participation of several countries. So it would be convenient if we could work together with associations that are already in business and add our data to their system.

This is where we stand: we have our data together, we have a methodology, we know what it takes and how much it costs. To begin with, it set us back around € 50,000 (€ 25,000 for developing the system and € 25,000 for executing it) plus an annual upgrade of € 10,000. The system we developed will of course be available for free.

So our question to you is: what would be the best way to proceed? Are you yourself member of a national organization like ours? How could we set up a similar system in your country?

Reports on local situations:

Spain

Araceli (Mundofonias, Madrid): At Fira Manresa there was a company that offered an online database to venues, artists and festivals for all information related to performances. The fee they charged was only € 50, but venues and festivals in Spain will not pay such money, as they have no need for these data. The support they get, is not based on quality or figures, but on having friends in the right places. There are official information systems in Spain, but they are not kept up to date, so people don't care about them.

Poland

Michal (Adam Miskiewicz Institute, Warsaw): We are a government organization based to promote Polish culture abroad. Technically we are not a music export office, but in practice we are. Unfortunately we don't put a lot of effort in generating statistics. Even though we live in an era of open access, it is difficult to get the information you're looking for. We have started to work on databases, but made no more than a first step. We do have a public organization called Polmic (Polish Music Information Center) and I believe they would be interested in taking part, since gathering data is their core business.

Xxx: Polmic is part of the composer's union and they are mainly dealing with contemporary composers. They have a lot of data on works by composers and also provide information about the music industry in Poland, but they probably do not collect any data on world music.

Rob Boonzajer Flaes: I know the problem, since in the Netherlands world music is also not a separate category. Which means you have to squeeze out the data by approximation. It can be done, but it's a lot of work.

Slovakia:

Olga Smetanova (Music Centre Slovakia) The international association of music information centres might definitely be a good partner for this project. The one in Slovakia is supported by the ministry of culture, so it is an official governmental organization which collects different kinds of data. In the past we were also concentrating on classical music and jazz, but now we are opening up to the world music scene in Slovakia. This is the first time we are present at Womex. We gather information in collaboration with the state statistics office, but the amount of data we collect, is very small. In fact we only collect two kinds of data. We have information about all music organizations that are supported by the government, because they are obliged by law to provide that information. And the second collection is about various of organizers such as festivals. Based on those data we provide statistics in our annual report, but to make these data comparable to the ones you propose, is another problem.

I know how difficult it is, since we ourselves tried to exchange data among the member of IAMIC and it turned out to be very complicated. This is in fact the reason we created the Minstrel Project, which was supposed to provide a European database for different segments of the

music business. The idea was to create separate databases for ensembles and other ones for festivals and producers. But the result of Minstrel was merely an idea and a few samples, because it was so difficult to create such a common European database. Since it was a project, it had a limited lifespan and now that it's finished, we are preparing the final report for the EU. Our problem as music information centres is that we don't have the data which politicians need: information that explains to politicians why they should support us. Data about composers and their works is of no use in this respect. We did collect some partial information about the music industry, but not specific for separate genres. That's why we came up with an idea called Music Monitor, which should be a collaboration between different kinds of networks and genres. But at this moment it's merely a plan for the future. Unfortunately there is no timetable for the execution and nobody is really in charge of the project.

France

Thomas (Zone Franche, World Music Network France): From previous assignments I have some experience in making studies and collecting data. Zone Franche is a member of UFIS, a group of 15 federations active in socio-economic and cultural fields – all small scale, no big industries. UFIS sends an annual questionnaire to all member organizations. And since the questionnaire is always the same, statistics can be automatically generated from these data. Apart from that there are flash studies about specific situations, so we can respond to political decisions quite quickly. Also the Ministry of Culture has national and regional agencies that generate statistics and these data are publicly available. Irma, another official organization, used to have a special section for jazz and world music, but this was closed down because of lack of funding. The data they collected should however still be obtainable from them.

Florence Chastanier (Babel Med, Marseille): We started with Fiesta du Sud in 1992 and then in 2005 Babel Med. Before that we were the organizers of Womex in 1997 and also of Strictly Mundial. In 1999 we started a Mediterranean database. But we were young and innocent and had no money, so we just went and visited countries around the Mediterranean and met people there. The data we collected are now obsolete, but it was a good experience. We did however find informants in all of the countries with good contacts. We also performed a study on the public of the six festivals we organize. So we know their age, where they live, what music they like, etc. This

enables us to show to collaborators and financiers that world music is not only a creative force, but also an economic force. At the same time we ourselves are just a small organization of 10 people, struggling to survive. And this is getting harder and harder, as the support we get from regional institutions is going down and down. So we can't offer much help ourselves, but we are a member of Zone Franche and are happy that they are willing to participate.

Austria

Kathrin Proll (Austrian World Music Association): We are a grassroots network organization that represents musicians, bookers, labels, journalists etc. It was founded because world music is rather neglected in Austria and we have done a lot of lobbying with funding organizations and with the media to get world music on the air. One thing we achieved is that it is no longer necessary to have an Austrian passport in order to get government support for musical projects. The network itself is not funded at all. We can only apply for specific projects and use a little bit of that money for our organization. One of our projects is the Austrian World Music Awards, which was initiated last year. There is a government funded music information centre in Austria, but it dealt only with classical, jazz and pop music. Because of our efforts they now have a small section on world music as well. They also act as an export agency and organize the Austrian umbrella stand at Womex. From the very start we saw the need for collecting data on world music in Austria, but without funding we could only make a start.

Rob Boonzajer Flaes: This only illustrates the need to collaborate on a European level. We all face the same problems. We are all grassroots network organizations that rely on projects for their income.

Belgium

Katrien van Remortel (Kunstenpunt /Flanders Arts Intitute, Belgium): For us the problem is that since we are now an arts institute rather than just a music institute, there is hardly any time left for additional efforts. Precisely for this reason we proposed the Music Monitor, but as the situation is the same everywhere, not much has been done. Actually I put it on my agenda for next year, but it since it was aimed specifically on world music, it was considered too narrow.

Roundup: Rob Boonzajer Flaes: For your inspiration and encouragement I would like to say that just five years ago WMFNL was a tiny organization and no match for the MCN (Muziek Centrum

Nederland), which received millions of euros each year, had a beautiful building and an expensive staff of over 40 people. And all of a sudden all subsidies were cut and they went out of business almost overnight. And now – thanks to the experience and expertise we gathered – we, the WMFNL, are the strongest section in the Dutch music industry.

Gathering data has two sides. On the one hand it's good know who you are. On the other hand it's also a force, an empowering tool. Getting a comprehensive field of research and a complete database would be very costly. But let's just start with the bloody obvious and go for the simplest figure, which is the turnover. How much money goes around in the world music business? We need just a rough estimate. Of course it would take some guesswork and fiddling with figures, but it would give us a rough idea of what we are worth. This would not only show how strong we are, but also stimulate other countries to do the same. Following Frances' idea, I suggest we start by looking for a correspondent in each participating country, who would have to come up with a rough estimate of the turnover in the world music sector. This would enable us to state our economic value whenever we are talking to EU officials.

This can be quite easily done with the help of the triage-system. If we get together a few knowledgeable professionals from relevant sectors, like a festival director, a booker and a label owner, and ask them for an informed estimate – in confidence of course – they will come up with figures that may be too low or too high, but the Law of Averages will guarantee that you will reach a quite reliable figure in the end. Also they don't have to give any information about their own financial situation, only an informed guess of the total worth of their sector. If we could start with eight countries, the outcome will be a trigger for other countries to start doing the same for themselves. And all it takes is one correspondent in each country who gets three professionals together to do the guesswork. The whole thing shouldn't take more than a day.

So let's forget about the system we developed in the Netherlands for now, unless some of you have €50,000 lying around, plus €10,000 for annual updates. And let's focus on generating this basic figure which is an indication of our economic force. It might just give us the leverage needed to proceed.



Oscar (WMDC/Grounds, Rotterdam): If you know of other organizations involved in collecting data that are relevant to our purpose, please inform us, so we can invited them to future meetings.

Olga Smetanova (Slovakia): This year we created a platform called Central European Music Square (Hungary, Slovakia, Poland and the Czech Republic), which has a stand here at Womex. It's a specific cooperation in the field of world music. And what we want to do is not only promote the four countries collectively, but also to gather data. So maybe this network could be your partner in this collaboration.

Rob Boonzajer Flaes: I think we should stick to individual correspondents, because in an informal network no one is responsible for a commitment made.

Resolutions:

- Instead of aiming for a comprehensive gathering of relevant data in this initial phase, the next step in this project will focus on one central figure: the total turnover of the world music sector in each participating country.
- The project will continue with at a limited number of six to eight participating EU countries, to gain momentum and to act as an incentive to others.
- Each of the parties present will look for a local correspondent who will submit a rough estimate of the total turnover of the world music sector in his/her country.