



CONTENTS:

Variazioni Perspectives:

- Editorial page 1

Contributions:

- EMP Meeting (Trossingen, Germany)
- Welcome to the CEP Communities
- VARIAZIONI: the Synergy of Music Heritage Assets and web Technologies
- An Evaluation Session day step by step page 2

CEP Contents Review

- Rhapsody in B minor, op. 79 no. 1 by Brahms
- The Swan in VARIAZIONI page 6

News

..... page 10

Future Activities

..... page 11

Related Links

..... page 11

VARIAZIONI REVIEWS

Editorial

Catalina Nagy

The VARIAZIONI Project is reaching its finalization in February 2009, after thirty months of vigorous creative processes and developments carried out by an outstanding group of specialized professionals from renowned Musical Institutions and technological development European Organizations.

The contribution of pedagogical and musical tradition provided by the *Fundación Isaac Albéniz* (Spain), the *Koninklijk Conservatorium Brussel* (Belgium), the *Sibelius Academy* (Finland), the *Escola Superior de Música e das Artes do Espectáculo do Porto* (Portugal) and the *Association Européenne des Conservatoires* (The Netherlands), backed by the research, development and application of new technologies carried out by *GERMINUS XXI* (Spain), *RIGEL Engineering Ltd.* (Italy), the *Universitat Pompeu Fabra* (Spain), the *Computer and Dipartimento Sistemi e Informatica, Università degli Studi di Firenze* (Italy) and *Exitech Ltd.* (Italy), have provided the means to achieve successfully the goals established for this important European Project, amongst which, we would like highlight the following achievements:

- Defining a metadata model for European musical assets;
- Constructing a novel multilingual portal for the integration, cataloguing, description, enrichment, and distribution of multimedia musical contents;
- Creating a magnificent digital collection containing more than 8,000 items of great cultural importance; and
- Conforming multiple Communities of users gathered by diverse musical interests.

The development of the Content Enrichment Portal (CEP) of VARIAZIONI was based on a collaborative platform integrating Web 2.0 technologies. Hence, its success and establishment has been possible thanks to the active participation and collaboration of more than 2,300 registered users, making real the exchangeability of assets, knowledge and experiences in the new virtual community conformed by VARIAZIONI.

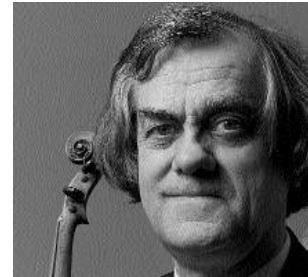


VARIAZIONI CEP – Results of searching by “Letter”



Gathering and attracting the attention of this remarkable number of users was one of the principal challenges during the execution of the Project, having now fulfilled all its goals successfully. The permanence of the VARIAZIONI Community and the continuous collaboration of all its members are due to the attractiveness of its collaborative Portal and the richness and quality of the musical contents as well as of the metadata integrated in the CEP.

The possibility of listening to selected musical works by great music Maestros such as Mozart, Puccini or Bach, being able to virtually attend to Master Classes held by renowned contemporary Maestros such as Vladimir Ashkenazy, Ivan Monighetti, Sigiswald Kuijken (in the picture) or Teresa Berganza amongst a long etcetera, having access to scores of a great number of musical works, including autographic manuscripts, as well as to interesting historical documents such as photographs and letters of Jean Cocteau, Zubin Mehta, Golda Meir or Franck Sinatra, all of this, added to the possibility of cataloguing, extending and translating content descriptions and reusing these important digital assets, have made the CEP a technological tool of great importance and interest to professional musicians and music lovers in general.



Through its Content Enrichment Portal, the VARIAZIONI Project makes a sustained contribution to the dissemination of European Culture and, particularly, to the preservation and strengthening of its extraordinary musical heritage.

CONTRIBUTIONS

AEC Early Music Platform Meeting, Trossingen (Germany) 23rd to 25th January 2009

Mercedes Guantes & Amalia Araújo

At the end of January 2009, a conference on Early Music organized by the Association Européenne des Conservatoires (AEC) was held at the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik in Trossingen (Germany).

The meeting took place within the 'Â Tre' competition, with the participation of relevant figures in the European field of music, amongst them, Barthold Kuijken, Bruce Haynes, Claire Chevallier and Regula Rapp.

Those present had the opportunity to attend concerts and conference related to the historical interpretation of music, as well as participate in a Variazioni Project Workshop held by Amalia Araújo and Mercedes Guantes.

The Workshop concentrated on the basic functionalities and the use of the CEP, showing contents related to Early Music and the latest developments in the CEP, currently in its last phase of development.



Variazioni Workshop in Trossingen (Germany)



Welcome to the Content Enrichment Portal Communities

Bárbara Wang
Manuel Benavides

Community		Members
20th Century Vanguards	Open	16
Acoustics	Open	5
Aesthetics	Open	5
Alexander Technique	Open	3
Art History	Open	7
Atonalism	Open	6
Baroque	Open	16
Bassoon performers	Open	7
Camerata	Open	1
Cello performers	Open	19
Chamber music performers	Open	13

One of the latest news about the Variazioni CEP is that the Communities Application is already functioning for all users.

At the Communities, users will find a great variety of contents exclusively oriented towards each community. Moreover, you can meet people with the same musical tastes, interested in exchanging knowledge and all types of information. Currently, there are more than 70 Communities, amongst which we can find the Institutions participating in the Project, those by Instrumentalists, by Groups of Interpreters, those about Musical Styles and also about Music Theory.

The existing Communities are open to all CEP users, just a click away from becoming part of the ones of your choice.

Community	Members	Online Now	
20th Century Vanguards	Open 15	4	Join
Acoustics	Open 5	2	Join
Aesthetics	Open 5	1	Join
Alexander Technique	Open 3	1	Join
Art History	Open 7	2	Join
Atonalism	Open 6	1	Join

Community	Members	Online Now	
20th Century Vanguards	Open 16	5	Learn
Acoustics	Open 5	2	Join
Aesthetics	Open 5	0	Join
Alexander Technique	Open 3	0	Join
Art History	Open 7	1	Join
Atonalism	Open 6	0	Join

This is the Community top ten by number of users:

1.	Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre	130
2.	Escuela Superior de Música Reina Sofía	96
3.	Escola Superior de Música e Artes do Espectáculo	89
4.	Folk Music	66
5.	Piano performers	53
6.	Violin performers	40
7.	Renaissance Music	32
8.	Medieval Music	29
9.	Baroque Music	29
10.	Koninklijk Conservatorium Brussel	25

If you do not find what you are looking for, in spite of the great variety of Communities, contact us; your suggestions are always welcome. (variazioniproject@albeniz.com)



VARIAZIONI: the Synergy of Music Heritage Assets and Web Technologies

Mantautas Krukauskas

In the current reality of interdisciplinary development in the field of sciences, humanities and the arts, new possibilities and approaches arise to implement new ideas by combining technology, research and artistic needs.

The value of historical heritage in music grows every day, as much as its quantity. The accessibility of information and its increasing amount also require new technologies to handle it. Many musical institutions, including Music Academies and Conservatoires around Europe face new challenges in managing and using their digital assets.



Therefore one of the priorities of Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre (and our partner institutions) is to find a new ways of storing, cataloguing and sharing our contents. The current strategy and needs of our institution are directly connected with goals and results of VARIAZIONI project.

What is VARIAZIONI for us, what could it be for any musician or music lover? How the VARIAZIONI platform is contributing towards development of new knowledge and artistic research? How do we achieve technology-assisted synergy? It's easy to answer these questions now, after being a part of VARIAZIONI project for more than 2 years from our perspective:

- It's a way to share our content with other institutions and users worldwide. The real value of content is its accessibility. LMTA has a collection of Open Domain content, which can be freely accessible for any interested professionals and music lovers. All VARIAZIONI users now can use this content to their research, education or even entertainment needs, as much as our students can access contents provided by other partner institutions.
- The value of the content also depends on how easy is to find what you are looking for! The technology and metadata developed by VARIAZIONI allows us to search and browse content easily, and even see the links between similar contents. It's easy to add a new metadata too!
- VARIAZIONI is using collaborative technologies, which are the essence of the prototype VARIAZIONI Content Enrichment Portal (CEP). Users are not just passive browsers of existing assets. They can join and create communities, translate existing metadata and upload their own content! It gives a lot of possibilities for a further development of a portal and its use for many exciting means.

We are close to the end of VARIAZIONI project. However, this is only the start of VARIAZIONI CEP and Community, which will sustain the ideas and goals of the project in every day life of Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre and other partner institutions. Join us!



An Evaluation Session day step by step

Veerle Van Bouchaute

On December 10th 2008, I performed one of the dissemination activities of KCB (EhB) in Izegem. In Belgium, ordinary music schools organize a 'pedagogical day or workshop' for teachers once a year. DKO West-Vlaanderen (Part-time Art Education West Flanders) uses a very interesting concept that stimulates the dissemination of knowledge and know-how: teachers from all over the province choose a presentation and/or workshop by a guest teacher in a West Flemish school of music. I was invited to give one of them: a Variazioni presentation and workshop in the Stedelijke Academie voor Muziek en Woord Izegem.

This activity was very well organised. A few weeks before it took place, the headmistress had sent me a list with the names and specialisations of the participating teachers. With the help of the person in charge of the ICT of the school, I managed to set up the powerpoint installation with internet connection and 10 computers with internet connection and headphones. After the powerpoint presentation, I gave a real-time demonstration of the use of the CEP by showing on a big screen how to search, upload, enrich, translate, add tags, how to join a community, read the newsletter, etc. I showed the content and the enrichment of one video of a master class, one manuscript score and one studio recording as examples according to the interests of the audience. Then there was a break, in which I was able to register the 15 participants and after that there still was a lot of time left for the workshop and for discussion.

As the teachers had chosen for this particular workshop, they were interested in the subject. They are music professionals teaching music lovers and a few of them are in charge of the ICT in their schools, and know other music portals. They asked a lot of relevant questions, mostly concerning IPR and content issues. During the workshop, I helped them to find contents related to their interests and teaching subjects. Most of them filled in the evaluation questionnaire. The others preferred to do it at home, after a deeper exploration of the portal.



Koninklijk Conservatorium Brussel

As the teachers had chosen for this particular workshop, they were interested in the subject. They are music professionals teaching music lovers and a few of them are in charge of the ICT in their schools, and know other music portals. They asked a lot of relevant questions, mostly concerning Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and content issues. During the workshop, I helped them to find contents related to their interests and teaching subjects. Most of them filled in the evaluation questionnaire. The others preferred to do it at home, after a deeper exploration of the portal.

The participants told me they recognized the need of portals like that of Variazioni, which is an ambitious project, growing step by step. They understood also the need of dissemination sessions like this, in order to involve the wishes of the users in the amelioration of the portal.

To make sure that the teachers had all the information needed to invite others to join Variazioni, I distributed a print of my powerpoint presentation and the Variazioni flyers. They told me they would tell their students.



CEP CONTENTS REVIEW

Rhapsody in G minor, op. 79 no. 1 by Brahms

Carla Fernández Benedicto

CEP Contents

- Content type: Studio recording; *Brahms, Rhapsody in B Minor, op. 79, No. 1 - (Part 1)* (performer Wilhelm Backhaus)
- Content type: Studio recording; *Brahms, Rhapsody in B Minor, op. 79, No. 1 - (Conclusion)* (performer Wilhelm Backhaus)
- Content type: Studio recording; *Rhapsody in b minor Op. 79 No. 1.* (performer Arthur Rubinstein)
- Content type: Composition; *Rhapsody in B Minor op 79 no 1*



Rhapsody in B minor, op. 79 no. 1 by Brahms
(Composition) in the CEP

According to traditional musicological considerations, the term 'Rhapsody' defines a musical work in a composition style which is relatively undefined and vague. This title was included in Brahms' op. 79 no. 1 and 2 because of strictly publishing criteria; nevertheless, the author had already titled these works as 'Capriccio' when they were first composed in 1880. Both compositions show a clear sense of unit not only in character but also in intensity; hence, some scholars have concluded that they should be performed consecutively. Indeed, few of them such as Rudolf Réti¹ state that these two pieces are actually the sections of a single work. In any case, the Rhapsody op. 79 no. 1 by Brahms is a recognisable example of Brahms' preference for succinct and imprecise titles, as well as the stylish blend between classic and romantic trends which characterises his most elaborated instrumental works.

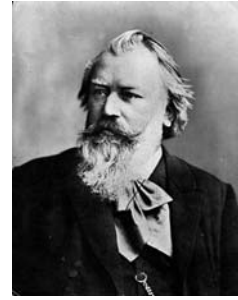
Brahms dedicated his Rhapsody no. 1 to his pianist friend Elizabeth von Herzogenberg who, supposedly, was startled by its technical difficulty. Indeed, this work was specially composed for the concrete possibilities of the piano itself, as well as for the concept of public concert as a principal means for its performance. In fact, its virtuosistic character shapes this piece as a work aimed to be executed in front of a large audience.

The tragic and heroic character of this work sends us back to the ballades composed by Brahms in his earliest years. Nevertheless, this is a mature piece which displays general trends of the most developed Brahms' works. Some of these features are the melodic profusion and the wide intervals related with German popular songs; the developed variation as the method through which the themes and motifs evolve; and the ternary structure with coda of sonatistic reminiscences. This last trend, though, is what is truly related to the main characteristic of Brahms' instrumental works, which could probably be considered his most relevant contribution to the history of music: the perfect fusion between classic formal elements and romantic novelties with relation to performance and expression.

¹ R. Réti: *The Tematic Process in Music* (New York, 1951)



Indeed, the Rhapsody no. 1 sharply captures the author's preference for structural trends distinctive of the classic period such as a logic order of musical developments, an iron structural soundness and a remarkable simplicity of means. The form of the composition is firmly bound to the purest classic instrumental tradition; the structural ternary pattern includes two main themes which tend to behave according to sonatistic procedures, and the essential diatonic functions of classic tonal harmony prevail throughout the entire work. Hence, formal limits are diluted in a mixture of sonata structure with an extended ternary form. Some pianists such as Bishop, Kavasevich and Katchen emphasise the sonatistic features by repeating the section A; nonetheless, the versions of Backhaus and Rubinstein, which are included in *Variazioni*, as well as other pianists such as Biret and Barenboim, execute with no repetitions at all, thus adopting a freer formal interpretation. The former seems to be the correct option: the Peterson and Dover editions do not display any sign for repetition of section A, thus the original manuscript did not probably have any related note. Furthermore, the section B is not a proper development of the main theme but an elaboration of one motif from the first section, which eventually became an individual entity.



This classicist structure contrasts with the displayed expressivity and lyricism of the Rhapsody, which is a characteristic feature of the Romantic music. Every element immerses us completely into the Romantic aesthetic, which ends up being the first and main auditive trend of the piece: weighty sonority obtained by wide-range chords as well as by fifths and octaves which remind of the latest Beethoven works; the use of the accompaniment relates to the style of Schumann's works; expansive figures and emphasis on the low register; chromatisms and innovative modulations through interval of third relationships; expressive intimism and heroic character. The work is composed almost entirely in the way of a collage technique through the mixture and superposition of small motifs. In fact, Brahms himself stated 'Melodies arise everywhere and one must be careful to not run over them while walking': repeated chords, persistent triplets and small lyric melodies which shape the rhapsodic character of the work. Indeed, at those specific fragments when this piece is not formed by a weave of small motifs, the composition consists of a series of high and low tension episodes which directly relate to the romantic musical credo.

In conclusion, the Rhapsody no. 1 op. 79 reveals the secret of the greatness of Brahms: the existence of diverging elements under a unique and coherent development. The instrumental music of this author must be understood from this point of view: formal perfection can only be achieved through a complete reconciliation between the form and the substance. Therefore, it is essential in this process to unite the classic structural logic and the romantic expressive freedom.





The Swan in VARIAZIONI

Boriana Borissova

CEP Contents

- Content Type: Studio Recording; *Swan Lake ballet, act 1 (1. Introduction)* (Tchaikovsky)
- Content Type: Studio Recording; *Swan Lake ballet, act 1 (3. Waltz)* (Tchaikovsky)
- Content Type: Studio Recording; *Great Masters Cycle. Tchaikovsky. Swan Lake op 20, Odette and Prince (Act II)* (Tchaikovsky)
- Content Type: Studio Recording; *Great Masters Cycle. Tchaikovsky. Swan Lake op 20, Russian Dance (Act III)* (Tchaikovsky)
- Content Type: Studio Recording; *Schwanengesang (1828) (1. Liebesbotschaft)* (Schubert)²
- Content Type: Studio Recording; *Great Masters Cycle. Vitaly Margulys. Schubert, Schwanengesang, (Schubert)*
- Content Type: Master Class; *Master Class HAGEN (viola)* (Hindemith)
- Content Type: Composition; *Der Schwanendreher, concerto after folksongs for viola and small orchestra (version for viola and piano)* (Hindemith)



“The swan”, “le cygne”, “der schwan”, “lebedinoo”... there are many titles in the history of music that include these words. A number of composers throughout time have chosen the symbol of the swan as inspiration, maybe because of its strong presence in European culture. Most of these cultural aspects derive from the Mute Swan of Europe (in Latin *Cygnus olor*).

Perhaps the best known story about a swan is the “Ugly Duckling” fable; the story centres around a duckling who is mistreated until it becomes evident he is a swan and is accepted into the habitat. There is a scientific basis for this story: young swans, called cygnets, are not the bright white of mature adults. Real ducklings are more attractive than a cygnet, yet cygnets become swans, - which are too many the epitome of beauty -.

Leaving their appearance aside, swans also feature strongly in Greek mythology: the story of “Leda and the Swan” recounts that Helen of Troy was conceived in a union of Zeus, disguised as a swan, and Leda. Also, swans are often a symbol of love and fidelity because of their long-lasting monogamous relationships.

The aspect of artistic inspiration was consecrated in Wagner's swan-related operas *Lohengrin* and *Parsifal*. Tchaikovsky's ballet “*Swan Lake*” (1875-6) is partially based on an ancient German legend which tells the story of Odette, a princess turned into a swan by an evil sorcerer's curse; no author or literary forebear is identified in the printed libretto used by Tchaikovski, but the plot depicts elements from Russian folk tales. We can find several contents in *Variazioni* in relation with this work: two concerts (the fragments “*Russian dance*” and “*Odette and the prince*” in the reduced version for violin and piano, performed by Zakjar Bron and Irina Vinogradova) and a studio recording of the ballet's Act I by the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra conducted by Antal Dorati.

² There are 13 Studio Recording Contents under the “*Schwanengesang*” title, one for every lied of the cycle.



But perhaps the feature that has had the greater impact, on composers most particularly, is the legend that refers that the Mute Swan is utterly silent until the last moment of its life, and then sings one achingly beautiful song just before dying. Thus, there is in *Variazioni* the example of Franz Schubert's "Schwanengesang" ("Swan song"), with Vitaly Margulys' performance of the piece "Ständchen" (Serenade). The fourteen lieder that constitute the "Schwanengesang" cycle were published in 1928, posthumously, and they were based on poems by Rellstab and Heine. They are part of a rich array of works that Schubert created at the end of his life: the last three piano sonatas (D958-60), the String Quintet in C major (D956), and "Der Hirt auf dem Felsen" (D965) for soprano, clarinet and piano. The sheer quantity and quality of productivity in Schubert's last months remains nothing short of miraculous, and could describe a man who knows that his time is almost up. In the spring of 1828 he gave, for the first and only time in his career, a public concert of his own works, which was very well received. After surviving a number of bouts of illness, Schubert died in 1828, before the age of 32.

As a violist, the search in *Variazioni* inevitably leads me to "Der Schwanendreher", which appears as a "composition" type of content in the version for viola and piano. It is one of the major works of German composer Paul Hindemith (1895-1963), and has become a cornerstone of the standard viola repertoire (together with the Bartok and Walton concertos). "Schwanendreher" literally means "the swan turner" –in reference to cooking over a spit. It is a concerto based on old German folksongs that Hindemith, a violist himself, composed in 1935 as he was secretly preparing to emigrate from Germany. The 1933 election brought the National Socialists to power, and Hindemith saw that his output was being banned, he was scarcely ever asked to appear as a performer in Germany and his Jewish colleagues at the Berlin Musikhochschule lost their jobs. He gave quotations to the solo viola describing the soloist as "One who comes among merry company and performs the music he has brought from afar: songs grave and gay and, to conclude, a dance." Hindemith left Europe, and since 1940 continued his career in the United States, primarily at Yale University. And at this point I must turn away from the main topic of this article to make a sorrowful mention of another illustrious violist: professor Jesse Levine, who died on 11 November 2008. Internationally renowned violist and conductor, he was an immense musician, an immense teacher and an immense human being. Those of us who had the privilege of hearing his performance of "Der Schwanendreher" (in 1996 with the Yale Symphony) were mesmerized and forever touched by his way of conveying the essence of the "Swan Turner", with sheer musicianship and the inner joy of *"One who comes among merry company and performs the music he has brought from afar..."*

To finish this journey along swans and music, a quote attributed to Socrates (year 399 b. C.):

"You think I cannot see as far away as a swan. You know that when swans feel the approach of death they sing, and they sing sweeter and louder on the last days of their lives because they are going back to that God whom they serve".



In Memoriam
Jesse Levine (1940-2008)



NEWS

KAREN ODROBNA WINS 1ST "JESÚS VILLARROJO" INTERNATIONAL COMPOSITION COMPETITION.



Karen Odrobna Gerardi

The young Italian composer Karen Odrobna Gerardi has been awarded a €6.000 prize at the 1st 'Jesús Villa-Rojo' International Composition Competition. Organized by the "Fundación Siglo Futuro de Guadalajara" and with the sponsoring of Fundación BBK, this sum of money as a prize, is accompanied by the Score Edition, Recording and Premiere of her work "Sur le bout de la langue", composed for clarinet, cello, violin and piano. Its outstanding aesthetic qualities, technique, instrumental treatment as well as its adequacy in relation to the established terms and conditions, were undoubtedly essential to her achievement.

BIGGEST RECORD DEAL FOR SCHOOLGIRL FARYL SMITH



Londres, 14 enero 2009

Faryl Smith - the thirteen years old mezzo-soprano, who rose to fame during her time on ITV's Britain's Got Talent earlier this year, has signed a record deal with Universal Classics and Jazz worth £2.3 million. Since showcasing her talent, Faryl has caught the eye of many record company bosses. However after strong competition, Faryl signed to the most valuable contract ever awarded to such a young artist - a multi-album deal worth £2.3 million. "It's all just so overwhelming," said Faryl, "I'm honoured to be joining such a fantastic record company, especially since it's where Katherine [Jenkins] started." "Faryl, The Debut Album" will be launched on 10th March 2009.

DANIEL BAREMBOIM TRYING TO ACHIEVE THE BALANCE IN HIS MULTIRRACIAL ORQUESTRA

Berlin.14-1-2009

Daniel Barenboim, renowned Israeli pianist and conductor of his own Orchestra "West-Eastern Divan" which involves young talented musicians from Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, Argentina and Spain has brought forward to Berlin. Due to the current situation and political conflicts in the Middle East, the concert which was supposed to be held in The Cairo last weekend, was cancelled by the Institution. Two Arab members of the Orchestra didn't attend the First Jubileo Concert in Berlin in order to avoid being sitting next to Israeli. "They often disagree with their political ideas and opinions but never seriously enough to be prevented from taking part in the Orchestra".

A YEAR OF EVENTS CELEBRATING BAROQUE MUSIC AND CULTURE

BBC-Radio3- Baroque 09

The grandeur and majesty of the Baroque era is being celebrated by cultural organizations throughout the UK in 2009, inspired by the anniversaries of two leading Baroque composers; it is the 250th anniversary of Handel's death and the 350th anniversary of Purcell's birth. The opulent Baroque style will be captured through Baroque '09, a year of events celebrating Baroque art, music and culture through an exciting programme of concerts, operas and exhibitions.





FUTURE ACTIVITIES

- Final Review of **VARIAZIONI** Project in Luxembourg by the European Commission, April 2009.

- Evaluation Sessions of CEP:

- Conservatorio Profesional de Música de Salamanca (Spain), February 2009
- Conservatorio Superior de Música de Salamanca (Spain), February 2009
- Conservatorio Superior de Música de Aragón (Zaragoza, Spain), February 2009
- Conservatorio Profesional de Música de Aragón (Zaragoza, Spain), February 2009

RELATED LINKS

Institute of Early Music, University of Music Trossingen

<http://www.mh-trossingen.de>

Escuela Superior de Música Reina Sofía

<http://www.fundacionalbeniz.com>

Fundación Albéniz

<http://www.esmae-ipp.pt/>

Escola Superior de Música e Artes do Espectáculo

<http://lmta.lt/english/>

Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre

<http://www.siba.fi/en/>

Sibelius Academy

<http://www.kcb.be/>

Koninklijk Conservatorium Brussel

<http://www.aecinfo.org/>

Association Européenne des Conservatoires



eContentplus



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