



MusicAustralia is a new service being jointly developed by the National Library and ScreenSound Australia, National Screen and Sound Archive, and content partners including the Australian Music Centre.

MusicAustralia aims to provide users with a rich online experience of Australia's music heritage—wherever and in whatever digital format it is held.

MusicAustralia will first develop a federated resource discovery service, based on the very successful PictureAustralia model. The resource discovery service will allow users to locate and use contemporary and heritage digital music and music related resources in a variety of formats and from a range of institutions and sectors, via a single web interface.

While the full production service will not be available until the second half of 2003, the first stage of MusicAustralia development resulted in a pilot, available for trial at <http://www.musicaustralia.org>. The MusicAustralia Pilot content base is small—just 170 items from four institutions—and was carefully selected to test requirements for delivering music related items in a wide range of formats and to explore and demonstrate the rich relationships between printed and performed music materials held by different institutions. Take the MusicAustralia Guided Tour from the homepage to experience the pilot content.

The MusicAustralia Pilot allows users to discover digitised printed music, digitised audio recordings, 'born digital' scores and pdf derivatives, text, pictures and manuscript items. Users can:

- * simultaneously view a piece of digitised sheet music being delivered from the National Library's web server, while listening to one or more digitised sound recordings of the same work being delivered from the Screen Sound web server, or from the National Library's website. For example, users can compare the original manuscript version of 'Waltzing Matilda' with four different print editions, two folklore recordings, and three audio recordings (a formal version featuring baritone Peter Dawson and full orchestra in 1938, the first known jazz recording featuring Don Burrows in 1945, and a recording of the Franklin B. Paverty Bush Band at the official opening of the new Parliament House in 1988);

- * navigate between related music materials, including multiple printed editions and versions of musical works. For example, users can experience various interpretations by different performers of the same musical score. Other historical relationships are also exposed, such as the relationship between a 1970 folklore recording in which Alex Hood interviews and records elderly bushman Tim McMahon singing 'Farewell to Greta' (attributed to Ned Kelly), and Alex Hood's own recording of this song in April 2002;

- * use and manipulate contemporary 'born digital' scores, which are produced by composers using the music notation softwares Finale and Sibelius. Thanks to the Australian Music Centre's involvement in the project, and the goodwill of a number of AMC represented composers, users can simultaneously view the digital score and listen to the integrated MIDI file of Ann Carr-Boyd's 'Moonbeams Kiss the Sea' or Raffaele

Marcellino's 'The Lottery in Babylon'; or simultaneously view a digital score and listen to a related performance audio recording, or interact with a score by changing the tempo or the key signature for practice and performance purposes;

- * print high quality copies of sheet music for research or personal use;

- * enjoy a small sample of music multimedia presentations, where digital print music and related digitised audio recordings are 'synchronised' to allow even non music-literate users to 'follow' the sheet music and audio.

The MusicAustralia project team is currently investigating the benefits of various data models to support the development of navigational pathways between related items, how to expose rich content which is buried deep within 'containers' such as oral history recordings, and grappling with how best to deliver digitised audio and multimedia objects to users without access to broadband internet services.

Of course, MusicAustralia's development is dependent on the availability of digital music content. The National Library has recently released its Digital Music Collection, which makes more than 2000 pieces of Australian sheet music (mostly pre 1930) available online. The Library's catalogue is the primary access point to this collection: users discover a resource through the catalogue and click on a Persistent Identifier URL to launch the Library's delivery system. The Library has invested considerable resources to develop its Digital Collections Manager (which manages storage plus bibliographic, preservation and administrative metadata for digital objects in many

formats), and in developing its generic delivery system. This system supports optimisation for particular collection types: the music version, for example, allows users to turn pages and move backwards and forwards through a piece of sheet music or album; the map version allows users to zoom, pan and use the Mr Sid plugin for very detailed analysis of map content.

The Library will be assisting a number of State Libraries to digitise unique printed music materials over the next 6-12 months, and hopes that other major collecting institutions will also participate in this cooperative digitisation project. Screen Sound Australia and the Library have long been converting their analogue sound recordings to digital format for preservation purposes, and are now working together on the many issues surrounding delivery of digital sound recordings over the web. Screen Sound's digital sound recordings are currently delivered directly through URLs in catalogue records, while the National Library is working on its sound recording delivery system, and

hopes to offer users enhanced functionality such as viewing timecoded transcripts of oral history interviews and even viewing associated collection images while listening to the sound recording.

Of course, many contemporary sound recordings only exist in digital form, and therefore pose significant collecting issues. This is especially the case with the works of less well-established musicians, who may be represented by an independent label. The Australia Council has recently funded a new music showcasing initiative, Australian Music Online. The AMO team has developed many links with producers of new Australian popular music, and will act as an 'aggregator' for this elusive content. MusicAustralia and AMO are working closely together to establish a long term aggregation and preservation strategy for this material.

The Australian Music Centre is developing guidelines to assist its composer members to make their digital scores publishable to the web.

There are many issues for the AMC and composers to deal with, including the fact that the two industry standard notation softwares are not compatible with each other, and are often not backwardly compatible. Storage and delivery of these digital scores is not a trivial matter, and a cooperative solution will certainly be required.

Alongside work on the resource discovery service, the MusicAustralia team is also modelling directory and interactive services for future development. MusicAustralia users will ultimately be able to access and navigate a rich store of information on Australian music, musicians, organisations and services from a single access point.

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<http://www.musicaustralia.org>
<http://www.pictureaustralia.org/>
<http://www.nla.gov.au/digicoll/>
Information on system requirements—including the need for an audio player to play sound recordings and special 'plug-ins' to experience born digital scores—is available through the *Music Australia* help page.

The Mayhew Music Indicator



Blind teachers would have used aids such as these to teach music to sighted students. Teaching music was a common form of employment for blind Australians and music was taught at schools including the RVIB in Melbourne from an early age. The indicator stands upright. One side of the indicator is marked with Braille music notes. By matching a slide at the back of the frame with the Braille notes, the teacher displays any one of 80 Staff and Tonic Sol-fa notations to a sighted student through a front window. The music indicator was manufactured by the Royal National Institute for the Blind, London, and was used during the 1960s.

✉ *Anna Fairclough, Archivist/Curator, Vision Australia Foundation. This music indicator is part of the Tilly Aston Heritage Collection.*

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